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THE AMERICAN FAITH IN THE SCHOOLS AS AN AGENCY
OF PROGRESS: PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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by

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The process of writing a dissertation is a humbling experience. One begins confidently in the expectation that it is destined to be a significant and outstanding piece of work. One ends painfully aware of personal intellectual limitations and hoping simply that the dissertation will be acceptable to the reading committee. My experience has been no different. No one is more aware than I that my subject might have been dealt with in a more sophisticated and incisive manner by a mature scholar. But even though the dissertation bears the marks of a young and very modest scholar, I hope that educational historians will find it informative and useful.

I wish to thank Professors Robert Jewett, Paul Klohr, Robert Bremner, and Mr. Edward McClellan for their careful and thoughtful reading of the manuscript. Their questions and suggestions significantly improved the dissertation in several places. My adviser and friend, Bernard Mehl, did a first-class job of editing the rough draft, and his influence on this work is apparent to all those who know him. Needless to say, however, I am responsible for whatever weaknesses and errors remain.

Finally, I want to thank my wife, Carol, not only for financing the dissertation, but for bearing with me when I was simply unbearable. For these and many other reasons I gratefully dedicate this work to her.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE SCHOOL AS THE AMERICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

The United States has no nationwide system of schools run by a central authority, but as Robin Williams notes, there is an "American system" clearly different from the educational systems of other cultures. Its unity derives from the common assumptions and values which underlie actual educational practice across the nation. Despite the strong outward tendency among Americans to deprecate the value of formal education, one of the central cultural themes is widespread "faith in education." Education in particular is often the object of disdain, education in general is widely acclaimed. To many Americans, education is a panacea, the foremost agency of progress, and America's faith in universal public education is regarded as the nation's greatest asset. ¹

For well over a century, essayists, educators, and foreign observers have noted this phenomenon. Education has been offered as the cure for most political, economic, social and moral ills throughout American history. "We in the United States," writes George S. Counts, "have a long record of faith in both the power and beneficence of education."² "Indeed this belief in the general beneficence of education is


one of the fetishes of American society. Although the processes of tuition may be but obscurely understood by the popular mind, they are thought to possess something akin to magical power. The most striking aspect of this phenomenon, however, is that Americans identify education largely with the work of the school. Their faith in education is thus a faith in the school, and they regard the school as a miracle worker.

While faith in education has been a dominant cultural theme in the United States, it must be pointed out that it has not been restricted to this country. William Ralph Inge, an English theologian, once reported that a reputable man of letters had asked a Frenchman, a Swede, a Dutchman, a Chinaman, and a Japanese "What is the leading interest in your country? What do your people really believe in?" The common reply was "Education." Edgar Knight, a leading historian of education, also asserted that the answer of all civilized people in modern times to social problems has been education. John Brubacher has concluded that "there has hardly been a modern society, autocratic or democratic, which has not designed its educational system under the rubric of social progress."

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4. Ibid., p. 17.
But while Americans have not been the only people in history to put great store in schooling, the intensity of their faith seems to have far exceeded that of any other nation. Denis Brogan, an English observer of the American scene, attests to this.

No people in history (at any rate, no people known to me) have had a greater, I might say uncritical, belief in education than the Americans. Some peoples—the Germans and the Scots, and in more modern times the Russians—have had, perhaps, an equal belief in education, but I am not quite certain this is so. The American is a man or woman who believes that most problems in life, perhaps all problems in life, can be dealt with by instruction before the problem arises. This is an exaggeration, but only a slight exaggeration.8

Lawrence Cremin also points to the unique faith of Americans in education:

As one reviews the American experience, nothing is more striking than the boundless faith of the citizenry in the power of popular education. It was a faith widely shared by the generation that founded the republic, and it has been an essential article of American belief ever since. Indeed, one literally cannot understand American history apart from it, so often have Americans expressed their political aspirations in educational terms. Education has been, par excellence, America's instrument of social progress and reform; and it has commanded such widespread support that D. W. Brogan was once moved to refer to the public school as America's "formally unestablished national church."9

Brogan's remark provides the clue to a clearer understanding of the American faith in the schools. The school in America is a kind of national church, the institutional manifestation of a deep and abiding belief in progress. To put this interpretation on the American faith in the schools is to perceive why Americans place such a high premium on

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Crane Brinton pointed out in *The Shaping of the Modern Mind* that men throughout history have always been painfully aware of the gap between the world as it is and the world as they feel it ought to be. At various times men have advanced schemes for closing this gap. Throughout most of their history, however, men have simply endured their condition, believing that the gap could never be closed. The 18th century Enlightenment significantly changed the fatalistic thinking of Western men when it developed the idea of progress. This doctrine stated that men and their condition improve and could be indefinitely perfected and that men would in the near future achieve heaven on earth. It assumed that the growth and diffusion of knowledge had been responsible for the progress of man up to then and that the further and more rapid diffusion of knowledge and reason would assure the further and more rapid progress of man. Education would be the means for closing the gap between the "is" and the "ought to be," between the real and the ideal. What this assumption did was to make the school the church for this faith. Education through schooling would not only speed up the scientific and technological progress of men, but it would maintain and improve the best form of government, democracy, by informing men of their rights and responsibilities. Above all, it would result in the moral progress of men by giving them the knowledge they needed to act rationally toward one another. The Enlightenment, in short, made the schools the new means for the salvation of the individual and society.

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18th century Americans, freed of the chains of the Old World and loose in a land full of promises and opportunities, were quick to adopt and promulgate this new faith in progress through its new church. By 1900, Barrett Wendell, a professor of literature at Harvard, could argue that the "mood of our country concerning education is neither more nor less than a mood of blind medieval superstition."¹¹

Let social troubles declare themselves anywhere—lynching, strikes, trusts, immigration, racial controversies, whatever you chance to hold most threatening, and we are gravely assured on every side that education is the only thing which can preserve our coming generations from destruction. What is more, as a people we listen credulously to these assurances. We are told, and we believe, and we evince magnificent faith in our belief, that our national salvation must depend on education.¹²

Wendell compared this certitude with the medieval faith in the Catholic Church. He pointed out that while the dominant architectural monuments of Europe are great cathedrals and other houses of worship, the dominant architectural structures in the United States are schools, colleges, and public libraries.

These structures, to be sure, lack the dreamy beauty of romantic fancy; but they are the best tokens which the munificence of our country could give that our national faith is unshaken. On education, we apparently believe, and on education alone, our national salvation depends . . . .

In all this, when one stops to consider, there is a somewhat disturbing likeness to the superstition which nourished the now fading splendors of religious foundations throughout medieval Europe. The men who laid these foundations never knew precisely how they were going to work. Assured, however, that religious foundations would at once work wonders and reflect inestimable credit on founders, they gave and gave, until the Church waxed fatter than the laity . . . . The educational enthusiasm which now possesses our free and enlightened country does not present


¹²Ibid., p. 389.
so marked a contrast to all this as might have been comfortably expected. When we begin to inquire, we are apt to discover that Americans in general do not know exactly what education is; and, furthermore, that they have extremely nebulous ideas of what it can accomplish. They are content with the assurance that in education lies salvation. They believe so. They give and give, accordingly, with what looks very like blind faith that they may thus justify those phases of themselves which most need justification.13

Several years later, Robert Morss Lovett concurred with Wendell's comparison between the medieval church and modern education and commented:

He might have extended his comparison to the personal hierarchy of the two institutions, for at the time of his article the President of Harvard spoke to the people of the United States with the voice of Innocent III, surrounded by his advisers among university presidents and superintendents gathered like Cardinal Archbishops, in the conclave of the National Education Association, of which the Committee of Ten was a sort of papal curia. Although the educational papacy has fallen into schism, the cities are still ruled by superintendents like bishops, the colleges by presidents and deans, like abbots and priors, and the whole structure rests on a vast population of teachers holding their precarious livings like the parish priests at the will of their superiors, tempered by public opinion.14

Along the same lines, Agnes Repplier, a noted American essayist and critic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, concluded:

The United States is a country of diverse theologies and one creed, of many churches and one temple, of a thousand theories and one conviction. The creed is education, the temple is the schoolhouse, the conviction is the healing power of knowledge. Rich and poor, pretentious and plain, revivalist and atheist, all share this supreme and touching confidence. Our belief in education is unbounded, our reverence for it is unaltering, our loyalty to it is unshaken by reverses. Our passionate desire, not so much to acquire it as to bestow it, is the most animated of American traits. The ideal democracy is an educated democracy; and our naive faith in the moral

13Ibid., pp. 390-391.
intelligibility of an established order makes clear the path of progress. Of all the money expended by the Government, the billions it pays for the instruction of youth seems to us the most profitable outlay.15

In the 1960's, Stanley J. Idzerda, the Dean of the College of Wesleyan University, has again voiced a similar judgment.

The significance, power, status, and cash we believe we derive from knowledge mean that in our society the school is the cathedral, and educational philosophy becomes our theology. The teacher is the shaman and the school administrator the high priest. If Job were to suffer his problems today, somebody would probably ask him whether he had thought of attributing them to the quality of the education he had received. Because our society places so much hope on education in the formal sense, the society often says to the schoolman, "Save us, lest we perish." When things take a sudden turn for the worse, society may crucify that same schoolman.16

Interpreting the American school as a church not only helps us understand more clearly the intensity of the American faith in the schools, but it helps us understand the rhetoric and behavior of American educators. Just as the priests and ministers of the Christian Church went out into the world filled with missionary zeal, so too have American educators manifested a sense of mission, a zeal to win converts to education, to improve the behavior of individuals, and ultimately to save men and society. American educators have behaved somewhat as priests of progress.

In the pages that follow, I will examine how the school became America's "formally unestablished national church" and why American educators have exhibited a messianic fervor.


Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to indicate how this work differs from two other works which have considered the American faith in education. This dissertation is in main a broad and general treatment of the influence of the idea of progress on the ways in which Americans have, at different times in their history, envisioned their schools as functioning in American life. Rush Welter's *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* on the other hand is an intensive analysis of the ways in which Americans have tended to substitute education for politics in their various efforts at social reform. The bulk of Welter's analysis deals with 19th century American educational thought, and he is as much or more concerned with the reliance Americans have placed on informal educational vehicles as he is with formal schooling. My focus, as the title indicates, is exclusively on the faith Americans have manifested in their schools, and the bulk of my analysis is concerned with 20th century American educational thought.

Henry Perkinson's *The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith In Education, 1865-1965* appeared after I had completed my rough draft. But a comparison of Perkinson's book with this dissertation will indicate that for the most part Perkinson's methodology and concerns differ widely from mine. He is not much concerned with the influence of the idea of progress on American educational thought. Moreover, Perkinson's work tends to become a general history of American social and educational thought since the Civil War rather than a discussion of the American

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17*(New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).*

18*(New York: Random House, 1968).*
faith in education.

The one writer who has addressed himself directly to the influence of the idea of progress on American educational thought has been A. A. Ekirch, Jr. in one chapter of his *The Idea of Progress in America, 1815-1860*. As the title indicates, however, his account is limited to a forty-five year period. As Brubacher has pointed out then, there is a gap in scholarship on this subject, and it is this gap which I have tried to help fill.

Chapter 2 discusses briefly the origins of the American faith in the schools in the experience of the Puritans and other colonists. While the Puritans did not, of course, embrace an idea of progress in the Enlightenment tradition, they did try to create a moral state and the faith they came to place in their schools to help them accomplish this purpose carried into America's early national period and helped prepare the way for Americans' acceptance of the Enlightenment's faith in schools. It is also in the Puritan experiment, I think, that we find the origins of the messianic spirit of American education.

Chapters 3 and 4 trace the spread and triumph of faith in the schools as an agency of progress from the revolutionary period to the end of the common school era. Although there has been no extended treatment of the influence of the idea of progress on American educational thought, several writers have touched on its influence during this period and they were very helpful sources. My special debt to Merle Curti's *The Social*

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20 Brubacher, p. 643.
Ideas of American Educators as well as Welter's book is apparent. While the reader who is familiar with the literature of American educational history will not find in Chapters 2-4 much new information about faith in the schools in this early period of American history, what is new is that information previously scattered throughout the literature has been brought together for the first time. These chapters also serve to provide a background for my discussion of the American faith in the schools since 1865.

Chapter 5 traces the changing expectations of the faith from 1865 to 1957. In researching this chapter, I not only examined familiar expressions of faith in schooling during this period, but I followed the suggestion made by Boyd C. Shafer, in his article "The American Heritage of Hope, 1865-1940," to examine the various publications of the National Education Association, the American Council on Education, and the files of the magazine School and Society for additional expressions of faith in schooling as a means of progress. The NEA Proceedings, Journal and Educational Policies Commission statements proved to be the most fruitful sources. The listings of the General Essay and Literature Index from 1900-1957 for "Education" and Shafer's article itself also provided several leads.

Chapter 6 deals with the challenge posed to faith in the schools by Sputnik and Americans' subsequent reaffirmation of their faith. While a few writers have touched on the challenge, this chapter is, as far as I can determine, the most extensive treatment of the subject to date.

21 The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVII (December, 1950), 427-450.
One of the ways in which Americans have traditionally believed the schools could promote social progress was by promoting the economic and social progress of individual people. This belief has been with us since the period of the American Revolution and Chapters 3 and 4 trace its development through the common school era. The further development and course of this belief since the Civil War is the subject of Chapter 7. This chapter is especially important because, among other things, it analyzes the role assigned to education in the War on Poverty, delineates the historical significance of the Coleman Report and the challenge the Report poses to American faith in the schools, it makes clear the loss of faith in the schools as a vehicle of social and economic mobility suffered by Negroes in the 1960's. This loss of faith and the reasons for it have not been as apparent as they should be to white Americans and their political leaders, who, in the 1960's, have generally reaffirmed their faith in the schools as an agency of individual and social progress.

Finally, Chapter 8 broadly summarizes and analyzes the American faith in the schools as an agency of progress and offers a general conclusion about what it is that Americans may legitimately expect of their schools.

The heart of the dissertation then is contained in Chapters 5-8, and it is in these chapters, I believe, the dissertation makes its most original contributions.
ORIGINS OF THE FAITH: THE PURITAN EXPERIMENT

The origins of what C. A. Bowers has called the "messianic tradition" of American education may be found within the Puritan experiment. Bowers points out that while this tradition has largely escaped the attention of educational historians, it has played a large role in shaping the thinking and rhetoric of American educators.¹ American schoolmen have historically manifested a tremendous sense of mission. At times this sense of mission was so intense that it "rendered the pronouncements of the educationist virtually indistinguishable in tenor and content from the revivalism issuing from the pulpit."² Horace Mann, for example, responded to the crime and vice of his day by claiming with evangelistic fervor that if all children were brought under the "elevating influence of good schools, the dark host of private vices and public crimes which now embitter domestic peace, and strain the civilization of the age, might in ninety-nine cases in every hundred, be banished from the world."³

While Bowers only traces the messianic tradition back to the period of Mann, it can be argued that it goes back to the Puritans. When

²Ibid.
the Puritans ended up housing morality in the school and relying on the school to close the gap between the real and the ideal, they erased the line between the minister and the teacher. The teacher together with the minister became responsible for the salvation of souls and the improvement of the moral order. Mann's statement was simply the Puritan in him coming out.

While the Puritans as Christians had no conscious doctrine of progress, they did have a vision of what the world ought to be like and they came to the New World with a sense of mission and purpose. Karier explains:

That mission was to live in the world, engage it, destroy the anti-Christ, and build a city of God in the wilderness. The Puritan saw himself not so much pioneering a new world as establishing a base of operation from which he and his fellows could lead the chosen children of God to attack Old World corruptions. In this way he usually viewed his own migration from the Old World as only a tactical retreat from Old World forces. New England, he thought, would be a place where Puritanism could flower according to its basic tenets, and not according to the will of an unsympathetic king or parliament. There on the rocky shores of New England the "Bay Saints" would establish that "City upon a Hill," with "the eies of all people . . . uppon us." 

Although other religious groups, such as Quakers, Lutherans, and Catholics, sought haven in North America from the religious repression of Europe, they were not out to reform the world as were the Puritans. And perhaps, as Karier suggests, it was their tremendous sense of mission which, despite their small numbers, enabled them to so influence American

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The Puritans' formula for the defeat of the forces of evil and the salvation of man's destiny was the theocratic state in which church and state were wedded like the two sides of a coin. The state was the handmaiden of the church. As such it worked to stifle religious dissent, freedom of thought and speech, and to establish a college and schools whose purpose it was to inculcate in the youth a loyalty to the established order and prepare them to take their place in it.

The Puritan theocratic state resembled in many ways the Utopia Plato had outlined in his Republic. Plato had assumed that if the Republic was to maintain justice and goodness, every aspect of the society would have to be dominated by the concept of the good. The Puritans tried to accomplish just this. Every infraction of the moral code, both religious and civil, was subject to fines and imprisonment. Speech patterns, clothing styles, personal behavior, economic dealings, and qualifications for office, including teaching, were all subject to public scrutiny and reprisal in the event of deviation from the accepted code.

Plato had also assumed that maintenance of the good and just state demanded that false views which might corrupt the minds of the citizens could not be tolerated. The Puritans also shared this view. Alien faiths were excluded from the state and heretics were expelled from the community.

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6 Ibid., p. 2.
7 Mehl, p. 4.
8 Ibid.
The ministers and teachers were the censors, weeding out false thought and instructing the flock in the duties befitting members of a saintly society . . . . Like the Roman Senator of old, such men as Increase Mather, John Cotton, and Cotton Mather tried to keep the true faith pure by lashing out at every act or thought that they believed departed from the teachings of the Puritan Church.9

The Puritans, then, were the first and perhaps the only large-scale example of a stable society joined in aim and resolve in American history.10 The resolve of this society had an extraordinary impact on the American mind.

A large part of what we now call the Protestant Ethic stems from the Puritan experience. Although we decry Puritanism as being synonymous with drab and prudish sexuality, stubborn stoicism, and lack of esthetic feeling, these are but specific instances of a mental set that has remained a significant feature of the American mind. Puritan values of temperance, integrity, and initiative form the core of our code of behavior, even if found more in speeches and platitudinous advertisements than in action. The Puritans sought to point the way for a civilized people to live morally within the confines of a truly moral state.

. . . Although the Puritan's experiment at moral rule failed, they succeeded in showing that the moral element in politics, economics, and social affairs had to be honored if the American dream were to approach anything close to reality.11

The Puritans thus gave Americans a moral tradition that provided the basis for subsequent reform movements.12 Reform in the United States from the American Revolution to the Great Society and the student uprisings at Berkeley and Columbia has represented a revival of the Puritan faith, as has the zeal of school reformers like Horace Mann and John Dewey.

9 Ibid., p. 5.
10 Ibid., p. 3.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
If the mission "to live in the world, engage it, destroy the anti-Christ, and build a city of God in the wilderness" gave Puritan society its strength, it also proved to be its greatest weakness. Plato had warned that if the good and just state were to survive, the material aspects of life could change little and the state's territory and population would have to remain stable. The Puritans failed to meet this requirement. Its confrontation with the world proved to be its undoing. Worldly trials and temptations overwhelmed it.

Puritanism failed as a social system, as it now may be failing as an ideology, because it could not isolate itself from land, wealth, city life, and ideas. Founded on faith, it lacked piety. Therefore, it could not perpetuate faith or keep it alive for the next generation, which had no way really to know, understand, or imbibe the zeal of the original saints. Edwards and Richey describe the decline of the theocracy in more detail:

In a frontier society it was impossible to repress the spirit of democracy and individualism, however much leaders in church and state might invoke divine sanction of their rule. Gradually, power--political, economic, and social--slipped from the hands of the ministers, magistrates, and gentlemen, who were the early leaders, to the hands of new and important elements in the population, namely, merchants, farmers, and artisans. As the seventeenth century drew to a close, the old order collapsed in Massachusetts, and elsewhere it was undergoing a transformation. A powerful merchant class had developed which was quite as much interested in its account book as in its Bible and which was out of sympathy with the intolerance and restricted view of Puritanism. It was two merchants, Thomas Brattle and Robert Calef, who had the courage to raise their voices in denunciation of the witchcraft persecutions. More important still, perhaps, was the development of a large class of small farmers, the solid core of New England society. This New England yeomanry was essentially democratic and it became increasingly conscious of its strength and importance. As men became busily engaged in building their homes in well-kept, elm-shaded villages, in improving their acres and adding to them, in making in home and shop the articles of everyday use, in building ships, and in competing for profits in the markets of the world, they lost

13 Ibid., p. 5.
much of the old religious fervor which had impelled their fathers across the sea.\textsuperscript{14} Cotton Mather might complain about the "fearful degeneracy, creeping, I cannot say, but rushing in upon" the churches and warn that no city was ever more liable to judgment by fire than Boston "through the wickedness of them that sleep in it."\textsuperscript{15} But theocracy in New England was dying. In the end, Puritanism ironically led not to a City of God but a secular order that relied on law and schools to maintain the good society.\textsuperscript{16}

The Puritans had always valued education. The men of colonial New England were agreed that the welfare of church and community depended on the citizens' ability to read and write and on leaders trained in classical languages and the liberal arts. Without these skills and leaders, society would succumb to sin and anarchy.\textsuperscript{17} One of the first things the Puritans did then was to establish Harvard College.

After God had carried us safe to New England and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the Civil Government: One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an Illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 43.

\textsuperscript{16}Mehl, p. 5.


As Rudolph has commented, the important fact about Harvard College was its absolute necessity. The Puritans could not have done without it. Learned men were essential to their mission to set the world straight.\textsuperscript{19}

Intending to lead lives no less than the purest, aspiring to serve God and their fellowmen in the fullest, they acknowledged a responsibility to the future. They could not afford to leave its shaping to whim, fate, accident, indecision, incompetence, or carelessness. In the future the state would need competent rulers, the church would require a learned clergy, and society itself would need the adornment of cultured men.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus it happened that "the two cardinal principles of English Puritanism which most profoundly affected the social development of New England and the United States were not religious tenets, but educational ideals: a learned clergy, and a lettered people."\textsuperscript{21}

While the founding of Harvard clearly had been intended, the founding of the lower schools was not. Laissez-faire in education at the lower levels had been the rule in England. Education had been the primary function of the family, community and church, not schools and books, and this was the tradition that the Puritans brought with them and fully intended to keep.\textsuperscript{22} But after a few years in the wilderness there was not only a decline in the authority of the church but a breakdown of family and community life as well. The burden of education was suddenly shifted to formal schools.


\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 5-6.


This phenomenon was not limited to the Puritans. According to Bailyn, it was a general occurrence throughout the colonies, so that by the end of the colonial period:

Education had been dislodged from its ancient position in the social order, wrenched loose from the automatic, instinctive workings of society, and cast as a matter for deliberation into the forefront of consciousness. Its functionings had become problematic and controversial. Many were transferred from informal to formal institutions, from agencies to whose major purpose they had been incidental to those, for the most part schools, to which they were primary. Schools and formal schooling had acquired a new importance. They had assumed cultural burdens they had not borne before. Where there had been deeply ingrained habits, unquestioned tradition, automatic responses, security, and confidence there was now awareness, doubt, formality, will and decision. The whole range of education had become an instrument of deliberate social purpose. It (Italics mine.)

What happened to the family in the New World that resulted in its traditional role as the primary educational agency being reduced and superceded and the role of formal education so dramatically increased? Bailyn has suggested several answers.

First of all, the wilderness upset the routine of family life. The long journey from the Old World to the New brought a disruption of normal family procedures and functions and a slackening of discipline. Once the colonists were re-established in permanent settlements, they tried to restore the old ways but failed. Initially they attributed this to moral weakness, but finally recognized the new conditions to be the source of their failure. ²⁴

Then, too, the wilderness experience was as new and frightening to parents as it was to children. Their knowledge and experience bore ²³

²³Ibid., p. 21.
²⁴Ibid., p. 22.
little relevance to the problems of the new environment and it was often the children who adapted to the new life most quickly.\textsuperscript{25}

A host of other circumstances contributed to family disorder. The prestige of parents was tarnished by the indignities of menial labor. It disappeared completely during "starving periods" which forced families to break up into smaller, self-sufficient units. And economic conditions no longer kept sons and servants in dependent roles. Land was abundant, labor in demand, and few adult males failed to make the break and set up their own household.\textsuperscript{26}

The colonists' response to this breakdown of family authority was to pass a series of extraordinary laws and admonitions regarding family life. All of the colonies, within a decade of their establishment, had laws requiring children to obey their parents and specifying severe penalties, even death, for disobedience. The relaxation of family discipline was everywhere condemned, and parents and masters were repeatedly ordered to fulfill their obligation to preserve civil order. These laws, however, could simply not stem the tide. Families continued to break up and the authority they exerted and the functions they filled continued to be reduced.\textsuperscript{27}

Within twenty years or so after the beginnings of the first settlements, it became apparent that the family was not fulfilling its traditional educational functions. In the early 1640's, Massachusetts

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 23.
\item\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp. 23-24.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and Virginia attempted to restore strength to family discipline by passing the first American education laws.

The famous Massachusetts statute of 1642, prefaced by its sharp condemnation of "the great neglect of many parents and masters in training up their children in learning and labor," was one of a series of expedients aimed at shoring up the weakening structure of family discipline. It not only reminded parents and masters of their duty to provide for the "calling and implant of their children" and threatened punishment for irresponsibility, but added to this familiar obligation the extraordinary provision that they see also to the children's "ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country."28

The Virginia law and the Duke's Laws of New York in 1665 manifested similar concerns.

As Bailyn observes, these laws represented a sudden realization of how important the family had been in the education of the young and what its disruption could mean to civilization. They were only the first of a series of responses made over the period of a century to the threat of brutish decline, the dissolution of the family's educational role, and a growing awareness of the necessity of education.29 The responses varied with local circumstances, but the response of Puritan New England was especially noteworthy.

In New England a high cultural level, an intense Biblicism, concentrated settlements, and thriving town institutions led to a rapid enhancement of the role of formal schooling. The famous succession of laws passed in Massachusetts and Connecticut after 1647 ordering all towns to maintain teaching institutions, fining recalcitrants, stating and restating the urgencies of the situation, expressed more than a traditional concern with schooling, and more even than a Puritan need for literacy. It flowed from the fear of the imminent loss of cultural standards, of the possibility that civilization

29 Ibid., p. 27.
itself would be "buried in the grave of our fathers."\textsuperscript{30}

It is imperative for our purposes here to note then that:

The Puritans quite deliberately transferred the maimed functions of the family to formal instructional institutions, and in so doing not only endowed schools with a new importance but expanded their purpose beyond pragmatic vocationalism toward vaguer but more basic cultural goals.

In the context of the age the stress placed by the Puritans on formal schooling is astonishing,\textsuperscript{31}

Thus it was that the school assumed a role of greatly elevated importance amongst the Puritans, not only as an agency of cultural transfer but as a primary agency of social control and direction. As Mehl has described it:

Morality was to be housed now in the school and was to be its prime subject matter. If the church had lost the war against the evil forces of greed, lust, crime, laziness, and emotionalism, the school could assume the power to keep order in the city and erase the line distinguishing the minister from the teacher. The end and aim of education were directed to an understanding of God's way, which was to be found in the literate interpretation of the Bible and obedience to it. Thus, common education stressed the basic three R's of the time—reading, writing, and religion.\textsuperscript{32}

The degree of trust the Puritans came to place in their schools as a means of gaining and keeping the good society is revealed by the remarks of a Harvard commencement orator in the 1670's:

The ruling class would have been subjected to mechanics, cobblers, and tailors; the gentry would have been overwhelmed by lewd fellows of a baser sort, the sewage of Rome, the dregs of an illiterate plebs which judgeth much from emotion, little from truth; we should have seen . . . no flashing sparklets of honor; the laws would not have been made by senatus consulta, nor would we have rights, honors, or magisterial ordinance worthy of

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{32}Mehl, pp. 6-7.
preservation, but plebiscites, appeals to base passions, and revolutionary rumbles, if these our fathers had not founded the University.\textsuperscript{33}

It was expressed also in the Law of 1647 which established a compulsory educational system designed to thwart "that old deluder, Satan"\textsuperscript{34} and in the Law of 1648 which stated that "the good education of children is of singular behoof and benefit to any Commonwealth . . . ."\textsuperscript{35}

Ultimately, the Puritans could not evenly sustain their great stress on education. As communities spread out and became more isolated, legislation proved difficult to enforce and the level of education sank to the requirements of purely local demands. By the 18th century, educational legislation had declined markedly. As Bailyn concludes, however, "the tradition of the early years was never completely lost, and New England carried into the national period a faith in the benefits of formal schooling and a willingness to perpetuate and enrich it that has not yet been dissipated."\textsuperscript{36} (Italics mine.)

The Puritan faith in schooling thus helped prepare the American mind to accept the Enlightenment faith that schooling meant progress. As shall be indicated, there were several reasons why Americans adopted the educational doctrines of the Enlightened. But certainly one of the most important factors was that faith in education was already an American


\textsuperscript{35}Law of 1648, reproduced in Tyack, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{36}Bailyn, pp. 27-28.
tradition by the time Enlightenment thought took hold in the new nation. And the Puritan element in American educational thought remains strong. If Americans today think that the schools can bridge the gap between American society as it is and American society as it ought to be by inculcating in the young a loyalty to established law and order, by instilling in children a knowledge and love of the good and right, and by getting them to reject crime, vice, prejudice and other evils in favor of leading virtuous, hard-working lives, then to a great extent this is the result of their Puritan heritage. As Mehl notes, for example:

The American educational system has inherited the Puritan conviction that at least on the lower levels—elementary, junior high, and even high school—the school cannot abdicate its hold on the moral teaching of the young. From the Puritans also comes the concept that the school has a stake in shaping the personal behavior of the child in terms of the main tenets of the Protestant Ethic.37

The American faith in the schools as a means to the good society is in large part, then, a puritanical faith.

37Mehl, p. 7.
While the beginnings of the American faith in the schools as a means of social improvement may be found among the Puritans, it was an idea that was reinforced and elaborated during the revolutionary and early national periods of American history. It is in the educational thought of these two periods that we also find the origins of two corollaries of the faith, that education is a vital means for preserving and advancing democracy, and that it is an avenue for social and economic advancement.

Crucial to an understanding of the spread of faith in education among Americans and their leaders during these periods is some knowledge of 18th century Enlightenment thought in both Europe and America. Crane Brinton has argued that "the basic idea and the striking novelty of the Enlightenment" rests in:

the belief that all human beings can attain here on this earth a state of perfection hitherto in the West thought to be possible only for Christians in a state of grace, and for them only after death. St. Just, the youthful French revolutionary, put it with deceptive simplicity before the Convention: le bonheur est une idée neuve en Europe—happiness is a new idea in Europe. Not new in heaven, of course, but new in Europe, pretty new even in America.¹

What brought about this change in 18th century man's attitude toward the

universe? What led him to hope that he could achieve heaven here on earth? After all, two thousand years of Christianity and the paganism of other millenia had not brought human perfectibility. Something new obviously had occurred to make 18th century man think this was now possible. This something new was primarily the late 17th century work of Newton and Locke.2

Isaac Newton's laws of planetary motion and gravity seemed to indicate that all natural phenomena were governed by laws. Enlightenment social theorists extrapolated from this conclusion and argued that if the physical universe behaved according to laws, then the behavior of men must also be determined by laws. If these laws could be discovered, they would provide the correct and mutually beneficial guidelines for the behavior of men and the operation of their social institutions.

John Locke took the methods of clear, simple reasoning employed by Newton and applied them to the study of man. Rejecting the Platonic and Cartesian notion of innate ideas, Locke's psychology pictured man's mind as a tabula rasa. Rejecting also the Christian notion of original sin, Locke argued that man's nature is at birth neutral, having capacities for either good or evil. Since man's nature was neutral and since all knowledge was derived from sense experience, it seemed reasonable to Locke and his disciples to conclude that men were shaped primarily by their environment. Corrupt men were the products of corrupt institutions and ignorance. But given reformed institutions and a proper education, good men and social progress would result.

2Ibid.
Newton and Locke together fashioned those potent notions of nature and reason, which were to Enlightenment doctrine what such ideas as grace, salvation, and predestination were to Christian doctrine.\(^3\) To the Enlightened, the idea of nature connoted not only the external world but a natural order of human relationships as well. The trouble with men was that so many unnatural human relationships--class distinctions, social etiquette and privilege, the contrast of palace and hovel--had been allowed to develop. These distinctions violated the rights and privileges each man had by nature and of which no one could properly deprive any man.\(^4\) If the role of nature in human affairs was properly understood, human actions could be regulated accordingly and unnatural behavior could cease.\(^5\)

The design of nature, the Enlightened believed, was disclosed by reason. The powers of reason were most apparent in mathematics and the work of Newton. Just as reason had disclosed the true relationships of sun to earth and earth to the other planets, so reason revealed how natural and beneficial it was for men to engage in free economic competition, how unnatural it was to take vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, or how absurd it was to believe in miracles, saints and the other trappings of Christianity.\(^6\) Indeed, the Enlightenment's faith in reason provided the foundation for a new religion of humanitarianism.\(^7\)

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\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 114.

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 122-123.

The ultimate objective of this new religion was the improvement, and perhaps even the perfection, of man in this world. Human nature might not be naturally good as Rousseau had argued, and it might be capable of selfishness, greed, and other vices, as Christianity had emphasized, but, as Locke had shown, it was at least capable of being improved. If men were permitted freedom of inquiry, they would develop their reason, follow natural law, preserve their natural rights, and unselfishly contribute to human progress. Man was to be redeemed by natural reason for the future enlightened society, not by Christian grace for a world beyond the grave. The root of sin, as Socrates had once said, was ignorance. But as soon as men were enlightened by education, once they knew the right, they would do the right, they would act reasonably, and the amount of sin in this world would be greatly reduced if not completely diminished.

Almost as the Church had been viewed as a vehicle to help man achieve God's grace in order to overcome the stain of original sin, so most humanitarians viewed education as a vehicle to help man develop his reason in order to overcome ignorance and, therefore, vice.

In the ideology (one might almost say the theology) of the Enlightenment, education replaced the Church as the primary means for man's salvation. For the Enlightened, education became the bridge between the real and the ideal.

The culmination of the Enlightenment ideology was the idea of progress, that is, the belief that "civilization has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction." The idea of progress was "the

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
central pillar in the Enlightenment temple of humanity," a pillar which rested firmly on the foundation of education.

Brinton observed that belief in progress, despite the two world wars and great economic depression of this century, remains so much a part of the American way that few Americans realize how unprecedented this belief is. The classical and medieval worlds entertained absolutely no belief that man and history were moving in a desirable direction. It is true that they had developed several elaborate schemes of man's destiny, but these ran quite contrary to any idea of progress. The pagan legends of the Mediterranean area put man's Golden Age in the past. The Hebrew legend of the Garden of Eden was the Western version of these legends. In the Graeco-Roman world intellectuals were tied to cyclical theories of history, the most popular one positing a beginning Golden Age followed by a Silver Age and then an Iron Age which was in turn followed by a catastrophe and then the appearance of another Golden Age and the beginning of another cycle. Those who believed this way usually assumed they were living in the Iron Age. Such notions of history were obviously based not on a belief in progress but rather a belief in regression or decadence. The sense of tragedy which dominated classical thought inhibited the development of naive optimistic thinking or an idea of progress.

12 Brinton, p. 118.
13 Ibid.
14 Karier, p. 24.
The cosmology of Christianity and the medieval world was similar to and, in fact, based on pagan notions of history.\textsuperscript{15} The Golden Age was in the past, Eden, man's home before his fall from innocence. Man could not recapture on earth his former state of bliss, and his corrupted nature doomed him to a life of sin and self-imposed misery. Man's only hope for lasting happiness and peace was salvation after death through the grace of God. But while medieval Christianity did not give men hope for heaven on earth, by holding out hope for an afterlife and providing the Church as a means for achieving that afterlife, it actually laid the groundwork for the idea of progress. What the intellectual leaders of the Enlightenment did was to secularize these Christian ideas.

Historians are at odds over who first suggested the idea of progress, but they generally agree with Bury that Condorcet's \textit{Esquisse de la Progres de l'esprit humain}, which appeared late in the 18th century, was the first book to treat the idea "with explicit fullness."\textsuperscript{16} Condorcet divided history into ten epochs in which he portrayed man as having progressed from savagery to the point where he was now about to enter the tenth and final epoch, the stage of earthly perfection and bliss. History, he argued, establishes that no bounds have been set on human improvement and "that the perfectibility of man is truly indefinite, and that the progress of this perfectibility, from now onwards independent of any power that might wish to halt it, has no other limit than the duration of

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\textsuperscript{15}Brinton, p. 119.

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the globe upon which nature cast us."  

Condorcet was rather vague about the nature of the moving force that had pushed man from one stage to the next. But like most intellectuals of the 18th century, he attributed human progress primarily to the spread of reason and enlightenment which increases man's ability to control his environment. Condorcet denied Rousseau's charge that the increase of knowledge led to the degeneration of mankind. "... It is not the growth of knowledge but its decadence that has engendered the vices of civilized peoples, and that knowledge, so far from corrupting man, has always improved him when it could not totally correct or reform him."  

If the progress of the mind had not always resulted in the progress of society it was because for the first seven epochs of history, knowledge had been the private property of "eminent and powerful professions," primarily the clergy. "I refer to the separation of the human race into two parts; the one destined to teach, the other made to believe; the one jealously hiding what it boasts of knowing, the other receiving with respect whatever is condescendingly revealed to it ... "  

But with the advent of printing in the eighth epoch this bifurcation of society began to break down. "Knowledge became the subject of a

18Brinton, p. 120.
19Condorcet, p. 24.
20Ibid., pp. 17-18.
brisk and universal trade."\(^{21}\) Men now had "a tribunal, independent of all human coercion," which favored reason and justice. This was also the epoch of Descartes who "commanded men to shake off the yoke of authority, to recognize none save that which was avowed by reason; and he was obeyed, because he won men by his boldness and led them by his enthusiasm."\(^{22}\) Thus, "everywhere during this stage we see reason and authority fighting for supremacy, a battle which prepared and anticipated the triumph of reason."\(^{23}\)

The triumph came in the ninth epoch, the epoch of Newton, the philosophes, and the Enlightenment. Men learned that they could subject every opinion to the test of reason, that their own minds were indeed the only means for the discovery of truth, and that they were not condemned to resting uncritically upon the judgments of others. Everywhere men rallied to the cry of "reason, tolerance, and humanity."\(^{24}\) The 18th century had brought the salvation of mankind. In a moment of exuberance Condorcet exclaimed, "Living in this happy age and being witnesses of the last efforts of ignorance and of error we have seen reason emerge victorious from this struggle, so long and so difficult, and we can at last cry out: Truth has conquered and mankind is saved!"\(^{25}\)

\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 99. \\
^{22}\)Ibid., p. 122. \\
^{23}\)Ibid., p. 117. \\
^{24}\)Ibid., p. 137. \\
The tenth epoch of the *Esquisse* dealt not with the past but with Condorcet's vision of "the future progress of the human mind." Since "nature has joined together indissolubly the progress of knowledge and that of liberty, virtue and respect for the natural rights of man," once the Enlightenment has spread to a number of nations, all men "will be the friends of humanity, all will work together for its perfection and its happiness." The future, unlike the past, will be based upon "the abolition of inequality between nations, the progress of equality within each nation, and the true perfection of mankind."  

Condorcet assigned the inequality of individuals to differences in wealth, inheritance, and education. These differences could not be done away with completely but they could be minimized by a just government and society. Inequality in wealth and inheritance could be abolished by laws favoring the distribution not the concentration of wealth. The miseries of poverty could be lessened by a system of social insurance. But along with political and economic reform, there must be educational reform. Inequalities in education could be diminished by a universal system of education, and "with greater equality of education there will be greater equality in industry and so in wealth." "At present, even in

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26 Condorcet, p. 10.

27 Ibid., p. 173.

28 In his Report on Public Instruction to the Legislative Assembly in 1792, Condorcet advocated a free and secular national system of education of all grades, open to all. See F. De La Fontanerie, *French Liberalism and Education in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1932).

29 Condorcet, pp. 183-184. As shall be indicated in the seventh chapter, this notion still constitutes part of the conventional wisdom about education in America today.
the most enlightened countries scarcely one in fifty of the people who have natural talents, receive the necessary education to develop them.  

Above all, education would diffuse knowledge, spread reason, and hasten man's progress. An enlightened humanity could only mean that:

the time will therefore come when the sun will shine only on free men who know no other master but their reason; when tyrants and slaves, priests and their stupid or hypocritical instruments will exist only in works of history and on the stage; and when we shall think of them only to pity their victims, and their dupes; to maintain ourselves in a state of vigilance by thinking on their excesses, and to learn how to recognize and so to destroy, by force of reason, the first seeds of tyranny and superstition should they even dare to reappear amongst us.

Ironically, Condorcet was hiding from his enemies and destined to die at their hands when he wrote the **Esquisse**. But like most reformers he took comfort in his vision.

> How consoling for the philosopher who laments the errors, the crimes, the injustices which still pollute the earth .... It is the contemplation of this prospect that rewards him for all his efforts to assist the progress of reason and the defence of liberty .... Such contemplation is for him an asylum, in which the memory of his persecutors cannot pursue him; there he lives in thought with man restored to his natural rights and dignity, forgets man tormented and corrupted by greed, fear, or envy; there he lives with his peers in an Elysium created by reason and graced by the purest pleasure known to the love of mankind.

The idea of progress made sense to early Americans. "America," writes Russell Nye, "was a new country, a blank tablet on which men could write what they wished, with none of the prejudices and faults of the old world to cloud their minds."  

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feudal institutions--primogeniture, entail, monarchy, and so on--would not be permitted to develop in the new republican government. Indeed, the Revolution greatly increased acceptance of the idea of progress. To the revolutionaries it meant that a new and benevolent government, based on natural law and unparalleled in world history, could be created. The open frontier with its seemingly endless resources and opportunities was another large factor in making faith in progress part of the American creed. Americans, Nye argues, believed in Condorcet's history. "The conditions under which they lived tended... to indicate that their epoch might be that fortunate tenth."

The faith of Condorcet was shared by the American philosophers. Franklin, in a letter to the English scientist Joseph Priestly, wrote that "the rapid Progress true Science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the Height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the Power of Man over Matter." John Adams, although less optimistic about human nature than his fellow philosophers, still could say that there was "hope for splendid improvement in human society, and vast amelioration in the condition of mankind." George Washington confessed to a "fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that the world is much less barbarous than it has been..." And Jefferson, while not sharing Condorcet's belief in

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34 Ibid., p. 3.


36 Quoted in Nye, p. 4.

37 Quoted in Nye, p. 5.
the inevitable perfectibility of man, did feel that "no definite limits can be assigned to the improvability of the human race." 38

Jefferson was clearly a son of the Enlightenment. As Karier observes, when Jefferson remarked that he considered Bacon, Locke, and Newton as "the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception," he expressed the faith of the Enlightened "in an empirical science, human reason, freedom of inquiry, and the progress of humanity." 39

He is important for our purposes not only because he helped diffuse Enlightenment ideals, but primarily because he popularized in America the idea expressed by European liberals like Condorcet that the survival of a republican government depended on an enlightened populace, that the state was responsible for educating the common man, and that education could be used to further social progress. 40 Indeed, Curti goes so far as to say that Jefferson is "the first American to emphasize public education as an instrument for the realization of democracy and for the furthering of social reform." 41 Whether or not that is true, after one reads Jefferson's statements on the importance of education to a republic, it certainly seems legitimate to conclude that he is probably the source of most of our conventional wisdom on that subject. "... Surely no one," writes Lee, "has more consummately set forth the crucial dependance of representative republican government upon full and systematic enlighten-

38 Quoted in Nye, p. 5.
40 Ibid., p. 32.
ment. 'Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people.'"\(^\text{42}\)

Jefferson's educational thought is epitomized in his **Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge** which he submitted to the Virginia legislature in 1779 shortly after becoming Governor and which he elaborated on in his **Notes on the State of Virginia**. James Bryant Conant has argued, in fact, that "Jefferson's claim to fame as an educational innovator rests . . . not on what he wrote in his old age or even in middle life but what he wrote when he was not yet forty. The bill of 1779 and his **Notes on Virginia** express radical ideas about education as an instrument of republican policy." \(^\text{43}\)

In the preamble to the Bill of 1779, Jefferson stated that individual rights are better protected in some forms of government than others. Nevertheless, it has been man's experience that even in good governments those in power may become tyrants. The best way to prevent this would be:

> to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes . . . .

Since it is also true that those people are happiest "whose laws are best, \(^\text{44}\)


\(^{44}\)Jefferson, p. 83.
and are best administered," and good laws are formulated and administered only by the "wise and honest," it therefore:

becomes expedient for promoting the publick happiness that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth, or other accidental condition or circumstance . . . .

The children of the poor, furthermore, "whom nature hath fitly formed and disposed to become useful instruments for the public" should be sought for and educated at public expense so that the happiness of all would not be confided to the weak or wicked.\(^45\)

Commenting on the Bill in his Notes on Virginia, Jefferson wrote that the ultimate purpose of the bill was to render "the people safe, as they are the ultimate guardians of their own liberty." In stressing the study of history as a chief means for achieving this, he revealed how he expected education to help preserve liberty.

History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views. In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover, and wickedness insensibly open, cultivate and improve. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary.\(^47\)

\(^45\) Ibid., p. 84.
\(^46\) Ibid.
\(^47\) Ibid., pp. 96-97.
The actual provisions of the Bill are well known and need not be
repeated other than to note that the three years of free education pro­
posed for the common man seem extraordinarily modest by today's standards.
But to Jefferson in the 18th century, this along with a free press seemed
enough education to enable the people to ward off tyranny. Of a free
press he wrote:

This formidable censor of the public functionaries, by arraign­
ing them at the tribunal of public opinion, produces reform
peaceably, which must otherwise be done by revolution. It is
also the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and
improving him as a rational, moral, and social being.

This raises the question whether Jefferson regarded the press
rather than the schools as more important toward the preservation of
freedom. But, as Lee points out, the question becomes insignificant
when we recognize that he called for both.

The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people,
the very first object should be to keep that right; and were
it left to me to decide whether we should have a government
without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I
should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I
should mean that every man should receive those papers and
be capable of reading them.

Jefferson assumed that a republican government depended on men who were
capable of thinking and acting independently of pressure or propaganda.
This demanded that they know how to read, write, and speak their language

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18 See A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, repro­

49 Karier, p. 31.

50 Jefferson, p. 17.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., p. 17.
above all else, and this meant schools.  

Jefferson's statements on the necessity of education to democracy and social progress, which he made in letter after letter, can be easily multiplied:

[To give] information to the people ... is the most certain and the most legitimate engine of government.  

If the condition of man is to be progressively ameliorated, as we fondly hope and believe, education is to be the chief instrument in effecting it.  

I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource most to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of men.  

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization it expects what never was and never will be.

Shocked by what he regarded as the growing power of the Supreme Court Judges, he advocated their election by the people saying:

I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.

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53 Ibid., p. 21.  
56 Letter to C. C. Blatchly, October 21, 1822, quoted in Honeywell, p. 148.  
58 Letter to William Charles Jarvis, September 28, 1820, quoted in Honeywell, p. 150.
Like the Puritans, Jefferson also looked to education to provide moral training, the difference being that for Jefferson morality was based on reason rather than Scripture.

When it is wanting [moral sense] we endeavor to supply the defect by education, by appeals to reason and calculation, by presenting to the being so unhappily conformed, other motives to do good and to eschew evil; such as the love or the hatred or rejection of those among whom he lives and whose society is necessary to his happiness and even existence; demonstrations by sound calculation that honesty promotes interest in the long run; the rewards and penalties established by the laws; and ultimately the prospects of a future state of retribution for the evil as well as the good done while here. These are the correctives which are supplied by education, and which exercise the functions of the moralist, the preacher, the legislator; and they lead into a course of correct action all those whose depravity is not too profound to be eradicated.59

Finally, there is this extremely optimistic statement about the benefits of education which appeared in a letter to Dupont de Nemours in 1816:

Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day. Although I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected.60

For Jefferson, then, education was intimately bound up with the preservation of American democracy, social progress, and individual moral improvement. With his fellow Enlightened, he viewed education as the primary means for closing the gap between the real and the ideal. Edu-

59 Letter to Thomas Law, June 13, 1814, quoted in Honeywell, p. 147.

60 Letter to Dupont de Nemours, April 24, 1816, quoted in Honeywell, p. 137.
cation would perfect democracy, society, and the individual. Progress was clearly Jefferson's faith, the school his church, and the trust he put in education has continued to influence American educational thought to this day. One need only remember, for example, how fond John F. Kennedy was of quoting Jefferson's statement that any nation that expected to be ignorant and free, expected what never was and never would be.

While the faith Jefferson put in education to maintain and improve American republicanism was extraordinary, he was not alone in this by any means. Many other revolutionary leaders and many ordinary Americans as well shared his belief.

Robert Middlekauf has pointed out that after the Revolution there was a change in the American "cast of mind":

The change was not so much in substance as in mood. Found in Americans everywhere, the new frame of mind was induced by the freedom the new nation enjoyed. Freedom made Americans self-conscious; it engaged their attention to the problem of what they were; it stretched their sense of what they might become . . . . . . Above all Americans wanted to build a unique nation, immune to the corruptions which had befallen Europe.61

Benjamin Rush gave voice to this new American nationalism when in 1786 he wrote:

Most of the distresses of our country, and of the mistakes which Europeans have formed of us have arisen from a belief that the American Revolution is over. This is so far from being the case that we have only finished the first act of the great drama. We have changed our forms of government but it remains yet to effect a revolution in our principles, opinions, and manners so as to accommodate them to the forms of government we have adopted. This is the most difficult part of the business of

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Noah Webster expressed the same attitude when he called for an "ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PATRIOTS for the purpose of forming a NATIONAL CHARACTER."\(^{63}\)

The zeal of men like Jefferson, Rush, and Webster to encourage nationalism was spurred on by a real fear that the new nation would collapse.

As successful revolutionaries, Americans tried to conserve and consolidate their gains. Just as the Puritans had feared failure in their errand into the wilderness, so many leaders in the early Republic, charged with a deep sense of destiny, masked a dark vein of anxiety by assertive nationalism. A number of them believed that history demonstrated that republics were as evanescent as fireflies on a summer evening, that Europe was conspiring to wreck the new nation, that internal disorders and factions were threatening to shatter the republican community.\(^ {64}\)

Just as the Puritans had looked to the school to maintain the moral state, so Americans now looked to the school to maintain republican government. Republicanism, writes Middlekauf, renounced the traditional props of government, privileged classes and divinely chosen rulers. In their stead they substituted education.

They were willing to gamble their entire political experiment on the belief that education could equip men to rule themselves . . . . Dependent upon its citizens, any one of whom might be summoned to office, a republic was compelled by simple prudence to educate them. Republicanism did not prescribe any specific curriculum . . . what it required was that education help provide enlightened and virtuous citizens—not a small task even by the optimistic standards of the day.\(^ {65}\)

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\(^{63}\)Quoted in Tyack, p. 83.

\(^{64}\)Ibid.

\(^{65}\)Middlekauf, p. 117.
For several of the leading Revolutionary lights, the answer to building national loyalty and patriotism was a national system of education. Between 1786 and 1800, Benjamin Rush, Robert Coram, James Sullivan, Nathaniel Chipman, Samuel Knox, Samuel H. Smith, Lafitte du Courteil, DuPont de Nemours, and Noah Webster all published plans for such a system. The essays by Knox and Smith were awarded a joint prize by the American Philosophical Society for the best essay on a "system of liberal Education and Literary Instruction, adapted to the genius of Government, and best calculated to promote the general welfare of the United States . . . ."66 None of the plans was ever put into effect, but they were important nevertheless because the principles they enunciated were vital factors in the growth of American democracy.67 A brief look at the plans of Rush and Webster will serve to illustrate them.

In his Thoughts Upon The Mode Of Education Proper In A Republic, Benjamin Rush announced that:

The business of education has acquired a new complexion by the independence of our country. The form of government we have assumed has created a new class of duties to every American. It becomes us, therefore, to examine our former habits upon this subject, and in laying the foundations for nurseries of wise and good men, to adapt our modes of teaching to the


67 Hansen, pp. 44-45.
peculiar form of our government.\textsuperscript{68}

The first issue Rush wanted to settle was "that an education in our own country is to be preferred to an education in a foreign country."\textsuperscript{69} In this he agreed with Thomas Jefferson and George Washington who argued that as long as American youth were educated in Europe, American society would continue to reflect Europe's divisions. Washington argued for the creation of a national university on the basis that it would make American "principles, opinions, and manners" more homogeneous and increase "our prospect of permanent union."\textsuperscript{70} And Jefferson claimed that the most beloved and trusted American men of learning, "whose manners, morals and habits are perfectly homogeneous with those of the country," had been educated in America. \textemdash The consequences of foreign education are alarming to me as an American."\textsuperscript{71}

So the "perfectly homogeneous" American had to be educated at home where republicans could keep an eye on him. "The principle of patriotism," said Rush, "stands in need of the reinforcement of prejudice, and it is well known that our strongest prejudices in favor of our country are formed in the first one and twenty years of our lives."\textsuperscript{72} "Our schools of learning, by producing one general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Benjamin Rush, Thoughts Upon The Mode Of Education Proper In A Republic, reproduced in Rudolph, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Quoted in Tyack, p. 85.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Quoted in Tyack, p. 85.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Rush, p. 9.
\end{itemize}
fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government." American youth had to learn that their dedication to country should be surpassed only by their devotion to God.

Next to the duty which young men owe to their Creator, I wish to see a SUPREME REGARD TO THEIR COUNTRY inculcated upon them . . . . Our country includes family, friends, and property, and should be preferred to them all. Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself, but that he is public property. Let him be taught to love his family, but let him be taught at the same time that he must forsake and even forget them when the welfare of his country requires it.

The authority of American teachers was to be "as absolute as possible."

The government of schools like the government of private families should be arbitrary, that it may not be severe. By this mode of education we prepare our youth for the subordination of laws and thereby qualify them for becoming good citizens of the republic. I am satisfied that the most useful citizens have been formed from those youth who have never known or felt their own wills till they were one and twenty years of age . . . .

It should be plain then, concluded Rush, "that I consider it as possible to convert men into republican machines."

This must be done if we expect them to perform their parts properly in the great machine of government of the state. The republic is sophisticated with monarchy or aristocracy that does not revolve upon the wills of the people, and these must be fitted to each other by means of education before they can be made to produce regularity and unison in government.

Noah Webster is best remembered for his "Blue-Back Speller" and, indeed, his speller and other textbooks were the foremost weapons of his

73 Ibid., p. 10.
74 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
75 Ibid., p. 16.
76 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
campaign for nationalism. In them he undertook to make the language uniform "by demolishing those odious distinctions of provincial dialects which are the subject of reciprocal ridicule in different states," to instill patriotic principles through the speeches of American leaders, and to encourage the development of an American literature. Webster expressed his educational views in *On the Education of Youth in America*.

The education of youth is, in all governments, an object of the first consequence. The impressions received in early life usually form the characters of individuals, a union of which forms the general character of a nation.

Education is a subject which has been exhausted by the ablest writers, both among the ancients and the moderns. I am not vain enough to suppose I can suggest any new ideas upon so trite a theme as education in general, but perhaps the manner of conducting the youth in America may be capable of some improvement. Our constitutions of civil government are not yet firmly established; our national character is not yet formed; and it is an object of vast magnitude that systems of education should be adopted and pursued which may not only diffuse a knowledge of the sciences but may implant in the minds of the American youth the principles of virtue and of liberty and inspire them with just and liberal Ideas of government and with an inviolable attachment to their own country.

Like Jefferson and Rush, Webster objected to Americans going to school in Europe.

A foreign education . . . gives young gentlemen of fortune a relish for manners and amusements which are not suited to this country, which, however, when introduced by this class of people will always become fashionable.

But a corruption of manners is not the sole objection to a foreign education: an attachment to a foreign government, or rather a wont of attachment to our own, is the natural effect

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77 Tyack, p. 86.

78 Noah Webster, *On the Education of Youth in America*, reproduced in Rudolph, p. 80.

79 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
of a residence abroad during the period of youth.\textsuperscript{80}

If our universities and schools are not so good as the English or Scotch, it is the business of our rulers to improve them.\textsuperscript{81}

It is time for the Americans to change their usual route and travel through a country which they never think of or think beneath their notice: I mean the United States.\textsuperscript{82}

Every American child, Webster urged, "should be acquainted with his own country."

He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen who have wrought a revolution in her favor.\textsuperscript{83}

Sharing the 18th century trust in the diffusion of knowledge, Webster hoped that better education would improve republican legislation. "It may be true that all men cannot be legislators, but the more generally knowledge is diffused among the substantial yeomanry, the more perfect will be the laws of a republican state."\textsuperscript{84}

Finally, Webster argued that the school played a crucial role in the moral development of the young. In doing so he reiterated the faith the Puritans had put in the school for this purpose and anticipated an argument that Mann and others would use in their efforts to win public support for the establishment of common schools.

\textsuperscript{80}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{81}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{82}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{83}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 64-65.
\textsuperscript{84}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 67.
The only practicable method to reform mankind is to begin with children, to banish, if possible, from their company every low-bred, drunken, immoral character. Virtue and vice will not grow together in a great degree, but they will grow where they are planted, and when one has taken root, it is not easily supplanted by the other. The great art of correcting mankind, therefore, consists in prepossessing the mind with good principles.

For this reason society requires that the education of youth should be watched with the most scrupulous attention. Education, in a great measure, forms the moral characters of men, and morals are the basis of government. Education should therefore be the first care of a legislature, not merely the institution of schools, but the furnishing of them with the best men for teachers. A good system of education should be the first article in the code of political regulations. . . . 85

There is a paradox in these plans of Rush and Webster which is not only apparent but which continues to haunt us to this day. In their anxiety to create a homogeneous and unified American population, the free American became the uniform republican. 86 This paradox emerged, for example, in Rush's desire that children should become "republican machines," and in his judgment that the best citizens are those who have not exercised their own free wills until one and twenty years of age. As Tyack indicates, Rush and Webster, thus "saw conformity as the price of liberty," and "encountered a conflict still inherent in the education of the citizens and still expressed in the injunction to teachers to train students to think critically but to be patriotic above all." 87

While the plans of Rush, Webster, and the others differed in details, they were all largely attempts at making the principles of 18th century liberalism the chief forces in the development of American

85 Ibid., p. 64.
86 Tyack, p. 84.
87 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
character and institutions. Man was capable of indefinite advancement, and education was the primary means for accelerating and guiding his advancement. Liberalism, humanitarianism, and belief in progress were thus identified with the destiny and promise of America. And although the plans were never implemented, they left their mark. The notion of uniform, systematic education serving republican purposes was to emerge again during the common school era when the society confronted new challenges.

In addition to the writings of Jefferson and the plans for a national system of education, the speeches, letters, and writings of other outstanding political leaders of the early national period provide additional evidence of the growing American faith in schools. In addition to Jefferson, all five of the other first six presidents agreed that the success of republican government depended on education. Washington, in his Farewell Address, urged his countrymen to "promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened." John Adams wrote that "education is more indispensable, and must be more general, under a free government than any other." James Madison was

88 Hansen, pp. 256-257.
89 Curti, p. 48.
90 Tyack, p. 92.
91 Quoted in USOE, p. 2.
92 Quoted in USOE, p. 9.
convinced that:

a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or tragedy, or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.\(^{93}\)

In a letter to the governor of Virginia, James Monroe offered the opinion that:

liberty cannot long be preserved unless the society in every district, in all its members, possesses that portion of useful knowledge which is necessary to qualify them to discharge with credit and effect, those great duties of citizens on which free government rests.\(^{94}\)

And John Quincy Adams, in his first address to Congress, said:

Among the first, perhaps the very first instrument for the improvement of the condition of men, is knowledge; and to the acquisition of much of the knowledge to the wants, the comforts, and enjoyments of human life, public institutions and seminaries of learning are essential.\(^{95}\)

Still other political leaders, as did the first Chief Justice, John Jay, considered "knowledge to be the soul of a republic . . . and nothing should be left undone to afford all ranks of people the means of obtaining a proper degree of it at a cheap and easy rate." DeWitt Clinton, the governor of New York, wrote:

The first duty of government, and the surest evidence of good government, is the encouragement of education. A general diffusion of knowledge is the precursor and protector of republican institutions, and in it we must confide as the conservative power that will watch our liberties and guard them against fraud, intrigue, corruption, and violence. I consider the system of our common schools as the palladium of our freedom, for no reasonable apprehension can be entertained of its

\(^{93}\)Quoted in USOE, p. 14.

\(^{94}\)Quoted in USOE, p. 16.

\(^{95}\)Quoted in USOE, p. 18.
subversion as long as the great body of the people are en-
lightened by education.96

It seems reasonable to conclude with Edwards and Richey that it was the
care of such prominent men that helped awaken what Cubberley called
the educational consciousness of the nation.97

Yet another indication of the increasing American faith in schools
was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 which declared: "Religion, morality,
and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of
mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."
According to Lee, Jefferson's Reports of the Committee [of the federal
Congress] on the Government of the Western Territory (March 1 and 22,
1784) contributed many of the essentials of the Ordinances of 1785 and
1787, and like Jefferson himself, these enactments further increased the
commitment of the democratic state to the public school.98 Reisner also
pointed out that the educational clause of the Ordinance of 1785 can be
traced directly to the influence of the New England group which was
interested in the settlement of the new territory. The generosity of
Congress was motivated in large part by the desire to make the conditions

96Quoted in USOE, p. 59. For additional expressions of faith
in education during the early national period, see this source.

97Edwards and Richey, p. 214.

98Jefferson, p. 8. Dallas Lore Sharp once noted that by 1900,
national land grants for education provided by the Northwest Ordinance
totaled 86,138,433 acres, "an area as great as Prussia, as great as the
six New England States with New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Dela-
ware added. This is an impressive figure and national in its applica-
tion; just as the utterance explaining it was impressive and national
in its bearing. Word and deed are ample proof of our national faith in
the public school. . . ." Dallas Lore Sharp, Education In A Democracy
of settlement in the new lands attractive to those who were leaving the advantages of schools behind. This provides additional evidence of the Puritan influence on the American faith in the schools.

Finally, there were the provisions for education in the state constitutions. The provision of the Massachusetts Constitution is representative:

Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the university at Cambridge, public schools, and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public institutions, by rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humor, and all social affections and generous sentiments among the people.

The constitutions of all seven states admitted to the Union between 1800 and 1820 contained similar statements.

Robert Middlekauf has ventured the judgment that the enormous confidence demonstrated by republicans in learning and human ability cannot be accounted for entirely. But certainly it seems reasonable

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100Quoted in Edwards and Richey, pp. 220-221.

101Ibid., p. 221.

102Middlekauf, p. 118.
to conclude that the Enlightenment belief of these early republicans that the diffusion of knowledge and reason would maintain and improve the democracy, their rejection of the Puritan view of man in favor of an optimistic view of man based on Lockean psychology and encouraged by American economic and political successes, and their inherited New England faith in schooling accounts for most of this confidence, if not all of it. In any event, most Americans in the early national period probably would have agreed with the writer in the Newport Mercury of July 1, 1794, who claimed that "from no savage shore, is that man to be produced, whom education would not improve."^103

One of the ways in which Americans have traditionally thought the schools could improve a man and foster social progress is by giving him the means to advance economically and socially. It is during the early national period also that schooling increasingly came to be regarded as a vehicle for social and economic advance.^104 Schools among the Puritans had not been designed to function as a path to social opportunity but rather to reinforce existing class patterns. But in the new nation class distinctions faded and a poor man might rise to the top. Education was one way to get there.

Society was more flexible than it had been. The rising middle class, whose values Benjamin Franklin so well symbolized, was associating learning with worldly success and demanding a more utilitarian type of knowledge and morals. Aware that there were others more privileged than they, the middle class and even the very poor nevertheless believed in the possibility of securing fame and wealth, and looked upon knowledge as a means to that end. . . . Advertisements indicate that by the

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^103 Quoted in Middlekauf, p. 119.

^104 Curti, p. 31.
eighteenth century evening schools—the "business colleges" of the colonial period—were teaching practical mathematics, bookkeeping, and such modern languages as foreign commerce required.105

Benjamin Franklin did indeed epitomize the values of the rising middle class. What Franklin stood for has been aptly described by I. Bernard Cohen.

In the American tradition Benjamin Franklin is the living symbol that America is the land of opportunity: he is the original boy who made good. The facts of his rise to wealth and to fame are more impressive than any story written by Horatio Alger and, being the stuff of life itself, more representative of the American character.106

His college was the printing shop and his university the newspaper; and so he symbolizes the aspirations of ordinary men, the tradition that in America high place does not depend on the material advantages in youth, including a college education.107

Franklin's education was for the most part informal and the preference he retained for it is clearly evident in his autobiography.108 Renowned scientist, philosopher, and statesman, holder of five honorary doctorates, Franklin was living proof that a man did not need a degree from Harvard to make good in the world. At the same time, however, Franklin founded schools and libraries and argued that men needed a good formal education to overcome life's trials, succeed in worldly affairs,

105 Ibid.
107 Ibid., p. 28.
108 Curti suggests that succeeding generations were so influenced by Franklin's story of his successful self-education that as a result they "were less ready to support free and universal schooling and a broad conception of the necessity and usefulness of formal education." Curti, p. 38.
and defend their rights.109

As a son of the Enlightenment, Franklin believed in Locke's psychology and maintained an optimistic view of man. Man had the ability to improve himself and society could progress through individual moral improvement. His "Plan for Moral Self-Improvement" and "Poor Richard says" aphorisms, his attempts to reform secondary education, and his desire to see free Negroes educated all attest to his concern for moral improvement.110 He made his position clearest in a letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson in 1750:

I think with you, that nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue. Wise and good men are, in my opinion, the strength of a state; much more so than riches or arms, which, under the management of ignorance and wickedness, often draw on destruction instead of providing for the safety of the people.111

For Franklin the advancement of learning was the basis of civic strength, moral betterment, and human progress. 112

While he shared and undoubtedly influenced the American hope for general progress through schooling, my primary interest in Franklin here is the changes he tried to bring about in secondary education in order to increase its power as a means for social and economic advancement. Most of his writings on formal education concerned the fact that the classical curriculum of the Latin grammar schools and the colleges did not meet the needs and aspirations of the middle class. If the schools were to increase

109 Cohen, p. 28.
110 Franklin, p. 16.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
rationality among men and supply "the succeeding age with Men qualified to serve the Publick with Honour to themselves and to their country,"

they would have to serve all men, rich and poor, and broaden their offerings so that a man could prepare for any trade or profession. His conception of what an education should be was frankly pragmatic and utilitarian and designed to serve the interests of an ambitious middle class. This attitude was reflected in his plan for an academy. Franklin wanted to give instruction in such studies as agriculture, mechanics, commerce and English equal status with instruction in classical studies.

The "college, Academy, and charitable School of Philadelphia" that finally resulted from Franklin's plan was a compromise between Franklin's scheme to teach the "most useful and ornamental subjects," and the aristocratic value placed on the classics by Franklin's co-founders. The English curriculum was quickly down-graded in favor of the classical curriculum despite Franklin's protests, and the academy finally became the University of Pennsylvania. But Franklin's desire for a more practical education was not to be denied. The idea of a wider and more useful course of study than that offered by the Latin school gained in popularity. The narrow classical curriculum was no longer in keeping with the thinking of increasingly worldly, commercial, and optimistic Americans. Furthermore, it smacked of social distinctions they abhorred. As a

113 Ibid., p. 127.
114 Curti, p. 35.
115 See Franklin's Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania and Idea of the English School in Franklin, pp. 126-150 and pp. 165-171 respectively.
result, Latin grammar schools declined in number and influence and academies began to flourish.

Franklin's emphasis on a utilitarian education and his role in starting the academy movement was not the only way in which he contributed to the American faith in education as a means for social mobility. A man's influence does not always stop where he wishes it to and Franklin was no exception. Misinterpretations of what Franklin said about education also reinforced the purely pragmatic value Americans increasingly placed on schooling. Having argued for a more useful education, Franklin's views were increasingly distorted throughout the 19th century to support a "cash value" vocationalism in American education.

Learning at every level came to be valued for its economic utility and its promise of material success. The familiar argument on behalf of education was that six years of schooling would make a man a good living, that twelve years would double it, and that an A.B. degree would make him rich. . . . The school became the way to wealth and little more, and Franklin was made the prophet and patron of a narrow pedagogical materialism. Ignored entirely in this view was the essential blend of humanitarian ideals and practical concerns that marked the greatness of Franklin's thought and work in the realm of education.117

Curti has remarked that Franklin's educational thought made him "a veritable John the Baptist for Jefferson." This is nowhere more clearly indicated than in Jefferson's Bill of 1779. Believing as he did in a natural aristocracy of virtue and talent, Jefferson's Bill called for schools being opened to both rich and poor, with poor children competing for a chance to go on to secondary school and a college education at William and Mary at public expense. In this way "twenty of the best

117 Ibid.
geniuses" would be "raked from the rubbish annually."\textsuperscript{118} As Curti notes, Jefferson's proposed system went much farther than Franklin's educational reforms toward overcoming class barriers in education.\textsuperscript{119} Jefferson thus stands as one of the contributors to the American faith in schooling as a means for social advancement.

But Jefferson, as Parrington remarked, had an aristocratic head on a plebian frame, and this manifested itself in his making a classical liberal arts education the screening device for the talented poor. As much as he distrusted aristocrats and put his faith in free farmers, he failed, as Franklin did not, to advocate instruction in such useful subjects as agriculture. His curriculum, writes Curti, "was scarcely designed to promote the economic well-being of the common people, on which depended in considerable measure their political influence, their practical intelligence, and their social position."\textsuperscript{120} But even more than this, as Mehl points out, Jefferson failed to see that:

an outgroup does not obtain power by dependence on an educational system mirroring the standard of the established group. It gains power by marshaling the political, ideational, and economic potential that gives the outgroup its distinctive characteristics. If a person is schooled in the language pattern of an elite group he adopts the values of that group. Instead of being able to defend his own point of view more clearly, he finds that he is "caught" in his schooling. . . . This point Jefferson did not grasp.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{118}Jefferson, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{119}Curti, pp. 40-41.
\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., p. 43.
In the 1960's Negro Americans would grasp this point. Locked in the ghetto and consistently failing the white man's curriculum, they would lose faith in the schools. But they would retain their faith in the possibilities of formal education as a means to social and economic advancement and call for a black curriculum taught with black techniques by black teachers in the hope that this would give them success in the schools and a chance to escape from the depths.

If the faith of Americans in schooling was becoming so widespread, why was there so little movement for the establishment of universal education at public expense? The answer, of course, is that the times were not yet ripe for massive public support of free schools. Schooling was still regarded as properly a private, religious, or philanthropic function. And, as always, while Americans were for many things, they were not for being heavily taxed. 122 As Edwards and Richey observe, any proposal to improve and extend the programs of the few, dreary public schools that did exist "would have been regarded, at least by the wealthy and politically powerful, as extravagance, a waste, a step toward national bankruptcy, a threat to the social order, and even perhaps a downright robbery which placed a penalty upon thrift and encouraged indolence." 123

The 1820 Indiana constitutional provision "to provide by law for a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation from township schools to a State university, wherein tuition" would be "gratis, and equally open to all," acknowledged public opinion by adding the qualifying clause, "as

122 Sizer, p. 21.

123 Edwards and Richey, p. 224.
soon as circumstance will permit."\textsuperscript{124}

Although there was not widespread support for public education at this point—Jefferson, for example, failed in his attempts to get Virginia to adopt his Bill—it would nevertheless be an error to conclude that this indicates that the American faith in education was not really as widespread or as deep as I have made it out to be in this chapter. Edwards and Richey seem to have made just this mistake when they write that despite the rhetoric, "in actual practice there was little evidence . . . that schools were generally considered as a necessary means of solving political, economic, and social problems of the day."\textsuperscript{125}

While support for public education was clearly lacking, the faith of Americans in schooling manifested itself in the widespread founding of schools more suited to an era of laissez-faire, private academies and colleges. Theodore Sizer, for example, has argued that the academy movement, which started at the beginning of the early national period and reached its high water mark in the 1850's, is attributable to:

- belief in equality and in the need of a republic for an educated citizenry, belief in practical education and in the perfectibility of man, local pride, the tendency to encourage private endeavor rather than continuing public responsibility. . . . Thousands of institutions were the result.\textsuperscript{126}

Frederick Rudolph also indicates that similar pressure led to the establishment of hundreds of private colleges in the period between the

\textsuperscript{124}Quoted in Edwards and Richey, p. 221.

\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., p. 224.

\textsuperscript{126}Sizer, p. 22. Middlekauf concurs with Sizer's judgment. The significance of academies, he writes, lays "in the illustration they once again provided of the widespread presumption that republicanism rested on an educated people." Middlekauf, p. 124.
Revolution and the Civil War.

College-founding in the nineteenth century was undertaken in the same spirit as canal-building, cotton ginning, farming, and gold-mining. In none of these activities did completely rational procedures prevail. All were touched by the American faith in tomorrow, in the unquestionable capacity of Americans to achieve a better world. In the founding of colleges, reason could not combat the romantic belief in endless progress. 127

The period of the American Enlightenment, then, stands as the primary source of the American faith in the schools as an agency of progress. By emphasizing the role the school could play in improving the values and behavior of children through the diffusion of knowledge and reason, it reinforced and extended the Puritan notion that the school could be an agency of social control and improvement. By stressing the notion that the school could inform children of their rights and responsibilities as American citizens, it convinced Americans that schools could assure the survival of democracy. And by creating educational institutions that served the needs and aspirations of the middle classes, it both expressed and fed the growing American belief that schools could be an avenue to social and economic advancement. Americans thus came to believe in education as a primary agency for promoting the welfare of the nation and individual. Progress was their faith, the school their church. And although the American Enlightenment failed in its attempts to establish a free and universal system of education, it provided the arguments that the next generation of reformers would use in the struggle for common schools.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAITH TRIUMPHS: THE COMMON SCHOOL ERA

Henry Steele Commager observes of the 19th century American that, "education was his religion, and to it he paid the tribute both of his money and his affection." Commager also points out that this American expected of education precisely what he expected of conventional religion, that it "be practical and pay dividends."\(^1\)

While educational reformers occasionally paid homage to the intrinsic values of education, they succeeded in promoting the idea of common schools on the basis that it would preserve democracy, provide opportunity for social and economic advancement, maintain social order, and in general be the chief instrument of American progress. Public education, as they portrayed it, provided something for everyone.

The common school movement was part of an era of reform. The period dating from Jackson's presidency to the beginning of the Civil War was filled with "infinite hope and infinite discontent," an era in which the whole of American society and its institutions came under scrutiny.\(^2\) "A restless, prying, conscientious criticism broke out in unexpected quarters," wrote Emerson. "Am I not too protected a person? Is


there not a wide disparity between the lot of me and the lot of thee, my poor brother, my poor sister?"³ "In the history of the world the doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour."⁴

We are to revise the whole of our social structure, the State, the school, religion, marriage, trade, science, and explore the foundations in our own nature; we are to see that the world not only fitted the former men, but fits us, and to clear ourselves of every usage which has not its roots in our mind.⁵

The belief in progress, the quest for equality, the resurrection of the Puritan zeal, all fortified by Transcendentalism, were the major factors accounting for this movement.⁶ Transcendentalism assumed the benevolence of God and nature and the divinity of man. Like the Enlightened, the transcendentalists believed that human departures from the natural order of things were the source of evil. Slavery, poverty, ignorance, all were unnatural. God and nature had intended that all men should have equal rights, opportunities, and treatment. Social evils would disappear if men and institutions were brought into harmony with the moral order.⁷

Inflamed by this philosophy, shocked by slavery, and angered by

⁴Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Man the Reformer, 1841," reproduced in Commager, The Era of Reform, p. 20.
⁵Ibid., p. 22.
⁷Commager, The Era of Reform, pp. 8-9.
the devastating toll acquisitive industrialism and growing urbanism exacted from the common man, humanitarians joined together in crusades against slavery, poverty, crime, slums, and intemperance, and labored long and hard for humane treatment of criminals and the insane, child labor laws, women's rights, and equal educational opportunity.

"The power which is at once spring and regulator in all efforts of reform," Emerson wrote, "is the conviction that there is an infinite worthiness in man, which appears at the call of worth, and that all particular reforms are the removing of some impediment." And indeed, for the reformers of this period, as for American reformers of all periods, the removing of impediments, the achievement of heaven on earth, was the mission of life. "What is a man born for," asked Emerson, "but to be a Reformer, a Remaker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good. . . .?"

The common school movement exemplified the spirit of reform. For many humanitarians the hope offered by Transcendentalism and the idea of progress was synonymous with education. Ekirch, in fact, has written that "no better example of the practical effect of the idea of progress" during this period can be found "than in the tremendous growth of American education." The American Enlightenment had done its work well, for


9 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Man the Reformer," pp. 22-23.

10 Ibid., p. 22.

by this period political leaders, intellectuals, humanitarians, all took
the necessity of education for granted. As Rena Vassar puts it:

Everything about the reform spirit—its faith in man, its
belief in progress and in the perfectibility of institutions,
its desire to elevate and dignify man—rested on the premise
that education was the most effective and efficient means of
improving American society and preserving and promoting demo­
cratic values and ideals.  

The drive for free, universal schooling attracted more support
than other reforms proposed by humanitarians for eradicating social evils
arising from industrial capitalism.

The problems it created, and which the hordes of immigrants
who came to build railroads, dig canals, and mine coal and
iron accentuated, were to be solved by education. Public
schools were to give every son of toil a chance to better him­
self, to withstand the temptation of the dram shop, the lure of
the brothel, the binding grip of the slum. Public schools were
to realize the dream of the Revolutionary fathers. The direct
action and militancy they had appealed to was now to give way
to the method of the schoolroom.  

Rush Welter argues that the republican theories of education formu­
lated in the early national period by men like Rush and Webster had a
narrow emphasis. They stressed the role education played in developing
American nationalism, but they hardly paid attention to the benefits an
individual might derive from education. Republican education was to be

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12 Vassar, p. 154. Curti also points out that in looking to public
education to remedy social ills, reformers were also following the example
of such outstanding European humanitarian educators as Pestalozzi and
Fellenberg who believed that schooling provided the solution to poverty.
Curti, p. 99.

13 Ibid., p. 155.

14 Curti, p. 99.

15 Ibid., p. 100.

16 Rush Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America
the mouthpiece of authority and the cornerstone of the political and social status quo. There was in the writing of Rush and Webster more concern with the education of the middle classes than there was with the masses. With the triumph of the common man, symbolized by the election of Jackson, these attitudes were challenged.

One group criticizing the inadequacy of republican educational achievements was the "working men" and "mechanics" of Pennsylvania, New York, and New England. "Their numbers were few and their direct political influence was slight," writes Welter, "but they first spelled out the educational perspective in which several generations of American democrats would see their society and their politics." The workingmen retained the republican opinion about the necessity of education. Indeed, they turned this argument on republicans to argue for mass education. But they were also concerned with schooling as the means for individual social and economic advancement. They believed that education would provide the economic and social status they desired.

Having won the right to vote, workingmen's organizations were more in the form of political parties than unions. "We are fast approaching," they announced, "those extremes of wealth and extravagance on the one hand, and ignorance, poverty, and wretchedness on the other, which will eventually terminate in those unnatural and oppressive distinctions which exist in the corrupt governments of the old world." The working class was ex-

17 Ibid., p. 38.
18 Ibid., p. 45.
19 Ibid.
cluded from the advantages of democracy "for want of knowledge and correct political information." With rhetoric reminiscent of Condorcet, the Working Men's Republican Political Association of Penn Township stated:

There appears to exist two distinct classes, the rich and the poor; the oppressor and the oppressed; those that live by their own labour, and they that live by the labour of others; the aristocratic, and the democratic; the despotic, and republican, who are in direct opposition to one another in their objects and pursuits; the one aspiring to dignified stations, and offices of power, the other seeking for an equality of state and advantage; the one apparently desirous and determined to keep the people in ignorance of their rights and privileges, that they may live in ease and opulence at the expense of the labour and industry of the others; the other showing that they are acquainted with the nature of their rights, and are determined to maintain and possess them; the one seeking to introduce and perpetuate among us invidious and artificial distinctions, unnatural and unjust inequalities, while the other party declares that all men are created free and equal, enjoying a perfect uniformity of rights and privileges, and that unnatural and artificial distinctions, independent of merit, are pernicious in their effects and deleterious in their consequences.

They attributed this state of affairs to "injudicious and partial legislators and to the indifference of our rulers to the general welfare."

Laws were made "for the benefit of the rich and the oppression of the poor." While capitalists had been favored by "charters for monopolizing companies," "the interests of the labourer" had "never been efficiently recognized by legislators."

It was apparent, as Carlton has written, that "the workers felt that they were suffering from grievous [sic] ills; and they were looking

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21 Quoted in Commons, p. 193.

22 Quoted in Commons, p. 193.
for a remedy."\textsuperscript{23} The remedy they decided on was schooling.

For years it had been impressed upon the public that education made for equality; that it was a prime essential in a free country. In both New York and Pennsylvania the governors’ messages had repeatedly heralded this opinion. Nicholas Biddle in 1810 had voiced this sentiment in an official report to the legislature of Pennsylvania. New England men, like James G. Carter, had been faithfully preaching the gospel of education. The trustees of the Public School Society, in a widely circulated report, had declared that "those who are without education must always be a degraded caste." Finally came men like Robert Dale Owen and Geo. H. Evans teaching a still more radical doctrine as to the efficacy and need of better educational facilities.

Suddenly the workers became enthused on the subject. It spread like wildfire. Practically every workingmen’s meeting from Albany to Wilmington and Charleston took up the cry. . . .\textsuperscript{24}

In 1829 the call for public education topped the list of measures advocated by the workingmen. The Working Men’s Republican Political Association of Southwark, Pennsylvania, declared that "real liberty and equality have no foundation but in universal and equal instruction," which "has been disregarded by the constituted guardians of the public prosperity."\textsuperscript{25}

The workingmen were not interested in existing public educational institutions, which were for the most part pauper schools. They desired a system of public education free of the stigma of charity. "We are well aware," said the Pennsylvania workingmen:

that large endowments have been made to colleges for the rich; and that some appropriations have been made in the establishment of Public Schools for the Poor; but to the latter of these institutions the mark of the beast has been affixed in the most


\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 87.

\textsuperscript{25}Quoted in Commons, p. 224.
repulsive characters, and that which should have been to us a matter of right is dealt out in the less palatable form of charity to the 'needy' and 'indigent'.

Sounding all the world like critics of the urban schools in the 1960's, they concluded:

In many of the schools under the supervision of the directors we find instead of experiencing the sympathetic feeling, or friendly regard of prudential teachers, the children are treated as the convicts of the work-house, having to submit to the tyrannical government of masters, who not having their own passions under control, and being withal filled with prejudice, and having imbibed from their employers a due proportion of their aristocratic feeling, are the last men on earth to whose guardianship the children of any generation ought to be entrusted.

Since the workingmen believed that political privilege was derived from educational privilege, they demanded equal educational opportunity for all. The report of a joint committee of Philadelphia workingmen appointed in September, 1829, "to ascertain the state of public instruction in Pennsylvania," argued their case.

The original element of despotism is a MONOPOLY OF TALENT, which consigns the multitude to comparative ignorance and secures the balance of knowledge on the side of the rich and the rulers. If then the healthy existence of a free government be, as the committee believes, rooted in the WILL of the American people, it follows as a necessary consequence, of a government based upon that will, that this monopoly should be broken up, and that the means of equal knowledge, (the only security for equal liberty) should be rendered, by legal provision, the common property of all classes.

It appears, therefore, to the committees that there can be no

26Quoted in Commons, p. 224.
27Quoted in Commons, p. 224.
28Welter, p. 47.
29This report is reproduced in Vassar, pp. 170-181.
real liberty without a wide diffusion of real intelligence; that the members of a republic, should all be alike instructed in the nature and character of their equal rights and duties, as human beings, and as citizens; and that education, instead of being limited as in our public poor schools, to a simple acquaintance with words and cyphers, should tend, as far as possible, to the production of a just disposition, virtuous habits, and a rational self governing character.\textsuperscript{31}

The faith of the workingmen in the powers of education stemmed from more than just their desire to break up political, business, and educational monopolies, however. They believed that the political authority of the people would be secured by education.\textsuperscript{32} The Philadelphia workingmen's report put it this way:

In a republic, the people constitute the government, and by wielding its powers in accordance with the dictates, either of their intelligence or their ignorance; of their judgment or their caprices, are the makers and rulers of their own good or evil destiny. They frame the laws and create the institutions, that promote their happiness or produce their destruction. If they be wise and intelligent, no laws but what are just and equal will receive their approbation, or be sustained by their suffrages. If they be ignorant and capricious, they will be deceived by mistake or designing rulers, into the support of laws that are unequal and unjust.\textsuperscript{33}

The workingmen viewed public education as having a twofold purpose. First, it was to make the victims of inequality aware of the wiles of the aristocracy and the dishonesty of politicians. Second, it was to guard established democratic principles against any political and social evils that might develop. Thus, it seemed that education promised to serve radical and conservative purposes at the same time.\textsuperscript{34}

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\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., pp. 174-175.
\textsuperscript{32}Welter, pp. 47-48.
\textsuperscript{33}Vassar, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{34}Welter, p. 48.
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It should be noted that the workingmen did not want political education for the masses in order to use governmental power. They were Jacksonians who agreed with Jefferson that the best government is the one that governs least. They thought, as had Condorcet, that education would give the masses the ability to protect themselves against the vices of politicians and men of privilege. They hoped that eventually government would stop interfering with the economy.

But while workingmen saw education in negative political terms, they still assumed it would play a positive role in the economic and social realms. They believed that schooling would diminish class differentiation, ensure an open society, give equal opportunity for advancement, and wipe out moral vice. The workingman's faith in the powers of schooling to accomplish all these things was revealed in *The Working Man's Manual* of one of their leaders, Stephen Simpson. Education, for Simpson, was the universal panacea for all of society's ills.

I hold it to be an indisputable maxim, that knowledge not only prevents crime, but increases industry—that it adds to the excellence of the human character in all its bearing—that it snatches men from low and grovelling vices, and gives them a fresh impulse to the acquisition of perfection of every kind. How seldom do we behold a tavern frequented by men of good education, and cultivated intellect? How seldom do we find men of educated minds, slaves to the beastly vice of intemperance?--Give education to the people, and you give them the spur to every virtue; the rein to every vice. Look into the cells of your prisons! By whom are they tenanted? By the ignorant, or the recipients of charity schools, who, perhaps, had better have been left among the unsophisticated mass of intellectual darkness.

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35 Ibid.
36 Vassar, p. 157. Vassar notes that Simpson's book presented all of the arguments for a system of free schools used during this period.
Simpson was concerned about how education could take root in a society filled with liquor stores and taverns where "a majority of that society are in the hourly habit of destroying the power of thought, and inhaling the steam of excitement?" He regarded this as a serious problem, but was sure that a conclusive solution was to be found in schooling.

Knowledge is the grand remedy of intemperance; for in proportion as we elevate men in the scale of existence, and give them reason to esteem and respect themselves, so do we reclaim them from all temptations of degrading vice, and ruinous crimes. A reading and intellectual people were never known to be sottish;—but those who are ignorant, or stupid, are forever wallowing in drunkenness and debauchery. Thus sobriety and political honesty, are the twin offspring of education. Make the people enlightened, and liberty will prove her own sentinel, virtue her own protector, truth her own champion.

Addressing himself to the gulf existing between the rich and the working class, Simpson argued:

Ignorance and inferiority of mind are the only causes of human degradation; except that of poverty, which is the general concomitant of ignorance—as ignorance is its invariable cause. . . . It is found, that where vigorous intellect bursts the bonds of its ignorance, in this contempt class, that it is immediately merged into the higher and cultivated class; and, notwithstanding the stigma of labour comes at length to excite respect. Thus the proof is afforded that it is the ignorance, not the occupation of the working people, that degrades them on the one hand, and empowers them on the other. Owing to this ignorance and degradation, it is, that the educated and enlightened, taking advantage of their contempt condition, have oppressed and bound them in the gutters of servile subjection. It is not ignorance that can make laws, organize governments, or administer justice. Education, therefore, is the key to government—it opens the path of power. . . . Educate those who toil—teach them to think; and they take the place of those who govern.

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38 Ibid., p. 186.
40 Ibid., pp. 190-191.
Simpson concluded:

It is to education, therefore, that we must mainly look for a redress of that perverted system of society, which dooms the producer to ignorance, to toil, and to penury, to moral degradation, physical want, and social barbarism. \[41\]

Knowledge is power, in respect to the procurement of equity to the great mass of the sons of labour. It is the light of intelligence that abashes despotism—it is the fire of intellect that dissolves and melts the chains that en thrall seven eighths of mankind to the caprice and luxury of the other few. \[42\]

For Simpson and the workingmen, then, schooling became a substitute for all other legislation and politics was reduced to education. As Welter concludes, "They defined democratic public policy in terms of anarchy with a schoolmaster." \[43\]

The extent to which early social agitators reduced politics to education is further indicated by the thought of radicals attached to the workingmen's movement. Seth Luther, a Boston labor leader, foresaw that the American working class would be degraded through monopoly and the absence of protective legislation, and predicted that New England factories would become as bad as those in England. \[44\] He bitterly complained that American workers were "ruined by the neglect of education, rendered miserable in the extreme, and incapable of self-government; and this by the grinding of the rich on the faces of the poor, through the operations of cotton and other machinery." \[45\] But instead of calling for

\[41\] Ibid., p. 193.
\[42\] Ibid., p. 194.
\[43\] Welter, p. 50.
\[44\] Ibid.
\[45\] Quoted in Curti, p. 89.
revolution as he was to do later in the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island, or at least appealing for social reforms, he chose to address New England workingmen "on the State of Education, and on the condition of the Producing Classes in Europe and America" and portrayed the neglect of education as the major sin of the "aristocracy."

Frances Wright, the Scotch feminist and radical critic of American society, expressed a similar attitude. She thought that the oppression of the American working classes by capitalists could only result in revolution. That revolution might take one of three forms. The working classes might be totally enslaved; the ruling classes might be the victims of a bloody overthrow; or the working classes might accomplish a revolution "through their legislatures." She considered the first form a remote possibility since she doubted that the masses would ever permit it. But she regarded the second form as totally undesirable. "Alas for the unsullied robe of American liberty, should this be so! . . . Oh, not thus--not thus be the victory won! May the means be as pure as the end!" She thus advocated the third form; "that mode which is alone worthy of a people who have assumed equal liberty for their motto, and declared their expressed will the law of the land." The first measure the people would have to achieve was "a plan of equal, universal, and republican education" for this alone would accomplish "the two objects we have in view--the relief of the present generation, and the improvement of the next." As for the first objective, "So long as the industrious classes remain burdened with the charge of their families--with their food, clothing,

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46Welter, p. 51.
education and fitting out in life, it is impossible for them to be relieved of their burdens." As for the second objective, since the whole of government resolved itself into education, "a rational education is the only road to knowledge, virtue, and happiness; a republican education the only road to equality; and a national education ... the only safeguard of youth, and the only bulwark of a free constitution." 47

But Wright was more radical than Seth Luther. Believing that the working classes had to be relieved of the burden of feeding and clothing their children as well as educating them, she advocated a system of state boarding schools attended by all children to insure mutual regard and respect between the classes. Joining Wright in advancing this proposal was her friend, Robert Dale Owen. He not only considered such schooling as "the only redeemer of our suffering country from the equal curses of chilling poverty and corrupting riches," 48 but he was also convinced that his father's utopian community at New Harmony had failed because of the anti-social habits its members had formed before joining. 49 He decided that the only way to prevent bad habits from forming in the first place was by a system of education that completely controlled the lives of children from the age of five. In a series of six essays in the Working Man's Advocate, Owen argued that such schools would "make but one class out of the many that now envy and despise each other; it will make American citizens what they once declared themselves, 47

48 Quoted in Carlton, p. 63.
49 Commons, p. 247.
If state schools are to be, as now in New England, common
day schools only, we do not perceive how either of these
requisitions are to be fulfilled. In republican schools,
there must be no temptation to the growth of aristocratical
prejudices. The pupils must learn to consider themselves as
fellow citizens, as equals. Respect ought not to be paid to
riches, or withheld from poverty. Yet, if the children from
these state schools are to go every evening, the one to his
wealthy parent's soft carpeted drawing room and the other to
its poor father's or widowed mother's comfortless cabin, will
they return the next day as friends and equals? He knows
little of human nature who thinks they will.51

The system of Public Education, then, which we consider
capable, and only capable, of regenerating this nation, and of
establishing practical virtue and republican equality among us,
is one which provides for all children at all times; receiving
them at the earliest age their parents chose to entrust them to
the national care, feeding, clothing, and educating them, until
the age of majority.

We propose that all the children so adopted should receive
the same food; should be dressed in the same simple clothing;
should experience the same kind treatment; should be taught
(until their professional education commences) the same bran­
ches; in a word, that nothing savoring of inequality, nothing
reminding them of the pride of riches or the contempt of poverty,
should be suffered to enter these republican safeguards of a
young nation of equals. We propose that the destitute widow's
child or the orphan boy should share the public care equally
with the heir to a princely estate; so that all may become not
in word but in deed and in feeling, free and equal.52

The controversy that ensued between the supporters and opponents
of Owen's plan wrecked the New York Workingmen's Party. While Owen's plan


51Karier observes that "to the present-day teachers, school ad­
ministrators, and social workers who labor so strenuously for some sem­
bliance of equality of educational opportunity in modern American urban
ghettos, the truth implicit in Owen's ... statement is self-evident. ... In
a way, Owen was prophetic, for the problem he clearly foresaw in 1830
became by mid-twentieth century, once reinforced by race prejudice, a
cancerous sore on the American body politic." Clarence J. Karier, Man,
Society, and Education (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman And Co., 1967),
p. 50.

found some support, the majority of workingmen were not interested in breaking up family life. Nor were they interested in a classless society. They valued education because they thought it would give them a chance to get what the rich had.\(^5\)

While the faith of the workingmen's parties was, as Curoe remarked, "almost fetichistic,"\(^5\) there were dissenters within the ranks who, while regarding public education as an essential reform, doubted the efficacy being assigned to it. Thomas Skidmore, the leader of the ousted agrarian wing of the New York Workingmen's Party, insisted that economic reform had to precede all other reforms. He considered "those political physicians . . . who . . . oppose, or attempt to postpone such enjoyment of their rights by the great mass of the people, until they shall receive . . . the benefit of education" as "ridiculously absurd."

If they be sincere in their belief that such education is so very indispensable as a previous step to this enjoyment, and that the

\(^{53}\) According to Harris, "the average workingman, with that arrivi-stre attitude which, from the beginning, seems to have been imbied with the American air, wanted for his offspring the fashionable 'classicist' education with all its rotund Latin tags, the same kind of education, indeed, that the rich and well born were getting in their academies and colleges; an outlook which was but another facet of labor's economic views. . . . In short, labor as a whole didn't want anything basically new or different; it wanted to share more fully in the advantages of existing commercial and industrial arrangements. It wanted for itself what the 'haves' possessed. It wanted its children to rise in the world. It wanted them to be farmers with a great deal of land; or even better, perhaps, it wanted them to be merchants, shipowners, lawyers, doctors, politicians, contractors, bankers, manufacturers, to wear high starched stockings, the period's equivalent of the white collar." Herbert Harris, American Labor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), pp. 26-27, quoted in Lawrence A. Cremin, The American Common School (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951), pp. 41-42.

people are not now sufficiently instructed, let me ask them how, under present circumstances, is it ever possible to give it? Is a family, where both parents and children are suffering daily, in their animal wants; where excessive toil is required to obtain the little they enjoy, where the unkind and the unfriendly passions, generated by such a wretched condition of things, reign with full sway; is such a family in a situation to receive instruction? Even if the children attend public institutions of education, as punctually as may be wished, where is that equality of rank and condition, as well between their parents as between themselves, which is so necessary to banish even from among children, those envious remarks on dress, &c. &c. which now render our public schools in a measure abortive? Political dreamers! Reformers, if ye prefer that I should call you so! Feed first the hungry; clothe first the naked, or ill-clad; provide comfortable homes for all . . . take care that the animal wants be supplied first; that even the apprehension of want be banished; and then will you have a good field and good subjects for education. Then will instruction be conveyed without obstacle; for the wants, the unsatisfied wants of the body will not interfere with it.

Horace Greeley, a friend of the labor movement, concurred. Education could not raise the worker's status, he argued, before there was a "vast and pervading" improvement in his physical and social condition.

I would not if I could conceal from you my conviction that, before Education can become what it should and must be, we must reform the Social Life whence it proceeds, whereunto it tends. To the child daily sent out from some rickety hovel or miserable garret to wrestle with Poverty and Misery for such knowledge as the teacher can impart, what true idea or purpose of Education is possible?

The influence of the workingmen's parties and trades' unions in the development of American public education is debated by educational historians. Carlton, for example, argued that it was the cities and the

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working classes, not the great educational statesmen like Mann, that were chiefly responsible for the development of tax-supported public education. More recent evidence indicates that the common school movement was supported primarily by the middle class rather than the working class. But one thing appears certain. Workingmen elaborated and reinforced all three elements of the American faith in the schools: they helped sell the idea that the common citizen must be educated in order to fulfill his responsibilities in a democracy; they were convinced that public education assured an open society and provided an avenue for social and economic advancement; and they argued that by keeping the morals of children straight from the beginning that schooling would improve society. In believing as they did, workingmen influenced the development of American education by convincing laboring parents that education was valuable to their children, and they helped stir the interest of legislatures and the general public in educational reform. And it was this kind of belief in schooling that finally resulted in political conservatives yielding to demands for tax-supported public education.

As long as the working classes lacked social, economic, and political power, conservative politicians and employers could simply flout their demands for free public education. But when the Jacksonian era gave the working classes access to power, conservatives were forced to respond to those demands. Mehl has described the situation in these

57 Carlton, pp. 30 ff.
58 See Cremin's foreword to Carlton, pp. xi-xvi.
59 Curoe, p. 33.
terms:

Faced with an accomplished fact of wider distribution of political power into the hands of people whose interests were at odds with their own, the established classes looked to the schools as the means for bringing these rude people into line. In a sense, the school was the Widow Douglas and the spirit of the Westerner, Huck Finn. In Mark Twain's account, Huck, wise in his own world, struggled against the moral, middle-class attempt of the Widow to "civilize" him.60

The only alternative of conservatives was to accept the two democratic commitments, popular liberty and public education.61 In doing this, however, they ironically, ended up making their own significant contribution to the American faith in the schools.

David Tyack has commented that the common school movement "was more remarkable for the consensus it secured than for the conflict it aroused."62 Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the remarkable thing about the movement was that everyone decided that a system of common schools would be to his own advantage. Workingmen believed that education would upset the status quo. Conservatives, on the other hand, became convinced that education would preserve the status quo. Educational reformers, trying to get common schools established, argued both ways, depending on whom they were soliciting. All three groups sensed the fact that schools can be used to help determine the character of the future social structure.63

61 Welter, p. 74.
63 Cremin, pp. 55-56.
In general, conservatives were anxious that the schools be used to secure and perfect the established social order. The schools were to stave off anarchy, despotism, crime, socialism and revolution while preserving property and wealth. A contributor to Godey's Lady's Book commented:

By diffusing the blessed light of knowledge, we shall not only rescue from bondage the oppressed, but we shall also avert a danger, than which a greater could not menace the earth with desolation—the danger of a revolution which shall annihilate every form of authority, and leave the mob, ignorant and deluded, to the utter licentiousness of their own fiery passions.

The conservative case for public education was advanced by several outstanding men of the period. The people of New England, Daniel Webster argued, had consented to taxation for public instruction because:

we regard it as a wise and liberal system of police, by which property, and life, and the peace of society are secured. . . . By general instruction, we seek, as far as possible, to purify the whole moral atmosphere; to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. . . . We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers or statesmen, but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of our system rests on that trust, that, by the diffusion of general knowledge and good and virtuous sentiments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow, but sure, undermining of licentiousness.

Thomas Cooper, the President of South Carolina College, wrote in 1829 that he was more inclined than ever to argue for the extension of

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64 As Ekirch observes, "On the whole the established classes . . . considered true progress to embrace a slow, gradual, and conservative advance without danger to the status quo." Ekirch, p. 193.


education:

... because if the ultra democratic doctrines now in vogue, of universal suffrage, and instructed representatives, are destined to prevail among us, I know no means of remedying their defects in practice, but to diffuse useful information as widely as possible.

... The people are too often ignorant of, and too often false and traitorous to their own best interests ... in many cases, their worst enemies are themselves. ... [This] evil is the result of ignorance, and the only cure for it, the extension of education and knowledge.67

Cooper also argued that schooling would dispel certain false notions about the distribution of wealth.

Education ... will tend ... to disabuse the working class of people, in respect of a notion that has crept into the minds of our mechanics, and gradually prevailing, that manual labour is the only source of wealth; that it is at present, very inadequately rewarded, owing to combinations of the rich against the poor; that mere mental labour is comparatively worthless; that property or wealth, ought not to be accumulated or transmitted; that to take interest on money lent, or profit on capital employed, is unjust. These are notions that tend strongly toward an equal division of property, and the right of the poor to plunder the rich. The mistaken and ignorant people who entertain these fallacies as truths, will learn, when they have the opportunity of learning, that the institution of political society originated in the protection of property; and this has ever continued to be its main end and design ... that labour is, of itself, nearly useless, and can never be brought into action but by means of wealth or capital; that the rich are as necessary to the poor, as the poor are to the rich. ...68

Robert Rantoul, Jr., however, was not quite so sure about the power of the wealthy to maintain their position.

Let any man, dwelling in the United States, consider this fact; that he is living in the midst of some millions of human beings, having strong bodies, strong wills, clear heads, and mighty passions; let him consider, further, that these millions suffer him to pursue his business, and sleep quietly at night, because


68 Ibid., pp. 333-334.
they see it to be their interest, or feel it to be their duty, to do so, but that, as soon as they cease to see their interest, or feel their duty, they may pull his house about his ears and hang him upon the nearest tree; and he will feel, to his heart's core, the necessity of wide-spread moral and religious education to his own safety.69

A Unitarian minister and humanitarian reformer, the Reverend Orville Dewey, was much concerned about the "popular ebullitions and revolutionary movements, more or less violent, in all the free countries throughout Christendom" especially "in our own country, combinations of the employed to procure higher wages, political working-men's parties, and fearful signs of resistance to the highest authority in the Federal Union."70 Dewey attributed these problems to an increase in schooling. "... Knowledge, spread as it never was before among mankind, is tending to the development of new, and higher and more generous ideas of liberty."71 While he welcomed this, there was still reason for concern.

There are, indeed, tendencies of this sort which ... must be controlled and regulated, or society cannot exist; tendencies to a radical reform, so radical indeed, that if not restrained it will tear up every social institution by the roots, and leave nothing behind but disorder, waste, and ruin.72

What was Dewey's solution to the problem? Education! The disease became the cure as well!

But we confess, without intending to say anything paradoxical, that we look to the very power which has given the impulse, to control it. That power, undoubtedly, is education, the diffusion

71Ibid.
72Ibid.
of knowledge, the spread, among nations, of juster information concerning the nature of human rights and the action of governments. Education, at present, is imperfect, and its result crude. The world, thus far, has only that 'little knowledge' which 'is a dangerous thing,' and deeper knowledge and reflection will 'sober it again.'

The Whig governor of Massachusetts, Edward Everett, during whose administration Horace Mann became Secretary to the then newly created State Board of Education, was frankly concerned about the growing power of the Western states. In a speech in behalf of Kenyon College before a group of Boston capitalists, he pointed out that in 1800 Massachusetts had twenty-one representatives in Congress while Ohio had only one. By 1833 Ohio's number had grown to nineteen while Massachusetts' had shrunk to twelve. "Nor will it stop here," he warned. "'They must increase,'" and we, in comparison 'must decrease.'" "The balance of the Country's fortune is in the West." "But," asked Everett, "has the power indeed departed from us; the efficient, ultimate power? That, sir, is, in a great measure, as we will." Pointing out that "the real government, in this Country, is that of opinion," Everett suggested to the entrepreneurs that one of the best ways they could influence public opinion would be by "building up institutions of education" that would propagate conservative economic doctrines.

Let no Bostonian capitalist, then, let no man who has a large stake in New England, and who is called upon to aid this Institution in the centre of Ohio [Kenyon], think that he is called upon to exercise his liberality at a distance, towards those in whom he has no concern. Sir, it is his own interest, he is called upon to promote. It is not their work, he is

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73 Ibid.
called upon to do; it is his own work. 75

Everett was sure that contributions toward the education of Westerners would not be in vain for "an intelligent class can scarce ever be, as a class, vicious; never, as a class, indolent." 76

This last remark of Everett's pointed to another benefit conservatives hoped to derive from schools. They not only looked to education to secure their wealth but to increase it as well by improving the productivity of the working classes. Francis Wayland, an economist and president of Brown University, expressed these hopes. "Intellectual cultivation tends to increase the industry of a people, in two ways," he wrote. First, "Intellectual cultivation excites a people to exertion. Ignorant men are indolent, because they know not the results that may be accomplished, nor the benefits that may be secured by industry." 77 An Indian, for example, may be expected to remain a savage. But,

... let him know that, by additional effort, he can provide himself with a blanket, and by a still additional effort, that he can exchange his bow and arrow for a rifle, and his wigwam for a comfortable house, and you present motives to additional labor. His industry will thus expand with the occasion. 78

Secondly, "Intellectual cultivation directs to a profitable end the industry which it has previously excited."

... In general, it is evident that, with a given amount of labor and of capital, production will be exactly in proportion

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75 Ibid., p. 170.
76 Ibid., p. 96.
78 Ibid., pp. 132-133.
to the knowledge which the operator has of the laws which govern that department of production in which he labors, and to the degree in which his labor conforms to his knowledge. If, then, labor will be in proportion to the benefits which it confers; and if, by knowledge, these benefits are increased, we see how manifestly labor must be stimulated by intellectual cultivation. Thus we see how it is, that an intelligent people is always industrious, and an ignorant people always indolent. Hence, one of the surest means of banishing indolence, is to banish ignorance from a country. 79

Educators who were leading the fight for the common school did little to discourage these expectations. In fact, they increased the level of expectation. These educational statesmen faced a great many conservative members of the power structure who had to be convinced that the common school was of value to the entire community whether or not all members availed themselves of its services. They argued that the common school would stave off the Jacksonian revolution the conservatives feared and provide the peace and prosperity the conservatives desired. They therefore reinforced arguments already being advanced by many conservatives.

But the educational reformers also faced opposition from the lower classes. Not all of them valued education the way the workingmen did. Many of those living on the frontier either harbored a suspicion of book learning or simply saw no need for it. Others were reluctant to support institutions that only the upper classes had the time to attend or taught views that were inimical to their interests. To this group the reformers preached the gospel of social mobility, promising that the common school would be the primary means by which the lower classes could achieve social and economic advancement.

In their attempts to win the support of the propertied interests, 79Ibid., pp. 133-134.
educational reformers followed the line of reasoning employed by James G. Carter.

How would the value of property be impaired, and at how dear a rate would the rich man purchase, or save a few dollars, by suffering an ignorant and naturally jealous populace to grow up around him? A populace equally impatient of the influence and authority, which property naturally confers, and rebellious against the salutary restraints of the laws. 80

The social thought of Carter and other American educators was profoundly influenced by the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. They firmly believed that the French Revolution could have been prevented if the masses had been educated. Furthermore, the rash of lawlessness and mob violence that occurred in the 1830's--the Dorr War, the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic riots in the East, the anti-rent and abolition riots--was interpreted by educators as the sign of a coming revolution which could be prevented only by education. 81 One lecturer, addressing the American Institute of Instruction, argued that revolution could not result in permanent and beneficial social changes because men who have become accustomed to one type of society could not cope with a totally different kind of society. He concluded, therefore, that the "improvement of education has come to be regarded by many as the first certain and safe step to all radical and permanent improvements in the condition of men." 82

Of special concern to capitalists at this time was the increasing militancy of labor. The response of educators to the capitalists was

81 Curti, p. 81.
82 Quoted in Curti, p. 81.
characterized by a "what else did you expect" attitude. F. A. Packard, a leader in the Sunday School movement and other educational concerns, argued that labor problems resulted from neglect of the education of laborers' sons by the rich.

And then, forsooth, when these same boys come up in the ranks of apprentices and journeymen, without the intelligence or moral restraint which a good education would have supplied, and are found at the head of mobs, and strikes, and trades' unions; speechmakers at riotous assemblies, and ringleaders of agrarian and atheistical clubs; when war is made upon the peace and order of communities, and the law, with all its forms, and sanctions, and ministers, is set aside; and especially when the hand of their lawless violence is laid on the mansions, and luxuries and treasurehouses of the rich; the arm of power must be raised and held up by military force; the police dockets must be crowded, and, in the direct and remote influence of such a state of things, our prisons and penitentiaries will overflow, and the public purse be emptied for the support of their degraded and miserable tenants.

All the children in our land deserve to be well and reasonably educated—they have a right to expect this at the hands of the governments under which they live, if they are to be held responsible for the discharge of the duties of citizenship. No man can escape from responsibility in this matter. Under such institutions as ours, we stand too near to be independent of each other, or to be indifferent to each other's interests. Not a child can come to years of maturity, uneducated, without harm to us— to you— to the whole republic.

The ability of education to control society was argued by Alonzo Potter in a popular teacher's manual of the period, The School and The Schoolmaster.

Though its ostensible object should only be to improve the intellect, it will still be apt to operate benignly on the moral sentiments and habits, and will tend to make its subjects better men and better citizens. By its discipline it contributes, insensibly, to generate a spirit of subordination to lawful authority, a power of self-control, and a habit of postponing present

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83 Frederick A. Packard, Thoughts On The Conditions And Prospects Of Popular Education In The United States (No place, no date), p. 31.

84 Ibid., p. 32.
indulgence to a greater future good; and, finally, by the knowledge which it communicates, it enlarges a child's conceptions of his true interests, and teaches him that forecast, self-restraint, and a correct moral deportment are indispensable prerequisites to success in life.\(^5\)

Like other educators, Potter also claimed that education would increase the prosperity of both rich and poor.

\[\ldots\] Education does contribute most powerfully to render men more efficient both as producers and preservers of property. If properly conducted, it renders them, in the first place, more trustworthy, and thus multiplies the ways, in which they can be employed with profit to themselves, and with advantage to the community. In the second place, a labourer, whose mind has been disciplined by culture, works more steadily and cheerfully, and therefore, more productively, than one who, when a child, was left to grovel in ignorance and idleness. In the third place, such a labourer, having both knowledge and habitual activity of mind, is fruitful in expedients to render his exertions more diversified and profitable.\(^6\)

As proof for these principles, Potter pointed to England which "has neglected the education of his labouring population, and the consequence is, that the land swarms with paupers and vagabonds. \[\ldots\]" New England, on the other hand, "with her free schools and her universal education," moved "steadily and rapidly forward in wealth and population, in spite of a sterile soil and an ungenial climate, and while destitute of all natural channels for inland commerce" thus indicating that "education is unspeakably more important than a luxuriant soil, fine climate, or noble rivers."\(^7\)

Potter was thus led to conclude not only that "education affords


\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 117.

\(^{7}\) Ibid., pp. 116-117.
the most certain and effectual means of developing the industrial resources of a country, and promoting its growth and prosperity" but also that "general education among a people forms the best preventive of pauperism." 88

... Nearly nine tenths of all pauperism actually existing in any country may be traced directly to moral causes, such as improvidence, idleness, intemperance, and a want of moderate energy and enterprise. Now it is hardly necessary to add, that education, if it be imparted to all the rising generation, and be pervaded, also, by the right spirit, will remove these fruitful sources of indigence. It will make the young provident, industrious, temperate, and frugal; and with such virtues, aided by intelligence, they can hardly fail, in after life, to gain a comfortable support for themselves and their families. 89

For Potter, then, as for the workingmen, conservatives, and other schoolmen, education was the primary means of social control and social progress.

Indeed, so powerful is education as a means of national improvement, that, to borrow the language of a late writer... "if the different countries of the world be arranged according to the state of education, they will also be found to be arranged, with few exceptions, according to wealth, morals, and general happiness... at the same time, the condition of the people, and the extent of crime and violence among them, follow a like order." 90

While educators of the common school era elaborated and expanded the faith in schools of the early republicans, they emphasized different means for achieving these objectives. The American Enlightened had assumed that education could contribute to social progress by developing the intelligence of citizens. But for the educators of this period that

88 Ibid., p. 120.
89 Ibid., p. 123.
90 Ibid., pp. 133-134.
could never be sufficient. American citizens had to be virtuous as well as intelligent. The reform era of which they were a part had the character of a moral crusade, perhaps even a religious crusade. Its leadership was provided by clergymen such as Emerson, Channing, and Parker, and by their disciples, Bronson Alcott, Dorothea Dix and Horace Mann. Some of the leading educational reformers were clergymen, the Reverend Calvin Stowe and Bishop Alonzo Potter, for example. This influence of Christian theology made common school reformers acutely aware of the fact that while knowledge was power, it could be used for evil as well as good. They therefore emphasized moral education and continually inveighed against mere intellectual training. Charles Brooks manifested this attitude when he pointed out that if an intelligent boy's mind was trained but not his character, he might easily grow up to become the leader of an agrarian faction or mob.

Curti has described how educators expected moral education to accomplish their objectives.

If there was trafficking in votes, then teach children to be honest, and such trafficking would cease. Thus ran the argument of educational leaders in those days. If there was political corruption, teach them honor, and political corruption would vanish. If there was danger of demagogism, eliminate the prevalent practice of emulation from the schoolroom. It was urged that appeals to emulation, an incentive much used in Lancastrian schools, kindled a passion for honor and power, which was seldom repressed and which endangered the very foundations of republican government. Rid the schoolroom of emulation, it was said, and there would be few to resort to questionable maneuvers in the later race for popularity, few to elevate themselves by bringing

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91 Commager, The Era of Reform, p. 9.
92 Curti, p. 59.
93 Ibid.
about the downfall of others. Above all, children must be taught to entertain the deepest horror of fraud and falsehood; they must be persuaded to resolve that, through their life, their faith, when once plighted, whether in public or private contracts, whether in affairs of a personal or political nature, must be held sacred and irrevocable.94

While common school educators rejected the 18th century reliance on reason, they clearly retained its faith in the individual and in the malleability of human nature.

The faith of Americans in schools during these years before the Civil War achieved its most enthusiastic and perhaps also its most naive expression in Horace Mann. Mann was one of the foremost priests of progress in American history, a role which he assumed early in life. His valedictory address at Brown University concerned the "Progressive Character of the Human Race," the subject which, according to his wife, was "his favorite theme through life, the basis of all his action in education and politics."95 On the day he accepted the office of executive secretary to the Massachusetts state board of education, he wrote in his diary:

Henceforth so long as I hold this office I devote myself to the supremest welfare of mankind upon earth . . . I have faith in the improvability of the race—in their accelerating improvability. This effort may do, apparently, but little. But mere beginning in a good cause is never little. If we can get this vast wheel into any perceptible motion, we shall have accomplished much.96

And much did he believe education could accomplish. For Horace Mann,

94 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
96 Quoted in Ekirch, pp. 205-206.
schooling was the basic method of reform and the only sure means of progress.

... In universal education, every "follower of God and friend of human kind" will find the only sure means of carrying forward that particular reform to which he is devoted. In whatever department of philanthropy he may be engaged, he will find that department to be only a segment of the great circle of beneficence, of which universal education is centre and circumference; and that it is only when these segments are fitly joined together that the wheel of progress can move harmoniously and resistlessly onward.97

As Cremin observes:

Here, then was a total faith in the beneficent power of education to shape the future of the young republic—a kind of nineteenth-century version of ancient Athenian paideia. Little wonder that it could fire the optimistic American imagination to the extent that it did.98

Mann accepted the Jeffersonian propositions about the importance of public education to republican government. They are repeatedly voiced throughout his twelve reports. "It may be an easy thing to make a Republic," he wrote, "but it is a very laborious thing to make Republicans; and woe to the republic that rests upon no better foundations than ignorance, selfishness and passion!"99 But Mann also recognized that by the 1840's this kind of proposition had gone stale.

It is so trite, indeed, as to have lost much of its force by familiarity. Almost all the champions of education seize upon this argument first of all, because it is so simple as to be understood by the ignorant, and so strong as to convince the skeptical. Nothing would be easier than ... to demonstrate ... that a republican form of government, without intelligence in the people, must be, on a vast scale, what a mad-house, without

97 Mann, Vol. IV, p. 220.
Of far more importance and interest, then, were the contributions he made to the development of the other two elements of the American faith in the schools as an agency of progress.

Mann's contribution to the American faith in education as a means of social and economic advancement was especially significant. It was Mann who popularized the idea of the money value of education. This was obviously not a new idea, since it had been argued for by the workingmen and some conservatives before Mann. But Mann provided the evidence that supported it.\textsuperscript{101} It was evidence that he needed because many closed-purse capitalists were still reluctant to support his crusade for common schools. Moreover, by the time he assumed his office, even the workingmen had lost their burning interest in education. The depression of 1837 had hit and they had lost many of the hopes harbored while Jackson was President. They now were the hardest of all to convince of the value of education. Faced with the reality that they were destined always to be mechanics and hired men, the workingmen abandoned hope and let their associations collapse. They also abandoned their demands for public education since the schools seemed interested only in keeping workers' children in their place.\textsuperscript{102}

In preparation for his fifth report to the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1841, Mann sent a letter to several prominent businessmen

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., p. 269.

\textsuperscript{101}Curti, p. 113.

which asked two basic questions: First, were educated workers more productive? Second, did educated workers make more money? The replies Mann received delighted him. The response from one James K. Mills was representative. It was his opinion:

1.--That the rudiments of a common-school education are essential to the attainment of skill and expertness as laborers, or to consideration and respect in the civil and social relations of life.

2.--That very few, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a common-school education, ever rise above the lowest class of operatives; and that the labor of this class, when it is employed in manufacturing operations, which require even a very moderate degree of manual or mental dexterity, is unproductive.

3.--That a large majority of the overseers, and others employed in situations which require a high degree of skill, in particular branches, which oftentimes require a good general knowledge of business, and always an unexceptionable moral character, have made their way up from the condition of common laborers with no other advantage over a large proportion of those they have left behind than that derived from a better education.103

On the basis of such responses Mann could only conclude that the answer to his first question was yes.

... The result of the investigation is a most astonishing superiority, in productive power, on the part of the educated over the uneducated laborer. The hand is found to be another hand when guided by an intelligent mind. Processes are performed, not only more rapidly, but better, when faculties which have been exercised in early life furnish their assistance.104

The answer to the second question was yes too.

Individuals who, without the aid of knowledge, would have been condemned to perpetual inferiority of condition, and subjected to all the evils of want and poverty, rise to competence and independence by the uplifting power of education. In great establishments, and among large bodies of laboring men ... those who have been blessed with a good common-school education rise to a higher and a higher point in the kinds of labor per-


104Ibid., p. 96.
formed, and also in the rate of wages paid, while the ignorant sink like dregs, and are always found at the bottom. 105

Having demonstrated, he believed, that education enabled men to escape poverty and achieve independence, Mann denied "the European theory" that "men are divided into classes,--some to toil and earn, others to seize and enjoy," and argued instead for "the Massachusetts theory," that "all are to have an equal chance for earning, and equal security in the enjoyment of what they earn." 106 He was concerned, as the workingmen had been, about the growing gulf between rich and poor and the threat of industrial feudalism in America. But he had so much faith in the powers of schooling that he looked not to political and economic reform to improve the situation but to education.

Now, surely nothing but universal education can counterwork this tendency to the domination of capital and the servility of labor. If one class possesses all the wealth and the education, while the residue of society is ignorant and poor, it matters not by what name the relation between them may be called; the latter, in fact and in truth, will be the servile dependents and subjects of the former. But, if education be equably diffused, it will draw property after it by the strongest of all attractions; for such a thing never did happen, and never can happen, as that an intelligent and practical body of men should be permanently poor. Property and labor in different classes are essentially antagonistic; but property and labor in the same class are essentially fraternal.

Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin,

105 Ibid., p. 97. According to Curti, the report was so enthusiastically received that 18,000 copies of it were circulated in New York alone. It was translated into German, and it was cited countless times in educational periodicals and the speeches of educational spokesmen. Curti also notes that several years later John D. Philbrick claimed that the report had "probably done more than all other publications written within the past twenty-five years to convince capitalists of the value of elementary instruction as a means of increasing the value of labor." Curti, p. 113.

is the great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance-wheel of the social machinery. . . . It gives each man the independence and the means, by which he can resist the selfishness of other men. It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility towards the rich; it prevents being poor.\textsuperscript{107} (Italics mine.)

Mann's diagnosis of and cure for contemporary social evils turned out to be the same ones the workingmen had first advanced.\textsuperscript{108}

While education might be the basic means for maintaining democracy and providing opportunity, neither of these was for Mann the ultimate purpose of education. The purpose was social progress, the achievement of a peaceful and humane world. Mann looked to the day when men might enjoy heaven on earth. He looked not to the mere diffusion of knowledge to achieve this goal but to moral education. Intellectual education and republican government could never be enough to stave off human wickedness. Knowledge could just as easily be used for evil as well as good. Men without moral restraint would always circumvent laws. "In fine, all means and laws designed to repress injustice and crime, give occasion to new injustice and crime. For every lock that is made, a false key is made to pick it; and for every Paradise that is created, there is a Satan who would scale its walls. . . ."\textsuperscript{109} Despite the fact that moral men have exposed social vices, satirists have chastised them, dramatists have ridiculed them, and ministers have inveighed against them, "still they continue to exist. . . . Like a weltering flood, do immoralities and crime break over all moral barriers, destroying and profaning the securi-

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., pp. 250-251.

\textsuperscript{108}Welter, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{109}Mann, Works, Vol. IV, p. 284.
ties and the sanctities of life."\textsuperscript{110}

In a passage that betrays the sadness of a reformer heartbroken over the condition of mankind, Mann recalled the many and varied solutions to "this greatest problem."

Mankind has tried despotism, monarchies, and republican forms of government. They have tried the extremes of anarchy and aristocracy. They have tried Draconian codes of law; and, for the lightest offences, have extinguished the life of the offender. They have established theological standards... and then they have imprisoned, burnt, massacred, not individuals only, but whole communities at a time, for not bowing down to idols which ecclesiastical authority had set up... and yet the great ocean of vice and crime overleaps every embankment, pours down upon our heads, saps the foundations under our feet, and sweeps away the securities of social order, of property, liberty, and life.\textsuperscript{111}

The experiments have been numerous and disastrous. They have given rise to men who "would abandon the world as a total;--who mock at the idea of its having a benevolent or even an intelligent Author or Governor; and who, therefore, would give over to the dominion of chance, or to that of their own licentious passions..."\textsuperscript{112}

Despite his own sadness over men's foolishness and cruelty, Mann refused to be one of these "doubters, disbelievers, or despairers," for "in human progress, it may still be said, there is one experiment which has never been tried."

It is an experiment which, even before its inception, offers the highest authority for its ultimate success. Its formula is intelligible to all; and it is as legible as though written in starry letters on an azure sky. It is expressed in these few and simple words:--"Train up a child in the way he should

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., p. 286.
\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., pp. 286-287.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., p. 287.
go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."\textsuperscript{113}

Mann was aware that the basic problem facing mankind is not ignorance but human nature. To simply diffuse knowledge was to leave how that knowledge was used to chance. To be reasonably hopeful that a child would turn out to be a decent human being one had to inculcate a sense of right. Mann was confident of public education's ability to do this.

There were three basic reasons for his confidence. He offered two of them in his Twelfth Report.

In the first place, there is a universality in its operation, which can be affirmed of no other institution whatever. If administered in the spirit of justice and conciliation, all the rising generation may be brought within the circle of its reformatory and elevating influences. And in the second place, the materials upon which it operates are so pliant and ductile as to be susceptible of assuming a greater variety of forms than any other earthly work of the Creator.\textsuperscript{114}

The third reason for Mann's confidence lay in his acceptance of phrenology. This pseudo-science, popular in the 19th century, held that men were born with propensities for good and evil. However, if the propensities for evil went uncultivated, they would decrease in power while cultivation of the propensities for good would increase their power.\textsuperscript{115}

Thus human nature could be modified. As Cremin has exclaimed, "What a wonderful psychology for a social reformer! It promised that education could really build the good society."\textsuperscript{116}

For Mann, then, men had yet to experiment with one other solution

\textsuperscript{113}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114}Ibid., pp. 232-233.
\textsuperscript{115}Curti, pp. 110-111.
\textsuperscript{116}Mann, The Republic and The School, p. 13.
for the problem of evil, a solution which held infinitely greater promise of success.

Education has never yet been brought to bear with one-hundredth part of its potential force upon the natures of children, and, through them, upon the character of men and of the race. In all the attempts to reform mankind which have hitherto been made, whether by changing the frame of government, by aggravating or softening the severity of the penal code, or by substituting a government-created for a God-created religion,—in all these attempts, the infantile and youthful mind, its amenability to influences, and the enduring and self-operating character of the influences it receives, have been almost wholly unrecognized. Here, then is a new agency, whose powers are but just beginning to be understood, and whose mighty energies hitherto have been but feebly invoked; and yet, from our experience, limited and imperfect as it is, we do know, that, far beyond any other earthly instrumentality, it is comprehensive and decisive.117

Mann clearly manifested the forces that combined to give rise to the messianic tradition among American educators—belief in the malleability of human nature, the Puritan zeal for a moral order, and, above all, belief in the idea of progress.

If the 18th century rationalists had erred in ascribing too much power to reason, Mann erred in ascribing too much power to moral education.118 He was unable to see that forces outside the school generally exert more influence on the development of children than does the school, and that moral education can therefore enjoy only limited results. Furthermore, as Curti notes, Mann's opposition to the discussion of controversial questions in the classroom, as well as his insistence that children be indoctrinated against specific social evils such as the use of violence to effect social change, robbed moral instruction of any vitality it might

118Curti, p. 125.
have had in its struggle to overcome social ills.  

Despite these criticisms, Howard Mumford Jones is correct when he writes that Mann's strength and greatness rested in an undeniable ethical appeal. While for others—Barnard, Parker, or Dewey—public education was a matter of statesmanship, psychology, or philosophy, for Mann schooling was always a moral issue. He realized that an education that fails to raise questions about the proper use of knowledge and the proper modes of human behavior is as likely to produce devils as it is good men.

Mann's faith in education reflected the extraordinary faith of most Americans in schooling during this period. It seemed reasonable at the time to believe that the vast amount of open Western lands provided an endless source of opportunity, especially if the opportunity for free education was available. American faith in the schools was encouraged also by a strong belief in a philosophy of individualism which grew out of the laissez faire notions of the Enlightenment and the secularization of Puritan values. Individualism held that the existing social order provided sufficient opportunities to enable any man, regardless of his present

119 Ibid., pp. 125-126.


121 There were important exceptions, of course. Many religious leaders regarded secular public schools as morally and religiously dangerous; many statesmen still looked to government as the most effective agent of public good; some political agitators did not regard education as a panacea and advocated radical social measures; and in the South, the argument for slavery made public education a positive evil. For these dissenting views, see Welter, pp. 124-137.

122 Curti, p. 124.
condition, to better himself if he were industrious and frugal and respected property, law, and God. Finally, as Mann argued, mass education had not been tried, and it had yet to prove or disprove that it could secure the republic, provide opportunity for all, or wipe out crime, poverty, and the abuses of capitalism.

But the intense faith of 19th century Americans in the schools blinded them to social and economic realities, even as it has continued to blind 20th century Americans. They could not see that the social and economic evils they abhorred were inherent in a system of unregulated capitalism and not due simply to the rich's monopoly on education or the ignorance and moral laxity of the poor. Only radical and direct political and economic reform could have overcome those ills. They also failed to perceive that the poor lacked the social and economic resources to benefit from schooling, and that no matter how industrious and temperate the poor might be they had little chance of making it. Instead, as in the 1960's, the comfortable of the land were shocked when the poor rioted or demonstrated, and they were more concerned about restoring law and order and giving the poor an education that would teach them to respect and appreciate their betters than they were about rectifying the conditions that had brought on the disturbances.

Militant labor leaders and utopian socialists like Thomas Skidmore were among the few who realized that public schools alone could not effect an equitable distribution of wealth or opportunity without prior social

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123 Ibid., p. 153.
124 Ibid., p. 200.
and economic reform. But few in the land listened to them. Americans, by and large, had faith in the idea of progress, and they believed in public education as the primary means for achieving a middle-class utopia "in which morality and religion would be respected; in which every citizen would be law-abiding, orderly, industrious, frugal; in which there would be no crime and no pauperism; in which property and life would be secure."^126

125^Ibid., p. 198.
126^Ibid., p. 197.
CHAPTER V

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHED FAITH:
THE CIVIL WAR TO 1957

Americans, from the Revolution to the Civil War, were confident that progress was inevitable. The nation had, in fact, made great strides and there seemed little reason to doubt that improvement would continue. The fervent belief in what George Bancroft described as "the necessity, the reality, and the promise of progress," was based not only on Enlightenment doctrines interpreted in the light of American experience but on several decades of territorial expansion, growing wealth and expanding national confidence. As Russel Nye has said:

What happened in America since Yorktown furnished it with convincing proof that there was such a thing as progress, as the Enlightenment promised, and that it was swift and decisive in its American manifestations. If any portion of the world had the right to assume the reality of progress, Americans believed, they did.

With America at present bogged down in an Asian land war and brutalized by assassinations, riots, and racial divisions at home, it is easy to despair and believe that the 1970's can bring only chaos and darkness. Indeed, as Time magazine has noted, "there is a vague anxiety that the machine of the 20th century is beginning to run out of control."

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2Ibid.

But Americans have been through dark periods before in their history and each time they have emerged as optimistic as before.

One of these dark periods was the Civil War, which provided the first real challenge to the American faith in progress. Americans found it difficult to be optimistic during and after a costly war amongst themselves. Yet many succeeded in remaining so. While battles were still raging, a Massachusetts teacher declared, "We write it down as a part of our moral, social, and political creed that the world is wiser and better than it ever was before, and that it will be wiser and better a hundred years hence than it is now." After the war was over it seemed that American civilization had made two great advances—slavery had been abolished and the Union had been preserved. It was not too long before the basic optimism of Americans had re-emerged and Charles Eliot Norton could write:

I believe that we have really made an advance in civilization, that the principles on which our political and social order rest are in harmony with the laws of the universe, that we have set up an ideal which may never be perfectly attained but which is of such a nature that the mere effort to attain it makes progress in genuine happiness more certain. . . . We are getting rid of old world things and becoming accustomed to new. We are forming new creeds, new judgments, new manners; we are becoming a new race of men.

As the 19th century came to an end, the American faith in progress "amounted almost to cocksureness."
Boyd C. Shafer, writing on "The American Heritage of Hope" from 1865 to 1940, identified five "hopeful ways to the glorious future" that Americans believed in during this period: education, the cultural contributions of immigrants, social Christianity, science, and economic reform. Whereas men in the period from the Jacksonian era to the Civil War considered schooling the best guarantee of progress, Shafer judged that after the Civil War Americans placed the most emphasis on economic reform as a way to the glorious future. But as will become evident, they continued to rely heavily on education.

Late 19th century faith in the schools as a means toward progress stemmed in large part from American interpretations of Charles Darwin and Auguste Comte. The Darwinian theory of evolution seemed at first to present a challenge to progress. The notion of the "survival of the fittest" seemed harsh and inhumane, retrogressive rather than progressive. Yet Americans somehow managed to transform a pessimistic doctrine into an optimistic one. Social Darwinists argued that while the failure of the unfit to survive might in the short run seem cruel, in the long run it led to the improvement of both the individual and society. Americans were cheered by Herbert Spencer's assurance that "progress is not an accident, but a necessity. What we call evil and immorality must dis-


\[8\]Ibid.
appear. It is certain that man must become perfect."9

The confidence inspired among American social thinkers by Darwin was reinforced by the social thought of the French philosopher, Auguste Comte. Comte shared with Condorcet a belief in the progress of history but criticized Condorcet for not attempting to discern the "true laws" of that progress and for making history "a perpetual miracle," "an effect without a cause."10 Assuming that the laws of progress were discoverable, Comte argued that it was possible to develop a "social science." The task of this science would be to formulate laws and use them to accelerate desirable social trends and eliminate undesirable ones. The impact of Comte's "positive" philosophy of society on American social thought cannot be underestimated. As Nye points out, Comte's faith in science and man's reason, and his confidence in man's ability to use both for his own good convinced many American social philosophers and reformers that progress could be planned, indeed, even guaranteed.11

While both the Social Darwinists and Comtians were agreed that progress was assured, they differed in their beliefs in man's ability to direct the course of his evolution. Comte felt that man's progress could be speeded up, but Spencer argued that the slow process of social evol-


11Nye, p. 23.
tion had to run its course and any attempt to accelerate it could only result in trouble. The function of social science was to make people cognizant of the intricate complexity of the social organism and put an end to the attempts of social reformers to alleviate human misery and social ills. "There cannot be more good done," said Spencer, "than that of letting social progress go on unkindered; yet an immensity of mischief may be done in the way of disturbing, and distorting and repressing, by policies carried out in the pursuit of erroneous conceptions." A similar attitude was expressed by William Graham Sumner. "All that we can affirm with certainty," he wrote, "is that social phenomena are subject to law, and that the natural laws of the social order are in their entire character like the laws of physics." Man was a creature of social evolution and could do nothing to alter its course.

The great stream of time and earthly things will sweep on just the same in spite of us. . . . It is only in imagination that we stand by and look at and criticize it and plan to change it. Everyone of us is a child of his age and cannot get out of it. . . . Therefore the tide will not be changed by us. It will swallow up both us and our experiments. . . . The things which will change it are the great discoveries and inventions, the new reactions inside the social organism, and the changes in the earth itself on account of changes in the cosmical forces. These causes will make of it just what, in fidelity to them it ought to be. The men will be carried along with it and be made by it. The utmost they can do by their cleverness will be to note and record their course as they are carried.

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13Quoted in Hofstadter, p. 44.

along, which is what we do now, and is that which leads us to the vain fancy that we can make or guide the movement. That is why it is the greatest folly of which a man can be capable, to sit down with a slate and pencil to plan out a new social world.  

Sumner would not even allow that unimpeded evolution would be inevitably beneficial to men. "Under our so-called progress," he asserted, "evil only alters its forms, and we must esteem it a grand advance if we can believe that, on the whole, and over a wide view of human affairs, good had gained a hair's breadth over evil in a century." The best that men could do to improve things would be to end their meddling in social development. Sumner rejected out of hand humanitarian claims that men could improve society through reason, education, and collective action. While Sumner regarded formal education as a dangerous tool in the hands of social reformers, it curiously played an important part in his social thought. If he had been a consistent Spencerian, he would have relegated schooling to the private sector. Instead, while he was complaining about men like Henry George and the single-taxers, Sumner gave twenty-five years of devoted service to the Connecticut State Board of Education. As a conservative, Sumner viewed formal education as a protector of the social order. He thus had no difficulty departing from his strict laissez-faire principles to argue for publicly supported schools because "we know that society must pay for and keep up its own..."

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conservative institutions." A good schooling would protect society by convincing future citizens of the futility of reformist and government meddling in the evolutionary process.

A good education would . . . teach its pupils to resist the magnetism of a crowd and the seductions of popularity. . . . Education ought to train us so that when we are in a crowd which is being swept away by a motive, we should refuse to join, and should instead go away to think over the probable consequences.  

Sumner criticized educators for believing that simply giving men knowledge made them good.

It does not. There is no connection of cause and effect. In truth, half-culture is one of the great curses of our time. Half culture makes man volatile and opinionated. It makes them the easy victims of fads and fallacies and makes them stubborn in adhering to whims which they have taken up. It makes them impervious to reason and argument because they hold to their pet ideas with a pertinacity which has a great deal of vanity in it. It makes them quick to talk and slow to think and study.

Men must not only be given knowledge, they must be taught how to use it. Education must make them see that:

the judgment of probable consequences is the only real and sound ground of action. It is because men have been ignorant of the probable consequences, or have disregarded them, that human history presents such a picture of the devastation and waste of human energy and of the wreck of human hopes. If there is any salvation for the human race from woe and misery it is in knowledge and in training to use knowledge.  

Sumner thus wanted to use the schools to reconstruct the social order,

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albeit in a negative fashion. Despite the fact that he snorted at efforts to move the social order in a desirable direction, his determinism failed to keep him from trying to do the same thing himself.\(^\text{21}\) And like the workingmen and conservative politicians and educators of the common school era, his ideal was anarchy with a schoolmaster.

If Sumner could accept the harshness of the world while safely ensconced in the security of the Yale campus, Lester Ward rejected the notion that men had to accept the world as it is. He opted for Comte's confidence in man's ability to direct the course of his evolution. Ward asserted that:

> the future of human society is in its own hands, and that a great and rapid progress can be artificially attained through clear and accurate scientific foresight of the necessary effects of present human modifications. . . . This is the department of active social dynamics, or 'sociocracy' . . . which Comte clearly saw but which his successors have thus far failed to recognize.\(^\text{22}\)

Ward agreed that man was a creature of natural evolution, but he rejected the notion that man must continue to be the victim of nature's whims. He argued that man had always used intelligence to interfere with nature for his own benefit. Civilization itself stood witness to that fact. It was an artificial attempt to control and direct nature. There was nothing natural about it. What Spencer failed to see was that he had merely described "genetic phenomena," that is, physical and animal evolution, which were essentially purposeless and planless. He had given no atten-

\(^\text{21}\) Welter, p. 230.

tion to the appearance of mind in the evolutionary process and "telic phenomena" which were the result of human purpose and planning. Evolution need not be blind but could be purposefully directed. Poverty and squalor were not natural but the result of human neglect. Man could improve society by "cold calculation."

I insist that the time must soon come when the control of blind natural forces in society must give way to human foresight. . . . Thus far, social progress has in a certain awkward manner taken care of itself, but in the near future it will have to be cared for. 23

Because Ward believed that "the general conduct of mankind is determined by the opinions held," and that a change in the sentiments, opinions, and ideas of society would mean a change in the character of its actions, he advanced education as the "great panacea" for social ills. For if schools instilled "progressive principles" in the young, "progressive actions" would result. 24 The foremost objective of education was therefore social improvement.

Education is really needed for the purpose of making better citizens. This is practically the same thing as the higher end, social progress, which we saw to be the condition to increase human happiness. If education cannot accomplish this end, it is worth nothing. 25

But Ward was confident that a free and universal system of education, properly conducted, could become the "mainspring of progress." "Give society education," he concluded, "and all things else will be added." 26


25 Ibid., p. 589.

26 Quoted in Peter Schrag, "The Circle of Futility," Commonweal, LXXIX (March 6, 1954), 685.
Ward's thesis was picked up by Albion Small who introduced it to professional educators in an 1896 address to the National Education Association (NEA) entitled "The Demands of Sociology Upon Pedagogy." Portraying the school as the advanced guard in any attempt to ameliorate society, he called upon teachers to make their students aware of the three great realities of modern life: interdependence; the need for cooperation; and the realization that new men and events demand new social arrangements. "Sociology," proclaimed Small, "knows no means for the amelioration or reform of society more radical than those of which teachers hold the leverage." Therefore:

the teacher who realizes his social function will not be satisfied with passing children to the next grade. He will read his success only in the record of men and women who go from the school eager to explore wider and deeper these social relations, and zealous to do their part in making a better future. We are dupes of faulty analysis if we imagine that schools can do much to promote social progress until they are motivated by this insight and temper.27

Small confronted American educators with a choice between Spencer and Comte.28 And as Cremin has observed, Small's younger colleague, John Dewey, had no trouble making the choice.29 Taking his lead from Comte, Dewey asserted that social progress resulted from "the application of intelligence to the construction of proper social devices." That is, government should arrange the social order in such a way that it favors


28Or, as Cremin has put it, a choice between conservative and reform Darwinism.

29Cremin, p. 99.
"the friendly tendencies of human nature at the expense of the bellicose and predatory ones. . . ."^30

While Dewey did not believe in the inevitability of progress, he did believe that if men used their reason they could control their own destiny and progress. Like Lester Ward, he developed a neo-Enlightenment outlook.^31 Reinventing the faith of the Enlightened in the intelligence of men, Dewey wrote:

It is the formation of a faith in intelligence, as the one and indispensable belief necessary to moral and social life. The more one appreciates the intrinsic esthetic, immediate value of thought and of science, the more one takes into account what intelligence itself adds to the joy and dignity of life, the more one should feel grieved at a situation in which the exercise and joy of reason are limited to a narrow, closed and technical social group and the more one should ask how it is possible to make all men participants in this inestimable wealth.^32

Because Dewey believed that the school was the primary agency for the development of intelligence, the school became for him also "the fundamental method of social progress and social reform."^33

I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.


^31 Commenting on the historical sources of pragmatism, Dewey said, "If I were asked to give an historical parallel to this movement in American thought, I would remind my readers of the French philosophy of the Enlightenment." John Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 34, quoted in Karier, p. 145.


I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer of the true kingdom of God.34

The reaffirmation of the Enlightenment values of rationality, science, education and progress at the end of the 19th century by Ward and Dewey was significant because it occurred at the very time that European intellectuals, led by Friedrich Nietzsche, were announcing the death of the Enlightenment, ideology, and the search for the laws of progress, and preparing to take refuge in nihilism, existentialism, or cyclical theories of history like that of Spengler's. As Karier points out:

In striking contrast to the European intellectuals' profound sense of despair at the turn of the century, many American intellectuals were in midst of a neo-Enlightenment reconstruction of social philosophy which emphasized not pessimism but guarded optimism; not contemplation of irrational well-springs but means of social action.35

Expressions of faith in progress through education in the last decades of the 19th century were not restricted to intellectuals and educators. And there were some glowing ones. "Educate men," wrote Andrew Carnegie, "and his shackles fall. Free education may be trusted to burst every obstruction which stands in the path of the democracy towards its goal, the equality of the citizen. . . ."36 "Just see, wherever we peer into the first springs of the national life, how this true panacea for all the ills of the body politic bubbles forth—education, education,

34Ibid., p. 32.
35Karier, p. 119.
education."\textsuperscript{37} Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia, in a speech before the Alumni Society of the University of Georgia on July 31, 1871, stated that "modern progress is chiefly, if not entirely, found not in the advancement of what are called the learned professions but in the education and elevation of the masses. . . ."\textsuperscript{38} Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire, attempting to gain support for his bills for federal aid to education, declared, "Educate the rising generation mentally, morally, physically . . . and this nation and this world would reach the millenium within one hundred years."\textsuperscript{39} Abram S. Hewitt, the ironmaster, claimed in 1896 that the "sudden and wonderful outbreak among rich men to endow higher institutions of learning" was due to the fact that these men "instinctively" recognized schools to be "the true saviours of society." This meant the coming of "a new and nobler civilization."\textsuperscript{40} Robert G. Ingersoll, a well-known lawyer and popular public lecturer of the time proclaimed, "I believe that education is the only lever capable of raising mankind." "The schoolhouse is infinitely more important than the church, and if all the money wasted in the building of churches could be devoted to education we should become a civilized people." The schools, concluded Ingersoll, "are the hope of the Republic and, in my judgment, of the world."\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 101.


\textsuperscript{39}Quoted in Welter, p. 151.


The Presidents of the time also viewed education as a powerful agency of progress and national security. President Grant viewed the support of education as protection against another civil war.

To insure ourselves against the disasters of war, particularly of civil war, we want education diffused, that the minds of our youth may be sufficiently taught to read and to distinguish between right and wrong, and with such education universally diffused the Republic can never be in danger.  

James Garfield took issue with the British historian Macaulay who had asserted that democracy would inevitably collapse. In an address in 1873 on "The Future of Our Republic: Its Dangers and Its Hopes," Garfield replied that Macaulay's opinion left out "the great counter-balancing force of universal education." Dedicating a school building at Canal Fulton, Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes declared that "an open schoolhouse, free to all, evidences the highest type of advanced civilization. It is the gateway to progress, prosperity, and honor, and the best security for the liberties and independence of our people." Finally, William McKinley, in his first inaugural address, urged that "illiteracy must be banished from the land if we shall attain that high destiny as the foremost of the enlightened nations of the world which, under Providence, we ought to achieve."

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44 USOE, Expressions on Education by Builders of American Democracy, p. 43.

Professional educators also continued to believe that the school was a primary agency of social reform, and persisted in manifesting a sense of mission during the closing decades of the 19th century. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, educators offered to "finish what the soldier has begun so well." Samuel S. Greene, the president of the NEA for 1865, asserted that "education is the chief unifying process on which we can rely for a permanent peace. Let our statesmen duly consider this point in the work of reconstruction." J. P. Wickersham, who was to become the Pennsylvania state superintendent of schools, was deeply concerned that the ex-slaveholders would legislate slavery back into existence, annul the confiscation laws, and cause the United States to assume the debt of the Confederacy. "Educate the whole people of the South," Wickersham advised, "and these machinations will all prove abortive, the rule of the haughty slave lord will pass away, and a great step will be taken toward making homogeneous our social as well as our political institutions throughout the nation." "American educators," concluded Wickersham, "hold in their hands the destinies of this nation." While their task is not as conspicuous as that of the soldier or statesmen, nevertheless "in the unobtrusive quiet of the school-room, though no eye, save that of God, witness the work, they may infuse such a love of our country and its institutions into the hearts of our coming generation of children, that the Republic, on its secure foundations, will stand as

47 Ibid., p. 32.
48 Ibid., p. 292.
firmly as the Egyptian pyramids."49 "Gentlemen of this Association," summoned President Greene, "let us buckle on the armor, and meet the new exigency of our times."50

The labor unrest of the 1870's and 80's prompted new claims by the schoolmen about what education had done and could do to resolve labor problems and preserve the social order. In fact, schoolmen increasingly stressed the narrow political uses of education after 1870.51 In his inaugural address before the NEA in 1877, President Newell quoted an "intelligent citizen" who had responded to the railroad strikes by saying, "It was the good sense of an immense majority of working people, created, fostered, and developed by public education that saved us from the terrors of the French Commune." Newell agreed and added, "Had educated intelligence been less widely diffused than it is, had all, or a great part of the labor of the country, taken up arms against capital, there would have been a revolution to which history offers no parallel."52 J. E. Seaman's solution to the conflict between labor and capital, "the onward strides of socialism and communism," and the "mob spirit" which was "abroad in the land," was also schooling. Education would "confront and abash the haughtiness of tyranny of insolent wealth," detect and expose the fallacies of socialism, and teach the poor "that they have an interest in respecting the property of the rich." Education, Seaman continued, "is

49 Ibid., p. 297.
50 Ibid., p. 234.
51 Welter, p. 159.
the only preservative against social dissolution, as well as the only germ of invaluable improvements. The power of education, rightly conducted is always omnipotent.53

Just as did the educators and conservatives of the common school era, the schoolmen of this era also prescribed schooling as the cure for crime and poverty. C. D. Randall maintained that "the growth of pauperism and crime if checked must be through the schools, or it never will be."54 Invoking the notion of the dangerous classes he stated:

In times of great disturbances, like our great railroad strikes or like the great upheavals of the French Commune, we see and feel the effects of the dangerous classes that we did not think of in more quiet times. . . . The riot, the commune . . . has its basis upon idleness, ignorance, and vice.

The mental, moral, and physical perversion of the youth is the main cause of the dependence and crime. The proper education of the youth is the one great remedy.55

J. P. Wickersham pointed to the education being provided for the children of paupers, drunks, and criminals by Charles Loring Brace at the Children's Aid Society of New York City and Brace's claim that not more than three out of a thousand children that left his schools became paupers and criminals. Wickersham also noted Pennsylvania's claim that only two percent of the twelve thousand Civil War orphans educated at state expense "have turned out badly." He concluded that this "shows the wonderful uplifting power of educational influences" and the wisdom of Solomon's maxim, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he

54 Ibid., p. 19.
55 Ibid., p. 20.
The idea of moral education continued to receive a good deal of attention from schoolmen. It was asserted that the final aim of schooling was good character, and ways of using each subject to teach morality were described. In tones reminiscent of Horace Mann, one educator said:

Duty is the supreme motive. From infancy to age, the greatest thing in education is to foster the ethical impulses, that they should become practically imperative in controlling human conduct. The noblest work of God is a man who from principle, and from habit does what he deems right. The highest work of the educator is the development of such men and women.

Such a statement is an example of the fact that American schoolmen, and especially the National Education Association, have traditionally approached schooling as if they were agents of evangelism. The NEA has historically combined religion and education and, as Bowers has noted, in these latter years of the 19th century "its yearly convention frequently took on the appearance of revival meetings as delegates presented papers that supposedly dealt with educational matters, but which in fact too often read like sermons." Samuel Greene, whose summons to "buckle on the armor" we have already encountered, closed his presidential address to the 1865 convention with these words:

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56 Ibid., (1881), pp. 53-54.
57 Ibid., (1898), pp. 462-488.
58 Ibid., (1892), p. 763.
60 Ibid., 205.
Let our sessions bear testimony to the spirit of earnestness and devotion which animates the leading educators of the land. Let us gather inspiration from personal fellowship, and this interchange of fraternal good will; and let us return to our several fields of labor, moved anew to the gigantic task which lies before us.\footnote{NEA, \textit{Proceedings}, (1865), p. 495.}

As Bowers observes, "not even Russell H. Conwell, the famous Baptist minister, who proclaimed the Gospel of Wealth, could have improved upon this."\footnote{Bowers, 205.}

Additional expressions of this evangelistic fervor are easily multiplied. In 1880 the principal of the Framingham Normal School defined the ideal teacher in these terms:

Such teachers are in humble measure like Christ, the touch of whose garment was health, and lift their pupils by a divine contagion of virtue. Such are the teachers whom our schools need. It is a sin to entrust the training of God's 'little ones' to any others.\footnote{NEA, \textit{Proceedings}, (1880), p. 220, quoted in Bowers, 205.}

In 1888 a Director of the NEA proclaimed that the teacher who "has found his kinship with the divine . . . will be a shining epistle, known and read by all."\footnote{Quoted in Bowers, 205.}

Given the temper of the NEA, it is little wonder that it became a mecca for crusaders looking for supporters. Frances Willard, the organizer of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, urged NEA members to assist her crusade for temperance by giving "chemical and physiological lessons which indicate that total abstinence is consistent with nature and reason," for "What . . . is our most insidious and powerful
foe? Where is the rendezvous of the low, the vulgar, the irresponsible members of one complex society? Whence comes the noisy horde. . . .? To all these questions, ominous and sad, there is but one reply—the rum shops!" Every teacher, she claimed, was bound to warn his students of "these cesspools of vice," especially since the teacher "moulds in clay while the temperance agitators are pounding away on marble. He forms while they almost vainly endeavor to reform." Miss Willard received a sympathetic hearing from her audiences. The Superintendent of Dayton schools, John Hancock, asserted that the teacher was the real reformer and warned, "When a true schoolmaster is let loose in a community, let vice beware." 65

Another crusader requested that teachers concern themselves with the honesty of politics. "The schoolmaster holds the future of American politics" because while we have parties to look after political issues and politicians to look after parties, "we need somebody to look after politicians. The public school is the only organization wide enough, and trusted enough, to render that service." 66

Speaking on the national and international influence of the public school, the Reverend George M. Grant declared that since democracy rests on popular sovereignty, and since the greatest instrument a democratic people has "for making the next generation wiser and better than themselves is the school. . . . Therefore, O brother and sister teachers!

65 NEA, Proceedings (1875), pp. 181-186.
66 Ibid., pp. 186-187.
67 Ibid., (1892), p. 66.
magnify your office. Ours is a higher position than that of kings. We are king makers." Thus did Grant describe the national influence of the school. But his prescription for the international influence of the school was really astounding. "Brother and sister teachers, the mission of the common school is to enlighten the State, to make the British Commonwealth and the American Union friends, and to link the nations in a holy brotherhood." 69

It was both characteristic and appropriate that as the 19th century ended, the NEA declared, "The common school is the highest hope of the nation. In developing character, in training intelligence, in diffusing information, its influence is incalculable." 70

By the end of the 19th century then, faith in progress and schooling had become intellectual cliches in American thought. 71 No matter what the problem, reconstruction, crime, poverty, labor unrest, or temperance, Americans as different as Lester Ward, Ulysses S. Grant and Frances Willard, as well as the schoolmen, looked to the school to solve a myriad of troubles and bring about progress in American society. In the post-


69 Ibid., p. 254. It should be noted that while the idea that the schools could bring about an alliance between Britain and America strikes one as fanciful, the movement for an Anglo-American alliance was fashionable in the 1890's. See Hofstadter, pp. 170-200.

70 NEA, Proceedings, (1900), p. 31.

71 While I am concerned here with the American faith in the schools, Americans also manifested a strong belief in the powers of informal education as well. For the reliance placed on informal education from 1865 to 1900 by such groups as farmers and the labor movement, and such social critics as Henry George and Edward Bellamy, see Welter, pp. 160-227.
Civil War era, just as in the common school era, reforms in the aims of the school were viewed as substitutes for other kinds of reform, and often advocated without any thought of any other kind of reform. For Americans continued to believe in anarchy with a schoolmaster, and it is this belief that provides continuity between the common school era and the post-Civil War era.

But this habit of considering the school as an agency pur excellence of social reform and progress is also the continuous element in the views of education between the post-Civil War era and the Progressive era. As Cremin has observed, it is hardly surprising that the generation that followed Horace Mann "would again view education as an instrument to realize America's promise."73

The Progressive movement was essentially a middle-class attempt to restore the promise of American life—equality of treatment and equality of opportunity—to millions of people who were paying the price of America's transformation from a predominantly agrarian society to a highly urbanized and industrialized society. The Progressives hoped to improve the lives of ordinary Americans through various political, economic, and social reforms. They shared with Dewey a faith in man's capacity for rational behavior, in his "contriving and constructive intelligence,"74 and agreed with Walter Lippmann that men could assert "mastery" over the "drift" of life if they would determine to "devise its social organizations, alter

72 Welter, p. 241.
73 Cremin, p. 89.
its tools, formulate its method, educate and control it."\(^{75}\) Progress was assured if men would but will to use their intelligence.

Unlike Jacksonians and conservatives during the 19th century, the Progressives did not fear strong government, and they proposed to use the power of government to bring about the reforms they sought. Their ideal was not anarchy with a schoolmaster. Nevertheless they too assigned a central role to the schools in their efforts to bring about social progress and improve people's lives. As Lawrence Cremin determined, "Proponents of virtually every progressive cause from the 1890's through World War I had their program for the school. Humanitarians of every stripe saw education at the heart of their effort toward social alleviation."\(^{76}\) Jacob Riis asked, "Do you see how the whole battle with the slum is fought out in and around the public school?"\(^{77}\)

The kindergarten, manual training, the cooking school, all experiments in their day, cried out as fads by some, have brought common sense in their train. When it rules the public school in our cities . . . we can put off our armor; the battle with the slum will be over.\(^{78}\)

Again there was talk of armor. Riis' friend, the Reverend William S. Rainsford, a leading spokesman for reform Protestantism, agreed with him, declaring that "the one way to bring better times, better civilization,


\(^{76}\)Cremin, p. 85.


\(^{78}\)Riis, p. 410, quoted in Cremin, p. 85.
better men, better women is education."79

Academic men also contended that social progress depended on popular schooling. Frank Tracy Carlton of Albion College argued that "the problem of the twentieth century is to make education an engine for social betterment. Hitherto, educational progress has been conditioned by economic and social changes. Have we advanced far enough on the path of civilization to make it, in a measure, a directive agent?"80 Ellwood P. Cubberley of Stanford also caught the progressive spirit when he wrote:

The evils and shortcomings of democracy are many and call loudly for remedies and improvement. Whether we shall have remedies and improvement or not depends very largely on how the next generation is trained. The ideas taught in the school today become the actuating principles of democracy tomorrow. . . . Our state governments are weak and inefficient, we say; the school must then teach, and teach in some effective manner, the principles of strong government. Our city governments are corrupt, we hear; fundamental moral and economic principles must then be taught. . . . Our people waste their money and their leisure in idle and profligate ways, we say; a knowledge of values and how to utilize leisure time must then be taught. 61

Of special concern to Cubberley was what he considered the threat to American democracy of the new wave of southern and eastern European immigrants. "Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our civic life."82 This

80 Frank Tracy Carlton, Education and Industrial Evolution (New York, 1908), p. 17, quoted in Cremin, p. 86.
82 Ibid., p. 15.
was not a new concern among established Americans. The President of Middlebury College, Benjamin Labaree, had wondered in 1849 whether the growing number of immigrants would prove the undoing of the Republic. The answer, he decided, depended "upon the wisdom and fidelity of our teachers." Now Cubberley urged the schools to implant in the immigrants' children "the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things in our national life which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth."

In his essay *The School and Society*, John Dewey called attention to the fact that in the transformation of America from an agrarian society to an industrial society something had been lost in the education of the child. The educational functions of the family, community and farm were no longer operative. "We cannot overlook the factors of discipline and of character-building involved in this," warned Dewey.

... We cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their social necessities and uses.

Since American society had been transformed, "if our education is to have any meaning for life, it must pass through an equally complete transfor-

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84 Cubberley, pp. 15-16.
86 Ibid., p. 37.
education functions of agrarian life would have to be assumed by the school.

To do this means to make each one of our schools an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society, and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science. When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious.

Lawrence Cremin has pointed out that:

Dewey's "embryonic community" was to improve the larger society by making it more "worthy, lovely, and harmonious." Once again, the school is cast as a lever of social change; . . . the educator is inevitably cast into the struggle for social reform.

Dewey elaborated on his confidence in the school as an agency for progress in Democracy and Education. He argued that education "may be treated as a process of accommodating the future to the past, or as an utilization of the past for a resource in developing the future." Dewey opted for the latter. By developing the intelligence of children, which for Dewey meant teaching them to think according to the scientific method, education would become "that reconstruction of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." But the reconstruction of

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87 Ibid., p. 49.
88 Ibid.
89 Cremin, p. 118.
91 Ibid., p. 76.
experience is not only personal but social as well. Since a democratic society is committed to realizing a good life for every individual, it necessarily must be an "intentionally progressive" society. This means that its members must:

endeavor to shape the experiences of the young so that instead of reproducing current habits, better habits shall be formed, and thus the future adult society be an improvement on their own. Men have long had some intimation of the extent to which education may be consciously used to eliminate obvious social evils through starting the young on paths which shall not produce these ills, and some idea of the extent in which education may be made an instrument of realizing the better hopes of men. But we are doubtless far from realizing the potential efficiency of education as a constructive agency of improving society, from realizing that it represents not only a development of children and youth but also of the future society of which they will be the constituents.92

Dewey's conception of formal education, as Welter has observed, "threatened to revolutionize American politics." What 19th century conservatives had regarded as the best guarantee against social reform, became its primary instrument. "Dewey's philosophy had redefined the formal educational institutions of the country in such a fashion as to make them seem the best possible guarantee of progressive political achievement."93 Cremin adds that in "talking about the public school as society's great instrument for shaping its own destiny," Dewey took "the grand jete of twentieth-century educational theory. . . ." Public education had become "coextensive with the education of the public."94

[Devey's] decision was a fateful one for American educational

\[92\text{Ibid., p. 79.}\]
\[93\text{Welter, p. 279.}\]
theory, for while it doubtless infused popular schooling with new vitality and high purpose, it effectively removed the agencies of informal education from the purview of public educators. . . . For years his disciples continued to confuse notions of schooling "the whole child" with nonsense about providing the child's whole education.95

This tendency among Dewey's disciples was reflected by Randolph Bourne in his Education and Living. Noting that "the school already overshadows the church" he maintained that:

The public school is the most interesting and the most hopeful of our American social enterprises during these days of sluggishness for us and dreary horror for the rest of the world. It is becoming one of the few rational and one of the few democratic things we have and science and hope are laying a foundation upon which a really self-conscious society could build almost anything it chose.96

The manner in which Dewey and Bourne felt schools could become one of the most rational and democratic institutions in America was delineated in 1916 by Dewey in an article entitled "The Schools and Social Preparedness." The United States was involved in an internal debate about preparedness for World War I and several state legislatures determined to require that high school boys should spend two or three hours of the school week in military drill. Dewey argued that this was a perfect example of the fact that the schools were a victim of the refrain "Let George do it." "Whenever any earnest group of people want something

95 Ibid., pp. 9-10. I think it must be added, however, that Horace Mann had already done a great deal to induce this educational myopia in American educators. Indeed, Welter points out that in the last decades of the 19th century, professional educators had begun to treat formal education as almost the whole definition of their educational concerns and ignored or even deprecated informal educational influences. See Welter, pp. 158-159.

which is threatened preserved or something which is stable altered, they unite to demand that some thing or the other be taught in the public schools, from 'temperance hygiene' to kindness to animals. . . ." Dewey labeled this tendency "an ironic tribute to our national faith in the efficacy of education." But this did not prevent Dewey from paying an ironic tribute to his own faith in the schools. As the remainder of the article made clear, Dewey agreed that youth ought to be prepared for World War I but by a different method. The trouble with drill was that it stopped thought. The time should be spent instead learning about the futility of an isolationist foreign policy, a policy which, said Dewey, "is the natural fruit of our educational system." Since most students were dropping out of school before entering high school, they never got a chance to study European history. All they knew about Europe was that discoverers and pilgrims had set sail from there and that it was a place filled with troubles. It was no wonder Americans were isolationists. If American history was taught "for what it is; largely a reflection of European movements and problems," it would be "an infinitely greater factor in national preparedness than a few hours of perfunctory drill. . . ." "A generation educated in the facts of American history instead of in American mythology would not be at a loss to find and express a unified mind in a crisis like the present, should one recur." Dewey thus made education the solution for isolationism. But not that only.

A nation habituated to think in terms of problems and of the struggle to remedy them before it is actually in the grip of the forces which create the problems, would have an equipment for public life such as has not characterized any people. . . . To make our schools the home of serious thought on social
difficulties and conflicts is the real question of academic freedom, in comparison with which the topic which we have hitherto dealt with under that head is indeed academic. 97

Dewey was not the only educator who thought the school had a role to play in World War I. Just as educators had offered their services after the Civil War for the tasks of reconstruction and the prevention of another conflict, so they now offered to help President Wilson make the world safe for democracy. One member of the NEA declared:

Education should become the essential agency in the restoration of civilization. It should teach the people of each and every nation to understand the true place of their country among the nations of the earth... it should develop a new conception of national rights and international obligations; and it should help to spread the conception of world-friendship and world-loyalty. 98

Another NEA member rather curiously assigned the cause "of the stupid slaughter of the flower of the world's young manhood" to "a lack of imagination," because no ruler "with a keen vivid imagination" which could foresee the human suffering that modern war brings would lead his people into it. She therefore concluded that teachers had it in their hands "to prevent a like catastrophe in the future.... Let us who guide the future destiny of this nation see to it that when the citizens leave our hands they go equipped with a glorious imagination that will enable them to grasp the shining fate that should be theirs." 99

Before World War I there were only a few dissenters to the idea of progress. The disillusioned historian, Henry Adams, and such literary

figures as Mark Twain, Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser were among the more notable. But they were a definite minority. With the coming of the war, however, the doctrine of progress no longer seemed to make sense to Americans. Their confidence was destroyed or modified drastically. Reflecting on the times several years later, Will Durant wrote, "The generation which lived through the War could no longer believe anything. The idea of progress seemed now to be one of the shallowest delusions that ever mocked man's misery, or lifted him up to a vain idealism and a monstrous futility." Many Americans became convinced that the rational element in man was so weak that it simply could not be depended on any more. And technology, which had promised to be man's liberator, had proved its capacity to be his most efficient destroyer. The hope that men could use science for moral ends gave way to bitter disillusionment. In an essay entitled "Progress - 1917," Robert L. Duffus despondently concluded that "Ten million men have perished to prove that progress is not automatic, nor comfortable, and not in any way a law of nature; even more, that there are dark forces that tear at the fabric of civilization as fast as it is woven."

And yet even while the war raged there was still a sign of optimism among a few. Dewey wrote in 1916 that while the war was not to be welcomed, "we may welcome whatever revelations of our stupidity and carelessness it brings with it," as well as the realization that "progress

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100 Quoted in Nye, p. 31.
101 Quoted in Nye, p. 31.
is not automatic; it depends upon human intent and aim and upon acceptance of responsibility for its production."\textsuperscript{103} The Nation, after airing a debate on the question "Does the War Disprove Progress" gave a qualified no, although it acknowledged that the war indicated that "progress is not so rapid as might be wished."\textsuperscript{104}

These more optimistic comments foreshadowed an ambivalence toward the idea of progress which characterized American thought in the years between the war and the Depression and which has persisted to the present time.\textsuperscript{105} Charles A. Beard commented in 1928 that the American intellectual was having difficulty deciding whether "the curve of contemporary civilization now rises majestically toward a distant zenith, or in reality has begun to sink rapidly toward a nadir near at hand."\textsuperscript{106} Among those who believed the worst was yet to come were literary men like T. S. Eliot, Sinclair Lewis, and Ernest Hemingway who wrote of barren wastelands, Babbitts, and lost generations. And old reformers like Frederick C. Howe found that "the illusions I had spent a lifetime hoarding were of no use in this world."\textsuperscript{107} But there were also those who believed the worst was over and the best yet to come. In The Rise of American Civilization, which appeared in 1927, Charles and Mary Beard expressed the belief that with the war over and the new technology under control, progress was in

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 824.  
\textsuperscript{104} Quoted in Nye, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{105} Nye, p. 33.  
\textsuperscript{106} Quoted in Nye, p. 33.  
\textsuperscript{107} Quoted in Nye, p. 33.
the offing. And in 1926 Durant maintained that progress was not a delusion and, despite the war, one could still be hopeful that "what is finally fair and noble" in the world "will escape mortality, to illuminate and gladden generations to come."108

In the 1920's, educators and others who addressed themselves to the subject of education remained optimistic for the most part and continued to have faith in the schools as an agency of progress and a means of maintaining the strength of American democracy. Vice-President Calvin Coolidge was of the opinion that it was:

not too much to say that the need of civilization is the need of teachers. The contribution which they make to human welfare is beyond estimation. . . . The influence which they create for better things, the inspiration which they give for higher ideals, are the chief contributing force to the stability of society and the march of progress. They point the way to the dawn, they lead toward the morning, toward light, toward truth.109

As far as Theodore Christianson, the Governor of Minnesota, was concerned, the schools had built America.

... If you ask me where America was made, I will say that it was made where its principles were cherished, its ideals vivified and its purposes made clear. It was made where character was strengthened, loyalty deepened, intelligence expanded, and patriotism intensified . . . for America was made in the schoolroom.110

Herbert Hoover claimed that "our rich democracy" could no longer "excuse itself for niggardliness toward those who so largely create its ability and upon whom its whole existence is so dependent," although he added

108Quoted in Nye, pp. 33-34.


that "teachers always have preferred, and probably always will prefer, to lose a little money rather than to lose the chance to live so abundantly in the enriched lives of the next generation."  

Speaking before the annual meeting of the NEA in 1923, Robert Soner, the president of the American Bar Association, pointed out that a 1922 American Bar Association committee report on American citizenship concluded that "there is but one remedy for our National ills—education. Knowledge and inspiration are essential to citizenship. The schools of America must save America." Soner himself went on to conclude that, "it goes without saying that we can make no substantial progress in civilization, nor indeed exist as a self-governing republic, without a better and better education of each rising generation."  

At the same meeting the President of the Oakland, California, Chamber of Commerce offered the judgment that teachers would increasingly enter into the kind of relationship with children previously held only by clergymen because they would increasingly "seek to implant in the youthful student the sturdy seeds of high ideals and sound principles . . . such truths as we find in the ten commandments and in the Sermon on the Mount." Teachers who did this were "the greatest potential power for good in this country."  

Clearly professional men thought teachers had a mission too. And, as usual, there were those with really sensational challenges for

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education. One writer reasoned that since education helped bring prohibition about (just how, he did not say), it now had to work to see that those laws were kept. "If in a democracy the laws are not enforced, the ultimate cure can be found only in education."¹¹⁴

The continuing faith of educators in progress and the schools was manifested by two historians of education. Ellwood P. Cubberley, the author of Public Education in the United States, for decades the standard history of American education, looked back over the years and concluded:

Education today has become the great constructive tool of modern civilization. A hundred years ago the school was of but small importance in the life of the State; today its proper maintenance has become the prime essential to good government and national progress. . . . Under a democratic form of government . . . the education of the people in a series of State schools, animated and directed by a national purpose, becomes the greatest of all constructive undertakings for the promotion of the national welfare. . . .¹¹⁵

Harry G. Good, a young historian of education whose reputation was yet to be won, pondered the rationale for his chosen career and declared that one of the reasons for studying the history of education was that:

history . . . gives us our ideal of progress, and this ideal is the guiding concept in education. It gives to all educational efforts in our modern world their meaning. Only this idea, as we now think, can rationally relate . . . facts and theories. An evolutionary view of the world is making possible a rational education. From this standpoint, education is the conscious and orderly pursuit of progress."¹¹⁶

Men are trying to substitute, "a conscious, orderly, scientific process


¹¹⁵ E. P. Cubberley, "The American School Program From the Standpoint of the Nation," NEA Journal, XII (September, 1923), 265.

of improvement," for the "blind and fortuitous groping of early man,"
Good continued. Reason is to be the guide, not tradition or chance.
And the history of education reveals "the growth of the institution
which will direct the process. . . . We here see the development of an
inspiring technique of progress."\textsuperscript{117}

The faith of the ordinary classroom teacher in the importance of
his daily task was expressed in these stanzas composed by a pedagogue:

\textbf{Many Springs}
I have witnessed the dispersion
Of the Children
Of many Autumns

Out they go to God's great labor mart;
Out to the workshop, schoolroom, field and mill;
Out to the mountains and the deserts;
To the office, the railroad, the sea.
To new homesteads and old estates;
To the vistas of new knowledge

Oh! This is erudition; glorified ambition -
Educated masses marching forward to their toil -
With elevated vision and a consecrated mission
Pushing Progress forward through the Great Turmoil.\textsuperscript{118}

If there were those who doubted the efficacy of education, the
President of the University of Washington, Henry Suzzallo, had some ans-
wers for them. "Our faith in education is not the product of the wish
to believe something which is pleasant for the schoolmasters to believe,"
he maintained. "Like every enduring reverence which men have, it is
well founded in reason and experience."\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{118}Lowry Nelson, "Education," \textit{NEA Journal}, XII (November, 1923),
p. 382.

\textsuperscript{119}Henry Suzzallo, \textit{Our Faith in Education} (Philadelphia: J. B.
The faith that we have in democratic forms of living and working together rests on the solid fact that men and women are capable of being made more responsible and more intelligent through training. It is doubtful if the ideals of democratic life could be anything but an intellectual mirage if we could not believe in the educable qualities of men and women. ... Civilization may become more kindly and more wise, more considerate and more cooperative, because individual men may be made into better human beings. 120

While all men and institutions are required to help in the task of improving men:

the strategic place for human rationalization is in the schools. Here the teachers are the deliberate improvers of a plastic youth working through fact and thought to a plan. It is a large and inspiring task. They must believe in their work. And by the same arguments they should share their faith in education with those who need it most of all—the citizens of our American republic. 121

Perhaps the most explicit defense and reaffirmation of the American faith in the schools in the 1920's was voiced by Will Durant in his essay "Is Progress a Delusion?" Durant not only answered this question in the negative, but he pointed to education as an indication that progress was no delusion. Noting that mass education "is almost a contemporary innovation" he went on to score those who believed the schools had failed.

None but a child would complain that the world has not yet been totally remade by these spreading schools, these teeming bisexual universities; in the perspective of history the great experiment of education is just begun. It has not had time to prove itself; it cannot in a generation undo the ignorance and superstition of ten thousand years. ... 122

120 Ibid., p. 31.
121 Ibid., p. 108.
It may very well be, said Durant, that in the end ignorance will triumph over education, but meanwhile "beneficent results" have already begun to appear.

Why is it that tolerance and freedom of the mind flourish more easily in the northern states than in the South, if not because the South has not yet won wealth enough to build sufficient schools? Who knows how much of our preference for mediocrity in office and narrowness in leadership, is the result of a generation recruited from regions too oppressed to spare time for the plowing and sowing of the mind? What will the fruitage of education be when everyone of us is schooled till twenty, and finds equal access to the intellectual treasures of the race?123

And what of the natural desire of parents to have their children surpass them, Durant asked.

... Here is the biological leverage of human progress, a force more to be trusted than any legislation or any moral exhortation, because it is rooted in the very nature of man. Adolescence lengthens; we begin more helplessly, and we grow more completely towards that higher man who struggles to be born out of our darkened souls. We are the raw material of civilization.124

There were dissenters in the 1920's from the faith in the schools. H. L. Mencken, that devastating critic of the American "boob," felt that:

next to the clerk in holy orders, the fellow with the worst job in the world is the schoolmaster. Both are underpaid, both fall steadily in authority and dignity, and both wear out their hearts trying to perform the impossible. How much the world asks of them and how little they can actually deliver! The clergymen's business is to save the human race from hell: if he saves one-eighth of one per cent., even within the limits of his narrow flock, he does magnificently. The schoolmaster's is to spread the enlightenment, to make the great masses of the plain people intelligent--and intelligence is precisely the thing that the great masses of the plain people are congenitally and eternally incapable of.125

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123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

The hope that the common school would occasionally unearth a first-rate man Mencken held to be patently false. If a first-rate man ever did appear "in obscure and ignoble circles" it was only proof that for a few brief years the wives and daughters of common men are comely--"and now and then the baron drinks more than he ought to."126

There were more serious criticisms, however. Nicholas Murray Butler noted that science and the scientific method had been increasingly studied in schools over the previous seventy years, yet there was little evidence that it had had any effect.

Fancy, if you can, what the future historian will say of an American legislature which, forty years after the death of Charles Darwin, solemnly considers a proposed statute to prohibit the teaching of the established facts of organic evolution in tax-supported schools... Fancy, if you can, what the future historian will say of the people of the State of Oregon, who, one hundred and thirty-five years after the adoption of the Constitution of the United States with its Bill of Rights, enact by popular vote a statute which makes of elementary education a government monopoly...

It would be tedious and disheartening to multiply illustrations. Over against the illusion that our educational system is the most successful in the world I would put the truth that its great task still lies before it.127

Another educator, Glenn Frank, warned of something that Americans would come to realize in the next decade.

Popular education per se is not a guaranty of democracy. That the little red school-house is necessarily the bulwark of democracy is simply one of the untrue truisms of political oratory. Popular education may be the dangerous tool of sinister interests, as it was in Germany under the Hohenzollerns. It is the things taught and the type of graduate produced that

126 Ibid., p. 259.

Ludwig Lewisohn, an editor of Nation and formerly Professor of German language and literature at the Ohio State University, denied that Americans really believed in education.

Our people do not believe in education at all—if education means a liberation of the mind or a heightened consciousness of the historic culture of mankind. Philosophy and morals are taken care of by the Fifth Street Baptist Church. College is to fit you to do things—build bridges, cure diseases, teach French. It is not supposed to help you be.

Education, Lewisohn maintained, should mean an "inner change—the putting on of a new man, a new criterion of truth, new tastes and other values." Instead the only things an American wanted from education were "finer and more flexible tools for the economic war which he calls liberty."

For similar reasons, Irving Babbitt attacked progressive educators for assuming that the child's nature was good and that the schools could promote the progress of humanity. Babbitt bitterly complained that "we have been permitting Professor Dewey and his kind to have an influence on our education that amounts in the aggregate to a national calamity."

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128 Glenn Frank, An American Looks at His World (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1923), p. 203.


130 Ibid., p. 156.

131 Karier, p. 193.

But most Americans in the 1920's probably would have agreed with Dallas Lore Sharp who dismissed most of the educational critics as cranks and confidently wrote:

... I doubt if there is another two billion dollar enterprise on this continent that begins to be so well managed as the educational enterprise, out of which we get so much for our money, one in which there are making more rapid and substantial gains, or one on which so securely rests the safety of the State and the happiness of the people.\textsuperscript{133}

The optimism of the 1920's quickly gave way to the fear and despair of the Depression. The American faith in progress was again challenged. With poverty, want, and unemployment a national experience, Chicago's 1933 Century of Progress Exposition seemed like a cruel joke. The rise of Protestant neo-orthodoxy in the 1930's also presented a challenge to the idea of progress. Led by Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, the movement resurrected the Calvinist notion that human nature and reason were at bottom weak and untrustworthy. Progress, if there was any at all, was unsure and as likely to be wiped out as not.\textsuperscript{134}

It was the task of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal to overcome this pessimism and reaffirm the belief of Ward and the Progressives that men could control their destiny through planning and social engineering, and demonstrate that the Depression could be overcome and a new society could be fashioned from the old. Roosevelt himself believed in progress and had written that "out of every crisis, every tribulation, every disaster, mankind rises with some share of greater knowledge of


\textsuperscript{134}Nye, pp. 36-37.
high decency, of purer purpose."\textsuperscript{135} And indeed, as Russel Nye maintains:

much of his political effectiveness derived from his ability to give new impetus to the doctrine of progress in an era that had a right to seriously doubt it, and to restore faith to a tradition of liberalism that seemed to be losing it.\textsuperscript{136}

By the time of his second inaugural address, F.D.R. could say, "With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our foot upon the road of enduring progress."\textsuperscript{137}

The 1930's were rough years for educators. The Depression brought with it a slashing of educational budgets, merciless cuts in salaries, and unemployment for thousands of teachers. What hurt even more was that the schools fell victim to a barrage of criticism the like of which they had never before experienced. Traditional educators attacked "progressive" educators for their soft-headed methods and disregard of fundamentals.\textsuperscript{138} Newspapers criticized the schools for wasting money on "fads and frills," and clergymen charged teachers with responsibility for the lost fortunes, divorces, and suicides that accompanied the Depression. One church group implied that because the schools had failed to instill a sense of social responsibility in children in years gone by, they were responsible for the greed that had led to economic disaster.

And Warden Lewis E. Lawes of Sing Sing Prison told the NEA that the

\textsuperscript{135}Quoted in Nye, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{136}Nye, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{137}Quoted in Nye, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{138}The most famous example of this was Robert Maynard Hutchins' \textit{The Higher Learning In America} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936).
schools had failed to discourage crime.\textsuperscript{139}

One writer pointed out that this was the first economic crisis in their history during which Americans cut educational spending.\textsuperscript{140} It was to no avail. There seemed to be a feeling that the schools had gotten fat and lazy during the 20's and had to be brought into line with economic realities.\textsuperscript{141} Charles Judd reflected that the Depression had not initiated the criticism of education but had simply brought it to the surface.

Even before the financial collapse of 1929 there were signs of restlessness among taxpayers at the mounting exactions on public resources which resulted from the rapid growth of high schools, but popular enthusiasm for education was so great that few ventured to raise any objection to the expansions which were taking place.\textsuperscript{142}

When the Depression cut national income in half and public revenues dwindled, vague restlessness matured into open reaction against taxes and all tax supported institutions.\textsuperscript{143} Several years later Edgar Knight theorized that American behavior toward the schools in the 1930's had not been due merely to "depression, debts, and deficits" but to a general "disillusionment with the unfulfilled promises of American education" as

\begin{thebibliography}{143}
\bibitem{139}{Edgar Knight, Fifty Years of American Education (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1952), pp. 348-350.}
\bibitem{140}{Royce S. Pitkin, Public School Support in the United States during Periods of Economic Depression (Brattleboro, Vt., 1933), cited by Knight, p. 365.}
\bibitem{141}{David L. Angus, "The Dropout Problem: An Interpretive History" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1965), p. 60.}
\bibitem{142}{Charles H. Judd, Education and Social Progress (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934), p. 5.}
\bibitem{143}{\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 7.}
\end{thebibliography}
well.

Throughout many decades before the gigantic economic dislocation of 1929, many claims, some of them perhaps extravagant, had been made for the wonder-working powers of public education, and probably most Americans had come to depend too much on schooling as the sovereign solvent of all their ills and inadequacies, and all their economic, social, moral, and spiritual problems. When the heavy economic blow fell, it was not unnatural for those who had placed so much faith in schooling to turn savagely on their own handiwork.  

While the American faith in the schools may have been weakened, it was not dying. If Americans did not like the fact that schools cost a lot of money, that was nothing new. And the accusations that the Depression and its attendant evils were due to poor education demonstrated how much Americans had come to believe in the powers of education and just how great their faith was.

Knight has observed also that the supporters of public education were apparently less vocal during the Depression than its critics. One study of public opinion of education examined nine thousand newspaper editorials from 1930-1935 on the subject and found that 44.5 percent of them were favorable to education while 32.4 percent were neutral, and only 23.2 percent were adversely critical. For the most part the favorable editorials declared their belief in the value of education or praised some educational institution.

The usual praise of public officials for the schools was also forthcoming. In a letter to the NEA in 1935, F.D.R. wrote:

Education must light the path for social change. The social

\[^{144}\text{Knight, p. 366.}\]
\[^{145}\text{Ibid., p. 351.}\]
and economic problems confronting us are growing in complexity. The more complex and difficult these problems become, the more essential it is to provide broad and complete education; that kind of education that will equip us as a nation to decide these problems for the best interest of all concerned. Our ultimate security, to a large extent, is based upon the individual's character, information, skill, and attitude—and the responsibility rests squarely upon those who direct education in America.146

Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, stated that because of our industrial and commercial developments and the corresponding difficulty of our social, political, and economic problems, "there never was a time in the history of America when education was so vital to us as a nation and so essential to us as citizens." He deplored those who had taken advantage of the Depression to urge the reduction of educational expenditures.

[They] do not seem to realize that civilization and education go hand in hand; that in fact education is the foundation rock upon which our civilization has been built. Weaken or destroy the foundation and the building erected thereon will totter or fall. It stands to reason that if the universal education that supports and justifies our civilization is undermined, our civilization itself will suffer to a corresponding degree.147

The American Legion also paid tribute to the schools. At the 1933 NEA meeting, the National Commander announced:

The keystone of the Legion's national defense is education, and we are proud to salute you, who have been entrusted with the high duty of preparing the coming generations for the responsibilities and joys of American citizenship. ... The future of our country is in your keeping. As you mold the young minds of today so the America of tomorrow will be fashioned. That is a heavy responsibility, but a glorious one.148

146Quoted in USOE, Expressions on Education by Builders of American Democracy, p. 55.


Although some educators lost heart when they saw what the Depression had done to the schools, on the whole they remained a resilient lot, confident of the worth of their task, confident that they could contribute to American progress. "It is impossible to over-emphasize the lifting force of rightly conceived, rightly managed education," wrote Joy Elmer Morgan. "It is the process by which civilization grows. The teacher stands on the unlimited frontier of childhood—a frontier that transcends time and space, and that leads on and on and on." A school principal advised teachers to realize that they were workers in a mint. "You and I are the dies that stamp the value on the bullion of souls that goes through our schools, and we are great deciding factors for the citizens of today and for God's kingdom tomorrow."

The poetry of the pedagogues during this period also expressed their faith:

I hold a torch within my hand -
   A lamp to light the earth
And kindle into flame some spark
   Of grandeur and of worth.

I deal in destinies of men
   And bargain for their souls;
I formulate their varied creeds
   And mark ahead their goals.

Mine is a task unsung, unmarked
   By all the striving throng;
Yet I send out to lead the world
   An army, thousands strong.

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149 Knight, p. 357.
I hold within my hand the torch
Which leads the army on -
However dark the night, I hold
The promise of the dawn.152

College educators also had their hopes for progress through education. Alexander Meiklejohn, a professor of philosophy and college president believed that "the permanent and recurring problems of a social order must be, for each member of society, objects of vital and lively study." He hoped that America would become "a genuine fraternity of learning" in order that its citizens may come "to know how living may best be done." He admitted it would not be easy to achieve this goal, yet he believed that "by proper teaching in a proper social order" American democracy could be made "a society in which every member is in process of education for the highest forms of behavior of which he is capable."153

If educators found themselves subject to blame for the Depression, at least some of them could not be accused of not trying to do something about it. Joy Elmer Morgan, who was for over thirty years editor of the NEA Journal, believed that whether America would follow the path of reform or revolution in their search for a solution to the Depression depended "in the last analysis upon the schools, upon the ability of the higher schools to lead and enlighten the nation."154


It is the high privilege of the teachers of America to turn the minds of the people away from violence, whether the revolutionary ideas originate among the greedy who talk about the failure of democratic government, which they have always sought to weaken and undermine, or whether these ideas are born of injustice, want, and despair among the poor. The teacher is the savior of the people.\textsuperscript{155}

According to Morgan, the most striking aspect of the economic crisis was not "the occasional violence on the part of the dispossessed and the needy" but rather "the remarkable patience and orderliness of the population as a whole in the face of personal disaster and uncertainty."

This is a fine tribute to the intelligence and rightmindedness of the people and reflects the results of a high level of schooling. Just as the schools have laid the foundations during the past generation, they will push civic intelligence to still higher levels during the present crisis.\textsuperscript{156}

Another educator who felt the schools had a role to play in overcoming the Depression was George S. Counts. His \textit{Dare The School Build a New Social Order?} was the most sensational expression of faith in the schools in the 1930's. A former student of Albion Small at the University of Chicago, Counts had been much influenced as a young man by the writings of Comte, Ward, and Dewey, and he agreed with Ward's thesis that the schools could be used as a leverage for social reform. But at a time when Dewey was still emphasizing the method of intelligence and defining every social problem as a need for more education,\textsuperscript{157} Counts went considerably beyond him. It was not enough from his point of view to simply analyze political, social, and economic defects in the class-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{155}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{156}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
room. Teachers had to become advocates of a new social order that would make impossible another economic disaster.

Counts' tract began in a subdued enough manner with a few comments on the American faith in education.

Like all simple and unsophisticated peoples we Americans have a sublime faith in education. . . . We are convinced that education is the one unfailing remedy for every ill to which man is subject, whether it be vice, crime, war, poverty, riches, injustice, racketeering, political corruption, race hatred, class conflict, or just plain original sin. We even speak glibly and often about the general reconstruction of society through the school. We cling to this faith in spite of the fact that the very period in which our troubles have multiplied so rapidly has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of organized education. This would seem to suggest that our schools, instead of directing the course of change, are themselves driven by the very forces that are transforming the rest of the social order. 158

The fact that the American faith in education is unbounded does not, however, make it untenable, Counts continued. "Under certain conditions education may be as beneficent and as powerful as we all want to think."

If this is to occur, teachers would have to deal with American social situations in a far more frank and realistic manner than ever before. They would have to pay the price of leadership; "to accept responsibility, to suffer calumny, to surrender security, to risk both reputation and fortune. . . . Society is never redeemed without effort, struggle, and sacrifice." 159

Counts hoped that the Progressive Education movement would clear the way. "Surely in this union of two of the great faiths of the Ameri-

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159 Ibid., p. 4.
can people, the faith in progress and the faith in education, we have reason to hope for light and guidance." But Counts had his doubts about Progressive Education because it had "elaborated no theory of social welfare, unless it be that of anarchy or extreme individualism. In this, of course, it is but reflecting the viewpoint of the members of the liberal-minded upper middle class who send their children to the Progressive schools. . . ." While they are nice charitable people who are always willing to lend a helping hand, their basic commitment is to the status quo, since they are enjoying its comforts, and not to the kind of drastic social reform needed to bring about economic democracy.

If Progressive Education is to be genuinely progressive, it must emancipate itself from the influence of this class, face squarely and courageously every social issue, come to grips with life in all its stark reality, establish an organic relation with the community, develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and challenging vision of human destiny, and become less frightened than it is today at the bogies of imposition and indoctrination.

While Counts was not contending that facts should be distorted or suppressed, he was arguing that:

all education contains a large element of imposition, that in the very nature of the case this is inevitable, that the existence and evolution of society depend upon it, that it is consequently eminently desirable, and that the frank acceptance of this fact by the educator is a major professional obligation.

What was the vision of the future society teachers were to impose?

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It was a society with a planned, coordinated, and socialized economy. Children had to realize that science and technology could produce all the goods and services the mass of people desired. They also had to realize that capitalism had demonstrated its inability to accomplish this and therefore a new collectivism was needed. Since the age of laissez faire and individualism had ended, the choice was not between individualism and collectivism, but between two forms of collectivism, "the one devoted to the interests of the people, the other to the interests of the privileged class." In a word, teachers must instill in children the "American Dream"--"a vision of a society in which the lot of the common man will be made easier and his life enriched and ennobled."165

How were schools to become centers for the building of a new civilization? Teachers were to "reach for power" and then use it. "To the extent that they are permitted to fashion the curriculum and the procedures of the school they will definitely and positively influence the social attitudes, ideals, and behavior of the coming generation."166

164 Ibid., p. 49.
165 Ibid., p. 38.
Besides the storm of controversy that Counts' argument aroused, Dare The School was an ironic book as well. For while Counts criticized the unbounded American faith in education, and while he acknowledged that "the school is but one formative agency among many, and certainly not the strongest at that," and while he further admitted that the school could not possibly win students to any social program unless it had the support of other social agencies as well, nevertheless the connotation of the book was clearly that the schools alone could build a new social order. The very title seemed to indicate that.

Counts' social reconstructionism was consistent with the messianic tradition in American education even if he meant to overhaul society rather than reform it within the given social framework. And just as educators had offered to help build a new order after World War I, so now Morgan, Counts and others offered to bail America out of the Depression. Even the proposed methods for accomplishing this were the same. More

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attention was to be given to the discussion of contemporary social, economic, and political problems.\(^{171}\)

There were during these years, however, educators with more modest hopes for what education could accomplish. One said:

> No matter what faith we have in education, we know it is impossible to make over human nature in a few years or even in generations, to rid ourselves of selfishness, greed in business, social impurities, and government corruption. We cannot take away from the divine the prerogative of redemption.\(^{172}\)

But, he added, "we have faith in education as a means of human improvement. If we do not have this faith we can scarcely justify our expenditure of vast sums of money to educate all of the children of all of the people."\(^{173}\)

As the 1930's wore on and Americans became increasingly concerned about the threat of fascism in Europe, they characteristically attributed the rise of fascism to bad schooling or looked to schooling as the ultimate solution for fascism or both. One writer argued that, "it is faulty education that has given the world its ugly examples of despotism and militarism; and it is education alone that can create a worthy social democracy and a world of cordial, cooperating countries."\(^{174}\) Harry Elmer Barnes wrote that education had failed to bridge the gulf between our mechanical accomplishments and our social ideas and institutions. If the

\(^{171}\) Ibid., p. 579.


\(^{173}\) Ibid.

gulf was bridged, a material Utopia was inevitable. But if not, the result was sure to be economic collapse, world war, barbarism, and chaos. "Mankind has never before been faced with a direct and immediate choice between Utopia and catastrophe, but such is precisely the alternative which is offered to western civilization today..." 175 In language that was reminiscent of Counts', Barnes called upon educators to prepare a blueprint of a better society and a realistic proposal for achieving it.

The guidance of society by realistic education appears to many to be the only guaranty that society, in the parting of the ways which lead to Utopia or chaos, could choose the road to Utopia. Certainly, it is the only reasonable hope that this choice can be made without violence and destruction. 176

The editor of Survey magazine, Beulah Amidon, also regarded education as the cause and cure for totalitarianism. "Here is the source of present failure in our adult world and the sole hope of ultimate victory—not the sterile defeats and gains of war, but the infinitely slower and more difficult retreats and triumphs of man's struggle toward civilization." 177 Americans, said Amidon, must be concerned with how an educational process turns out insecure and undiscriminating people who flock to dictators and let their hate and prejudice run rampant. They must ask how schooling can quicken curiosity, strengthen integrity, help people distinguish truth from propaganda, and encourage neighborliness.

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176 Ibid.
and good will.

Here are concerns more enduring than military communiques and diplomatic moves. For the strengths and the weaknesses of the democratic way of life lie within our borders, not outside. Mightier than armies with banners, the quiet, undramatic forces of education are the safeguards of freedom, tolerance, human growth. 178

Schoolmen, too, considered their enterprise basic to the nation's defense against fascism. At the NEA meeting in 1940, its president told her constituents that they must "preach" to Americans "in no uncertain terms" that a decent education for all children "is the greatest insurance we can take out against foreign issues." The American public had to realize that education "is indeed the foundation, the first line of defense, the very bulwark of American democracy." 179 In the Fall of 1940, the NEA's Educational Policies Commission stated that the schools could play a central role in the defense of American democracy by "laying the physical and mental groundwork for effective military service;" "providing the vocational and technical training which the conduct of modern war requires;" helping "to achieve natural unity by clarifying loyalties to the values basic to a society of free men;" assisting "in releasing and organizing productive energies;" and aiding adults "to reach sound conclusions on the urgent questions of national policy." 180 On the eve of America's entrance into World War II, the president of the NEA declared that, "in this period of national crisis it is as important to support

178 Ibid., p. 5.
and improve our schools as it is to support and develop our army and navy. 181

There was, however, a definite note of dissent from the American faith in progress and education sounded by a leading educational historian, Edgar Knight. In a lecture given in 1941, he reminded educators and the American public that the idea of progress had been severely jolted in the three preceding decades by World War I, the Depression, and "the perfidy and treachery of tyrants during the past few years in a world gone mad and giving itself up almost completely to destruction." These jolts should serve as warnings, Knight declared, "to those who have blindly if not indeed rashly placed their full faith in the omnipotence of mere schooling. . . ."182

Knight also reminded educators that despite the many promises that had been made in the name of education since the time of Horace Mann, "crime, corruption and bigotry still flourish. . . ."183 The problem, he asserted, was that the public as well as educators had come to ascribe "omnipotent influences" to education and simply assumed that by building more schools and graduating more teachers social progress and happiness would surely follow. Both had to realize that "real educational progress must be measured in brains rather than bricks."184 It was not


183 Ibid., p. 87.

184 Ibid., p. 144.
quantity that was important but quality. Until schools were manned by
teachers worthy of the name, they would not be able to turn out intelli-
gent and high-minded men and women.

The Second World War gave the idea of progress yet another jolt. Horace Kallen noted that many Americans felt that progress was indeed, "a lie that modern man tells himself, an illusion that he has whistled up to comfort his soul." Henry Luce marveled at the paradox of the 20th century: "No other century has been so big with promise for human progress and happiness. And in no one century have so many men and women and children suffered so much pain and anguish and bitter death." The President of the Carnegie Institute, Vannevar Bush, stated the dilemma of those who still hoped for progress:

The first World War shook our optimism, the depression shook it further, and the second World War nearly destroyed it. Now, though we may still hope that our race will go forward in progress, we are confronted with facts that take all the former exuberance out of hope.

As far as an old believer in progress, E. A. Ross, was concerned, after the Second World War the belief in progress was for "born ninnies and teenagers" only.

But as Clarke Chambers has pointed out, there were many prominent Americans who continued to hold a modified belief in progress who were neither teenagers or ninnies. Professor Sidney B. Fay, in his presi-

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185Quoted in Nye, p. 39.
186Quoted in Nye, p. 39.
187Quoted in Nye, p. 39.
188Quoted in Chambers, p. 214.
189Chambers, p. 214.
dential address to the American Historical Association in 1947, argued that while progress was not constant or automatic, men could still believe that it is "possible and even probable as a result of man's conscious and purposeful efforts." In 1950, Dwight Eisenhower counseled Americans that they "must not be discouraged by the inescapable slowness of world progress. However disappointing may be the lack of speed, every new evidence of advance brings immediate hope of a brighter tomorrow." Adlai Stevenson, while acknowledging "that our wisdom is imperfect, and that our capacities are limited," still thought that "progress is a basic law of life." Crane Brinton, writing in 1950, noted that despite two world wars and a depression, belief in progress was still very much a part of the American way.

As Americans continued to believe in progress after the war, they continued to believe in the school as an agency of progress. Criticisms of the quality of education begun in the 1930's intensified until they reached their high water mark in the 1950's. Nevertheless, the hopes vested in education remained high. Consistent with their hope that the end of the war would bring a better world, people looked to the schools to help achieve a new world order. Eleanor Roosevelt contended that academic freedom was imperative because "if we restrict the flow of ideas and discussion, it isn't going to be possible to work out a better basis

190Quoted in Nye, p. 40.
191Quoted in Nye, p. 40.
192Quoted in Nye, p. 40.
for understanding and peace." She thought this ought to be America's primary task after the war. "So you see why I feel the role of the educator is the most important thing before the country today." Since the end of the war would bring many changes and problems:

if we are going to be leaders and use the strength that we have and many other countries lack, we shall need to have as great convictions about our democracy and where we are going and how we are getting there as any other people in the world. And I think largely this question is back in the laps of the teachers of the country. 195

In his 1946 proclamation for American Education Week, President Truman wrote, "It is the task of education to bring about a realization of the issues at stake and to develop the practices of human brotherhood that alone will enable us to achieve international cooperation and peaceful progress in the atomic age." 196

Having offered their services to help rebuild the nation after the Civil War, World War I, and the Depression, schoolmen once again felt that education could help the nation build a new world order. America had just entered the war when Alexander Meiklejohn diagnosed "the catastrophe which has come upon humanity" as "the collapse of human learning and teaching." Future catastrophes could be avoided only if we succeeded "in devising better learning and better teaching. Under the conditions of modern life the primary need of mankind is that we have better

195 Ibid., 60.
education. At the 1944 meeting of the NEA, the Commissioner of Education, John W. Studebaker, called for education for international understanding in order to insure an enlightened public opinion that would guide and support the efforts of American leaders to secure a just and enduring peace after the war. Shortly after the end of the war, Joy Elmer Morgan declared that since the atomic age made it imperative that the U.N. succeed, teachers would have to do all that they could to prepare children's hearts and minds for world understanding and cooperation.

In 1946, Raymond M. Hughes, the President Emeritus of Iowa State College, and William H. Lancelot, a professor of vocational education at the same institution, published a book entitled Education - America's Magic, undoubtedly one of the most grandiose expressions of faith in schooling in all of American history. Hughes and Lancelot were impressed with the military machine which the U.S. had mustered during the war and the nation's prosperity. "Our people produce more and so receive the

197Alexander Meiklejohn, Education Between Two Worlds (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942), p. ix. A similar position was taken a few years later by Harold Benjamin who argued that the danger of extinction men faced derived not from guns or the atomic bomb, "but from the savagery and ill will which a misdirected education gives an ignorant people. . . . The first problem of the world today is not primarily a military, political, or economic problem. It is first of all the problem of how the people of the world shall assume command of their education." See Harold Benjamin, Under Their Own Command (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p. 8. Benjamin was a member of the United States delegation that helped draft the charter for UNESCO and is credited with the phrase: "Wars begin in the minds of men."


highest real wages in the world; and, as a nation, we live better, with more and better food, better clothing, more leisure, and better homes than other people." These things go so far beyond anything in previous history that they seem "amazing" and "to partake of some quality of magic." What is this magic, Hughes and Lancelot wondered. It is certainly not that we are racially superior. Nor is it due simply to our natural resources, our democratic order, or our willingness to work hard. Other peoples had these things too but still did not prosper like Americans. There could only be one answer.

It is universal education, not only at the elementary level but also through the high school, and, within limits, the college and university. A wide gulf, more difficult of passage by far than any expanse of waters, separates us from other peoples of the world in this respect. It is a new thing in human history, and its effects have for the first time been decisively felt in the recent struggle. A far greater proportion of the men of our nation than of any other have been of the capable, resourceful type that were able to out-think their enemies in every situation. Like all others they have possessed courage, but beyond this, they have had imagination and initiative.

The influence of education on man and his world, argued Hughes and Lancelot, has not been appreciated. "Virtually all the important differences between man ten thousand years ago and today are due to education." The increase in the life-span of men, modern sources of power like steam and electricity, modern modes of transportation like the car and plane, modern weapons of war like the superfortress and atomic bomb, "all of this and countless other similar changes we owe to education."
Hughes and Lancelot acknowledged that men learn from many agencies besides the school, but since the school is the major instrument of education in modern nations, "the average man owes a large part of all he knows to the school, and what the school teaches him is that part of his education which contributes most to his efficiency and success." 203

Not only does schooling separate modern from primitive man, it also separates modern nations from primitive nations. The differences between wealthy and powerful nations like the United States and Great Britain and backward nations like China and India is education. Similarly, the difference between states that enjoy high per capita incomes and living standards like Nebraska and Oregon and those that do not, like Arkansas and Mississippi, is their level of support for education.

Clearly, then, the advance of any people can be attributed to the schools, and if each American citizen were educated as much as his ability and interest warranted, America would embark on a golden age in agriculture, industry, art, and music.

It is therefore extremely important that everyone maintain an active and critical interest in education. Everything about education is of transcendent interest, all who are engaged in that field are working at the very foundations of our national life. 204

As the euphoria of the war's end and the hope for a new world gave way to the realities of the Iron Curtain and the Cold War, American laymen and educators voiced interest in what the schools could do to maintain American strength in the face of the Communist enemy but at the same time

203 Ibid., p. 5.
204 Ibid., p. 7.
get young Americans to see the necessity for international cooperation if peace was to be preserved.

According to President Truman, education was "our first line of defense." In a world divided into communist and democratic blocs, America's hope, indeed, the world's hope was schooling. "Through education alone can we combat the tenets of communism. The unfettered soul of free men offers a spiritual defense, unconquered and unconquerable." This being the case, America had to take measures which would guarantee that each of its children received "the highest level of training by which he can profit." Similarly, Truman's Commission on Higher Education concluded that, "in a real sense the future of our civilization depends on the direction education takes, not just in the distant future, but in the days immediately ahead," and called for:

- Education for a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living.
- Education directly and explicitly for international understanding and cooperation.
- Education for the application of creative imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs.

Warren R. Austin, the U. S. Representative to the U.N., wrote that education must help its citizens realize the interdependence of men and nations, that peace has become the only practical condition of existence, and that they must do what they can to help the U.N. succeed.

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The Educational Policies Commission concurred. In a statement on American Education and International Tension, it declared that the schools must inform children of the nature and threat of Communism, but that they must also get children to see the necessity for peace and cooperation between East and West. It was also in the interest of national survival that the Commission reaffirmed the necessity of moral education in the public schools.

In a sense, the division in the world is also a division within each person. If there are not developed in men some inner restraints strong enough to control their impulses toward power and brutality, the alternative appears to be the rule of the strong over the weak, of the few over the many, of the despot over the subject. To be sure, the defense of freedom in the modern world has become in part a problem in military strength and strategy; in part a problem in diplomatic foresight and ingenuity; in part a problem in economic and industrial organization. But it is also, as in the last analysis it always has been, a problem in moral and spiritual development.

The onset of the Korean War and the intensification of the Cold War brought new but similar expressions of the importance of education. In a special edition of Life magazine in the Fall of 1950 devoted to American education, the editors maintained:

In the divided and distracted world of this mid-century, the tough and crucial battles are being fought in that realm where all solemn issues of history are decided—man's own mind. Not on smoke-choked Asiatic beachheads but on leaf-covered campuses and in classrooms filled with children's

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excited babble will the only meaningful questions finally be answered: Can humanity ever achieve wisdom enough to cease preying upon itself? Do the citizens of Western democracy, challenged and besieged, have the intellectual and moral stamina to fight back? Does America, as the champion of the West, have the brain... to match its brawn?  

Earl Warren, then Governor of California, remarked that while the hopes Americans had at the end of World War II for a better world had not been realized, and while the future remained dark, with determination America and its allies could still win "peace and honor in our time." And, he added, "the one thing that can do more to bring about this happy situation more than any other is universal education."  

There were also those who wanted the schools to enter the seamier struggles of the Cold War. With McCarthyism on the rise, the National Commander of the American Legion, addressing the 1951 meeting of the NEA, asserted that "communism in America must be made a crime" and suggested that here was "a worthy campaign in which the educational world could furnish sterling leadership."  

With the coming of the Eisenhower era and the end of the Korean War, Americans settled back to enjoy their post-War prosperity but soon found themselves confronted with the fact that the schools needed financial help if they were going to be able to cope with the flood of war babies entering them. The speeches and conferences concerning the plight of the schools served to express once again the hopes Americans placed in them. Adlai Stevenson said that "to look squarely at the issue of educa-

212 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
tion is to face nothing less than the central question of whether civil-
ization is to prove a fulfillment of divine and rational purpose—or a
bitter mockery.”

In a very real sense the central issue of education is
the central issue of today: How a civilization which has
reached, at least in America, unprecedented heights of ma-
terial wellbeing, and unlocked awesome secrets of the physi-
cal world is also to master the ways for preserving its
spiritual and moral and intellectual values—for preserving,
if you please, those very things that are the essence of
civilization.213

The 1955 White House Conference on education determined that
while the basic function of the schools was training in the 3 r's, the
mission of the school had been enlarged.

The order given by the American people to the school is grand
in its simplicity: in addition to intellectual achievement,
foster morality, happiness, and any useful ability. The
talent of each child is to be sought out and developed to the
fullest. Each weakness is to be studied and, so far as possi-
bile, corrected. This is truly a majestic ideal, and an
astonishingly new one.214

It was indeed a majestic and astonishing ideal, but hardly a new one.
The "order" which the American people were giving represented a reinvest-
ment of the hopes of Horace Mann and John Dewey.

There were, of course, the customary homilies about the necessity
of education to progress during these years as well. Eric Johnston, the
President of the Motion Picture Association of America, told the 1956
NEA meeting:

... I say this with complete sincerity, that the future of

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214 Committee for The White House Conference on Education, A
our nation not only depends upon the education of our youth, as Diogenes said, the future of the world depends upon education. You have a tremendous task and with that tremendous task you have a tremendous responsibility. We cannot attain peace, we cannot attain understanding, we cannot attain progress, without education. I am sure that if we can achieve that education, we can walk down the path toward a brighter, a more glorious future than we have ever had in the past.215

And Vice-President Nixon told the 1957 NEA meeting that it was fitting that the 181st anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence should coincide with the 100th anniversary of the NEA, "because, as we know, America has been blessed with great progress in the 350 years since the first settlement occurred in the New World, and no factor has contributed more to progress than our educational system."216

Schoolmen also continued to manifest the conventional wisdom about how the school could improve the society. The old Deweyan position that the schools could contribute to the reconstruction of society by teaching them to think scientifically and making them aware of social and economic defects that needed solutions remained a popular point of view.217

The social reconstructionist views of Counts also continued to receive some support, although they, like Dewey's ideas, were more often the subject of conversation than the object of commitment. The post-War conservatism of the country, which was induced by the Cold War and rumors of Communist subversion in the government, resulted in the decline of the notion that the school should take the lead in social reform.218

218Curti, p. xxxiii.
duced Counts continued to write, but the chief exponent of reconstructionism, and certainly the most prolific, was Theodore Brameld. Like Counts, Brameld criticized progressive educational philosophy for lacking ends or goals. Like Counts, too, Brameld argued that teachers should work to get children to adopt a social vision, although he qualified this by saying that teachers should do this only through the "method of defensible partiality." However, the content of Brameld's social vision was decidedly different from that of Counts. The world had changed and whereas Counts' vision had been chiefly influenced by the Depression, Brameld's vision was chiefly influenced by the advent of the atomic age.

According to Brameld, man was now capable of releasing the energies of nature "either to remake his world in a new and wonderful image of technological and esthetic achievement, or to commit mass suicide." In an age of power the question was whether education would be merely the servant of other powers or whether it would also be "a generator and director of power." Brameld argued for the latter.

My contention is that if education is to become meaningful in such a setting, it too must become powerful. It is, in fact, the one power left in the world that is greater than the forces of nature that man has now enslaved. Only the power of education is capable of controlling the other powers that man has gained and will use either for his

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219 See, for example, George S. Counts, Education and American Civilization (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952).


annihilation or for his transformation. But since education could be used for moral or immoral purposes, the end to which it would be employed had to be decided on. For Brameld, the desirable end was quite clear, the building of a world order directed by a majority of people. As long as the world was divided into competing factions, the eventual annihilation of men through atomic warfare was almost certain. Only through the formation of a world democratic civilization could catastrophe be avoided and world peace guaranteed. It was also the only means that would insure a just economic order that would provide adequately for the bodily needs of all people and provide the kind of civilization that would enable the individual spirit to develop and flourish. Here, Brameld concluded, was a truly humane purpose to which teachers could devote themselves and "help young people to assume responsibility for its achievement. . . ."

While Brameld styled his philosophy as radical ("such a goal as world civilization in which peoples of all races, all nations, all colors, and all creeds join together in the common purpose of a peaceful world, united under the banner of international order, is truly a radical purpose"), by the middle of the 1950's, the aim of getting children to see the need for international peace and cooperation was a commonplace among educators, and what Brameld was saying hardly seemed all that radical.

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222 Ibid.
223 Ibid., p. 35.
224 Typical examples of this were two of the Horace Mann lectures, Ernest O. Melby, The Education Of Free Men (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955) and Francis S. Chase, Education Faces New Demands (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1956).
Furthermore, he failed, as had Counts, to answer convincingly such questions as why he believed the schools could become more powerful than the other educational agencies of society, why his social vision was the absolute answer to the world's problems, and just how teachers could propagandize for his social vision without violating the tenets of academic freedom or abrogating the public's right to control the schools.

While Brameld had altered considerably the original reconstructionist vision of Counts, Ashley Montagu, an anthropologist rather than an educational philosopher by trade, advocated a role for the school that was more reminiscent of the one Counts had argued for. Like a latter-day Condorcet, he believed that society was "infinitely perfectible" if men finally recognized that social progress results from cooperation and love rather than competition and strife. Furthermore, he argued, all the evidence of modern psychology and biology leads us to believe "that human beings are born good—'good' in the sense that there is no evil or hostility in them." "Human nature is good. It is our present human nurture that is bad." It was Montagu's belief that in order to induce the necessary attitudinal changes in men, "in addition to what each person can himself do, here and now, the best results will be secured through the long term agency of education." In addition to the three r's, the schools had to begin teaching the fourth r, human relations and make it "the principal reason for the existence of the school."


The measure of a person's humanity is the extent and intensity of his love for mankind . . . not the extent or intensity of his knowledge of the three r's. If mankind is to be saved, it can be done only by replacing the values of industrial technology with those of humanity, of cooperation, of love. It is only when humanity is in control that technology in the service of humanity will occupy its proper place in the scheme of things. 227

The school also had to work to submerge economics in the matrix of human relations. Men lived in a profit motive, "economic-struggle-for existence society," in which individuals preyed upon each other. Few succeeded, many failed, and the result was class and caste distinctions. Men had to substitute for this society one so structured that:

the processes of getting a living are co-operative; no one does anything for gain, the profit motive is nonexistent, and the individual feels secure in the knowledge that as long as there is anything to eat, every member in the group will eat. The menace of insecurity is collectively eliminated and individual destitution unknown. 228

If educators advanced these teachings in the schools, children would be prepared for their task as future social engineers charged with basing the social order on human relations rather than economics.

Despite the writings of Brameld and Montagu, the position that prevailed among philosophers of education in the 50's was that social reform was the function of adults in the larger society and not the schools. 229 The function of the schools was not to work for social reform directly but to produce intelligent and informed young adults capable of being social reformers when they came of voting age. In order to accomplish

\[\text{227 Ibid., p. 111.}\]
\[\text{228 Ibid., p. 114.}\]
\[\text{229 Curti, p. xxxiv.}\]
this, the schools would have to give children a solid grounding in all areas of knowledge, teach them the methods of gathering information, and train them to think critically and make sound judgments. Paul Woodring epitomized this position when he wrote, "The schools in any vital civilization have always prepared for the future, but they have done so through an interpretation of the past. They have not led the way but rather have set the stage and provided the background for those who are to lead."230

Woodring's position was actually a variant of Dewey's, that while the schools could not reform society directly, they could do so indirectly by graduating intelligent young men and women. Woodring did not seem to recognize it as such, however. He mistook Counts' social reconstructionism for the position of all progressive educators.231

Between 1865 and 1957, despite two World Wars, a Depression, and a myriad of educational critics, the American faith in the schools endured and grew. At mid-century, Morris R. Cohen found that "probably no single word carries more prestige among us than education."232 Harold Laski remarked that there had never been an age in American history in which the belief in education was so widespread.233 And Max Lerner wrote, "Americans have an extravagant reliance on education."234

231Ibid., pp. 119-126.
George Counts was among the few who voiced reservations. In an article entitled "A Rational Faith in Education," Counts commented on the NEA's centennial slogan, "An educated people moves freedom forward."

We should know now that literacy, earlier regarded as a reliable index of popular enlightenment, may be an instrument through which a controlled press may enclose a whole people. We should know also that the level of human culture cannot be measured by the number of schools and other agencies maintained by a society for the instruction of the young. Germany under the Nazis and Japan under the military caste were among the most literate and well-schooled lands on the face of the earth.235

Pointing to the famous 1920 declaration of H. G. Wells in The Outline of History that "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe," Counts observed that this had been the favorite quotation of American educators in the interbellum period, but that in 1939 Wells himself had reached the melancholy conclusion that "the race may, after all, prove a walk-over for disaster." We realize today, said Counts, that education actually acted as the "midwife of catastrophe."

The Axis powers gave as much attention to inculcating loyalty to the state as they did to their armed forces. "Throughout the world, education, either deliberately or unwittingly, helped to bring upon mankind the disasters that came close to destroying the best in our civilization."236

As we contemplate the uses to which education has been put in the immediate past or is being put in the Soviet Union today, we should realize, Counts concluded:

that organized education may or may not serve the cause of

236 Ibid., p. 253.
peace, liberty, and justice on the earth. In fact, we know that it may serve any cause—tyranny as well as freedom, ignorance as well as enlightenment, falsehood as well as truth, war as well as peace, death as well as life. . . . Education is indeed a force of great power, but whether it is good or bad depends, not on the laws of learning, but on the conception of life or civilization which it expresses. 237

Counts' pessimism was countered by Henry Steele Commager, however. In a rousing declaration that originally appeared in Life magazine and which the schoolmen happily reprinted and distributed by the thousands, Commager argued that "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free."

Since the time of the Puritans, Commager maintained, education has been the American religion. It is in education that we have put our faith, as testimony of that faith we have built schools like cathedrals, and our faith has been wholly justified. "No other people ever demanded so much of education as have the Americans. None other was ever served so well by its schools and administrators." 238

According to Commager "our triumphant faith" imposed four tasks on the schools. The first and most important was to provide an enlightened citizenry. The schools accomplished this task. Americans established a nation and held it together. They created a "more perfect union," solved their problems through compromise and shunned dictators and revolution. It was not Americans who had succumbed to Nazism, Fascism, or Communism. "Only a people taught self-government could record these achievements." 239

237 Ibid.
238 Henry Steele Commager, "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free," Life, October 16, 1950, p. 46.
239 Ibid.
The second task was the creation of national unity. It was in schools that young Americans had become acquainted with men who gave America a common language and heritage: Cooper, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Bancroft, Webster; with memorable sayings like "give me liberty or give me death;" with songs like "Concord Hymn" and pictures of Washington crossing the Delaware or Boone pushing through the Cumberland Gap. "Through its young eyes the young people came to see itself as one nation."²⁴⁰

The schools' third task was to Americanize the immigrants. The millions of newcomers coming to America between 1840 and 1920 had to become Americans in language and thought. "The nation's first and main answer was the public school." It taught the immigrants' children who in turn took home American ways. The schools did "the astounding job asked of them: they have literally made millions of Americans."²⁴¹

The fourth task imposed upon the schools was to keep "this most heterogeneous of modern societies—profoundly varied in racial background, religious faith, social and economic interest" from being torn apart by the "forces of riotous privilege and ruinous division."

These forces have not prevailed; they have been routed, above all, in the schoolrooms and on the playgrounds of America. In the classroom, the nation's children have lived and learned equality—all subject to the same educational processes and the same disciplines. On the playground and athletic field,

²⁴⁰Ibid.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 47. Isaac Kandel concurred with Commager's judgment. That the schools had succeeded in Americanizing the immigrants, he argued, was demonstrated by the immigrants' loyal services in two wars, their contributions to American culture, and the testimony of foreign educators. See Isaac Kandel, American Education In the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 87-88.
Commager concluded that "for a century and a half American schools have served and strengthened the Commonwealth," and "if society clearly defines the new duties it wishes our schools to fulfill and if it steadfastly supports them not only with money but also with faith, they will surely justify that faith in the future as they have in the past."²⁴³

At mid-century most Americans were inclined to agree with Commager that their faith in the schools had been justified. They firmly believed that public education strengthened American democracy and assured social progress.

²⁴² Ibid.
²⁴³ Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

CHALLENGE AND REAFFIRMATION: THE FAITH
FROM SPUTNIK TO THE GREAT SOCIETY

There exists something of a myth which holds that when the Russians in 1957 launched Sputnik I, the American public went immediately into a state of shock. Actually it took some time for the shock to set in. In Boston, public reaction was one of massive indifference. In Denver, football and the Asiatic flu remained the primary topics of conversation. The only missiles Milwaukeeans were talking about were the ones Lew Burdette had thrown at the Yankees in winning the second game of the World Series.  

As the days went by, however, the public, informed of the implications of Sputnik, began to appreciate what some of their scientists and high officials had already appreciated. The Russians had not only one-upped the United States by being first in space, but the rocket power and guidance system it took to orbit the satellite could also hurl a thermonuclear warhead at New York City. It appeared that the Soviets had taken a dangerous lead in weaponry. Although Americans joked about Sputnik cocktails (one third Vodka, two thirds sour grapes) and "muttnik" (after Sputnik II with a dog aboard was launched), they were truly frightened. Having been led to believe that American science and technology were the

envy of the world, they wanted to know why the United States suddenly found itself second best.

The search for reasons for the American predicament began almost immediately, becoming a favorite pastime of the mass media. Although opinions varied, the consensus was that the Russians had put a much greater emphasis than had the United States on getting into space first. Not only had they devoted more effort to space exploration, but the Russians had also gained an advantage in rocket power by developing it while the United States had favored the development of long-range bombers. Furthermore, the American space program had been retarded by lack of funds resulting from an economy-minded Eisenhower administration anxious to avoid deficit spending while deciding to spend more money on complex defense systems than on the space program.²

But these reasons did not satisfy all the critics. To many of them, Sputnik represented not only a triumph of Soviet scientific and technological expertise, but ultimately a triumph of the Soviet educational system. It was the Russian schools that had produced the scientists and engineers who made the feat possible. Conversely, some thought, the United States found itself second-best in space exploration because its educational system was second-best. It had not produced the experts that an increasingly scientific and technological age demanded. Suddenly, the institution in which Americans had placed so much trust and confidence became the scapegoat for a national failure, and many Americans, at least temporarily, lost faith in their schools.

The mass media were not slow to pick up these criticisms. The press accused the schools of substituting "life-adjustment" education for rigorous instruction in the teaching of mathematics and the sciences. Publication of interviews with leading educational critics was also common. U. S. News & World Report, for example, ran a series of interviews with Arthur Bestor of Educational Wastelands fame. An interview published on January 24, 1958, epitomized Bestor's criticisms, which were representative of most of the criticisms following Sputnik.

Q. Dr. Bestor, why is it that we suddenly find ourselves with an inadequate educational system? What went wrong in our schools?

A. The basic trouble is that the persons running our public school system lost sight of the main purpose of education--namely, intellectual training. In the last half century we have expanded our educational system enormously, and this has been all to the good. But educationalists became so intoxicated with the idea of mere size that they were ready to lower standards in order to achieve it. Now we are paying the price of a "soft" educational policy. We have millions of college graduates and tens of millions of persons with high school diplomas, but the Russian threat reveals us dangerously short of men and women with thorough and rigorous training in science and mathematics and other fundamental fields.

Q. Why is it, for instance, that all of a sudden Russia has a lot of scientists and we're told that we didn't develop enough scientists? Was there something wrong with our system?

A. There was certainly something drastically wrong with our system. For a great many years, scientists and scholars in our universities and research establishments have been warning the country of the danger. Back in 1952, in an address to the American Historical Association, I referred to the danger as "anti-intellectualism in the schools." By this I meant the

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tendency of professional educationists to "pooh-pooh" the idea of mental discipline, and to say that the aim of public education ought to be "life adjustment" instead of thorough training in fundamental fields like science, mathematics, foreign languages, history and English.

In the light of Sputnik, "life-adjustment education" turns out to have been something perilously close to "death adjustment" for our nation and our children.4

Q. How do our high school standards compare with those of say, Russia?

A. I'd like to answer that by laying side by side two recent and widely publicized statements by top people in the Federal Government.

The first is from President Eisenhower's broadcast of November 13, 1957: "Remember that when a Russian graduate from high school he has had five years of physics, four years of chemistry, one year of astronomy, five years of biology, ten years of mathematics through trigonometry, and five years of a foreign language."

The other is from the memorandum of December 30, 1957, by Marion B. Folsom, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare: "Studies indicate, for example, that only 1 out of 3 high school graduates . . . has had a year of chemistry, only 1 out of 4 has taken a year of physics, and only 1 out of 3 has had more than a year of algebra."

This is the situation in a nutshell, and remember that the Russians take ten years for their program, whereas we take twelve.

Q. Can citizens do anything about this?

A. Yes. The President suggested one thing in his broadcast. "I wish," he said, "that every school board and every PTA would this week and this year make one single project their special order of business: to scrutinize your school's curriculum and standards to see whether they meet the stern demands of the era we are entering."5


5Ibid., p. 71.
Radio and television broadcasters were not to be outdone by the press. Shortly after the launching of Sputnik I, the Columbia Broadcasting System presented a program describing the education of a "typical" Russian teenager, one Ivan by name. While Ivan had his share of extracurricular fun in sports and amateur dramatics, he spent the major part of his time learning a good bit of mathematics, drinking deeply of both Russian and Western literature, learning to speak English, and doing plenty of homework. From Moscow, CBS switched directly to Tennessee, where it asked a group of American high school students what they thought of Ivan. The general consensus was that Ivan was probably a drag. One girl confessed that she would not enjoy a date with him because she doubted that they would have anything to talk about. Furthermore, she thought that the things Ivan was studying were not only a waste of time but downright boring. The rest of the kids concurred with her judgment.

As far as they were concerned, the most important lesson to be learned in school was learning how to get along with other people. The comparison seemed devastating, especially since the American kids took such pride in their ignorance and manifested the "organization man" philosophy that was under attack in the mid-50's. This, of course, was exactly the effect CBS and the other mass media were trying to achieve.6

There was very little that was new in all of this. Criticisms of American education, and primarily progressive education, had been a regular part of the American scene since the 1930's, starting with the publication of Robert Maynard Hutchins', *The Higher Learning in America.*

The criticism reached a crescendo in 1953 with the publication of Bestor's *Educational Wastelands*, Hutchins' *The Conflict in Education*, Paul Woodring's *Let's Talk Sense About Our Schools*, and Albert Lynd's *Quackery in the Public Schools*. Furthermore, in 1948, Harvard's president, James Conant, had argued that the United States, as the leader of the free world, could not become complacent, and that its survival depended on the marshalling of its talent. A year before Sputnik, Dr. Vannevar Bush and William Benton, a former Connecticut senator, warned Americans of the great strides the Russians had made in mass education, particularly the training of scientists and technicians, and of the increasing sophistication and capabilities of Soviet science and technology. While these criticisms caused some stir amongst the American intelligentsia, the public remained undisturbed. In 1950, *Life* magazine reported that a Roper survey found that while some Americans were dissatisfied with the schools in their own neighborhoods, on the whole they were basically con-

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9Frank G. Jennings, "It Didn't Start With Sputnik," *Saturday Review*, September 16, 1967, p. 96. Benton published what seems to have been the first article in a large-circulation publication dramatizing the Russian educational challenge under the title "Now the 'Cold War' of the Classrooms" in *The New York Times Magazine* of April 1, 1956. This article and his subsequent reports and warnings were published in book form two years later under the title *This Is The Challenge* (New York: Associated College Presses, 1958).

10See Paul Woodring's introduction to Hechinger, p. 10.
tent with the schools. Paul Woodring observed that before 1957, Americans assumed that because they had more schools and kept their children in them longer their educational system must be better. They also found it comfortable to believe, Woodring added, "that the Russians substituted propaganda for liberal education, that their scientific and technical schools were inferior to ours, and that they had been able to develop an atomic bomb only by stealing our secrets."

What was new about the post-Sputnik criticisms was that the American public suddenly seemed to take notice and found that what the critics had been saying seemed to make sense. The editors of Life commented:

For years most critics of U. S. education have suffered the curse of Cassandra--always to tell the truth, seldom to be ignored or believed. But now the curse has been lifted. What they were saying is beginning to be believed. The schools are in terrible shape. What has long been an ignored national problem, Sputnik has made a recognized crisis.

Time magazine declared, "It seemed for a while that all the critics of United States public education, so vociferous since the war, had just


12 Hechinger, p. 10.

13 "Crisis In Education," Life, March 24, 1958, p. 25. This was the first in a series of Life articles on the "Crisis In Education," the remainder of which appeared in the issues for March 31, April 7, 14, and 21, 1958. The series is representative of popular educational journalism in the months after Sputnik and dealt with such topics as the poor working conditions of teachers, the neglect of gifted children, the Physical Science Study Committee, and the influence of the family on learning.
about shot their bolt. Then came Sputnik.\textsuperscript{14} Clifton Fadiman added, "What opened our eyes? A flying box containing a dying dog. We are going to reform American education not because we are eager to produce finer citizens but because we are scared stiff."\textsuperscript{15}

There was something else that was new, a new seriousness on the part of the public about education. Benjamin Fine, then education editor for the New York Times, pointed to this when he wrote:

The year 1957 began quietly enough in education, but it is ending on a hurricane note. The two Soviet earth satellites have changed the public attitude toward education. People are asking such questions as: Is it good enough? Have we failed to educate our children properly? How shall we improve the quality of education?\textsuperscript{16}

There was a growing concern, Fine reported, over the way Americans had taken education for granted and had defeated bond issues for new buildings and ignored teachers' pleas for higher salaries. And there was a new awareness that education could no longer be treated as a marginal luxury. "So education has become front-page news. Suddenly the nation has realized that scientific and technological advances and our public welfare and defense are irrevocably interwoven."\textsuperscript{17}

The degree to which education had taken on added importance in


\textsuperscript{15}Clifton Fadiman, "The Mess in Education--Who Is Responsible?" Reader's Digest, October, 1958, p. 51, quoted in Martin, p. 143.


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
the public mind was indicated by the increase in periodical articles devoted to education. During the year after Sputnik the number of articles devoted to education in mass circulation periodicals increased by 30 per cent. The editors of these periodicals had clearly joined the "millions of Americans who had taken education for granted all their lives and now turned a sadder and dissatisfied eye upon the schools and the children who inhabit them."^19

These new attitudes of the American public toward education were reflected in the speeches and writings of leading politicians. Vice-President Nixon, who in the summer of 1957 had told the NEA that no other institution had contributed more to American progress than the school, now gave his blessings to the critics of education. The fundamental challenge of the Soviet launchings, he declared, lies in the field of education. "Our military and economic strength can be no greater than our educational system. That is why the American educational system is being subjected today to one of the most penetrating periods of criticism and re-examination in our national history."^20 Even though our educational system was good, it could be made better, and, after all, making things better had been "the secret of American progress." Nixon adopted many of the critics' viewpoints. Our major problem, he said, was quality not quantity. We had to have better teachers and less soft

^18 Martin, p. 141.


courses. For just as a soft physical life results in flabby muscles, a soft mental life results in underdeveloped brains and weak intellects. We also had to place less emphasis on adjustment and more on standards. Students had to be taught to face failure and learn how to compete, just as in real life.

If Nixon reflected the American attitude that perhaps the critics had something, Senator John F. Kennedy manifested the other American attitude, that education was vital to the nation's external security. "Crucial questions confront America today," Kennedy wrote. "Will we provide world leadership or display fatal weakness? Will we succeed or fail in the struggle for survival during the years to come?"

The answers, I sincerely believe, depend on whether our educational system is capable of meeting the challenge of today or whether a shortage of teachers, classrooms, and money—with a consequent lack of high-quality education—will prove in the long run to be the undoing of our nation.21

More aid to schools from all levels of government was imperative in order to build more classrooms, train better teachers, and improve teachers' salaries and working conditions. "... These are the goals toward which must move all who recognize that upon education rests the fate of the nation."22

Public concern about education, concern that at times bordered on panic, continued throughout 1958. Fred Hechinger reported that hardly a week passed without several television programs examining education. And when the Rockefeller report on education appeared, it was headline

22 Ibid., p. 11.
news even in small-town dailies. 23

The Rockefeller report was the product of a panel chaired by
John W. Gardner, then president of the Carnegie Corporation. The panel
included David Riesman and James R. Killian, Jr., the president of MIT
and then newly appointed Special Assistant to the President for Science
and Technology. In the midst of a flurry of polemics on education, the
report struck a sober and thoughtful note.

Formally titled The Pursuit of Excellence, the report introduced
the public to a word that was to be the keynote of educational reform in
the next few years. 24 While acknowledging that world conditions required
us to think of our performance as a nation, the report was fundamentally
concerned with the subject of individual excellence, arguing that the
fundamental value of a free society was individual dignity and that a
nation's greatness ultimately depended on the greatness of the individuals
who constituted it.

The report adopted the criticism popularized in the 1950's by
David Riesman and William H. Whyte, Jr., that "our society has given too
little attention to the individual of unusual talent or potentialities." 25

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23 Fred M. Hechinger, "Five Basic Problems of Education," The

24 Gardner himself later elaborated on the theme of excellence in
that excellence in a free society as a whole was vital to its continued
existence and he discussed the conditions that made for excellence. In
his Self-Renewal (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Gardner discussed the
requirements for and necessity of individual and social renewal to the
preservation of excellence in society and the prevention of the decline
and fall of a free society.

25 Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc., The Pursuit of Excellence:
Education And The Future of America (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday
This assertion was not meant to demean society's attempts to raise the general level of achievement. Instead it pointed up the need for attention to the education of the gifted and the need to encourage excellence of all kinds.

Every democracy must encourage high individual performance. If it does not, it closes itself off from the main springs of its dynamism and talent and imagination, and the traditional democratic invitation to the individual to realize his full potentialities becomes meaningless. More, perhaps, than any other form of government, a democracy must maintain what Ralph Barton Perry has called "an express insistence upon quality and distinction." 26

The report noted that Americans have always told themselves that education was vital to the nation's strength and it acknowledged that "the times have grimly underscored the correctness of that view." But it was no longer enough merely to repeat this cliche. "We must recognize that in many areas our educational facilities are poor and our educational effort slovenly." 27 The schools were overcrowded, understaffed, and ill-equipped. They were often unable to offer chemistry, physics and mathematics because there were no teachers to teach them. And teachers were often hard to find for such basic subjects as English and social sciences. These conditions could not be blamed on educators. The public demanded the expansion of the educational system without providing funds needed for buildings and salaries. 28 Schools were asked to include in their curriculum "an incredible variety of subjects, to take

26 Ibid., p. 16.
27 Ibid., p. 19.
28 The report pointed out that the high school population was eighty times as large in 1955 as it had been in 1870.
more and more of the functions of the home, and to accept a sense of responsibility for every psychic or civic crisis involving individuals below the age of consent." The report marveled at the fact that educators had held up under the pressure. "That they may be credited with heroic achievements in creating a system of universal education is a simple fact." While the writers did not wish to absolve educators of their failures, above all they did not want to absolve the public of its failure.

The fateful question is not whether we have done well, or whether we are doing better than we have in the past, but whether we are meeting the stern demands and unparalleled opportunities of the times. And the answer is that we are not.30

If the nation was to get the high quality educational programs the times demanded, there would have to be an "unsparing re-examination of current practices, patterns of organization, and objectives."31 But Americans would also have to realize that an improved education was going to take much more money than they had been willing to spend because "at stake is nothing less than our national greatness and our aspirations for the dignity of the individual."32

Americans would also have to overcome the "cult of easiness," the quest for security, comfort, and luxury. A culture, if it is to survive, claimed the report, must offer "great meanings, great objectives,

29 Rockefeller Brothers Fund, p. 21.
30 Ibid., p. 22.
31 Ibid., p. 21.
32 Ibid., p. 33.
great convictions" and these must inspire the education of its youth.

They are preparing themselves for a world in which, as Thornton Wilder said, "every good and excellent thing . . . stands moment by moment on the razor-edge of danger and must be fought for." They are preparing themselves for a world which has always been shaped and always will be shaped by societies which have placed at the service of their most cherished values a firmness of purpose, discipline, energy, and devotion.33

The Rockefeller report confirmed what many Americans already sensed. Sputnik had signaled the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. In addressing itself to the crisis in science the report put it this way:

... The U.S.S.R. is not the "cause" of the crisis. The cause of the crisis is our breath-taking movement into a new technological era. The U.S.S.R. has served as a rude stimulus to awaken us to that reality.

The heart of the matter is that we are moving with headlong speed into a new phase in man's long struggle to control his environment, a phase beside which the industrial revolution may appear a modest alteration of human affairs.34

The report also confirmed the necessity for the new public seriousness about education. As the New York Times editorialized, the report was a challenge to Americans to take action before it was too late.35 The way Americans had thought about education in the past was no longer good enough. Pieties about the value of education to democracy without necessary financial and moral support would no longer do. Americans had

33 Ibid., p. 49.
34 Ibid., p. 28.
1959 brought the climax of post-Sputnik educational criticisms. President Eisenhower, whose administration was held responsible for not getting a U. S. satellite up first, condemned the educational philosophy of John Dewey in a letter published in Life on March 15, 1959, implying that Dewey was to blame for the embarrassment his administration had suffered.

Educators, parents and students must be continuously stirred up by the defects in our educational system. They must be induced to abandon the educational path that, rather blindly, they have been following as a result of John Dewey's teachings.37

In 1959 the Council for Basic Education published The Case for Basic Education. It accused the schools of shoddy intellectual standards. One writer argued that, "self-government cannot long survive unless mass education moves toward . . . academic standards. . . ."38

1959 was also the year Jacques Barzun published The House of

36 The Educational Policies Commission, in a statement entitled The Contemporary Challenge to American Education (Washington, D. C.: National Education Ass'n., 1958), arrived at conclusions similar to those of the Rockefeller panel. It noted that the public was now aware that the nation's future rested to a large extent upon progress in science and technology and that this was a matter of priority for American education. It called for better educational opportunities for gifted students, better guidance, improvement in the selection and training of teachers, better working conditions for teachers, improved instruction in mathematics, sciences, and languages, and the money necessary to realize these objectives. The statement issued the following year by the President's Science Advisory Committee, Education for the Age of Science (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1959), was also reminiscent of the Rockefeller report.


Intellect which emphasized a characteristic post-Sputnik concern, the school's responsibility to foster ability and achievement. Barzun was nauseated by the word "education," labeling it "damnable."

Besides all the educating for health, character, happiness, and pedestrian safety, we now have driver education and alcohol education, cancer education and sex education—just as next to the Education of Henry Adams we have The Education of a Poker Player.39

The word "education" should therefore be reserved "for all this, which it has conquered, and absolutely banned from discussions of schooling and instruction, which in an evil day it replaced."40 "Education" never seems to end, "whereas in instruction there is a point (or should be) at which one knows how to read, count, write, speak German, and understand physics."41 If we really wanted to improve our schools, said Barzun, we would have to "forget the language and especially the slogans, of mass education." Nonsense like keeping the schools "democratic" only resulted in neglect of ability differences. It was a "wasteful, dangerous, and unjust" attitude.

Ability and achievement are too important to the country to be any longer trifled with. . . . The analogy of athletics must be pressed until all recognize that in the exertions of intellect those who lack the muscles, co-ordination, and will-power can claim no place at the training table, let alone the playing field.42

Barzun held that we could not make intellectuals out of two mil-
lion students. Too many were simply incapable of a bookish education and had the good sense to know that some marketable vocational training was what they needed most. But we could foster ability by:

the selection and special schooling of those with a talent for abstraction, articulateness, and the pursuit of ideas in books. This selection need not mean a new kind of segregation: many classes can be shared by all the children in a school, while special classes will speed the intellectually strong toward their goals. In this way the schools could begin honestly to serve the ends of intellect.

The most acerbic criticisms of the schools in 1959 came from Vice Admiral Hyman G. Rickover in his *Education and Freedom*. Rickover's interest in education was stirred by his assignment to build nuclear reactors. In the course of interviewing two thousand men for his engineering group, he was able to find only one-hundred fifty that met his requirements. This experience, he said, left a deep impression. "It led me directly to a study of why our educational system produces so few men who are qualified to do the work which we must do if we are to progress." Rickover's study subsequently led him to the conclusions that the schools "are the greatest cultural lag we have today," and that "only massive upgrading of the scholastic standards of our schools will guarantee the future prosperity and freedom of the Republic."

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While the Rockefeller report had stressed the poor conditions caused by public neglect under which educators were forced to operate, Rickover laid the blame for educational failures squarely at the feet of John Dewey and other "educationists." It was they who had led the schools down the road to life-adjustment education, abdicating the responsibility to provide solid grounding in educational fundamentals. In words reminiscent of Irving Babbitt's in the 1920's, Rickover complained, "The American people have never authorized the schools to replace education with life-adjustment training and behavioral conditioning. Yet we have permitted the schools to experiment with Dewey's ideas for a long time."\(^7\)

Rickover admired European schools.

European schools are neither social clubs nor finishing schools. Their objectives are limited and clearly defined: they seek to equip the child with all the intellectual tools he can handle, they nourish his mind with as much general culture as he can absorb; and they give his body all the exercise it can take. When a point is reached where pupils can absorb no more mental food, they go on to schools which give vocational training of one kind or another.\(^8\)

If American schools were to meet the requirements of the modern world, they would have to follow this example.

Young people in this modern world need minds that are well stocked with the kind of knowledge that makes life intelligible. No substitute for a liberal-arts education has yet been invented that serves this purpose as well. English, foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, history, geography--these are the subjects which must be mastered. . . . Those who do not have the mentality to master all these subjects need the same kind of intellectual fare, only less of it.\(^9\)

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 145.
\(^8\)Ibid., p. 151.
\(^9\)Ibid., p. 154.
Only in this way could the school hope to produce "the technical expert," "the man of the future on whom we shall depend more and more. . . ." 50

Our complicated nuclear reactors are but the forerunners of many more projects of even greater complexity, requiring more people with good education and strong motivation. I speak out only because I must. Because in my work I have had a glimpse of the future. The future belongs to the best-educated nation. Let it be ours. 51

Education and Freedom was the climactic statement of the post-Sputnik educational criticism. In fact it can be argued that it was the climax of the educational criticism that had begun in the 1930's. For not only was it the most artless appeal to improve education in order to insure American military superiority (Sidney Hook scowled that it should have been properly entitled "Education for Victory in the Next War" 52), but one could not read it without a strong feeling of déjà vu. It rehearsed most of the major criticisms of the previous thirty years, but without the urbanity and sophistication of a Hutchins or Bestor. At times Rickover's arguments were amateurish. His learning theory—"the same basic process of storing the mind with knowledge can be adapted for each group of students"—was antedeluvian. His account of how Dewey had corrupted the schools was sheer fantasy. Despite Rickover's sincere concern about America's need for competent and independent minds, Education and Freedom came close to being a parody of educational criticism.

There was another reason why Rickover's book was the climax of post-Sputnik educational criticism. That was the publication in 1959 of

50 Ibid., p. 19.
51 Ibid., p. 38.
52 Hook, p. 11.
James B. Conant's *The American High School Today*. While Americans had manifested a new seriousness about education in the months following Sputnik, by 1959 their seriousness had turned to weariness. Conant told them what they wanted to hear, that the high schools were not that bad after all, and in doing so he put a damper on the criticism of the schools.

Conant's study had been commissioned by John W. Gardner and the Carnegie Corporation in the winter of 1957. In the aftermath of Sputnik it received more attention than expected. Conant's approach differed from Bestor's and Rickover's. His select research group went out and visited over a hundred high schools throughout the country to see what they actually were doing. The results of this empirical study proved a devastating blow to the criticisms of those who had attacked the schools from a purely ideological standpoint.

Conant disdained comparing American education to education elsewhere. Such comparisons "frankly, leave me cold," he said. As far as

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55 Conant himself commented that "the Russians really put Sputnik up right on schedule in 1957 for my purposes. That book was addressed to 20,000 local school boards, all under tremendous pressure from Sputnik." See Terry Ferrer, "Conant Revisited," *Saturday Review*, March 18, 1967, p. 57.
56 James Koerner complained, however, that there were no recognized scholars in any subject involved in Conant's study. See Koerner, p. viii.
57 Karier, p. 253.
he was concerned, the only thing there was to compare between two educational systems was the social and political structure encompassing them. The American high school, Conant contended, is a unique institution with no counterpart in any other country. Unlike the German gymnasium, it does not provide the students' entire general education and its students do not go directly into professional studies at the university. Instead the American student takes two to four years of general education at college before beginning professional studies. Therefore, the standards met upon graduation from high schools are obviously not equal to those met after graduation from the gymnasium. Furthermore, the American high school is a comprehensive school, encompassing all the children of a community and providing an appropriate education for each. For some, a full program of general education is appropriate, but for the majority vocational training is imperative. No one type of education is suitable for all.

Conant did not attempt to answer the question whether the high schools were good enough. Instead, he asked whether schools met three criteria: (1) Did they provide a good general education for all the students? (2) Did they provide vocational courses that would enable students to develop skills they could market after graduation? (3) Did they provide the opportunities for the academically able (approximately 15-20 per cent of the high school population) to take advanced work in science, mathematics, and foreign languages?

\[59\text{Ibid.}\]

Although he found only eight schools meeting all three requirements to his satisfaction, he still concluded that, aside from needed consolidation of small school districts, "I believe no radical alteration in the basic pattern of American education is necessary in order to improve our public high schools. If all the high schools were functioning as well as some I have visited, the education of all American youth would be satisfactory..." There were, of course, some minor changes that would have to be made. Foreign language instruction had to be improved as would the guidance of more able girls. And Conant did have one general criticism:

The academically talented student, as a rule, is not being sufficiently challenged, does not work hard enough, and his program of academic subjects is not of sufficient range. The able boys too often specialize in mathematics and science to the exclusion of foreign languages and to the neglect of English and social studies. The able girls, on the other hand, too often avoid mathematics and science as well as foreign languages.

But if schools adopted his recommendations for able students and communities began to de-emphasize football, marching bands and other extracurricular activities in favor of academic activities, this situation could be remedied.

Conant reaffirmed the faith of Americans in their schools. His report disputed the claim that the schools were in bad shape, while assuring Americans that with more money and community concern and the

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61 Ibid., p. 47.
62 Ibid.
adoption of the report's recommendations, the schools could produce students who would meet the manpower needs of America in the Space Age.

Conant's report did not go uncriticized—some charged it with blind conservatism, while schoolmen denied that it was true that able students were not working hard enough—but it did signal the end of the educational storm. By the end of 1960, Fred Hechinger reported that the violent debate between lay critics and professional educators had abated, and the debate over proposed school reforms was now concentrated within the profession itself.65

An indication of the return to normalcy in education was the reappearance of cliche-ridden remarks about the value of schooling. The dedication of the NEA Headquarters Building in Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1959, occasioned several of them. Luther H. Evans, the Director General of UNESCO from 1953-1958 said, "My experience makes me believe that the future peace of mankind will depend on what happens in the schoolroom."66 Lawrence Derthick, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, observed:

We find ourselves suddenly poised on the threshold of a scientific revolution, in a world in which all the sons of man are reaching out impatiently for new dimensions of understanding to help them combat man's ancient enemies—ignorance, poverty, disease, and human degradation.

Teachers have the responsibility and the privilege of

64 The Educational Policies Commission's, An Essay on Quality in Public Education (Washington, D.C.: National Education Ass'n., 1959), apparently influenced by Conant, who was a member of the commission, made similar recommendations.


leadership in all that this new age can do to carry forward the promise of human progress.67

And there was also this declaration by John H. Fisher, then the Superintendent of Schools in Baltimore and later President of Teachers College at Columbia University:

The fundamental fact . . . is that our whole pattern of political, social, economic, and cultural development in this country rests upon universal education. Our development as a nation has gone forward steadily—and only—as the quality and amount of educational preparation among our people have increased. . . .68

The homilies were not limited to speeches dedicating NEA office buildings. In the first editorial of the Saturday Review's new monthly educational supplement, Paul Woodring invoked H. G. Wells' declaration about history being a race between education and catastrophe and stated:

Today our attention is focused on the race that Wells foresaw, and it is no longer clear that education holds the lead. Catastrophe in two forms--nuclear weapons carried by guided missiles, and governments that blot out the freedom of men--appears to have pulled ahead. It remains to be seen whether the twentieth century will go down in history as the century of atomic destruction and the end of human liberties or as the century of universal education in which enlightened men learned to conquer the forces that threatened to destroy them.69

David Sarnoff, head of RCA and an inveterate believer in the tremendous technological progress he had witnessed in this century, warned that the schools must equip men and women with the power to handle an increasingly complex technology. "Unless that need is filled, so-called

67 Ibid., p. 22.
68 Ibid., p. 18.
'progress' can turn into its very opposite—retrogression."70

Perhaps some of the most unregenerate comments concerning the power of schooling came from Francis H. Horn of the University of Rhode Island. Sounding like Harry Elmer Barnes at the end of the 1930's, Horn maintained that "the most important task in the world today is education. Education is the one best hope for a world which stands at a crossroads where mankind has never stood before."71 One way leads toward a peaceful society, free of hunger, poverty, disease, and ignorance, where men enjoy justice and a decent standard of living. The other way leads to nuclear warfare and the annihilation of mankind. Education in all nations must be improved and extended and instill in the young a love of truth, beauty, and integrity. These values possess intrinsic worth. They insure that men will survive and flourish.

It is given to teachers, whether in colleges or in the elementary and secondary schools, to help young people establish a life solidly constructed upon these enduring values. Theirs is the great task of our time. In no other profession are the opportunities so challenging. In no other job is the contribution that can be made to society so significant or so long-lasting.72

If teachers fulfill their task, education "will truly be the major factor in the avoidance of catastrophe and the achievement of the good life promised to all mankind if we make the courageous effort the challenge of the future demands."73

70David Sarnoff, "Education in Our World of Change," Teachers College Record, LXII (October, 1960), 62.
71Francis H. Horn, "Education--For What?", Teachers College Record, LXII (March, 1961), 476.
72Ibid., pp. 481-482.
73Ibid., p. 482.
What can be said of the "hullaballoo" about education that followed Sputnik? In one respect concern about its quality was warranted. The critics were right when they quoted, ad nauseam, Whitehead's dictum that the technological age demands trained intelligence and the nation that does not cultivate such intelligence is in peril. It is apparent, however, that there was more to the anguish raised. The major part of the anxiety was not over what the schools would do in the future, but rather what many Americans thought they had failed to do in the past. Believing as they did in the powers of education, it was characteristic of Americans to assume that the failures of the United States in space were the fault of the schools. It was equally characteristic of them, moreover, to believe that the solution to the Russian challenge was to be found in education. Just as Americans had believed in the 19th century that schooling was the cure for destructive radicalism and held in the 1930's and 40's that it was the cure for economic depression and fascism, so Americans in 1957 concluded that education could rectify their failures in space. And even though many Americans believed that the schools had been corrupted by John Dewey, they retained the feeling that if the schools were purged of progressive elements, they could redeem themselves.

Although all the post-Sputnik rhetoric about education had largely dissipated by the beginning of the 1960's, it did change the schools. Sidney Hook points out that it is no exaggeration to say that before Sputnik and after Sputnik mark two eras in the history of American education.

The nation came out of the shock to its pride and self-confidence produced by the glittering orbit of the Soviet satellites
with a frenzied scramble for educational short cuts which would restore its much vaunted technological superiority. ... Crash programs were called for to produce more engineers and scientists, to teach intensive courses in mathematics and sciences at all educational levels, to prune the curriculum of high schools and colleges of the dry rot of needless cultural courses, and to favor the gifted students by accelerating their educational development.  

Asa Knowles, the president of the University of Toledo commented, "Truly, our educators and teachers are on the spot! Society is expecting them to fulfill a much more important role than at any previous time in our history. They are expected to produce an intellectual renaissance for the Western world—intellectual leadership on the part of the U.S.A."  

An intellectual renaissance was perhaps a bit too much to expect. But what did emerge after the dust had settled was a serious attempt to reform curriculum and teaching methods. By the end of 1960, Hechinger reported that, "the theme for American education was curriculum reform. For the first time in more than a generation American educators were introducing drastic changes."  

The so-called "revolution" in education did not begin with Sputnik. For one thing, the examination of draftees during World War II, which revealed that many high school graduates were mathematical and scientific illiterates, had aroused the concern of many scientists who made it their business after the war to investigate the quantity and quality of secondary school science and mathematics. According to

74Hook, p. 9.  
director E. G. Begle, the roots of the School Mathematics Study Group, founded in 1958, can be traced to a conference of mathematicians held in the early 50's concerning the quality of high school mathematics.\(^77\)

Curriculum reform had also received support in the early 1950's from middle class parents, grown increasingly affluent, who desired a college education for their children and who assumed that a precollegiate curriculum prepared by distinguished scholars would help ready their children to compete for the limited number of college openings.\(^78\)

Another reason for the reform movement in education was that the knowledge explosion had left the schools teaching outdated information. Scholars increasingly realized that students had to be acquainted with the theoretical constructs that give "facts" meaning. Consequently, there was a new emphasis on the "structures" of the academic disciplines and the methods of knowing employed by scholars. This new emphasis, in turn, led to an interest in how children could best learn these structures and strategies. Piaget's studies of children's learning were re-discovered and the problems of programming and instruction received

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\(^77\) John I. Goodlad, "The Curriculum," The Changing American School, Sixty-Fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 35. The first group formed to revise the high school mathematics curriculum, the University of Illinois' Committee on School Mathematics, was similarly founded because of discontent over the mathematical deficiencies of students entering the science and engineering departments at the university. The Physical Science Study Committee was also founded prior to Sputnik, in 1956, and its first programs were put in use in the 1957-58 school year.

\(^78\) Ibid., p. 36.
renewed attention.  

Frank G. Jennings points to three additional factors that helped spawn the curriculum revolution. First was the establishment of the National Science Foundation as an independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government charged with strengthening basic research and education in the sciences. Founded with a budget of a few hundred thousand dollars in 1950, the NSF’s budget amounted to $121 million in 1967. Its money was used to provide fellowships for graduate and post-doctoral students in science; to promote training of teachers of science, mathematics, and engineering; to improve science and mathematics curricula, especially in the high schools; and to identify talented high school and college students. Second was the establishment of the Fund for the Advancement of Education in 1951 by the Ford Foundation. The Fund supported experimental programs in teacher education, classroom television, teacher aids and similar innovations. Third was the Carnegie Corporation’s support of Conant’s study of the high school.  

But even when all these catalysts for the revolution in education are pointed to, the fact remains that the primary catalyst was Sputnik. Before Sputnik, educational reform was the concern of a few people and a few foundations. After Sputnik it was a matter of national and governmental concern. “Sputnik has been referred to so many times and


80 Jennings, p. 96.
in so many contexts," writes Goodlad, "that we are too much inclined to ignore or underestimate its significance as a factor productive of school curriculum reform." 81

The National Science Foundation, which funded the Physical Science Study Committee, went on to fund such curriculum revision projects as the School Mathematics Study Group and the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act which provided funds for the United States Office of Education to sponsor research and innovation in science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, and guidance. The Act also permitted the federal government to finance new teacher training programs, experiments with new educational methods, and educational research centers. It also allowed the federal government to grant money to the states on a matching basis for the purchase of science equipment and the construction of science laboratories in an effort to improve science instruction in the secondary schools.

The government-sponsored curriculum reform in science and mathematics also inspired subsequent private curriculum reform projects in the social sciences sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and its various members. 82

81Goodlad, p. 35.

82This description of NDEA provisions is based on the one given in S. Alexander Rippa, Education in a Free Society (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 334-335. The NDEA Act was renewed by Congress in 1964 and expanded to provide funds for the improvement of instruction in reading, English, geography, history, and civics.

83Descriptions of these and most other curriculum projects may be found in John I. Goodlad, The Changing School Curriculum (New York: The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1966).
Goodlad and others have pointed out that while previous eras of curriculum development in the 20th century can be labeled child-centered or society-centered, the new curricula are much more aptly described as discipline or subject centered. In a very real sense these curricular revisions represent a return to an older tradition of curriculum development. The emphasis is once again on subject matter organized within separate academic disciplines, and university scholars and scientists are again largely determining what is to be taught in the secondary schools. For these scholars, the disciplines determine the ends and means of schooling. The purpose of studying physics and mathematics is to learn the structure of physics and mathematics and the ways physicists and mathematicians think and operate. The purpose of studying history is to learn the structure of history and the ways historians think and behave. The literature describing the new curricula reiterates these aims exclusively. According to William Wooten, the historian of the School Mathematics Study Group:

In the final analysis, the sole purpose of the Group has been to try to increase the sum total of mathematical knowledge, both in the individual and in the society as a whole. The massive efforts made to improve textbooks, teaching, and other factors bearing on mathematics instruction have all been undertaken with a view toward their ultimate effect on this knowledge.

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For Jerrold Zacharias, the architect of the Physical Science Study Committee, the basic purpose of the new curricula is to bridge the gap between the professional scholar or research scientist and the classroom.

This apparent lack of concern for the ultimate aims of education for which the study of the new mathematics or physics is a means, caused consternation among some observers. Theodore Sizer, Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, argued that the limited objectives of specific curriculum projects and the introduction into the schools of the new curricula subject by subject threatens to leave the curriculum fragmented.

We need to look at the curriculum as a whole as well as subject by subject, and we must do both simultaneously. The strategy for a broad-gauged attack must necessarily be more complex than that for dealing with individual subjects. Just as the reformers started by looking at the inherent logic of each subject and at the ends for which the student studied it, so we must look for the underlying rationale for formal schooling and the particular ends for which a particular school is preparing.

While the curriculum revisionists refused to concern themselves with the final purposes of schooling, those who did gave expression to the renewed American faith in the schools. John I. Goodlad, reaffirming the Puritan and Enlightenment strains of American educational thought, argued that the aim of education was a moral one.

The central task of education, and, therefore, of schools, is to develop men of good will who do not cheat or steal or kill—universal individuals who value as one both self and

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88 Heath, p. 68.
all mankind, sensing immortality as the idea of mankind and not the fact of man.\textsuperscript{90}

Such men, said Goodlad, would be rational men, men committed to the rigorous examination of the problems that confront them, but prepared to act even when their conclusions were tentative. Once again the schools were assigned the overwhelming task of transforming human nature.

The Enlightenment ideal of rationality was also reaffirmed by the Educational Policies Commission in 1961. Man's aesthetic, moral, and religious powers, the commission wrote, rest on his rational powers, by which the commission meant man's ability to recall, imagine, classify, generalize, compare, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, deduce and infer. Intelligent value choices and behavior, as well as the power to achieve personal goals and fulfill obligations to society, depend on the cultivation of these abilities. "The rational powers are to the entire human spirit as the hub is to the wheel."\textsuperscript{91} Since the development of the rational powers further "personal and social effectiveness," "they are central to individual dignity, human progress, and national survival."\textsuperscript{92}

The school, therefore, can do nothing more important than help the individual develop the ability to think. "This is the central purpose to which the school must be oriented if it is to accomplish either its traditional tasks or those newly accentuated by recent changes in the


\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., p. 11.
Five years later the Commission reasserted and enlarged on its judgment. The rational person is the person who thinks scientifically. The schools, therefore, should foster those values inherent in the spirit of science: (1) Longing to know and to understand; (2) Questioning of all things; (3) Search for data and their meaning; (4) Demand for verification; (5) Respect for logic; (6) Consideration of premises; (7) Consideration of consequences.\(^\text{94}\)

If there were educators like Conant who stressed the need for the schools to meet national manpower requirements in the interest of national survival, there were also educators like Sterling McMurrin, President Kennedy's Commissioner of Education, who, while acknowledging the validity of this claim on the schools, believed that it was the primary concern of America's educational institutions to protect the sanctity of the individual against social and political demands. "As never before he must be encouraged in his uniqueness, his creativity, his spirit of intellectual adventure, his moral courage, and his aspirations." This aim required that we achieve educational excellence, "for nothing short of genuine excellence in our educational pursuits is good enough for our people or will satisfy our obligations to our society." Only then would we be able to produce the individual who would be capable not only of insuring national security, "but of creating a culture that in


every way measures up to the high quality of which we are capable."

Samuel B. Gould, President of the State University of New York, also chose to de-emphasize the role of education in insuring national survival in favor of its potential role in the course of peace. While he acknowledged that the hope for a world without war had been disappointed countless times, still, he believed, it was attainable. But it could only be achieved "by going beyond the point of survival to the more lasting and firmer ground on which all men can stand because of their interdependence, their humanity, their understanding, their compassion."

Education rightly conceived and developed, rightly understood for its true purpose, can take this nation a long way toward such a place. This is the single greatest contribution we can make to all the generations to come.

Philip Phenix also thought that the schools, and the nation as well, had to be concerned with more than survival. Equilibrium among nations, he maintained, cannot be established solely on the basis of power. "Principles of reason and morality will have to govern within and between the nations if there is to be any future for civilization."

Since the central task of education, according to Phenix, was intellectual and ethical cultivation, the welfare of the nation and the world depended on whether education would be honest to its own "intrinsic imperatives."

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95 Sterling M. McMurrin, "American Education and the Culture," Teachers College Record, LXIII (October, 1961), 36-37.

The true necessities of our nation's life today are the compulsions of knowing the truth and doing the right, and these are and have always been the proper goals of education. Insofar as educators become instruments for a national policy more narrowly conceived—in particular, in terms of a power struggle—they not only prove themselves unfaithful to their professional trust, but ultimately disloyal to their nation and to humanity.97

The continuing faith of Americans in formal education after Sputnik was manifested not only by their support of new curriculum projects and by expressions of what they hoped education would accomplish, but also by their efforts to expand educational opportunity. This manifestation of their faith was noted by the editor of Teachers College Record, Edward Shoben, Jr.

Shoben showed that in the year after Sputnik, 1958, the Soviet Union, in attempting to achieve a superior military position, reformed its educational system in order to assure an adequate future supply of engineers and scientists. One effect of the reform, however, was to reduce the educational opportunity of a large number of Soviet children. At the very time the Soviets were doing this, Americans were responding to Sputnik by trying to increase the opportunities of their children for more education. Americans refused to require certain children to enter such expertise fields as aeronautical engineering or astrophysics. They simply made it possible for more children to go on to college. As Shoben noted, the contrast was striking and it underscored the American faith in the schools. "Rooted in the American bone, there is an apparent belief that virtually any crisis can be met and overcome if there is a

sufficient number of educated people in the population." Shoben further observed that Americans did not even seem to care that people were educated in any particular way. In fact, they seemed to take the attitude that the greater the variety of educational patterns the better. Shoben concluded that, "universal education, capacious enough in its scope to accommodate all the millions to whom it applies, is a secular route to contemporary salvation."98

And indeed it was, just as it had been since the days of the American Revolution. Sputnik had caused Americans to re-examine their schools, and for various reasons, good and bad, they had found them wanting. Believing in education as they did, however, they were quick to reinvest their faith, trusting that with reform and expansion the schools could meet the challenge of the new technological era. Americans of the late 1950's and the mid-1960's, as Americans before them, continued to have faith that education could preserve democracy and insure its progress. President Kennedy expressed this belief when he declared in his 1961 message on education to Congress:

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. Our requirements for world leadership, our hopes for economic growth, and the demand of citizenship itself in an era such as this all require the maximum development of every young American's capacity.99

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99John F. Kennedy, John F. Kennedy on Education, ed. William I. O'Hara (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1966), p. 117. In his 1963 message on education, Kennedy also wrote: "Education is both the foundation and the unifying force of our democratic way of life—it is the mainspring of our economic and social progress—it is the highest expression of achievement in our society, enobling and enriching human life. In short, it is at the same time the most profitable investment society can make and the richest reward it can confer." Ibid., p. 133.
President Johnson agreed with his predecessor. He told the members of the NEA that it was they who would determine the future shape of American society.

Education, more than any single force, will mold the citizen of the future. That citizen, in turn, will really determine the greatness of our society, and it is up to you to make that education equal to our towering expectations of the America that we love and the America that is to come.\textsuperscript{100}

John W. Gardner, Johnson's Secretary of HEW, assured the same group of teachers that:

\ldots it isn't just a cliche of the commencement platform that you, the educators, are shaping the future of the nation. Through your hands pass our future leaders, and the voters who will select those leaders, and the teachers who will educate the voters.\textsuperscript{101}

Apparently American teachers believed Gardner. Braulio Alonso, the President of the NEA in 1967, carried on the messianic tradition of his profession when he told his fellow teachers:

Our generation of teachers is given the opportunity to enhance the dignity of every man, to spread enlightenment around the globe, to fight injustice, to promote freedom, and to help secure the peace of men and of nations.\textsuperscript{102}

Drawing on a popular song for inspiration, Alonso exhorted his peers to "dream the impossible dream, fight the unbeatable foe, reach for the unreachable star--together." And continuing the NEA's tradition of combining education with religion, Alonso concluded, "May God give all of us the vision, the wisdom, the courage, the faith, and the strength to fulfill our commitment to action."\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{100}NEA, Proceedings, (1965), p. 7.
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., (1966), p. 31.
\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., (1967), p. 44.
\textsuperscript{103}Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

THE ASSURANCES OF BELIEF: FAITH IN THE SCHOOLS

AS A WAY OF OPPORTUNITY, 1865-1968

The last two chapters traced the development from 1865 to the mid-1960's of the American faith in the schools as an agency of progress and its corollary, faith in the schools as a means of preserving and strengthening democracy. This chapter will examine the development since 1865 of a second corollary, faith in the schools as a means of social and economic advancement.

The reader will recall that the idea that the United States should provide equal educational opportunity for each individual so that he might have the chance to develop his talents and abilities to the fullest goes back to the founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson advocated a system of free public schools where children of different classes would mingle and a natural aristocracy of virtue and talent could emerge. Benjamin Franklin led in the development of an English school which provided an education more suitable to the middle classes and their worldly concerns.

The ideal of equal educational opportunity was carried forward and enlarged during the common school era. The common school was to break down odious class barriers and enable every boy and girl to better their economic and social condition. Assuming that associating in a
common school would engender mutual respect and friendship, the Reverend Caleb Stetson of Medford, Massachusetts, told the Middlesex County Association for the Improvement of Common Schools:

I want to see the children of the rich and the poor sit down side by side on equal terms, as members of one family—a great brotherhood—deeming no one distinguished above the rest but the best scholar and the best boy—giving free and natural play to their affections, at a time of life when lasting friendships are formed, and worldliness and pride, and envy have not yet alienated heart from heart. . . . The different classes of the community will love and honor each other, when they come to remember these intimate associations of their childhood and the great lesson they taught—namely, that true dignity and worth depend not upon the outward but upon the inward man.—

Addressing himself to the same subject in The New England Magazine in 1832, another writer declared:

There the rich and the poor should meet together; there their children should join—the rich man's son to learn that it is by a rough contest with the rougher members of society, that he is to work his way through life; and the poor man's son to catch some of the embellishments of higher stations and more polished minds. It is this mixture of character that improves our minds, and forms the harmony of this sometimes jarring world.

The Workingmen's Associations also militated for free public education, believing that it would increase their income and status. Horace Mann argued that education was "the great equalizer of the conditions of men" and that it not only disarmed the poor of their hostility toward the rich but it prevented being poor.

Post-Civil War educational thought reaffirmed the ideal of equal educational opportunity in a common school. Lester Ward contended that:

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2Quoted in Cremin, p. 59.
state education is far better for the pupil. It is distinguished fundamentally from private education in dealing with all in a strictly impartial manner. The lowest gamin of the streets here meets the most pampered son of opulence on a footing of strict equality. Nothing counts but merit itself. Pupils take their places according to what they are, not what they are called.\(^3\)

There was also concern about extending educational opportunity to those previously excluded or neglected by the common school, Negroes, immigrants, and Indians.\(^4\) Robert L. Owen, a former secretary of the Cherokee Board of Education, exhorted Congress to:

increase tenfold the present appropriations for the education of the wild men, who unlike the civilized tribes have not the means to educate their children, and out of these people will grow in a few years a class of intelligent and useful citizens, as many have already become. They will then be absorbed into the great body of American citizenship, where all the races of men can and do meet on the level of common right and equal justice.\(^5\)

What emerged then was a picture of the public school as America's great "melting pot." In the school, people of different nationalities, creeds, and loyalties would be melted down into Americans.\(^6\)

The reaffirmation of the ideal of equal educational opportunity after the Civil War led to demands for equal access to high school and college for rich and poor alike. If education was to provide a person with dignity and personal and economic independence in an age of increasing social and technological complexity, then it would have to give a man


\(^5\)Quoted in Butts and Cremin, p. 361.

\(^6\)Butts and Cremin, p. 361.
more than just the rudiments of knowledge. This was the argument of John E. Seamen, a New Orleans schoolman.

The circumscribed course of rudiments taught in the lower schools is not education. They are the tools only. If the ultimate object of a public school education is to lift up man to the dignity of a reflecting, self-guiding, virtuous member of society, then the instruction, scrupulously limited to the three R's, is a lamentable failure. A moment's reflection will satisfy us that the high schools in this age are as important as the primary schools a century ago. They are imperatively demanded by the progress of the sciences, arts and inventions, and their application to the commercial and domestic uses of life.

Another writer added:

Free institutions in the higher branches of learning is necessary to prevent all those class distinctions that are sure to spring up if such instruction can be obtained only by a favored few. A republican State and republican society are both impossible unless the children of the State are educated alike and together in the same schools, to that extent at least, necessary to enable and incline their minds alike and judge alike on all questions pertaining to the principles on which rest republican institutions.

James B. Angell, the President of the University of Michigan, held that all children should have an opportunity to attend college. The theme of his commencement address for 1879 was "that it is of vital importance, especially in a republic, that the higher education, as well as common school education, be accessible to the poor as well as to the rich," and that higher education was the right of all young people so that they could develop their talents to the utmost. The republic would benefit by cultivating the capabilities which God had bestowed "with im-

7Quoted in Butts and Cremin, p. 365.

8National Education Association (NEA), Addresses and Proceedings (1879), p. 22.
partial hand equally on the rich and the poor."9

Abram S. Hewitt, the ironmaster, argued, as had Mann, that equal educational opportunity insured the ultimate distribution of wealth. In a speech at the dedication of the new buildings of Columbia University on Morningside Heights in 1896, Hewitt declared:

The masses of the people have never demanded equality of fortune, and indeed understand it to be impossible; but they have always insisted, and will always insist, upon equality of opportunity. With free schools and universal education, with opportunities for the youth of exceptional ability in the ranks of the rich or the poor to secure the benefits of the highest instruction, the approaches of communism need never be feared. Equality of opportunity insures the ultimate distribution of wealth upon just conditions and within reasonable periods of time.10

By the 20th century, faith in the schools as a means of social and economic advancement had become a part of the American conventional wisdom. Walter Hines Page maintained that:

to carry on education as a privilege is to mistrain some and to leave the others untrained. To carry it on as a universal duty is to open to every one his natural opportunity, to enable every one to find himself and to find his usefulness to his fellows.11

Charles W. Eliot declared in 1910 that, "in a democracy education is the chief factor in determining the social classification. . . . The education of the child . . . is the only way in a democracy of transmitting high position from one generation to another."12 In 1922, the Secretary

9Quoted in Butts and Cremin, p. 367.


of State, Charles Evans Hughes, maintained that it was imperative to make education available to all since it gave "those who start amid the direst necessities and with the most slender advantages the chance to rise."

The American ideal . . . is the ideal of equal educational opportunity, not merely for the purpose of enabling one to know how to earn a living, and to fit into an economic status more or less fixed, but of giving play to talent and aspiration and to the development of mental and spiritual powers.13

For Herbert Hoover, democracy was not merely a form of government but an ideal of equal opportunity as well and this meant that each new generation must be given an equal educational opportunity.

Some poetic mind called America the melting pot for all races; there have been some disappointments in melting adults, but none will deny that our public schools are the real melting pot, pouring out a new race. Under our schools race, class and religious hatreds fade away. From the real melting pot is the hope of the fine metal which will carry the advance of our national achievement and our national ideals.14

The U. S. Commissioner of Education in 1925, John J. Tigert, agreed.

In the public school mingle the children of all races and all creeds. The Christian and the Jew, the Protestant and the Catholic, the Theist and the Atheist, the native born and the foreign born, all sit down together to learn the most fundamental things of life in an institution in which they have a common faith and to which they give a united support.15

Tigert believed that every child who entered an American classroom "knows that he is living in a land of equal opportunity, and experience has proved that there is no ambition so high that the poorest or lowliest

boy or girl may not achieve it through the schools." Acknowledging the imperfections of American education, Tigert still thought that all loyal Americans would gladly add these articles of educational faith to their religious and patriotic creeds:

I believe in the school system of the United States of America as an institution of the people, by the people, for the people, conceived by the founders of this Republic, nurtured for nearly three centuries by our fathers, sustained today by the consent and support of all our citizens. I believe in free universal education, equal opportunities for all our children, which guarantee our democracy within a Republic established upon the principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity. I therefore believe it is my duty to the school to love it, to support it morally and materially, to send my child to it, to help my neighbor's child to have the same opportunity, and to defend it against all enemies.17

While Tigert and Hoover emphasized the notion of the public school as a leveling institution, the economic payoff of education was increasingly stressed after World War I. In the Fall of 1918, the U. S. Department of Labor sponsored a Back-to-School drive as part of an effort to fight the abuses of child labor. One of the arguments used by the Labor Department to help get children out of factories and back into schools was that children who stayed in school until they were sixteen earned two and one-third times as much as those who left at age fourteen.18

Shortly after the war, child-labor reformers also developed the argument

16 Ibid., p. 10.

17 Ibid.

that school withdrawal "caused" poverty and that more could be done to alleviate poverty by getting children to stay in school than by allowing them to take jobs at an early age. Studies were done comparing the wages of dropouts with those of graduates and they concluded that "education pays" at the approximate rate of five per cent on an investment of $18,500. One writer asked, "Can a boy increase his capital faster any other way?"^19

Industrialization was bringing a new "world of work" demanding increasingly higher levels of education for economic success. One way out of poverty was to stay in school and qualify for a high paying occupation rather than dropping out and taking a low-level job. By the end of the 1920's the success image of the "self-made man" who rose to the top on the basis of hard experience and his own initiative rather than mere schooling was quickly dissipating. 20 Horace Mann's notion that education could be the ladder on which children could climb out of poverty seemed to be confirmed anew by the prosperity of the 1920's. As Angus notes:

Through schooling, social groups formerly caught in the jaws of grinding poverty could lift themselves out of slums and into respectable working-class status. Working-class children could hope to enter white-collar occupations on the basis of training received at public expense, assuming that they were sufficiently tractable. 21

High school enrollments more than doubled between 1920 and 1930 and the

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20 Angus, pp. 48-49.
21 Ibid., p. 49.
schools were holding pupils about three and one-half years longer in 1929 than in 1904.

The increasing awareness of the economic payoff of education among common people in the 1920's was documented by the Lynds in their study of "Middletown." They quoted two working class parents as saying, "If children don't have a good education they'll never know anything except hard work" and "A boy without an education today just ain't anywhere!"

The Lynds concluded that, "If education is oftentimes taken for granted by the business class, it is no exaggeration to say that it evokes the fervor of a religion, a means of salvation, among a large section of the working class."\textsuperscript{22}

When the Depression hit, the "world of work" for which the schools were supposedly preparing children disappeared, but the notion that the school was the avenue to economic advancement persisted. William F. Russell, then Dean of Teachers College and later its president, wrote, "I hold that education is the means by which the American people may achieve their heart's desire." For Russell, America was still the land dreamed of by our ancestors, a land where the conditions into which one was born did not determine one's future, a land "where happiness and contentment would come to those who labor and where the race of life would be run from an even start and in a free field."

Such a place is the United States of America, and our educational system is the chief means toward the realization of this dream. It should open the door of opportunity to all boys and girls; opportunity to earn a living, to enjoy life regardless of accidents of birth and wealth; opportunity to

excel, to serve, and to lead. Change in the past twenty-five years can be termed progress to the extent that education has developed more surely to accomplish this purpose; and indeed I believe that this has been the case.  

The degree to which the notion that education was the door to opportunity remained part of the conventional wisdom during the Depression is further indicated by the fact that a high school girl won a 1933 NEA sponsored essay contest with a composition that included these words:

My education means my chance of success, and that the American school has given me. It has enabled me to become an educated member of society and an intelligent citizen. If I make a failure of life, I shall feel that I am a traitor to my school, my home, and my country. May we students mean as much to America as the American school has meant to us;

One other indication of the economic value Americans continued to attribute to education during the Depression years was the appearance of criticisms of the growing vocational orientation of education. Christian Gauss, the Dean of the College of Princeton University, complained that vocational schools and courses "have become immensely popular since they are supposed to lead to financial success--which is the supreme aim of our life... Higher education will not be an end in itself and can do little to further the search for truth and the welfare of mankind."  


As the Depression decade came to a close, the Educational Policies Commission did not hesitate to conclude that one of the values of the schools to Americans was that they encouraged workers to advance through personal efforts and thus promoted occupational mobility. The notion of the school as a melting pot also continued. According to Robert Bowden, a social science professor at Youngstown College:

"The sons and daughters of the banker, the baker, and the candlestick maker mingle together, receive a similar elementary education, and in later years conduct the many organizations of city and state. In our scheme of social organization no one person or group can furnish the leadership all the time. Today the baker's son leads and the banker's son follows; tomorrow the son of the candlestick maker furnishes the leadership and the baker's son follows. In a democracy intelligent fellowship is quite as important as intelligent leadership. Both must be fostered by the intelligent masses."

With the coming of World War II, there was a large influx of adolescents into the expanded labor force, and once again there was concern about abuses of child labor. The Federal government again decided to try to get youngsters back to school. Starting in the summer of 1943 and continuing for the next three years, the Children's Bureau and U.S. Office of Education jointly sponsored a National-Go-to-School Drive. One of the arguments used to lure children back to school was that while there were an abundance of jobs at high wages during the war, after the


28 Angus points out that while the influx of women into the labor force of the war years is well-known, what is less known is that teenagers constituted more of the labor force expansion than did female labor. See Angus, pp. 85-86.
war there would be a labor surplus and a sharp drop in wages and only qualified people would get the good paying jobs. Government publications asked, "Do you want to be a kite in a four-engine world?" "Ever try to open an oyster with a toothpick?" 29

A study published in 1945 by the Committee on Education of the United States Chamber of Commerce showed a strong correlation between higher income and higher educational achievement. The committee found that fifty per cent of those who went to college or beyond, thirty-nine per cent of those who attended high school or graduated, and only eleven per cent of those who had finished eight years of schooling or less reached the $5,000 income bracket. It concluded that given the large percentage of those in the higher income brackets who had completed a higher level of education, "it would appear reasonable that the majority in the very low income groups of low level education . . . could improve their economic status by education of the right kind." 30

It thus became apparent that middle income groups with a middle level education could improve their economic status by getting more education. Shortly after the war, the Labor Department showed that a man with a college degree would on the average earn $100,000 more during his lifetime than a high school graduate. 31

The emphasis on the correlation between education and income con-

29 U. S., Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, National Go-to-School Drive, 1944, pp. 8-9, quoted in Angus, p. 94.

30 Committee on Education, United States Chamber of Commerce, Education: An Investment in People (No place, no date), p. 53.

tinued into the 1950's and 1960's. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce twice revised its 1945 publication, Education: An Investment in People. The 1955 revision reported that:

Those with college or high school education had . . .  
73% of the $5,000 to $6,000 incomes  
77% of the $6,000 to $7,000 incomes  
79% of the $7,000 to $8,000 incomes  
82% of the $10,000 or more incomes

Those with an eighth grade education or less had . . .  
77% of the incomes below $500  
73% of the $500 to $1,000 incomes  
65% of the $1,000 to $1,500 incomes  
61% of the $1,500 to $2,000 incomes

The 1964 revision reported median incomes during the peak earning years of an average man's lifetime as follows:

$3100 for men, age 35-44, with less than 8 years of school  
$4470 for men, age 35-44, with 8 years of school  
$5050 for men, age 35-44, with 9 to 11 years of school  
$5690 for men, age 45-54, with 12 years of school  
$6800 for men, age 45-54, with 1 to 3 years of college  
$9540 for men, age 45-54, with 4 years of college  
$9810 for men, age 45-54 with more than 4 years of college

The Chamber of Commerce concluded that "good education strengthens the entire economy by enabling the individual to earn more money and thus have greater buying power."  

The quest for a college diploma to improve earning power quickened so much after World War II that John Keats described Americans as being afflicted with a "sheepskin psychosis."  

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34 Ibid.

35 Keats.
determined that most parents desired a college education for their children "because it will make life easier for them." Attending college for intellectual reasons was of minor importance. Keats commented that:

We are more inclined to view college as the best of all marriage markets for our daughters and as the certain pathway to financial success for our sons, and so strongly do we hope, and believe, that we resort to almost any means to get them into college—often mortgaging our homes, impoverishing ourselves, changing our religions, pulling strings, and cheating in the process.

Parents were not the only ones who held this utilitarian view of higher education. A 1961 Youth Survey by the Saturday Evening Post found that a majority of teenagers were well aware that a college degree would increase their purchasing power and were making plans to acquire one. One Florida boy said, "You can be the best educated person in the world, but without a college degree you can't get a garbage man's job."

The degree to which Americans have come to equate education with a higher income was indicated by a Look survey of 1960. Seventy-eight per cent of those interviewed said they wished they had gone further in school because in their opinion schooling was a better way to financial success (50 per cent) than hard work (25 per cent). Stuart Chase commented that belief in the Horatio Alger story had clearly dwindled. A 1953 Gallup poll which asked the question "If you had your life to live

37 Keats, p. 29.
38 Chase, p. 129.
39 Ibid., p. 128.
40 Ibid.
over again what would you do differently?" found that only 2 per cent of those answering said they would work harder—the same percentage as those who said they would travel more—while 33 per cent said they would get more education.\(^1\) Chase concluded:

While Americans universally favor education, wish they had more of it, and want more for their children, the goal is primarily to improve earning power. Education for a better understanding of the world and of themselves is not often mentioned in the surveys.\(^2\)

Just as they emphasized the economic payoff of education, Americans in the 1950's and 60's continued to believe in the school as a melting pot. Commager argued that in America's classrooms "the nation's children have lived and learned equality" which has kept it from being torn by the "forces of riotous privilege and ruinous division."\(^3\) James Conant emphasized the importance of maintaining comprehensive high schools instead of establishing specialized high schools because "one of the highly important objectives of the comprehensive high school is the development of mutual respect and understanding between students with different abilities and different vocational interests."\(^4\) He reported that in one school:

the superintendent stated that one of his principal aims was to develop an attitude between the future manager of a factory and the future labor leader which would result in mutual respect and understanding. Such a strong democratic spirit, he

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 136.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 137.
\(^3\) Henry Steele Commager, "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free," Life, October 16, 1950, p. 47.
said, was characteristic of his city. From my brief examination of the situation, I concluded he was right about the city and that his school was accomplishing the aim he had in mind.45

John W. Gardner maintained that while education serves all American purposes, "liberty, justice, and all our other aims," "the one it serves most directly is equality of opportunity. We promise such equality, and education is the instrument by which we hope to make good the promise. It is the high road of individual opportunity, the great avenue that all may travel."46 The President of the University of Illinois, David D. Henry, also argued that "there is no more dramatic story than the working of the educational process in the lives of people."47 It is the chief means of social and vocational mobility and it gives meaning to our professed concern for the welfare of the individual.

Consider the journey of the poor boy from the city slums to his position as business tycoon; the road traveled by the lad from the farm to the life of scholarship; the achievement of the minister's son as he makes a career as world diplomat; the development of the street urchin into the influential preacher; the change of the immigrant boy into the national leader.48

Henry concluded that:

education is the essence of the democratic hope. In providing "social mobility," education keeps alive the aspiration of every person that he and his children will have an opportunity to improve their lot. Democracy does not promise there will

45 Ibid.


48 Ibid.
be no economic or cultural dividing lines. It does promise that everyone has a chance to cross such lines if he has the will and the ability to do so. The schools are the symbol of that tradition for they are the means of continuing individual improvement.49

While the confidence expressed by a Robert Boudin or David Henry in the school as "the great social switching yard."50 has clearly constituted part of the conventional wisdom about education since the common school era, this aspect of the American faith in the schools has been periodically challenged. It has been apparent to some critics of American education that the son of the banker and the son of the candlestick maker do not enter the school on equal terms, nor do they derive the same kind of benefit from schooling, that the quality of education each receives differs, and that their opportunity to achieve a high level of educational attainment is often greatly restricted.

These issues were raised as early as the 1830's by the Workingmen. Robert Dale Owen asked if it was reasonable to expect that if children attending public schools "go every evening, the one to his wealthy parents' soft carpeted drawing room and the other to its poor father's or widowed mother's comfortless cabin" they would treat each other as friends and equals. Thomas Skidmore criticized the "dreamers" who believed it was possible for children who came from homes racked with poverty to benefit as much from instruction as those who came from well-to-do homes.

At the turn of the century Dewey criticized American schools for

50The phrase is Peter Schrag's. See his Voices in the Classroom (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 281.
being concerned exclusively with intellectual pursuits and consequently driving out those students whose dominant interest was to do and to make. And Charles W. Eliot, while claiming that "in a democracy education is the chief factor in determining social classification" still acknowledged that "birth contributes, since birth often determines the early material and spiritual environment" and that "intellectual and artistic tastes, and personal excellences of body and soul, are surely more transmissible than property."

The 1920's began to produce empirical evidence which demonstrated that the opportunity of a younger to continue in school was directly related to the socioeconomic status of his family. In a landmark study entitled The Selective Character of the American Secondary School, George Counts found that:

at the present time, the public school is attended quite largely by the children of the more well-to-do classes. This affords us the spectacle of a privilege being extended at public expense to those very classes that already occupy the privileged positions in modern society. The poor are contributing to provide secondary education for the children of the rich, but are either too poor or too ignorant to avail themselves of the opportunities which they help provide.

The Lynds' study of Middletown also concluded that family income was a "potent" factor in determining how long a child stayed in school.

A number of mothers who said that a child had left school because he "didn't like it" finally explained with great reluctance, "We

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52 Eliot, p. 65.

couldn't dress him like we'd ought to and he felt out of it," or, "The two boys and the oldest girl all quit because they hated Central High School. They all loved the Junior High School down here, but up there they're so snobbish. If you don't dress right you haven't any friends." "... My oldest girl stopped because we couldn't give her no money for the right kind of clothes. The boy begged and begged to go on through high school, but his father wouldn't give him no help. Now the youngest girl has left 10B this year. She was doing just fine, but she was too proud to go to school unless she could have clothes like the other girls."54

"Free" public education was clearly not free at all. It took money to go to school.

The correlation between educational opportunity and socioeconomic status continued to be corroborated throughout the 1930's. A 1932 U. S. Office of Education study which investigated two of the four school systems Counts had studied ten years earlier found that schools in Seattle were more selective on a socioeconomic basis in 1932 than they had been in 1922 and that Bridgeport schools were only slightly less selective.55 In 1938, Howard M. Bell published a study of 13,528 Maryland young people between the ages of 16 and 24 entitled Youth Tell Their Story. Bell found that the chief factors which affected the amount of schooling these youth received were race, relief status, sex, family size, and occupation of the father. Of these factors, the father's occupation was easily the most significant. Four and one-half as many of the youth whose fathers were unskilled laborers dropped out of high school before graduating as those youth whose fathers were in professional and technical occupations.56

54Lynd, pp. 186-187.
55Angus, p. 73.
56Ibid., p. 79.
In addition to the evidence confirming the relation between educational opportunity and economic status, the 1930's also produced an important study by Newton Edwards of the equality of educational quality throughout the United States, Equal Opportunity for Youth: A National Responsibility. As expected, Edwards found that the quality of education in different geographic areas was not equal at all. Fifteen states offered an education that cost less than the estimated $60 per pupil it took to provide a minimum defensible instructional program. Costs ranged from Arkansas' $24 per pupil allotment to New York's $124. Reasons for the disparity cited by Edwards were the difference in the distribution of taxable wealth and the number of children. He pointed out that the inequality was a national problem because of the internal migration of people and the dependence of industrialized urban areas on rural areas for population growth.57

In 1945 a similar study was published by John K. Horton and Eugene S. Lawler. Entitled Unfinished Business: An Inventory of Public School Expenditures in the United States, it quoted data indicating that 3 million adults had never gone to school, 10 million were illiterate, 2 million children were not going to school, and that the Selective Service System had rejected about 5 million men for educational, physical, and mental deficiencies. The study also showed that school facilities ranged from one room shacks with incompetent teachers and inadequate equipment to educational palaces with outstanding teachers and the latest equipment and material. The cost per classroom unit in 1939, which included

teachers' salaries, books, equipment, and maintenance ranged from \$6000 to less than \$100, the lowest expenditures occurring in those areas that had the most children to educate.\textsuperscript{58}

The 1940's, 50's, and early 60's produced several studies, among which were Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb's \textit{Who Shall Be Educated}\textsuperscript{59}, Hollingshead's \textit{Elmtown's Youth},\textsuperscript{60} and Sexton's \textit{Education and Income},\textsuperscript{61} which not only continued to document the relationship between socio-economic status and school attendance but additional relationships between status and I.Q., school achievement, college attendance, participation in extracurricular activities, teacher attitudes toward students, and quality of educational facilities.

Sexton's \textit{Education and Income} is a representative study. Based on an investigation of Detroit schools, it is a topical work in a decade which has found itself obsessed with the problems of urban education.

In examining the characteristics of Detroit's elementary schools, Sexton scrutinized achievement scores and found three things: (1) that all schools with children from families earning above \$7000 were achieving above grade level, while all schools with children from families earning below \$7000 were achieving below grade level; (2) that achievement scores tended to go up as income levels went up; (3) that in the fourth

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 56.


\textsuperscript{60}August B. Hollingshead, \textit{Elmtown's Youth} (New York: John Wiley, 1949).

grade, children coming from homes with an average income of $3500 were achieving almost one whole year below grade level, while children coming from homes with an average income of $11,055 were achieving at a level two whole years above the lowest income group. The scores showed that achievement scores rose with faulty income levels without exception.

While achievement tests indicated that children from homes below a $7000 income were reading below grade level and children from above $7000 homes were reading above grade level, there were more upper-income children in reading improvement programs. The incredible reason for this was that a score of at least a C on an I.Q. test was required for entrance into the programs. Since the tests were essentially tests of reading skill, the lower-income children failed to make C scores on them and therefore were not eligible for remedial reading aid. Furthermore, the I.Q. scores were often accepted as an explanation of the low performance levels of lower-income children. They also functioned as a kind of social cement that fixed students into the social classes of their birth. And Sexton found that people in all income groups often accepted their I.Q. scores in a way that they would never accept their social class status. The vicious cycle thus completed itself.

Typically, the lower-income child comes to school and sooner or later he learns that he cannot compete with upper-income students. He has too many cultural disadvantages. Usually he does not have as much "book knowledge" or as much experience with the world outside his own neighborhood; his language is poor, he cannot read very well, he is often troubled emotionally, he does not have as much will to succeed or as much confidence that he can succeed.

For these reasons he does poorly on IQ tests. The teacher learns that he has a low IQ rating and puts him into a slow moving group where he is not expected to do much or given much attention. He is bright enough however to catch on very quickly to the fact that he is not considered very bright. He comes to
accept this very unflattering appraisal because, after all, the school should know. Now he is in a pigeonhole. He can't get out and, what is more, he doesn't try; he accepts his fate. His parents also accept it, since, after all, the schools should know. Intellectually he is lost. He has accepted this low appraisal of himself, and both he and society must suffer the consequences. 62

As might be expected, Sexton found that the rate of failure was almost ten times higher among lower-income students. And the program for the "gifted" which the Detroit schools had established after Sputnik turned out to be a program for upper-income students. Of the 436 students chosen, not one came from the income group below $5000 while 148 students came from the highest-income groups, despite the fact that there were 10,000 fewer students in this group than in the group below $5000.

If lower-income students were infrequently found in classes for the gifted, it was customary to find many of them in "ungraded" classes for students with behavior problems. The rate of admission to detention schools for students from the income group below $3000 was thirty-two times greater than the rate for students from the income group above $9000.

While responsibility for the delinquency of lower-income youth could be attributed primarily to parents, neighborhood environment, and society in general, Sexton argued that school policies were also to blame. The schools extended better services to upper-income students than lower-income students. Their middle-class culture alienated lower-income child-

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62 Ibid., pp. 51-52. Interestingly enough, Sexton pointed out that the Soviets do not use IQ tests "because intelligence is not considered an innate quality, incapable of being changed by environment and instruction; also, it is said, that the use of IQ tests tends to retard the school progress of children who get lower scores." Ibid., p. 50.
ren. The "female" attitudes, interests, and behavior standards of the school made it difficult for lower-income boys, who value masculinity more than upper-income boys, to fit in with school life. Lack of clinical services for emotionally disturbed lower-income students was another contributing factor. Finally, the all too frequent attitude of the school that lower-income "troublesome" students are not worth the time and effort that "gifted" students are also did its damage. In short, the school rejected the lower-income child who in turn rejected the school. The school, therefore, unwittingly became a cause for delinquent behavior.

Lower-income students also got most of the punishments meted out by the Detroit schools, while most of the rewards, such as good grades, prizes, social acceptance, elected student offices, extracurricular club membership, and teacher favoritism, went to upper-income students.

Other characteristics of lower-income elementary schools that Sexton found were familiar ones. The pupil turnover rate, the dropout rate, and the rate of illness were all higher than in upper-income schools while the school attendance rate and parent membership in PTA groups were lower. Lower-income children needed more attention than upper-income children, but Sexton found that lower-income schools consistently were overcrowded and had larger classes, higher pupil-teacher ratios, more uncertified teachers, and poorer buildings and facilities. The most flagrant example of unequal distribution of school services in Detroit was the fact that 42 per cent of the schools serving homes earning less than $3000 a year served no free meals or milk while only 22 per cent of the schools serving homes earning more than $9000 a year failed to do so. The children who needed the food most were thus least likely
to get it. The "excuse" for this was that lower-income schools frequently
did not have cafeterias. But since it was perfectly possible to serve
cold lunches, Sexton could only conclude that the failure to provide free
lunches for needy children was simply "the lack of administrative inter-
est in the program."\(^{63}\)

Sexton's examination of Detroit's high schools yielded a similar
list of findings. The average reading score of tenth grade lower-income
students was 7.4, more than two and a half grades below grade level.
This was worse than it appeared since many of the poorest readers had
already dropped out of school. As in the elementary schools, pupil turn-
over rates, detention school rates, failure rates, and dropout rates were
all higher in lower-income schools, while attendance rates and parent
membership in parents groups were lower. Lower-income high schools also
had larger classes, more overcrowding, more uncertified teachers, older
buildings, and poorer facilities. While no usable information about high
school club activities in Detroit were available, what information there
was seemed to be in line with Hollingshead's findings in Elmtown that
upper-class students dominated high school activities while lower-income
students were often kept out. Hollingshead's findings that upper-income
students were most often in the college preparatory curriculums while
lower-income students were most often in the general or vocational cur-
riculums also seemed to hold true in Detroit. The schools thus succeeded
in establishing a class structure which was more rigid than the one in
the outside world.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 135.
While lower-income high school students, like their elementary school counterparts, got most of the punishments meted out by the high schools, National Scholastic Awards, National Merit Scholarships, and university freshman honors went almost exclusively to upper-income students. Of the eleven Ford employee college scholarships awarded one year, only one went to a lower-income student, even though the vast majority of Ford employees made less than $7000 a year.

Needless to say, college attendance among upper-income students was much higher than among lower-income students, with 58.2 per cent more of Detroit's highest-income group applying for college admission than of the lowest-income group. It was Sexton's general observation that lower-income students often did not know how to go about applying for college admission and no one was helping them. Among lower-income students who did make it to college, many dropped out, more often for financial reasons than for academic ones.

Finally, Sexton found that in Detroit, as elsewhere, the school board was composed primarily of members of upper-income groups who hired an administrative staff that reflected the general character and quality of the school board and which looked after the interests of upper-income rather than lower-income children. Even the daily papers in Detroit were conservative and their statements on underprivileged children, delinquency, money expenditures, taxes, and education of the "gifted" reflected upper-income group attitudes.

On the basis of her study and the ones that had been done earlier, Sexton came to some devastating conclusions. Robert Dale Owen, she believed, had seen what many critics of education failed to see even today,
"that elite groups, even when selected by the most rigorous tests of 'merit and ability' derive their status much more from their 'rich carpeted drawing rooms' and from accidents of environment and association than from superior virtue or talent."\(^{64}\) What Owen said continued to hold true.

The system has not changed much; it has simply changed with a rising standard of living for people at all levels and ranks.

The doors of opportunity have been opened, but not very wide. Those who pass through first are simply newer generations of the same groups who came first in Owen's day. Mostly they are members of the old elites of wealth and status, disguised now as an elite of ability. Others of course pass through before the doors close, but their numbers are small considering the size of the crowd that is left waiting.\(^{65}\)

It was apparent that educational opportunity depended largely on what kind of home the child came from and what kind of social class conditioning he got there.

In school, as in the world at large, opportunities are usually open to students or closed to them in accordance with their social class position. The higher their position, the more opportunities they have. Or, to put the formula another way; the more students have, the more they get— in school and in life.\(^{66}\)

The fact of the matter was, Sexton pointed out, that in an age when a college degree increasingly separates the "Haves" from the "Have Nots," a worker's child in the USSR had twice as good a chance of going to college as did a worker's child in the United States.

If most Americans in the early 1960's continued to take for granted

\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. xvi.

\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., p. 16.
their traditional faith in the schools as a means for social and economic advancement, it was apparent that for the poor that faith was a pipe dream. As Kenneth Clark, a Negro social psychologist, put it in his forward to Sexton's book, Dr. Sexton "has presented evidence which demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that our public school system has rejected its role of facilitating social mobility and has become in fact an instrument of social and economic class distinctions." 67

The lack of equality of educational opportunity in the 1960's has been further documented by former U. S. Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel. Keppel points out that while more than 69 per cent of young adults between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine were high school graduates according to a Bureau of the Census report for March, 1964, still three out of ten American youth failed to complete high school and 5 per cent did not even finish the eighth grade. Moreover, the preparation of those who did graduate was not equal. The upper three-fourths of graduates in some high schools were better prepared for college than the upper 10 per cent in others. 68

Education beyond high school remains selective. One-fourth of high school seniors in the 80-90 percentile of their class and one-third in the 70-80 percentile did not go on to college. Fifteen per cent of the high school graduates with IQs in excess of 120 failed to go on to college largely for financial reasons. Youths from low-income families have a poorer chance of entering college than do those from upper-income

67 Ibid., p. ix.
The students in the top 2 per cent of their class who reach college regardless of family income get there because numerous colleges are on the lookout for such exceptional candidates, but below this top level, the facts are far less encouraging. Of American high school boys in the second quarter in academic aptitude, 51.8 per cent from families with incomes below $3,000 per year fail to enter college, as contrasted with only 20.3 per cent from families with incomes above $12,000. For girls the situation is even more inequitable; in the second quarter in general college aptitude, 74.8 per cent of students from families with incomes below $3,000 annually fail to enter college compared with 29.2 percent from families with incomes over $12,000.69

There are other facts to be contended with. Approximately 19.5 million Americans eighteen years or older failed to complete eight years of schooling. This includes about eight million functional illiterates with less than five years of schooling. In eight states in 1960, the adult population had a median education of less than nine years. Even in the seven states with the highest median educational level, almost half the adult population had less than a high school education.70 Keppel concludes that "equality of educational opportunity throughout the nation continues today for many to be more a myth than a reality."71

If equality of educational opportunity remains a myth, so does equality of the quality of education. Sections of the country with the lowest per capita income tend to have the heaviest educational burden, and inequality within states is also common.

A child in a rural community or urban slum has less chance for a good education than a suburban child. Inequities exist

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 25.
71 Ibid.
from region to region, from state to state, from urban to rural, from slum to suburb. In 1960, 63 per cent of college-age children of white-collar workers, 29 per cent of manual and service workers' children, and 27 per cent of farm workers' children went to college. 72

The average state expenditures per child for elementary and secondary schools range from a low of $317 to a high of $876 (1965-66 estimates); median expenditures by states for cost per classroom unit in 1959-60 ranged from $12,215 in New York to $3,645 in Arkansas; average teachers' salaries in 1965-66 ranged from $4,190 in Mississippi to $8,240 in Alaska. Measured in dollars, children in the states at the bottom of these figures are not receiving an education equal in quality to children in the states at the top of the figures. 73

These figures help to account for the variance in the median years of school completed between regions and states. "In 1960, the average person twenty-five years old and over had 9.6 years of school in the South, 10.7 years in the Northeast and North Central regions, and 12 years in the West. The range among states was from 8.7 years in South Carolina and Kentucky to 12.2 years in Utah." 74

Furthermore, the range of average expenditures is greater for school districts within states than between states. In the lowest-expenditure states one can find school districts spending money at or above the national average while in the highest expenditure states there were school districts spending less than the national average. New York State, for

72 Ibid., p. 76.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
example, had an average operating expenditure in 1962-63 of about $680 per pupil, yet there were school districts spending more than $2,000 per pupil while others spent less than $300. There continue to be educational palaces and educational hovels.

The wealthier, better-staffed school districts are the ones with the language laboratories, science equipment, planetariums, mathematics laboratories, greenhouses, integrated textbooks (but often little integration), testing services, public address systems, and the like. It is not only that educational leaders with more original ideas serve in the wealthier districts, but rather that the ability or lack of ability to buy is also a factor—for even salesmen and distributors steer clear of those districts with which they cannot "do business."75

While there never has been equality of educational opportunity, no matter what Americans may have thought, it is also true that until the end of World War II it really did not matter. There were other ways of making it in society besides getting an education. A man could farm or go into business for himself or take a job that demanded little besides a strong back or a willingness to learn. Paul Goodman has pointed out that in 1900 only 6 per cent of all seventeen year olds graduated from high school. The other 94 per cent had already begun to make their way in the world.

They were everybody; future farmer, shopkeeper, millionaire, politician, inventor, journalist. Consider the careers of two master architects who were born around that time. One quit school at eighth grade to leave home and support himself. Gravitating to an architect's office as an officeboy, he found work to his liking. He learned draftsmanship in various offices, and French and mathematics on the outside ... and

75Ibid., p. 77.

76Ibid. What the inequality of quality described by Keppel means in the everyday life of American schools has been incisively and interestingly described by Peter Schrag in Voices In The Classroom.
he eventually won the Beaux Arts prize and studied in a Paris atelier. He has since built scores of distinguished buildings and, as the graduate professor of design at a great university, is one of the most famous teachers in the country. The other architect is the most successful in America in terms of the size and prestige of his commissions. He quit school at age 13 to support his mother. Working for a stonecutter, he learned to draw, and in a couple of years he cut out for New York and apprenticed himself to an architect. In competition with a roommate, he studied languages and mathematics. Via the Navy in 1918, he got to Europe with some money in his pocket and traveled and studied. Returning, he made a splendid marriage, and so forth. 77

Christian Gauss also observed that some of America's greatest men, Washington and Lincoln, Carnegie and Rockefeller, Edison, the Wright brothers, Henry Ford, Walt Whitman and Mark Twain had never gone to college. 78

By the 1920's the character of work had begun to change—a change that meant specialized training in order to meet job requirements. Yet in the 1920's a man with a high school diploma or college degree continued to be the exception rather than the rule, and a man could still be a success in the world of work without them. 79 But by 1950 the change in the character of work had become a total reality. 80 The transition of


78 Gauss, p. 335.

79 In 1930, only 30 per cent of 17 year olds graduated from high school, and only 11 per cent went to college.

80 Between 1900 and 1950 the proportion of agricultural workers in the American labor force declined from 37 per cent to 12 per cent. Unskilled laborers declined over the same period from 12 per cent to 7 per cent. Meanwhile skilled and semi-skilled workers were increasing from 23 to 35 per cent; clerks and sales workers from 7 to 19 per cent; professionals and semiprofessionals from 4 to 9 per cent. Despite the decline of small businesses, managers, officials, and proprietors increased as a group from 6 per cent to 9 per cent. The professional man and salaried manager emerged at the top of the occupational structure in terms of status, influence, and rewards, and they continued to increase in absolute numbers and relative importance. See Burton R. Clark, Educating the Expert Society (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing House, 1962), pp. 45-47.
American society from a nation of small businesses to a large corporate society, begun after the Civil War, was all but complete, and what Burton Clark calls the "educational threshold of employment" had greatly increased.

Labor on the family farm did not demand literacy, but skilled jobs and clerical work in the factory required literacy and more. Now, in a society where automation is taking over the tasks of routine labor, a large proportion of jobs increasingly falls into the upper ranges of skill and expertise, in the range from professional to technician. Large-scale enterprise—big business, big government, big labor, big education—demands managers, professionals, and technicians, and these posts demand training beyond the high school for the most part. Education is becoming so fused with occupations that it may be seen as part of the economic foundations of society. In the technological society—the currently most advanced stage of industrialism—highly trained men replace raw materials and the factory machine as the crucial economic resource; and these men are trained through the educational institution—through schools and colleges and the educational systems that are springing up in industry and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{81}

American society had thus become a society requiring educational credentials for economic opportunity.\textsuperscript{82}

By the early 1960's several factors had made it apparent to Americans that equal educational opportunity had become a necessity. First, Sputnik had indicated the threat inequality in education posed to national

\textsuperscript{81}Clark, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{82}During the 1950's the number of jobs requiring a college education or better increased 54 per cent. Between 1950 and 1960 the number of employed technical and professional workers increased 66 per cent while employment for unskilled workers increased only 4 per cent and decreased for farm laborers by 13 per cent. It is predicted that by 1970, 45 per cent of all American jobs will be white collar. Professional workers already constitute the fastest growing occupational groups. There were 6.5 million Americans in professional fields in 1957. It is expected that by 1970 there will be 10.5 million, a 60 per cent increase. In 1958, there were approximately 366,000 Bachelor's degrees granted. That figure is expected to increase to about 718,000 by 1970. See Keppel, pp. 25-26, and Clark, p. 49.
survival. Second, the rediscovery of poverty\textsuperscript{83} made Americans realize that inequality of educational opportunity meant inequality of economic opportunity. The new literature on poverty made clear that one of the reasons people were poor was that they lacked both an adequate education and the opportunity to get an education. If America was to keep its promise of equal opportunity for all, then equal educational opportunity would have to be made a reality for the poor.

The demands from the Negro Civil Rights Movement for equal educational opportunity had also increased. As Michael Harrington so forcefully pointed out, to be a Negro in the United States usually meant to be poor.\textsuperscript{84} And as Gunnar Myrdal observed, Negroes, taking on the American faith in education, believed that schooling was the key to social and economic advancement.\textsuperscript{85} These demands were not new. Earlier Negro demands culminated in the 1954 Supreme Court decision that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. Subsequent efforts to desegregate schools and give Negro children equal educational opportunity, however, met with indifference or outright hostility.\textsuperscript{86}


\textsuperscript{86}For a brief discussion of the various phases of the effort to desegregate the schools, see Robert J. Havighurst, "Schools Face New Desegregation Phase," Nation's Schools, LXXVII (March, 1966), 80-82.
1960's, Negroes, tired of waiting for what was by right theirs, renewed their demands in a more militant fashion.

To be poor in the United States often meant, as James Conant discovered, to be young, a high school dropout, unable to find a job in the new world of work, and in trouble. Conant reported that in one Negro slum, 70 per cent of the boys and girls ages sixteen to twenty-one were out of school and unemployed, and he perceived early in the 1960's what the riots in Harlem, Watts, and Detroit later demonstrated, that gangs of uneducated and unemployed youths roaming the streets day after day with nothing to do and no where to go but down constituted "social dynamite." Indeed, Conant reminded his readers that "communism feeds upon discontented, frustrated, unemployed people." It was apparent that something had to be done to put the lid on this dynamite. That something, Conant and others agreed, was to provide equal educational opportunity for slum youth. It was hoped that slum youngsters would qualify for a good paying job putting them into the "mainstream" of American economic life. Just as 19th century conservatives and schoolmen had looked to the schools to prevent crime and radicalism, so in the 1960's Americans once again called upon the schools to control delinquency and stave off revolution.

The rediscovery of poverty made it apparent that the function of formal education in the 1960's was to equip youth with the skills needed

87 James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: Signet, 1961), p. 34.
88 Ibid., p. 10.
89 Ibid., p. 34.
to fit into a new technological and corporate society. It also publi-
cized the fact that the schools were failing many young people miserably.
In urban areas, and in many rural areas as well, children were not at-
tending schools that were "common" in any sense of the word. As Michael Harrington had written about the other America, it became clear that there was also the other educational system, the system that served the poor.

The gap between education in the nation's well-to-do sections and its poor sections had continued to widen after World War II with the migration of Negro and white rural poor, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans to the cities and the subsequent flight of the white middle class to the suburbs. By the 1960's there was in the United States a discernable double system of public education. Conant pointed to this fact in the very title of his book on the problems of urban education, Slums and Suburbs, and he explained to his readers:

The contrast in money available to the schools in a wealthy suburb and to the schools in a large city jolts one's notions of the meaning of equality of opportunity. The peda-
gogic tasks which confront the teachers in the slum schools are far more difficult than those which their colleagues in the wealthy suburbs face. Yet the expenditure per pupil in the wealthy suburban school is as high as $1,000 per year. The expenditure in a big city school is less than half that amount. An even more significant contrast is provided by looking at the school facilities and noting the size of the professional staff. In the suburb there is likely to be a spacious modern school staffed by as many as 70 professionals per 1,000 pupils; in the slum one finds a crowded, often di-
lapidated and unattractive school staffed by 40 or fewer professionals per 1,000 pupils. The contrast challenges any

90 The statistics of the migration and flight have been re-
hearsed in several places. See, for example, Elizabeth M. Eddy, Walk the White Line: A Profile of Urban Education (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1967), pp. 1-20.
complacency we may have about our method of financing public
schools—even within a rich state like New York.91

Later on in the decade Peter Schrag pointed up the differences between
the two systems in even more explicit terms:

... One half [is] largely suburban, white, and middle class,
the other urban (or remotely rural), often dark skinned, and
usually poor. On the surface the two parts are similar: often
their lists of courses, their organization, even, at times,
their rhetoric, are identical. But they are not the same. One
half leads from better homes, through brighter, well-financed
schools, to colleges and universities, then on to the lucrative
life in similar suburbs. The other takes children from depressed
areas—the poor, the deprived, the oppressed—through dark and
aging buildings, and then back to the slums from which they
came. It adds little of cultural value, prevents the accumu­
lation of social or economic resources, and leaves the next
generation with no more than the last.92

Keppel summed up the situation when he wrote, "The nation in effect does
not have a truly public school system in a large part of its communities;
it has permitted what is in effect a private school system to develop
under public auspices."93

While the conditions in the urban schools and the low achievement
levels of the children who attended them did not attract widespread public
attention until the early 1960's,94 these problems had commanded some
attention in the mid-1950's and a few programs were established to try
to improve education in slum schools. There was, for example, the Great

91Conant, Slums and Suburbs, pp. 10-11.
92Peter Schrag, Village School Downtown (Boston: Beacon Press,
93Keppel, p. 38.
94For example, the New York Times year-end survey of educational
problems did not mention the problems of urban education until its survey
for 1961, and then primarily because Conant's Slums and Suburbs was
published that year.
Cities Gray Areas School Improvement Program sponsored by the Ford Foundation in cooperation with the schools of Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. The program included remedial reading clinics, orientation centers for newly arrived rural migrants, and nongraded programs for overaged pupils. Another program was the "Higher Horizons" project in New York City. This project, begun in 1956 in a predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican junior high school, was essentially an attempt to salvage promising but under-achieving students and instill in them a desire to go on to college. In addition to concentrated classroom efforts to improve the children's achievement levels, the project included trips to museums, concerts, plays, and colleges. Some sensational improvements on IQ tests by a few of the students and a reduction of behavior problems led in 1959 to the extension of the project to other junior high and elementary schools.  

While these programs initially showed promise, they were limited in scope and never affected the lives of most of the students in the school systems served. Most children in urban areas received no programs at all, and their school achievement continued along at a slow and dreary pace. This condition, combined with the slow pace of school integration, angered Negro civil rights groups and led to public demonstrations of their grievances against urban schools.

The summer of 1963 was a summer of demonstrations. In Chicago, CORE picketed the Board of Education urging that the superintendent of schools, Benjamin Willis, be dismissed. In Detroit, a proposed real

95 My description of these two projects is based on Conant's description in Slums and Suburbs, pp. 55-56.
estate tax to finance public schools was defeated in the city's Negro wards. In New York, the NAACP threatened the schools with a boycott unless there were honest attempts made to integrate the schools. When nothing much was done, Negro and Puerto Rican organizations combined in February, 1964, to organize a one-day boycott that resulted in 44.8 percent of the students being absent from the schools as a whole and 75 percent of the students in Negro and Puerto Rican schools being absent. Behind all this, as Martin Mayer, the author of The Schools, pointed out, "lay a horrifying--but not unreasonable--loss of faith in the schools."

Negro parents no longer believe that the schools will prepare their children to live better than they do; and the failure of this belief accounts for the despair that has made many of the demonstrations in recent months so frightening. If this energy is to become a fruitful rather than a destructive part of American life, the schools must find a way to offer Negro parents a legitimate hope.

If Negro parents and white critics censured the schools, they had not lost their faith in the possibilities of formal education. The schools had become the focus of concerned scrutiny and the center of violent controversy because there was so much hope vested in them. John Fischer, the President of Teachers College, indicated this when, in commenting on the conflicts surrounding the schools, he wrote, "More of us than ever before, some for the first time, are discovering that what we have been saying about the fundamental importance of education is actually

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97 Eddy, p. 58.

true."99

Schoolmen had not been slow in trying to make this point. The language of some of them in fact seemed to betray a leap of the heart as they surveyed the human wreckage of the cities and envisioned themselves as saviors. Two of them declared:

Experience with efforts to cure such social diseases as crime, poverty, juvenile delinquency, immorality, unemployment, economic irresponsibility, political impotence, and sub-standard health practices repeatedly reveal the futility of treating symptoms through welfare programs, police services, and programs of aid. Only through education, both long-range and remedial, can human deprivation and wastage be prevented.100

The legacy of Horace Mann and the messianic tradition of American education persisted. Education was still considered the universal panacea.

Politicians also continued to utter the conventional wisdom about the importance of education to the eradication of poverty. Typical were remarks made by Indiana Senator Birch Bayh to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education:

We all know that there are many factors that contribute to poverty. But there can be little argument that one of the chief factors contributing to poverty is inadequate education. The incidence of poverty for families headed by a member with eight years of education or less is 37 percent. Or, putting it another way, two out of every five impoverished families has as its breadwinner a person who did not go beyond elementary school.101


Education means a job. . . . This needs to be said over and over again to those who take education lightly. Our most serious challenge, Bayh concluded, was to end the complacency of prominent citizens and make them realize that the future of civilization depends on the quality of schooling.

The reaffirmation of education as a primary means of ending poverty also came from the men who had brought the poverty issue to the public's eye. John Kenneth Galbraith wrote, "My impression is that poverty will be eliminated primarily by energetic action along lines on which we are already working--on civil rights, education, slum abatement, the rest. . . ." Pointing out that "there is no place in the world where a well-educated population is really poor," he recommended that the federal government designate the lowest-income counties and urban areas as special educational districts, equip them with the best school plants, transportation, and recreational facilities, give the children the food and clothing they needed to attend school regularly, and then send in an elite Teachers Corps.

Michael Harrington considered Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz's idea of raising the compulsory school age to 18 "an excellent suggestion."

The problems of poverty lie at both ends of the age scale: if we are to deal effectively with the situation, we will have to delay the entrance of youth into the work force and, at the same time, make it easier for the elderly to leave it. With our technology, we simply do not have enough jobs for our population.

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102 Ibid., p. 56.


Retraining programs for youth were also necessary. "There are workers who cannot get jobs in this country, in 1964, because they do not know how to read a sign on a bus and they cannot sign their names. One thing we can do rather simply in a war against poverty is to begin here: to wipe out functional illiteracy."\textsuperscript{105}

Harry Caudill, the author of \textit{Night Comes to the Cumberlands}, concurred with Galbraith and Harrington.

To assimilate the great subculture of historic or transmitted poverty into the main body of American life without endangering the nation's well-being is not only possible, it could be accomplished in little more than a generation. It could be done in large part by a dramatic and costly overhaul of the public schools--their faculties, curricula, and objectives, and by the use of a new regional approach to regional poverty problems.

\begin{quote}
Only high-quality education can break the ancient cycle of poor schools, poor job preparation, poor pay (or unemployment), and poor people.\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

Schoolmen, politicians, economists, and social critics thus agreed that education was to play a vital role against poverty. Americans once again affirmed their faith in schooling as the key to social and economic advancement. The new world of work promised prosperity for those with an education. Education, it seemed, was indeed "the great equalizer of the conditions of man--the balance wheel of the social machinery."

The calls for new educational opportunities for the poor culminated in the passage of two pieces of legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965. The

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
Economic Opportunity Act represented the Johnson administration's major effort in its War on Poverty. It emphasized education "as the first line of attack on poverty," as one schoolmen's journal put it,\textsuperscript{107} and most of the programs it established included some kind of education and training.

Title I authorized three programs. Part A established a Job Corps for youth, 16 to 21 years old, "to prepare them for responsible citizenship and employment through work experience, vocational training, basic education, health education, recreation, and counseling in conservation camps and residential training centers."\textsuperscript{108} Part B authorized a Neighborhood Youth Corps for youths 16 to 21 to enable them to continue or resume their schooling or increase their employability. The Corps paid part of the cost of full- or part-time employment "in meaningful tasks in the public interest."\textsuperscript{109} Part C established a work-study program for undergraduate and graduate students from low-income families.

Title II, part A authorized the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to pay up to 90 per cent of the costs of planning and administering antipoverty programs at the community level. The Senate's Committee on Labor and Public Welfare indicated that it was expected "that virtually every community action plan will include broad-scale attacks on the special educational problems of the poor."\textsuperscript{110} The Committee recommended

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Quoted in "Education: Weapon Against Poverty," 23.
that communities develop a "balanced program of educational assistance" which included remedial programs, tutoring, field trips, pre-school day-care or nursery centers for 3 to 5 year olds, the development of remedial material, and preservice and inservice training for teachers.\textsuperscript{111}

Part B of Title II authorized the OEO to make grants to states to provide education for adults in such basic skills as reading and arithmetic.

Part B of Title III authorized the OEO to assist state and local agencies to establish and operate housing, sanitation, education, and child day-care programs for migrant farm workers and their families.

Title V extended work experience, training, and educational programs to people on welfare, especially unemployed fathers and women who as heads of families were receiving welfare aid.

Finally, Title VI established the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to serve as aides, counselors, advisers, and teachers in federal programs for migrants, Indians, the mentally ill, in the Job Corps, and in other federal, state, and local antipoverty programs.

The Economic Opportunity Act aimed at eliminating poverty by providing special, remedial, and supplementary education for adults, adolescents, and pre-schoolers. The Elementary and Secondary School Act tried to eliminate poverty by equalizing educational opportunity throughout the nation "to ensure that children of this generation of poverty shall not grow up to be the next generation of poverty."\textsuperscript{112} The Act had five titles, $
\textsuperscript{111}$Ibid.

but its Big Bertha was Title I which provided $775 million dollars for the education of children of low income families. The money was to be spent for construction of school facilities and for the establishment, expansion, and improvement of special programs designed to meet the needs of educationally deprived children. School districts serving these children were to design programs which could include "educational radio and television, mobile educational services and equipment, remedial education, preschool or afterschool programs, additional instructional personnel, equipment and facilities, and others judged necessary for improving the education of disadvantaged children." 113

The scope of these two bills and the amount of money invested was breathtaking. Together they offered testimony to the American faith in schools as an agency of progress. President Johnson expressed that faith when signing the school act into law in a one-room schoolhouse in Texas: "As President of the United States, I believe deeply that no law I have signed or will ever sign means more to the future of America." 114 Vice-President Hubert Humphrey declared, "All we hope for America—a ll we seek for our children and grandchildren, all we desire for mankind—is dependent upon the excellence of our educational system." 115

With over 60 per cent of the Economic Opportunity Act estimated


to be directly concerned with education (the only programs not dealing with some kind of educational support being those concerned with the aged and infirm), Fred Hechinger commented that "everywhere the question is how to translate what appears to work wonders with individual children or youths into similarly successful procedures for great masses wanting or needing education." Hechinger's colleague, Nan Robertson, added that "at no time in our history, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, has there been such an emphasis on education to enable the poor to help themselves escape their lot."

Robertson's observation was not quite accurate. There had been a similar emphasis on education as the cure for poverty during the Progressive Era when "humanitarians of every stripe saw education at the heart of their effort toward social alleviation." Indeed, President Johnson's War on Poverty was a reinvestment in old Progressive methods and hopes. Education was again at the heart of a humanitarian effort to alleviate social ills. It was again being used as an instrument of social progress and reform.

But just as critics in the 1890's had referred to the social settlement's educational approach to the alleviation of poverty as "a fine Vic-

118 Hechinger, p. 75:8.
119 Robertson, p. 51.
torian example of rose water for the plague," so the War on Poverty's educational approach came in for similar criticisms.122

About ten months after the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, John Hersey cautioned that having wakened to the domestic horror of poverty, Americans were now in danger of becoming slogan-bound about the solution for poverty: "Oh, poverty? Education is the antidote for THAT. They're turning on the education juice. We don't have to worry about THAT any more."123 The Economic Opportunity Act with all its educational provisions indicated that Americans had long since become slogan-bound about the solution for poverty. Given the faith of Americans in schooling and their tradition of substituting education for other kinds of reform, it was inevitable that they would buy this solution.

In order to understand the criticisms of the War on Poverty's educational approach to poverty, one must understand the four basic strategies which the government can employ to solve problems of poverty and unemployment. One is the "curative" strategy. This strategy emphasizes programs to help the poor and unemployed become self-supporting by improving their skills or improving the economic conditions of an area. The strategy is summed up in slogans like "rehabilitation not relief," and its programs include area and regional development, vocational education,


work training, job experience, literacy training, and community action programs. This is essentially the educational strategy and the one emphasized in the Economic Opportunity Act. 124

Second is the "equal opportunity" strategy. The emphasis here is on doing away with discrimination in employment, wages, education, and housing. The foremost example of this strategy is the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which banned discrimination by employers and labor unions on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. 125

A third strategy is the "aggregationist" strategy. This strategy is based on the assumption that a lot of unemployment and poverty results from an inadequate demand for labor and insufficient opportunities for employment. It involves using broad fiscal and monetary policies to stimulate economic growth and create jobs. The Employment Act of 1946 committed the federal government to this strategy by pledging it to use various programs and policies to maintain "maximum employment, production, and purchasing power." The 1964 income tax cut and the 1965 reduction in excise taxes exemplify this strategy. 126

Finally, there is the oldest of all strategies for helping the poor and unemployed, the "alleviative" strategy. This involves giving financial or material aid to impoverished people on a short- or long-term basis. Alleviative programs include unemployment compensation, public


125 Ibid., pp. 75-76.

126 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
assistance, medicare, work relief and general relief, and all involve some kind of "transfer payment." These programs have increased in number in the last few decades. They stem from the view that poverty and unemployment are the result of forces beyond the control of individuals and that public assistance is imperative to protect individual dignity. This strategy, nevertheless, remains the least popular strategy among Americans because it is often associated in their minds with "socialism" and "communism." Many Americans also continue to regard poverty as the result of individual moral defects.

Economists agree that all four strategies must be employed in order to successfully overcome poverty and unemployment. Critics argued that the War on Poverty relied too heavily on the curative strategy and that more attention had to be given to the aggregationist and alleviative strategies.

In planning the War on Poverty, the Johnson administration felt that with the 1964 income tax cut sufficient attention had already been given to the aggregationist strategy and that the emphasis had to be placed on the curative strategy. The reasoning was that while economic growth created jobs and opened exits from poverty, many poor people were unable to use the exits because of lack of skills. According to Walter Heller, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, the problem was not that the economy was failing to create enough jobs. Many poor people already had jobs, he pointed out. The cause of poverty for them, Heller

\[127\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 75.\]

\[128\text{Charles E. Silberman, "The Mixed-Up War on Poverty," } \textit{Fortune}, \ \text{August, 1965, p. 226.}\]
argued, was "not lack of jobs but lack of higher skills and productivity needed to yield a decent income. . . . They must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and health to find and hold better jobs."\(^{129}\)

The administration's position rested on two assumptions: that in 1964 there were a large number of unfilled jobs demanding skills and education; and that an increasing supply of people with skills and education would create its own demand.\(^{130}\) Critics disputed both assumptions.

As regards the first assumption, Charles Silberman observed that while there was some unfilled demand for labor, most of it was for exactly the kinds of jobs poor people already had, dishwashers, domestic servants, hospital workers and other low-paying jobs.\(^{131}\) Michael Harrington argued that these would be the only kinds of jobs available to the poor, no matter how well trained, unless there were profound changes in the way the American economy allocated resources and distributed wealth.\(^{132}\) After training programs are over, said Harrington, we are left with the "horrible, corroding question," for what have we trained the poor? Private business and industry had failed to generate jobs in recent years. All it had done was eliminate them. Only the public sector generated jobs, as when a Department of Defense contract with General Dynamics created 10,000 new jobs.\(^{133}\) If the 1.9 million new jobs needed each year were to be gener-

\(^{129}\)Quoted in Silberman, p. 226.

\(^{130}\)Silberman, p. 226.

\(^{131}\)Ibid.


\(^{133}\)Harrington, "An Unconditional War," 838.
ated, there would have to be massive spending in the public sector. Otherwise we would train for jobs that would not be available.\textsuperscript{134} What was needed was more emphasis on the aggregationist strategy.

As for the second assumption, Silberman responded that while supply creates its own demand over the long-run in that education increases productivity, it is questionable whether a supply of trained workers would create demand in the short-run. This, he said, was at best an unresolved question.\textsuperscript{135}

Doing something for the poor in the short run was the basic concern of those critics who felt that the War on Poverty gave totally inadequate attention to the alleviative strategy. In a booklet published jointly by the U. S. Office of Education and the Office of Economic Opportunity, the question was posed, "Why is America suddenly so concerned . . . about improving the education of children of the poor? This money cannot fatten a father's paycheck. It will not put bread on tonight's table."\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{134} Harrington, "The Politics of Poverty." Gunnar Myrdal shared the same viewpoint. See Gunnar Myrdal, "The War on Poverty," New Perspectives on Poverty, pp. 125-127. Herbert Kohl reported that the vocational programs of an antipoverty program in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn boiled down to training for low paying jobs as cooks, grease monkeys, and vending machine fillers despite such fancy titles as Food Service training or Vending Machine Service training. These, Kohl pointed out, were exactly the kinds of jobs poor youth had rejected in the first place and had helped persuade them to drop out of school and then not bother to look for work. It was a good example, Kohl concluded, of trying to do something about poverty while preserving the status quo--precisely Harrington's point. See Herbert Kohl, "How to Succeed in Antipoverty Without Really TRYing," Poverty: Views From The Left, ed. Jeremy Larner and Irving Howe (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1968), pp. 274-279.

\textsuperscript{135} Silberman, p. 226.

The answer given was "we have learned that poverty and ignorance go hand in hand." The critics, however, held that it made more sense to emphasize that ignorance stemmed from poverty instead of vice versa. It was more humane to alleviate immediately the conditions in which the poor lived, and in the long run the poor were more likely to benefit from educational programs if their poverty was reduced first.

The Federal administration in planning the War on Poverty had debated whether the program should fight poverty through the alleviative strategy or through increasing job opportunities for the poor through education. The final decision was for the curative strategy, which, as Weisbrod pointed out, explains the curious but little-noted contrast between what President Johnson called the War on Poverty (not the War on Inequality of Opportunity) and the initial piece of supporting legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act (not the Antipoverty Act). The upshot of this decision according to Christopher Jencks, however, was that the War on Poverty consisted almost entirely of old programs aimed at traditional objectives: the elimination not of poverty, "but of ignorance, incompetence, and so forth." In other words, the War on Poverty was reminiscent of the methods of mid-19th century schoolmen and the Progressives.

Jencks argued that instead of adopting the curative approach, the
architects of the poverty program should have simply subsidized the low wages of the poor. He thought that they were prevented from doing this by Congress' hostility to "socialism." Though many poor people were working, and many of those who were not were sick, aged, burdened with children, or apathetic, the architects still decided to give them an education to earn more money. But what this did was to make the War on Poverty fundamentally conservative. "It assumes that the poor are poor not because the economy is mismanaged but because the poor themselves have something wrong with them." They live in the wrong place, have the wrong (or no) skills, will not retrain or save, have too little education and refuse to go back to school, have the wrong personality or bad health, refuse to use contraceptives and have unwanted children.

The War on Poverty thus turned out to be a "war on the poor, aiming to change them beyond all recognition. The aim is not just to provide them with a lower-middle class standard of living, but also with the lower-middle class virtues, such as they are." This plan, Jencks argued, could not succeed. Poverty could be abolished only in the narrow economic sense. "But have we the means to abolish the attributes of the poor? Ignorance? Incompetence? Short-sightedness? Apathy? Despair? Illness? Not for $1 billion a year, and probably not for $10 billion either." Even if every family was headed by a healthy, white male college graduate between the ages of 25 and 55 there would still be men

140 Ibid., p. 18.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
out of work under the present economic setup—probably those with the poorest college grades or lowest IQ. The only possible way to help the poor, Jencks concluded, "is to give them money or free goods and services. Only then will the bottom fifth of the nation share in American consumption." ¹⁴³

Similar criticisms were leveled by Bernard Beck, a professor of social work at Northwestern University. Beck accused the warriors on poverty of treating the poor like "our natives," or as "aborigines." In setting them apart from us, "intervention in their affairs becomes noble instead of rude. Lecturing them on tactics becomes idealistic rather than snotty. The poverty warrior represents succor rather than interference." ¹⁴⁴ What the poor need, said Beck, is not an education but a guaranteed annual income. "... One way to help people who do not have sufficient resources to live at a prescribed level is to give them those resources. If you go by most of the proposed remedies for poverty, you would never know that these were people whose basic problem was not having enough money." ¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ibid.


¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 114. Interestingly enough, Dwight Macdonald argued that the idea of a minimum income for all was as reasonable as the idea of free public schools for all. "For a century now we have accepted the idea of free public schools on perfectly scientific, non-economic grounds. This system is very expensive, but we think that it is the right of every citizen to have a free education. I think within the next twenty-five years we will begin to consider it the right of every citizen regardless of anything else, to have not a subsistence living but a decent living at the public expense." See Dwight Macdonald, "The New Visible Poor," Poverty in Plenty, ed. George H. Dunne (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1964), p. 69.
An indication of the War on Poverty's dependence on the educational approach and its lack of alleviative measures was illustrated by the Head Start program. Project Head Start, a summer educational program for preschoolers ages 3 to 5, is sponsored by the federal government under the community-action title of the Economic Opportunity Act and designed to help overcome the "cultural deprivation" of poor children to ready them for successful school achievement. The reasoning is that if children can start off well in school, they have a better chance of completing their education and escaping from poverty. In fact, the assistant director of the Office of Economic Opportunity wrote that "...no other element in the whole war on poverty begins to compare with the priority given to childhood education."146

A critic of Head Start, Ivor Kraft of the U. S. Children's Bureau, pointed out, however, that preschooling could never become a major antidote for poverty because it is too far removed from the root causes of poverty. The major remedies for poverty, he argued, are concerned with jobs, income maintenance, housing, racial discrimination, and the urban environment.147

The most telling criticism of all was leveled by Leonard Schneiderman, a professor of social work at Ohio State University. Head Start, said Schneiderman, was bound to be ineffective and make promises it could not keep as long as the national strategy for fighting poverty

146 Hyman Bookbinder, "Is America Waking Up?" *Childhood Education*, XLII (April, 1966), 477.

147 Ivor Kraft, "Head Start To What?" *Nation*, CCIII (September 5, 1966), 180.
was concerned primarily with neutralizing the destructive effects of slum home and community conditions it made no attempt to eradicate.\textsuperscript{148} The federal government, he held, had developed new educational programs to compensate for poverty it had itself underwritten. Of the 34 million Americans living in poverty, as indicated by inadequate food, clothing, housing, and medical care, only 8 million could qualify for the public aid available, even though about half were too old, too young, or too disabled to work. Families in which the breadwinner was dead, disabled or absent and the mother unemployed were eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). But in December of 1964, the average recipient of AFDC funds received an estimated \$133.85 a month, about \$1,625 a year, or about half the \$3000 estimated to be the upper limit of poverty for a family of four. The average AFDC family included 3.9 persons.

Such welfare programs, Schneiderman declared, are a mockery of the stated federal intention to maintain a floor of decency beneath which no eligible American had to live. Their effect sustains poverty and degradation.

Does it make sense to subsidize a condition of life whose destructive impact then becomes part of the rationale for still another federal program? Does it make sense to have one federal program whose purpose is to neutralize the damaging effects of the poverty sustained in a second program?\textsuperscript{149}


\textsuperscript{149}ibid., 37.
stitute for the physical necessities of life? Schneiderman acknowledged that "education must be one vital component of any solution to the problem of poverty," but clearly it was no substitute for a decent and fair program of public welfare.

There are many reasons that could be offered to explain the War on Poverty's mistake of emphasizing the curative strategy to the neglect of essential aggregationist and alleviative strategies; the American fear of "socialism;" the Protestant Ethic with its belief in hard work, thrift, and competition; the Puritanical desire of Americans to regulate each other's behavior. Any explanation would be incomplete, however, if it did not take into account the American faith in education. It was not only because economists said education was needed to cure poverty that the Johnson administration and Congress produced a poverty program in which little else was featured. It was also because the War on Poverty was the product of a nation that had long been convinced that education was the solution for poverty and just about everything else; a nation that had a tradition of substituting education for other kinds of reform; a nation that deeply believed that schooling was the ultimate means of personal and social salvation here on earth. But the extent to which education was beside the point for many poor people was expressed in the words of a poor Negro named Jim, a friend of the social psychologist Robert

\[150\] Ibid., 38.

\[151\] Ibid.

\[152\] For an analysis and criticism of attempts to regulate the behavior of the children of the poor, see Bernard Mehl, "Is There a Culture of Poverty?" Educational Perspectives, VII (May, 1968), 3-5.
"People say they want to wipe out poverty"—he began with a derisive tone that already anticipated his views. "That's what you hear, but it's a lot of talk, a lot of show, and maybe a little shake of salt here and there. They tell us they want to retrain us. 'That's right,' they say, 'come on along and we'll get you retrained.'

"But I know how to do all kinds of things already, and I still can't get a job. They don't take but a few colored, trained or untrained. I'm as good a carpenter and electrician as anyone is, but can I get a job? No, sir, no union will hire me on my own. What is all this poverty thing but plugging up a lot of holes, when you need a new dam?

"They should say: 'O.K. man, we're so rich we don't know what to do with it. We're even flying over to visit the moon and into heaven, we got so much money. So here's what we'll do for you cats. We'll say every one of your children can have food, we have so much of it; and we'll give you a good apartment and a real nice school, and enough money so you won't be crawling on your belly for that relief check business. Then we have some work for you to do. Now you, Jim, we want you to help us build that hospital, or that school building for your kids and your brother's kids. You're a good builder, Jim; so help us build.' Then I'd have my head up and there wouldn't be anyone who would make me bow it and feel ashamed for sitting around or raking in them leaves.

"Isn't that the way to beat old man poverty, instead of taking some of our kids to a camp and trying to get them to learn something, when they figures after they learn it there still won't be the number of jobs we need? And what about that surplus food you have to beg to get, and saying only when you are older than 65 you can get a doctor for free? Who around here lives that long? They know right well all along that we need more than they're going to give. I see those kids on the block growing up, and they starts giving up around 10, I'd say. They just gives up. And it's because they knows the score, and no man can fool them, I don't care how clever he be.

"They try to, though. Instead of giving us what we need, they try to make us be like them. Why don't they give us what we deserve? We been working for them since the beginning, and for free most of the time. Now it's our turn to get our rights as Americans and they should let us be as we finds it in our hearts to."153

It was not long before the Johnson administration's other major

piece of poverty legislation, the Elementary and Secondary School Act, also encountered a severe challenge. The challenge came from the Coleman Report.

The historic American conception of equality of educational opportunity has been that all children should have equal access to public schools of equal quality. When some schools did not measure up to others in terms of facilities, personnel, money, and so on, the assumption was that the inequalities could be rectified by allocating equal resources to the schools. Once equal resources were allocated, it was thought, the academic level of all students would rise to the norms.

When the inequalities of schools serving the poor became apparent in the 1960's then, the conventional wisdom dictated that what was needed was more money. It was on this basis that the Elementary and Secondary School Act was passed.

The traditional conception of equal educational opportunity received a devastating jolt in 1966 with the publication of James S. Coleman's *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. This Report was the result of a directive issued to the U. S. Commissioner of Education under Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to conduct a survey "concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in educational institutions" in the United States and its possessions.

What the directive seemed to call for was simply an inventory of physical facilities, teachers, and expenditures in schools serving minority groups. But the U. S. Office of Education interpreted the directive in such a way as to include such basic questions as, Do compensatory education
programs such as Head Start improve children's school performance? Do better teachers help the poor break the "cycle of poverty"? Do Negro students learn more in integrated schools? Does the performance of middle-class children decline if they go to school with lower-class children? Do increased expenditures for education result in improved student achievement? The conventional wisdom assumed that the answer to most of these questions was yes.\textsuperscript{154}

The Report centered around four major questions. The first asked whether minority groups were segregated in public schools. Coleman and his colleagues found that they were. Among minority groups Negroes were the most segregated. "More than 65 per cent of all Negro pupils in the first grade attend schools that are between 90 and 100 per cent Negro. And 87 per cent at grade 1, and 66 per cent at grade 12, attend schools that are 50 per cent or more Negro."\textsuperscript{155} Among all groups, however, white children were the most segregated. "Almost 80 per cent of all white pupils in 1st grade and 12th grade attend schools that are from 90 to 100 per cent white. And 97 per cent at grade 1, and 99 per cent at grade 12, attend schools that are 50 per cent or more white."\textsuperscript{156} All of this more than ten years after the 1954 Supreme Court decision holding that separate schools were inherently unequal.

The second question asked whether school facilities for minority

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\item[\textsuperscript{154}]Robert Nichols, "The Coleman Report: An Inadequate Study But the Best We Have So Far," \textit{Phi Delta Kappan}, XLVIII (June, 1967), 527.
\item[\textsuperscript{156}]\textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
children were inferior to those of white children. Surprisingly Coleman found that there was no consistent advantage for any group in terms of class size, educational programs, physical facilities, and teacher qualifications. There were, of course, differences in the facilities available to the different racial and ethnic groups. For example, nationally Negroes had fewer physics, chemistry, and language laboratories, fewer library books and fewer textbooks. But these differences were small when compared with the differences between regions and metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. 95 per cent of Negro and 80 per cent of white students in the metropolitan Far West, for example, attended schools with language laboratories, while only 48 per cent of Negro students and 72 per cent of white students in the metropolitan South went to schools with language laboratories even though a higher percentage of Southern schools were less than 20 years old.157 As one writer put it, "in terms of these indicators, the educationally deprived groups in the U. S. are not racial or ethnic minorities, but children--regardless of race--living in the South and in the nonmetropolitan North."158

The third question asked whether there were differences between the scores of minority groups and whites on tests of ability in reading, writing, calculating, and so forth. The tests, as the report explained, were not intended to be "culture free." On the contrary, they were "culture bound."

What they measure are the skills which are among the most important in our society for getting a good job and moving up

157Ibid., pp. 9, 12.
158Nichols, 527.
to a better one, and for full participation in an increasingly technical world. Consequently, a pupil’s test results at the end of public school provides a good measure of the range of opportunities open to him as he finishes school—"a wide range of choice of jobs or colleges if these skills are very high; a very narrow range that includes only the most menial jobs if these skills are very low."

With the exception of Oriental Americans, the average minority pupil scored distinctly lower on the tests than the average white pupil. Negro averages were the lowest, "about one standard deviation below those of whites, which means that about 85 per cent of the Negro scores are below the white average." Minority scores were also further below majority scores at the 12th grade than they were at the 1st grade.

The persistent differences in standard deviations over the various grade levels also meant an increasing difference in grade level gap. Negroes in the metropolitan Northeast, for example, were about 1.1 standard deviations below whites in that region at grades 6, 9, and 12. But at grade 6 this represented only 1.6 years behind while at grade 9 it meant 2.4 years behind and at grade 12, 3.3 years.

The highest regional average score for Negroes was still below the lowest regional average for whites. Coleman concluded:

For most minority groups ... and most particularly the Negro, schools provide little opportunity for them to overcome this initial deficiency; in fact they fall farther behind the white majority in the development of several skills which are critical to making a living and participating fully in modern society. Whatever may be the combination of nonschool factors—poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents—which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal

159 Coleman, p. 20.
160 Ibid., p. 219.
161 Ibid., p. 21.
skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it.\footnote{162}{Ibid.} (Italics mine).

The fourth question asked by the report was whether differences in school achievement between minority groups and whites were related to school facilities. The startling finding was that the schools were "remarkably similar in the way they relate to the achievement of their pupils when the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students is taken into account."\footnote{163}{Ibid.} It had been known that socioeconomic factors were strongly related to academic achievement. But it was assumed that low academic achievement was due not only to family and community background but to poor educational facilities as well. It was also assumed that improved school facilities could compensate for handicaps imposed by socioeconomic background. Coleman concluded that this was not the case. "The data suggest that variations in school quality are not highly related to variations in achievement of pupils."\footnote{164}{Ibid., p. 297.} This was indicated by the Report's finding that children from the poorest family backgrounds began school with the lowest achievement rate and maintained it. Additional data indicated that this finding not only held true between ethnic groups but within them as well. Negro children who began poorly in school continued to do poorly while Negro children who began well in school continued to do well. Coleman concluded that "differences between schools account for only a small fraction of differences in pupil achievement."\footnote{165}{Ibid., p. 22.}
When school characteristics did seem to make a difference in school achievement, it was minority pupils, not white pupils, who seemed to benefit most. "Thus, 20 per cent of the achievement of Negroes in the South is associated with the particular schools they go to, whereas only 10 per cent of the achievement of whites in the South is. Except for Oriental Americans, this general result is found for all minorities."\textsuperscript{166}

On the basis of this information it could be inferred "that improving the school of a minority pupil may increase his achievement more than would improving the school of white child increase his." Conversely, "the average minority pupil's achievement may suffer more in a school of low quality than might the average white pupil's." In short, then, "whites and to a lesser extent Oriental Americans, are less affected one way or the other by the quality of their schools than are minority pupils. This indicates that it is for the most disadvantaged children that improvements in school quality will make the most difference."\textsuperscript{167}

These results raised the question, What school characteristics most affect the achievement of minority children? The report came to an astounding conclusion which questioned the validity of the concept of compensatory education. "It appears that variations in the facilities and curriculums of schools account for relatively little variation in pupil achievement insofar as this is measured by standard tests."\textsuperscript{168}

This finding did not mean that variations in facilities made no

\textsuperscript{166}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{168}Ibid.
difference at all in school achievement. They made some difference and again "somewhat more difference" for minority children than for whites. Science laboratories, for example, "showed a small but consistent relationship to achievement." The quality of teachers showed an even stronger relationship and this relationship increased progressively at higher grades, "indicating a cumulative impact of the qualities of teachers in a school on the pupil's achievement."

But the differences laboratories and teachers made to school achievement were almost negligible when compared to the difference "the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school" made. The data collected by Coleman indicated "that children from a given family background, when put in schools of different social composition, will achieve at quite different levels." Once again, the effect was less for white pupils than for any minority group except Oriental Americans. Coleman thus came to the most startling conclusions of all.

... If a white pupil from a home that is strongly and effectively supportive of education is put in a school where most pupils do not come from such homes, his achievement will be little different than if he were in a school composed of others like himself. But if a minority pupil from a home without much educational strength is put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase. 170

... Minority pupils, except for Orientals, have far less conviction than whites that they can affect their own environments and futures. When they do, however, their achievement is higher than that of whites who lack that conviction.

Furthermore, while this characteristic shows little relation-

169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
ship to most school factors, it is related, for Negroes to the proportion of whites in the schools. Those Negroes in schools with a higher proportion of whites have a greater sense of control. This finding suggests that the direction such an attitude takes may be associated with the pupil's school experience as well as his experience in the larger community.  

The implications of these conclusions seemed apparent. If increases in educational achievement of minority pupils were dependent on the educational backgrounds of their classmates, then their achievement was not likely to increase very much because most minority pupils attended segregated schools with students who did not have strong educational backgrounds. Coleman found that:

the average Negro has fewer classmates whose mothers graduated from high school; his classmates more frequently are members of large rather than small families; they are less often enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum; they have taken a smaller number of courses in English, mathematics, foreign language, and science.  

Furthermore, since the findings of the report indicated that no ethnic group had a consistent advantage in school facilities and that school facilities did not make a crucial difference to school achievement anyway, the belief that one could improve achievement simply by improving facilities or increasing the number of compensatory education programs no longer seemed warranted. Assuming that Coleman's findings were correct then, the only way the school achievement of minority pupils could be improved was by integrating them with middle-class children who had strong educational backgrounds. As Christopher Jencks pointed out, this did not mean that racial integration per se would turn the trick. Integrating

171 Ibid., p. 23.

172 Ibid., p. 20.
poor Negroes with poor whites would probably do no good, while integrating poor Negroes with middle-class Negroes would probably accomplish as much as integrating them with middle-class whites. But as Jencks also observed, since there were not enough middle-class Negroes to go round, class integration inevitably meant racial integration as well for the foreseeable future.173

One reviewer of the Coleman Report remarked that its findings stood "like a spear pointed at the heart of the cherished American belief that equality of educational opportunity will increase the equality of intellectual achievement."174 As far as James Coleman himself was concerned, the spear had already penetrated the heart and a new concept of equality of educational opportunity had emerged. The new concept measured equality of educational opportunity in terms of the results of school learning rather than resource inputs.175 As Coleman put it, "the crucial point is that effects of inputs have come to constitute the basis for assessment of school quality (and thus equality of opportunity), rather than the mere definition of particular inputs as being measures of quality (e.g. small classes are better than large, higher paid teachers are better than lower-paid ones, by definition)."176 From this point of view, the conventional wisdom of educators and legislators that merely

174 Nichols, p. 530.
176 Quoted in Kent, 242.
pouring more money into the schools increased learning was a fallacy. Parents had been sold a rotten bill of goods.

Coleman also believed that this new concept of equality of educational opportunity shifted the burden of responsibility for education from children and parents to teachers and administrators. Until recently, he claimed, it was assumed that if children failed in school it was their fault, not the school's. Now:

the responsibility to create achievement lies with the educational institution, not the child. The difference in achievement at grade 12 between the average Negro and the average white is, in effect, the degree of inequality of opportunity, and the reduction of that inequality is a responsibility of the school. 177

Coleman added that "this does not imply that all students' achievement comes to be identical, but only that the averages for two population groups that begin at different levels come to be identical." 178

This new concept of educational opportunity meant that parents could justly hold schoolmen responsible if desired academic results were not forthcoming. 179

While the new concept of equal educational opportunity sounded reasonable, the question still remained as to how it could be achieved. Predictably, white liberals argued that it could only be achieved through school integration and they pointed to the Coleman Report as evidence. The urbanologist and historian Daniel Patrick Moynihan maintained:

Because race is the single most inclusive (although not,  

177 Quoted in Kent, 242-243.  
178 Quoted in Kent, 243.  
179 Kent, p. 243.
of course, complete) determinant of class . . . I will argue that Coleman's data represent the most important demonstration of the absolute necessity of racial integration in education that has ever been assembled. He has shown that the achievement of lower class students is raised when they are included in a predominantly middle-class school, and that the corresponding achievement of the middle-class students is not thereby lowered. . . . The evidence is that if we are going to produce equality of educational opportunity in the United States in this generation, we must do so by sending Negro students, and other minority students as well, to majority white schools.180

Similarly, Christopher Jencks argued that the Coleman Report provided empirical evidence for the necessity of a common school. "Those of our forefathers who pushed for the common primary school, and later for the comprehensive high school, were evidently on the right track. Such a melting pot seems to help the disadvantaged without appreciably hurting the advantaged."181

But Jencks also observed that:

neither parents nor educators will believe the Report's finding that white, middle-class children do as well in heavily integrated schools as elsewhere. The necessary changes will therefore be strongly opposed by both suburban and small-town educators, and by white parents. They will only be possible if the federal government ignores those people's protests and intervenes directly in an area traditionally reserved to local government. Such intervention is unlikely. But that is only another way of saying that white America is not ready to do what would have to be done to integrate Negroes into the mainstream of society.182

The Federal government did intervene, however. Harold Howe of the U. S. Office of Education followed the directive of Congress to withhold funds available under the Elementary and Secondary School Act from those

180 Quoted in Kent, p. 243.
school systems which resisted integration. But the government's intervention became an issue in the 1968 presidential election because middle-class whites continued to resist integration. And segregation in the schools had actually increased after the 1954 Supreme Court decision. With the continuing influx of Negroes into major cities, the ever increasing flight of whites to the suburbs, and the inability of affluent Negroes to buy their way out of the ghetto because of housing discrimination, all signs indicated that the situation would worsen even more.  

Fred Hechinger reported at the beginning of 1965 that "many civil rights leaders appear to believe that if only all schools could be integrated, the inferior status of Negroes would be licked. Therefore the brunt of the protests in the Northern cities has been directed against the schools." If that was the case in 1965, an event in 1966 made it clear that the attitudes of many Negro leaders and parents had begun to undergo a distinct change. When the new Intermediate School 201 opened in East Harlem in the Fall of 1966 amidst a storm of controversy, it became apparent that some Negroes had lost hope that school integration would ever be achieved and they no longer cared.

From the time the site for I.S. 201 was originally selected in 1958 to the time it was to open in April, 1966, parents and community groups had protested to the Board of Education that the school's location guaranteed that it would be segregated. The Board, however, assured them

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184 Hechinger, p. 75.
that steps would be taken to make the school a model of "quality, integrated" education. Nothing was done. When the school was about to open in the Spring of 1966, the local superintendent told the parents that the school would indeed be integrated: 50 per cent Negro and 50 per cent Puerto Rican. The outraged parents prevented the scheduled April opening of the school. The Board tried to appease the parents by pointing out that it was an air-conditioned, multi-million dollar plant, but to no avail.185

The parents were not only angry over the false promises of integration. They were also upset about their children's poor level of achievement. The story of Harlem was similar to Patricia Sexton's Detroit. In 1963 half of Harlem's sixth graders were two years behind. But in 1966, 85 per cent were. The dropout rate was also growing. Two-thirds of the youth who entered Harlem's only high school never graduated, and of those who had graduated in June, 1966, only 13 got academic diplomas allowing them to go straight to college.186 One Harlem mother complained, "Our kids can't read. The Board of Education has given us so-o-o many experiments, but they aren't working. Maybe if the board let us have a voice, things would be better."187 Preston Wilcox, a professor of community organization at Columbia's School of Social Work and theoretician of the parent's movement, agreed. Wilcox, a Negro, took the position that


if a segregated white school could be good, so could a segregated black school. He argued that:

if it is true that the public school system can do no more than it is already doing, then the residents of the ghetto must seize the opportunity to assume a leadership role in the education of their own children. In this they claim only a chance to exercise, for better or worse, the same right which is exercised by some of those outside the ghetto. 188

During the summer, Wilcox, along with community groups, formulated a plan for a school-community committee. Its members were to have close ties to the community and the school administration and teachers were to be accountable to this committee. The plan was ignored by the Board of Education until a threatened boycott brought its president and the superintendent of schools to a parents meeting to negotiate. The officials surprisingly agreed to the formation of a community council which would have a voice in the hiring of new school personnel and curriculum formulation. 189

But the parents also wanted a Negro principal because, as one community leader put it, "when the school administrator becomes the prime daily adult male authority image for children needing racial self-respect and ambition, the race of that principal may prove an educational factor more important than we prefer to believe." 190 The Board of Education appeared to be willing to go along with this. The principal, Stanley Lisser, was made to "voluntarily resign" and the Negro assistant principal, Miss Beryl Banfield, was assigned to take his place temporarily.

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188 Quoted in Kopkind, 12.
189 Hentoff, 333.
190 Quoted in Hentoff, 333.
She refused, however, saying that she did not want to be appointed on the basis of race. But she also felt that without obtaining the credentials of a principal she could not command the community's respect. Nor did she wish to cover up for the fact that there was no Negro principal available for the school (out of 870 principals in the city system, only four were Negroes). As it turned out though, the Board withdrew its offer to install a black principal because of pressure from a principals' organization and the walkout of 55 of I.S. 201's teachers who demanded Lisser's return, fearing that their tenure rights would be violated by the community. The result was a boycott complete with picketing and police lines.

The boycott eventually faded, a new plan for community control proposed by Kenneth Clark got nowhere, and things soon returned to normal. But not quite. For the parents of East Harlem had begun something that was to have widespread repercussions. They made Mayor Lindsay and other prominent people realize that the city school system would have to begin moving towards decentralization in order to become more responsive to community wishes. Of equal importance was the fact that while the parents in effect had adopted Coleman's new concept of equal educational opportunity, they rejected the view of white liberals like Moynihan and Jencks that the only way to achieve it was through integration. Their answer was that it could be achieved through community control.

Floyd McKissick of CORE expressed his own dissatisfaction with Jencks' interpretation of the Coleman Report and elaborated on the meaning

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191 Hentoff, 333-334.
of I.S. 201. It is difficult, said McKissick, for a Negro to live with
the conclusion that he will have an equal educational opportunity only
with racial integration when it is obvious that it will not soon occur.
It made more sense, he argued, to emphasize that portion of the Coleman
Report that concluded that a Negro child's achievement is highly corre-
lated with his feeling that he can control his own destiny. Since the
Report also indicated that Negro children showed the least amount of
conviction that they controlled their own destiny, it was this to which
attention must be given.

One wonders if a good teacher is not really one who in-
creases that sense—that sense of ability to cope, to perform,
to succeed.

And . . . one wonders if that thing called "middle class"
is not really a way of saying that the middle-class child is
less helpless and vulnerable, that he knows his parents will
go to bat for him, that he carries that attitude around with
him, that his teachers perceive him differently.192

If this is the case, then "total reliance on integration—which amounts
to reliance on acceptance by the white man—is at direct odds with that
sense of 'control over one's destiny' . . . ."193

This was precisely the meaning of I.S. 201, McKissick continued.

It made clear to the nation:

that the facile liberal equation between excellence in educa-
tion and integration is one which Negroes (as well as whites)
are no longer prepared to accept.

And the Coleman Report implicitly supports much of what
the parents are fighting for. . . .

.. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

These parents knew—perhaps better than the professional
educators—that their individual and collective feeling of

192 Floyd McKissick, "Is Integration Necessary?" The New Republic,
CLV (December, 1966), p. 35.

193 Ibid.
powerlessness and the resulting lack of self respect had had and would continue to have a crippling effect upon their children.\textsuperscript{194}

It was for this reason that they demanded black authority figures, sympathetic teachers, a curriculum that reflected the Negro's contribution to American and world history, and greater participation in their children's educational lives. In effect these parents were saying to educators:

that if a child with native intelligence is not achieving, the fault does not lie in the child. One must assume the technique is wrong, the relationship is wrong, the measure of achievement is wrong, the perception of the child is wrong. As with a doctor with a sick patient, it is more prudent to try changing the medicine and the mode of treatment than to curse the patient for not getting well.\textsuperscript{195}

In short, McKissick concluded, "I.S. 201 says there is a different route to respect and a different route to educational excellence." "It might even offer as much as the opportunity to be bused at 8:00 a.m. into hostile lily-white suburbs to attend a school where acceptance is from nine to three and where membership in the glorious student culture is merely at sufferance."\textsuperscript{196}

McKissick was not alone in his disdain for the liberal interpretation of the Coleman Report. At the 1967 Fall conference of the doctoral Colloquium Board of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, similar views were expressed by other prominent Negroes. The Negro president of the Orange, New Jersey, Board of Education, John Alexander, declared that

\textsuperscript{194}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196}Ibid., p. 36.
the report dealt a "death blow to all black children. If this report [were] accepted as fact, all black children would never have a chance to be educated." The "whiteness-is-rightness" bias of Coleman's study was simply unacceptable to blacks in 1967, he said. Preston Wilcox of I.S. 201 fame added, "I don't subscribe to the view that a black kid must sit next to a white kid to learn. The report is based on the myth of white supremacy. Schools improve only when educators become advocates of their students and not the system." Low Negro achievement, he charged, was attributable to "WASP Nationalism" which had undermined the self-confidence and sense of identity of blacks. The solution to the black's problem of low achievement was black control of the schools.

Ironically, Coleman himself did not subscribe to the view that the educational achievement of minority children was dependent on racial integration. Integration would help, he believed, but it was not a panacea. "The task of increasing achievement of lower-class children cannot be fully implemented by school integration, even if integration were wholly achieved--and the magnitude of racial and class concentration in large cities indicates that it is not likely to be achieved soon."

Whether or not the Coleman Report supported the need for racial integration and a common school, as Moynihan and Jencks maintained, was in the end almost beside the point. Even if it did, the Report appeared at a time in American history when American society was going beyond the

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197 Quoted in Kent, p. 244.
198 Quoted in Kent, p. 244.
199 Quoted in Kent, p. 244.
common school. There were many indications of this. One was that in the
great metropolitan areas in the 1960's, given housing patterns, continu­
ing white prejudice toward blacks, and growing black anger toward whites
because of their prejudice, the common school had simply disappeared and
interest in restoring it was quickly dissipating. I.S. 201 was signifi­
cant because it showed all these factors at work. The Negro parents
began by demanding a common school. Rebuffed by whites, they finally
told them "to go to hell" and demanded control of the school to see what
they could do about improving learning. In the end, neither Negro nor
white parents cared about creating a common school.

But I.S. 201 not only represented a loss of hope for common
schools by Negroes. It also indicated Negroes' continuing loss of faith
in the ability of the schools to teach their children successfully and
help them make it economically and socially. To employ the analogy of
the school as a church, it indicated that Negroes had become aware that
the church had become corrupt and they were now calling for its reforma­
tion. Just as the bureaucracy, the rituals, and the priests of the Renais­
sance Catholic Church had become self-serving, so now also had the bureau­
cracy, the curriculum, and the teachers of the American church. The
bureaucracy and priests of the American church, like the bureaucracy and
priests of the Renaissance church, were using their positions to exploit
the faithful. No longer interested in the faithful's welfare, they simply
used them as a means for making an easy and fairly comfortable living.
And like Renaissance bishops, those at the top of the school bureaucracy,
superintendents and their seemingly endless number of assistants, often
enjoyed power, prestige, and money despite the fact that they did little
besides keep the system going. Furthermore, the curriculum, like medi­
val Latin liturgies, had become a series of meaningless chants and re­
sponses by the priests and the faithful. When the parents of I.S. 201
demanded sympathetic administrators and teachers and a meaningful cur­
riculum, they were not simply asking for minor changes in the school but
its total reformation.

There was a growing body of evidence to indicate, however, that
the needed reformation could not be carried out within the normal frame­
work of city school systems. Not only had the Coleman Report indicated
that compensatory education programs were not working, but it was becoming
increasingly apparent that with the way minority children were being
treated in ghetto schools nothing would work. Jonathan Kozol documented
the rampant racism of urban schools, racism that not only resulted in the
physical and psychological abuse of Negro children but in teachers treat­
ing them as if they were incapable of learning anything with the result
that they did not.\(^\text{200}\) Kenneth Clark pointed out the racist overtones of
theories of cultural deprivation and observed that instead of increasing
teachers' understanding of the learning problems of Negro children, these
theories often led them to treat the children as uneducable, just as
theories of racial inferiority had.\(^\text{201}\) Herbert Kohl further indicated
that low expectations of Negro children resulted in low achievement.\(^\text{202}\)

\(^{200}\)Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early Age* (New York: Houghton
Mifflin, 1967).

\(^{201}\)Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965),
p. 131.

\(^{202}\)Herbert Kohl, *36 Children* (New York: New American Library,
1967).
Elliott Shapiro, the principal of New York City's P.S. 119 who became famous because he cared about the destinies of the minority children he was responsible for, maintained that "our children are dying" because "their brain cells have never been fully brought to life" and as a result, are doomed to a life of unemployment and uselessness. He pointed out that his kindergarten children and first-graders who had not gone to kindergarten had been tested and compared with middle-class children in other New York schools with the surprising finding that 75 per cent of them were closer to middle-class norms of knowledge and apperceptive abilities than had been thought. "It is after the first grade that the disparities between our children and those of the middle class start showing up."  

Not only was the mistreatment of children in ghetto schools becoming clear, but so was the reluctance or inability of city school systems to change their basic patterns of operation. Peter Schrag, for example, found that although the Boston schools had a myriad of experimental programs, they were sheer window dressing and were having little or no effect on the everyday teaching in most classrooms. Elliott Shapiro and his faculty had to embarrass the Board of Education by placing an advertisement in a New York paper listing the miserable conditions in their school building, which included rats and roaches on every floor,

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204 Ibid., p. 11.
205 Schrag, Village School Downtown, pp. 70-72.
before the Board moved to repair the building and make plans for a new one.

Both of these problems were manifested most clearly in the Head Start program. One critic pointed out that the theory of Head Start--making up for the one to three years of formal education a middle-class child often has upon entering kindergarten as well as the informal educational advantages he enjoys--ignored the evidence that:

Harlem children enter school with less of a handicap than they have six years later--after the school has enriched them. It ignores the fact that 25 per cent of the children in North Philadelphia schools at the end of the first grade seem to be college bound on the basis of achievement and IQ, compared to only 4 per cent at the end of sixth grade. It ignores the fact that most poor children do learn the mechanics of reading and compete more or less successfully until the fourth grade where they reach an early and final plateau. She concluded that unless laymen pressured educators into new educational patterns, "the addition of two vulnerable years to the present school tenure may simply produce an exaggeration of the benumbing and depressive effect that ghetto schools are already having. Under such circumstances the highly vaunted Head Start will only be a head start to a dead end." 208

Other critics observed that the schools were relying on Head Start to help bail out the status quo. Martin Mayer commented that "Head Start is popular with the schools because it calls for no change in what the schools are doing." "If we do not change what we do with children in the elementary school, whatever we do with them earlier--through Head

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206 Rentoff, Our Children Are Dying, pp. 35-42.

207 Deborah Meier, "Head Start or Dead End?" Poverty: Views From the Left, p. 131.

208 Ibid., p. 136.
Start or any other procedure--won't make very much difference."209
Charles Silberman quoted another critic as saying that Head Start and
other OEO educational programs were simply "shoring up the same old
stupid system, instead of changing it."210

The obvious inertia, unresponsiveness, and pedagogic failures of
city school systems, and the growing demands in ghettos for community
control of schools finally led some cities to experiment with decentrali­
zation in a few school districts. It had become obvious to at least some
politicians and educators that if there were to be any kind of signifi­
cant reforms in the schools and if faith in the schools among ghetto
residents was to be restored, there would have to be some structural
changes in their administrative organization. The decentralization
experiment that attracted the most attention was New York City's.

The running series of battles between neighborhoods and the Board
of Education which had begun in the early 1960's and culminated in I.S.
201 prompted Mayor John Lindsay to ask the Board of Education in the
Spring of 1967 to appoint a task force to study the question of decentrali­
zation. When the Board failed to display a willingness to do this, Lindsay
finessed the Board by getting the state legislature to request him to sub­
mit a plan "for the creation and redevelopment of educational policy and
administrative units ... with adequate authority to foster greater com­
munity initiative and participation."211 The Mayor appointed an Advisory

209Martin Mayer, "Stop Waiting for Miracles," PTA Magazine,

210Silberman, p. 223.

211Quoted in Thomas R. Brooks, "Can Parents Run New York's
Panel on Decentralization of the New York City Schools chaired by Ford Foundation president McGeorge Bundy to draw up the plan. Bundy and the Ford Foundation, however, persuaded the Board of Education to set up "demonstration units" to test community control before the plan was submitted. During the summer of 1967 three pilot districts were established: one at I.S. 201, appropriately enough; another in Two Bridges, a racially mixed district on the lower East Side of Manhattan; and a third in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, a predominantly Negro district in Brooklyn. The Ford Foundation contributed $135,000 to help support the districts.

Elections were organized in each district for seven parent representatives for the "governing board." Once elected these representatives in turn chose five additional community representatives. To these twelve were added seven more members. In Ocean Hill-Brownsville, four teachers, two administrators, and a Brooklyn college professor completed the board. The board then chose a district administrator who had responsibility for appointing principals and hiring teachers.

The experiments ran into trouble right from the start. When Rhody McKoy, Ocean Hill-Brownsville's district administrator, picked six principals (one Puerto Rican, two whites and three Negroes) from the state's certification lists rather than the city's "eligible" lists, seventeen of the district's eighteen assistant principals requested transfers because they felt McKoy's move undermined the merit system. White teachers were harassed by parents who accused them of bigotry and incompetence and parent-teacher meetings often turned into shouting matches. When the teachers participated in a city-wide teacher's strike,
their jobs were threatened.

The stage was set then for a confrontation between the United Federation of Teachers and the governing boards. This occurred in the Fall of 1968 when the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district refused to accept ten teachers whom it had "transferred" on grounds of incompetence and undermining the decentralization experiment, and replaced them with teachers McKoy had hired during the summer. The charges against the teachers seemed false to an examiner—a Negro—who investigated them. And there was some question whether the governing board had the power to transfer teachers since the Board of Education—perhaps in an attempt to scuttle the experiment—had never defined its power clearly. In any case, the UFT called a city-wide strike claiming that the due process of its members had been violated. After a settlement that temporarily ended the strike fell through because of the Union's claim that teachers continued to be harassed by parents and administrators, a second strike was called. When a second agreement fell through for similar reasons, a third and more protracted strike was called.

The strike was complicated by other factors. Since almost two-thirds of New York's teachers are Jewish, charges of teacher incompetence and disregard led to anti-Semitism among militant blacks (although there was no evidence of anti-Semitism on the governing board since 70 per cent of the 350 teachers hired during the summer were Jewish). Furthermore, the UFT appeared to black militants to be more interested in protecting the job security of teachers, even incompetent ones, than in the fact that black children were not learning. And when UFT president Albert Shanker demanded the end of the decentralization experiment as his price
for settling the strike, it also appeared to blacks that the UFT was fighting to maintain the status quo. 212

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict cooled the New York state legislature's enthusiasm for approving the Bundy recommendations for decentralization, which had been published in the Fall of 1967, or any other decentralization plan. Those legislators who still favored some form of decentralization favored tight central control of the powers of community boards. 213 But in the Fall of 1968, Negro demands for decentralization were increasing across the nation and educators and legislators were also beginning to realize that these demands would have to be dealt with on peril of radicalizing Negro communities and breeding racial conflict. The comment of Detroit's Superintendent of Schools was typical: "Some type of decentralization is inevitable. There is no question that it is desirable to get as much citizen involvement as possible at the local school level. Decentralization is the best method of achieving it. The question is, what is the best method of achieving decentralization?" 214

212 My description of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy is based on the Brooks article cited above and on Peter Janssen's article, "Who Should Run The Schools?" Newsweek, October 28, 1968, pp. 84-85.


214 Quoted in F. M. Hechinger, "Local Control of Schools a Growing National Issue: Negroes' Priority Demand," The New York Times, October 13, 1968, p. 80. The basic problem in achieving decentralization is how to safeguard teachers from harassment and arbitrary dismissal by local boards. In cities where there are large numbers of Negro teachers, the problem is not expected to be too great. But in a city like New York, where 90 per cent of the teachers are white while more than 50 per cent of the students are Negro or Puerto Rican, the problem is likely to continue to loom large.
In the growing drive for decentralization, two things are being lost sight of. First is the liberals' interpretation of the Coleman Report that claims that integration is necessary for equal educational opportunity. Decentralization reaffirms the concept of the neighborhood school, not bussing children across school district lines to achieve racial balance. Noting this, Peter Schrag has argued that:

> if the Coleman Report has any validity—and there is little reason to doubt that children from different social backgrounds do learn from each other—then decentralization, which will help institutionalize segregation, is a step backward. Thus the Bundy Report, which outlines a plan of decentralization for New York City, and the Coleman Report, one might think, were composed on different planets.215

Whether decentralization is a step backward or not, the desire for metropolitan schools that could be called "common" is fading indeed.

The second thing being lost sight of is that decentralization is supposed to be a means to an end, improving school instruction. It is based on the premise that local control will give the parents a chance to see what they can do about getting teachers who care and a curriculum that is meaningful. But with the growing black quest for power, and at a time in which politicians are anxious to restore black faith in the schools and buy some political peace, decentralization is becoming an end in itself. In one way this is healthy because a revolt against professionals who have held the power but "failed to deliver the goods," as Schrag puts it, is necessary, especially since the professionals are reluctant to give up power. But in another way it is dangerous because there seems to be a growing assumption among militant blacks that decen-

215 Peter Schrag, "Why Our Schools Have Failed," Commentary XLV (March, 1968), 35.
eralization plus more black teachers and administrators will automati-
cally mean sound education. That this will hardly be the case has been
pointed out by Schrag.

He observes that decentralization is just the beginning of a new
set of problems. As the Negro parents who are involved in New York's
decentralization experiments are discovering, bad education is not simply
the result of institutional racism and bad intentions. It is ultimately
the result of what the Coleman Report implied, that teachers still do not
know very much about how to teach. "Negro schools are bad because all
schools are bad. We simply don't know very much about how children
learn. This is, in the end, what the Coleman Report proved. It may also
be the greatest single contribution of the civil-rights movement."216

In arguing to this conclusion, Schrag, like Sexton, challenges
the common belief that the schools have been and are America's greatest
avenue to social and economic advancement. He maintains that since the
Coleman Report shows that children who do well in school continue to do
dwell while those who begin poorly continue to do poorly indicates "that
schools make relatively little difference, except as a place where kids
learn from each other, and that money spent in improving them is likely,
at best, to yield marginal results."217

To put it another way, where education depends entirely on
the school, it turns out pretty badly; success comes from
those situations in which the home environment, or some other
external factor, provides the motivation, the discipline, and
the interest. If this is so, then--at best--the schools do
no more than magnify and amplify tendencies determined by

216 Ibid., p. 37.
217 Ibid., p. 32.
outside influences; at worst they are simply irrelevant, not merely to the deprived—but to all children. Those who learn, would learn regardless of the school.218

Schrag is aware that one is tempted to dismiss such assertions as preposterous since "we take it as an article of faith that the public school has always been the great American social instrument, the device that converted the raw material of immigration into an endless stream of social success."219 But the fact is that "the school seems to be failing in the very functions on which its reputation has always been based. It does not seem to be able to bring the most indigenous and American of all 'immigrants' into the mainstream or even to give them the educational qualifications that life in the mainstream requires."220 Schrag thus challenges Commager's thesis that the schools successfully Americanized the immigrants as well as the schoolmen's claim that the school has historically been the chief instrument of social and economic advancement.

With the possible exception of the Jews, did the school ever become a major avenue of entry for the ethnic minorities of the urban centers? How effective was it for the Irish, the Italians, the Poles? Was it the school or the street that acculturated our immigrants? What about such Americanizing institutions as the political ward, the shop, and the small town? A half-century ago American society provided alternatives to formal education and no one became officially distressed about dropouts and slow readers. Now the school has become the gatekeeper to advancement, and while it is being blamed for obvious failures, it may actually be doing better than it ever did before.221

But while the schools may be doing a better job than ever before,

218 Schrag, Village School Downtown, p. 162.
219 Schrag, "Why Our Schools Have Failed," 32.
220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
Schrag's point is that they do a lot less than most Americans think they do. Or, to put it more negatively, they are a lot worse than even the critics of urban education think. As Schrag writes, "The logic is fairly simple: either the schools can educate (or, better, can get children to learn) or they can't. And if they can succeed only with those bound to succeed, then they need to be reformed from the top down." In education, as in business, the customer is always right, and when large numbers of children, in the ghetto and out, fail to improve or just fail period, it is the schools that need adjustment, not the children. The American church it turns out is corrupt indeed and its total reformation is mandatory.

But this is still only half the story. For it is not only that the schools do not know much about how to get failing children to learn, but they often stifle children who could learn on their own. Thus Schrag concludes that "when it comes to many contemporary school systems, all children tend to be disadvantaged."

What I'm suggesting is that many schools are not educational but sociological devices which destroy learning and curiosity and deny differences as often as they encourage them, and which value managerial order above initiative, good behavior above originality, and mediocrity above engagement. (Yes, of course, there are exceptions.) All too often, they demand styles of behavior antithetical not only to social and ethnic minorities, but also to most other original or "difficult" children, no matter what their background. They are instruments of social selection and as such they screen out misfits for the middle class, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In performing this function, every guidance counselor becomes an immigration officer and every examination a petition for a passport.223

222 Schrag, Village School Downtown, p. 162.

223 Schrag, "Why Our Schools Have Failed," 34.
Schrag's conclusion is based on his reading of education's so-called "Romantic" critics, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Paul Goodman, John Holt, and Jules Henry, four men who have issued challenges to the faith of Americans in their schools as serious as those issued by the Coleman Report.

Although these men form a diverse group, they have in common a Rousseauian belief in the natural goodness of children, a Deweyan concern that education should mean individual growth, and a belief that contemporary American society and its schools actually resist the processes of learning and growing up. Friedenberg's *The Vanishing Adolescent* (1959) and *Coming of Age in America* (1965), Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* (1959) and *Compulsory Mis-Education* (1964), and Henry's *Culture Against Man* (1963) all center around the themes of alienation, conformity, and middle-class repression, while Holt's *How Children Fail* deals with the strategies teachers employ to convince themselves that they are actually teaching students something and the strategies children have devised to pass exams and convince their teachers they have indeed learned something without having really come to understand much of anything. They are all, however, "reports on the emptiness of the adult world and on the way teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and administrators seduce and coerce children into self-denial, how they teach them games of evasion, and how they deprive them of their desires for honest confrontations with the adult world." Thus Friedenberg writes in *The Vanishing Adolescent*:

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225 Ibid.
Adolescent growth can and should lead to a completely human adulthood; defined as a stable sense of self, it could lead nowhere else. . . . Youngsters who do not achieve this stability [are], in a sense, victims of cruelty, misfortune, or social pathology. . . . But they are also the products of what, in our society, is normal growth; of growth that is consistently distorted so as to lead to the outcome society actually expects, and under ordinary circumstances, rewards. . . .

Subjective intensity, disciplined but not repressed, lies at the heart of integrity, of artistic creativity, and of adolescence. It seems to me in the last analysis, that this is what terrifies the contemporary middle-class adult most. Any individual through whom subjective intensity may intrude into the processes of bureaucratic equilibrium is extremely threatening to our society.226

Adults fear adolescents' natural instincts and honest questions—sexual, political, religious, and so on—and try to repress them because their own behavior is so often dishonest, compromising, and morally ambiguous. The simple truth, says Friedenberg, is that adult American society cannot tolerate the young's natural humanity and it must therefore twist and distort it. The result is a flood of adolescent pathology. As Goodman sees it, those adolescents who enter the system have become "finks" who never really had a chance to determine exactly what it is they believe and desire and who are as dishonest as their parents. Those who reject the system and the rat race become dropouts, delinquents, and beats who are unable to find purpose in their lives. The whole process of growing up turns out to be absurd.

Educators contribute to the absurdity by teaching children how to pretend and lie. According to John Holt:

We have only to convince ourselves that a lie will be "better" for the children than the truth, and we will lie. We don't always need even the excuse; we often lie only for our own convenience. . . .

We present ourselves to children as if we were gods, all-knowing, all-powerful, always rational, always just, always right. This is worse than any lie we could tell them about ourselves. . . . As we are not honest with them, so we won't let children be honest with us. . . . We require them to take part in the fiction that school is a wonderful place and that they love every minute of it. They learn early that not to like school or the teacher is verboten, not to be said, not to be even thought.  

Goodman maintains that the educational process reduces to brainwashing:

The components are a uniform world-view, the absence of any viable alternative, confusion about the relevance of one's own experience and feelings, and a chronic anxiety, so that one clings to the one world-view as the only security. This is brainwashing.  

For Henry and Holt both, the educational process is permeated with fear. Henry believes that:

In order not to fail most students are willing to believe anything and not to care whether what they are told is true or false. Thus one becomes absurd through being afraid; but paradoxically, only by remaining absurd can one feel free from fear.  

Holt asks why children fail and answers:

They fail because they are afraid, bored, and confused. They are afraid, above all else, of failing, of disappointing or displeasing the many anxious adults around them, whose limitless hopes and expectations for them hang over their heads like a cloud.

They are bored because the things they are given and told to do in school are so trivial, so dull, and make such limited and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capacities, and talents.

They are confused because most of the torrent of words that pours over them in school makes little or no sense. It often flatly contradicts other things they have been told and hardly

227 Quoted in Schrag, ibid., p. 81.

228 Quoted in Schrag, ibid.

229 Quoted in Schrag, ibid.
ever has any relation to what they really know—to the rough model of reality that they carry around in their minds.\textsuperscript{230}

As far as Friedenberg is concerned, the school obscures its students' feelings and moral quests. More interested in good public relations, administrative convenience, and political peace than it is in the growth of its students, the school denies or evades their problems instead of confronting them directly.\textsuperscript{231} In so doing, says Friedenberg, it teaches its students that "they can only win esteem by how they look and behave, not for what they are. . . ."

It is more firmly convinced than ever that its job is to teach youngsters to respond to other people's expectations. While it emphasizes the expression of personality, it conveys to the student that personality should be built on certain standard plans, superficially varied according to taste, and that expression should consist of a fairly continuously emitted code signal by which other persons can recognize what they want when they see it. If they don't want it, there must be something wrong with either the personality or the signal, and it must be changed.\textsuperscript{232}

A lower-class child never has a chance in such a system:

These youngsters are handy with their fists and worse; but they are helpless in the meshes of middle-class administrative procedure and are rapidly neutralized and eliminated by it. . . . They quickly learn that the most terrifying creatures are those whose bite passes unnoticed at the time and later swells, festers, and paralyzes; they cannot defend themselves against the covert, lingering hostility of teachers and school administrators.\textsuperscript{233}

Schrag sums up all the criticisms in these words:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{231}Schrag, "Education's 'Romantic' Critics," p. 81.
  \item \textsuperscript{232}Quoted in Schrag, \textit{ibid}.
  \item \textsuperscript{233}Quoted in Schrag, \textit{ibid}.
\end{itemize}
The school, in short, is not an instrument of pluralism, but of conformity. It turns out shoddy goods for the dime store trade; its teachers are not professionals but petty civil servants who teach children to deny their own instincts and honesty, teach them little tricks of evasion, and reject those who are not acceptable for the mold. The descriptions of the impact of schooling on youth given by the Romantic critics, the Coleman Report, Schrag, Kozol, Kohl, Shapiro and the others point to one devastating conclusion: that what goes on in many schools, perhaps most, is not an educational process that liberates human potential and prepares young people to lead meaningful lives, but some kind of pathological process that erodes individual integrity and esteem, warps human personality, and destroys ability to learn. What it reduces to, although it is frightening to say it, is sheer madness.

Perhaps things are no worse in the average school than they have ever been. Oscar Handlin suggests in *The Uprooted*, for example, that schools were not the hospitable places for immigrant children that for some reason we have convinced ourselves they were. Nor is it incidental that middle-class children, as well as lower-class children, have always had a distaste for school. We have smiled at their complaints about it without realizing that they may very well have been justified. Perhaps also schools are now doing a better job than they have ever done before, as some defenders of the schools claim they are. The point

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234 Schrag, "Why Our Schools Have Failed," p. 35.


236 See, for example, Robert J. Havighurst, "Requirements for a Valid 'New Criticism'," *Phi Delta Kappan*, XL (September, 1968), 20-26. See also Paul Goodman's criticisms of Havighurst's position, "How the School Establishment HOAXES the Public," *Phi Delta Kappan*, XL (September, 1968), 18-19.
is, however, that in an age when the school has become the primary agency for selecting out society's elites, an age in which we must acknowledge America's dependence on education as well as her faith in it, the average school is still far from being good enough.

It is because schooling has become the primary route to social and economic success while alternate routes to such success—the farm, small business, unskilled jobs—are increasingly disappearing, that a search for alternate forms of schooling apart from public schools has emerged. In essence, this search is an attempt to restore the choices a simpler society took for granted. In a way, decentralization is part of this search. And yet decentralization is essentially an attempt to reform the schools from within. What the search for alternative forms of education apart from public schools represents is first a loss of faith in the ability of large school systems to generate needed reforms and a belief that if all children are to have a half-way decent chance of making it, that substitutes for these "self-serving bureaucratic monsters" must be found. Secondly, it represents a belief that as long as the present system of public schools continues to operate as an educational monopoly no significant reforms can be expected. Reform can come only in the form of a counter-reformation, a reaction to the appearance of new "churches." Thirdly, it represents an interesting attempt to overcome that common villain of the New Left and the New Right, the


bureaucrat. And finally, it represents still another indication of the declining faith of many Americans in the common school and the fact that American society is indeed moving beyond the ideal of the common school.

In 1962, the conservative economist Milton Friedman wrote that:

... both the imposition of a minimum required level of schooling and the financing of this school by the state can be justified. ... A third step, namely the actual administration of education institutions by the government, the 'nationalization,' ... of the bulk of the 'education industry,' is much more difficult to justify on ... any ... grounds.239

At first, ideas like Friedman's did not attract much attention since they seemed similar to conservative schemes for having private industry take over the Post Office on the grounds that no business should be operated by the government.240 But as the decade wore on, revealing the inadequacies of the public school and making apparent the fact that while the rich had a choice of private schools or private-like suburban schools, the poor and lower-middle class had none, proposals for alternative educational programs began to make more sense.

One of the first to propose some alternatives was Paul Goodman. In opposing the notion that the solution to the "problem" of dropouts was to get them back into the schools, Goodman declared:

There is a mass superstition, underwritten by additional billions every year, that adolescents must continue going to school. The middle-class know that no professional competence--i.e. status and salary--can be attained without many diplomas; and poor people have allowed themselves to be convinced that the primary remedy for their increasing deprivation is to agitate for better schooling. Nevertheless, I doubt that, at present or with any


240Schrag, "Competition for the Public Schools," p. 75.
reforms that are conceivable under present school administration, going to school is the best use for the time of life of the majority of youth.\textsuperscript{241}

Dropping out, said Goodman, is an intelligent response to an intolerable situation and it is a "problem" only because there is no other place for youth to go. He suggested that the $1000 it takes to keep a youth in high school (or the $2000 for reform school) be used instead to pay the youth directly for an "educative job."

Here are four great classes of youth jobs: construction--e.g. improving the scores of thousands of ugly small towns; community service and social work--like the Friend's Service, or working in understaffed hospitals or as school-aides, or janitoring public housing; assisting in the thousands of little theaters, independent broadcasters, and local newspapers, that we need to counteract the mass-media; and rural rehabilitation and conservation. For educational value for a majority of the young, I would match that curriculum against any four-year high school.\textsuperscript{242}

Interestingly enough, the Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps bear some resemblance to what Goodman proposed, and they are, of course, supposed to operate as alternatives to regular schooling.

Friedenberg also proposed some alternatives. He suggested that private schools be made an alternative for the poor by using public funds that would ordinarily be spent on them in public schools to pay the tuition fees of the private school, secular or church-supported, chosen by a poor student. He also proposed federally supported boarding schools for the poor, a proposal similar to that made by Robert Dale Owen and Frances Wright in the 19th century.

I would expect the public school to serve--as it now does

\textsuperscript{241}Goodman, \textit{Compulsory Mis-Education}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{242}Ibid., p. 151.
effectively—ambitious, conventional youth who accept with equanimity the commonplace folkways of their community. This would include gifted and talented youth who found it comfortable to express their talents in conventional ways. I would expect the private schools to serve their present clientele, greatly enhanced and complemented by the presence of students too energetic, creative, and original to flourish in the public school and too poor or "disadvantaged" to attend these schools without subsidy. The new boarding school I would expect to attract initially poor youngsters who needed the physical and emotional support it provided and the special instructional techniques and patience it could afford them.

The boarding schools, Friedenberg maintained, would raise the poor's achievement level and ready more of them for college than do the public schools, which consistently underestimate the ability of the lower-class youngsters. Furthermore, they would improve the public schools because:

- they would relieve it of the burden of those students whom it finds, and who find it, least congenial. And they would force the public school to regard the student as a client with alternatives, rather than as a conscript. The individual adolescent himself would become one of the political factors the administration would have to consider. He would no longer be, as he is now, the easiest victim to sacrifice in any conflict of interest.

Like Friedenberg, Christopher Jencks has also proposed that private schools be made an available alternative to the poor by using the money that is now spent on them in public schools as tuition grants for private schools. Jencks acknowledges that there are not enough private schools at present to handle all the potential applicants but believes more of them would be established if a demand were created. But he also argues that more diversity and decentralization in schools would be possible even without tuition grants if school boards contracted with various

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244 Ibid., p. 258.
groups such as a university, a corporation ("If Litton industries can run a Job Corps camp, it can surely run a school"), or an incorporated group of teachers to manage particular schools within their systems.

All these alternatives aim at a radical decentralization of both power and responsibility. All would liberate the schools from the dead hand of central administration, from minute accountability to the public for every penny, every minute, and every word. They all recognize that so far as the slum child is concerned, the present system of "socialized education" has failed, and that some kind of new departure, either "capitalist" or "syndicalist," is needed. To the objection that tuition grants or management contracts would "destroy the public school system as we know it," Jencks answers, Of course they would.

When one thinks of the remarkable past achievements of public education in America, this may seem a foolish step. But we must not allow the memory of past achievements to blind us to present failures. Nor should we allow the rhetoric of public school men to obscure the issue. It is natural for public servants to complain about private competition, just as private business complains about public competition. But if the terms of the competition are reasonable, there is every reason to suppose that it is healthy. Without it, both public and private enterprises have a way of ossifying. And if, as some fear, the public schools could not survive in open competition with private ones, then perhaps they should not survive.

Perhaps the most significant proposal for competitive schools has come from the U. S. Chamber of Commerce's Task Force on Economic Growth and Opportunity. Its proposal is based on those of Friedman and Jencks, but the proposal's significance derives from the fact that it has been made by an "establishment" organization. The task force, which was headed

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246 Ibid.
by the editor of the Christian Science Monitor, Erwin D. Canham, and which included executives of major corporations, recommended:

Competition with existing public school systems offers a promising means of improving both public and private education. If all parents, at every income level, could choose between sending their children to public schools and sending their children to approved private schools at public expense, both public and private education would improve as schools attempted to attract and hold pupils. Businessmen should press for the fullest possible consideration of proposals designed to enhance competition in education. Local, state, and federal government should consider legislation which would enable communities to adopt programs establishing a public-private option for all children. Universities and educational associations should sponsor symposiums to explore the advantages, appropriate procedures, and possible pitfalls of establishing educational competition.247

While these proposals for competing private schools remain largely in the talking stage, there already exist a growing number of private and semi-public storefront schools in city ghettos--the street academies and tutoring centers. One of the most notable of these enterprises is the East Harlem Block Schools which began in 1965 and as of June, 1968, were operating nursery and primary schools in four locations with an enrollment of 135 children.248 The schools are supported by foundation and Head Start funds, but it is the community's parents who are "minding the store," as Schrag puts it. They elect the schools' board of directors, work as assistant teachers and provide other kinds of auxiliary aid. And if a teacher is deemed incompetent he is simply fired. The schools thus give the parents the kind of accountability and


responsibility that they demand but rarely get from public schools. The parents are hoping that the schools can add a grade a year until they operate through at least the intermediate grades. According to Schrag, "to many, a return to the public schools is unthinkable."\(^{249}\)

In addition to proposals for competing private schools there have also been proposals for competing parallel systems of public schools. One such proposal has come from Kenneth Clark. According to Clark, the continuing flight of middle class whites from the cities and the increasing competition which schools must engage in for a fair share of the tax dollar makes it frighteningly possible "that Americans will decide deliberately or by default to sacrifice urban public schools on the altars of its historic and contemporary forms of racism," and the chances of this happening will increase if it appears that "this can be done without any real threat to the important segments of economic and political power in the society and with only Negro children as victims. . . ."\(^{250}\) Clark is convinced that this possibility can be averted only if a "formula" can be found "whereby it can be demonstrated to the public at large that the present level of public school inefficiency has reached an intolerable state of public calamity" and "that minority group children are not the only victims of the monopolistic inefficiency of the present pattern of organization and functioning of our public schools."\(^{251}\)

The formula Clark proposes is interesting because it emphasizes

\(^{249}\)Ibid.


\(^{251}\)Ibid.
economic arguments reminiscent of those used by Horace Mann to gain support for the common school rather than the moral argument which is ultimately at the base of the American belief in equal opportunity. "... It does not seem likely that the changes necessary for increased efficiency of our urban public schools will come about because they should," writes Clark. Therefore:

It must be demonstrated that business and industry suffer intolerable financial burdens of double and triple taxation in seeking to maintain a stable economy in the face of public school inefficiency which produces human casualties rather than constructive human beings.

It must be demonstrated that the cost in correctional, welfare, and health services are intolerably high in seeking to cope with consequences of educational inefficiency—that it would be more economical, even for an affluent society, to pay the price and meet the demands of efficient public education.252

Clark's formula is thus an ironic commentary on how slow progress really is in a nation that believes so much in it.

In any event, given these economic arguments and the inability of city school systems to reform themselves, Clark proposes the following alternative kinds of public schools:

Regional State Schools. These schools would be financed by the states and would cut across present urban-suburban boundaries.

Federal Regional Schools. These schools would be financed by the Federal Government out of present state aid funds or with additional federal funds. They would cut through state boundaries and could make provisions for residential students.

College- and University-Related Open Schools. These schools would be financed by colleges and universities as part of their laboratories in education. They would be open to the public and not restricted to children of faculty and students. . . .

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252 Ibid., p. 110.
Industrial Demonstration Schools. These schools would be financed by industrial, business, and commercial firms for their employees and selected members of the public. These would not be vocational schools—but elementary and comprehensive schools of quality. They would be sponsored by combinations of business and industrial firms in much the same way as churches and denominations sponsor and support parochial or sectarian schools.

Labor Union Sponsored Schools. These schools would be financed and sponsored by labor unions largely, but not exclusively, for the children of their members.

Army Schools. The Defense Department has been quietly effective in educating some of the casualties of our present public schools. It is hereby suggested that they now go into the business of repairing hundreds of thousands of these human casualties with affirmation rather than apology. Schools for adolescent drop-outs or educational rejects should be set up by the Defense Department adjacent to camps—but not necessarily as an integral part of the military. If this is necessary, it should not block the attainment of the goal of rescuing as many of these young people as possible. They are not expendable on the altar of anti-militarism rhetoric.253

It should be noted that Clark, who played a major role in bringing about the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, is unhappy about the growing number of Negroes who want all-black schools, which includes many who are pushing for decentralization. He understands that this stems from black frustration over white resistance to integration, but he sees no reason to believe that all-black schools will be any more effective when run by blacks than by whites.254 He argues further that while it may be easier to win the battle for black control of black

253 Ibid., pp. 112-113.

254 There is evidence to justify Clark's argument. It has been pointed out that in Washington, D. C., for example, where 80 per cent of the teaching staff is Negro, Negro children's achievement has not improved and, what is more, the Negro teachers are often contemptuous of their Negro pupils and demand to know why these children should get any more help than they got in escaping from poverty and slum life. See Susan L. Jacoby, "Washington: National Monument to Failure," Saturday Review, November 18, 1967, p. 89.
schools than it is to win the battle for integration, the effect of this will probably be the continued neglect of the black schools by white school bureaucracies because there will be no white middle-class parents bothering them. "School boards and public school officials seem as resistant to developing or implementing programs designed to improve the quality and efficiency of education provided for Negro children in segregated schools as they are deaf to all requests for effective desegregation plans and programs." Clark acknowledges the need to upgrade education in predominantly black schools, but argues that "in developing an appropriate strategy and the related flexible tactics, it must be clearly understood that the objective of improving the quality of education provided for Negro children is not a substitute for or a retreat from the fundamental goal of removing the anachronism of racially segregated schools from American life."

Clark may be somewhat naive in believing that even white middle-class parents can get big city school bureaucracies to move. They were unresponsive to them long before civil-rights leaders came on the scene and decentralization would probably have become an issue without the civil-rights movement. Nevertheless, Clark does speak for those Negroes who still desire integration. It is in response to the conflicting demands of Negro integrationists and black nationalists that Jencks has issued a modified version of his earlier proposal for a system of private schools.

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256 Ibid., 106.
Contrary to his assumptions when he made his first proposal in 1966, Jencks no longer believes that private schools will stand a better chance of improving the academic achievement of Negro children because he thinks that research done since 1966 indicates that "the malignant effects of growing up in the ghetto" destine most Negro children to do poorly in school. 257 "This means that, barring a general improvement in the social and economic positions of black America, black children's school achievement is unlikely to improve much in the foreseeable future, no matter who runs the schools or how they are run." 258 (Contrary to his initial interpretation of the Coleman Report, also, Jencks thinks that further research indicates that integration does not improve Negro children's achievement either. 259)

Jencks still believes, however, that the idea of alternative private schools has merit as a substitute for extreme school decentralization. Rather than "Balkanize" the city schools in such a way that segregation would be insured, he proposes only "some decentralization," enough to allow for more efficient school administration but not enough to prohibit integrated schools. The city schools could still serve those Negro parents who wanted their children to attend integrated schools. As for the black nationalists, "the best alternative I can see is to follow the Catholic precedent and allow nationalists to create their own private schools, outside the regular school system, and to encourage this by

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258 Ibid., p. 132.
259 Ibid., p. 30.
making such schools eligible for substantial tax support." That way they will not feel cheated by "whitey" again. In fact, Jencks believes that this may be the only way to get legislatures to approve some form of decentralization, for they will not approve plans that give black separatists complete control over "their" schools. "Just as legislatures earlier protected the rights of Protestants and anti-clerical Catholic minorities in devout Catholic communities, so they will almost certainly protect the rights of white and black-integrationist minorities in predominantly black neighborhoods."4

The loss of faith in the common school signaled by the search for alternative forms of schooling sets off recent criticism of the schools from that in the past. Furthermore, the proposals for competing private schools represent a break with the traditional American belief that private schools are necessarily socially divisive forces, a belief that goes back to Horace Mann and the other founders of the common school, and that has been reiterated in recent years by no less a personage than James Conant. As Jencks points out in his most recent proposal for private schools, a recent survey of Catholic schools indicates

260 Ibid., p. 137.
261 Ibid.
262 Schrag, "The End of the Common School," p. 68.
that their students may have been more tolerant and socially responsible than Catholic children who attended public schools. Moreover, the private school proposals indicate a growing realization among liberals that private schools serve not only private ideologies but public purposes as well, and that Federal and state support to enable private schools to accomplish these purposes may be appropriate and in line with the constitutional separation of church and state (Public support for secular private schools would, of course, also mean public support of religious private schools). Finally, while most of these proposals remain in the talking stage, it is clear nevertheless, as Schrag observes, that the more Americans continue to expect of education and the more of it they demand, the smaller will be the amount of education that can be offered within a single common school.

The more diverse the student body, the more diverse must be the programs and institutions available for it. "Special education," was developed for those regarded as being in some respects different from the norm. More and more we may come to recognize that in education few norms are possible. It is highly likely, therefore, that there will be increasing attempts to establish educational instruments and institutions that will offer alternatives to the single public school system and that will, in some measure, replace the institutions that existed before the public school achieved its monopoly.

The fact that Americans are going beyond the common school and searching for other alternatives is, however, a symptom of an even larger problem. When Schrag writes that "more and more we may recognize that in education few norms are possible," he is pointing to the fact that

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266 Jencks, "Private Schools For Black Children," pp. 139-140.

267 Ibid., pp. 138-139.

268 Schrag, "The End of the Common School," p. 68.
Americans are becoming increasingly aware that they do not really know what a "good" school is or even what an "equal educational opportunity" is. Precisely what constitutes a "good" school was, of course, the subject of a running series of battles between progressive and conservative educators from the early 1900's up through the 1950's. In the last ten years or so we have tended to assume that "good" schools were like those in Newton, Scarsdale, or New Trier which were well-financed and using what John Holt calls the latest "razzmataz" from Harvard or M.I.T. An equal educational opportunity was considered to be a chance to go to schools resembling those in Newton. Now, in the post-Coleman era, we talk about an equal educational opportunity being the chance to achieve at the level of average national norms. But we are becoming aware that these definitions of a "good" school and an equal educational opportunity are inadequate.

While we have stressed tough-minded curricula in the last decade, critics like Goodman and Holt have begun to reaffirm the validity of tender-minded curricula and more traditionally progressive practices. As Schrag points out:

Educational criticism in the next decade may well concern itself more with the soft side of things— with non-cognitive approaches, and with a reaffirmation of Deweyan ideas. There are a number of people who are talking seriously about a "curriculum of concerns," educational programs that begin with the interests and experience of kids, not with predetermined sets of skills to be learned. Most of the ghetto experiments that seem to have potential are pure Dewey: letting children talk their own stories and developing vocabulary and writing skills from them; trips to factories, galleries, and museums; stories and poems about the streets of the city, and even about addicts and junkies. . . .

269 Schrag, "Why Our Schools Have Failed," p. 37.
But none of these things or any curriculum, tender-minded or tough-minded, is ever going to be a panacea. Because the schools deal with diverse individuals, if they are to succeed there is going to have to be diversity in schooling. What may be an equal educational opportunity for one child may not be for another child. For as Schrag says, while equality may be relatively easy to define in employment, housing, or medicine, "it is impossible to define in education because the very nature of the enterprise demands distinctions and produces diversity."^ 270

Just how true this may be has been indicated by the recent research of Susan S. Stodolsky and Gerald Lesser. Their findings suggest that different ethnic groups have different intellectual strengths and weaknesses. Jewish children, for example, seem to have higher verbal ability than ability in space conceptualization while the abilities of Chinese children are just the reverse. This means that "through the incidental enhancement of the space-conceptualization skills we may produce proportionally more Chinese than Jewish architects and engineers. Conversely, through incidental enhancement of verbal skills of the Jewish children, we may produce proportionately more Jewish than Chinese authors or lawyers."^ 271 This does not mean that the future will see Jewish or Chinese curriculums but that instruction may be tailored to the strengths of particular children^ 272 (although one can already foresee arguments about whether the strengths have been accurately determined).

^270 Ibid.

^271 Quoted in Schrag, ibid., p. 34.

^272 Schrag, ibid., p. 34.
Providing diversity in schooling does not mean either that schools will not be expected to develop the minimum levels of verbal and mathematical ability demanded to function in the culture that Coleman believes should be developed equally. But it does mean that to treat these abilities as the cardinal virtues and to focus almost exclusively on their development as the curriculum reformers of the last decade have done is not sufficient or fair since it only serves to sort out more effectively than ever "the sheep of privilege from the goats of deprivation." As Schrag asks:

Should we be concerned only with the preparation of economic functionaries and the development of conventional academic skills, or also with the growth of human beings whose dignity is not necessarily dependent on middle-class standards of success? Is an understanding of algebraic functions any more desirable than the ability to paint or dance? (The mandated requirements for many jobs—nursing, for example,—include verbal abilities that are higher than those the job actually require; the stipulated credentials are not necessarily related to the characteristics the jobs demand.) Are we establishing norms that tend to undervalue characteristics that all of society could well use, and for which certain children might be especially well prepared, or do we have to make all children into replicas of the middle class?

All of these questions come to the fore in ghetto schools, and part of what makes their situation so pathetic and so short on hope is that no one is sure what the answers to these questions are. For the fact is, as Schrag maintains, that neither white liberal or black nationalist has come up with an adequate notion of what ghetto schools should be doing or how a Negro child's education should differ from that of a middle-class white child.

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273 Ibid.
274 Ibid., p. 36.
The existing ghetto schools fail Negroes not so much because they are different from all other schools—as the integrationists once assumed—but because they are too much like them. Local control may introduce diversity and new ideas, but those changes are far from clear. At this point there are few alternative models to the existing public school program. The current talk about relevance in Negro education—about more Afro-Americanism in the curriculum, about Negro history, about urban problems—and the peripheral efforts to use the arts (painting, the dance, music) as ways of engaging children's interests have not taken us very far toward genuine educational integration, toward the point, that is, where ghetto children have the skills to compete effectively in the larger world.275

But the single standard of success that has been established within a single public school system has not only wrought havoc in the ghetto but in suburbia as well. It has turned off, as the saying goes, many young people from affluent homes and the hippie phenomena of the 1960's seems to testify to this.276

All of this points to the conclusion that no one type of school can ever again be designated "good" and upheld as the model for "bad" schools to emulate. Given the fact of human diversity, there needs to be as much educational diversity as possible. As Schrag argues:

Perhaps we have to recognize the principle of pluralism not only in a cultural context but in an educational one as well. A few years ago such suggestions would have been regarded as racist slurs, but it is now the black militant who regards Swahili as desirable for Negroes as Latin.277

What is demanded then is some vital and significant thinking in the area of philosophy of education. We need to find new answers to the old questions, What are the aims of education? What should we teach?

275 Ibid.
276 Ibid.
277 Ibid.
What pedagogical methods and administrative arrangements will facilitate our teaching so that we may achieve our goals? We also need to confront what Schrag justifiably calls "the real unanswered question" of the declining faith in the public school, whether American democracy has the desire and the will to make good on its promise to provide an equal educational opportunity for rich and poor, white and dark. If it does not then we may expect the outcome predicted by the Kerner commission's report on riots, two American societies, the one affluent and white, the other dark and poor. If, on the other hand, America does really want a decent education for all, then, as Schrag declares:

... we shall have to make it available in all kinds of ways, at all times, and to all comers, no matter what their condition of previous disadvantage. This means education and training that begins with people rather than institutions—Job Corps camps, television courses, neighborhood centers, and programs that make it possible for anyone to go to school half-time, quarter-time, or full-time. No one ever expects to solve all the problems of education, but the opportunities and choices must always exist as a declaration of faith that the society still believes in its own possibilities. The question is whether education in America will be regarded as a barrier or an opportunity. As a barrier, education is no more defensible than any other form of social and economic exclusion. Finally, education is either a liberating process or it is not really education at all.278

But even if America does provide the kind of educational diversity that is needed, it will still not be enough to fulfill the American promise of equality of opportunity and to restore faith in the schools as an avenue to making an honorable and successful go of it in life. For the schools, contrary to traditional American belief, cannot do everything. No matter how good they are or how many different kinds there

278 Schrag, "The End of the Common School," p. 68.
are, they can never be an adequate substitute for direct political action aimed at curing social ills. The problem today with the American belief that education is the doorway to social and economic advancement is that it continues to lead Americans, white and dark, into the same kind of erroneous thinking that they have always engaged in—that merely schooling a child will give him the personal security that will keep him out of the poorhouse and prison. Rush Welter is correct when he writes that Americans "have grown skeptical of purely economic competition for success only to substitute educational competition for the rewards that economic competition used to promise."

Americans must realize what radical critics of American education like Robert Dale Owen, Frances Wright, and Thomas Skidmore realized long ago, that the chances of achieving personal security through schooling are drastically reduced without pre-existing social security—decent housing, clothing, food, family stability and an equal chance to get a good paying job once schooling has been completed. If Americans are going to succeed in conquering poverty, they are going to have to do more than simply provide an equal educational opportunity. First, they are going to have to make sure, through massive public spending or other economic measures, that there is a job for everyone who wants to work. For as Daniel Moynihan has argued, in a society that makes work a moral impera-


tive and in which one's manhood is dependent on having a decent job, it is truly immoral not to provide the needed number of jobs. But even more than this, the United States is going to have to insure, through a guaranteed annual income, a program of free goods and services, adequate social security payments, and so on, that there is a minimum decent standard of living that every American shall enjoy by right of birth in this nation, just as his birthright entitles him to a free and equal education at public expense.

American society must get over the notion that the poor are poor because of moral bankruptcy and decide that the underclasses too deserve the respect due them as persons and the decency of treatment that will erase the conditions that induce the cycle of poverty and keep the poor from achieving meaningful and fulfilling lives. It must, in short, realize the wisdom of Robert Cole's friend Jim. Only then will the promise of American life be fulfilled.

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We are unable to process the enclosed bill(s) for the reason checked below.

1. The following items are not payable under the voluntary supplemental medical insurance program.
   a. Drugs and medicines which can be self-administered.
   b. Orthopedic shoes and other supporting devices for the feet.
   c. Dental services.
   d. Private duty nurse care.
   e. Eyeglasses, hearing aids, or examinations for prescribing, 
      fitting or changing them.
   f. Routine physical check-ups or immunizations.
   g. Routine foot care.
   h. Elastic stockings or other support type stockings.
   i. Other

2. This is a duplicate(s) of a charge(s) previously submitted.

3. This charge(s) was previously submitted directly to Medicare by the 
   hospital where the service(s) was performed. This bill(s) is for 
   your records.

4. Other

Medicare Claims Division 
Nationwide Insurance Company
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: THE FAITH ASSESSED

Having surveyed the origins and course of the American faith in the schools as an agency of progress, what can be said about it? Since I have already stated my conclusions about the American belief in the schools as a means for social and economic advancement, I am concerned here primarily with the American belief in education as a means of fostering progress and its other corollary, belief in education as a means of preserving American democracy.

First of all it should be noted that belief in progress, despite all the irrationality and destructiveness of the 20th century, still remains a fundamental America credo. The tenacity of this belief has been nowhere better expressed than by Bernard Baruch, who, in contemplating the more than half-century of history he had helped shape, wrote in 1954:

When I was a younger man, I believed that progress was inevitable—that the world would be better tomorrow and better still the day after. The thunder of war, the stench of concentration camps, the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb are, however, not conducive to optimism... Yet my faith in the future, though somewhat shaken, is not destroyed. I still believe in it. If I sometimes doubt that man will achieve his moral potentialities, I never doubt that he can. I still believe that with courage and intelligence we can make the future bright with fulfillment.¹

And despite all the criticisms that have been leveled at education in the

¹Quoted in Russel Nye, This Almost Chosen People (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), p. 40.

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last forty years, America's faith that the schools can foster progress and preserve the democracy remains as tenacious as its belief in progress. This continuing faith has been aptly expressed by America's two highest public officials. Speaking to the 1965 White House Conference on Education, Vice-President Humphrey declared:

We of this American generation have the chance to be remembered, as Toynbee says, not for crimes or even for astonishing inventions, but as the first generation to dare to "make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race."

And the surest way to that goal is the way of education. . . .

Our weapons can be the schoolhouse and books. Our soldiers can be teaching volunteers. Our victory can be the victory of the human spirit over hopelessness and despair. Our monument can be a society of free and creative peoples, living at peace and with the knowledge that each new day can be a better day.\(^2\)

President Johnson maintained:

Education will not cure all the problems of society, but without it no cure for any problem is possible. . . .

Belief in education is, of course, not a new belief. It is a faith as old as the Nation--the faith that the progress of America and the possibility of democracy depended upon the education of our citizens. And so, through the generations, we have invested our skill, our energy and much of our resources to build an educational system broad enough to serve all the needs of all our people.

No investment has ever been more wisely made. None has ever resulted in more abundant returns to a people and a nation.\(^3\)

The extent to which Americans believe with President Johnson that without education "no cure for any problem is possible" is indicated by the fact that more than ten years after Sputnik, the fastest growing area of the curriculum is not physics, chemistry, or mathematics but driver


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 207.
education. With fifty thousand people being killed on the nation's highways every year, the assumption is that traditional forms of driving instruction have failed and, therefore, the schools must supply better forms of instruction to stop the slaughter. As Lawrence Cremin comments, "It is a curious solution, requiring courses instead of seat belts, but typically American. One of my friends likes to remark that in other countries, when there is a profound social problem there is an uprising; in the United States, we organize a course."^4

The continuing American faith in the schools has two basic assumptions. The first is that the schools have several past accomplishments to their credit that demonstrate their effectiveness and vindicate our faith in them. This assumption is apparent in President Johnson's claim that "no investment has ever been more wisely made. None has ever resulted in more abundant returns to a people and a nation." The second assumption is that the schools continue to be an effective means for promoting social progress, democracy, and the uplift of individuals. This assumption is apparent in Vice-President Humphrey's claim that education is the "surest way" to a humane civilization.

As regards the first assumption, the fact of the matter is that we have very little knowledge about what the schools have actually accomplished in the past. Theories about what they accomplished have, of course, been advanced. There is, for example, Commager's argument that they provided an enlightened citizenry, helped establish national unity, Americanized the immigrants, and kept the country from being torn

apart by class conflict. Sidney Hook has maintained that "it would be
difficult to explain the history of American social legislation without
reference to the influence, mediated by mass education, which the ideal
of 'equality of opportunity' . . . has had in formulating pointed demands
for more democracy in other fields." More recently, Kenneth Clark has
declared:

Until the influx of Negro and Puerto Rican youngsters into
urban public schools, the American public school system was
justifiably credited with being the chief instrument for mak­
ing the American dream of upward social, economic, and politi­
cal mobility a reality. The depressed immigrants from southern
and eastern Europe could use American public schools as the
ladder toward the goals of assimilation and success. The past
successes of American public education seem undebatable.6
(Italics mine.)

Despite these assertions, the fact remains that there has been
very little research done on the past impact of the schools on American
life. Lawrence Cremin has pointed out, for example, that we know very
little about how much the school's efforts at Americanizing the immigrants
actually accomplished.7 And while studies of educational opportunity like

5Sidney Hook, Education for Modern Man (New York: Alfred A.

6Kenneth Clark, "Alternative Public School Systems," Harvard

7Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York:
Vintage Books, 1961), p. 69. The lack of such research, in fact, was
one of the factors that gave rise to the Fund for the Advancement of
Education's Committee on the Role of Education in American History.
This committee sponsors historical research which attempts to determine
the role which the schools and informal educational agencies have played
in the development of the United States and has already helped produce
Bernard Bailyn's Education in the Forming of American Society (New York:
Vintage Books, 1960) and Richard Hofstadter's Anti-Intellectualism in
Role of Education in American History, Education and American History
that of Sexton's has led at least one writer to conclude that education is and has been primarily a mechanism for stabilizing social class positions across generations and only secondarily a mechanism providing for social mobility, there is no historical evidence either to support or contradict such an assertion. The past accomplishments of the schools are therefore a mystery. But if research confirms, for example, Peter Schrag's suspicion that the streets did more to Americanize the immigrants than the schools, or if it shows that the schools have indeed served primarily to stabilize social class positions, then we may discover that the schools have not accomplished as much as we like to suppose. Actually, recent investigations like the Coleman Report into the contemporary impact of schools on their students indicates that they accomplish far less than Americans suppose. And if the "Romantic" critics of education can be believed, what impact they do have is often detrimental to their students.

The recent research of social scientists into the role of education in contemporary societies indicates that education does indeed perform several functions. It is fundamental to a nation's economic growth; it increases the desire for achievement and, for many, provides an avenue for mobility; it promotes political stability and increases military effectiveness. And when the efforts of the schools are coordinated with a society's other educational agencies, such as the mass media and


9 Turner, p. 224.

10 Cremin, The Genius, pp. 31-32.
youth groups, they can serve as an effective instrument for controlling public opinion, as the Nazis and Stalinists demonstrated so well.\textsuperscript{11}

Furthermore, schools can be used to implement public policies, and the United States has, in the last few years, increasingly used them for this purpose. This is clearly apparent in the "lever" role which has been assigned to the schools by the federal government in such national policy matters as racial integration, the War on Poverty, and the space race.\textsuperscript{12} Up until the 1950's it was simply assumed that the schools, while being governed locally, were still serving national purposes. Since the 1950's, the Federal government has begun to exercise control over the schools (albeit to the dismay of conservatives) to make sure that they do indeed serve national purposes. Consequently, the old debate about whether the schools should reflect or reshape their society has become largely academic as political forces have driven the schools into spearheading the social changes deemed necessary in politically formulated public policy.\textsuperscript{13} Interestingly enough, George Counts commented in 1965 that if he had been writing \textit{Dare The School} that year instead of 1932 he would have argued "that the school should . . . employ all of its resources to assist in building the Great Society."\textsuperscript{14} To a large extent

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 15-17.


\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 197.

\textsuperscript{14}George S. Counts, "Dare the Schools Build the Great Society," \textit{Phi Delta Kappan}, XLVII (September, 1965), 30.
this is precisely what has occurred. While the schools are not taking it upon themselves to reconstruct the society, they are being used to help reconstruct it in part. As Perkinson points out, the schools have come a long way from the days when they were supposed to prevent governmental tyranny and Americans believed in anarchy with a schoolmaster.\(^{15}\)

But even when all these functions which the schools can and do perform have been rehearsed, even when the question about what the schools have accomplished in the past has been put aside, the question raised by the second assumption of the continuing American faith in education still remains; Can the schools, or, more precisely, can teachers in classrooms help promote social progress and preserve the democracy?

John Dewey once observed, "Control opinion and you control, for the time being at least, the direction of social action."\(^{16}\) Totalitarian governments, of course, have been well aware of this fact. But in looking back over the course of the American faith in the schools, it is apparent that educators, politicians, and social reformers have hoped to move American society in whatever direction they deemed desirable by using the schools to control or at least strongly influence the opinions and behavior of children. Whether it was the Puritans, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, Robert Dale Owen, Horace Mann, Lester Ward, George Counts, Ashley Montagu, or the Commander of the American Legion, they have, in


effect, agreed with the 19th century English writer, John Ruskin, that "education is not teaching people what they do not know; it is teaching them to behave as they do not behave." Their techniques have varied, but their objective has been the same.

The common method of those who have desired to bring about reform through the schools has been a characteristic American reliance on individual action rather than mass political action or the alleviation of oppressive conditions. The technique favored by educational reformers from the common school era to the Great Society for conquering poverty and achieving economic democracy has been an individualistic one, that of giving individuals an education which would qualify them for a good paying job that would lift them out of poverty. The technique favored by those who have been concerned with overcoming individual intemperance or stemming the tide of radicalism and crime and inculcating a respect for property, law, and order has been the training of character. Another technique for achieving these ends has been the emphasis of educational reformers on the importance of common schools which would serve to promote mutual respect and understanding among the classes.

Next to character education, which has been the most popular technique among educational reformers, the technique most emphasized among those who have sought to preserve democracy or bring about social

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18I am using the phrase "educational reformers" to refer to all those who wished to redirect schooling in some fashion and not just to professional educators.

19Curti, p. 584.
progress has been the study of social and world problems. Whether the objective has been to inculcate loyalty to democracy and a hatred of fascism or communism, to make children aware of the horrors of war and the need for international cooperation, to awaken youth to the social and economic injustices in American life, or to teach them the virtues of working through the established channels of democratic government to attain their goals rather than through violence or political and economic radicalism, educational reformers have believed that it could be achieved through the social studies. By teaching youth the scientific method of inquiry and by making them use it to study social problems critically and come to rational conclusions about what was needed to solve them, the hope was that the next generation would move to solve the problems the present generation refused to solve. Of course, there have also been those who considered this hope far too shaky and consequently advocated something close to the indoctrination of specified solutions to make sure the next generation would demand that they be put into operation.

In believing that they could shape public opinion and control social direction through these various techniques, educational reformers have, however, made two false assumptions. One was the assumption underlying their belief in the social benefits of character education, the social studies, and the method of intelligence, that knowledge is virtue, to know the right will mean to do the right. Like Condorcet and the philosophes, they have believed that the enlightenment of the masses would guarantee social progress. Even those like Horace Mann, who realized that mere enlightenment does not assure the moral goodness of men, assumed that a knowledge of moral principles would. The second
false assumption was that the schools have a profound influence on the way young people will think and behave as adults.

The first assumption neglected what Crane Brinton called the anti-intellectual critique of reason,\(^\text{20}\) which, while acknowledging the possibility of logical thought and good behavior, has emphasized the large amount of destructive behavior and irrationality among men and stressed the fact that there does not seem to be any direct causal relationship between men's moral ideals and their actions.\(^\text{21}\) Unlike the Enlightened and most Americans, anti-intellectuals like Freud and Niebuhr have refused to believe that it is possible to educate men to think and act correctly overnight and that progress can be rapid and sure. On the contrary, as Brinton explained:

Anti-intellectualism maintains . . . that men are not and cannot under the best educational system be guided by their reason, that the drives, habits, conditioned reflexes that mostly do guide them cannot be changed rapidly, that, in short there is something in the nature of man that makes him and will continue to make him behave in the immediate future not very differently from the way he behaved in the past.\(^\text{22}\)

The anti-intellectual critique goes back to the latter part of the 19th century. But at the time European intellectuals were abandoning Enlightenment beliefs in reason, science, and progress, American intellectuals like Ward and Dewey were reaffirming them. And although


two World Wars, a Depression, and neo-orthodox theology have made American intellectuals pay attention to anti-intellectualism, American laymen and educators seem to have remained oblivious to it, judging from such things as the progressives' never ending faith in intelligence, the recent Educational Policies Commission statement that the central purpose of American education is to develop rational men, and the claims of high government officials for the powers of schooling.

Educational reformers have also failed to take adequate account of the fact that young people pick up their values and behavior patterns from an ever increasing number of educational agencies of which schools may well be among the least important. The rapid development of radio, television, and movies, the greatly increased circulation of newspapers and magazines, the growing membership of youth groups like the Boy and Girl Scouts, the YMCA and YWCA, and the increase in educational programs conducted by private industry and the armed forces has worked an educational revolution in the 20th century.\(^{23}\) While we have little hard empirical information on the impact of these educational agencies on the beliefs, values, and behavior of people,\(^ {24}\) it is doubtless great judging from the success the Nazis and Stalinists had with some of them.

Research has been done in recent years on the effect of the schools on student values and learning, and the astonishing finding has been that schools seem to exert very little influence while the peer group exerts an extraordinary influence which often runs counter to what


\(^{24}\) Ibid., pp. 26-27.
the school is trying to accomplish. The Coleman Report seems to indicate that a child's achievement level is influenced far more by whom he goes to school with than by what school he goes to or who his teachers are (although this conclusion is admittedly still open to debate). Coleman's earlier study of peer culture in the secondary schools, *The Adolescent Society*, found that the achievement level of students in any given high school depended on whether the peer group valued scholarship or athletics and social activities more highly and concluded that:

> if secondary education is to be successful, it must successfully compete with cars and sports and social activities for the adolescents' attention in an open market. The adolescent is no longer a child, but will spend his energy in the ways he sees fit. It is up to the adult society to so structure secondary education that it captures this energy.  

Studies that have investigated the relationship between personal attitudes and level of educational attainment have found a strong correlation between more liberal attitudes and higher levels of schooling. At first glance, this might seem like a comforting finding. But here again it is not clear whether this is attributable to the formal teaching-learning process or the influence of the peer group. Burton Clark, for example, reports a series of studies which he claims indicate:

> that education leads toward tolerant and humanitarian attitudes. Consistently it has been shown that the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the degree to which "democratic" attitudes are held. Similarly, education is a prime correlate of interest in politics and of cultural awareness or sophistication. College graduates are more tolerant than high-school graduates in their attitudes toward ethnic and racial groups; they are more supportive of democratic norms such as having a multiparty political system; they tend to listen more to serious programs and read more magazines.  

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school graduates, in turn, are more tolerant and more involved culturally and politically than are those with only grammar-school education. Level of education is related this way even when the influence of age, occupation, and income is controlled or ruled out.26

According to Clark, this liberalization of attitudes results "partly from greater knowledge, or the content of instruction, and in part from being socialized to new perspectives through contact with faculties and other students and through anticipation of one's future career."27 This, of course, is what one would assume. But Clark leaves unanswered the more important question of how large a part each factor plays and specifically the part played by teachers.

The studies that have been done on the changing attitudes of college students, however, seem to corroborate the findings of Coleman at the elementary and secondary school level that the peer group plays a much larger role than teachers. Nevitt Sanford notes that "in the area of attitudes and values, recent studies, as well as those performed twenty-five years ago, show that between the freshman and senior years in college there is, in general, change in the direction of greater liberalism and sophistication in political, social, and religious outlook."28 But since these studies "report on average differences and not very large ones at that, and since it is by no means clear that observed changes were due to educational activities deliberately undertaken by the


27Ibid., p. 36.

college," and since other studies "leave no doubt that what students learn in college is determined in very large measure by their fellow students or, more precisely, by the norms of behavior, attitudes, and values that prevail in the peer groups to which each student must belong," there seems to be no occasion for "general rejoicing." \(^{30}\)

A further indication that there is no reason to rejoice over changing values among college students is the amazing findings of Philip Jacob's study of the effect of social science instruction on student values. He found that "the quality of teaching has relatively little effect upon the value-outcomes of general education— in the social sciences or in other fields— so far as the great mass of students is concerned." While he also found, as one might guess, that students prefer instructors who respect them as persons and are capable of arousing their interest in a subject:

Yet by and large the impact of the good teacher is indistinguishable from that of the poor one, at least in terms of his influence upon the values held and cherished by his students. Students like the good teacher better, and enjoy his classes more. But their fundamental response is little different than to any one else teaching the course. With important individual exceptions, instructors seem equally ineffective in tingling the nerve centers of student's values.

In the process of mass education, many students appear to take the instructor for granted, as he comes, good or bad, a necessary appliance in Operation College. His personal influence washes out in such an atmosphere, especially in regard to the deeper issues of life-direction, and the recognition and resolution of basic value-conflicts. A teacher can be recognized as a good teacher by his students, but with increasing rarity is he an effective teacher in the communication and maturing of values. Something in the contemporary social and educational climate curtains him off

\(^{29}\)Ibid., pp. 806-807.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., p. 463.
from the inner recesses of his students' character and freezes their motivational responses.\textsuperscript{31}

Furthermore, Jacob found that different methods of instruction, including the much heralded "student-centered" methods, seemed to exert only minor influence on student values.

Under certain circumstances, notably a favorable institutional environment, student-centered teaching has apparently resulted in a somewhat more satisfactory emotional and social adjustment by the students, and a more congenial learning situation. But there is little indication of a significantly greater alteration in the beliefs or behavioral standards of students taught by one method or another.

The response of a student to a given type of instruction often reflects his personality or disposition previous to entering upon the course.\textsuperscript{32}

While Jacob did find that in small liberal arts colleges, or in other situations where student-faculty contact was frequent, that some teachers did exert a profound influence on some students, even to the point of changing their philosophy of life or vocational goals, and while his findings are still open to debate, nevertheless they cast a great deal of doubt on the American faith in the powers of the schools. In the end what Coleman, Sanford, and Jacob may be pointing to is that America's unestablished church is about as effective in overcoming the influence on thought and behavior of the larger society as the sermons preached in America's established churches every Sunday.

Plato long ago recognized that it is society that educates. Consequently, his \textit{Republic}, while giving little attention to formal schools, gives a great deal of attention to the influence on the young.


\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 8.
of music, drama, poetry, painting, law, architecture, and athletics and to how they may be regulated for good by the philosopher-kings, who, as Cremin quips, were presumably to be the first professional educationists. While 20th century dictators have been quick to grasp the insight that it is the community that educates, it has escaped the American faith in the schools.

But even if new methods of instruction that do effectively influence the young were devised by educators, the question of how educators should use them would still remain. Would it be desirable to allow a group of social reformers to use them to influence the young in order to bring about "progress" as they define it? Or would the desirable thing be "to make the young aware of the constant bombardment of facts, opinions, and values to which they are subjected; to help them question what they see and hear; and, ultimately, to give them the intellectual resources they need to make judgments and assess significance"?

True democrats must, of course, argue for the latter position. American educational reformers have undoubtedly considered themselves democrats. But the logic of their efforts to use the schools to promote "progress" in one direction or the other committed them, whether they realized it or not, to the former position. Bertrand Russell once warned of this trap in words so pertinent and eloquent that they are worth quoting at length.

33 Cremin, The Genius, p. 5.
34 Ibid., p. 23.
Education is, as a rule, the strongest force on the side of what exists and against fundamental change: threatened institutions, while they are still powerful, possess themselves of the educational machine, and instill a respect for their own excellence into the malleable minds of the young. Reformers retort by trying to oust their opponents from their position of vantage. The children themselves are not considered by either party; they are merely so much material, to be recruited by one army or the other. If the children themselves were considered, education would not aim at making them belong to this party or that, but at enabling them to choose intelligently between the parties; it would aim at making them able to think, not at making them think what their teachers think.  

When the child is considered, said Russell in tones that remind one of Paul Goodman's recent criticisms of the schools:

> it is almost exclusively with a view to worldly success—making money or achieving a good position. To be ordinary, and to acquire the art of getting on, is the ideal which is set before the youthful mind, except by a few rare teachers who have enough energy of belief to break through the system within which they are expected to work.  

Russell did not argue that authority in education was always undesirable. He acknowledged that if children were to be taught how to read, write, and think, some authority was inevitable. But, he maintained, this was one reason why teachers carried a great responsibility.

> The children must, necessarily, be more or less at the mercy of their elders, and cannot make themselves the guardians of their own interests. Those who educate have to find a way of exercising authority in accordance with the spirit of liberty.

Where authority is unavoidable, what is needed is reverence. A man who is to educate really well, and is to make the young grow and develop into their full stature, must be filled through and through with the spirit of reverence. It is reverence towards others that is lacking in those who advocate machine-made cast-iron systems; militarism, capitalism, Fabian scientific

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36 Ibid., p. 92.
organizations, and all the other prisons into which reformers and reactionaries try to force the human spirit.

... The man who has reverence will not think it his duty to "mold" the young. He feels in all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual and strangely precious, the growing principle of life, an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world. ... All this gives him a longing to help the child in its own battle; he would equip and strengthen it, not for some outside end proposed by the State or by any other impersonal authority, but for the ends which the child's own spirit is obscurely seeking. The man who feels this can wield the authority of an educator without infringing the principle of liberty.37

The schools, Russell concluded, "ought to foster the wish for truth, not the conviction that some particular creed is the truth," for "education in credulity leads by quick stages to mental decay. ..."38

In those whose minds are not very active the result is the omnipotence of prejudice; while the few whose thought cannot be wholly killed become cynical, intellectually hopeless, destructively critical, able to make all that is living seem foolish, unable themselves to supply the creative impulses which they destroy in others.

... It is only by keeping alive the spirit of free inquiry that the indispensable minimum of progress can be achieved.39

As things stand now, we do not have to worry about the school indoctrinating children with particular beliefs on their own. They simply do not seem capable of influencing young minds that strongly. But even if they could it hardly seems the desirable thing to do in a democratic society, as Russell makes clear. The messianic spirit of American educators, that is, the personal efforts of teachers to use the classroom to try to reconstruct society along lines they consider desir-

37 Ibid., pp. 89-91.
38 Ibid., pp. 97-98.
39 Ibid., p. 98.
able is thus both irrelevant and illegitimate in an educational process that should strive not to form young minds but to inform them and set them free so that they may judge for themselves.

If the schools cannot now determine the exact outcomes of the teaching-learning process, and if it is not even desirable that they should be able to do so outside of graduating youth who are literate and possess an understanding of the processes of clear thinking, then the effect of schooling on youth and its consequent effect on man's progress or regression must remain an unknown quantity. Teachers may legitimately make value judgments and state their own positions on given political, economic, and social issues. But whether young people will adopt those judgments and conclusions, or whether they will reject them and continue to believe and behave the way they have learned elsewhere is left to them. Teachers cannot determine for them how they should think and behave and consequently cannot guarantee whether their students will contribute to mankind's progress or not. Thus when Bertrand Russell writes that "it is only by keeping alive the spirit of free inquiry that the indispensable minimum of progress can be achieved," he is not guaranteeing that free inquiry will mean progress, but only that no progress is possible without it.

Another way of saying all this is that there is no necessary payoff to schooling and that the schools can at best play only a limited role in social change. The only thing teachers can do is work at doing the best job possible and then hope, along with the parents of the child-

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ren they teach and all other concerned Americans, that the job they do
accomplishes some good. Sidney Hook points to this conclusion when he
writes:

The schools cannot rebuild society. The decisive steps in
social transformation depend upon crises that are prepared
not by education but by the development of the underlying
economy, existing technology, and the chances of war. What
education can do is prepare, through proper critical methods,
the attitudes and ideals that come focally into play when
crises arise. It can develop the long-term patterns of
sensibility and judgment which may be decisive in resolving
the short-term problems whose succession constitutes so much
of the substance of contemporary history.41

In the end the American faith in the schools is just that, faith,
for men are sinners, their reason is weak, knowledge is not virtue, the
social conditions that arouse and inflame their inborn capacities for
evil are great, and the little boats of even the most well-intentioned
and dedicated teachers are easily swamped. Sirhan Sirhan was, after all,
a graduate of Pasadena Senior High School and undoubtedly had a Problems
of Democracy course as well as a gun under his belt. Most Americans
today have had a good deal of schooling, yet contrary to the hope of
Horace Mann in the 19th century, or Will Durant in the 1920's, crime and
poverty and Americans' inhumanity to each other continues unabated.
Whites hate blacks, corporation executives defraud the public, high-level
politicians with college and university degrees galore lead the nation
into avoidable wars, and congressmen insist on spending most of the
nation's revenue on superfluous bombers and missiles while cities decay
and their inhabitants rot. Even schoolteachers, alas, with their often
corrupt attitudes and ways leave youth alienated, hostile, uneducated

41 Hook, pp. 91-92.
and hopeless, while that most educated of all groups, college professors, busy themselves pursuing the gods of fame and fortune through grantsmanship, meaningless publications, and cut-throat institutional politics.

This does not mean that schools can do nothing to help achieve the "indispensable minimum of progress," but it does mean that no matter how good they are they cannot overcome the defects of human nature and human reason any more than any other human institution ever could. It also means that we must give up the Enlightenment dream that the schools can usher in the millenium, the dream epitomized by Jefferson's dictum, "Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day." For as Cremin declares, "The sad reality, of course, is that tyranny and oppression of body and mind will not vanish in our day any more than they did in Jefferson's."42

But while we must greatly reduce our expectations of the schools, we must continue to hope and believe with Cremin "that men will learn to face their problems more intelligently in the future than they have in the past,"43 and that the schools can do something to help achieve this hope. And we dare not surrender this hope and yield to despair, no matter how discouraging the situation in society and the schools may seem. For while wishing will not make it so, it is just as certain that yielding to despair will accomplish nothing either and may well lead to disaster. The 20th century has made clear that notions of human per-


43 Ibid.
fectibility are at worst silly, and that human progress is not sure or
the goal of history. Thornton Wilder was right when he wrote that "every
good and excellent thing . . . stands moment by moment on the razor-edge
of danger and must be fought for." History is the story of man's
struggle to keep his head above water. But to take these facts and
leap to the conclusion that the "indispensable minimum of progress" is
not possible at all, to throw up one's hands and decide that the world
is inevitably going to hell, is to risk a self-fulfilling prophecy. Man's
intelligence may be limited but, as Cremin observes, it "remains his best
instrument for comprehending and dealing with his experience."44 Our time
is best spent neither praising it nor bemoaning its limitations, but us­
ing it to accomplish what we can.

The 20th century has made clear also that the schools cannot
accomplish everything Americans have expected of them. But as with man's
intelligence, our time is best spent neither blindly reaffirming our past
faith in the schools nor bemoaning their inadequacies, but working to see
that they do the best job possible of developing men's intelligence and
moral sensibilities. Neither the schools nor any other human institution
can save man. Ultimately the salvation of the world depends on the good
will and intelligence of individual men themselves, not their institu­
tions. But the schools can try to help develop good men by laboring to
instill in the young what Philip Phenix calls "the compulsions" to know
the truth and to do the right. These are indeed the only proper goals
of education and constitute a sufficiently herculean task.

44 Ibid., p. 115.
We are unable to process the enclosed bill(s) for the reason checked below.

1. The following items are not payable under the voluntary supplemental medical insurance program.
   - a. Drugs and medicines which can be self-administered.
   - b. Orthopedic shoes and other supporting devices for the feet.
   - c. Dental services.
   - d. Private duty nurse care.
   - e. Eyeglasses, hearing aids, or examinations for prescribing, fitting, or changing them.
   - f. Routine physical check-ups or immunizations.
   - g. Routine foot care.
   - h. Elastic stockings or other support type stockings.
   - i. Other ____________________________________________________

2. This is a duplicate(s) of a charge(s) previously submitted.

3. This charge(s) was previously submitted directly to Medicare by the hospital where the service(s) was performed. This bill(s) is for your records.

4. Other ____________________________________________________________

Medicare Claims Division
Nationwide Insurance Company
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