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Battles of the Mind: The Reaction Against Progressive Education, 1945-1959

Ben Yturri
University of Montana

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by

Ben Yturri

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Approved by:

Dr. Ashby Kinch, Dean
Graduate School

Dr. Michael S. Mayer, Chair
History

Dr. Jeffrey Wiltse
History

Dr. Adrea Lawrence
Education

Introduction

This thesis investigates the relationships between three intellectual movements of the post-war period (circa 1945-1959). The first involves the overwhelming concern among leading American intellectuals regarding the relationship between the individual and society. Following WWII, the nation's leading scholars and social critics addressed the most important problem facing the country and, for that matter, the world: how to avoid totalitarianism. By that point, any sane person agreed with the aim of avoiding the fate of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, and many of the most prominent intellectuals agreed that such catastrophes were consequences of individuals becoming subsumed into mass society. In different ways and with different emphases, thinkers from across the ideological and political spectrum like Hannah Arendt, David Reisman, C. Wright Mills, William Whyte, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Russell Kirk contemplated the relationship of the individual to society in their attempts to explain the horrors of the 20th century.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), the philosopher Hannah Arendt attributed the rise of totalitarian regimes in part to their ability to destroy or co-opt intermediary institutions like labor unions, social clubs, and religious organizations that traditionally provided an institutional buffer between the individual and the state. Almost naturally, intellectuals like Arendt wondered if and how a similar fate could befall the United States. Writing around the same time, David Reisman, a Harvard sociologist, argued in *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) that Americans traditionally received social and moral reference points from internalized values informed by external sources like family, community, and church (Arendt would call these intermediary institutions). This "inner-directed" orientation was giving way to what Reisman called "other-directed" behavior. Instead of internalized values, other-directed individuals

obtained their moral and social reference points from their peers and the mass media. Thus, for Reisman, inner-directed Americans adjusted and re-adjusted to conform to society.[1] If there existed any characteristic among Americans that provided protection against totalitarianism, it seemed a lack of conformity was not one of them. Many public intellectuals, including Reisman, Mills, and Kirk, believed educational reforms were necessary in order to prevent succeeding generations of individuals from being swallowed into a totalitarian mass.

This ideological climate, overcast by this preoccupation with the relationship between the individual and society, inevitably translated to a second intellectual development: the post-war debates over education. Broadly speaking, these controversies involved two related disputes over the efficacy of progressive education and the proper relationship between church and state. The first involved a growing dissatisfaction with pedagogical and administrative aspects of progressive education. With respect to pedagogy, critics such as James Conant, Robert Hutchins, and Arthur Bestor generally agreed that progressive education attended to the needs of average students at the expense of "gifted" students, but each of these authors offered a different solution to the problem. Though to different degrees, such critics advocated a return to traditional, "liberal" education. This previous sentence may seem ironic at first, but in this context "liberal" did not carry a political denotation. Rather, the term referred to the liberal arts, a set of studies intended to provide a broad–hence, liberal–base of knowledge and general intellectual capacities. Put briefly, in contrast to "progressive" education, with its emphasis on learning through the senses and catering to each student's interests and talents, proponents of liberal education urged teachers back to the curriculum of the "three Rs": reading, writing, and arithmetic. They also often chastised the rhetoric and theories attributed to progressive pedagogy such as "adjustment," "life skills," and "real needs." Many promoted the study of classical antiquity and the western

[1] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

literary canon. These subjects and skills, liberal educationists maintained, were essential to inculcating in each generation the critical faculties necessary to sustain and take part in a civil, democratic society. From their perspective, vocational and specialized training, though practical and marketable, offered limited opportunities to exercise each individual's mind. Even more troubling, pedagogy that focused on adjusting individuals to what was marketable and practical threatened to subsume individuals into the mass and distracted them from a broad field of knowledge and critical, independent thinking skills. In this spirit, critics of progressive education, including Arthur Bestor, frequently echoed Thomas Jefferson's warning: "If a nation expects to be both ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."[2] The implications of these pedagogical disputes, however, were not limited to domestic concerns of a well-functioning democracy.

Such concerns over education had geo-political implications in the context of the Cold War. Anxieties over the inadequacies of American education reached a climax after the Soviet Union beat the United States in the race to launch the first artificial satellite into space. On October 4, 1957, the U.S.S.R. launched Sputnik I into a low-earth orbit, where it zoomed around the Earth at 18,000 miles per hour. About every 96 minutes, Americans could sometimes hear the ominous beeping sound emitted from the satellite as it traveled overhead.[3] After 3 weeks, Sputnik went silent when its batteries died, and descended back into the atmosphere after another two months.[4] Though the satellite did not pose an immediate danger to the United States, Sputnik certainly left many Americans questioning the quality of their education system. This event was particularly shocking at a time when the United States enjoyed global military and economic hegemony in the wake of WWII. That the Soviets won the race to launch the first satellite

[2] Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wastelands* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1953), 2.
[3] William J. Jorden, "Soviet Fires Earth Satellite Into Space." *The New York Times*, October 5, 1957.
[4] Paul Terry, *Top 10 Of Everything*, (Octopus Publishing Group Ltd, 2013): 77.

stunned many Americans, and many blamed progressive education. Sputnik seemed to validate cries from critics of progressive education about falling standards and that progressive pedagogy catered to the average student while neglecting to nurture the "gifted."

Debates over education policy also involved questions about the separation of church and state. These controversies also took on moral and theological overtones with the rise of religiosity and neo-orthodoxy. The post-war period saw a reemergence of religious observance coupled with a renewed theological emphasis on original sin. In this context, many Americans found liberal education better suited for preserving traditional religious values than progressive education. Furthermore, with the development of an atheistic foreign adversary, and the history of another still fresh in memory, the idea that religion had some place in education became increasingly attractive to many Americans. For them, progressive education was too secular, even amoral. Worries about the secular tendencies of progressive education fell into two categories: pedagogical and administrative. With respect to pedagogy, in addition to aforementioned critics, still others believed that progressive pedagogues ignored important distinctions between good and evil. Such distinctions seemed all the more relevant considering the recent horrors of Nazi death camps and Soviet gulags. In terms of administration, however, many Americans who desired more religious instruction in education came in direct conflict with administrative progressives who wanted more consolidated management in American schooling.

The intellectual arc of James Conant illustrates this well. Conant achieved an illustrious career as both cold warrior and education reformer as the 23rd president of Harvard University (1953-55), second chairman of the National Defense Research Committee that oversaw the Manhattan Project (1941-1945), first Ambassador to West Germany (1955-57), and author of the best-selling book on education during the post-war period, *The American High School Today*

(1959). With respect to pedagogy, Conant emerged as a mediating figure between the advocates of progressive and liberal education. Though less critical of pedagogical progressive education than authors like Arthur Bestor and Robert Hutchins, Conant agreed with many who criticized American public education for failing to challenge academically talented students with rigorous instruction. At the same time, however, Conant was less moderate with respect to administrative progressive education, which aimed primarily at consolidated management. In fact, Conant advocated consolidation of small high schools into larger ones in *The American High School Today*. By the printing of his best-seller, Conant established himself as a leading advocate for consolidation. He even went so far as to advocate the elimination of private and parochial schools, igniting a controversy that invited damning indictments. Conant's almost exclusive emphasis on and encouragement of public schools attracted the ire of private school interests, particularly Catholics. Conant's most animated critics, especially Catholics, not only voiced their concerns of secularism but also charged him with "fascism."

In 1949, Conant delivered a widely quoted speech to the American Association of School Administrators in Boston. Conant's address cautioned against what he called the "dual system" of private and public schooling. For Conant, the coexistence of secular and sectarian schools posed a potential threat to "democratic unity provided by our public schools."[5] "A dual system serves and helps to maintain group cleavages," Conant warned, "the absence of a dual system does the reverse."[6] Reprinted in numerous periodicals and newspapers in 1949 and the early 1950s, Conant's oration received praise and opprobrium. In 1952, Archbishop Richard Cushing published a fierce rebuttal to Conant in the *Saturday Review*. Cushing compared Conant's derision of private schools to fascist totalitarianism: "everything in the State, nothing outside the

[5] James B. Conant, "Education: engine of democracy," *Saturday Review*, May 1952, 12.
[6] Conant, "Education: engine of democracy," 13.

State." Cushing interpreted Conant's speech as an assertion that "the State must monopolize all education" and even suggested that "[f]ascism of every stripe opposes private and parochial schools and always demands a single State school system without independent competition, challenge, or rival of any kind."[7] Though not all went so far as leveling charges of "fascism" against Conant, many intellectuals, critics of education, and religious leaders shared Cushing's concern over secularism in American education and American society in general. Such concerns gained greater currency in the context of rising post-war religiosity.

The third post-war intellectual development of interest was "pervasive secularism amid mounting religiosity," as Will Herberg put it in *Protestant–Catholic–Jew* (1955). Between 1949 and 1953, sales of the Bible increased 140 percent and reached a record 9,726,391 volumes a year. Americans bought and distributed scripture at an unprecedented rate. Yet, their religions could not escape the secular trends of society.[8] Herberg identified this as the paradox of post-war religious life: though Americans were becoming more religiously observant, their religions were becoming more secularized. Herberg characterized the religiousness of his day as "religiousness without religion, a religiousness without almost any kind of content or none, a way of sociability or 'belonging' rather than a way of reorienting life to God."[9] For Herberg, this development stripped religion of its conviction, commitment, and sincerity. As Americans increasingly used religious affiliation as a source of social location and networking, religion gradually served secular and practical functions rather than spiritual ones. He went on to add perhaps an even more troubling observation, echoing Riesman's concerns about conformity. Herberg even used Riesman's language: "The other-directed man or woman is eminently religious in the sense of

[7] Richard J. Cushing, "The Case for Religious Schools," *Saturday Review*, May 1952, 48.
[8] Will Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, orig. pub., 1955), 2.
[9] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 260.

being religiously identified and affiliated, since being religious and joining a church or synagogue is, under contemporary American conditions, a fundamental way of 'adjusting' or 'belonging.'"[10] This raised an uncomfortable proposition. Perhaps Americans did not need a fascist or communist dictatorship to wipe out their intermediary institutions and subsume everyone into the authoritarian mass. Perhaps, as in the case of religion being used as a means of adjusting or belonging to the mass, we would do it to ourselves. If Americans were willing to treat an intermediary institution as intimate as religion, not as a buffer between the individual and the mass but as a way of conforming to it, what might happen to other such institutions?

Given such concerns, Carl Degler's characterization of the post-war period as one of "affluence and anxiety" becomes startlingly clear. Though the U.S. enjoyed unprecedented material prosperity, the nation also faced new problems at home and abroad. This thesis will focus primarily on domestic issues without losing sight of the fact that the controversies surrounding education were inextricably linked to the context of the Cold War. Again, these quarrels ranged from criticisms of progressive education to questions of the relationship between church and state, but in either case took on moral overtones in the context of rising religiosity.

Numerous scholarly studies cover the post-war history of education with regard to the topic of segregation. Curiously, however, such historiography neglects how religious conflict shaped the debates over education from 1945-59. The relationship between parochial schools and the greater public school apparatus remains a neglected topic in American historiography. Merle Curti's *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (1935) and Tom Woods's *The Church Confronts Modernity* (2006) represent notable exceptions.[11] These works, however, cover the early 20th century and earlier. Furthermore, few histories of education attend to the influence of the most

[10] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 260.
[11] Jurgen Herbst, *School Choice and School Governance: A Historical Study of the United States and Germany* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 4.

important post-war intellectuals. The political history of this period on the disputes between Catholics and teachers unions over federal aid is covered by Gilbert Smith's *Limits of Reform: Politics and Federal Aid to Education, 1937-1950* and by Frank Munger and Richard Fenno's study of the 1950s in *National Politics and Federal Aid to Education* (1962). Though Smith, Munger, and Fenno provide helpful insights, their political focus omits the role of ideas in the education debates. Works that include intellectual history and religious groups give only cursory attention to the period from 1945-1959. These include R. Freeman Butts's second edition of *A Cultural History of Western Education* (1955), Diane Ravitch's *The Troubled Crusade* (1983), David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot's *Managers of Virtue* (1982), and Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir's *Schooling for All* (1985). Even Lawrence Cremin's *The Transformation of the School* (1962) and *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (1988) do not provide much about the education debates from 1945 to 1959. *How Teachers Taught* (1984) by Larry Cuban provided a thorough account of the conflict between liberal and progressive education, concluding the latter did not really catch on. However, Cuban focused primarily on the years from 1890 to 1940 and 1965 to 1990, omitting the post-war period. The following pages survey the reaction to progressive education during those neglected years.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first provides context for the intellectual climate of the post-war period, especially with regard to the overwhelming concern among intellectuals over the relationship between the individual and society. Chapter one then details both the religious and practical aspects of the post-war conservative movement. In terms of religion, such features included a reemergence of religiosity and a renewed emphasis on the doctrine of original sin. On the practical side, economic and political conservatives challenged the New Deal consensus, generally regarded by historians as the assumption that the federal

government should assume responsibility of the national economy and overall welfare of its citizens. The intellectual framework of these movements is presented through an analysis of some of the most influential works of the period: *Protestant–Catholic–Jew* (1955) by Will Herberg, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944) by Reinhold Niebuhr, and *The Conservative Mind* (1953) by Rusell Kirk, among others. Chapter 2 turns to the first half of the 20th century in order to survey the intellectual history of the administrative and pedagogical elements of progressive education. Upon returning to the post-war period, chapter 3 compares and contrasts the works of some of the most influential works of progressive education's critics, like Conant's bestselling *The American High School Today* (1959), Arthur Bestor's *Educational Wastelands* (1953), and Robert Hutchins's *The Conflict in Education* (1953). Chapter 4 details the controversy over church-state relations in response to proposed legislation for federal aid to education and the Supreme Court's decision in *Everson v. Board*. Chapter 5 then analyzes the appeal and distrust of these various positions among the three major American faith-groups: Protestant, Catholic, Jew. This will be achieved through a sampling of articles from popular magazines representing each faith group, especially their respective primary organs of public opinion: *Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, and *Commentary*.

Three questions will be asked of these sources: How did some of the most important post-war intellectuals perceive and influence the education debates from 1945-59? Generally, how did periodicals representing America's three major religious groups respond to these controversies? Moreover, to what extent did rising religiosity and emerging conservatism influence responses from Protestants, Catholics, and Jews? Doing so, hopefully, will fill a gap in the historiographical literature and illuminate the history of the education debates from 1945-59,

the echoes of which are still heard today. This thesis explores some of the origins of such present disputes by looking at similar debates in the past.

Chapter 1: Post-War Intellectual History

Some of the most important works of social criticism since WWII appeared in the '50s. All concerned themselves with the most critical issue of the day: the relation between the individual and society. In 1951, Hannah Arendt published one of the most perceptive works of the 20th century on this subject: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The title was somewhat misleading, as Arendt argued that totalitarianism was an entirely new phenomenon. One novel element of totalitarianism, for Arendt, was the deployment of terror not only as a means of obtaining power but also as a method of governance. Arendt observed the effort of totalitarian regimes to destroy intermediary institutions like churches, political parties, and labor unions in their attempt to centralize power. Without such institutions to provide any institutional buffer between the individual and the state, the totalitarian state submerged the individual into the mass. "[T]yranny," Arendt contended, "can stay in power only if it destroys first of all the national institutions of its own people."[12] However, Arendt "emphasized repeatedly" that totalitarianism was not just any kind of tyranny. For her, it was a completely novel form of government, one more extreme and all-encompassing than ever before. In addition to its deployment of terror as a means of governance, Arendt observed that the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, despite their ideological differences, aimed to obliterate any intermediary institutions between the state and the individual. Totalitarian governments often accomplished this by supplanting such cultural and social institutions with groups under the control and leadership of the totalitarian party. As she put it, "the means of total domination are not only more drastic but that totalitarianism differs essentially from other forms of political oppression known to us such as despotism, tyranny and dictatorship. Wherever it rose to power, it developed entirely new

[12] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1951), 128.

political institutions and destroyed all social, legal and political traditions of the country."[13] Thus, by destroying all intermediary institutions and supplanting them with its own, the totalitarian state seeped into and exercised control in nearly every aspect of society and culture, destroying both. The state became all-encompassing, hence totalitarian. Though Arendt's book mostly discussed Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, she still cautioned against the prospect of conformity leading to totalitarianism in the U.S. Alarmed by the Red Scare, Arendt lamented "we have reached the point where even free democracies, as, for instance, the United States, were seriously considering depriving native Americans who are Communists of their citizenship."[14]

Several other social theorists criticized the conformity of American society in the '50s. Riesman published *The Lonely Crowd* in 1950, and many other intellectuals echoed Reisman's ideas, including C. Wright Mills. A professor of sociology at Columbia, Mills went on to become the intellectual grandfather of the "new left," a term he helped popularize.[15] One year after the publication of Reisman's book, Mills published *White Collar*. In it, he observed that white collar workers resembled a new Marxian "lumpenproletariat": an underclass lacking class-consciousness. For Mills, white collar work resembled the impersonal, repetitious, and meaningless tasks performed by 19th century industrial workers. Mills called this new class "the lumpen-bourgeoisie."[16] Like the 19th century factory laborer, white collar workers had little ability to defend their political and economic interests. Also like the factory worker, white collar workers had little control over their work. Furthermore, Mills argued that, in some ways, white collar workers were worse off than 19th century industrial workers. Though he acknowledged

[13] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* 460.
[14] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* 280. See also Hannah Arendt, "The Threat of Conformism," *Commonweal*, November 24, 1954.
[15] C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left," *New Left Review*, 1960.
[16] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (Pantionos Classics, 2020, orig. pub., 1951), 34.

that factory workers were subject to much more physical danger, Mills contended that white collar workers sold not only their time and energy, they also sold their personalities. As he put it, "[w]orking for wages with another's industrial property involves a sacrifice of time, power, and energy to the employer; working as a salaried employee often involves in addition the sacrifice of one's self to a multitude of 'consumers' or clients or managers."[17] This observation closely resembled Riesman's idea of other-directed behavior. The white collar worker derived his sense of identity from external rather than internal sources and adjusted his or her personality to accommodate pressures from society and the marketplace. Thus, in this "personality market," as Mills termed it, internal moral values no longer motivated acts of kindness and respect. Rather, external factors increasingly dictated such behavior. Genuine acts of goodwill gradually gave way to insincere niceties driven by the desire to get along with the group and, ultimately, succeed. In this work-place culture, Mills lamented, "[k]indness and friendliness become aspects of personalized service or of public relations of big firms, rationalized to further the sale of something. With anonymous insincerity the Successful Person thus makes an instrument of his own appearance and personality."[18] Indeed, success in this white collar world Mills described had much to do with conformity.

Similarly to Mills and Riesman, William Whyte observed conformist trends in American society. In *The Organization Man* (1956), Whyte observed the Protestant ethic of hard work, responsibility, and delayed gratification giving way to a social ethic of the organization. Individuals, not just white collar workers, found meaning only as a unit of society and convinced

[17] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar,* 143.
[18] Mills, *White Collar,* 143.

themselves that organizations made better decisions than individuals. Thus, the only way to advance in society was through an organization, not personal initiative.[19]

One of the most striking examples of conformity in popular culture that Whyte described was Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), "the biggest-selling novel of the post-war period."[20] The book's central character was Lieutenant Stephen Maryk, the executive officer of the minesweeper U.S.S. Caine. Maryk represented an organization man. He liked the system, and even resisted suggestions from fellow sailors of Commander Queeg's psychopathy. But Maryk became disillusioned at the climax of the novel when the ship encountered a typhoon, which sank three other battleships. Instead of turning into the wind, Queeg tried to run the ship away from the storm, a decision that would have ensured a watery grave. As Maryk begged Queeg to turn into the storm, Queeg's behavior devolved into a state of fear and paralysis. Using Article 184 of the Navy Regulations, Maryk temporarily relieved Queeg of command, turned the ship around, and steered into the wind and out of the storm to safety. But in Wouk's novel, Maryk was no hero. Since Maryk relieved a superior officer during wartime, the military tribunal charged Maryk with mutiny and had him court-martialed. Barney Greenwald, though strongly opposed to Maryk's actions, defended Maryk in court and won with a masterful cross-examination exposing Queeg as an incompetent coward. At the party celebrating the acquittal, Greenwald expressed his disapproval of the celebrations, because, he said, men like Queeg represented a system that defeated the Nazis who boiled Greenwald's Jewish grandmother into a bar of soap. In disgust, he threw his glass of champagne at one of the Lieutenants.[21] Later, one of the junior officers reflected on this episode in a letter, "I see that we were in the wrong."[22]

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[19] William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, orig. pub. 1956).
[20] Whyte, *The Organization Man,* 243.
[21] Whyte, *The Organization Man,* 245.
[22] Whyte, *The Organization Man,* 245

In his analysis of these scenes, Whyte could not have put his critique of Wouk any better: "Here, certainly, is an astounding denial of individual responsibility. …We are asked to accept the implied moral that it would have been better to let the ship and several hundred men perish rather than question authority–which does seem a hell of a way to keep a ship going. …the lesson is plain. It is not for the individual to question the system." Perhaps even more astonishing, in addition to its preeminence in popular fiction sales, was the "overwhelmingly favorable" critical reception of the book. Thus, to Whyte's horror, the deference to conformity in Wouk's novel not only appealed to ordinary people, but educated literary critics as well. "The 'smart' people who question things, who upset people–they are the wrong ones." Thus, for Whyte, *"The Caine Mutiny* rationalized the impulse to belong and to accept what is as what should be." This conformity, he exclaimed, had the potential to descend into authoritarianism: "If we can be shown there is virtue in following a Queeg, how much more reason to welcome the less onerous sanctions of ordinary authority!"[23]

Questions of conformity, authoritarianism, and the relationship between the individual and society also spilled onto the pages of significant theological theological works. One of these was *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), by Rienhold Niebuhr. In a 2011 edition of this book, Gary Dorrien of Union Theological Seminary identified Niebuhr as "the leading American Christian social ethicist of the twentieth century."[24] Similarly to Arendt, Niebuhr saw Stalin and Hitler as two manifestations of totalitarianism. From Niebuhr's theological perspective, both leaders were guilty of the same "original sin" of Adam and Eve: intellectual pride. In *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, Niehbur argued that "children of light," radical communists motivated by utopian visions, and "children of darkness,"

[23] Whyte, *The Organization Man*, 246.
[24] Gary Dorrien, introduction in Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, orig. pub., 1944), ix.

fascists driven by the will to power, both placed themselves above others and were willing to destroy anything or anyone in their way. Niebuhr advocated neo-orthodoxy, or a return to an emphasis on original sin: the idea that humans were inherently sinful, and thus their institutions were inherently imperfect. Therefore, neo-orthodox theologians promoted humility on the individual level. In a broader sense, this sensibility contributed to a general distrust of large institutions and bureaucracies–namely, the government.

In a similar vein of distrust for institutions, Friedrich Hayek, in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), denounced any government intervention in the economy. Hayek argued that mixed economies tended toward totalitarian control because the government, with its advantage of not having to borrow money, would inevitably squeeze out private initiative. Furthermore, Hayek argued that political freedoms could not exist without economic freedom. Thus, the U.S. Constitution, with its emphasis on political rights and omission of economic rights, had its priorities backwards. Though Hayek did not put it in such stark terms, he maintained that if the government controls the individual's money, it also controls the individual. His analysis indicated to many Americans that they were not only on the "road to serfdom" but on the highway to totalitarianism as well. Indeed, for Hayek, the former was one stop on the same road to the latter.[25]

Such intellectual preoccupations inevitably spilled over into concern about education, and all of the aforementioned post-war intellectuals expressed their opinions about American schools. Indeed, whenever they did so, it was frequently in the context of conformity and totalitarianism. In keeping with his fears that socialism tended toward authoritarianism, Hayek identified socialists as the initial promulgators of conformist indoctrination through education. For Hayek, successful centralized planning not only preferred conformity and uniformity of

[25] Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007, orig. pub., 1944)

worldview among its citizens, it required it. "It is because successful planning requires the creation of a common view on the essential values that the restriction of our freedom with regard to material things touches so directly on our spiritual freedom. Socialists, the cultivated parents of the barbarous offspring they have produced, traditionally hope to solve this problem by education." Hayek doubted education could effectively create complete conformity of moral and ethical values, but he lamented that this did not deter socialists from trying. As he put it, "[i]t is not rational conviction but the acceptance of a creed which is required to justify a particular plan. And, indeed, socialists everywhere were the first to recognize that the task they had set themselves required the general acceptance of a common Weltanschauung, of a definite set of values." According to Hayek, it was out of such efforts to effect a mass movement guided by a singular *Weltanshauung*, or world-view, "that the socialists first created most of the instruments of indoctrination of which Nazis and Fascists have made such effective use."[26]

> In Germany and Italy the Nazis and Fascists did, indeed, not have much to invent. The usages of the new political movements which pervaded all aspects of life had in both countries already been introduced by the socialists. The idea of a political party which embraces all activities of the individual from the cradle to the grave, which claims to guide his views on everything, and which delights in making all problems questions of party Weltanschauung, was first put into practice by the socialists.[27]

Thus, for Hayek, socialism, by way of education, initiated an important mechanism by which totalitarian regimes pervaded their ideologies into all segments of society. Naturally, members of the emerging conservative movement found plenty of intellectual ammunition in Hayek's arguments to attack socialist ideas and policies. But Hayek was not alone in his observation of totalitarianism's socialist antecedents.

Arendt identified the same phenomenon. She also identified socialists as the progenitors of the first anti-semetic parties. "Small as these first antisemitic parties were, they at once

[26] Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007, orig. pub., 1944), 142.
[27] Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 142.

distinguished themselves from all other parties. They made the original claim that they were not a party among parties but a party 'above all parties.'"[28] Such a bold assumption not only implied the party above all other parties, but, ultimately, the party over the state itself**.** According to Arendt, however, "[t]he claim of a party to be beyond all parties had other, more significant, implications than antisemitism." The combination of rising socialist sentiments in the late-19th century with overt anti-semitism united the materialist plights of the common masses with underlying prejudices against Jews. This made for an ugly, and ultimately deadly, concoction. In such a political climate, the socialists "could pretend to fight the Jews exactly as the workers were fighting the bourgeoisie." For Arendt, their political advantage lay in appealing to the stereotype of the Jews as "the secret power behind governments." Thus, socialists, in addition to attacking class differentiation, "could openly attack the state itself."[29]

Post-war conservatives shared with Arendt a respect toward Judeo-Christian values. Though Arendt was a secular Jew, she acknowledged that the "Jewish-Christian tradition…in the concept of one common origin beyond human history, human nature, and human purpose...is the metaphysical concept on which the political equality of purpose may be based." These religious values, at least in part, provided the foundation for Western ideas of equality between individuals and equal rights. Similarly to Niebuhr's "children of light," Arendt believed 19th century progressives distorted Judeo-Christian moral virtues in their conviction that history inevitably

[28] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 38.

[29] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 39. One example Arendt gave to illustrate this trend was the political success of Georg Ritter von Shoenerer: "Schoenerer's anti- semitism, at first almost exclusively directed against the Rothschilds, won him the sympathies of the labor movement, which regarded him as a true radical gone astray. His main advantage was that he could base his anti- semitic propaganda on demonstrable facts: as a member of the Austrian Reichsrat he had fought for nationalization of the Austrian railroads, the major part of which had been in the hands of the Rothschilds since 1836 due to a state license which expired in 1886. Schoenerer succeeded in gather-ing 40,000 signatures against its renewal, and in placing the Jewish question in the limelight of public interest. The close connection between the Rothschilds and the financial interests of the monarchy became very obvious when the government tried to extend the license under conditions which were patently to the disadvantage of the state as well as the public. Schoenerer's agitation in this matter became the actual beginning of an articulate antisemitic movement in Austria." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 43.

trended in a positive direction. “Nineteenth-century positivism and progressivism perverted this purpose of human equality when they set out to demonstrate what cannot be demonstrated, namely, that men are equal by nature and different only by history and circumstances, so that they can be equalized not by rights, but by circumstances and education.”[30] As indicated in the above passage from Arendt, progressives viewed education as a centerpiece of their plans.

In *The School in the United States* (2001), James W. Fraser identified four groups of education reformers who called themselves “progressive”:

- administrative progressives, who sought consolidated management
- militant teachers, who sought a greater role for themselves
- child-centered curriculum reformers
- advocates of testing and measurement[31]

Critics often conflated these categories when referring to progressive education. Nevertheless, there existed some overlap and tension between these groups. For example, though he criticized child-centered reformers, Conant promoted both consolidation and standardized testing. Though responses to militant teachers and advocates of testing appear in the following pages, this thesis deals primarily with reactions against administrative progressives and child-centered curriculum reformers. Many Americans in the post-war period criticized progressive pedagogy but strongly disagreed with solutions to the problem offered by administrative progressives like Conant. The degree to which Americans resented progressive administrators manifested along religious lines, with Catholics leveling the fiercest objections. Indeed, looking at the response to progressive pedagogy and administration through the lens of religion is particularly appropriate considering the post-war context of mounting religiosity.

Though religion became increasingly secularized, as Herberg observed, it remained an important reference point for how many Americans saw the world. Furthermore, religious values

[30] James W. Fraser, *The School in the United States* (McGraw Hill: 2001), 182.
[31] James W. Fraser, *The School in the United States*, 182.

gained greater currency in the post-war period after "secular faiths," as Herberg described fascist and communist ideologies, "collapsed under the shattering impact of the events of our time."[32] Thus, for Herberg, purely secularist ideologies no longer satisfied Americans. "We no longer look to science, to 'progress,' to economics, or to politics for salvation; we recognize that these things have their values, but we also know that they are not gods bringing redemption from the confusions and perils of existence." In biblical language. Herberg maintained that man "cannot live by sober, limited, pragmatic programs for restricted ends" alone; "these soon lose whatever meaning they have unless they are embedded in a transcendent, actuality-defying vision." Herberg believed people inevitably sought faith, whether secular or religious, in order to explain the world around them. "Man needs faith," as he put it, "a total, all-embracing faith, for living."[33] Better this faith be a religious one than a secular one, for Herberg and many others, as brutally demonstrated by the secularist regimes of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Though this resurgence of religious sensibility cast a conservative mood on the American intellectual milieu, such sympathies were not limited to theological or political conservatives. Indeed, the emerging conservative movement was one variation of many responses to the question about the relationship between the individual and society that occupied the most important intellectuals of the post-war period. As detailed above, exploration of this question by such intellectuals led them to related questions concerning education.

In this context, many Americans wanted religious instruction for their children. "By a large majority," Herberg noted, Americans believed "children should be given religious instruction."[34] Herberg found that even secular "Jews who so frequently [said] that they [did] not 'believe in God' and who [did] not attend synagogue services very largely insist[ed] that their

[32] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 63.
[33] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 63.
[34] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 72.

children should receive a religious education."[35] Though not limited to conservatives, mounting religiosity reinforced the emerging post-war conservative movement, and vice versa. In addition to religious considerations, however, members of the post-war conservative movement also concerned themselves with more practical issues.

The New Conservative Movement

Defeating one totalitarian system during WWII and confronting another in the Cold War promoted serious reconsideration among Americans about the amount of power delegated to the federal government during the Depression and War. For many, New Deal programs closely resembled what Hayek warned against in *The Road to Serfdom*. Hayek's book became one of the foundational texts of American conservatism, along with William Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* (1951), Whittaker Chambers's *Whitness* (1952), and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (1953).[36] These works provided the intellectual foundations of an emerging conservative movement. Indeed, a new conservative movement became conscious during the post-war period. Peter Vierek coined the term "new conservatism" in *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt against Revolt* (1949). In it, he called for a reformist yet ethical conservatism founded upon the "necessity and supremacy of Law and of absolute standards of conduct."[37] But conservative ideas were not limited to the new conservative movement.

[35] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 223.
[36] The enduring legacy of these texts appeared in a recent article in *National Review*, which mentioned these exact four works in the same sentence when discussing the canonical books of post-war conservatism. Matthew Continetti, "The Irreplaceable William F. Buckley Jr." *National Review*, 3 June 2017, https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/06/william-f-buckley-jr-conservatives-must-move-forward-without-him/. Interestingly, however, Hayek did not consider himself a conservative. In *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), Hayek ridiculed conservatives for their willingness to use the state for their own ends while lacking a coherent set of principles. Michael S. Mayer, *The Eisenhower Years* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2010), 288.
[37] George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2008), 64.

A general conservative trend influenced intellectuals on the left as well as the right, though in varying degrees. Hayek, for example, started his economics career as a socialist but over time moved toward conservatism, if not libertarianism.[38] Will Herberg, an active member of a small communist movement led by Jay Lovestone in the late '20s and early '30s, and a self-identified liberal by 1950, arrived at a Burkean conservatism by the late '50s. Russell Kirk voted for the socialist Norman Thomas in the 1944 election, but by 1953 he published *The Conservative Mind* and was well on his way from atheism to Roman Catholicism.[39] As Kirk's spiritual journey indicated, however, this general conservative trend was not limited to politics and practical principles. It manifested itself, for example, in Niebuhr's theological development. In the 1920s, he adopted Social Gospel idealism and pacifism, which he abandoned during the following decade when such positions no longer seemed tenable to him. For one thing, a passive approach to totalitarian regimes in Europe seemed increasingly immoral. Furthermore, the idealistic assumption of the inherent goodness of humans, characteristic of the Social Gospel movement, and liberal Christianity in general, lost credibility with knowledge of Soviet gulags and Nazi death camps. Niebuhr led a theological and intellectual movement toward a renewed emphasis on original sin. Niebuhr always remained a political liberal. Nevertheless, his neo-orthodox approach had conservative qualities.[40]

Neo-orthodoxy appealed to many members of all three major American faith-groups across the political spectrum and injected a renewed emphasis on original sin into American intellectual life, especially the new conservative movement. It also introduced new tensions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. One development that contributed to this friction was

[38] Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 37.
[39] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77.
[40] Gary Dorrien, introduction in Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, orig. pub., 1944), ix.

what George Nash, author of one of the definitive works on post-war conservatism, observed as "[o]neof the most remarkable features" of the emerging conservative movement: "that, in a country still substantially Protestant, its leadership was heavily Roman Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, or critical of Protestant Christianity." Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, whom Nash identified as an important "link between the continental European conservative tradition and the conservative stirrings in America in the post-war decade," was a Catholic and frequent contributor to *National Review*.[41] Buckley, the founder of *National Review*, was also Catholic, and Kirk eventually converted. Though he remained Protestant, Peter Viereck once wrote to Francis Wilson, a Catholic leader of the conservative movement, "that he considered himself 'in many ways [but not all] a fellow-traveler of the Catholic Church.'"[42]

Somewhat paradoxically, as the leadership of the new conservative movement took on a Catholic cast, Catholics in general assumed a kind of "minority-group defensiveness." Indeed, all three faith-groups, according to Herberg, expressed particular varieties of minority-group defensiveness, each unique to the circumstances they confronted. Although most victims of the Red Scare were radical leftists, conservatives and Catholics also received charges of "un-American activities."[43] The hierarchical and dogmatic aspects of Catholicism invited accusations of "papism," with the implicit prejudice that Catholics followed the leadership of the Pope and the creed of the Church without question or criticism. Amid post-war fears of conformity and authoritarianism, many found the hierarchy and dogma of Catholicism antithetical to the American civic tradition of decentralized authority and democracy. Many prominent intellectuals who held such concerns did not keep their prejudices private. This was a

[41] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 27, 62.
[42] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77.
[43] Zoe, Burkholder, "'A War of Ideas': The Rise of Conservative Teachers in Wartime New York City, 1938-46," *History of Education Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (May 2015): 220-21.

time when the leftist philosopher and educational reformer Sidney Hook claimed "there is no academic freedom in Catholic colleges."[44] In 1951, the socialist and assistant-editor of *The Nation* magazine, Paul Blanshard, published his bestselling *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. "Catholicism," Blanshard asserted, "conditions its people to accept censorship, thought-control, and ultimately, dictatorship."[45]

Though exaggerated, there existed some merit of Blanshard's allegations of Catholic statism and Hook's claims of Catholic anti-intellectualism. The Jesuit president of Georgetown University, Hunter Guthrie, advocated limits on academic freedom in his 1950 commencement address. "The sacred fetish of academic freedom," for Guthrie, constituted "the soft under-belly of our American way of life, and the sooner it is armor-plated by some sensible limitation the sooner will the future of this nation be secured from fatal consequences." Unsurprisingly, Guthrie envisioned an academic "freedom limited by a belief in God, by faith in the omnipotence of truth and the beneficence of justice." These principles of the "western tradition," according to Guthrie, "made [America] great." Thus, Guthrie believed academic freedom should not extend to ideas that challenged the basic premises of the western tradition, from which, he believed, western man derived all other forms of truth and knowledge. In his closing remarks, Guthrie described western civilization as "a tradition that freedom springs from truth, but that truth is rarely freedom's offspring."[46] However, not all Catholics, nor all Jesuits, sympathized with Guthrie.

John Courtney Murray, a Jesuit theologian, demonstrated a commitment to academic freedom to such a degree that the Vatican censored his writings. Murray believed the Catholic

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[44] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77.
[45] Paul Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), 257.
[46] Hunter Guthrie, "The Sacred Fetish of Academic Freedom: Freedom Springs From Truth, Truth is Rarely Freedom's Offspring," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 1 August 1950, 632-3.

Church's position on church-state relations was inadequate for a modern pluralistic society. In an article "On the Structure of the Church-State Problem," Murray acknowledged the historical ambition and success of the Catholic Church in influencing state institutions in Europe. However, Murray found such aspirations irreconcilable with the American Constitution and no longer useful for contemporary society. The Church's reliance on institutions "in certain circumstances of space and time and political fact," Murray argued, "may represent an effective incarnation of principle." However, Murray also acknowledged the inflexibility of institutions, which "involve[d] the risk of a lag behind history."[47] The Vatican demanded that Murray cease writing about the church-state issue. Many non-Catholic Americans interpreted this action as a demonstration of the Vatican's desire to seek a union of church and state. But this perception ignored a distinction between American and European Catholicism. Herberg, an admirer of Murrary's work, acknowledged a desire among European Catholics to unify church and state. As Herberg noted, this was the usual arrangement in Europe for centuries. However, such predilections did not last in America. By the middle of the 20th century, a majority of American Catholics did not aspire to a union of church and state. During this time, American Catholic intellectuals revisited the relationship of church and state and encouraged the concept of pluralism in the style of Murray. As Herberg's biographer observed "the average Catholic looked on American society as pluralistic…Herberg believed that the Catholic Church had been fairly successful in accommodating itself to American culture."[48]

Nevertheless, alarm about Catholics attacking academic freedom and aspiring towards a Catholic state waxed sensational, exaggerated, and hyperbolic. So much so that post-war anti-Catholicism prompted Viereck to famously remark that "Catholic-baiting is the

[47] John Courtney Murray, "On the Structure of the Church-State Problem," *The Catholic Church in World Affairs* (1954): 19.
[48] Harry J. Ausmus, *Will Herberg: From Right to Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 144.

anti-Semitism of the liberals." As Nash put it, "[t]o be a Catholic in these years was to occupy an uncertain position in American intellectual life; to be a conservative Catholic was to bear an even heavier burden."[49] Though an articulate and intellectually formidable conservative movement was rising, conservatives nevertheless remained a shrill minority. In contrast to "new conservatives," many Americans viewed New Deal reforms and wartime measures as vindications of liberalism, not repudiations. Following the Great Depression, Americans generally agreed that the federal government should assume responsibility for the economy and public well-being. Having assumed such responsibilities, the New Deal did not succeed in terms of stimulating economic recovery, but it did grant real relief to many in hard times. Then, the federal government played an instrumental role in planning the economy and, ultimately, defeating the authoritarian regimes of Italy, German, and Japan in WWII. Whatever its merits or demerits, the New Deal proved an immovable object in American politics and remained one of the primary grievances of conservatives. President Dwight Eisenhower tried to clearly, if not condescendingly, articulate this to his conservative brother Edgar in a 1954 correspondence:

> Should any party attempt to abolish social security and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are H. L. Hunt (you possibly know his background), a few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or business man from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid.[50]

In contrast to this "New Deal consensus" and secularism, conservatives and Catholics were "outsiders," as Nash put it. Thus, it is not surprising that many leaders of the emerging conservative movement were Catholic. Nash even suggested "that the new conservatism was, in part, an intellectual cutting edge of the post-war 'coming of age' of America's Catholic

[49] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77.
[50] Michael S. Mayer, *The Eisenhower Years* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2010), 191.

minority."[51] On the political front, Nash pointed to the ascent of Joseph McCarthy, "an outsider, a loner, a hero among many conservatives, and a Catholic who enjoyed much support among Catholics," and John F. Kennedy, "whose views—on 'who lost China,' for instance—were often conservative. In short," according to Nash, "the 'Catholic' temper of much traditionalist conservatism reinforces one's sense of how fundamental a challenge to 'official' secular-liberal America the movement was—and was meant to be."[52] The emerging conservative movement influenced Americans on the left and the right. It also contributed significantly to an explosion of religious observance. Indeed, one of the most significant scholars on this topic, Will Herberg, was deeply influenced by Niebuhr.[53]

The Reemergence of Religious Observance

Will Herberg wrote one of the most perceptive works on the rise of religiosity during the late '40s and early '50s. Paradoxically, however, Herberg found religion becoming increasingly secularized. Using Reisman's language, Herberg perceived American religious life moving from inner-direction to other-direction. Rather than serving as a source of internalized values, Herberg saw religious affiliation as "a fundamental way of 'adjusting' and 'belonging'" to society. While "inner-direction remain[ed] dominant," Herberg judged the "turn to religion and the church as, in part at least, a reflection of the growing other-directedness" in American society. Instead of serving as a source of transcendent meaning and moral values, Herberg observed Americans increasingly using religious identity as a means of "social location."[54] This phenomenon manifested perhaps most clearly "[w]ithin the Protestant community" as "the complex structure of denominationalism" readily served as "a way of expressing class differentiation and racial

[51] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77.
[52] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 77-78.
[53] Harry J. Ausmus, *Will Herberg,* 92.
[54] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 123.

segregation." Though the denominational structure of American Protestantism lent itself more easily to such expressions of social location, this other-directed behavior also characterized American Catholicism and Judaism.[55] One of the most striking statistics exemplifying the turn from inner-direction to other-direction in American religious life, Herberg revealed that "[t]hough 83 per cent of Americans affirmed the Bible to be the revealed word of God, 40 per cent confessed that they read it never or hardly ever."[56] Despite it being the best-selling book of the post-war period, little more than half of Americans took the Bible seriously enough to bother reading it. Though religion lost sincerity in the post-war period, rising religiosity contributed to serious conflicts between America's three major faith-groups, especially between Protestants and Catholics, who frequently accused each other of "conformity" and "authoritarianism."

The Influence of New Conservatism and Religiosity on Education

Curiously enough, one of the only instances Herberg used the term "authoritarianism" involved a discussion about education and religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants: "In a most curious way, the authoritarian doctrine of *l'etat enseignant* (the "teaching state," the state as molder of the ideology of its citizens) has become part of the creed of a large segment of American Protestantism." Herberg prefaced this claim with a discussion of a "much-noted editorial" published by *The Christian Century*, a theologically liberal and non-denominational Protestant magazine. In this 1951 article titled "Pluralism–National Menace," the editors of *The Christian Century* warned its readership that the "proliferation of Catholic parochial schools," among other Catholic organizations, "ha[d] more than religious significance to American society. It means that a conscious and well-planned large-scale attempt is being made to separate

[55] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 217-19
[56] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 220.

Catholics from other Americans in almost every area of social life." Such a "plural society," *The Christian Century* editors charged, contradicted the "unifying function of education by splitting up among its constituent units the responsibility for providing education, rather than allowing the state to provide a common education for all children." Such rhetoric echoed Conant's critique of the "dual system" in American education.[57] This provided context for Cushing's allegations of "fascism" against Conant.

In addition to the context of this religious conflict, concerns over conformity and authoritarianism in education animated members of the emerging conservative movement. Observations similar to Herberg's about religion losing its sincerity came together in Kirk's *Conservative Mind* with criticism of progressive education. "In the realm of morals," Kirk wrote, "religion declined steadily toward the credo of 'service'...the educational ideas of John Dewey, disavowing all checks, inner or outer, captured the schools."[58] Like Herberg's observation of religion, Kirk saw education becoming increasingly other-directed.

Kirk's distaste for this elevation of the service aspect of religion also extended to his criticism of progressive education and its principle proponent, John Dewey. Kirk objected to Dewey's child-centered vision of schooling aimed at serving the "real needs" of each student. At the time Kirk wrote, progressive education dominated American teachers colleges. As Cuban demonstrated, progressive pedagogy failed to take hold in American schools. Nevertheless, it remained an influential force in education departments.[59] By then, progressive pedagogues frequently used the phrase "real needs" in reference to the necessary training to "adjust" the pupil to society. In fact, progressive education theorists, including Dewey, did not shy from using the language of "adjustment" that so troubled the intellectuals already discussed. Well before the

[57] Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 236-7.
[58] Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (Washington D.C.: Gateway, 2019, orig. pub., 1953), 455.
[59] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1983), 59.

1950s, however, even John Dewey believed his disciples took progressive pedagogy too far. In 1938, Dewey in *Experience and Education* even warned that progressive pedagogy "may become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which [it] reacted against."[60] Nevertheless, Kirk went as far as to compare Dewey's pedagogy to that of Stalinist Russia. "Whether educated 'to be like Stalin' or to 'adjust to the group' after the notion of John Dewey," wrote Kirk, "the tendency of these gigantic states is toward a sheep-population, though achieved in Russia by harsh compulsion, in America by contagion and attraction."[61] Kirk attributed the attractiveness of progressive education to his observation that "[t]he belligerent expansive and naturalistic tendencies of the era found their philosophical apologist in John Dewey. …

> …He commenced with a thoroughgoing naturalism, like Diderot's and Holbach's, denying the whole realm of spiritual values: nothing exists but physical sensation, and life has no aims but physical satisfaction. …a utilitarianism which carried Benthamite ideas to their logical culmination, making material production the goal and standard of human endeavor; the past is trash, the future unknowable, and the present the only concern of the moralist. He propounded a theory of education derived from Rousseau, declaring that the child is born with "a *natural* desire to do, to give out, to serve," and should be encouraged to follow his own bent, teaching being simply the opening of paths. …Every radicalism since 1789 found its place in John Dewey's system.[62]

In this passage, Kirk aired his concern about both secularism and service. Like many other critics of progressive education, Kirk faulted Dewey for his Rousseauian idealism. As was the case with liberal Christianity, Rousseau's assumption of the inherent goodness of humans lost credibility after WWII. In contrast, Kirk maintained that "[r]ecognition of the abiding power of Sin is a cardinal tenet in conservatism."[63] Contrary to Rousseau and Dewey, Kirk rejected the notion that humans were inherently good. Rather, he maintained that they were inherently sinful, and thus their institutions were imperfect. For Kirk, the faith in human beings' intrinsic goodness, combined with the presumption that children are endowed with "a *natural* desire to

[60] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier, 1963, orig. pub., 1938), 22.
[61] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 450.
[62] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 418.
[63] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 243.

do, to give out, [and] to serve," made for a troubling combination in an age of secularism. If religion no longer impressed the doctrine of original sin upon the citizenry and no longer functioned as a means of serving God, but simply offered a way of adjusting to society, then religion served society by subsuming the individual into the mass as much as it served the individual to adjust to society.

Kirk detected a similar pattern in progressive education. Though progressive educationists appealed to the individual pupil's desires, interests, and "real needs," their unflinching efforts to adjust the child to society by definition considered society's needs just as much as those of the individual. In order to adjust the student to society, he or she had to learn to serve society. Paradoxically, progressive education served society as much or more than it did the individual, despite its child-centered principles. Along with that of many other critics of progressive education, Kirk offered liberal education as an alternative to what he saw as an unfortunate proliferation of vocational, specialized, and "practical" education.

Kirk preferred liberal education because he believed it prepared students' minds to serve their own intellects, rather than someone else's. "Liberal studies," he maintained, "are especially characteristic of a university and of a gentleman–as opposed to *servile*, the employments in which the mind has little part."[64] It was not just the intellectual attainment of individual students at stake, however. According to Kirk, and other critics of progressive education, the liberty of the entire country depended on a renewed emphasis on liberal education. He argued that "[f]or real liberty–the liberty of true distinction, not the fierce leveling freedom of envy–the leaders of society require a liberal education."[65] Kirk even detected a whiff of fascism, or union between the corporation and the state, with his observation "that the Rockefellers and Harrimans

[64] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 290.
[65] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 436.

represented the same forces as did John Dewey: they stood for the delusion that men can be improved upon utilitarian principles."[66] The danger of progressive education lay not only in its dismissal of religious principles as a means of individual improvement, but also in that utilitarian obsession with providing "useful" knowledge in order to "adjust" the student to society. In the context of the rise of white collar workers, this increasingly meant learning skills useful to a corporation. Thus, the buffer of the moral intellectual framework of the church between the state and the individual vanished in the case of education, leaving no barrier between the corporation and one of the most intimate and primary functions of the state: education. "The old bulwarks of prejudice and prescription," he argued, "have been demolished by the popularization of naturalistic ideas in every segment of society: and the humanist can counter this radicalism only by winning men to an alternative system of ideas."[67]

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Indeed, Kirk's *Conservative Mind* represented one humanist's attempt to persuade the American public of alternative ideas–namely, conservative ones. Like other important intellectuals of his time, Kirk's concern over the relationship between the individual and society naturally led him and other conservatives toward questions of education. Picking up on Riesman's observation that Americans were becoming "other-directed," and thus losing traditional internalized values, Kirk and other conservatives wanted a more traditional, "inner-directed" education for their children. They and many others believed liberal education better served this aim than progressive education. As they saw it, the liberal arts did more to expose the individual to a broad range of knowledge and stimulate critical thinking necessary to

[66] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 422.
[67] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 422.

think for oneself. Such training seemed all the more relevant in the context of post-war fears that conformity would lead to authoritarianism.

In this context of the emerging conservative movement and reemerging religiosity, as well as the concerns of towering intellectuals of the post-war period, Cushing's condemnations of Conant as a fascist appear more serious and less sensational. In the milieu of the emerging conservative and neo-orthodox movements, Catholics, and conservatives in general, found vindication in their ideas among a cadre of serious intellectuals concerned with the same issue of the relationship between the individual and society. Though Catholics, and advocates of liberal education in general, shared with Conant a concern of progressive pedagogy's inadequacies, they balked at his brand of progressive administration and his proposals to eliminate private and parochial schools. Conservatives in general, and Catholics especially, believed education was incomplete without religious instruction, especially the teaching of original sin. This idea was not unreasonable or sensational for many Americans across the political spectrum who seriously found such emphasis on intellectual pride an especcially good idea after the horrors of the Nazi and Soviet regimes. Nevertheless, the most vocal accusations of potential authoritarianism in American education came from Catholics. Catholic suspicion of authoritarianism in American education was not wholly without historical precedent. As detailed in the next chapter, some important progressive administrators often advocated policies with marked authoritarian qualities, even championing the public schools as a tool of the state to separate the parent and the child. This represented one of many efforts during the first half of the 20th century to assimilate the children of immigrants into American society. Among other prejudices, anti-Catholicism significantly motivated such endeavors.

Chapter 2: Progressive Administration and Pedagogy

Catholics had good historical reasons to be skeptical of the public school system. Not coincidentally, the campaign for common public schooling began amid a wave of immigration from Ireland in the first half of the 19th century. Almost 90 percent of all immigrants to the United States between 1820 and 1840 were Irish.[68] A substantial majority of them were Catholic. One response to this demographic development was the common school movement, led mostly by Anglo-Saxon Protestants like Horace Mann.[69] In *Managers of Virtue*, David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot often referred to the original proponents of public schools as "crusaders" and likened their efforts to a "religious movement."[70] Contrary to arguments made by public school advocates a century later, the public schools did not from their inception adhere to a strict separation of church and state. Horace Mann himself championed readings of the Bible, without comment, in public schools. Tyack and Hansot observed that, "although public education was often so Protestant in orientation that it repelled Catholics, its pan-Protestant compromise of teaching the Bible without comment encouraged most denominations to support a common school."[71] Behind the public education movement of the nineteenth century, they argued, lay a consensus in what historian John Higham called a "Protestant-republican ideology," which combined religious and civic values to promote a sense of unity in a highly decentralized country. Many Protestant sects shared some variation of this idea. Since Protestants believed salvation came through an individual's relationship with God, most school reformers saw

[68] James Oakes, et al, *Of the People: A History of the United States, Volume I: To 1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 414.
[69] David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 5
[70] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 5-6.
[71] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 30.

individual righteousness and good citizenship as inextricably linked.[72] This sensibility changed with the Gilded Age and the turn of the century.

In contrast to the mid-19th century, education leaders of the 1890-1950 period had a far more secular vision for society. Additionally, Tyack and Hansot described this generation of education leaders as "social engineers who sought to bring about a smoothly meshing corporate society."[73] Despite this difference, this era of education also began in response to another wave of immigration. Nearly 24 million immigrants arrived in America between 1880 and 1921, almost a 50 percent increase to the population of 50 million in 1880. Many native-born Protestants deemed these new immigrants, and the religious beliefs they brought with them, incompatible with American society. Previous immigrants came mostly from northern and western European countries. Though many still came from Ireland and Germany, this second wave of immigration also included record figures of immigrants from southern and eastern European countries such as Italy, Poland, and Russia. Catholics made up a large percentage of this new wave of immigration. Although they represented only five percent of the total U.S. population in 1850, by the first decade of the 1900s, the number of Catholics rose to 14 million, or 17 percent of the total population. By then, Catholics constituted the largest religious denomination in the country.[74] Many politicians, educators, and writers resented and reacted against the abrupt change in the culture, previously dominated by Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Such sentiments motivated the formation of groups like the American Protective Association, created by Protestant groups in 1887 to champion the complete separation of Church and State. The Association advocated a non-sectarian public-school system and prohibition of any government funding of religious

[72] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 20.
[73] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 6.
[74] Julie Byrne, "Roman Catholics and Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America," last Modified November 2000, https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nromcath.htm.

groups. Anti-Semetic and anti-Catholic attitudes continued through the turn of the century and prompted the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1910s and 1920s. According to Thomas Pegram's history of the Klan in the early 20th century, the KKK during this period focused it's rhetoric on anti-imigration, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism. Though most Americans did not take their intolerance to the level of the Klan, such nativist sentiment pervaded American society, especially established Anglo-Saxon Protestants, who nudged education policy in a more secular direction from 1890-1950.

Three of the most important figures in this second period of educational leadership were Ellwood Cubberly, Alexander Inglis, and James Conant. In 1896, during the interview process for the superintendency position in San Diego, the chairman of the school board questioned Cubberley not so much on his experience in education, even though he lacked it. Rather, the chairman's inquiries dealt more with Cubberley's religious convictions. Cubberley declared himself "in the strongest sense a harmonizer of Religion and Science." It was the right answer. Not only did Cubberley get the job, but his response fell in line with conventional wisdom of education leaders. Most leaders in education sought to reconcile scientific ideas of pedagogy with the nonsectarian yet evangelical approach of Horace Mann.[75] The historian Jean Quandt described this "process of secularization" as a transmutation of the providential view of redemption into a socio-evolutionary approach which maintained that experts could improve the world to manifest a new social order. Education represented an important means of achieving this end.[76]

Though perhaps well-intentioned, these ideas in practice often amounted to Anglo-Saxon Protestants harnessing the power of the state to impose their values upon the "new" immigrants

[75] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 114-115.
[76] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 116.

of the late 19th century. Cubberley described these newcomers as "illiterate, docile, often lacking in initiative, and almost wholly without the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency and government." Compelled assimilation seemed the only solution to many leaders in education like Cubberley.[77] After his superintendency, Cubberley accepted an assistant-professorship at Stanford's school of education. The invitation came from David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford and Cubberley's mentor.[78] Cubberley impressed Jordan with his "view of education as 'social engineering.'"[79] Drawing on his experience in San Diego, Cubberley concluded "that urban school boards should be 'nonpolitical,' small committees elected at large rather than by wards."[80] In effect, this policy prevented minority ethnic communities from electing someone who represented their interests. If taken at his word, Cubberley did not care too much about such groups' interests anyway. He once wrote that the immigration of southern Europeans "served to dilute tremendously our national stock, and to corrupt our civic life."[81] It seemed that diminishing the relationship between the parent and child provided the best way to assimilate the offspring of these immigrants. In *Changing Conceptions of Education* (1909) Cubberley rejoiced that "each year the child is coming to belong more and more to the state and less and less to the parent."[82]

Cubberley became one of the key figures who professionalized school administration.[83] Though he failed to persuade his fellow faculty members that education constituted a respectable discipline, he successfully campaigned "to raise the educational requirements for certification."[84] But perhaps Cubberley's greatest impact came with his work outside Stanford as an editor of

[77] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 117.
[78] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 124.
[79] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 125.
[80] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 123.
[81] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 127.
[82] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 128.
[83] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 121.
[84] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 125.

Houghton Mifflin's textbooks on education. Writing 10 of them himself, he edited 103 of the 110 books in the series and used this opportunity to legitimize recent reforms in schooling. In 1905, Cubberley left Stanford briefly to obtain an M.A. and Ph.D. at Teachers College, Columbia. Although "not a good scholar," as the psychologist and eugenicist Edward Thorndike characterized him, Cubberley became one among the most influential alumni of Teachers College in the nation. By his own estimation, Cubberley delivered 1,000 speeches before he retired. Through the rest of the century, Teachers College remained the primary legitimating institution for professionalized education. "It was, in fact, an historical movement that was then being initiated in American education, at Teachers College especially," wrote Cubberley's biographer and colleague, Jesse Sears.[85]

Cubberley's vision for professionalizing education was bureaucratic and corporatist. He perceived superintendents as "the central office in the school system, up to which and down from which authority, direction, and inspiration flow[ed]." Moreover, he admired the new corporations for their "demonstration of efficiency in organization, direction, coordination, and control." At a time when Fredrick Winslow Taylor's ideas of organizational management and efficiency were all the rage, Cubberley presented the superintendent as the business executive of the schools.[86] The historian and philosopher Samuel Haber found that the application of scientific management to the schools "increased the authority of the administrator and limited the freedom of the teacher. In the midst of the efficiency craze, the new profession of public school administrator took form."[87] In addition to centralization, Taylor's principles of homogenization and sorting also influenced Cubberley's advocacy of the differentiated curriculum.

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[85] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 126-7.
[86] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 128.
[87] Samuel Haber. *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1890-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), found in Tyack and Hansot, 109.

Like many other graduates of Teachers College, Cubberley became an ardent proponent of differentiated education. Borrowing many of Dewey's ideas, education leaders like Cubberley supported a school curriculum "closely related with the needs and problems of our social, civic, and industrial life."[88] At the same time, Cubberley's nativism colored his motivation for promoting aspects of progressive education. Keeping with his prejudices, he believed the educational "needs" of immigrants from southeastern Europe to be more vocational and less academic than those of Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Cubberly judged unassimilated immigrants as a menace to American society. He believed the federal government should force all schools to teach English and detested Supreme Court decisions like *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923) that overruled such requirements. The *Meyer* decision struck down a Nebraska law prohibiting schools from teaching any model language other than English to students before 9th grade.[89] Furthermore, increasingly popular ideas of eugenics and social Darwinism appealed to Cubberly, who attributed failure and success primarily to genetics.[90] Indeed, such deterministic interpretations became almost an orthodoxy during the Progressive Era. He served as a consultant for many federal and state education commissions and even drafted model state education laws, which showcased Cubberly's eugenic beliefs. One state code Cubberly wrote segregated black students under the assumption that they differed mentally from whites. Other educators were not immune to such ideas. "Apparently," Tyack and Hansot observed, "teachers and administrators (mostly native-born and Protestant) found nothing objectionable in his nativism."[91]

[88] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 128.
[89] *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390 (1923).
[90] It may not be too bold to suggest that Cubberly was "following the science."
[91] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 126-8.

In addition to delivering speeches and consulting education commissions, Cubberley also edited *Principles of Secondary Education* (1918), by Alexander James Inglis. This title, strikingly similar to *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), echoed Taylor's emphasis on homogenization, centralization, and sorting.[92] With regard to homogenization, Inglis underscored the "development of like-mindedness, of unity in thought, habits, ideals and standards, requisite for social cohesion."[93] The maintenance of this unity, ironically coupled with sorting, for Inglis, depended on the centralization of authority. He praised the centralized state control and administration of education in France and Prussia, and lauded their separate systems of vocational education.[94] Inglis emphasized "selection by differentiation" as one of the primary functions of secondary education.[95] He also championed the "adjustive function," or "the establishment of certain fixed habits of reaction, certain fixed standards and ideals, and also the development of a capacity to adjust adequately to the changing demands of life."[96] Though ignored by many historians, Inglis played an influential role in the intellectual history of progressive administration in education.[97]

Many of Inglis's ideas in *Principles of Secondary Education* influenced adherents of differentiated education from Cubberley to Conant. Ideas from this work also found their way into the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (1918). The *Cardinal Principles* provided the manifesto for progressive educational reformers who sought a differentiated curriculum.[98] Presented by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE) and

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[92] Heidi Tilney Kramer, "Visionary of Control: The Efficiency, Expertise, and Exclusion of Alexander James Inglis," MA Thesis, (University of South Florida, 2010), 38.
[93] Alexander James Inglis, *Principles of Secondary Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), 377.
[94] Inglis, *Principles of Secondary Education*, 231-232, 239.
[95] Inglis, *Principles of Secondary Education*, 382.
[96] Inglis, *Principles of Secondary Education*, 376-7.
[97] William G. Wraga, "Progressive Pioneer: Alexander James Inglis (1879-1924) and American Education," *Teachers College Record*, June 2006.
[98] David L. Angus and Jeffrey E. Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School* (New York: Teachers College Press), 14.

co-sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Education and the NEA, the report represented a distinct departure from the NEA's report issued in 1892 by their Committee of Ten. At its time of publication, the Committee of Ten report constituted "the most important educational document ever issued in the United States."[99] It firmly opposed differentiation and maintained that all high school students should take "academic" courses "no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease."[100] By contrast, the *Cardinal Principles* strongly supported differentiated education and endorsed Inglis's ideas of selection and adjustment based on ability. The membership of the CRSE also represented a discontinuity from that of the Committee of Ten. While university presidents and private school headmasters largely dominated the Committee of Ten, the CRSE organized a growing coalition of educational administrators, high-school representatives and professors of education. The only college president in attendance happened to be a former professor of education.[101] Inglis, however, was one of six professors of education on the commission. With their endorsement in the *Cardinal Principles*, Inglis's ideas of differentiation and adjustment endured through the 1940s and 1950s, though not without challenge.[102]

Inglis' ideas about class determining academic achievement lost some credibility after WWII. Perhaps the most striking example related to the unexpected demand among veterans for college-level academics. Educators expected veterans to use their G.I. bill for vocational training, not academic institutions of higher education. To their surprise, and even horror, over a million veterans enrolled in higher education in the fall of 1946. Conant, as well as other university presidents like Robert Hutchins, feared the influx of veterans into colleges and universities

[99] Angus and Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School*, 14.
[100] Angus and Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School*, 15-16.
[101] Angus and Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School*, 15.
[102] Edward Krug, *Salient Dates in American Education 1635-1964* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1966), 133.

threatened academic standards. While not completely opposed to the idea of veterans using the G.I. bill for higher education, Conant believed only "a carefully selected number of returned veterans" should do so. Conant later changed his opinion when veterans earned their reputation, in his words, as "the most mature and promising students Harvard has ever had." The G.I. bill not only broke the "class ceiling" that prevented many poor young men and women--nearly 3 percent of WWII veterans were women--from going to college. The experience also persuaded educators and the public that lower-class men had the academic ability to perform, even outperform, at institutions of higher education.[103]

Before veterans could prove their academic capabilities at colleges and universities, however, the notion that disadvantaged students were unsuited for higher education permeated education policy throughout the '30s and '40s. The Depression put many teenagers out of work, pushing many youths, who were otherwise unlikely to attend, into the high schools. Between 1930 and 1934, high school enrollments increased nearly 30 percent. The largest increases came from older students who otherwise would have been working.[104] In response to this development, high schools changed their focus from academic and vocational preparation to a curriculum based on adjustment and "needs." In part, this shift reflected high school educators' efforts to provide practical coursework for this new type of student. The high school also became acknowledged as a way to combat unemployment by keeping youths out of the labor market. In the 1930s, enrollment rose from over half to almost two-thirds of all 14-17 year-olds. Education leaders across the country voiced concerns of declining student ability. In 1934, a report by the NEA characterized "the new enrollment" of high schoolers as "unable or unwilling to deal

[103] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, 13-14
[104] Angus and Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School*, 60.

successfully with continued study under the type of program which the secondary school is accustomed to provide."[105] Such anxieties lasted through the 1950s.

In 1940, Conant published an article in *Atlantic* magazine calling for a "reconstruction" of secondary schools to accommodate the new "horde of heterogeneous students."[106] As a solution, Conant offered "[e]xtreme differentiation of school programs" and convincing parents of their childrens' "limitations imposed by nature."[107] Although Cubberley's ethnocentrism was less fashionable by the time Conant published his first work on education in 1948--the war against an ethno-genocidal Germany had much to do with that--Conant's work still stressed unity, centralization, and sorting.[108] A recent history by David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel considered Conant highly influential in directing national educational leadership toward a "vision of a highly differentiated, custodial high school that had little belief in the capacities of its students to master challenging subject matter."

As did Inglis and Cubberley, Conant proposed a differentiated education system based on abilities. In *The American High School Today* (1959), he encouraged the Advanced Placement Program for the top 15 to 20 percent of students.[109] He also advocated the consolidation of small high schools into larger ones to cut costs and provide a more "comprehensive" curriculum. "Elimination of the small high school on a nationwide basis," Conant estimated, would "help reduce the teacher shortage in important subject-matter areas."[110] Furthermore, he discouraged what he called the "dual system" of private and public schools.

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[105] *NEA Journal*, "Commission on the Orientation of Secondary Education," 1934, p. 64, found in Angus and Mirel, 72.
[106] James B. Conant, "Education for a Classless Society: The Jeffersonian Tradition," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1940): 602.
[107] Conant, "Education for a Classless Society," 601-2.
[108] Kramer, "Visionary of Control," 38.
[109] James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 63, 20.
[110] Conant, *The American High School Today*, 79-80.

This provided context for Catholic charges of "fascism" against Conant. Many Catholics perceived Conant's criticism of parochial schools as an endorsement of centralizing the control of education into the state. Cushing was not alone in his concerns of Conant's brand of progressive administration.

The most popular Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant magazines of the period took distinct positions with regard to administrative progressives like Conant. Though most did not call Conant a fascist, many writers for religious magazines shared the conviction that religious moral values had a place in American education. Such differences and similarities in the reception of Conant's ideas manifested along religious lines. As argued in the following chapters, many Jews and Protestants trusted Conant's administrative progressivism, while most Catholics remained highly skeptical. The extent to which each of these groups accepted or rejected Conant's plans corresponded with the degree to which they exhibited fears of secularism. Such anxieties generally animated Jews the least, Protestants somewhat more, and Catholics the most. Yet fears of secularism in education leading to a morally misguided and conformist populace extended beyond the religious-faithful. Many critics of progressive administration, secular or otherwise, used the language of "anti-intellectualism" as a byword for conforming to either a secularist or progressive mindset, or both. Such charges of "anti-intellectualism" directed at progressive administrators also extended to progressive pedagogues.

Progressive pedagogy, promulgated at the end of the 19th century, was a response to traditional education of rote memorization, drill, the Western literary canon, and the "three Rs": reading, writing, and arithmetic. John Dewey, the most important theorist of progressive pedagogy, emphasized child-centered education. Dewey and other progressive pedagogues advocated allowing students to learn at their own pace, building on prior knowledge,

specialization based on skills and talents after establishing a rudimentary base of knowledge, and practical learning through the senses and experience. The pedagogical maxim, "We learn by doing," is often attributed to Dewey. "Action is the test of comprehension," wrote Dewey in *Schools of To-morrow* (1915). "This is," stated Dewey, "simply another way of saying that learning by doing is a better way to learn than by listening."[111] For Dewey, students learned best by acting in the world and appraising the consequences of their actions.

One notable opponent of progressive pedagogy, and of John Dewey himself, was Robert Hutchins. The former president of Chicago University, Hutchins gained national attention in the late 1930s for eliminating the varsity football team, which he deemed a distraction from higher learning and detrimental to educational standards. Dewey's secular pragmatism, Hutchins maintained, was "not a philosophy at all" because, according to Hutchins, it failed to distinguish between good and evil. Hutchins also advocated a return to liberal education. He also emphasized the Western literary canon, what he called the "Great Books." Hutchins edited a book titled *Great Books of the Western World*.[112] This synopticon surveyed what Hutchins and other liberal educationists regarded as the most important works of Western civilization. The list ranged from the ancient Greeks like Homer and Plato, through medievals such as Aquinas, to Renaissance figures like Machiavelli and Shakespeare, and on to 19th and early 20th thinkers like Karl Marx, William James, and Sigmund Freud. It is interesting that the *Great Books* collection included William James, who shared Dewey's pragmatic philosophy that worried Hutchins so much. Furthermore, the synopticon did not include James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, which attempted reconciliation between pragmatism and religion. James concluded that philosophy was incapable of demonstrating the truth of religion by rational processes.

[111] John Dewey, *Schools of To-morrow* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1915), 120.
[112] Robert Hutchins, *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952).

However, if transformed into a "Science of Religions," philosophy could serve as a useful tool to appraise religious beliefs by comparing various religions across cultures and analyzing where these religions contradicted the natural sciences.[113] Whether or not the omission of *Varieties* constituted a contradiction, Hutchins's *Great Books* gained currency among other critics of progressive pedagogy. He pointed out that Conant "proposed to make the kind of books selected central in a reform of scientific education."[114] Indeed, many critics of progressive pedagogy often upheld the canon as a prerequisite to a quality education.

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Critics of progressive pedagogy, however, were not always unified. Conant and Hutchins both criticized progressive pedagogy and championed aspects of liberal education, but they and other critics of progressive education placed varying emphases on the role of religious moral values in education and differed in terms of progressive administration. This explains why their popular reception split along religious lines. Furthermore, the general reaction against progressive education brought enormous public attention to education and shaped the public intellectual debate over pedagogy and administration. A survey of the critics of progressive education, followed by their reception in religious periodical literature, reveals that Catholics detested progressive administrators, like Conant, as much as if not more than progressive pedagogues.

[113] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, orig. pub., 1902), 347.
[114] Robert Hutchins, *The Great Conversation* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1956), xxi.

Chapter 3: Critics of Progressive Education

In many ways, Winston Churchill predicted the importance of the contest of ideas in education:

> The price of greatness is responsibility. ...
> The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.
> It would, of course, Mr. President, be lamentable if those who are charged with the duty of leading great nations forward in this grievous and obstinate war were to allow their minds and energies to be diverted from making the plans to achieve our righteous purposes without needless prolongation of slaughter and destruction.[115]

Winston Churchill offered these words in a speech delivered at Harvard in 1943. When he said "Mr. President," he was referring not to Franklin D. Roosevelt, but to the president of Harvard University, James Conant. In many ways, Churchill's speech anticipated the post-war period being one of "affluence and anxiety," as Carl Degler characterized it.[116] While the United States experienced unprecedented prosperity and global dominance during this decade, Americans nevertheless feared threats to their democracy at home and abroad. The Cold War brought with it a new foreign adversary and trepidations about nuclear annihilation, and the Red Scare alarmed Americans about potential domestic enemies. The threat of communism, however, was not all Americans worried about. The end of WWII brought with it a new enemy abroad, but also new challenges at home, and nearly every major domestic crisis facing the nation related to education. The NAACP focused on school segregation to challenge the constitutionality of "separate but equal" and finally won the landmark *Brown v. Board* decision in 1954; McCarthyism spread fears of communist infiltration and limited freedom of expression at schools and universities; the baby boom created a shortage of teachers, materials, and classrooms; many Americans perceived, inaccurately, a rising threat of juvenile delinquency.[117]

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[115] Churchill, Alliance With U.S. After War, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, September 15, 1943, 714-715.
[116] Degler, Carl N. *Affluence and Anxiety, 1945-present* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1968).
[117] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,* 347 U.S. 483 (1954); James B. Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Two topics that received some of the most public attention encapsulated many of these issues: the separation of church and state, and the competition between progressive and liberal education.

Churchill's remark to Conant bore the ring of prophecy over the next two decades. Churchill not only foretold the power of ideas in the coming decades but also implied that education would be a key battleground in the struggle between "empires of the mind." Furthermore, Churchill suggested that leaders in education, like Conant, had a special role to play in the coming intellectual conflict. Moreover, Churchill's speech anticipated the importance of education for national defense. Indeed, history smiled upon these predictions. The education debates following World War II proved inextricable from the Cold War, leaders in education played a pivotal role in shaping those debates, and the importance of these debates corresponded to the significance of ideas. Conant apparently took Churchill's words to heart, as he became one of the most important figures in the education debates. He went on to publish the best-selling work on education of the 1950s, *The American High School Today* (1959), and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963. Though victorious in many ways, Conant did not escape from the battlefield of ideas unscathed. While he took a fairly moderate stance regarding progressive versus liberal education, his strident position with respect to church and state prompted criticism and even accusations of fascism.

Before surveying the controversies Conant inaugurated and moderated, it is noteworthy that even economic influence played less of a role in the education debates than ideas themselves. The Ford Foundation's Fund for the Republic, headed by Robert Hutchins, contributed far more toward education philanthropies than the Carnegie Endowment for

International Peace, which sponsored Conant's *The American High School Today*.[118] However, Conant's ideas proved more influential than Hutchins's. The policies forwarded by the 1958 National Defense Education ACT (NDEA) resembled Conant's proposals more than Hutchins's. Furthermore, the Great Books championed by Hutchins and supported by the Ford Foundation found little traction in America's public schools. Thus, the direction that American educational policy took during the post-war period cannot be wholly attributed to the influence of large philanthropic organizations of the billionaire-class. As Churchill advised Conant, this contest would be fought and won on the battleground of the mind.

In 1961, the Carnegie Corporation, yet another large philanthropic organization, offered Conant a grant to study the education of primary and secondary school teachers. Having published a bestselling book *The American High School Today* two years earlier, the former president of Harvard was a clear choice for the job. Upon publishing his findings in *The Education of American Teachers* (1963), Conant admitted taking up the project "with some reluctance" given the "highly controversial" nature of the topic.[119] He described the conflict as one between professors of education and their colleagues from other university departments, whom Conant labeled "academic" professors. Many academic professors believed progressive pedagogy captured an ideological monopoly on the education of teachers. Conant recalled that, as a young chemistry professor at Harvard in the '20s and early '30s, he "automatically voted with those who looked with contempt on the school of education." When he became president of Harvard in 1933, however, Conant had a change of heart and encouraged the two hostile groups to "exchange views and, if possible, learn to cooperate in their endeavors."[120] Conant recalled

[118] Rene A. Wormser, *Foundations: Their Power and Influence* (Sevierville, TN: Covenant House Books, 1993, orig. pub., 1958), 30.
[119] James B. Conant, *The Education of American Teachers* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), v.
[120] Conant, *The Education of American Teachers*, 2.

that his requests for reconciliation fell on deaf ears. “In fact,” he observed, “the quarrel intensified in the 1950s because laymen entered the fray in increasing numbers and with increasing vehemence.”[121] Though unsuccessful in realizing détente between academic and education professors during his twenty-year tenure as president of Harvard, Conant emerged out of the 1950s as a popular mediating figure in the field of education, one who shared ideas with both groups. On one hand, Conant agreed with many academic professors and laymen who criticized American public education for failing to challenge academically talented students with rigorous instruction in Math, Science, English composition, and foreign languages. On the other hand, Conant’s calls to eliminate private schools, and thus religious ones along with them, prompted fears of secularism, conformity, and totalitarianism.

Many American citizens, professors, and educators lamented the loss of skills in ancient and contemporary languages and argued progressive education taught toward average students to the detriment of the “gifted.” They also questioned Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy that underpinned progressive pedagogy. The American pragmatists, Dewey and James foremost among them, believed that knowledge, rather than a description of truth, was a tool to advance understanding of truth. Those who subscribed to this philosophy could justify their knowledge, not due to a finite or final knowledge of anything, but because their tools sufficiently explained or predicted the world around them. Many religiously-minded critics of progressive education balked at Dewey’s dismissal of an ultimate knowledge or the understanding of the difference between “right” and “wrong.” Indeed, this was Hutchins’s primary objection to Dewey’s philosophy. Applying pragmatic philosophy to education, Dewey proposed that students learned best by experiencing and observing the effects of a given lesson in a hands-on manner. Educational “progress,” according to Dewey, lay “not in the succession of studies, but in the

[121] Conant, *The Education of American Teachers*, 5.

development of new abilities towards, and new interests in experience."[122] Dewey's child-centered and object-based pedagogy not only challenged traditional teacher-centered and text-based methods, but also posed a threat to traditional moral values.

One of the first works challenging experience- and child-centered progressive education in the 1950s flowed from the pen of Albert Lynd, a Harvard-educated businessman, concerned parent, and member of his local school board. Lynd represented one of the many "laymen," as Conant described them, who increasingly weighed in on the education debates with "increasing vehemence" during the '50s. Lynd's polemic style in *Quackery in the Public Schools* cast progressive education as a threat to traditional values. Though Albert Lynd opposed "substantial teaching of religion in the public schools," he disagreed with progressive education's pragmatic foundations which, he claimed, assumed "the falsity of all gods."[123] Lynd characterized Dewey's "educational pragmatism" as "subversive of traditional religion" and judged progressive pedagogy to be incompatible with the deeply-held beliefs of most Americans.[124] Lynd asked a rhetorical question to this effect which pointed to the resurgence of religiosity in the 1950s as an important cultural phenomenon:

> ...how many communities, if so consulted, would be likely to approve a philosophy which is plainly uncongenial to certain loyalties which most plain non-philosophizing people, hold for better or worse, to be important: belief in supernaturalism, in a transcendent natural law, in the immutability of certain moral principles?[125]

In addition to progressive pedagogy, Lynd also took issue with progressive administration. Like Cushing, Lynd strongly disagreed with Conant's preference for public over private schools. However, Lynd also pointed out that Conant's administrative progressivism not only harmed Catholics, but parents more generally who did not have good public schools in their

[122] John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed,* (New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co., 1897), 12-13.
[123] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953, orig. pub., 1950), 211.
[124] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 187.
[125] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 188.

districts. Lynd responded to Conant's Boston speech in the opening pages to the 1953 edition of his book:

> I should greatly prefer that the public schools provide for more children the quality of education provided by the very private schools to which Mr. Conant sent his own children, before he was moved to lecture the rest of us on our duty to send children to the public schools. ...Many parents who now scrimp reluctantly to pay private school bills would much prefer a good public school, if one were available.[126]

With his rebuke of Conant's administrative progressivism out of the way, Lynd focused the rest of his book on his frustrations with progressive pedagogy. Lynd had no argument with Dewey's goals of giving every American a proper education, but he detested the system that progressive education left in place. Similarly to Kirk, Lynd traced the history of progressive pedagogy back to Rousseau. He also attacked one of Dewey's most prominent disciples: William Kilpatrick. By the 1950s, the public generally recognized Kilpatrick as the philosopher who translated Dewey's ideas into practice.[127]

Lynd, however, described the philosophy of Kilpatrick as an "elementary Deweyism heavily adjectivized."[128] Furthermore, Lynd perceived a conformity to Kilpatrick's "adjectivized" language in the rhetoric used by education professors. Throughout his book, Lynd called attention to the vague language often employed by education departments. Like Kirk, Lynd observed a connection between the "curriculum of real needs" and falling standards. As an example, Lynd referenced teachers of foreign languages fitting their subjects into the "'real needs' scheme" in order "to take the drudgery out of them." Lynd saw such "drudgery" and rigor as a positive quality of traditional education; it challenged the mind and thus strengthened the intellect.[129] Lynd also perceived in education departments a systematic conformity to the rhetoric of "real needs":

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[126] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 5.
[127] *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, "Progressive Defense: Educators Debate," (Bluefield, WV), Aug. 4, 1959, 22.
[128] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 19.
[129] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 85.

> Research seeks to find reasons why certain literary experiences may be more related to the "needs" of students than are others. What has really happened to courses in English literature is that the heavy thinkers on Educational philosophy have called the tune while the researchers in the language field have multiplied studies in conformity with it.[130]

Lynd further charged professors of education with providing inadequate academic training for teachers and self-induced cultural isolationism from other university departments.[131] "Quackery," for Lynd, was "almost inevitable in a profession whose practitioners create their own subject matter and are the only judges of their own competence."[132] Throughout his book Lynd referred to this self-isolation of education departments from other academic scholarship as Educationism–with a capital "E."[133] In Lynd's view, the individuals who "worked most effectively to isolate Educationism from genuine scholarship, and who have built it to its present vast self-sufficiency, are largely those whose progressivist theories of education have freed them (in their opinion) from any dependence upon traditional learning."[134] Lynd asserted that this conformity to progressive pedagogy in education departments condoned "illiteracy" with regard to other academic fields and lowered standards within education. Additionally, Lynd judged progressive pedagogy and administration inconsistent with most Americans' religious values. Thus, for Lynd, progressive education remained culturally isolated from the traditional values of Americans

Lynd shared his frustrations about the cultural isolation of education departments with Arthur Bestor, whom Lynd quoted favorably in his book. A professor of history and a legal scholar, Bestor later became one of the first historians of the Constitution to call for Nixon's resignation. Bestor lamented what he perceived as a loosening of structure and standards in

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[130] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 85-6.
[131] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 168.
[132] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 90.
[133] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 10.
[134] Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*, 168-169.

education.[135] "Because clear thinking is systematic thinking," he wrote in *Educational Wastelands* (1953), pupils "must be brought to see the structure of the science they are learning."[136] Bestor, like Lynd, attributed the failures of public schooling to a lack of rigor in teacher training due to a turn away from liberal pedagogy. "Of 97,800 college freshmen who took the draft-deferment tests recently," Bestor noted, "among students majoring in education only 27 per cent passed, the poorest showing of any category of students."[137] Citing Willard B. Spanding, dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois, where Bestor also taught, Bestor provided evidence that even prominent faculty members in education departments "publicly conceded that 'there is little value in most present courses and texts in education.'"[138] Indeed, Bestor believed that the problem underlying public education was teacher training and certification. Furthermore, he maintained that freedom in a democracy relied upon an educated population, which necessitated properly educated teachers. Bestor referred to a quote from Thomas Jefferson, who said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, ...it expects what never was and will never be."[139] In this spirit, Bestor expanded on this idea, and others from *Educational Wastelands*, in *The Restoration of Learning* (1955). Again, he referenced the founding fathers:

> The one safeguard that Jefferson and Madison insisted upon was that the basic principles of our own system, the great documents of our own tradition, and the full history of our own development should be thoroughly understood, so that no man might surrender his heritage through ignorance of what it is and how it came into being.

To protect this safeguard, Bestor urged that every teacher undergo rigorous testing in order to ensure his or her competence in the history and documents of the American tradition. Such

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[135] Wolfgang Saxon, "Arthur Bestor, a Leading Scholar On the Constitution, Dies at 86," *The New York Times,* Dec. 17, 1994, 24.
[136] Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wastelands* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953), 21.
[137] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands*, 120.
[138] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands*, 120.
[139] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands*, 2.

measures, Bestor estimated, "would provide a far more effective guarantee of the schools' contribution to good citizenship than any loyalty oath that can possibly be devised."[140]

Having identified his diagnosis, Bestor went on to write a prescription to treat the blight of educational wastelands. In order to break up what he saw as a legislative monopoly on teacher certification, Bestor proposed that several paths to teacher certification should be made available. He also thought different certificates should be awarded to teachers for separate subjects.[141] More than any other measure, however, Bestor held that a new curriculum for teacher education based on the liberal arts would "do more to restore the repute of the public schools than any other step that can be taken."[142] Moreover, he called for comprehensive and rigorous examinations of students to establish and maintain higher educational standards and determine student aptitude.[143]

Bestor and Lynd attacked progressive education and its adherents on philosophical grounds but still credited Dewey as a philosopher. An even more disgruntled critic was Robert Hutchins. Though he, too, was concerned about standards–as his reasoning for disbanding the Chicago University football team indicated–Hutchins hardly considered Dewey a philosopher. "Pragmatism, the philosophy of Dewey and his followers," Hutchins opined, "is not a philosophy at all, because it supplies no intelligible standard of good or bad."[144] Like Bestor and Lynd, however, Hutchins believed that all citizens could and should receive a basic, liberal education, in order to "understand the great philosophers, historians, scientists, and artists."[145] Also similarly to Bestor and Lynd, Hutchins took issue with the specialized language of progressive educators, especially the rhetoric of "adjustment," and connected this term to falling standards in education. Furthermore, Hutchins shared with Bestor, Lynd, and other critics of progressive

[140] Bestor, *The Restoration of Learning*, 434.
[141] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands,* 133-5.
[142] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands,* 147.
[143] Bestor, *Educational Wastelands,* 157.
[144] Hutchins, *The Conflict in Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 53.
[145] Hutchins, *The Conflict in Education*, 88.

education the belief that such notions of adaptation and adjustment "explicitly exclude[d] any consideration of standards," and therefore constituted "a system without values."[146] Like many religious leaders, secular critics of progressive education like Hutchins, Bestor, and Lynd, believed liberal education better suited the aim of ensuring traditional moral values for generations to come.

Conant shared concerns about falling standards in education with Hutchins, Lynd, and Bestor, but he did not pay much attention to religion or traditional values. Indeed, Conant never mentioned religion in *The American High School Today*. When he did make a reference to religion in *The Education of American Teachers*, he used it, by analogy, to criticize progressive pedagogues. Ironically, for Conant, attempts by progressive pedagogues "to provide legal support for their position actually serves to undercut the public confidence in them." Conant observed on "campus after campus" professors and students "widely believed...that the only justification for pedagogical courses is that the state requires them." Conant went on to analogize the consequences of such requirements "to those Thomas Jefferson feared would result from the state's legal support of religion."[147] While many Americans shared Conant's criticism of progressive pedagogy, his position on the church-state issue attracted condemnation from critics of progressive administration.

Conant preferred a strict adherence to the separation of church and state, and, as previously mentioned, also expressed concerns about the mere existence of private religious schools. Furthermore, Conant also perceived the prevalence of many small public high schools in America to be "one of the serious obstacles to a good secondary education throughout most of the United States." One of his primary suggestions for reform in *The American High School*

[146] Hutchins, *The Conflict in Education*, 25.
[147] Conant, *The American High School Today*, 37-9.

Today was to reduce the number of small high schools "with graduating classes of less than one hundred students" by consolidating them into larger high schools that might offer a more differentiated curriculum.[148] In a curious way, Conant's answer to the problem of progressive education was progressive administration.

In addition to administrative and philosophical criticisms of American education, a more technical criticism penned by an Austrian immigrant, Rudolf Flesch, attracted widespread attention. In *Why Johnny Can't Read* (1955), Flesch argued that Dewey's maxim that one learns by doing did not apply to learning how to read. For Flesch, a child did not learn to read simply through the act of reading. Flesch argued that the reports of professor Ralph C. Preston, who found that American second graders lagged considerably behind their German counterparts with regard to reading ability, demonstrated the failure of progressive pedagogy.[149] As did the previously discussed authors, Flesch blamed the movement away from tradition in education departments.[150] "We have decided to forget that we write with letters and learn to read English as if it were Chinese. One word after another... We have thrown 3,500 years of civilization out the window." Flesch offered a return to phonics as the remedy. According to Flesch, learning the phonetic sounds of the alphabet proved superior in "every single research study" to the successive memorization of words.[151] The legacy of Flesch's book survived the century. In 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics mentioned the publication of *Why Johnny Can't Read*, along with Sputnik I, as one of two developments that galvanized public concern about education.[152]

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[148] Conant, *The American High School Today*, 57.
[149] Rudolf Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 2.
[150] Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, 14.
[151] Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, 60.
[152] J. R. Campbell et al., *NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2000), 1.

Periodical literature from the 1950s served as an exciting arena in which other laymen and academics weighed in on the debates provoked by critics like Lynd, Bestor, Hutchins, Conant, and Flesch. Before analyzing to what extent magazines of each major American faith-group agreed with critics progressive education and adhered to the emerging conservative and neo-orthodox movements, however, it is necessary to get a sense of what popular non-secular magazines had to say about these topics.

The titles of some of these articles, such as "That Dangerous Mr. Hutchins" by Walter Goodman, were just as attention-grabbing as the books to which they responded. Goodman wrote to inform his readers of his conviction that Hutchins was no friend of veterans' interests and the American Legion. Moreover, Goodman argued Hutchins downplayed the threat of communism in American universities.[153] In the conservative, even reactionary, climate of the Red Scare, the Legion deemed Hutchins not conservative enough.

Others, however, found Hutchins too conservative. In 1954, the president of Saint Lawrence College, Harold Taylor, published a book review of *The Conflict in Education* for the *New Republic* magazine deceptively titled "A Conservative Educator." Whether or not the editors or Taylor provided the title to this piece, Hutchins proved too complex and unique to deserve a "conservative" label. The title of Taylor's article accurately reflected Hutchins's traditionalist ideal of "Great Books" pedagogy.[154] On the other hand, though raised a Presbetyrian, however, Hutchins grew more secular with age and certainly was not a conservative in that regard. In this way he departed from the religious revival of the 1950s. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Hutchins was a regular contributor to *The Progressive*

[153] Walter Goodman, "That Dangerous Mr. Hutchins," *New Republic*, October 1955, 9.
[154] Today, the best example of the "Great Books" program at the collegiate level can be found at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

magazine and was open to entertaining a variety of new ideas. Whatever the merits and flaws of his title, Taylor's book review delivered a reasonable rebuttal.

Taylor held that Hutchins' book veered "from abstraction to abstraction, dismissing philosophies and values systems with a sentence, settling serious philosophical questions, with one or two words, assuming without further comment that 'the chaos now obtaining in the philosophy of education results from the chaos in philosophy in general.'" After referencing a passage from *The Conflict In Education* in which Hutchins repeated his conviction that Dewey's pragmatism did not constitute a philosophy, Taylor asked: "Dewey's philosophy not a philosophy? Then what have the anti-Dewey critics and Mr. Hutchins been arguing against for all these years?"[155] This point was perhaps well taken, as Hutchins's book did not explain why a philosophy necessitates a distinction between "good" and "evil."

Taylor went on to describe Hutchins's educational doctrine as an "elite-philosophy." To provide an example, he quoted Hutchins again: "The prime object of education is to know what is good for man. It is to know the goods in their order. There is a hierarchy of values, The task of education is to help us understand it, establish it, and live by it." Taylor objected to Hutchins' faith and certainty in a hierarchy of values. The crucial point that Hutchins avoided, in Taylor's view, was the failure to identify the source and arbiter of his hierarchy. Taylor insisted that the main goal of education was "to help individuals establish their own hierarchy of values" and discover for themselves how to prioritize their lives accordingly. Moreover, Taylor also pointed out the existence of more than one hierarchy of values:

> The American Legion has a hierarchy of values, the Catholic Church another, the Communist Party a third, Senator McCarthy a fourth, and there are any number of other systems of values held by groups and individuals who would like to have the educational

[155] Harold Taylor, "A Conservative Educator," *New Republic*, March 1954, 16.

> system 'understand, establish and live by them.' Most of us would prefer not to feel obliged to accept any such hierarch, and would rather work one out ourselves.[156]

Though Taylor perceptively noted Hutchins's vagueness with respect to moral values, this last sentence could reasonably be interpreted as the height of arrogance, according to the doctrine of original sin. As Niebuhr taught, the original sin committed by Adam and Eve was intellectual pride. Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God and reneged on his hierarchy of values. Whether or not Taylor's comment truly summited the peak of pretentiousness, apologists for progressive pedagogy frequently dismissed its critics with pompous disregard.

An example of such insolence manifested in "Our Public Schools," a 1954 article in *The Nation* by James C. Bay, a former professor of education at Columbia and one of the nation's leading school administrators. Bay discussed attacks against Deweyan pedagogy advanced by Lynd, Bestor, and Hutchins. Between these critics, however, Bay did not find much distinction. For him, Lynd and Bestor only echoed Hutchins's complaints. Furthermore, he supposed that Hutchins had not even read Dewey's work.[157] In short, like many other progressive pedagogues and school administrators, Bay did not take critics of progressive education very seriously.

After the launch of Sputnik, however, advocates of progressive education could no longer ignore their critics. This was the central point in the introduction to a famous 1958 article in *Life* magazine titled "Schoolboys Point Up A U.S. Weakness." This article served as the opening piece of a multi-issue series in *Life* called the "Crisis in Education." The editors at *Life* put the crisis this way, "For years most critics of U.S. education have suffered the curse of Cassandra–always to tell the truth, seldom to be listened to or believed." Sputnik convinced the editors at *Life*, along with many other Americans, that American "schools [were] in terrible shape. What has long been an ignored national problem, Sputnik has made a recognized crisis."

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[156] Taylor, "A Conservative Educator," 17.
[157] James Bay, "Our Public Schools," *The Nation*, June 1954, 541.

The article then compared a 16-year-old American schoolboy, Stephen Lapekas, to his Soviet counterpart, Alexei Kutzkov. To the astonishment of many of its readers, *Life* determined that "Alexei [was] two years ahead of Stephen." The editors attributed this to the rigor and discipline of the Soviet curriculum. Juxtaposed against images of Alexei focused on chemistry and physics class, *Life* presented pictures of Stephen dancing, swimming, and laughing with his classmates. "For Stephen," *Life* concluded, "the business of getting educated seldom seems too serious. For Alexei, who works in a much harsher intellectual climate, good marks in school are literally more important than anything else in his life." Though some Americans still doubted the superiority of the Soviet education system, this article from *Life* reinforced concerns that the American system failed to realize the potential of its most academically talented students with disciplined, rigorous instruction.[158]

Part four of *Life*'s "Crisis in Education" series provided several answers to these concerns. Prominently featured among these was Conant's plan for comprehensive high schools. Since Conant had yet to publish his bestselling *The American High School Today*, editors at *Life* proudly announced this article as "the first published statement of his over-all idea." As *Life* summarized it, Conant's plan called for "a stiff academic curriculum for the upper college-bound 20%" of students. For "average" pupils, Conant recommended "a largely vocational course," and an "even more simplified general studies and basic shop courses" for the "slow learner." In this way, Conant perpetuated administrative progressives' fascination with sorting. In Conant's "ideal high school" these three types of students interacted only during homeroom, music, typing, and 12th-grade social studies.[159] One year after this article in *Life*, as the popular reception of

[158] *Life,* "Schoolboys Point Up A U.S. Weakness," 24 March 1958, 25-35.
[159] *Life*, "Famous Educator's Plan for a School that will Advance Students According to Ability," 14 April 1958, 120-21.

Conant's bestseller showed, many Americans welcomed progressive administration as a solution to the inadequacies of progressive pedagogy.

Yet challenges to progressive pedagogy did not lead to its immediate wholesale abandonment. Immediately following its piece on Conant's comprehensive high school, *Life* ran an article titled "Do-It-Yourself Physics," clearly echoing Dewey's pedagogical creed of "learning by doing."[160] Despite severe setbacks after Sputnik, many disciples of Dewey maintained their faith in progressive pedagogy.

A speech delivered in 1959 by Lawrence Cremin exemplified this enduring faith in progressive pedagogy. Delivered at Teachers College Columbia and printed in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, a monthly magazine, Cremin's oration announced the end of an era in American pedagogy with the "death of the Progressive Education Association in 1955, and the passing of its journal *Progressive Education* two years later."[161] As a noteworthy historian of education, Cremin spoke with significant authority in explaining this development. Curiously, however, Cremin did not attribute progressive pedagogy's demise to Sputnik. One reason for the decline of progressive pedagogy, in Cremin's estimation, was "the more general post-World War II swing toward conservatism in political and social thought." But the most important reason, Cemin surmised, was that American society simply moved beyond the issues of the progressive era. For Cremin, the "great immigrations [were] over, and a flow of recent publications by David Riesman, Will Herberg, and others [were] dramatically redefining the problem of what it means to be an American."[162] Head of the department of Social and Philosophical Foundations at Columbia's Teachers College, Cremin defended his colleagues in education pedagogy from its critics. In the end, Cremin's speech effectively served as an apology for progressive education.

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[160] *Life*, "Do-It-Yourself Physics," 14 April 1958, 122-3.
[161] Lawrence Cremin, "What Was Progressive Education?" *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 15 September 1959, 721.
[162] Cremin, "What Was Progressive Education?" 724.

His benedictory sentence concluded that "some of the best of what the progressives tried to teach [had] yet to be applied in American schools."[163] Though he dismissed Sputnik's impact on progressive pedagogy's plummeting credibility, Cremin could not ignore the influence of the emerging conservative movement on education.

A history discussing the influence of the post-war conservative movement is probably incomplete without an examination of the leading conservative magazine, *National Review*. Founded in 1955 by William F. Buckley, *National Review* provided a platform for members of the emerging conservative movement to debate and advocate their ideas. Though it was consciously created as a conservative outlet, its pages contained articles from a broad spectrum of political backgrounds, from the anarchist Murray Rothbard to the monarchist Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. Though Buckley kept the pages of *National Review* open to a diverse range of intellectuals who shared a variety of conservative ideals, he distanced himself and his magazine from groups on the Right he found unseemly, like anti-Semites and the conspiratorial John Birch Society.[164] One of the most famous undergraduates of all time, Buckley, a Catholic, published his first and bestselling book *God and Man at Yale* at age 25. In it, he rebuked his professors at Yale for teaching religion from the perspective of anthropology and teaching Keynesian economics as gospel. Buckley also argued that academic freedom was under attack at universities due to many professors' ignorance of traditional spirituality and economics. Buckley was calling out something similar to the cultural isolationism and anti-intellectualism in education departments Bestor and Lynd described.

[163] Cremin, "What Was Progressive Education?" 725.
[164] Alfred S. Regnery, *Upstream: The Ascendance of American Conservatism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), p. 79. Roger Chapman, *Culture Wars: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices*. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 58, 91, 148.

In fact, this concern of cultural-isolationism manifested in Buckley's regular column on higher education in *National Review*: "The Ivory Tower." In the first appearance of this editorial, Buckley reiterated his charge of a liberal bias among American professors and teachers. Indeed, Buckley maintained that he was not alone in his indictment: "It is the contention of many informed conservatives that a very large number of teachers in this country are in fact actively engaged in indoctrinating their students in an identifiable position, loosely described as 'liberal.'" Buckley found it appropriate to use the term "liberal" loosely because liberal teachers failed to "expose students to all points of view adequately and impartially" without imparting "the particular point of view of the teacher." Thus, Buckley determined that educators were in the business of indoctrination rather than education. He went on to announce two $100 awards to two college students with "the most revealing" responses to questions like, "Does your economics teacher refer impartially—or in any other way—to the works of Friedrich Hayek…? …Does the teacher of psychology dismiss religion as fantasy before or after exposing you to the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, or Paul Tillich, or Reinhold Niebuhr?"[165]

Another leader of the new conservative movement and commentator on education, Russell Kirk, frequently wrote for *National Review*. In his nearly bi-weekly column, "From the Academy," Kirk opined on all levels of education, in contrast to Buckley's focus on "the ivory tower." Nevertheless, Kirk's broader reportage on education stemmed from a concern he shared with Buckley over higher learning. While Kirk agreed with Buckley's charge of the liberal bias among college professors, he emphasized that the diminished quality of higher education was due to lower standards of education at the primary and secondary levels. Kirk also echoed Buckley's accusations of indoctrination, conformity, secularism, and lack of academic freedom:

[165] William F. Buckley, "The Ivory Tower: National Review Offers Awards to College Students for Assistance in Research Project," *National Review*, 28 December 1955, 14-16.

> If the professors are quarter-educated doctrinaires, sedulous to engage in secular indoctrination rather than in a real search for Truth, then they have no right to academic freedom, and are sure to lose it. And if the students are so ill-prepared for the higher education that they cannot really form independent judgments, but must take for Holy Writ whatever their professors say, then the reason for academic freedom has vanished, the Academy having degenerated into a custodial institution where the immature are exposed to "socialization" and indoctrinated in "approved social attitudes."

This passage was revealing for several reasons. It not only seconded Buckley's concerns of indoctrination, conformity, secularism, and academic freedom at the post-secondary level, it also indicated a more general concern about the lack of critical thinking skills of high school students matriculating into college. Like other critics of progressive education, Kirk believed liberal education imparted critical thinking skills more effectively than progressive pedagogy. Furthermore, Kirk capitalized "Truth," signaling a rebuke of relativism. Moreover, Kirk's use of the term "custodial institution" anticipated the aforementioned observations made by Angus and Mirel almost half a century later.

Perhaps most striking of all, however, was Kirk's suggestion that Americans were bringing authoritarianism upon themselves. The intellectual conformity and consequent challenges to academic freedom that Kirk feared were not imposed by an authoritarian state, but by citizens themselves. In this passage, and many others, Kirk repeated concerns of previously mentioned social critics about the relationship between the individual and mass society. Like other important intellectuals of his time, Kirk's concerns of mass society naturally translated to concerns about education. "The great problem of the age. [Cardinal Henry] Newman said more than a century ago, is the education of the masses. That still is the great problem of the age."[166]

In fact, in his column on education, Kirk frequently quoted a particular phrase from David Reisman, "the patronage network of Teachers College, Columbia," to describe the authoritarian control of the teachers colleges and unions over the educational system and the

[166] Russell Kirk, "From the Academy: Riverside Restoration," *National Review*, 7 December 1955, 25.

disproportionate influence of progressive pedagogy and administration. Reisman's words graced the pages of Kirk's column for the first time in a blistering critique of the NEA's power over teacher certification. Titled, "What Makes a Teacher," Kirk's article reported on the new certification code established in Michigan. According to Kirk, Michigan's board of education, were "elected by popular vote, but [were] selected, in reality, by the hierarchy of the National Education Association and the Michigan Education Association, almost without exception." Kirk asserted that neither low salaries nor fear of McCarthyism primarily discouraged talented young people from the teaching profession.

> The real cause is the boredom and frustration imposed upon the prospective teacher and the working teacher by dreary courses in pedagogy, together with the bullying by the educationist hierarchy throughout his career which is his probable future. …He had been thoroughly spoon-fed with the pabulum of what Mr. David Riesman calls "the patronage network of Teachers College, Columbia."

For Kirk, Michigan's new certification code exemplified the "very worst aspects of what Professor Arthur Bestor calls 'educational wastelands.'"[167]

Kirk went as far as to argue that progressive pedagogues were not fulfilling their stated goals. For him, progressive education "ceased to be a 'preparation for life,'" as it aimed to be. Instead, in the progressive school, "[t]he child [was] kept a child," and the individual's personality was never allowed to fully mature.[168] Similarly to other intellectuals' concerns about individuals losing their identity to the mass, Kirk cautioned that the increasing enrollment at colleges, though the result of good intentions, not only diluted the quality of higher education but diminished the identities of college students. "Business-machine methods of registration, testing, and grading," he wrote, "have vitiated the old professor-student relationship. Students' numbered identity-cards are replacing even proper names." Although access to higher education increased

[167] Kirk, "From The Academy: What Makes a Teacher?" *National Review,* 16 May 1956.
[168] Kirk, "From The Academy: The Educationists' Utopia," *National Review*, 30 May 1956.

after WWII and the GI Bill, the college experience became more impersonal. Many universities issued IBM punched cards to students in order to streamline administrative processes with new computer technology.[169] A notice printed on the cards instructed students to not "bend, fold, spindle or mutilate" the paper card so that the IBM machine could process the data punched through it. In an essay on the cultural impact of the punch-card, historian Steven Lubar traced the cultural history of the cards being used at universities. Ironically, for Lubar, students came to use punch-cards as symbols for their own alienation in an increasingly impersonal system. "After all, that was, in their eyes, the way the University saw them."[170] Lubar related the story of a clever student at Berkeley who pinned a sign to his chest reading: "I am a UC student. Please don't bend, fold, spindle or mutilate me."[171]

To Kirk's astonishment, however, many education leaders believed higher learning was not "mechanized and impersonalized enough." As an exemplar of this attitude, Kirk pointed to Milton Eisenhower, the highly successful brother of Dwight. In a December 1955 article in *National Review*, Kirk criticized Eisenhower, then serving as president of Pennsylvania State University, for his "business-like" approach to higher education. A month earlier in the *Detroit News*, Eisenhower said that "[t]he instructor's productivity must be increased." Kirk, however, argued that professors were more productive than ever, pointing out that the average instructor-to-student ratio increased fivefold, from 1:8 at the beginning of the century to 1:40. In addition to this unprecedented burden placed on professors, to Kirk's horror, Eisenhower "referred to the swelling state universities, approvingly, as 'academic supermarkets.'" Kirk joked that such a "super-market ought to be built in skyscraper style, so as to make learning as

[169] Steven Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate': A Cultural History of the Punch Card," *Journal of American Culture* 15, no. 4 (1992): 44.
[170] Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate,'"46.
[171] Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate,'"48.

businesslike as possible." This quip is revealing, not only in that it reveals similar concerns of Whyte and Mills about the conformity of the organization man and the personality-destroying, soul-crushing effects of white collar work, but that it suggested universities were losing their function as institutions of higher learning. Instead, higher education increasingly served as the training ground to supply a complaint and docile white-collar labor force for corporate America. But Kirk's assault on Eisenhower did not end there.[172]

In one of his most damning sentences that appeared in his column, Kirk predicted that if Eisenhower got his way, American higher education would devolve to "'canned' lectures by closed-circuit television, 'stocked by the academic supermarket,' so that a Big Brother professor can sit in remote majesty and behold his disciples only through relayed images—and vice versa. This notion pleases Dr. Eisenhower inordinately: it's progressive." Like other critics of progressive education, Kirk saw a link between progressive administration and authoritarianism. To him, Eisenhower's vision came uncomfortably close to Orwell's warning of a dumbed down society overlaid with constant surveillance:

> "Honor systems and examination proctors will be made unnecessary," the *Detroit News* summarizes Dr. Eisenhower's predictions, "with half a dozen cameras scanning as many rooms and transmitting what they see to the professor and his monitors." Well, it's all very like Bentham's Panopticon. The Panopticon was designed for hardened criminals, of course, and Dr. Eisenhower's university is designed for the intellectual leaders of the nation.[173]

Though pessimistic about the state of American education, Kirk remained optimistic about its future. Though, on his account, "[e]ven bare facts seem[ed] … ill taught in the majority of American colleges and universities," Kirk found hope in "the courageous endeavors of certain conservative reformers give promise that wisdom may get a hearing once more." Such efforts, for Kirk, clearly included a return to liberal education and abandonment of "secularist,"

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[172] Kirk, "From The Academy: University Imperialists," *National Review*, 21 December 1955, 22.
[173] Kirk, "From The Academy: University Imperialists," 22.

progressive education. Though he admitted that "[w]hat Burke called 'a liberal understanding' counts for very little today at many of our Northern, secularistic, 'progressive' colleges," Kirk predicted liberal education would, like Lazarus, rise again. As Kirk put it, in Biblical imagery, "though liberal learning is as lean as Lazarus, I think it is crawling forth from the sepulchre where the Deweyites thought they had buried it." Interestingly, Kirk identified Catholics as doing more than Protestant or state institutions to raise liberal education from the dead: "Catholic colleges are carrying on a work of educational reform of which too little notice is taken by state and Protestant institutions of higher learning."[174] According to Kirk, Catholics embodied the emerging conservative movement to a greater degree than Protestants and Jews.

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Catholics also expressed concerns of conformity, secularism, and authoritarianism to a greater extent than Jews and Protestants. In part, this resulted from the threat progressive administrators like Conant posed to private schools. With their historical interest in a vast network of parochial schools, Catholics resented Conant's proposal to eliminate private schools altogether. This illustrated a key difference between religious critics of progressive pedagogy and administrative progressives. Like Kirk, many Catholics viewed liberal education as a means of passing on their traditional values to their children. In Reisman's terminology, they judged liberal education better suited than progressive education to the task of producing more "inner-directed" children. Though many Catholics agreed with Conant that progressive pedagogy failed to realize the potential of academically talented students, they disagreed intensely with his brand of progressive administration. This conflict between Catholics and progressive administrators extended to related debates over federal aid to education and the proper relationship between church and state. This controversy basically boiled down to a struggle involving Catholics, on

[174] Kirk, "From the Academy: At Boston College," *National Review*, 18 January 1956, 24.

one side, and an ironic coalition of secular educators, Protestants, and Jews, on the other. The clash that ensued between these two groups became one of the most potent issues in Washington as congressmen debated federal aid to education.

Chapter 4: Church State Relations and Federal Aid to Education

In the first five years after WWII, two issues posed crucial obstacles to forming a large enough coalition to pass federal aid in Congress: race and religion.[175] With regard to the former, the powerful southern Democrats feared federal oversight and challenges to state segregation policies would inevitably follow federal aid. The latter received little attention in forthcoming histories of education. Interestingly, this conflict involved a tension between two exceedingly important First Amendment values: freedom of expression and separation of church and state. On the one hand, Catholics maintained that excluding private schools from federal monies discriminated against parents with students in parochial schools. On the other hand, some Protestants and Jews believed federal aid to parochial schools was a Catholic plot to use tax dollars for religious indoctrination.[176] Though not its stated position, such sympathies characterized the National Education Association (NEA), the largest and most influential teachers union. Most NEA members hailed from middle-class, rural, Protestant parts of the nation, especially the South and West.[177] However, the NEA was not really a teachers union. Rather, since its founding in 1857, the NEA represented educational leaders, mostly school administrators and superintendents.[178] Moreover, selection for superintendency often depended on religious affiliation. In a 1934 survey, out of 796 superintendents who reported their religious affiliation, none were Jewish, and only six were Catholic.[179] Such discrimination continued through the middle of the century. Another study conducted in the mid-1950s concluded "not only did superintendents and school boards in culturally pluralistic Massachusetts overwhelmingly prefer hiring white males, but also that some admitted to favoring Protestants

[175] Gilbert Smith, *Limits of Reform* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1982), 8.
[176] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 8.
[177] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 11.
[178] Margorie Murphy, *Blackboard Unions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 4.
[179] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 169.

over Catholics or Jews."[180] Though racial discrimination certainly characterized the politics of education in the years following WWII, religious division also shaped the federal aid debates. As R. Freeman Butts observed, "[m]ost Protestants and Jews opposed any bill that would give federal aid to parochial schools as well as to public schools. Roman Catholic groups favored such bills but opposed any federal-aid bill that ruled out support for private and parochial schools."[181] Thus, disputes over federal aid to education divided along religious lines.

With fits and starts, legislation in Congress providing for federal aid to education experienced greater success in the Senate than in the House. Though initially opposed to federal aid to education, Robert A. Taft emerged as the critical figure behind passing legislation in the Senate. As a freshman Senator in 1939, Taft chided the "totalitarian features" of a federal aid bill offered by Elbert Thomas (D-UT). He and other Senators, especially Southern Democrats, feared federal control would inevitably follow federal aid. Indeed, as Gilbert Smith pointed out, "[f]ederal aid could only pass if the coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats failed to combine against it."[182] In 1943, Taft attacked the NEA's bill sponsored by Thomas and Lister Hill (D-AL), the first federal aid to education legislation to reach the Senate floor in almost sixty years.[183] To foment opposition from conservative southern Democrats, Taft suggested the bill would "require every state to permit colored and white children to go to the same schools." He also employed the help of William Langer (R-ND), who introduced an amendment forbidding the discriminatory use of federal funds. Civil rights advocates recognized Taft's maneuver as an attempt to kill the bill by inserting anti-discrimination language into it. The NAACP opposed this addition as unnecessary, since the bill already provided safeguards against racial discrimination.

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[180] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 169.
[181] R. Freeman Butts, *A Cultural History of Western Education* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1955, orig. pub., 1947), 529-530.
[182] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 106.
[183] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 103.

Nevertheless, as Senator Alben Barkley (D-KY) acknowledged, the bill proved attractive to Senators "whose minds constantly dwell on the next election."[184] The amendment passed and effectively killed the bill, because, as Taft cleverly anticipated, the powerful Southern Democrats, who controlled nearly every Senate seat from the South, refused to support it.[185]

Three years later, Taft had a change of heart. In an ironic twist of history, "the man who had nearly single-handedly killed the 1943 bill...switched sides and took over leadership of the federal aid movement."[186] His conversion began in 1944, when the NEA members John Norton, head of the Educational Policies Commission, and Willard Givens, president of the NEA, convinced Taft to reconsider his opposition to federal aid. To Norton and Givens's surprise, their admonitions worked. In 1946, Taft introduced a bill with Thomas and Hill as co-sponsors. The bill restricted aid to public schools only.[187] Predictably, this provision raised the hackles of Catholics. The popular Catholic magazine *Commonweal* praised Senators Walsh (D-MA), Murray (D-MT), Aiken (R-VT), and Morse (R-OR), for pointing out that federal monies already graced the halls of denominational schools with the G.I. bill and school lunch programs.[188] The legislation cleared committee proceedings, but not without a major compromise on aid to parochial schools. Aiken and others argued that the provision against parochial aid contradicted state laws that paid for textbooks and transportation. In response, Taft consented to revise the bill to leave use of federal aid to the discretion of the states. Though this concession broke the deadlock in committee, the legislation arrived too late for the Senatorial action in 1946.[189]

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[184] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 107.
[185] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 111-112.
[186] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 135.
[187] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 136.
[188] *Commonweal*, "Good Plea for Federal Aid," 5 July 5 1946, 277-278.
[189] *Everson v. Board of Education,* 330 U.S. 1 (1947). Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 138.

Deliberation had to wait until next year. With four Democrats and three fellow Republicans, Taft reintroduced the same bill with almost no changes in 1947.[190]

The religious issue remained the primary obstacle.[191] Furthermore, the *Everson* v. *Board* decision that year in the Supreme Court added fuel to the fire. In a 5-4 decision, the Court upheld a program in Ewing, New Jersey, that reimbursed parents for costs of transporting children to parochial schools. Writing for the court, Hugo Black inked the famous lines: "The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach. New Jersey has not breached it here."[192]

The ruling encountered criticism from many Protestant denominations. Baptists and the Disciples of Christ abhorred it.[193] The *Christain Century* accused Catholics of "using these apparently insignificant matters as the thin edge of the wedge which would ultimately crack open the Constitution and give the Church the privileged position in the United States which it confessedly seeks."[194] The Methodist Council of Bishops charged Catholics with political action that amounted to "denials of liberty" and "bigotry."[195]

The *Everson* decision established the entitlement of Catholic schools to federal aid for transportation costs and other non-educational services. However, editors of *Commonweal*, a prominent Catholic magazine, lamented the tide of anti-Catholic sentiment in the wake of the decision. "The Court decision in this case," warned the editors, "while upholding an undeniable right….has awakened among Protestants a new wave of anti-Vatican hysteria." The editors suggested that "Catholic support of the Taft bill would do much to soothe those who have been

[190] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 144-145.
[191] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 146.
[192] *Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), 18.
[193] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 143.
[194] *Christian Century*, "Now Will Protestants Awake?" 26 February 1947, 263.
[195] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 144.

roused by what they consider the incipient dangers in the Supreme Court decision."[196] Reverend William McManus disagreed. In the following week's publication of *Commonweal*, McManus announced his dissatisfaction with language in the Taft bill that allowed states to allocate federal monies to private schools. In an attempt to persuade his readers, the Reverend analogized this measure to the Jim Crow South: "[I]t is claimed that Catholic schools have a 'right' to federal funds provided the States amend their constitutions and their legislatures authorized grants of public funds to the parochial schools. That's about the same as politely telling a Negro in Mississippi that he has a 'right' to vote if he can persuade the legislature to repeal the poll tax."[197] Though his analogy was far from perfect, McManus correctly observed that almost all state constitutions forbade public funds to private schools. Indeed, in 1948, 45 out of 48 state constitutions contained language preventing aid to sectarian schools.[198] McManus characterized the provision leaving distribution of funds to the discretion of the states as "a carefully designed discrimination." Though Catholics did not always agree about which policy to support, many shared Hayek's fear that federal aid to public schools would drive out competition from private institutions and lead to federal control. This fear also extended to institutions of higher education.

In 1948, an editorial in *Commonweal* titled "Federal Aid Without Controls" alerted its readers to plans for federal intervention that posed threats to private colleges and universities. The article reported on the fifth report of the President's Commission on Higher Education. *Commonweal*'s editors emphasized a quotation from the Commission conceding that providing funds exclusively to public post-secondary schools "might 'make it extremely difficult for many private institutions to survive' in the face of such heavily loaded competition."[199] *Commonweal*

[196] *Commonweal*, "Taft Education Bill," 14 March 1947, 533.
[197] William McManus, "Communications," *Commonweal*, 21 March 1947, 564-5.
[198] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 157.
[199] *Commonweal*, "Federal Aid Without Controls," 13 February 1948, 435

then invited its readers to imagine "an American educational system where the student is a ward of the State from kindergarten right through graduate school."[200] Whether or not this particular attempt at public persuasion was successful, the sentiment that federal aid would drive out competitors to the public schools at all levels of education characterized many Catholics' apprehensions of federal aid to public schools only.

Not all Catholics shared this fear, however. Helen Storen, a Catholic professor at Teachers College, Columbia, wrote a letter responding to *Commonweal*'s editorial. "I, along with many other Catholics," she claimed, "feel that aid should not be given to private institutions." Storen also warned of "the dangers that would result from a church-state tie-up are far more serious than than would come from federal subsidies to Catholic schools." She even went as far as to assert that "many of the smaller colleges, both Catholic and non-denominational, do not meet the standards that we feel are necessary for education of American youth today. Many of them could well be closed or consolidated." *Commonweal* editors published Storen's letter in their magazine. Nevertheless, they maintained that federal subsidies to public institutions might lead to students becoming wards of the state. The editors also pointed out that Storen failed to confront this prospect in her critique. Whether or not *Commonweal*'s editors or Storen represented the majority viewpoint of Catholics, the editors' insistence on the possibility of state-controlled education at the very least revealed how they wished to frame the issue.[201]

Unfortunately for *Commonweal*'s editors, direct aid to parochial schools seemed increasingly unlikely. By the late '40s, Catholics placed greater emphasis on indirect means of securing federal funds. The *Everson* case prompted Catholics to shift their focus from general and direct aid to "auxiliary services" like transportation, health examinations, and non-religious

[200] *Commonweal*, "Federal Aid WIthout Controls," 436
[201] Helen Storen, "Federal Aid Without Controls," *Commonweal*, 5 May 1948, 519.

textbooks.[202] It also convinced Taft that the provision allowing states to control distribution of aid to private schools offered the most promising future for local control and passage of the bill.[203] In July, the full education committee approved the bill and sent it to the Senate floor.[204] Taft pushed the bill through without any changes he did not support.[205] In April, 1948, the Senate passed his bill, 58-22. With that vote, federal aid to education passed the Senate for the first time in sixty years.[206]

Christian Century's editors were more antagonistic than their Catholic counterparts at *Commonweal* toward the Taft bill. While *Commonweal*'s editors suggested Catholics ought to support the bill to appease Protestants, *Christian Century* predicted that enactment of the Taft bill would "scuttle the American public school system" and allow the "Roman Catholic Church to carry on its fight state by state for a dual or multiple system of federally aided schools."[207] The editors believed that leaving allocation of federal monies for education up to the states allowed them to spend federal dollars on religious education, thus contradicting the *Everson* decision. Though the Supreme Court decision, now the law of the land, prevented such action and most states already prohibited public funds to private schools, *Christian Century* remained resolute in its opposition to anything resembling a breach of separation between church and state. While Protestants focused on threats to the establishment clause of the first amendment, Catholics warned the danger of complete state control of education. Furthermore, while the editors of *Commonweal* openly encouraged their readers to support the Taft bill to appease Protestants, their counterparts at *Christian Century* deplored such a compromise as a danger to the separation of church and state.

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[202] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 147.
[203] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 149.
[204] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 150.
[205] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 158.
[206] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 159.
[207] *Christian Century*, "Taft Education Bill Passes the Senate," 21 April 1948, 340-341.

Taft's leadership in the Senate did not translate to the House. "A lot of people are not very hot for federal aid to education," concluded Majority Leader Charles Halleck (R-IN). House Republicans were wary about issues of government spending, religion, and federal control. Their electoral successes in 1946 also made them reluctant to give President Truman a legislative victory. In the end, Republicans in the house refused to move the bill out of committee.[208] For the remainder of the federal aid deliberations in Congress, the House proved more inhospitable to federal aid than the Senate. The most heated and public controversies on federal aid came out of the lower chamber of the next Congress.

According to historian Seymor P. Lachamn, the church-state issue made front-page news in *The New York Times* for the first time amid a wave of heated debate over federal aid to education in the summer of 1949.[209] Page one of the *Times* reported on a commencement speech delivered at Fordham University by Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York. Addressing a crowd of 15,000, Spellman deployed incendiary language against H.R. 4643, recently introduced to the House of Representatives and sponsored by Graham Arthur Barden (D-NC). Spellman balked at a provision in the legislation that prohibited funds directed toward transportation and health services for students of both private and public schools. He perceived this arrangement as an attempt to skirt *Everson*. The Cardinal implored his audience to pray for Barden and other "apostles of bigotry" who advocated an "irrational un-American, discriminatory thesis that the public school is the only truly American school."[210]

On June 23, 1949, Eleanor Roosevelt penned a response to Spellman in her nationally syndicated column. "The separation of church and state," she opined, "is extremely important to

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[208] Smith, *Limits of Reform,* 150.
[209] Seymour P. Lachman, "The Cardinal, the Congressmen, and the First Lady," *Journal of Church and State* (Winter 1965): 41.
[210] "Spellman Denounces Author of School Aid Bill as 'Bigot', *New York Times*, Jun 20, 1949, 1, 20, found in Lachman, 41.

any of us who hold to the original traditions of our nation. To change these traditions by changing our traditional attitude toward public education would be harmful, I think, to our whole attitude of tolerance in the religious area."[211] On July 22, Spellman responded in an open letter to Mrs. Roosevelt in which he accused her of "anti-Catholicism."[212]

As the feud between Roosevelt and Spellman made national front-page news, mainstream Protestant and Jewish publications came to the First-Lady's defense. "Name-Calling Does Not Resolve Issues," read a headline of an article printed in *The American Jewish World*. "Mrs. Roosevelt needs no defense, it seems to us, from accusations of bigotry or prejudice," wrote *Jewish World.* "We have long since cast our lot with Mrs. Roosevelt and the others--the large majority of the United States–who think as she does on that vital issue."[213] This alliance between Eleanor Roosevelt and many Jews was rather ironic. According to Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman, Eleanor made several anti-Semetic comments. Upon meeting Felix Frankfurter, she described the Supreme Court judge as "an interesting man but very Jew." After grudgingly attending a party for Bernard Baruch, a Jewish financier and head of the War Industries Board, Eleanor declared, "The Jew party was appalling. I never wish to hear money, jewels, and sables mentioned again."[214] Curiously, despite these remarks, many Jews supported Roosevelt's position on church-state relations.

Fundamentalist and liberal denominations of Protestants–another ironic coalition–under the auspices of the Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU) drummed up support for the Barden bill. Though the POAU constituted a minority of Protestants, the flagship non-denominational magazine, *Christian Century,* tended to back POAU

[211] Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day" *New York Times*, June 23, 1949. Found in Lachman, "The Cardinal, the Congressmen, and the First Lady," 44.
[212] Lachman, "The Cardinal, the Congressmen, and the First Lady," 46.
[213] "Name-Calling Does Not Resolve Issues" *The American Jewish World*, 5 August 1949, 4.
[214] Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 17.

initiatives.[215] In its editorial section on October 10, 1949, *Century* lambasted two Catholic Congressmen, John Lesinski (D-MI)--chairman of the House committee on education and labor--and John McCormack (D-MA), for stalling the Barden bill. *Christian Century* also quoted the NEA's position on the matter, which derided Lesinski and McCormack's actions as "'a capricious and arbitrary abuse of power that obstructs both the letter and the spirit of democratic process.'" The *Christian Century* went on: "The National Education Association does not make charges of this kind lightly. A considerable share of the nation's public school teachers, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant and Jewish, are included in its membership." Claiming, incorrectly, that McCormack received a knighthood from the Pope–that distinction belonged to an Irish opera singer with the same name–*Christian Century* accused McCormack and Lesinski of "acting in collusion with the Catholic hierarchy."[216] Indeed, many opponents of federal aid to parochial and private schools voiced such warnings of the "Catholic hierarchy."

Whatever the merits to his grievances, Spellman timed his outburst poorly. In years past, anti-Catholicism thrived amidst nativist movements of the Know-Nothing party of the 1850s, the American Protective Association in the 1890s, and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1910s and 1920s. Similarly, the late 1940s witnessed a revival, though not nearly as overt, of organized hostility toward Catholics in response to increasing political assertiveness of Catholics in education policy. Among the most important of such groups was the POAU. Founded in 1947, this coalition began after a spate of meetings among various educational, religious, and fraternal organizations. These included the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Education Association. Though it claimed no intention of criticizing the Catholic Church, the POAU accused the Church of promoting policies "plainly subversive of religious liberty" and aspiring

[215] Leo Pfeffer, *Church, State, and Freedom* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953), p. 291. Found in Lachman. p. 42.
[216] *Christian Century,* "Two Catholics Block Federal School Aid," 19 October 1949, 1221.

"to secure for itself...a privileged position in the body politic." Specifically, the POAU singled out Catholics for pursuing "total support" for Catholic schools. Demands for auxiliary services, POAU members warned, constituted a slippery slope toward complete Catholic control of federal aid to education. Furthermore, the POAU characterized the Taft bill as "a disguised evasion of the issue." Within two months of its founding, the POAU persuaded thousands of non-Catholics to its membership and formed a national advisory board of one hundred educators, churchmen, and civic leaders.[217]

The controversy over the Barden bill also presented a point of contention between the two largest teachers unions in the U.S., the N.E.A. and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Many members of the AFT, including John Dewey, signed a petition in opposition to the Barden bill because it left the allocation of federal aid up to the discretion of the states, which would allow the Jim Crow South to favor white schools over black ones.[218] Local control also allowed the NEA to maintain segregated union chapters, a policy it continued for three years after the *Brown* decision. Furthermore, the NEA eschewed adopting an anti-discrimination policy until the week that the 1964 Civil Rights Act passed.[219] This illustrated a continuation of a key difference between the AFT and NEA on civil rights issues in the first two-thirds of the 20th century. Since its founding in 1915, the AFT opened its membership to all racial backgrounds.[220] However, not all chapters of the AFT endeavored racial integration. The union still had segregated locals, which did not become much of an issue until its 1947 convention. In 1951, the Executive Council of the AFT voted against granting new charters to segregated locals.[221] In 1955, in observance of the first anniversary of the *Brown* decision, the union issued ultimatums

[217] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 185.
[218] Lachman, "The Cardinal, the Congressmen, and the First Lady," 55.
[219] Maurice Berube, *Teacher Politics: The Influence of Unions* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988), 111.
[220] Berube, *Teacher Politics*, 106.
[221] Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 197.

to its Southern locals: either integrate or face expulsion from the AFT.[222] By 1958, the AFT claimed it lost 14% of its membership, or close to 7,000 members, due to its stance on integration. In reality, the AFT only lost 4,000 members. Such exaggerations, which the NEA did not hesitate to point out, represented one of many such attempts to influence public opinion–in this case, to win the sympathies of urban teachers.[223] Ultimately, the Barden bill failed to pass Congress, and federal aid would have to wait until after the launch of Sputnik I in 1957 provided urgency to pass the National Defense Education Act.

This divide between the teachers unions also manifested itself in the controversy over federal aid to parochial schools. The NEA aligned with Protestants and Jews in their opposition to aid to parochial schools. The AFT, on the other hand, joined Catholics in opposing the Barden bill, albeit for different reasons. The AFT was more concerned that local control measures in the Barden bill would reinforce segregated schools in the South, and therefore the organization gave only tacit and reluctant support of federal aid to parochial schools. In 1945, the AFT's Commission on Education Reconstruction sent draft legislation for approval by its parent union: the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL sent the bill back with a clause allowing federal aid to private schools for non-educational purposes such as operations and maintenance.[224] Since the AFL represented a large cadre of Catholic workers, its officials rejected the AFT's position against aid to parochial schools.[225] Moreover, a caucus of Catholic teachers within the AFT continued advocating federal aid to all schools, public or private. Nevertheless, the AFT's official position eventually, to the frustration of Catholics, moved toward skirting the *Everson* decision and excluding nonpublic schools from federal aid. At its

[222] Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 197.
[223] Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 200.
[224] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 116.
[225] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 101.

1947 convention, the AFT supported federal aid for school lunches, libraries, scholarships, as well as health and recreational services to non-public schools. However, to avoid aid allowed to parochial schools under the *Everson* decision, the union specifically excluded transportation from this list.[226]

In January of 1947, the Jesuit magazine *America* published an article titled "The AFT Reverses itself" lamenting the union's change in policy.[227] Protestants also voiced disappointment in the change in AFT policy, though for opposite reasons. The editors of *Christian Century* found the AFT's "concession" to the AFL "unnecessary" and contradictory. "The A.F.T. cannot have it both ways," the editors concluded. "It must either repudiate...that federal aid should be limited to public schools or its action concerning the use of welfare funds."[228] Once again, the Protestant magazine attacked any compromise allowing aid to private and parochial schools, even aid judged constitutional in the *Everson* decision. To the annoyance of Catholics, the AFT maintained its stance on transportation. Nevertheless, the union still backed some forms of aid to non-public schools. This approach appeared far more acceptable to Catholics than that of the NEA, which proved uncompromising in its support for the Barden bill.

Even when Catholic leaders attempted compromise, Protestants and the NEA refused to budge. In 1949, congressman John E. Fogarty (D-RI) proposed a bill setting aside 10 percent of auxiliary aid monies to non-public schools.[229] A year later, when Fogarty's bill failed to gain the support of Protestants and the NEA, Cardinal Spellman blamed the deadlock on "the hierarchy of the [NEA,] who refuse[d] to yield from their position." He then announced that the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) approved yet another concession to the NEA, reducing

[226] William E. Eaton, *The American Federation of Teachers*, *1916-1961* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 139.
[227] *America,* "AFT Reverses itself," January 1947, 263.
[228] *Christian Century*, "Teachers Union Straddles Parochial Aid Issue," 10 September 1947, 1068.
[229] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 198.

the figure of the monies allocated to non-public schools for auxiliary services from 10 percent to 2 percent, leaving the remaining 98% for public schools.[230] Still, the NEA did not bite. At its convention in 1950, the association accepted a resolution against all direct or indirect federal funding of parochial schools.[231]

Commonweal editors speculated that arguments concerning separation of church and state in education debates really boiled down to anti-Catholicism. In 1950, *Commonweal* published an editorial referencing the Barden bill and the "last year's debate conducted in the murky atmosphere of mutual suspicion." While *Commonweal* admitted that "the most damning indictment[s]" came from "some angry Catholics," the magazine attacked Protestants and "secularists" by analogizing their rhetoric of the "Catholic hierarchy" to that of Hitler's Germany: "Among some very vocal Protestants and secularists, an old sinister figure was revived–the monstrous Catholic hierarch, shrewd and cunning and reprehensible as Herr Goebbels' Jew."[232] Although this statement rang of hyperbole, *Commonweal* cited evidence of their claim that religious partisanship motivated Protestant support for public schools and antipathy to private ones. The editors reported quotations from Reverend Erwin L. Shaver given at "a recent meeting of the International Council of Religious Education," a Protestant organization. According to *Commonweal*, Shaver contended that Protestants placed in the public school system "an investment which we confidently believe has paid splendid returns and which we are bound to protect."[233] *Commonweal* found this a blatant admission on the part of Shaver of anti-Catholicism and charged Protestants with using public schools to advance their own religious agenda:

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[230] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 208-9.
[231] Smith, *Limits of Reform*, 214-15.
[232] *Commonweal*, "Federal Aid: Round Two," 3 March 1950, 548.
[233] *Commonweal,* "Federal Aid: Round Two," 549.

> In all the discussion of Federal aid, this is the first time we have heard it said frankly that what Christianity there is in the public school system is Protestant in tone and direction. Dr. Shaver's statement betrays one more nick in that famous wall of separation, of course; but more and more the wall is beginning to look like a rhetorical barrier against whatever smacks of Catholicism--that is, Roman Catholicism. (It sounds more sinister and alien that way).

Commonweal further declared Shaver's disclosure that Protestants had a special investment in public schools amounted to double standard. The editors suspected that "if a Catholic spokesman said the things Dr. Shaver said: 'Catholicism has a heavy investment in the public schools'...a storm would blow up! ...It seems a lot depends on who is talking."[234] This comment resembled Nash's observation that most Americans at this time still viewed Catholics as "outsiders."

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Catholic claims of discrimination against them revealed the religious conflict within the federal aid debates. A coalition of Protestants, Jews, and NEA members combined against Catholics to prevent any federal aid to parochial schools. Even when the Catholics offered compromises, eventually agreeing to only 2% of federal funds allocated to auxiliary services, Protestants, Jews, and secular teachers refused to yield. Indeed, Catholics experienced a considerable amount of frustration in their efforts to secure federal aid for their schools. Some pointed out that federal aid already followed G.I. bill monies to private colleges and universities. Others pointed out the long history of the disproportionate influence and interest Protestants had on the public schools, and thus reasoned federal aid that excluded private schools would inherently privilege Protestants over Catholics. Though Protestants and Jews disagreed with Catholics in terms of the church-state issue and related questions of progressive administration, members of the three major American faith-groups generally agreed in terms of progressive

[234] *Commonweal*, "Federal Aid: Round Two," 549.

pedagogy. The following chapter details such differences as evidenced in the religious periodical literature of the post-war period.

Chapter 5: Religious Responses

Catholic

Perhaps no one articulated the Catholic position on education better than Fulton Sheen. A holder of two doctoral degrees: a Ph.D. in philosophy from Catholic University of Leuven and a Doctorate of Divinity from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Sheen was easily one of the most educated Catholic theologians of his time. He was also one of the most charismatic. He became known as "Father Sheen" on an NBC radio program, "The Catholic Hour," which he hosted from 1930 to 1950. The program enjoyed additional success when Sheen moved it to NBC's television network in 1953. Sheen appeared wearing full Catholic regalia, and often opened his programs with endearing humor. Due in part to his ability to harness communication technology, in combination with his intellectual prowess and ability to convey complex theological matter in layman's terms, Sheen became one of the most influential Catholic intellectuals of the 1950s.

In October of 1950, before he became a familiar face on American television, Sheen delivered a speech to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. As he often did, Sheen primed his audience with a self-deprecating joke: "I always consider applause at the beginning of a lecture a manifestation of your faith. If it comes in the middle, it is a sign of hope. And if it comes at the end, it is always charity." However, the topic of Sheen's oration, titled "Education as the Guardian of the American Heritage," was no laughing matter. Sheen defined the American heritage as "respect for human rights and liberties" and maintained that such rights and liberties came, not from the federal government, but from God: "If you got your rights and liberties from the Federal Government in Wasington, the Federal Government in Washington could take them away." Sheen paraphrased the Declaration of Independence as

evidence that even the Founding Fathers recognized that rights came from God, not men or their institutions: "it is a self-evident principle that the Creator–the Creator–has endowed man with certain unalienable rights." Thus, for Sheen, "if you wish to keep your rights and liberties in education, you must also keep your God. That is the American heritage." Though the Declaration of Independence employs the phrase "their creator" instead of "the Creator," Sheen's use of "your" indicated that he did not really care what God someone worshiped, so long as that God had a place in education. Like Niebuhr, Sheen advocated acknowledgement of original sin and sought the application of neo-orthodox ideas on education. He even borrowed Niebuhr's language when he described the present world as "oscillating between two extreme solutions of man": pessimism and optimism. For Sheen, American education urgently needed neo-orthodoxy to protect the American heritage from authoritarianism.

> Education can not fall into either of these extremes of optimism or pessimism. Rather we have to realize that we are all not saints and we are not devils either–that we are just human beings who can be very weak. …If, then, education is to preserve the great American heritage, it will train the will as well as the intellect. It will keep God and it will also stress discipline in education. [235]

In addition to original sin, Sheen shared concerns with aforementioned intellectuals about conformity, authoritarianism, and secularism. He put these worries forward more powerfully in another speech before The National Catholic Education Association's annual convention in 1954. By then auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, and a famous TV personality, Sheen spoke with considerable influence when he announced "the modern exile of God…ended in the tyrannization of man." Thus, he reasoned, educators needed to "approach the problems of education very differently" than they had in the past. As an answer to this problem, Sheen implored "Catholic educators to concentrate on three great tasks:"

[235] Fulton Sheen, "Education as the Guardian of the American Heritage–the Purpose of Education," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, March 15 1951, pp. 349-51.

1. To save our civilization from authoritarianism.
2. To preserve it from straight-jacket uniformity.
3. To keep the foundations of our rights and liberty.

With these objectives, Sheen not only reiterated his call for neo-orthodoxy as means to preserve rights and liberties, he also made it clear that two other worries of his were conformity and authoritarianism and that education, particularly Catholic education, had an important role to play in combating these nefarious forces. He also indicated that progressive education bore responsibility for the problems he and many others perceived in American education. Beyond that, Sheen, like Hutchins and others, criticized the pragmatic philosophy upon which progressive pedagogy was founded. "Pragmatism," Sheen contended, diminished reason "to a faculty which sought the practical or the useful, not the true." In addition to his charge that progressive pedagogy failed to foster critical faculties of students and thus created circumstances more conducive to conformity, Sheen believed progressive pedagogy played a significant part in infecting the American population with authoritarian ideas:

> How far authoritarianism has seized the modern mind, is evident from the fact that practically all education today assumes that man is nothing else but an animal capable of action and reaction, or that he is an automatic nerve ending who can be trained to right "social responses." …As a result many schools today are not educating youth, they are "conditioning" youths to accept an anonymous authority without reason.

After registering these concerns of authoritarianism and conformity, Sheen returned to warnings of secularism. For him, recent history indicated that "unless citizens take cognizance of the fact that they have souls by declaring their loyalty to God, the State may say, 'Since you profess no other allegiance than to us, then you wholly belong to us.' This is the beginning of totalitarianism." But for Sheen, the choice facing the world was not one between religion and atheism, "but between two religions–a religion from God or a State religion, a religion with a Cross or a religion with a double cross, by which all human rights are negated." [236] With this

[236] Fulton Sheen, "Education in America–Progres is not Automatic," *Vital Speeches of the Day,* 1 June 1954, 502-6.

evocative imagery, Sheen implied secularism could lead not only to an atheistic population, but worse, a state religion with fascistic tendencies, though he did not go as far as using the term "fascism."

Catholic World

With these same concerns in mind, some Catholics, however, did go that far, especially when discussing Conant's administrative progressivism. In 1953, Mary Whitcomb-Hess, a poet and philosopher, published an article in *Catholic World* titled "Conant's Big-Business Fascism."[237] Hess favored the educational philosophy of Robert Hutchins over that of Conant. For Hess, Hutchins emphasized the establishment of unifying common morality, while Conant's "principle of unity [was] only the American free enterprise system substituted for Hitler's race-and-nationality myth." In Hess's account, America risked sliding into totalitarianism by implementing the "free enterprise system" without any moral system. Hess agreed with what Oliver Martin characterized as Conant's "moral nihilism and anti-intellectualism" in a brochure titled *Two Educators: Hutchins and Conant* (1948).[238]

In addition to criticisms of progressive administration, *Catholic World* also published challenges to progressive pedagogy. The editor of *Catholic World*, Father John Sheerin praised Bestor and announced the launching of Sputnik as the "death blow to progressive education."[239] Sheerin went further to suggest that progressive pedagogy failed to live up to pragmatic ideals it was founded upon: "Strangely the progressivists prided themselves on their pragmatism and their practical approach to real problems. Now by the pragmatic test of hard experience they have been proved to be very impractical. Their results are most unsatisfactory." Although Flesch's

[237] Oliver Martin, *Two Educators* (Hinsdale, I.L.: Regnery, 1948), 4.
[238] Mary Whitcomb-Hess, "Conant's Big-Business Fascism," *Catholic World*, April 1953, 26-7.
[239] John Sheerin, "Eclipse of Progressive Education," *The Catholic World*, May 1958, 84.

book was not the topic of his article, Sheerin gave a nod to Flesch in the title: "Why Johnny Can't Think."[240]

Commonweal

Writers for *Commonweal* did not call Conant a fascist as Hess did in *Catholic World*. Indeed, *Commonweal* took a less reactionary stance than Hess, and even worried that some Catholics were becoming reactionary in their criticism of public schools in the wake of Conant's 1949 speech. In 1952, editors of *Commonweal* hoped Conant would "not succeed in maneuvering Catholic opinion into an anti-public school position."[241] Nevertheless Catholics had an economic interest in their private school systems and generally perceived liberal education as the best pedagogy for maintaining traditional moral values, not only in their own private schools, but in public schools also. In 1950, journalist Milton Mayer published an article in *Commonweal* "mak[ing] an argument for the kind of education known as liberal, general, and humanistic."[242] Mayer asserted that only religion could adequately address "the problem of right action" and echoed Sheen's observation that even "Jefferson wanted [God] in the public schools."[243] In the same issue, Willis Nutting also warned that "the whole ideological and institutional structure of Christian civilization [was] disintegrating." For this reason the professor of history at Notre Dame posited "liberal education" as "the most important task that we face now."[244] Though they generally preferred liberal education, Catholics were not wholly opposed to progressive education.

[240] Sheerin, "Eclipse of Progressive Education," 84.
[241] *Commonweal,* "Yale vs. Harvard," 27 Jun 1952, 285.
[242] Milton Mayer, "The Vestige of God," *Commonweal*, 14 August 1950, 12.
[243] Mayer, "The Vestige of God," 11-13.
[244] Willis Nutting, "Mark Hopkins" *Commonweal*, 14 August 1950, 9.

Indeed, a Catholic attempt to implement progressive pedagogy took place in New York City at Corpus Christi School. Father George B. Ford, pastor of Corpus Christi Church, informed his readers that his article came "at the editor's request." All three educational principles Ford identified as worthy of consideration were Deweyan: "Training for leadership and responsibility, [c]ooperation instead of competition, [e]ncouragement of creative powers and originality."[245] The school also emphasized practical experience and kept "[m]emorization...at a minimum," except when it came to learning the catechism.[246] In the same issue as Ford's article, *Commonweal*'s editors advocated not "destruction of the system but...a greater integration of the school into community life."[247] On the whole, however, *Commonweal* generally published articles promoting liberal education and critical of progressive education.

In September, 1954, the principal of Richmond Hill High School in New York City, Francis Griffith, wrote a piece in *Commonweal* titled "John Dewey: Theory and Practice." In it, Griffith distinguished "between Dewey's basic philosophic position and his educational theories." For Griffith, Dewey "was the philosophic godfather of hundreds of 'progressive' schools in which his educational theories were applied or, as was frequently the case, misapplied."[248] Griffith contended that "[s]ome of Dewey's educational principles [did] not hinge upon his basic philosophic position. What Dewey had to say about democracy and education, the role of the teacher, discipline, interest, the curriculum, and self-activity [were] cases in point." Griffith observed Dewey's "view points on these topics [were] so generally accepted...in theory if not in practice, that they sound[ed] commonplace..."[249] "Every teacher is familiar with Dewey's doctrine, 'learning by doing,'" Griffith observed.

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[245] George B. Ford, "Corpus Christi School," *Commonweal*, 18 April 1952, 37.
[246] Ford, "Corpus Christi School," 39.
[247] *Commonweal*, "Parochial Schools in a Democracy," 18 April 1952, 31.
[248] Francis Griffith, "John Dewey: Theory and Practice," *Commonweal*, 24 September 1954, 603.
[249] Griffith, "John Dewey: Theory and Practice," 605.

> But it must be accepted with reservations. True, the best way to prepare for the future is by living happily and successfully in the present, getting as much as possible out of every desirable experience. True, the school should represent real life experiences and situations. But education must look to the imperatives of mature life as well as to the immediacies of childhood. ...A Catholic however holds that every man has an innate worth because of his supernatural origin and destiny. Similarly, a Catholic rejects the reasons that prompt Dewey to advocate a type of education which develops socialized individuals.[250]

Griffith's concerns of "socialized individuals" resembled those of David Reisman's in *The Lonely Crowd.*

Reverend Leo Ward, professor of philosophy at Notre Dame, agreed with "John Dewey's magnificent summary [that] we want to work out conditions such that every man will have the chance to reach the full stature of his possibilities." However, "the progressivist idea," for Ward, "represent[ed] a needed reform."[251] In his view, though Dewey was raised an evangelical Protestant, as an adult he took a negative, or at most neutral, stance with regard to theology in education. According to Ward, Dewey instead held a secular and meliorist position on education reform, replacing faith in religion with faith in progress.[252] Ward's observation, and implied skepticism of the possibility of progress without religion, echoed Hess's charges of "anti-intellectualism" against Conant's faith in "free enterprise" without moral education and guidance.

However, Catholics were guilty of anti-intellectualism and conformity as well, according to the Bishop of the diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts, John J. Wright, who penned a 1955 article in *Commonweal* titled "Catholics and Anti-Intellectualism." Wright conceded "there is room for much debate as to why so many Catholics have conformed to the prevailing mood of anti-intellectualism in our land." Bishop Wright attributed anti-intellectual and voluntarist

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[250] Griffith, "John Dewey: Theory and Practice," 606.
[251] Leo R. Ward, "The Key to Education," *Commonweal*, 1 June 1951, 184.
[252] Leo R. Ward, "Theology and Liberal Education in Dewey." *Modern Age* 21, No. 2, (1977): 139-146.

"heresies" to divisions in the "Christian flock in these last four centuries."[253] Similarly to Reinhold Niebuhr's warnings of original sin, Wright argued the "dangers of intellectual pride [were] many and grave."[254] Bishop Wright also related Winston Churchill's aforementioned speech at Harvard in 1943. Churchill's telling convocees that the great battles of the future would not be fought between colonial, material, or political empires, but rather between "empires of the mind," struck Wright as having "the ring of prophecy." The Bishop concluded this "battle for the minds of men, for the furtherance of ideas rather than political boundaries or military spheres of influence, [was] a battle in which the Holy Catholic Church not only belong[ed] but must be victorious."[255]

Victory on the ideological battlefield took precedence over victory on the football field. Nutting, like Hutchins, supported eliminating sports from higher education and saw the sport as an anti-intellectual activity which thus had no place at a University. In a 1953 article for *Commonweal* titled "The Failure of American Education," Nutting quoted historian Richard Hofstadter's lambasting of "quasi-intellectual or nonintellectual activities," at universities, "pre-eminently by intercollegiate sport." For Hofstadter, "prominence of athletics in American colleges [was] no accident; it is a primary symptom, a logical outgrowth of the cult of youth, the prevalence of anti-intellectualism, and the schools' need for public attention and private funds."[256] After quoting Hoftadter and other public intellectuals at length, Nutting urgently called for "liberalization of higher education" and knowledge "to be valued for its own sake." Reiterating comments in his 1950 article, Nutting championed religious belief as integral to "the ability to choose rightly."[257]

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[253] John Wright, "Catholics and Anti-intellectualism," *Commonweal*, 16 December 1955, 276.
[254] Wright, "Catholics and Anti-intellectualism," 277.
[255] Wright, "Catholics and Anti-intellectualism," 278.
[256] Willis Nutting, "The Failure of American Education," *Commonweal* 30 January 1953, 428.
[257] Nutting, "The Failure of American Education," 429.

America

In the context of mounting religiosity, many Americans believed religion had an important role to play in education, especially with respect to instilling moral values and fostering "the ability to choose rightly." This was not new for Catholics, who historically preferred sending their children to Catholic schools, for obvious reasons. Indeed, many Catholics found public schooling unacceptable and even inhospitable to their traditional values. For them, the thought of sending their children to public schools was out of the question. As discussed in the previous chapter, this led to a conflict over the church-state issue between Catholics versus Protestants and Jews. Since many Catholics could not send their children to free public schools in good conscience, they regarded private school tuition as an unfair tax. In their view, this arrangement offered no conscionable option than to pay private school tuition, thus infringing on their right to freedom of expression. On the other hand, many Protestants and Jews perceived any federal aid to parochial schools as a breach of the establishment clause. One of the most influential Catholic thinkers on this conflict was John Courtney Murray, who argued for a "common ground" between the two sides in several essays published in *America*.

In one such composition titled "Separation of Church and State," Murray laid out his assessment of the church-state controversy. Interestingly, Murray marshaled an argument closely resembling today's disputes over parental rights and school choice. For Murray, parents objected to sending their children to public schools for academic reasons in addition to religious ones. Many parents unopposed to secular education could not accept the choices of public schools in their districts, leaving them with no other option than to pay private school tuition. Recognition of "the deplorable inequalities in educational opportunities," according to Murray, constituted "the proper-starting point" for his analysis. "Half of the nation's children are ill-educated,"

Murray lamented, "and the States cannot adequately cope with the situation." Americans generally agreed this problem necessitated federal aid but quarreled over the distribution of such funds to private and parochial schools. Written in 1947, Murray's article naturally led to a discussion of pending legislation for federal aid to education.[258]

Murray believed federal aid should equally benefit private and public schools. He praised Senators Aiken, Murray, Walsh, and Morse for urging fellow congressmen "not to encourage or discourage one system of education as against another" during deliberations over the Taft bill. Unfortunately, for Murray, "two organized forces—the secularist educators and clerical Protestantism—[were] bringing their influence to bear in order to write into public policy the exclusion of parochial school children from all public aid, Federal or State." Even worse, Murray discerned "that the Protestant lay electorate [was] being systematically encouraged to believe that the Roman Catholic hierarchy is engaged in a conspiracy (apparently not too successfully disguised!) to split American democracy wide open." Murray blamed "Protestant publications" for the propagation of this attitude. He specifically went after a *Christian Century* editorial in 1946 portraying Catholic demands for federal aid to auxiliary services, in their words, as "the thin edge of the wedge which, when driven all the way in, will split American democracy wide open." As Murray noted, "the thin edge of the wedge" served as "the usual fear-inspiring image" for the *Christian Century*. The magazine deployed the same language one year later in a previously mentioned article accusing Catholics of using this "thin edge" to "give the Church the privileged position in the United States which it confessedly seeks."[259] Though this was true of European Catholics, the same could not be said of most American Catholics, especially Murray.

[258] John Courtney Murray, "Separation of Church and State," *America*, 15 February 1947, 543.
[259] *Christian Century*, "Now Will Protestants Awake?" 26 February 1947, 263.

According to him, such fallacies perpetuated the myth of a Catholic plot to "turn American democracy into a clerical-Fascist dictatorship."[260]

In addition to *Christian Century* editors describing the Catholic position on federal aid as "the thin edge of the wedge," Murray also objected to their framing of the issue in terms of "'separation of Church and State'—that negative, ill-defined, basically un-American formula, with all its overtones of religious prejudice." Like Sheen, Murray observed that the Founding Fathers did not intend to keep the realms of state and church entirely separate. Rather, the Establishment Clause aimed to prevent the state from favoring one religion over others. Since Protestants enjoyed a historical and disproportionate influence in the American public education system, Murray perceived the slogan "separation of church and state" as hypocritical. Furthermore, given the Protestant interest in public education, as previously indicated by Reverend Shaver, preventing federal aid to private schools in effect privileged Protestants over Catholics and Jews. Murray conceived as the "wall of separation between Church and State" as a false one. This fallacy, in the context of Catholic fears of secularism in public education, effectively resulted in the subsidization of a secular religion. As he put it, "this false wall deflects all governmental aid singly and solely towards the subsidization of secularism, as the one national 'religion' and culture, whose agent of propagation is the secularized public school." Murray even suggested this "false wall" effectively segregated American schools on the basis of religion. According to Murray, "secularist educators (whose voice [was] obediently echoed by many Protestants) maintain[ed] that separation of Church and State entail[ed] as a necessary consequence separation of parochial school children from public school children." Murray preferred the term "cooperation" over "separation," and argued this conception offered more room for compromise between Catholics and Protestants. Murray envisaged the dynamic

[260] Murray, "Separation of Church and State," 541-2.

between church and state as one of "relationship," not "separation." Instead of viewing the schools as a realm in which church and state must remain wholly separate, Murray viewed the school [as] a common ground on which State and Church meet in friendly cooperation." Unfortunately, for Murray, European Catholics at the Vatican disagreed. The Vatican demanded Murray cease writing on the church-state issue. However, such intolerance did not represent the sympathies of most American Catholics. Protestants, on the other hand, in the eyes of many Catholics like Murray, clearly exhibited intolerant attitudes in terms of educational administration.[261]

In addition to intolerant attitudes in debates over progressive administration and the relationship between church and state, *America* also chronicled intolerance of dissent among progressive pedagogues. In 1953, Robert C. Hartnett, S.J., recorded an episode resembling today's "cancel culture." Hartnett's account began on September 5th of that year, when the respected progressive education journal *School and Society* hired William W. Brickman as editor. Just fifteen days into his new job--one he kept for 23 years--the new editor, in Hartnett's words, "planted a time bomb under his own desk when he published on Sept 20 an article by Prof. Arthur E. Bestor...attacking the growing monopoly of teacher training by our schools of education." Hartnett echoed Bestor's insistence that teachers should be educated by the universities themselves instead of leaving this responsibility entirely to departments of education. The week prior to the publication of Hartnett's article, a blizzard of letters from teachers colleges piled high on Brickman's desk. This letter-of-protest campaign was organized by "a director of school of education in a Western State university." "Almost all protesters," Brickman commented, "voiced a vehement denial of Bestor's right to be heard in *School and Society.* Shutting off Bestor's avenue of expression [was] not the way to reply to his criticism." Brickman

[261] Murray, "Separation of Church and State," 541-3.

found the response from the protest campaign hypocritical. In his view, the fact that progressive pedagogues who championed "'education for democracy' and 'democracy in education'...conspire[d] to impose 'thought control' on their own respected weekly [was] nothing short of scandalous."[262] In this passage, Hartnett echoed cries of conformity and anti-intellectualism expressed by other critics of progressive pedagogy. He also suggested that progressive pedagogy represented something of an ideological monopoly among teachers colleges. Such intolerance of dissent, similarly–though not limited to one isolated incident–in the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, smacked of authoritarianism. Such unpleasant experiences with progressive pedagogues reinforced many Catholics' preference for liberal education.

Protestant

Christian Century

Like their Catholic counterparts, Protestant writers for *Christian Century* tended to favor liberal education over progressive pedagogy and emphasized the moral guidance of scripture. In 1954, Phillips Moulton published an article for *Christian Century* titled "Education: Christian and Liberal." Moulton argued "that a person with a well-grounded faith is less likely to be lured into espousing some fanatical gospel than is the person with no spiritual moorings." Moulton cited a Harvard report, "General Education in a Free Society," warning that open-mindedness without belief risked fanaticism.[263] Moulton also pointed out that "[m]odern science was begun largely by men who conceived of their endeavors in religious terms. Copernicus, Galileo and Newton sought to understand the universe primarily in order to understand its Creator." Like

[262] Robert C. Hartnett, "Current Comment," *America*, December 1953, 254.
[263] Phillips Moulton, "Education: Christian and Liberal," *Christian Century*, 21 April 1954, 488-9.

Nutting, rather than a strictly scientific or pragmatic approach to knowledge, Moulton advanced the "pursuit of 'truth for its own sake' in order to avoid reducing religion into utilitarianism." In order for people and society to find values worth striving for, Moulton maintained that the answers lay in "the insights of religion, for religion deals with meaning, goals and values...This means that an education which ignores God is incomplete." Quoting Howard Jefferson, president of Clark University, Moulton concluded his article by asking: "not whether religion and liberal education are compatible, but whether an education which excludes religion can be truly liberal."[264]

Reinhold Niebuhr's brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, agreed. He insisted that theological education should be a part of every responsible educator's curriculum. For H. Richard, theological education was "special" because it was "an education that Christians seek to carry on and therefore it is not characterized by that same reliance on the educational process itself that is present in so much of the secular society." Though Niebuhr recognized secular trends in the church, he championed the institution "as a great historical community."[265] Indeed, like Arendt, H. Richard Niebuhr believed the institution of the church served as an important check against totalitarianism. But how was the church to meet future and contemporary challenges? Echoing his brother's warnings of original sin and the inherent fallibility of man's institutions, Niebuhr alerted his readers of the church's acute "need for examining its proclamation and its total work, of maintaining the great tradition while being highly critical of the 'traditions of men,' including its own."[266]

Following the lead of Hutchins and Catholics, Protestants reexamined one such "tradition of men": football. "Catholic Colleges Are Dropping Football" read a January 1955 editorial in

[264] Moulton, "Education: Christian and Liberal," 489.
[265] H. Richard Niebuhr, "Why Restudy Theological Education?" *Christian Century*, 28 April 28 1954, 517.
[266] Niebuhr, Why Restudy Theological Education?" 527.

Christian Century. The magazine reported six Catholic colleges recently disbanding their football teams. "Protestant college presidents might profitably give close attention to what their Roman Catholic colleagues are doing."[267] "Taking a leaf from the Catholic book of strategy," implored an article by John O. Gross in *Christian Century* a year later, "Protestant educational work should aim to have a strong Christian college in every important center in the country."[268]

Like Catholics, Protestants agreed with critics of progressive pedagogy, especially after Sputnik. Editors of *Christian Century* questioned Eisenhower's initiative to direct aid to STEM fields at the expense of the liberal arts. An editorial in *Christian Century* called this "a mistaken decision" and reaffirmed their position that the "greatest need is for men and women soundly grounded in the humanities." Furthermore, *Century* editors likened Eisenhower's decision to "the regimented society" of the Soviet Union.[269] Indeed, though Protestants were more subtle in their accusations of creeping conformity and authoritarianism than Catholics, they shared similar fears.

A 1952 editorial in *Christian Century* illustrated some agreement between Protestants and Catholics concerning progressive administration. *Christian Century* covered an ongoing controversy between Conant and Archbishop Cushing of Boston. Like Lynd, Cushing deeply resented Conant's comments about private schools. In his reply to Conant, printed in the *Saturday Review*, Cushing accused the Harvard professor of "'Fascism' six times in the last three paragraphs."[270] Nathanael M. Guptill provided further reporting on the feud. "Protestants viewed the debate with mixed feelings," wrote Guptill. "While they agreed with Pres. Conant that

[267] *Christian Century*, "Catholic Colleges Are Dropping Football," 5 January 1955, 6-7.
[268] John O. Gross, "Protestant Higher Education," *Christian Century*, 11 April 1956, 454.
[269] *Christian Century*, "Are Technocrats Our Greatest Need?" 27 November 1957.
[270] *Christian Century*, "Can Parochial Schools be 'Catholicized'?" 21 May 21, 1952, 604.

private schools must be financed by private funds, they were inclined to approve the archbishop's declaration that the Harvard educator underestimates the dangers of secularism."[271]

Also like Catholics, Protestants criticized themselves for having fallen for the secularist trends in society. "Catholic Complains For Us All" read a 1958 editorial in the *Century*. "The healthiest element within Roman Catholic parochial education," for *Christian Century*'s editors, was "the critical faction which time and again diagnoses the system's principal weakness." *Christian Century* acknowledged Magda Arnold, a professor of psychology at Loyola University, for charging "that 'Catholic performance in the intellectual field lags behind that of Protestants, while Jewish intellectuals are leading the field. . . . Our Catholic colleges produce good Catholics but not such good scholars.'" *Christian Century* further praised Arnold for prompting the Catholic Church to reexamine its institutions. Arnold charged the church with failing to "provide a climate suitable to academic growth." She argued that Catholic education was too focused on spiritual training at the expense of "continuing improvement in teaching and teachers, with students being emotionally attached to their religion and accepting without question anything they are told." This charge, the *Century* noted, could also be fairly applied to Protestant churches: "Exalting piety, they have lost learning." These comments also reflected the fear among Protestants of Catholic conformity.

Another article in *Christian Century* by Hubert Noble also echoed these fears, but the author also found Catholics' expansion of private colleges worthy of emulation. Noble pointed to a statistic indicating that "between 1940 and 1950 Protestant colleges decreased by 14 [percent] while Roman Catholic colleges increased by 23." For Noble, this finding raised questions about Protestants' commitment to education: "Does Protestantism believe strongly enough in higher education to really sacrifice for it?" In addition to his suggestion that Catholics were more

[271] Nathanael Guptill, "Clash on Public-Private Schools," *Christian Century*, 21 May 1952, 623.

serious about education than Protestants, Noble also observed that education had become "a tool for the nation to use in achieving the ends of the cold war and survival." Though he did not explicitly mention Sputnik, Noble saw the emphasis on STEM fields in the National Defense Education Act rendered the liberal arts an "after-thought." Like other Christian writers, including Catholics, Noble's ideal of liberal education included "moral and spiritual development." And though he did not use the term "fascist," like Hess, Noble expressed fears of state control over education that resembled concerns in *Catholic World*, *America*, and *Commonweal* about trends toward secularism and conformity in education. He implored his Protestant readership to ask themselves the following question: "What is our part in keeping alive education that is independent and liberal when education comes increasingly under the control of the state?"[272]

Jew

Commentary

Interestingly, *Commentary*, a Jewish publication, did not echo Cushing or Hess's charges of "fascism" against Conant. Out of the three major religious groups, it would seem Jews would be most alert to threats of totalitarianism. With the exception of Herberg, writers for *Commentary*, the most popular Jewish magazine, tended to sympathize with the worries of secularism but to a lesser degree than their Christian counterparts. In the May 1953 edition of *Commentary*, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a conservative Rabbi and advocate for incorporating talmudic and kabalistic texts into the western literary canon, published an article titled "Jewish Education Must Be Religious Education." In addition to urging his readers to make the Talmud and Bible the "beginning" and "major content of Jewish education," Hertzberg also favored

[272] Hubert Noble, "Protestants and Higher Education," *Christian Century*, 1 April 1959, 384-5.

liberal education over progressive pedagogy: "There is warrant in the Jewish past for the teaching of even those aspects of the Law that have no practical relevance."[273] However, writers for *Commentary* were not so quick as their Christian counterparts to sign on to liberal education and Hutchins's "Great Books" program. In September, F. R. Leavis, a highly-influential literary critic from Britain, published an article in *Commentary* responding to Hutchins's program. Leavis believed Hutchins too quickly conflated liberal education with his program. Moreover, he doubted Hutchins's assertion that democracy was doomed unless every American received a liberal education: "If Mr. Hutchins is right, then we can have no hope for democracy."[274]

The most prolific writer on education for *Commentary* was Spencer Brown, an English teacher at an ivy-league prep-school, the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. Like Leavis, Brown questioned the effectiveness of Hutchins's "Great Books" program. Nevertheless, like Hertzberg, Brown believed the Bible had a place in every American's education as "one of the finest treasuries of our culture."[275] In an article titled "The Bible and a Liberal Education: its Benefits, as Seen by an Unbeliever," Brown supported the Bible in education for its moral insights and its contribution to literature. When referring to the Bible, Brown meant the King James translation.[276] After articulating his criticisms of the Bible, Brown maintained that, even from a Jewish perspective, the influence of the book itself warranted consideration in the American curriculum: "It is easier to name its inconsistencies and limitations...than to analyze its power." In this way, Brown compared the Bible to Shakespeare as a great work of literature for all its foibles and virtues: "Take away Shakespeare's faults, and the less Shakespeare he." Brown held that all good literature, religious or not, provided valuable moral content. "In short," Brown

[273] Arthur Hertzberg, "Jewish Education Must Be Religious Education," *Commentary*, May 1953, 452-3.
[274] F. R. Leavis, "The 'Great Books" and Liberal Education," *Commentary*, September 1953, 227.
[275] Spencer Brown, "The Bible and a Liberal Education," *Commentary*, October 1953, 320.
[276] Brown, "The Bible and a Liberal Education," 311.

summarized, “the Bible is a moral book in the sense that all literature is moral; it instructs as all literature instructs; it is different from other books in excellence and size rather than in kind.”[277] Brown anticipated rebuttals that this analogy was unfair, but from his view Shakespeare and the Bible were “different in manner and degree, not in kind.” Furthermore, Brown contended that both were “filled with moral wisdom and verbal felicity; to destroy the latter must impair the delight by which we attain the former.”[278]

“Faced with the demonstrable failure of church and home to make religion attractive,” Brown observed, “the sects have chivvied the public school to let them in or itself to give religious instruction. Their pressure has been crude, emotional, sometimes disingenuous. ...On the other hand I know that if our culture is to be preserved and transmitted at its best, it must include the Bible. Church and home failing, the school must undertake the job and hand it over to the English teacher.” Brown concluded “the Bible should be taught,” but not as theology. Rather he suggested that it should be taught “as great fiction, history, myth, and poetry” by English teachers like himself. Brown’s final paragraphs resembled the “affluence and anxiety” of the period. While he wished future generations to inherit the prosperity of the ‘50s, he acknowledged that technology and leisure, ironically, posed threats to intellectual attainment. Left to their own devices, Brown feared that American youths were “unlikely to read the Book of Books concealed inside a comic, or, like latter-day Abe Lincolns, by the flickering light of the TV set; and if they do, they will need our help in the reading.” In his last remark, Brown not only cautioned readers against the dangers of wealth, but the trend of secularism as well. Though Brown acknowledged secularists’ “justifiable apprehension” about the blurring of separation

[277] Brown, “The Bible and a Liberal Education,” 312-13.
[278] Brown, “The Bible and a Liberal Education,” 319.

between church and state, he warned *Commentary*'s readers to resist anxieties "of the secularists to deprive us and our children of its delight and wisdom."[279]

Brown feared the effects of secularism posed a threat to moral education and education in general. In his view, all influential works of literature, religious or otherwise, deserved a place in the school. In this way, he promoted liberal education and shared concerns about secularism with progressive education's critics. Brown also sided against critics of progressive education when it came to memorization: "There is not much to be done with these masterpieces except to memorize them."[280] However, Brown found things to praise and criticize when it came to proponents of both liberal and progressive education.

In March 1954, Brown published an article in *Commentary* titled "The Hot War Over Our Schools." He credited Bestor for "his radical and...profoundly sensible discussion of teacher-training [at] the center of his whole argument." For Brown, Bestor "rightly ridiculed many aspects of the core curriculum." Brown also lauded Bestor's "suggestion for an integration of the liberal arts around the study of American civilization, though hedged with fairly careful qualifications." Brown chided Bestor's advocacy of "that crammer's paradise, the rigid but easy Regents' Examinations." However, Brown found *Educational Wastelands* more praiseworthy than *Quackery in the Public Schools* and *The Conflict in Education*. Brown dismissed Lynd for employing "present educational malpractice or humbug as excuse to reach for his axe and matches" and Hutchins for deploying "elephantine absurdity in the Syntopicon of Great Books." Furthermore, Brown was slower to reject progressive education for its lack of religious conviction in its pragmatic underpinnings. Indeed, Brown ended his article with three passages from Dewey, whom he dubbed "a middle-of-the-road teacher."[281]

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[279] Brown, "The Bible and a Liberal Education," 320.
[280] Brown, "The Bible and a Liberal Education," 317.
[281] Spencer Brown, "The Hot War Over Our Schools," *Commentary*, March 1954, 230-241.

> [P]ragmatism is a peculiarly American philosophy; it is hardly surprising that John Dewey, who may be loosely termed a pragmatist over his own protest, proved so attractive to American teachers, who had in any case to operate in secular schools. It is a pity that educators know only one philosopher, and they should learn more. ...he still has much to teach us in our efforts to bring about the kind of education that he and we would desire.[282]

Brown chided Hutchins and other critics of progressive pedagogy for "exacerbating distrust between school and home" and "diverting the energies of the school toward self-defense and away from its proper business."[283] Notably, Brown excluded Conant and Bestor from these criticisms.

Like Bestor, Brown advocated policies to accommodate the talents of "gifted" students. In a 1956 article titled "How to Educate the Gifted Child?" Brown advocated "special training for the unusually able...contingent upon demonstration of that ability without reference to financial ability, and granted that such training is not without its psychological and social hazards, it should be acceptable as being efficient without being undemocratic."[284] However, Brown's democratic impulse presented him with a contradiction, or, as he saw it, a paradox: "Paradoxically, the readiest way to judge the success of educational enrichment is to note whether and how much it has widened the gap between the gifted child and the average."[285] Brown's preferred means of widening this gap was what he called "enrichment," or "adding to the curriculum other material or experiences not offered the average child."[286]

After the launch of Sputnik I, many blamed progressive education, but not Brown. In a 1958 article, he posed the question everyone was asking after the Soviets had beat the U.S. to space: "Have Our Schools Failed?" For Brown, the answer was "no." Brown attributed America's loss in the space race to "not an educational but a political failure. Increased

[282] Brown, "The Hot War Over Our Schools," 241.
[283] Brown, "The Hot War Over Our Schools," 168.
[284] Spencer Brown, "How to Educate the Gifted Child?" *Commentary*, June 1956, 535.
[285] Brown, "How to Educate the Gifted Child?" 357.
[286] Brown, "How to Educate the Gifted Child?" 353.

appropriations and governmental effort could have hoisted a satellite much sooner if it had seemed desirable to the people in power. It didn't."[287] Brown believed that fears of the superiority of the Soviet's education system were taken advantage of by critics of progressive education, to grind their pedagogical axes. He denounced *Life* magazine's article comparing the Soviet and American education systems as "misleading in the extreme." Nevertheless, for Brown, Sputnik made it clear that the U.S. "must appropriate more money for everything [and] teach more mathematics and science, without neglecting the humanities."[288] Despite his criticisms of some proponents of liberal education, Brown still placed a high value on the liberal arts. Furthermore, he praised Conant, a critic of progressive education, for having the most practical plan for reforming American education, because it had "the merit of being a composite of actual practices." Conant suggested "three main sequences, for the bright, the average, and the slow student." The curriculum for "bright" students consisted of preparation for college-level "mathematics, science, and language." For "average" students, Conant's plan provided for "a solid but less advanced academic course with considerable vocational training, leading perhaps to business or highly skilled labor." Finally, "slow" students were to follow "simplified general studies and basic shop courses." Brown acknowledged some limitations to Conant's plan, which was "most appropriate for large, comprehensive high schools."[289] Moreover, Brown argued that the federal aid to education necessary to implement Conant's plan "inevitably [ran] into difficulties of principle and politics over the questions of integration and subsidy to religious institutions."[290] Furthermore, though Brown frequently criticized Hutchins, he acknowledged

[287] Spencer Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" *Commentary*, June 1958, 461.
[288] Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" 465
[289] Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" 466.
[290] Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" 467.

problems with Conant's vocational approach and echoed concerns of conformity observed by William Whyte in *The Organization Man*:

> ...professors of the humanities are desperately striving to keep their few islands of culture in the liberal-arts colleges from being washed away by the rising tide of "business majors" and other quasi-vocational courses, most of which are of very dubious value even in training for any known vocation. ...Colleges today are entirely too successful in molding boys into organization men.[291]

Nevertheless, Brown found Hutchins's plan less practical than Conant's. For Brown, Conant offered an answer to a problem the U.S. had yet to solve: "the difficulty of providing a decent 'terminal education' in the high school for the student unable or unwilling to go on. Dr. Hutchins would teach him the Great Books. I'd like to see him do it." Brown contended that professors "and Dr. Hutchins in particular" had no experience in teaching students with low IQs because they "never had to try."[292]

In a 1952 column title "The Religious Stirring on the Campus," Herberg reported his astonishment with the student demand at large universities for more courses on religion. "Such a thing would probably have been unthinkable not so very long ago," noted Herberg. " It certainly would have been unthinkable in my own student days." Herberg attributed this to the weaknesses of secularist ideologies as demonstrated by recent developments of the 20th century. "The utopias and panaceas, the messianic faiths in science, planning, progress, and revolution, have collapsed," wrote Herberg, "and with them have gone the shibboleths that passed muster in another age." Such sensibilities no longer satisfied smart students of the post-war age. "Thinking young people of today demand something deeper," Herberg observed, "something more serious, something that bears a more authentic relation to human existence." Much as Sheen and other proponents of including neo-orthodox ideas in education, Herberg reasoned that studying

[291] Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" 468.
[292] Brown, "Have Our Schools Failed?" 470.

religions encouraged critical thinking and decision making. As he put it, the "[c]apacity for decision is largely dependent on the courage to clarify one's basic goals and to venture much in pursuit of them." Fundamentally, for Herberg, this was "always a religious problem." Furthermore, in his view, it was an unavoidable problem. Herberg believed humans were "*not* free to decide" (Herberg's italics) between faith and non-faith. To this point, he quoted Dotoyevsky's famous line: "'Man must worship something; if he does not worship God, he will worship an idol made of wood or of gold or of ideas.'"[293] Indeed, as indicated in a succeeding article in *Commentary*, Herberg was especially concerned with worship of ideas.

Herberg summed up the religious tensions over education with characteristic insight and clarity in another article for *Commentary*, titled "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State: A Divisive Threat to Our Democracy?" In it, Herberg lamented "the marked deterioration of Protestant-Catholic relations in this country" and "warn[ed] Jews against exacerbating these tensions." Written in 1952, Herberg's article anticipated some of the ideas he articulated in *Protestant–Catholic–Jew* three years later. Herberg identified the "issue of church and state in education" as "the most persistent occasion for Protestant-Catholic conflict" at the time. But this dispute had more to do with intellectual developments over time than religious difference. Herberg reminded his readers "that the American public school system [was] preeminently the creation of American Protestantism." Thus, many Protestants held "a deep emotional–one might even say, proprietary–interest in the public school." Contrary to the position of most Protestants, Herberg pointed out the "historical fact that neither in the minds of the Founding Fathers nor in the thinking of the American people through the 19th and into the 20th century, did the 'separation of church and state' imply unconcern with, much less hostility to, religion on the

[293] Will Herberg, "The Religious Stirring on the Campus: A Student Generation 'Accessible to Good,'" *Commentary*, March 1952, 242-48.

part of the government." In fact, for Herberg, American public education always aimed to promote religion as one of its primary objectives.[294]

Like Sheen, Herberg referenced Jefferson as an example of a Founding Father who saw a place for the study of religion in education. Thirty-one years after the ratification of the Constitution, Jefferson wrote that the establishment clause of the First Amendment was not "to be understood that instruction in religious opinion and duties was meant to be precluded by the public authorities, as indifferent to the interest of society. On the contrary, the relations which exist between Man and his Maker, and the duties resulting from those relations, are the most interesting and important to every human being, and the most incumbent on his study and investigation." Herberg maintained that public education in America operated on this principle for most of the country's history. For him, the widespread notion among Protestants that there ever existed in education a "high and impregnable wall of separation between church and state," in Justice Black's words, was a fairly recent intellectual development.

In fact, Herberg saw this as a remarkable "change in the *spirit* of public school education which today is no longer religious, neither Catholic, nor Protestant, nor Jewish; it is, by and large, *secularist*, even militantly so. (Herberg's italics) But even more striking," for Herberg, was that "the most influential educational philosophies and centers of teachers' training are self-consciously secularist, and so [was] educational practice in almost every part of the country."[295] Like Murray and Sheen, Herberg argued that public education and pedagogy not only favored secularism, but actively promoted it. This raised a paradoxical question: why did so many Protestants, who presumably took their faiths seriously, gradually prefer secularism and separation of church and state in education? Herberg attributed this to what he called a

[294] Will Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State: A Divisive Threat to Our Democracy?" *Commentary*, November 1952, 450-2.
[295] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 451.

"minority-group psychology" that occupied the minds of many Protestants who watched the growing enrollment in Catholic schools and increasing attendance at Catholic churches with uncertain trepidation. "[O]n the whole," Herberg discerned, "the crusade for the preservation of the 'wall of separation' between church and state in education as elsewhere is conceived by Protestants as a defensive campaign against Catholic 'aggression.'" Herberg went on to note, that "[p]ractically every Protestant leader with whom I discussed the matter referred in vague but disturbed terms to the 'ominous growth' of the Catholic Church in this country and expressed grave concern over what the future might bring."[296] Herberg attributed much of this minority-group defensiveness among Protestants to the fact that the Catholic Church's most notable successes occurred "in those parts of the country in which Protestants and Catholics come into direct contact, particularly in the urban centers." In the cities and suburbs, Protestants observed Catholics enrolling more students in their parochial school system, which was rapidly expanding, and more importantly, "Catholic churches [were] full, where Protestant churches so frequently remain half empty." Thus, for Herberg, Protestants "developed a defensive minority-group psychology in which it sees itself threatened on all sides." This mindset was not entirely new, however. Aspects of this minority-group psychology manifested as early as the late 19th century, interestingly, in the wake of waves of Catholic immigration to the United States.

However, as Herberg pointed out, Protestant fears of "Catholic domination" were not reinforced by statistics. From 1926 to 1950, Catholic Church grew by 53.9 percent; Protestantism increased 63.7 percent. But then again, the majority of the expansion in Protestantism during this time occurred in rural areas, particularly among Southern Baptists, where Protestants and Catholics came in contact with each other less frequently than in urban areas.

[296] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 453.

Nevertheless, Herberg found some legitimacy in many Protestants' concerns with the growing influence of Catholicism and its potential dangers to America's democratic traditions and institutions. He, like many other Jews, shared with Protestants a concern that some aspects of Catholicism were antithetical to American democracy, even authoritarian:

> "[T]raditionaly formulated political and social aims of the Catholic Church sometimes run counter to what most Americans hold to be the democratic way of life. The claims and pretensions of the Church to legal primacy, if not monopoly, in religion, education, and family relations, seem to many, as they do to me, incompatible, in their authoritarianism, with the liberal, pluralistic foundations of American democracy.

Despite his sympathy with Protestant reservations with Catholicism's growing influence in American democracy and institutions, he found "the Protestant reaction …surely far out of proportion to any conceivable threat or provocation." It seemed to Herberg, as he "sadly noted,...unity against Rome" remained the only thing that united American Protestantism. Thus, Protestantism became more defined by what it was *against* than what it was *for.* This lay at the heart of Herberg's explanation for American Protestantism's paradoxical movement toward aggressive secularism: "It is this Protestant negativism and defensiveness that has opened the way for the strange alliance between a considerable section of American Protestantism and the forces of militant secularism." To support of his claim that Protestantism could only organize behind what it was against, Herberg referenced "the Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State," notably organized behind what it was against–namely, the influence of Catholicism in education–rather than what it was for. Herberg also pointed out that the POAU began "under the auspices of *Christian Century* and a number of high Protestant dignitaries." Thus, Herberg revealed a concerted effort among Protestant leaders, organizations, and publications to influence public opinion toward a secular, even anti-Catholic, approach to education.[297]

[297] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 454.

Herberg not only found this a worrisome development; it was counterproductive to Protestant interests. Since Protestantism increasingly "conceded the primary secularist claim that religion is strictly a 'private affair' and that culture and social life are to be built on humanistic foundations," the faith-group withdrew its religious influence from many areas of public life, including public education. Their efforts to combat "Catholic domination" backfired, as they "left the field free to the Catholic Church, which…naturally…[took] full advantage."[298] But Protestants were not alone in receiving Herberg's criticism, which he extended to his fellow Jews.

For obvious reasons, and due to fresh memories, minority-group psychology was more pronounced among Jews than Protestants, and Catholics for that matter. Though, like Protestants, Herberg believed Jewish concerns of Catholic influence in education were legitimate, he found the resulting alliance between Jews and Protestants in their crusade against "Catholic domination…short-sighted and self-defeating"--literally:

> Ultimately, man finds the autonomy which secularism offers him an intolerable burden, and he tends to throw it off in favor of some new heteronomy of race or nation, of party or state, that the idolatrous substitute faiths of the time hold out to him. In such idolatrous cultures, the Jew is inevitably the chosen victim.[299]

According to Herberg, avoiding the dangers of secularism and totalitarianism in education required that American education remain pluralistic. This pluralism, Herberg maintained, was a unique feature of the Anglo-American tradition. In contrast to the pluralistic Anglo-American system, France and other European countries "looked upon [education] not as a device for making up the inadequacies of individual or group effort, but as a 'natural' activity of the state designed primarily to inculcate a common doctrine and create a uniform mentality among the citizens." Furthermore, the aim of balancing "the inadequacies of individual or group effort"

[298] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 455.
[299] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 459.

sounded much like the Progressive obsession with "adjustment." Herberg also echoed Arendt as he went on to explain the danger of relinquishing too many intermediary institutions to the state. From the Hitlerian and Stalinist perspective, as well as that of the progressives to a certain extent, "private individuals and non-state institutions (churches, for examples) really have no business in the field of education; they are rivals of the state and such rivalry is held to be intrinsically 'anti-social.'" If the point was lost on the reader, Herberg warned that such ideas recently demonstrated "a marked authoritarian, even totalitarian, potential." Like Sheen, though with important qualifications, Herberg cautioned his audience against progressive education's tendency toward secularism, conformity and authoritarianism.[300]

Also like Sheen and other Catholics, Herberg believed the general American education establishment failed to reconcile itself to the Supreme Court's decision in *Pierce v. The Society of Sisters* (1925), which struck down an Oregon statute requiring all children attend public school.[301] In fact, he asserted "secularist educators" constantly sought "some way of circumventing the intent of the Oregon decision." This Herberg evidenced by quoting a professor at Columbia Teachers College, John L. Childs. "A more satisfactory compulsory education law,' suggested Childs, "might be done in which the state would require each child to spend at least one half of the compulsory school period in the common, or public, schools." Herberg also shared Catholic fears that too much emphasis on separation of church and state created the intellectual milieu that encouraged the popularity of "Blanshardism." Though, like Peter Viereck, Herberg was not himself Catholic, he agreed with Viereck's claim that "Catholic-baiting is the anti-Semitism of the liberals." In contrast to the notion that the Pope endorsed fascism, Herberg believed the Catholic Church remained "one of the most important forces fighting Communist

[300] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 456.
[301] *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925).

totalitarianism on a world scale; and that the attempt to equate the two as like perils to American democracy on the ground that both alike are authoritarian systems is dangerous nonsense and could lead to disaster."[302] Although Herberg agreed with Protestants and fellow Jews that history earned the Catholic Church a certain amount of skepticism, he condemned "'liberal' slogans" that preyed off "fears, prejudices, and aggressions in an approved fashion." For Herberg, such liberal slogans explained the popularity of Blanshardism among many Protestants and Jews.

Herberg concluded his long article with some words of advice for each major American faith-group. First, Protestantism needed to abandon its minority-group defensiveness and articulate a position with "more to offer than an intransigent determination to prevent Catholic parochial school children from using public buses." Second, Herberg implored his fellow "Jews, even more than Protestants," to overcome their own minority-group psychology, despite its historical justification. Third, Catholics needed "to realize the deep suspicion with which their every move is regarded by a large segment of the American people, and admit, at least to themselves, that there is considerable historical justification for such suspicion." Finally, Herberg believed "all of us, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and secularists too, must realize the seriousness of the present tensions and our responsibility to do everything in our power to allay them, certainly not to exacerbate them."[303]

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In Herberg's estimation, Murray's writings on the church-state issue represented a real effort to relieve tensions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. In fact, Murray significantly influence Herberg's thinking on the subject.[304] Indeed, Herberg and Murray both identified an ironic coalition of secular teachers, Protestants, and Jews united against Catholic demands for

[302] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 460.
[303] Herberg, "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," 461-2.
[304] Ausmus, *Will Herberg*, 144.

federal aid to private schools. Both perceived *Christian Century* as a primary propagator of anti-Catholic sentiment, intent on convincing its readership that any federal aid to parochial schools violated the separation of church and state. Murray and Herberg found these arguments hypocritical of a Protestant publication, because Protestants historically enjoyed a disproportionate influence and interest in American public schools. Thus, if federal aid only benefited public schools, such monies privileged Protestants over Catholics by default. Such an arrangement would also harm parents who found the public schools available to them undesirable. Whether for religious conviction, academics, or both, many Americans could not in good conscience send their children to their local public school. This left them with only one option: private school, and the accompanying high tuition fees. The choice between an inadequate public school or an expensive private school, for many parents, was hardly a free choice at all. This was especially true of poor and working-class parents who could not afford private school tuition. In this way, the debates over federal aid to education took on their modern shape. Indeed, as detailed in the conclusion, this very issue regarding school choice came out of the post-war debates over education.

Conclusion

As indicated by the periodical literature, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, despite their differences, shared concerns about progressive education. Writers for *Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, and *Commentary* shared concerns with critics of progressive education like Lynd and Hutchins about losing traditional values in education. In the context of post-war fears of "other-direction," to use Riesman's language, many Americans wanted education to be more "inner-directed." For them, liberal education seemed better suited to these aims than progressive education. Amid anxieties about the relationship between the individual and society, coupled with rising religiosity and neo-orthodoxy, many Americans believed religion deserved a place in education. In addition to religious concerns, practical considerations also animated debates over education. The emerging conservative movement played a significant role in shaping the contours of such religious and practical concerns, and vice versa. Indeed, Peter Viereck, the man who gave the movement a name, described conservatism as "the political secularization of the doctrine of original sin." What Viereck wrote next is worth quoting at length as he described the religiosity of the period as a phenomenon motivated by fears of conformity, secularism, and authoritarianism.

> In contrast, radicalism is Rousseau's "natural goodness of man" collectivized into a touching political faith in "the masses." Nazi radicalism equates Rousseau's Noble Savage with the radical mass (the *Volk*); Marxist radicalism equates him with the economic mass (the prolitariat). But he is not worshiped like this by the churches. The churches, Protestant, Catholic, or the closely related Jewish, draw the fangs of the Noble Savage and clip his ignoble claw. By so doing, and when and if they practice what they preach, they are performing their share of the conservative function, the function of spanning the gap between the cave man and society. Marx gave the ablest summary of the issue when he dreaded religion as "the opiate of the people"--that is, the tamer, pacifier, civilizer of the people. The contemporary un-civilizers are only logical in persecuting religion."[305]

[305] Peter Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1966, orig. pub., 1949), 46-47.

For Viereck, and many other previously mentioned intellectuals, religion served as a bulwark against fascism and Stalinism. Significantly, new conservatism, mounting religiosity, and concerns over education represented related responses to geo-political developments. Naturally, these movements also concerned themselves with domestic issues and the relationship between man and society, or as Viereck put it, "cave man and society," the gap between which he believed to be properly filled by religion. For him, and many others, Marx's observation of religion acting as a sedative upon human nature seemed increasingly appealing, especially at a time when ideas of man's inherent sinfulness proved all the more compelling.

In terms of religion, the conservative movement contributed to post-war religiosity and renewed emphasis on original sin. On the practical side, conservatives maintained that the discipline, rigor, and drill of liberal education prepared high-achieving students better than progressive pedagogy. Such positions gained greater currency in America across the political spectrum after the launch of Sputnik. Many blamed progressive education for America's failure to beat the Soviets to space. Although many Americans shared a desire to secure a liberal education for their children, they strongly disagreed over the administration of such a curriculum. In this way, criticisms of progressive education ranged from the pedagogical to the administrative.

With regard to pedagogy, religious leaders, liberal educationists, and even administrative progressives like Conant, agreed that liberal education cultivated critical thinking skills better than progressive pedagogy. Furthermore, critics challenged the pragmatic philosophy underlying progressive pedagogy on religious and practical grounds. Many religious leaders found pragmatism fundamentally inconsistent with Americans' religious values, which were all the more prevalent during the '50s. On the practical level, both secular and religious critics believed

progressive pedagogy failed to foster the minds of high-achieving students, and they advocated liberal education as a solution. Though Protestants, Catholics, and Jews voiced similar objections to education, they did so to varying degrees. As indicated by *Commonweal*'s favorable report on progressive education at Corpus Christi School, some Catholics expressed willingness to experiment with progressive pedagogy. However, most articles in *Commonweal*, *Catholic World*, and *America* criticized progressive pedagogy and championed liberal education. Protestant and Jewish periodicals also tended to favor liberal education. However, in several columns by Spencer Brown, *Commentary* dedicated more space to defending progressive pedagogy than its Protestant or Catholic competitors. Nevertheless, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews shared a general preference for liberal pedagogy over progressive. Although editors at *Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, and *Commentary* often chastised each other, they generally shared concerns that progressive education threatened traditional, "inner-directed" values.

With regard to administration, however, such consensus fell apart. Though Protestants, Catholics, and Jews shared concerns about secularism in education, they responded disparately to Conant's administrative progressivism. In general, Catholics reacted more vehemently against progressive administration than Protestants and Jews. With considerable interest in a vast parochial school system, Catholics rejected Conant's proposal to eliminate private schools. Indeed, as evidenced by charges of "fascism" against Conant, some Catholics resented progressive administrators even more than progressive pedagogues. Though Protestants and Jews shared some concerns of Conant's proposals with Catholics, they reacted much less passionately. This difference between Protestants and Jews versus Catholics translated to debates over federal aid to education.

As Herberg and Murray observed, an ironic coalition of Protestants, Jews, and secular administrators combined against Catholics in the debates over federal aid. This divide effectively prevented the passage of federal aid to education until Sputnik provided enough urgency to pass the National Defense Education Act in 1958. On one hand, Protestants, Jews, and progressive administrators maintained that any federal aid to private and parochial schools constituted a violation of the separation of church and state. Catholics, on the other hand, pointed to the *Everson* decision as evidence to the contrary. Though the *Everson* decision upheld federal aid to auxiliary services, Protestants, Jews, and progressive administrators remained steadfast in their opposition to any such appropriations. Even when the National Catholic Welfare Conference agreed to legislation that only allowed 2% of federal monies to auxiliary services, Protestants, Jews, and progressive administrators refused to compromise. Without any other means of obtaining federal funding for their private schools, Catholics changed tactics toward promoting a voucher system that would allow federal funds to follow the student to their parents' school of choice.

Herberg weighed into the emerging school choice issue in an introduction of *Freedom of Choice in Education* (1958) by Virgil C. Blum, S.J., another Jesuit whom Herberg admired. Blum's book represented one of many tax-credit plans that emerged as a solution to the deadlock over the religious issue that thwarted federal aid to education. In his introduction to this work, Herberg gave his endorsement to Blum's plan along with several reasons for doing so. Similarly to his evaluation of *Christian Century*'s article, "Pluralism–National Menace," Herberg condemned Americans who characterized pluralism as "'divisive' and 'undemocratic.'"[306] While Herberg recognized historic pluralism in American society, he identified education as the only

[306] Will Herberg, introduction in Virgil C. Blum, *Freedom of Choice in Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977, orig. pub., 1958.), xi.

area in American life in which pluralism "arous[ed] the suspicion, even the resentment, of a considerable number" of Americans: education. Furthermore, Herberg noted that education constituted the only field in which Americans accepted "government monopoly, otherwise so repugnant to the American genius." Protestants, Jews, and secular teachers objected to private schools, according to Herberg, "because of the threat to democracy alleged to be inherent in" them. A Burkean conservative and influential member of the emerging conservative movement by this time, Herberg moved to level a conservative critique of "this puzzling anomaly in the American liberal consciousness."[307] Indeed, his lambast echoed Viereck's comment that "Catholic-baiting is the anti-Semitism of the liberals."

Herberg chided this liberal position as ironically and "profoundly illiberal since it not only discourages pluralism…but also substantially denies freedom of choice in a field where, above all, freedom of choice would seem to be desirable and necessary." Herberg maintained that parents who exercised their freedom to choose a private school "are heavily penalized, since under present practices they can receive only minimal aid from the community." For Herberg, private schools clearly served an important–perhaps the most important–public service of educating citizens. Since the education of students, whether they attended public or private school, clearly fell under the public interest, many Americans like Herberg believed private schools should receive public funding. "Since most of the nongovernmental schools in this country [were] schools under church or religious auspices," however, Herberg found the debate over federal aid to education "further bedeviled by the emotion-charged issue that goes under the rubric of 'separation of church and state.'"[308]

[307] Herberg, introduction in Virgil C. Blum, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, xi.
[308] Herberg, introduction in Virgil C. Blum, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, xii.

Unfortunately, according to Herberg, emotion rather than reason informed the coalition of secular teachers, Protestants, and Jews. "Contrary to the facts of history," Herberg lamented, "contrary to the general burden of Supreme Court decision, it is still vehemently asserted in certain quarters that due recognition of the independent school as a public educational institution performing a public education function would be a violation of the First Amendment."[309] Having exhausted all appeals to history and reason, Catholics, as well as other religious and secular parents, shifted their energies toward promoting tax credit plans that permited a portion of each parents' tax dollars to follow their children to their non-public school of choice instead of automatically funding the local public school. Blum's book offered one such strategy, and Herberg's endorsement along with it. With these new tactics, the modern debates over education took their recognizable form.

The above developments and observations have particular relevance today in the wake of a recent Supreme Court case involving religious discrimination. In *Espinoza v. Montana*, the Supreme Court ruled Montana's state tax-credit programs that benefited non-religious private schools but excluded parochial schools unconstitutional under the Free Exercise Clause of the Constitution.[310] Interestingly enough, like the *Everson* decision, the Court split in a close, 5-4 decision. Both cases also involved questions of public aid to education and religious discrimination. In the *Espinoza* case, the Supreme court upheld the state's right to its tax-credit plans to supplement cost of private schools but maintained such schemes cannot exclude religious schools.

If federal funds can simply follow the student, regardless of attendance at a private or public school, the Supreme Court's ruling certainly opens the possibility that private parochial

[309] Herberg, introduction in Virgil C. Blum, *Freedom of Choice in Education*, xii.
[310] *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, 18-1195 U.S. 591 (2020).

schools may eventually receive federal funds more directly. Such an arrangement has the potential of leading to undesirable unity between church and state. This was the same concern that animated many Protestants, Jews, and secular teachers during the post-war period. However, the *Espinoza* case is further complicated by each parents' freedom expression, also protected in the First Amendment. Indeed, this was one of the main concerns of many post-war Catholics. Thus, much of the current debates over education originated in the post-war period: an age of affluence and anxiety; an era of rising religiosity and conservatism; a time when Americans seriously contended with the question of the relationship between the individual and society; and a period in which acknowledgement of intellectual pride and original sin seemed particularly pertinent.

Though context has vastly changed since the post-war period, perhaps neo-orthodoxy–in terms of recognizing the dangers of intellectual pride–is just as relevant to our time as they were in the post-war period. Whether or not readers consider these pages a historical contribution, perhaps they will at least draw wisdom from some of the towering intellects previously discussed. As we debate present concerns over education and the proper relationship between the individual and mass society, may we heed Herberg's warning to "realize the seriousness of the present tensions and our responsibility to do everything in our power to allay them, certainly not to exacerbate them." Perhaps a renewed recognition of intellectual pride could do much to serve that end.

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