

SCHOOLING FOR SUCCESS

The US Federal Government, the
American Education System and the
Cold War, 1947 – 1957

by

REBECCA FRANCES ISAACS

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Department of American and Canadian Studies
School of English, Drama and American and Canadian Studies
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that, during the post war and early Cold War years, the US Federal government, and in particular the Executive branch, was inspired to increase the role which it played in the US Education system. It also seeks to chart the methods it utilised in order to do so. One inspiration was the desire to direct the US education system towards a curriculum which better **benefitted the nation's Cold War effort, including placing a greater emphasis** upon scientific education and training, more tightly regulating the discussion over democratic vs. communist ideologies in the classroom and the pursuit of a greater equalisation in opportunity for African American students. Further inspiration was provided by both the widespread expansion of centralised government programs and the increased importance of education to social progress witnessed across the world after the Second World War, and both **President Truman's own personal commitment to the equalisation of education opportunity, and the Democratic Party's pursuit of black votes** during the Truman Administration. This thesis charts the **Executive and Judicial branches'** innovative and unorthodox usage of the powers available to them in order to garner greater influence over the education system, and assesses the varying rates of success of these programmes in order to demonstrate the significant and irrevocable shift in the relationship between the US Federal government and the US education system which occurred during the early Cold War.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Enola Gay dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945 and made academics, not soldiers, the controlling influence over military might, the Federal government began to pay close attention the role which education would play in the future world order. The knowledge that, in the Pacific arena, the war had been won not by boots on the ground, but by researchers in a laboratory, gave new importance and relevance to the work of schools, colleges and universities across the USA. Wars could be won and lost on campus, and this newfound status fundamentally altered how the Federal government, and in particular the Executive branch, perceived the importance of the US education system. More importantly, this in turn also greatly impacted the interest which it showed in it.

The subsequent breakdown in communication between President Truman and Josef Stalin and the rise of Communism in Eastern Europe shortly after the Japan bombings, gave immediacy to the interest shown by the government. There existed in the USA a longstanding fear of Communism, which had begun with the first Red Scare during the First World War. By the end of the war Stalin – head of the only nation capable of toppling America from its pedestal – had a fanatical hold on the Eastern Bloc, **and the Soviet Union’s growing power caused this fear** to grow exponentially in the USA. The Federal government feared Communism at every turn, from nuclear attack and infiltration by Communist spies to a diminished power overseas, and this climate inevitably filtered into both foreign and domestic government policy during the years after the Second World War.

Fear of Communism led to the creation of a host of government **programmes and measures, such as Truman’s Loyalty Program, which was** established in 1947 and led to the subsequent rise of McCarthyism. These actions by the Federal government called into question the loyalty of the American

citizens whom it purported to be protecting. Left-leaning schoolteachers and professors did not escape the attention of anti-Communist witch hunts, and numerous careers were destroyed with little supporting evidence.¹ The politics of the teachers was not the only area, however, in which the Federal government demonstrated interest in the US education system; who was being taught, what was being taught, and how it was being taught were perceived by the Federal government to be as relevant to the fate of US national security as who was teaching. This area, however, has received far less scholarly attention.

The debate over how the education system could aid the government in this new era began as soon as the atomic age did, with the publication of ***Science: The Endless Frontier*** (1945), a report written by Vannevar Bush, the head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development during the First World War and a **key player in the Manhattan Project. Bush's report recommended the** establishment of a National Science Foundation (NSF), an official body which would channel government funds into scientific research, in order to ensure that the USA remained a key player in the field of science.² As tension between the USA and the Soviet Union escalated, **Bush's recommendations took on even greater significance, and the government's interest in impacting the future** direction of many aspects of the US education system – not just the scientific programmes – escalated.

This movement was significant as, traditionally, the US Federal government has no constitutionally mandated authority to directly impact the US education system; it is a specifically State-by-State matter in the USA. With the outbreak of the Cold War, however, education became even more relevant to the protection of national security in the USA. The Cold War created new

battlegrounds; wars were not fought between the USA and the Soviet Union, but between proxy nations on proxy battlegrounds. Ballerinas, chess grand masters and Olympians became the new soldiers, and their stages became battlefields. Equally, US students, especially in the fields of science and technology, became not just relevant to the war effort, but central to it; they did not just innovate on behalf of the soldiers in the military, they were the soldiers, and their innovations – domestic and military – were their bullets.

With the outbreak of the Cold War, ensuring the perpetuation of US **citizens' unshakeable commitment to democracy also took on a new importance**, and further inspired the Federal government, and in particular the Executive branch, to consider expanding its role in the US education system. As the schools, **colleges and universities educated the USA's future citizens, they therefore** represented the most effective way in which to ensure that the USA created the right kind of future citizens – ones with an unwavering faith to democracy over communism and an unshakeable faith in the supremacy of the USA. This aspect of school life, therefore, also became relevant to US national security, and therefore to the Federal government.

Finally, the increasing global importance of education as both a concept and a pursuit after the Second World War also ensured that the USA's **schools** were closely monitored by Third World nations. Many developing nations, especially former colonies, drew a direct link between excellent educational provision and economic and social progress. As many of these nations were also predominantly populated by black citizens, the USA's **provision of education for African Americans** came to be of particular interest. The need for US schools, colleges and universities to demonstrate and uphold the USA's **democratic ideals**

and extend the possibility of education to black students took on a new significance after the outbreak of the Cold War.

The Cold War, however, was not the only event which caused the Executive branch of the Federal government's to consider increasing its interest in the US education system after the Second World War. The death of FDR meant that Vice President Harry S. Truman became President just weeks before the end of the Second World War and Truman had a personal commitment to expanding educational opportunity for all US youths, which had been born out of his own personal experiences and opinions on the importance of education. In addition, the post war period saw a widespread global expansion in government involvement in societal issues. This movement garnered more success in the UK than in the US, but nevertheless it was still pursued by Truman throughout his Administrations.

The Executive branch of the Federal government employed many and varied methods of circumventing its lack of constitutional right to support and guide the education system throughout the early years of the Cold War, as it had **done throughout American history**. Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst's *The Political Dynamics of American Education* (2005) – the most widely used text in the politics of education – identifies no fewer than six methods through which the Federal government has gained influence over the education system without the need for general Federal aid. Four of these methods – **'moral suasion'**; **'discover knowledge and make it available'**; **'regulate'**; and **'provide services'** – were utilised by the Truman Administration in order to gain influence over education in the early years of the Cold War, before the Sputnik crisis made general Federal aid,

and the final methods, ‘differential funding’ and ‘general aid’, more viable options for the Federal government to explore.³

The first method identified in *Political Dynamics* which the Federal government made use of during the Truman Administration is ‘moral suasion’, a tactic which utilises rhetoric in order to persuade educators and the general public to support a new direction for education without ever needing to resort to force or provide financial persuasion. More recently this tactic has been employed by President George H. W. Bush, in order to promote ‘character education’ – a practice through which teachers incorporate character-building workshops into their normal lessons – after a number of school shootings had occurred, and also by President George W. Bush in advocating the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) programme. In this instance, George W. Bush employed the ‘bully pulpit’, a subsection of the ‘moral suasion’ technique; Bush publicly castigated the programme’s critics, claiming that they were guilty of “giving in to the soft bigotry of low expectations for pupil achievement”.⁴ This labelled Bush’s opponents as anti-education, rather than merely anti-Federal involvement, thus vilifying them in the public eye despite their valid and constitutionally correct opposition to Bush’s plans.

The ‘bully pulpit’ was often exploited by members of the Federal government in the early Cold War years in order to undermine critics of the Federal government’s education programmes, most often by invoking claims of anti-Americanism or pro-Communist sympathies. Especially in the age of McCarthyism, where being labelled as a Communist, or even merely not ‘pro-American’ enough, could ruin one’s life as well as one’s career, the ‘bully pulpit’ was a particularly effective technique to silence critics of the Federal

government's programmes. Most regularly 'moral suasion' was utilised to create support for or to quell opposition to the government's programmes for 'education for democracy', but it proved to be such a powerful persuasive technique that 'moral suasion', and especially the 'bully pulpit', were employed to control the reaction to almost all of the Federal government's early Cold War ventures into the US education system.

The second tactic identified in *The Political Dynamics of American Education* is to 'discover knowledge and make it available'. The NSF is identified by *The Political Dynamics of American Education* as the primary example of the tactic 'discover knowledge and make it available', along with the National Center for Education Statistics.⁵ Despite being established to conduct basic research, securing national defence is explicitly outlined in the Foundation's mission statement. During the Cold War, this tactic was not only utilised by the NSF, which was established in 1950 for this express purpose, but also the United States Office of Education (USOE). Both the USOE and the NSF worked with schools, universities and colleges, and received funding directly from the Federal government. As such, both the USOE and the NSF were able to direct teaching and research in the schools and colleges respectively, which in turn influenced teaching staff's curriculum management and areas of expertise. This, of course, directly impacted the students, as well as their school and college experiences, and their own areas of expertise and the careers they had been prepared for upon graduation, which, for better or worse, affected the health of the nation.

Finally, 'regulate' and 'provide services' have been utilised most often in order to improve equality of access to education. For example, President Nixon's establishment of Title IX in 1972 protected equity in education for women,

especially in high school and college sports programmes.⁶ By establishing Title IX, President Nixon indirectly influenced the education system and the experiences which American pupils would have whilst enrolled, without actually directly involving himself in education policy or issues of **States'** rights. During the early years of the Cold War **the tactics 'regulate' and 'provide services' were used specifically to desegregate the education system. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) is an example of the Judicial branch's use of regulation, and later advisers were** provided to school districts who were undergoing the process of desegregation, in order to smooth out the procedure.

The Federal government had one more method at its disposal during the early years of the Cold War: the need to protect national security. Despite the lack of armed combat for much of the Cold War, it was just that: a war. Any loss which the USA had to sustain in this battle could be perceived to negatively affect the **USA's national security. This, in turn, placed the American people and their** way of life under threat. In this circumstance, the Federal government had a constitutional responsibility to protect the nation in any way it could. In wartime, special war measures are often introduced to achieve just this end – the protection of national security. The US military is the institution traditionally utilised to protect the nation, but in the Cold War, the fight was not simply a military one, but instead was both logistical and ideological, consisting of a struggle against Soviet technical advancement and a struggle for the hearts and minds of the American people and the battles were fought not by soldiers, but by schoolchildren and scientists based in academic institutions. As schoolchildren **represented America's best hope of protecting national security**, this, the Federal

government could argue, brought them under the constitutionally mandated jurisdiction of the Federal government.

Federal involvement in education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths was so successful during the Truman Administration that in an article printed in the February 1951 edition of *School Life* magazine, the Commissioner of Education actually pondered whether or not too much had been done and if it would lead to an educational imbalance; Commissioner McGrath **contemplated that “there is growing concern among the nation’s educators and statesmen over the possibility that government action in one narrowly defined area may lead to an undue emphasis in the natural sciences”**.⁷ The Federal government requested from the education system an amplified focus on education for democratic citizenship, a vast improvement in the standard and focus of science education and even easier access to higher education for marginalised youths, and the education system responded.

Despite never having pursued a constitutional amendment which altered the terms of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution and allowed for a formal Federal role in the US education system, the Federal government was inspired by the political and social contexts of the post war and early Cold War period to attempt to increase its role within it. Eventually, this led to the establishment of a Department of Education and an unquestioned role for the Federal government to play in modern-day America. This thesis seeks to identify the moment at which the shift occurred from momentary, targeted intervention, as was the norm before the Second World War, to a full scale role for the Federal government in the education system, which slowly became the norm in the years which followed it.

This thesis will demonstrate the driving forces for intervention, and the powers that were utilised, largely by the Executive branch, in order to impact the issues identified, and assess the varying degrees of success which the Federal government achieved in its endeavour. Each chapter will assess the specific and unique conditions present in each circumstance which either allowed for or prevented Federal intervention into the US education system. In addition, the varying levels of success which the Executive branch achieved will be assessed, and the specific reasons for failure when it occurred – **such as President Truman’s** poor relationship with Congress or the blockades created by the Southern bloc – will be pinpointed and explored. Regardless of success, each attempt simultaneously broke down the barriers which prevented Federal intervention in the education system, eventually leading to a full scale role for the US Federal government in the US education system.

This thesis specifically discusses the expansion of Federal influence over the US education system during the post war/early Cold War period, between the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957. The reason for these defining parameters lies in the nature of education policy during this period. Before 1945, Federal interest in education policy either **falls into the ‘pre-war’ bracket and bears little resemblance to post war policy due to the significant shift in the USA’s social and political structure** that was caused by intervening events of the Second World War, or can be defined as a war **measure and a part of FDR’s expanded war powers, which represents a very** different form of Federal intervention than the kind discussed here. After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, the Federal involvement with education policy shifted again; the Sputnik crisis forced Federal involvement in the US education system

out into the open, and garnered widespread public support, thus stimulating the passage of the revolutionary National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. This Act cleared the way for the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1965, which in turn solidified a Federal role within the US education system.

The majority of the primary research for this thesis was conducted at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, the National Archives in College Park, Maryland and George Washington University's Gelman Library in Washington DC. The Truman Library, of course, holds the papers of President Truman, and it is also home to the records of the President's Commission on Higher Education and the President's Committee on Civil Rights. Additionally, the Library houses the Papers of John D. Russell (Assistant Commissioner of Education, 1946 – 1952), Oscar R. Ewing (Head of the Federal Security Administration, 1947 – 1953, of which the USOE was briefly a part), and Earl J. McGrath (Second Cold War Commissioner of Education, 1949 – 1953), all of which have been valuable to me in understanding the role which the Federal government played, or attempted to play, in the education system during the Cold War.

The National Archives at College Park hold the records of the United States Office of Education, which were vital to gain insight into the workings of such a pivotal department. Equally useful was the back catalogue of *School Life* magazine, the USOE's own publication, which was significant in enabling me to understand and evaluate the information which was disseminated by the USOE during the Cold War. Finally the Gelman Library at George Washington University holds the records of the National Education Association (NEA) which

enabled me to gain an insight into the workings of the non-Federal educational world during this period. Without this resource I would not have been aware of **how complicit the educational world was with the Federal government's aims in** its fight against Communism both within and outside of education.

In addition, numerous contemporary education policy reports were **utilised, such as the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy* (1948)**, as well as reports detailing contemporary reactions to its publication. These include **Vannevar Bush's report *Science: The Endless Frontier* (1945)**, **John R. Steelman's *Science and Public Policy: A Report to the President* (1947)**, **M. H. Trytten's *Student Deferment in Selective Service: A Vital Factor in National Security* (1952)**, the report of the **White House Conference on Education (1955)** and the report of the **President's Committee on Education Beyond the High School (1955)**, among many others. Both the workings and the findings of these many committees and commissions were central to unravelling the push towards the establishment of a Federal influence over the US education system during the post war/early Cold War period.

A Selected Review of the Field

My thesis intersects three research fields within American History, specifically education history, Cold War history and US Presidential history. All three fields have discussed the interaction between the Federal government and the US education system during the period with which this thesis is concerned, to varying degrees and from various approaches. This is most prevalent within education history, the field with which this thesis is most aligned. Within the fields of Cold

War and Presidential history, the Federal interaction with the education system has also been discussed, but to a far lesser degree. Where Cold War history is concerned, Federal interaction with the education system is discussed almost exclusively with regards to either the international situation, race issues or both. Within Presidential history, the economic aspects of Federal intervention are given the most focus. This thesis seeks to contribute to all three fields by considering Presidential interaction with the education system during the post war and early Cold War period outside of fiduciary influence.

Education History

There are three main schools of thought which are dominant in the fast-growing field of US education history. Reese and Rury have noted in *Rethinking the History of American Education* that the origins of educational history lie in the institutionalist-progressive approach – **the concept that education is “an important adjunct of social reform and human progress”**, a view which, they highlight, was shared by the Federal government and was a strong impetus in the creation of Federal education policy.⁸ Early US educational history was rooted in the concept that schools promoted mobility and forward thinking, which allowed **society to move forward. Harry G. Good and James D. Teller’s seminal history of US education is written from this perspective, and discussed the development of the American education system, with special focus on the simultaneous development of educational theories. *A History of American Education* traces the many influences which impacted the development of the US education system, from European theories on education to political turbulence. Good and Teller asserted that**

“America has created many good educational precedents in pursuing her dream of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of sex, race, national origin, economic level or social background. The common community school, the junior high school, the comprehensive high school, the junior college and the American university are all good precedents, to be improved certainly, but not to be destroyed by those who would impose upon youth what they think he should have rather than what his unique individuality requires”.⁹

Good and Teller’s understanding of US education stems primarily from the perspective that education creates societal and individual progress, not stagnation, which is typical of the traditionalist institutionalist-progressive approach to the study of US education.

This historiographical viewpoint was not challenged until the development of revisionist history in the 1970s, a movement which is generally agreed to have been spearheaded by Bernard Bailyn and the publication of his work *Education and the Forming of American Society* (1960).¹⁰ Historian Harold Silver asserted that this movement grew out of **“the radicalization of American Politics and intellectual life in the 1960s”**.¹¹ Alongside Lawrence Cremin’s *American Experience* Trilogy, published between 1970 and 1990, and Carl F. Kaestle’s *Pillars of the Republic, Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860*, (1983), **Bailyn’s work spurred the revisionist movement within the field of education history. All three historians have been credited with overturning the ‘myths’ perpetuated by earlier historians writing in the field of education history.**

Bailyn’s work, the earliest of the three, discusses the sociological influences upon the development of the American education system. A contemporary

reviewer asserted that, despite his original intentions, Bailyn was obliged to **“challenge the presuppositions” prevalent within the field.**¹² Cremin’s trilogy discusses the development of the American education system from its earliest inception in 1607 up to 1980. Education historian Wayne J. Urban, when discussing the development of historiography within the field, has asserted that **both Bailyn and Cremin “criticized the scholarly weaknesses of the early contributors”.**¹³ Finally Carl F. Kaestle’s *Pillars of the Republic* has been described as a **“careful, detailed and persuasive analysis of the development of the American common school”** and a **“masterful summing up of the state of [American] educational history”.**¹⁴ Kaestle’s work also **“debunk[ed] several debilitating myths”,** including establishing that the origins of public schooling lay far earlier in American history than had previously been assumed.

Bailyn’s challenge to revise the field of education history spurred Michael B. Katz to pen *The Irony of Early School Reform* (1968), the publication of which marked the beginning of the radical-revisionist approach. This school of thought built upon the work of Bailyn and his contemporaries to present a history of the US education system which was entirely at odds with the institutionalist-progressive school. The radical-revisionist school views the work of educational **institutions as more closely allied to “ideological domination and economic exploitation”** than as modes of social progress; **it argues that schools reinforce class distinctions and racial bias,** rather than allowing for the elimination of both, as is argued by the institutionalist-progressive school.¹⁵ David Tyack has summed up the approach as one which argues that **“it was foolish to suppose that schooling could correct the basic inequities of life”.**¹⁶

This movement did not replace the traditionalist institutionalist-progressive approach, but instead grew up alongside it. Noted US education historian Diane Ravitch continued to work within the institutionalist-progressive approach, for example, despite coming to the discipline after Bailyn's challenge. Ravitch's 1978 work *Revisionists Revised* challenged the uniformity and rigidity of the neo-conservative radical-revisionist approach and attempted to re-establish the dominance of the liberalistic institutionalist-progressive school.¹⁷ The third edition of Good and Teller's *A History of American Education*, published in 1973 after the emergence of the radical-revisionist school, also reiterated the supremacy of the institutionalist-progressive approach. The authors highlighted in their preface that "like the first two editions, this edition treats [the] changes in American education as a phase of the rise and progress of American culture as a whole".¹⁸

Another school of thought has emerged more recently which combines both institutionalist-progressivism and radical-revisionism. The post-revisionist approach carved a middle ground between the earlier polarised schools of thought, adopting the position that the education system was neither wholly devoted to progress nor exploitation. Instead, post-revisionists view the schools, colleges and universities as a seedbed of external interests, sociological pressures and environmental factors. As Reese and Rury have stated, members of this school accept that educational institutions are "matters of interest to a variety of groups in American society".¹⁹ The post-revisionist school has typically seen both value in and problems with the work of historians in both earlier schools of thought. Jeffrey Mirel's *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System* (1993) is one example of a text written from this post-revisionist perspective; Mirel tracked

the development of the school curriculum in Detroit between 1907 and 1981, and clearly demonstrated instances of both progress and stasis, and demonstrated the interest groups which impacted the changes.²⁰

John R. Thelin has also contributed a modern survey of the development of education beyond the high school from the perspective of the post-revisionist school of thought. Entitled *A History of American Higher Education* (2011), it was first published in 2004, with a second, updated edition following in 2011. Thelin discusses not only the progression of the higher education system from the establishment of Harvard College in 1636, through to 2010, but also the major problems faced by the higher education system at different points in its history. With regards to the period with which this thesis is concerned, Thelin asserted the post-revisionist position that “good fortune was so heady” following the close of the Second World War “that journalists and college administrators as well as historians have called this a ‘golden age’. Success, however, did not provide an exemption from campus problems, many of which were associated with growing pains”.²¹ Thelin highlighted the positives of the education system without ignoring the negatives. Some of the major themes of Thelin’s work include academic freedom won and lost; business, governmental and philanthropic interests and individual choice. Thelin also included in-depth discussions of school buildings and construction, college lifestyles and college students, among other topics.

Finally, Thelin takes care to present a diverse and balanced account which includes discussion of minority education. The study of minorities within education and the provision of education for minorities has grown exponentially during the post-revisionist period, mirroring the general trend in history outside

of the field. Such discussions concerning the history of minority education have become a feature of modern education histories, especially in the 21st Century, as historians consider a wider populace in their studies of the development of education. Historian Paula Fass spurred further enquiry into education for less visible groups with her well-regarded study of minority education *Outside In: Minorities and the Transformation of American Education (1989)*. Fass's book focused on immigrant education, religious education, and education for blacks and women. More recently, education historians have been successful in creating a body of scholarship that focuses past the story of white male experiences and have elevated the understanding of African American education and education for women in particular above the status of footnotes in history.²²

This thesis is situated within the post-revisionist approach to the study of education history, and seeks to contribute to the scholarship in this school by firmly establishing the Federal government, especially the Executive branch of the Federal government, as an interest group which impacted the course of the US education system after the Second World War, whilst including an assessment of the phenomenon which goes beyond discussion of only white students.¹ As the Cold War became visible on the horizon, the Executive branch, with support at times from both the Legislative and Judicial branches of the Federal government, attempted to establish a formal and long-term role within the education system. This was part of a larger programme of governmental expansion of power.

¹ Due to the time and length constraints of this thesis, however, only African American students have been discussed. No discussion of education for women during this period has been included; Linda Eisenmann however has written a superb study of women in education during the period with which this thesis is concerned, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945-1965* (2006).

Whilst Federal intervention into the US education system has begun to receive more attention from the post-revisionist school, efforts have focused more **often on larger initiatives such as the Serviceman's Re-adjustment Act (GI Bill) (1944) and the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (1958)**. My thesis seeks to contribute to the field by exploring the proceedings in between these two events, and demonstrating the impetus for the shift from momentary intervention, as demonstrated in the GI Bill, to a long-term role, as advocated by the NDEA. These developments further enabled an outside interest group – the Federal government – to impact the autonomy of the schools, colleges and universities and to control the direction in which learning was developed. This served to both engender external social progress and perpetuate social control from within the education system. This is not to say that Federal interests were the only influence upon the development of the US education system in the early years of the Cold War, but until now it is an influence which has remained largely unexplored, despite its relevance to the study of later developments which occurred within the Cold War US education system.

Major Sub-fields in Education History

Curriculum History

Within the field of Education history, there are numerous major and minor sub-fields, three of which will be discussed here. One major sub-field of education history is the study of the curriculum. This sub-field is focused on engaging with the very essence of education itself – what is actually taught in the classroom, and how new curriculum structures supersede earlier dominant structures. Curriculum history is primarily concerned with classroom dynamics and

curriculum theory and theorists. Outside interest groups' impact upon the shaping of the curriculum is relevant and of interest in order to draw a line between current events or interested parties and developments within the classroom. Historian Herbert Kliebard has been central to the development of this sub-field, and his books represent some of the best examples of this type of scholarship.

The Struggle for the American Curriculum (1987) in particular represents a central text in this important sub-field. Kliebard traces the development of the American curriculum throughout the 20th century, and demonstrates how different schools of educational thought have shaped both what is taught in America, and how it is taught. The various pedagogical techniques that have fallen in and out of favour over the decades are explored, as are the reasons behind their rise and fall. His follow up collection, *Forging the American Curriculum: Essays in Curriculum History* (1992) delineated the major theoretical movements within curriculum history and disentangled the many threads of the burgeoning discipline in order to create a coherent basis for further enquiry.

Kliebard's work also spurred a collection of essays to be published by a group of his former graduate students, *Curriculum and Consequence: Herbert M. Kliebard and the Promise of Schooling* (2002). This volume offered further exploration of the issues which he had identified in his own writing. The essays included are written from a more specifically post-revisionist perspective, and **further Kliebard's earlier work by attempting to ascribe relevance and importance** to the interests and influence of curriculum theorists and demonstrating how the fluctuations in the curriculum can have long-term impacts upon the structure of society.²³ *Engendering Curriculum Theory* (2011) by Petra Hendry is one of the

most recent examples of curriculum education history. Hendry was heavily **influenced by Kliebard's earlier work but, again writing from a 21st Century post-revisionist perspective, has sought to extend and expand upon it by focusing specifically on women's contribution to the establishment and implementation of curriculum theory.**²⁴

Andrew Hartman, a current Education Historian whose work aligns more with the field of curriculum history than sociological education history, has recently published *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (2008), which specifically focuses on the period with which this thesis is concerned. Hartman focuses his thesis on the relationship between the development of the Cold War and the development of the curriculum alongside it. Hartman skilfully delineates how the Cold War affected the educational policies, teachers and notions of academic freedom, eventually resulting in an education-wide shift to the right. Hartman specifically identifies that the education system was a factor in politics prior the launch of the Sputnik satellite, and highlights the fact that the Cold War battle for the American schools was **"dramatized but not initiated by Sputnik"**.²⁵

Hartman also includes discussion of the impact which the increased interest of the Executive branch of the Federal government in the education system had upon the curriculum. He notes that **"rather than explore the strengths and weaknesses of political life in the United States", the curriculum recommended by the USOE, under the direction of the Executive branch, instead "encouraged students to think of American democracy in a normative fashion and to define it solely in opposition to totalitarianism"**.²⁶ He also explores the ways in which the Life-Adjustment curriculum, popular in post war America, enabled the

easy dissemination of the Truman Administration's plan to promote patriotism in the education system. The Life-Adjustment programme was more focused on creating good citizens than well-educated citizens, and was therefore an ideal catalyst for the Federal agenda.²⁷

Whilst curriculum history informs this thesis, it is not strictly relevant to it. This thesis seeks to delineate the specific motivations which affected the **Federal government's attempts to expand its role in the education system, and to identify the methods used to pursue these goals.** Historians in this group such as Andrew Hartman support my work by demonstrating the impact which the **government's commitment to the programme** of democracy education had in the classroom, thus re-enforcing the existence of Federal impact. Historian John G. Ramsay wrote of curriculum history that the discipline sacrificed “understanding of how ideas arose and became institutionalized” in favour of “an understanding of the enduring ailments of curricula theory”.²⁸ Similarly, Hartman is more concerned with the outcome within the classroom, and therefore does not explore the reasons behind it. My work seeks to go some way to closing the loop.

Sociological Education History

Sociological education history is the most common sub-field of US education history, and seeks to explore the ways in which the US education system has advanced alongside American society throughout its history. This sub-field engages with the various political, military and social factors which have impacted upon the progression of US education over time in order to demonstrate its development and relevance to the wider study of US society. There are numerous excellent overviews of the development of the US education system

that have been written within this sub-field. The most comprehensive of the recent publications is Thelin's *A History of American Higher Education* (2011); Christopher J. Lucas's *American Higher Education: A History* (1994), however, offers a useful, if less diverse, exploration of US higher education. Additionally, Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner Jr. offer a brief but detailed and highly educational study in *American Education: A History, 3rd Edition* (2004) which makes for a great starting point to those who are new to the field. William H. Jeynes' *American Educational History: School, Society and the Common Good* (2007) also offers an interesting perspective, and has attempted to classify the various interests which have shaped the US school system throughout history.

This is the sub-field in which this thesis is situated, as it seeks to explore the impact which both the early Cold War foreign and domestic climates and the personal and political pressures felt by the early Cold War Presidents had upon the development of the US education system. **Where the Federal government's interest in and impact upon the US education system is discussed, education historians have generally tended to group themselves into two further sub-groups: economic education history and political education history. Economic education history focuses on the financial contributions made by the Federal government to the US education system; political education history focuses on the creation and implementation of Federal education policy. This thesis falls under the 'political' subsection of sociological education history.**

Historian Willis Rudy has successfully straddled both sub-fields and produced a study which considered both fiduciary and non-fiduciary Federal involvement in the US education system in detail in *Building America's Schools and Colleges* (2003). **Rudy's work is an overview which discusses the relationship**

between the Federal government and the US education system throughout the entirety of American history. Rudy discusses every major political event and each significant instance of Federal intervention (or attempted intervention) in the education system, but does not discuss any such instance in detail as his intention is to demonstrate a pattern, not provide a comprehensive analysis. For this reason, Rudy's **book serves as an excellent starting point, but also offers many** more avenues for further enquiry.

The Political Dynamics of American Education, edited by Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, is an excellent contribution from the political arm of the sub-field. First published in 1982, but extensively revised since, the latest edition offers insight into the complicated system of governance and power which exists within the American education system. Whilst the book discusses far more than just the Federal involvement in the education system – **including teachers'** unions, school boards and districts and micropolitics within schools – Wirt and Kirst take time to examine the evolution of Federal involvement, both financial and not, its impact and its future. Similarly to Rudy, as *Political Dynamics* surveys the entirety of American history, and includes other avenues of enquiry as well, no aspects of Federal involvement are discussed in detail. Both books raise more questions than they answer.

This thesis builds upon these works by offering a more in-depth analysis of the themes and trends which are identified during one of the time periods **which is explored. Wirt and Kirst's exploration of Federal intervention is superb,** but the history provided is not chronological (and their analysis benefits from this structure) therefore the themes identified are neither properly applied to the early Cold War period, nor are the specific and unique contextual factors of the early

Cold War period explored in any depth. This thesis seeks to fill this gap, whilst building on the excellent work carried out by Wirt and Kirst. Rudy has provided a clear identification of post war Federal action on education – focusing on fiduciary action – and has clearly demonstrated the link between this Federal intervention into the US education system and the national security crisis which was sweeping the nation.

Rudy's intention is to demonstrate a long-term trend for Federal involvement within the education system, notable because of its lack of constitutional power within this area. As such, his work on the early Cold War is brief at best, and lacking in vital detail and nuance at worst. This thesis seeks to further Rudy's starting point by further exploring the involvement primarily of one branch of the Federal government in detail, in order to demonstrate the reasons why increased involvement was sought by the Federal government during this period, and carefully detailing how these intentions were pursued. By placing the events in context, an explanation beyond Rudy's overly simple 'national security' impetus has been demonstrated. National security issues were of course relevant, but not all-encompassing, as Rudy's study of this period seems to suggest.

With regards to the particular time period with which this thesis is concerned, historian Audra J. Wolfe has recently contributed *Competing with the Soviets: Science, Technology and the State in Cold War America* (2013). Wolfe's research primarily discusses the relationship between the Federal government and the scientific community, but this also includes careful discussion of the relationship between the Federal government and the academic arm of the scientific community. Similarly to Hartman, Wolfe specifically assesses the

impact which the Cold War had upon this relationship, and the symbiotic connection between the two.²⁹ **Wolfe asserts that the early Cold War was “the time during which Federal support for science and technology was most strongly associated with military and defense needs”.**³⁰ Wolfe focuses primarily on science as a discipline rather than a school subject in her work, and this thesis furthers her scholarship as it demonstrates the impact which increased Federal interest in science both within and outside of schools, colleges and universities had upon science as a discipline, a major, and the scientists who studied it.

My work adds to the discussion over the interaction between the education system and the post war/early Cold War period by exploring the number of ways in which the foreign and domestic situation affected the US education system during this period. Currently the available scholarship has failed to chart the **Cold War’s importance in *changing***, rather than merely *continuing*, the tradition of Federal influence in this area. Whilst Federal influence has always been a feature of the US education system, prior to the Cold War, involvement had been largely indirect and short-term, as will be discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Many historians focus on the vital relevance of the GI Bill (1944) as an instance of post war Federal involvement (passed prior to the end of the war but as a post war measure), but without interaction with the ***nature*** of Federal involvement, the discussion of the relevance of the GI Bill is limited.

The GI Bill is undoubtedly central when discussing the ***impact*** which the Federal government had on the education system, but is less important when seeking to identify the impetus for the shift from interim, emergency Federal involvement to full scale, full time Federal involvement, as is the case in modern **day America. The GI Bill represented the ‘old style’ Federal involvement, as the**

intention when passing the GI Bill was not to impact the education system specifically, but to prevent veterans from impacting upon the unemployment line.

The President's Commission on Higher Education, which occurred three years later, however, represented the 'new style' direct, long-term influence. The purpose of the Truman Commission was to allow the Federal government to directly impact the US education system and guide its progression and development, thus creating a blueprint for future interaction between the Federal government and the education system.

This thesis will also go some way to addressing another gap in political education scholarship; until recently the majority of books within the sub-field of political education history focused on the impact which the launch of the Sputnik satellite had upon the US education system. This thesis will demonstrate that a concerted effort towards Federal intervention in fact began far earlier.

Brainpower for the Cold War: The Sputnik Crisis and the National Defense Education Act of 1958 by Barbara Barksdale Clowse, published in 1981, is a comprehensive history of the weeks and months which followed the launch of Sputnik and the political and educational wrangling which resulted in the passage of the NDEA in 1958. Clowse presents an excellent, in-depth study of the legislative process and the growth in the Federal government's involvement in the education system. Clowse does not, however, discuss the origins of the NDEA which predated the launch of Sputnik, despite acknowledging that they existed. Recent scholarship on Sputnik and the NDEA is headed by noted education historian Wayne J. Urban. Urban's book, *More than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (2010), builds directly upon Clowse's work to expand understanding of the NDEA and its intended impact. Urban

himself describes his research as an “**ideological history**”; **his intention was to demonstrate how the NDEA fits into the Federal government’s intended direction** for the education system, and the extent to which this was achieved.³¹ Like Clowse, Urban discusses only the changes to the Federal/education relationship which occur after the launch of Sputnik.

This is a common theme of post war education history – it is not contested between education historians that Federal intervention grew exponentially during the Cold War, but most ascribe the moment of intervention to the passage of the NDEA in 1958. This thesis seeks to highlight the importance of the many and varied attempts to gain influence over the education system in the years between the deployment of the atomic bomb and the launch of the Sputnik satellite. Among other initiatives which are explored in detail in this thesis, the **President’s Commission on Higher Education, the Trytten Report and the establishment of the National Science Foundation** are worthy of greater note than has previously been the case within the field of education history. Federal intervention in the US education system did not begin with the launch of the Sputnik satellite and the subsequent passage of the NDEA. For a decade beforehand, the Federal government had been steadily and, to a certain extent, stealthily increasing its involvement in the US education system. This was in order to ensure, among other pursuits, that the general education level of US society was raised through a programme of increased access, that science education remained on an equal footing with Soviet science programmes and that American schoolchildren were patriotic enough to study subjects for the good of their country instead of for their own personal interest.

One area in which political education history has been largely silent with regards to the early Cold War era is the sub-field of Presidential history. Whilst the relevance to the education system of the Federal government as an amorphous entity has been explored, specific vacillations caused by the specific characteristics of each President and their Administrations has had far less attention. The inverse is true of Presidential histories – whilst numerous excellent histories of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower exist, few discuss education policy, and where it is discussed, it is almost always in relation to something other than education: **Truman’s relationship with Congress; Eisenhower’s approach to race politics; more recently, both Presidents’ approach to Cold War domestic policy.** Each **President’s specific approach to education policy and its effects** has remained largely unexplored by both political education historians and historians of Truman and Eisenhower.

There is a significant gap in education history scholarship that this thesis seeks to fill by considering all of the relevant factors – **Truman’s relationship with Congress, both Presidents’ approach to race dynamics, the links between early Cold War foreign and domestic policy** and, importantly, each President’s specific approach to education policy and the reasons behind this – simultaneously. **In doing so this thesis will highlight the complexities of the Executive branch’s approach to education policy during the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations and demonstrate the definite pursuit of an expanded Federal role within the US education system. In addition, each Administration’s utilisation of the powers available to it in order to overcome the Federal government’s lack of constitutionally mandated authority to direct the US education system will be examined.**

Histories of President Truman almost without exception note that Harry S. Truman was the last President to have ascended to the White House without **having first been to college, and most attribute this to his father's failed investments**;³² studies of Truman era education policy often note that Truman was committed to expanding access to higher education for students who were prevented from attending.³³ None, however, have discussed these two events concurrently, or attempted to suggest a relationship between the two. Furthermore, the significance of the loss of this personal impetus after Eisenhower took over the Oval Office is also worthy of note, but has also remained unexplored. Historians of the Truman era regularly note his penchant for an expanded governmental role, especially notable in his pursuit of the Fair Deal;³⁴ as has been demonstrated, education historians often note that Truman pursued Federal funding for education. Both pursuits were largely unsuccessful as both required Congressional commitment, yet neither field has as yet provided an in-depth discussion of the ways in which Truman circumvented the need for Congressional approval in order to indirectly impact the US education system.

President Eisenhower's interest in the US education system was limited to the sciences, and more specifically to how science education could be made to support US national security and defence. Yet in order to achieve this, he was required, similarly to Truman, to utilise powers that were available to him in order to overcome the fact that the Executive branch wielded no constitutional power over the education system. Eisenhower historians who discuss education, as well as education historians who discuss Eisenhower, however, tend to focus on the passage of *Brown* and the events at Little Rock. No in-depth studies of **Eisenhower's education policies outside of his approach to the desegregation of**

the education system have yet been produced.³⁵ This is of particular note, as Eisenhower is often regarded as a President who avoided the expansion of 'big government'. This is certainly true of the majority of Eisenhower's policies outside of education, but when Eisenhower's Presidency is viewed from the perspective of education history, the image is more blurred.³⁶ Due to the fact that historians focus most regularly on Eisenhower's record on African American education, this has yet to be reflected in the scholarship. When only his race-education policies are explored, his policy record supports this conclusion; however, when his science-education policies are explored, a different picture of Eisenhower's willingness to expand the Federal role is drawn.

This thesis's focus on the relationship between the Cold War and the development of the US education system also aligns it with a wider field of study which analyses the ways in which Cold War policies both directly and indirectly influenced the domestic lives of American citizens, especially in the early years of the Cold War. In no area is this truer than the discussions over the intersections between the Cold War and race politics in America. This field was popularised by Mary L. Dudziak with the publication of her flagship work *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000). There is no historical consensus over either President's approach to the Civil Rights debate; more historians speak favourably of Truman than Eisenhower, but currently there is certainly no agreement – a topic which is given more attention in this thesis in Chapter Four. Both Presidents' interactions with *Brown v. Board of Education* are often discussed as a specifically race-relations matter in political history however, rather than an educational concern, or since the publication of *Cold War Civil Rights*, with regard to the international situation. This is neither the

whole story of *Brown*, however, nor the whole story of the Truman Administration's involvement in or commitment to African American education. Where only *Brown* is discussed, the story is incomplete and misleading.

Understanding of the Federal role in the desegregation debate from the perspective of education history is vital to understanding more broadly the interaction of the Federal government, and in particular, the Executive branch with the civil rights debate during this era. In particular Mary L. Dudziak, a leader in this field, intersects with the field of education history in her seminal works, but offers no understanding of the wider interactions between the Federal government and the education system. Dudziak instead chooses to view these interactions as stand-alone, race-focused incidences, rather than as part of a wider and more systematic programme of Federal influence in education.³⁷

Exploration of the themes discussed in the report of the Truman Commission, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, for example, demonstrates that the pursuit of desegregation in the school system was indeed one aspect of a wider programme, rather than a specifically and singularly race-driven issue. This is not to diminish the importance of race and the civil rights debate with regards to desegregation, which remains the driving factor. An education history perspective however offers another dimension to the triangular interactions between the Federal government, the civil rights debate and the education system. The desegregation of the schools and the general promotion of improved educational provision for African American students is one aspect of a larger pursuit of expanded Federal influence, and in the case of the Truman Administration, something which the Executive branch pursued, rather than were pushed into.

There is, however, one aspect of Federal involvement in the education system during the early years of the Cold War in particular that this thesis has not discussed in detail, and this is largely because it has already been written about at length in books which focused on other topics. The loyalty oaths and academic witch hunts which took place during the McCarthy era represent an important example of the increase in Federal control over the US education system during the Cold War, as it enabled the US Federal government to involve itself in hiring and firing practices at a number of academic and research institutions. As the McCarthy era has been extensively written about, however, so has this example **of the Federal government's involvement in the education system.**³⁸ As such, it will not be discussed further in this thesis.

Longitudinal Education History

Longitudinal education history is vital in assessing the real-world impact of education policy or curriculum changes. This type of history by definition cannot be conducted for decades after a particular policy or curriculum change has been implemented, as therefore longitudinal research which focuses on the time period this thesis is focused on is only starting to emerge. For example, the impact of the GI Bill could not be fully understood for many years after its passage; the true difference between a college educated veteran and a non-college educated **veteran's career paths could not be assessed until enough time had elapsed for** each group to pursue a long-term career, so the true effects of their schooling could be measured.

This is not a sub-field which this thesis has directly engaged in as this thesis seeks to demonstrate the motivations for and methods utilised in Federal

involvement, rather than the long-term effects. This type of study has recently engendered a significant amount of new scholarship which focuses on the long-term success (or lack thereof) of *Brown v. Board*, however, and longitudinal studies in this area have influenced this thesis. Longitudinal studies of *Brown* can be radically different from policy-based perspectives as they take into account the long-term impact of the ruling. Whereas policy-based studies often culminate with either the 1954 ruling or the 1965 Civil Rights Act, longitudinal studies are able to suggest that when the full sweep of history is taken into account, *Brown* was a failure, because it did not truly impact integration in reality in the same way **that it did on paper. This approach has been labelled the ‘unfulfilled promises’** approach and emerged in 2004 as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown’s* passage.³⁹ These studies **collectively argue that “if the promises of the *Brown* decision had been fulfilled, the income, wealth, employment, achievement, and other gaps between African Americans and whites would have been closed” in the intervening years between 1954 and the present day.**⁴⁰ This knowledge that *Brown* has remained largely ineffectual has **necessarily informed this thesis’s understanding and interpretation of the event and the vacillations of its earlier history.**

Thesis Overview

The first chapter of this thesis will delineate the history of the relationship between the US Federal government and the US education system with the aim of establishing a pattern of influence which stretches back across American history. The chapter first briefly assesses the development of the education system in America, beginning with the Colonial period and the Revolution, and

follows the progression of the relationship between the newly created US Federal government and the US education system through to the Civil War. The way in which the shifts **in the government's wants and needs impacted education in the USA** in its formative years are delineated, and the establishment of West Point and the Morrill Land Grant Acts are given particular focus. In addition, the way in which the major political and social upheavals which took place throughout the first half of the last century, in particular the Great Depression and the Second World War, continued to affect and impact the US education system is also discussed.

This chapter offers insight into the many methods that have been utilised by the Federal government **in order to increase it's** to influence the US education system. It will demonstrate the many routes that have been made available to the Federal government to create openings through which they can influence the development and direction of education in the USA; the chapter examines financial manoeuvres, subterfuge, the creation and utilisation of government agencies with increased powers, the promotion of patriotism and, conversely, charges of subversion. All were used by the Federal government to promote or undermine programmes and institutions as they saw fit. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the opposition to each perceived infringement and the ways in which the Federal government chose to address, quash or ignore each charge, in order to demonstrate that, whilst Federal intervention into the US education **system has never been 'accepted', this has never prevented the Federal government from implementing its plans whenever they were either needed or desired.**

In closing this chapter offers a discussion of the particular set of circumstances which converged at the end of the Second World War to create a **'goldilocks' environment** which inspired the Federal government to pursue intervention in the US education system. The ascension of Harry S. Truman to President after the death of FDR, the close of the Second World War with the deployment of the atomic bomb – an educational, not military achievement – the global shift towards governmental expansion, the increased security risks to the USA with the outbreak of the Cold War and a greater worldwide focus on education all united and stimulated the pursuit of a greater role for the Federal government within the education system which continued to grow throughout the Cold War.

The remainder of this thesis will specifically examine the dynamics of the early years of this involvement, and the ways in which the Federal government, and in particular the Executive branch of the Federal government, sought to involve itself in the US education system. The motivations for this increased role and methods used to pursue it are identified and explored in order to demonstrate a clear and intentional attempt to garner power over the education system in order to implement a range of new ideas and curriculums, and to protect US national security.

Chapter Two of this thesis will discuss the particular ways in which President Truman utilised the powers available to the Executive branch in order to safeguard the perpetuation of a democratic outlook and ideology among the **nation's youth. The Executive branch's utilisation of** its power to create a Presidential Commission which focused on the Federal agenda for education policy is examined, alongside a discussion of the traditional role of presidential

commissions in Executive policy making and the way in which the President's Commission on Higher Education both worked within and departed from this. In addition, a discussion of a similar, but non-Federal, education commission which was in session during the same time period is included, in order to demonstrate **the specific relevance of the Federal influence over the President's Commission** on Higher Education and its findings.

The impact which the Commission had upon the US education system and its focus on education for democracy will be discussed, both from short-term and **long-term perspectives. Programmes such as the 'Zeal for American Democracy'** programme will be examined as will far more long-ranging outcomes of the Commission's **findings. Finally, the opposition to the Commission's** recommendations will be discussed, both to highlight the surprising lack of organised and effective opposition to the expansion of the Federal role in the US education system and the lack of impact that the little opposition there was had.

Chapter Three will discuss the Executive decision to intervene in the American education system in order to ensure that schools and colleges developed a greater commitment to education and output in science, technology, engineering and maths, both in the years following the Second World War and in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the Korean War. the Federal government utilised its power to place controls on the military draft and in turn exerted increased control over the number of students who matriculated, majored and graduated with degrees in the nationally useful subjects. This thesis examines the expansion of scientific disciplines within schools, colleges and universities, and the ways in which the Federal government initiated, encouraged and directed this growth.

The chapter first discusses the reasons why the Federal government chose to influence the education system to place a greater focus on the scientific disciplines, including a discussion of the incentives inherent in expanding the number of trained scientists in the USA. This expansion not only allowed the USA to create more and better weapons with which to protect national security, but also improved the living standards of average Americans through a diverse range of scientific advancements, from medical breakthroughs to more efficient dishwashers. This focus on scientific research and implementation also gave the USA an advantage in the Cold War as the increase in the number of graduating scientists, engineers and mathematicians in the USA and the benefits their research brought to the USA and the world was counted as a win in itself, as it demonstrated that the USA was the superior nation.

The main focus of Chapter Three centres on the methods which the Federal government utilised to implement its plans. In particular, the development of research universities, and the Federal aid offered to institutions of higher education in return for conducting government research in war related fields, is explored. This aid allowed the Federal government to indirectly control the type and amount of research conducted on specific campuses, and to direct its **progression, without ever directly confronting the issue of 'Federal aid to education'**. In particular, this chapter includes a discussion of the Federal programme of Selective Service during the Cold War, and the decision to exempt college students, especially those enrolled in scientific disciplines, from the draft. Finally, the implications of the **Federal government's efforts to increase its control** over this aspect of the education system are discussed.

Finally, Chapter Four of this thesis will discuss the motivations behind the Executive branch's commitment to the elimination of discrimination and segregation in education during the early years of the Cold War. Specifically, this chapter will discuss the reasons behind the Executive and, at times, the Judicial branch's commitment to equalising educational opportunity during the early Cold War period. **This chapter seeks to build on Mary L. Dudziak's interrogation** of this area to demonstrate the ways in which these branches of the Federal government strove to improve education for African Americans in order to improve both the USA's **image overseas** – as noted by Dudziak – and its pool of trained manpower at home, both in order to aid the nation in its Cold War effort. The relevance of the increase in the manpower pool to the success or failure of **the Federal government's intentions is also discussed, highlighting the limitations of Dudziak's analysis of this interaction.**

In addition, this thesis will demonstrate that, where the dynamics of race and education during the early years of the Cold War are concerned, Derrick A. Bell Jr.'s **Interest-Convergence theory still takes precedence over Dudziak's Cold War imperative theory.** Where the improvement of African American education **did not resonate with the nation's needs in the Cold War, and especially when it** directly opposed it, the Federal government was not successful in expanding educational opportunities for African Americans when it wanted to. Race-equality was not important enough to the USA's **Cold War effort to persuade the Federal government to commit to it when it did not suit the government's wider** policy goals. Educational advancement for African Americans during the Cold War only occurred when such progress also directly contributed to the Federal **government's Cold War effort** – and when it did not, the Federal government

actively worked against such **advancement**. **As such, the prevalence of Bell's** Interest-Convergence theory is re-asserted.

The Conclusion to this thesis will close the thesis with an overview of the **ways in which this early and widespread Federal involvement in education 'for the duration' evolved into the normalisation of** Federal involvement in US education and even the establishment of a US Department of Education, something that had been carefully avoided previously throughout American history. Special attention is paid in the Conclusion to the first three decades after the passage of the NDEA in 1957. More research has been conducted into evaluating the impact of the Federal/education relationship during these years, as opposed to the 1990s and the 21st century. This is due to the simple fact that not enough time has yet passed to properly evaluate the impact that the recent interactions between the Federal government and the education system have had (and will have) upon the system itself.

This thesis does not represent a complete history of Federal intervention, or attempted intervention, into the education system during the Cold War era; such a thing would have required far more time and pages. It is instead intended to demonstrate both the pattern of behaviour, and the inspiration behind it, **which resulted in a permanent shift in the Federal government's relationship** with the US education system. This thesis seeks to offer further clarification of the intervening events which have allowed for the current relationship between the US education system and the Federal government, thereby demonstrating a contrast to the history set out in Chapter One of this thesis and highlighting the **importance of the 'goldilocks' conditions of** the early years of the Cold War in engendering this change.

Both the length and severity of the Cold War meant that Federal involvement in US education, **which had always been accepted ‘for the duration’** in times of need, began to become instead the modus operandi. It therefore continued long after the initial issues – the need for democracy education and science education, and the implementation of desegregation programmes – had fallen out of the public eye. Today, the Federal government play a central role in the US education system despite having no constitutional authority to do so, and the instigation of this development in the formation of US education policy can be traced back to the early years of the Cold War.

INDIVIDUAL OR NATION?

Federal Involvement in the US
Education System throughout
History

“There is no better example of the influence of politics upon culture than that presented by a historical perspective of the ideas which have developed our great educational system”.⁴¹

The Federal government has played a part in shaping the US education system from the earliest days of the Republic. At moments when it has felt intervention was required in order to benefit or safeguard the nation, the Federal government **has intervened in the US education system to ensure that America's schools, colleges and universities were teaching what needed to be taught, and producing citizens whom the US could entrust its future to.** Historian Willis Rudy has asserted in his work *Building America's Schools and Colleges: The Federal Contribution* (2003) that **"when fundamental challenges threatened the country, the government customarily sought to meet the situation by centralizing power under national authority. Such activism very often included Federal efforts to mobilize vital educational resources".**⁴² Historians Carl F. Kaestle and Marshall S. Smith have corroborated this stance in their article **"The Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education, 1940 – 1980". They asserted that the increasing role of the Federal government in the US education system was a result of "urgent social goals, superior revenue raising power, an impulse to equalize resources and opportunity and the seemingly irreversible drift to centralized administration in a technological, bureaucratic society".**⁴³ Despite the terms set out in the Tenth Amendment, the Federal government has always been a silent partner in the education system whenever it has chosen to be so.

The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, adopted in 1791, **states that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people".**⁴⁴ In essence, this Amendment established that unless the Constitution specifically stated that a certain power was the domain of the Federal

government, or that said power specifically did not belong to the States, then the power lay in the domain of the individual States. The power to intervene in the running of the education system is not delegated to the Federal government in the Constitution of the USA, and as such, the US education system has always been the responsibility of State governments, and remains so today. The Federal government has no direct power over the education system and as such can play no overt part in it.

Crucially, however, the Tenth Amendment does not include the word **‘expressly’** – **“powers not expressly delegated to the United States...”** – despite the fact that its inclusion was discussed.⁴⁵ This means that the Tenth Amendment does not prevent the Federal government from involving itself in State affairs through implied **powers through the ‘Necessary and Proper’ clause in Article One, Section Eight, Clause 18 of the Constitution. The Clause states that** “Congress shall have power ... to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any Department or **Office thereof**”.⁴⁶ **Without the word ‘expressly’, this clause supersedes the Tenth Amendment.**

Two other clauses also allow the Federal government to override the Tenth Amendment in order to protect and defend the national security of the USA and ensure a republican form of government remains in power. Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution requires the Federal government to provide for the common defence of the USA; Article 4, Section 4 requires it to guarantee a republican form of government to every State in the Union. When the education

system is required to support the national defence of the nation, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal government because the Federal government is **responsible for the nation's defence. Whilst the Constitution does not expressly** give the Federal government power over the schools in a time of national emergency, this can be inferred from these two subsections.

Many other avenues have also been utilised in order to enable the Federal government to support and influence schools, colleges and universities across the USA. According to Harry G. Good and James D. Teller, authors of *A History of American Education* (1973), **these avenues have included “the First Amendment, dealing with religion and with freedom of communication; the Fourteenth Amendment with its ‘due process’ clause; the power to maintain a postal system and to promote science and the useful arts; the powers assigned to the Supreme Court or developed by it; the general welfare clause (I, 8) and the taxing power”**.⁴⁷ Moreover, a method which has always been open to the Federal government is the promise of Federal aid for education in return for certain favours – usually the promotion of a certain field of study. Many routes have been explored in order to enable the Federal government both to mould the institutions and the curriculum to suit the changing needs of the nation and to glean from the education system the future Americans that were needed or desired. Throughout American history the Federal government has used these loopholes to defend countless attempts to influence the US education system. As such, Federal involvement in American education has long been in practice in the USA.

The opposition to Federal involvement in American education has also been powerful throughout American history, and over the years opponents have

emerged from many quarters. Federal aid to education has proved to be the most contentious issue. Whilst financial aid has always been needed by American education (the education system has never been flush with funds), financial aid from Federal quarters was continually resisted for fear that the money would alter the balance of power in the education system in favour of the government over **the institutions or the States. Opposition is usually asserted from either a ‘States’ rights’ or ‘academic freedom’** platform, with arguments formed around the perspective that the Federal government cannot be trusted to provide funds to the education system without wanting something in return.

This position has more often than not been cited as a smokescreen for the real purpose of opposition however, and these underlying reasons have varied over the years. They include, but are not limited to, concerns that Federal funding will be limited to State schools and will therefore negatively impact private schools or religious schools, especially Catholic schools; that Federal aid will include church schools, and will therefore undermine the separation between church and state; that Federal funding must be distributed equally between black and white schools or, after 1954, only to integrated schools; that the proposal for funding does not enforce the law, whether that be separate-but-equal or the *Brown* decision, by *not* insisting that funds be distributed equally; that aid will be limited to States whose education boards are struggling financially; and that aid will not be distributed according to need.⁴⁸ As the decision of whether to allow Federal intervention in education lay with the States, each State considered, first and foremost, how much its own education system would benefit. As each State

had varying wants and needs, this had a great deal of impact on the establishment of a programme of Federal aid to education.

In some instances, however, Federal funding for education was resisted by educators for the reason they cite: the fear that Federal control of education would overrule academic freedom or State control, and create an education system designed to serve the needs of the nation as a whole rather than the needs of the individual student. It has been feared that students would be required to study subjects and train for jobs which were necessary to the nation, rather than studying subjects they enjoyed or were interested in and training for the jobs they wanted to do. This fear has not always been confined to a fear of Federal funding for education; any form of Federal involvement has been greeted with a similar level of apprehension. The establishment of a Department of Education by President Andrew Johnson in 1867 was viewed with suspicion by members of both Congress and academia even though it offered no financial aid, as they feared that a formal Federal agency for education would try to supersede the authority of State governments to control their educational institutions. Representative Frederick Pike of Maine voiced his reservations at the time by **stating that “the schoolhouses of the country will go under the control of general government. Churches, I suppose, are to follow next. So, taking the railroads, telegraphs, schoolhouses and churches, it would leave us little but our local taxation and our local pauperism”**.⁴⁹ What has, throughout American history, manifested itself as a fear of Federal involvement in education, has always in reality been a fear of centralised control of education.

This chapter critically assesses the ways in which the Federal government used the powers available to it in order to circumvent the Tenth Amendment whenever intervention in the US education system was deemed to be necessary to its running of the nation. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of some major instances of Federal involvement within the education system between the early years of the Colonies up to the beginning of the Cold War, with particular focus on how these were achieved. The driving forces behind the attempts at involvement made by the Federal government will also be considered in order to examine why certain Federal proposals were successful and others were not. In particular, the establishment of a National University, the focus on African American education after the Civil War, and the Morrill Land Grant Acts will be discussed.

The link between Federal involvement and the need for national defence will receive special attention, as will the fact that the Federal government repeatedly achieved its own ends despite opposition. This chapter will examine **the way in which the Federal government's ongoing involvement in the education system established a culture of Federal intervention which the government was able to build upon during the early years of the Cold War.** The specific nature of its involvement after the Second World War will be examined in later chapters. This chapter will establish a correlation between the national situation and the **Federal government's desire to involve itself in the education system,** and demonstrate a pattern of behaviour which will highlight the fact that, if the Federal government desired to intervene over the education system, it usually found a method through which it could achieve this end.

Finally, this chapter will demonstrate the reasons why Federal intervention into the education system was pursued more earnestly and fervently during the early years of the Cold War. This will be achieved through an exploration of the convergence of a number of factors which, together, created an **ideal ‘goldilocks’ climate for Federal intervention to flourish in the US in a way it previously had not.** These factors include the sudden and extreme increase in the perceived importance of the education system to national security due to the success that the atomic bomb had in securing victory for the Allies in the **Second World War; President Truman’s own personal commitment to education as an institution and a tool which shaped society;** and the global trend towards extended involvement of national governments in the day to day lives of citizens, **demonstrated by the creation of the Welfare State in Britain, Truman’s own pursuit of expanded Federal powers in other areas such as race relations and socialised medical care, and a global focus on the link between education and social progress after the Second World War.**²

The American Revolution

The slow development of a Federal government of any significant size in the USA meant that the early emergence of education was, by default, free from Federal interference. The British government demonstrated no interest in the few country schools and private universities in this far off colony, especially as any children **‘of consequence’ were sent to England to be educated.**⁵⁰ For those left behind,

² This final contributing factor will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, however, due to its specific impact on the discussion of educational provision for African American students.

education, if undertaken at all, usually consisted of only a few years of study and took place in small independent schools, family-run schools or with private tutors.⁵¹ **It was common for local governments to contribute to a college's** founding; for example, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony contributed roughly £400 to the establishment of Harvard College, but this was usually the limit of governmental involvement.⁵² The oncoming Revolution, however, as it unified the Colonies and separated the American nation from mother England, changed this state of play. As the children of the Colonies became important to the newly established nation, those in charge of it began to take notice of them.

The American Revolution brought about a change in the perception of education among the middle and upper classes in the USA. Education in the early years of the new Republic was viewed as the responsibility of the new government. The founding fathers quickly identified a relationship between a free people and a well-educated populace, and attempted to plan accordingly. **“Education, in their view”, Good and Teller have asserted, “was a means of preserving liberty, securing unity, promoting good citizenship and developing the resources of the land and people. Education would help maintain the union of States, a united people and a republican government”.**⁵³ Frank Wilson Blackmar, author of *The History of Federal and State Aid to Higher Education* (1890), asserted that after the Revolution there existed in the newly United States a **“new zeal for educated citizenship”** and that it was vehemently advocated by statesmen that **“education was to be the nation's defense”.**⁵⁴ After the Revolution, freedom had to be defended, and this meant that the American populace needed to know

- at the very least - what freedom was, that they had it, and that it must be protected at all costs.

This concern extended as far as an expansion of higher education for the new nation, and the Federal government strongly recommended that this be achieved through the **establishment of a ‘National University’, which would be supported and run by the Federal government.** Blackmar has noted that Washington viewed political intelligence as a national safeguard, and with all of **the nation’s brightest youths from across the USA** gathered together in one place, **Blackmar highlighted, the Federal government would be able to “turn sectional pride into national feeling”.**⁵⁵ In order to avoid this watering down of the philosophies of the new Republic, Washington keenly supported the establishment of this Federal institution of education, and even bequeathed stock in a navigation company in his will, which was intended to be put to use in the establishment of this institution. This stock proved to be worthless, but had it not, it is likely that a National University would have been founded.

Washington was not the only representative of the Federal government to support this initiative; of the first six presidents to be elected in the USA, four expressed strong support for a Federal university and recommended the consideration of such an institution to their respective Congresses.⁵⁶ The National University never came to fruition, however; there was strong opposition to the ideological implications of a federally controlled institution of education, and each proposal was repeatedly blocked. When the founding of a Federal university was proposed in disguise by Congressman James Madison (the proposal asked only for the authority to establish a university and not, at the present time, for

any funds for it), Congressman John Nicholas (Virginia) opposed the measure, as **he believed “the responsibility would fall on us to keep [fund] the institution”**.⁵⁷

Nicholas claimed that the establishment of a national university was futile, as everyone would pay for it but few would benefit; even most who could afford the tuition would not be able to afford the cost of sending their children so far away to study, a problem which would only worsen as the USA expanded westward.⁵⁸ He claimed the university would also not promote a unity of ideas, **but instead entail “much evil”**.⁵⁹ Once again, this issue – that the Federal government could not be trusted to ‘finish what they started’ and that the burden would then fall on the tuition-payers, or worse the taxpayers, was a regular feature of the debate over Federal intervention. Especially in the early years of the Republic, few citizens received even a secondary level education, let alone a tertiary level education, therefore the direct benefits of an improved education system to the average American was hard to explain. No powerful narrative or unifying cause existed during this period that drew a line between the everyday citizen and a general better educated America and allowed the wants of the Federal government to be heard over the voice of the opposition.

George Washington’s ideas languished and were eventually forgotten about until Thomas Jefferson’s second term. Jefferson once again proposed the idea of a national university, and also drew attention to the fact that the Federal government had no constitutional authority to direct education in the USA. Jefferson’s intention was to rectify this situation and allow the Federal government some control over the education of its citizens, but Jefferson’s plan backfired. The powerful ‘States’ rights’ lobby which existed in Washington at this

time – historian Albert Castel has described them as more Jeffersonian than Jefferson himself – immediately jumped on this fact and prevented an amendment to the Constitution. In highlighting **the Federal government’s lack of** authority, Jefferson accidentally undermined any opportunity the Federal government may have had to influence the education system without claiming constitutional authority.⁶⁰

This mistake did, however, enable Jefferson to establish two long-running **patterns for the Federal government’s involvement in the American education** system: firstly, he demonstrated the impetus to intervene in order to ensure a widespread commitment to fundamental US values; secondly, he demonstrated the fact that, where the education system is concerned, the Federal government is usually successful in its efforts eventually, albeit not always in the way it intended. Thomas Jefferson was indeed eventually successful in founding an academy of higher education that was dedicated to protecting the ideals of the Federal government, the Constitution and the nation. In 1802 he founded the United States Military Academy, better known today as West Point.⁶¹ It was not a national university, but it performed the same function. This was no accident; West Point was not intended to be seriously focused on military training, as is demonstrated by the fact that in the same Act in which Jefferson established a military academy, he simultaneously reduced the size of the army; this military academy had an agenda other than preparation for war.

Indeed, the purpose of West Point was not, as was popularly assumed, to train soldiers to defend the nation, but instead to mould soldiers to support republican principles and to teach them to love their new government. Historian

Theodore J. Crackel asserted in his history of the academy, *Mr Jefferson's Army* (1987), that “it was not armies, per se”, that Jefferson feared, “but an army loyal to incorrect political principles”.⁶² Another West Point historian, Robert M. S. McDonald, has furthered Crackel’s theory by emphasising that Jefferson “envisioned the academy as one of several mechanisms through which he could transform the Federalist leaning officer corps into a thoroughly republicanized (and Republicanized) cadre of men dedicated to the defense of the nation’s revolutionary ideals” and through highlighting the fact that Jefferson regularly appointed only cadets who shared his Republican views.⁶³

Jefferson himself had the honour of appointing the first superintendent of the Academy. Rather than choosing an established war veteran, as may have been expected, he chose Harvard graduate Jonathan Williams, a noted scientist and philosopher who had spent the entirety of the Revolutionary War in England as a representative of the US government. Classes were focused not on military strategy, but on science and technology, which the new government felt would best serve the nation both militarily (for the development of weapons) and economically (for the sale and export of new American-made inventions). Jefferson even made suggestions about which books should inhabit the Academy’s library, enabling him to further control the dissemination of knowledge to the matriculating students.⁶⁴

Whilst the establishment of a national university was an abuse of the Federal government’s powers, the alternative foundation of a similarly purposed ‘military academy’ was instead a “‘necessary and proper’ outgrowth of the national government’s power to ‘raise and support armies’”.⁶⁵ Jefferson regarded

education, McDonald has stated, as “too important – and potentially too influential over the character of the nation’s future military leaders” to be entrusted to an establishment outside of the Federal government. As such he utilised the powers that were available to him to ultimately circumvent the opposition, and the Constitution, and in doing so, began a governmental trend that would eventually result in a permanent Federal role in the US education system.⁶⁶

The Civil War and Reconstruction

Willis Rudy has argued that war has always acted as a catalyst to the expansion of the American education system, and equally as a catalyst to the expansion of Federal involvement in it.⁶⁷ This was certainly true of the Civil War, as a widespread expansion of secondary and higher education occurred during Reconstruction after the War. Yet as the economy of the South was in ruins after the Civil War, the Southern States neither shared in nor benefitted much from the vast expansion of higher education which the Northern States experienced during this period. The expansion of secondary education was delayed as Southern society could not resolve the issue of how to treat its newly freed former slaves, and the War had left most Southern colleges and universities destitute.⁶⁸

To treat African Americans as equals conflicted with all that many Southern citizens knew, but to not treat them as freed men and women now conflicted with the laws of the newly reunited Union. Therefore, during the Civil War and the early years of Reconstruction, education for African Americans in

the South became, in part, a Federal and military affair. This involvement demonstrates an example of another common feature of Federal involvement in US education; the need **to force the States to uphold the law or protect the US's** commitment to democracy. Under the direction of the Federal government, the military took control of the education system to ensure that African American students received the education due to them as US citizens. General Nathaniel P. Banks issued an order in 1864 that ensured that all of the freedmen under his protection in New Orleans, where he was based at the time, received a rudimentary education. In order to provide this education, the army assumed **“the power to tax, and in fact requisition, to build, to hire and to regulate and discipline. The army supplied books, set up courses of study, and set the schools’ hours”**.⁶⁹ The Federal government assumed total control of the education system for African Americans in the State of Louisiana during this period.⁷⁰

As a part of Congressional Reconstruction, all of the Southern States were required to provide a system of public schooling for all of their youth, and this included African American youths. For the most part, this system began as a segregated one. Before the outbreak of the Civil War, the few schools that existed for African Americans had been supported and run by volunteers, missionaries and philanthropists. After the end of the Civil War, most of these schools were absorbed into their local school systems and became the provision for the African American students in the area.⁷¹ Some locales temporarily established integrated school systems, but a mixture of protests and local ordinances soon created an entirely segregated school system in the South, which became enshrined in law after the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* ruling in 1896. Good and Teller have suggested that

it may have been for fear of this military seizure of the control of their schools that the Southern States so quickly agreed to provide public schooling for African American students after the Civil War – something which the majority of Southerners were against as schooling for African Americans had, up until recently, not even been legal in their States, let alone publicly funded.⁷² These separate schools, of course, were not equal either before *Plessy* or after it, but without this Federal pressure, it is unlikely that education for African Americans would have become a public concern at all.

The Morrill Land Grant Acts (1862; 1890)

The Civil War and its aftermath brought with it a significant and irrevocable change within American society, and higher education was not left untouched. Lucas recognised in *American Higher Education* that “the clear tendency in American higher education, throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, more than anything else, was one of concessions to the demand for more **utilitarian learning**”.⁷³ Lucas asserts that this shift was achieved through the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Acts in 1862 and 1890; their passage demonstrated another long-term impetus for Federal involvement in the education system – the need to ensure that the schools, colleges and universities were teaching what the Federal government **felt the nation’s students needed to be learning**.⁷⁴ As Good and Teller have recognised, land-grant colleges were founded (or, in some cases, converted) upon the idea that advanced scientific principles and formal learning had become relevant to the traditionally apprenticeship-controlled fields of agriculture and industry, and therefore the

modernisation of such fields was vital to the advancement of the American nation.⁷⁵

The first Morrill Land Grant Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 after five years of deliberation in the Houses. The Library of Congress outlined the Act as such: **“The Morrill Act provided each State with 30 acres of Federal land for each member in their Congressional delegation. The land was then sold by the States and the proceeds used to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and the mechanical arts”**.⁷⁶ The Morrill Act also represented the first instance of Federal money being used specifically, directly and openly to fund higher education in the USA. The Act reached every State in the Union, and was sought after not just by small, struggling universities, but by well-established State institutions as well, despite the fact that it represented an intrusion of Federal concerns into matters of education - a factor which had been significant enough to derail the cause of the National University less than a century earlier.⁷⁷

Southern Democrats held up earlier incarnations of the Bill for years prior to the Civil War, during which time every hallmark of the ongoing debate over Federal intervention had been discussed. Southern States feared Federal intervention into matters of education in part because this Democrat stronghold **disliked ‘big government’ and preferred to administer their own affairs at a State level**; those opposed also feared being forced to integrate their schools or fund separate schools for African American students. President James Buchanan **vetoed the bill, claiming it was unconstitutional and that it represented “the end of the Republic”**.⁷⁸ Buchanan defended his decision by stating that the passage of

a bill for Federal aid to education would mean that the Federal government would **abuse its power and would “dictate the curriculum”**.⁷⁹

Yet the outbreak of the Civil War made the Morrill Act relevant not just to farmers or educators, but to the defence of the nation. If an army marches on its stomach, the government has to make sure it is full; if the future of the nation relied upon the increasing educational level of its farmers, then it was the responsibility of the Federal government to create a viable system of knowledge transfer. The Morrill Act, with its agricultural foresight, represented a means through which this could be achieved.⁸⁰ Factory labourers and skilled mechanics were also lacking in the USA at this time as the War had significantly slowed the flow of immigration from Europe; the Morrill Act promised a provision for training students in the Mechanic Arts.⁸¹ It even included a clause which mandated military training in all land-grant universities, a vital departure from the traditional exemption of college students from military service.⁸² This visible link between the American public and an improved education system helped to garner support for the Act.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, the Morrill Act became equally as beneficial to the Federal government as it was to student farmers. It was popular among unaffiliated homesteaders, and its passage assured their loyalty to the Union government. The Congressmen and Senators who were present and approved the Morrill Act did so with an agenda in mind, and the funds arrived at the universities laced with conditions. The Morrill Act insisted upon

“the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college, where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical

studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several **pursuits and professions in life**".⁸³

The Act prescribed the kind of knowledge to be taught and the kind of student to which it should be imparted, and served to benefit the nation as much as individual colleges or individual students. It is no accident that the bill was passed at a time when the South – traditionally the most vehement lobby against Federal intervention in the education system – had seceded from the Union and were, therefore, not able to influence Congressional proceedings; had Southern Representatives been present, the Morrill Act would have met far stronger opposition. More importantly, without the national imperative created by the outbreak of the Civil War, it is unlikely that the Act would have received such impassioned support from those who were present; the Morrill Act, whilst dressed up as an agricultural and educational measure, enabled the Federal **government to utilise the USA's** youth and its education system to help the Union win the War.

Further adding to the chagrin of the academic world, the first Morrill Act was not as successful as had been hoped as it had not ensured long term funding for the institutions it founded, and therefore many of them quickly found themselves without enough funds to survive. The Federal government did not **'finish what it started'** just as had been feared during the debate over the creation of the National University. The affected universities converged in Washington DC

to request further Federal support, and eventually they received it, in the form of the second Morrill Act (1890). This Act established that an annual appropriation from the National Treasury be given to each land-grant college. The **universities'** need for this law, however, placed the power in the hands of the Federal government, which utilised it by calling for even tighter Federal controls. Annual reports were required regarding how the grant had been spent. If Federal officials deemed this spend inappropriate, they were at liberty to withhold some or all further grants to an institution, or even request the money back.⁸⁴

The Federal government, bit by bit, claimed a significant amount of control over American higher education. It could not direct *how* the money was spent, **but it could stop payments if it disapproved of a university's choices. This caused the universities to think carefully about the Federal government's agenda. After** the US Office of Education was established, these reports, previously submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture, were instead sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior was allied more closely to the needs of the nation **than the needs of an individual's agricultural education, which further strengthened the Federal government's hold over higher education.**

The Federal government also used the second Morrill Act to further the cause of African American education, as it had done in the early years of Reconstruction. The Act stated that funds could not be given to States that practised segregation, unless they provided agricultural and mechanical colleges for African American students as well. As a result, 17 institutions of higher education especially for African American students were founded in the former Confederate States so that these States in question could avoid integrating their

established land-grant colleges.⁸⁵ Willis Rudy has asserted that it is highly unlikely that these 17 institutions would have been founded in the former Confederate States without the impetus provided by Federal controls.⁸⁶

Twentieth Century America

Almost 25 years after the passage of the second Morrill Act, another war prompted further Federal intervention in the education system. Just two months before **the USA's entry into the First World War, the Smith-Hughes Act** made Federal funds available specifically for the dissemination of knowledge in the vocational professions – agricultural and industrial work in particular – in high schools across the USA.⁸⁷ The changes to the high school curriculum proposed in the Smith-Hughes Act were not dissimilar in nature to those outlined by the Cooley Bill – another bill which had advocated Federal funding for vocational education four years earlier – yet it succeeded where its predecessor had failed. This is due to the fact that, in the four intervening years between the two **proposals, the outbreak of the First World War, and the USA's subsequent** commitment to it, had caused a radical change in the political situation of the USA.

As the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act was a reaction to the First World War, it is no surprise that the funding also benefitted the nation as much as it improved schools or supported students, and it also came with strings attached. The changes which occurred in the USA after the nation joined the First World War in 1917 meant that vocational careers became far more closely linked to

national security – food, clothing and boots were needed to send to the soldiers fighting in France; an increase in industry was required in order to speed up mobilisation. The funding provided by the Smith-Hughes Act went some way to quickly bridging the gap between what the nation needed and what the nation had.

The benefits which the Act would provide to the Federal government were the primary source of the opposition to the Smith-Hughes Act; educators felt that it exposed the education system to the vacillations of national politics.⁸⁸ Noted educational theorist, John Dewey, criticised the Smith-Hughes Act on the eve of its signing and asked whether the new vocational education movement was **designed to “increase ... the industrial intelligence and power of the worker” or if it was intended rather to “add to the profits of employers... by avoiding waste, getting more out of their machines and materials” in the hope that profits would increase.**⁸⁹ **Dewey claimed that the bill “settled no problem; it merely symbolizes the inauguration of a conflict between irreconcilably opposed educational and industrial ideas”.**⁹⁰

Whilst it did benefit those students who had no desire to enter academia, in elevating vocational education over a traditional liberal arts education, the tenets of the Smith-Hughes Act ultimately served the needs of the nation over the wants of the education system. Criticism of the Act declined greatly after the **USA’s entry into the First World War in 1917, and the US education system** continued its commitment to vocational education throughout the 1920s. Herbert Kliebard asserted in *The American Curriculum* that **“the winds of change... had swept the educational world in the previous quarter century”** –

change which had been driven by the wants and needs of the Federal government.⁹¹

By the 1930s, schooling at every level was affected by the onset of the Great Depression; historians Frank J. Munger and Richard F. Fenno have argued that **“the question of direct Federal aid to education was forcibly reopened by the economic collapse that followed 1929”**.⁹² In many areas of the USA, schoolchildren had no schools to attend, and where schools were still in session it was often due to the fact that teachers had agreed to teach for free. Across the USA, pupils dropped out at an alarming rate in order to earn money to support their families.⁹³

Schools were kept open with Federal funds to ensure that pupils could attend them; the National Youth Administration (NYA) used Federal money to find on-campus jobs for students such as work as janitors, research assistants and work building playgrounds and other public facilities to ensure that they could afford to stay in school.⁹⁴ The main reason for the institution of many of the programmes which concerned the education system directly was to ensure that the pupils stayed in school or were otherwise occupied in order to keep them out of the job market – and the unemployment line.⁹⁵ No interest was shown in the kind of education the students received between 9am and 3pm or how enthusiastic an underpaid teacher would be. The main goal was to ensure that the students were busy, which prevented them from either taking a job from someone else, or adding to the already sky high unemployment figures.

Without any direct involvement, the Federal government allocated more **money to the education system during Roosevelt’s first two terms than any earlier**

administration in American history.⁹⁶ **Historian Paula S. Fass has argued that “in the course of its relief efforts, the New Deal developed educational programs and facilities that paralleled those of traditional educational institutions. Those programs were **federally administered and controlled**”.**⁹⁷ The educational activities of the CCC camps became so established that, while still unregulated, they became formalised and extended; in 1937, Congress provided each works camp with a schoolhouse and increased the funding allocated to education therein.⁹⁸ In 1941, CCC members from 47 States and the District of Columbia received educational credits for the schooling they received whilst in the camps. Unmonitored schooling provided and controlled entirely by the Federal government became, in retrospect, as much a part of the formal education system as the schools and colleges themselves, but entirely without regulation from an educational body.⁹⁹

Opposition to the education provided by the New Deal programmes did exist, and echoed earlier issues over Federal involvement. The programmes were considered by some National Education Association (NEA) members to be a **“hostile intruder” into American education, and were thought to be “usurping what should remain local responsibilities”**.¹⁰⁰ Educator George S. Counts claimed that **“the school will become an instrument for the perpetuation of the existing social order rather than a creative force in society”**.¹⁰¹ Southern educators feared that Federal money would involve a caveat requiring desegregation or equal distribution of funds between white and black institutions.

Opposition, however, did not prevent the Federal government from involving itself in American education. As Fass has argued, the New Deal enabled

the Federal government to **“enter the educational arena through the back door, as it were, not as an agent of education, but as a dispenser of relief”**.¹⁰² By ring-fencing its involvement as social relief, not educational policy, the Federal government avoided major controversy over its policies, whilst simultaneously utilising education and the education system to address the societal problems **caused by the Depression. In addition, the Federal government’s involvement in** the education system was largely beneficial to the individuals who received a federally funded education during the Depression years, which in itself helped to stem the flow of opposition.

The Federal government showed no interest in permanently funding education, despite calls from public school officials who wished such legislation – free from Federal control of course – to be enacted.¹⁰³ To offer long-term unfettered funding was both expensive and in no way beneficial to the Federal government. President Roosevelt continually reiterated his position that he **“preferred to rely on the new State agencies he created to get funds to those most in need”, and, as such, retain the power to repeal funds when the emergency subsides**.¹⁰⁴ This flexibility proved useful to Roosevelt as a new emergency – **the USA’s entry into the Second World War** – brought with it a need for a different **type of Federal intervention in the USA’s education system. Few programmes** initiated by the New Deal administrations survived this change.¹⁰⁵

The Second World War

The outbreak of the Second World War, **and the USA's subsequent commitment** to it, caused the Federal government to once again review the American education system and its efficacy, just as it had after the outbreak of the First World War. The Federal presence on campus increased during the Second World War as the government began using college facilities to train military personnel.¹⁰⁶ **Thelin has asserted that American colleges and universities “proved to be both resilient and useful as a part of the national war effort in World War II”.**¹⁰⁷ He has **highlighted that “the campus reconstituted itself to provide a hospitable setting for a variety of intense military training programs at hundreds of colleges”.**¹⁰⁸ Facilities and resources at colleges and universities across the country were made available to the Federal government to aid the nation in the War effort – in exchange for Federal dollars, of course.

US patriotism and constitutional authority were not the only driving forces **behind the colleges' and universities' acquiescence to the Federal government.** The numbers of students matriculating in higher education dropped off sharply during the war years, placing a serious strain on the funds available to each **institution. Federal research grants became vital to many institutions' survival.** Some universities and colleges, **Lucas has recognised, became “almost entirely dependent on government subsidies for their very survival” during the war and by 1945, “upwards of half of the income supporting certain academic institutions came from the national government”.**¹⁰⁹ Without the financial support provided by the Federal government, many institutions of higher education would have been added to the casualties of the war.

The Serviceman's Re-adjustment Act (1944)

Federal involvement in the education system did not subside after the war, but **instead massively increased with the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act**, more commonly known as the GI Bill. It was passed one year before the end of the War and one year before the government's specially appropriated war powers came to an end. **The GI Bill was designed to provide "vocational training or formal education in any field on every possible level" and allocated funding for** all returning servicemen and women to attend - if accepted - a college of their choice.¹¹⁰ Returning servicemen could take advantage of one year of education for 90 days of service given to their country in the Second World War, plus another month for every month of active duty the soldier had served, up to but not exceeding 48 months – the length of a college degree. Tuition fees, book subsidies and college supplies were paid for by the Federal government, usually directly to the college or university, and each new servicemen-turned-student received either \$50 or \$75 per month dependent on their marital status.¹¹¹

Lucas has stated that "more than any other single initiative, [the GI Bill] brought massive changes to higher education in the **postwar era**".¹¹² The GI Bill engendered a dramatic shift in the demographics of the college campus, as it enabled a large number of working class Americans, who would not have had the opportunity otherwise, to attend college. It also became more common for mature students to attend college after the passage of the GI Bill as the majority of returning servicemen who took advantage of the opportunity had put college on hold in order to join the war effort or, alternatively, had neither the money nor the qualifications to attend college before the war.

The GI Bill, like the Federal government's presence on campus during the war, was not without its critics. The Republican opposition feared that the GI Bill would, according to Rudy, "upset racial segregation in the South, unbalance the Federal budget, and somehow undermine the moral fiber of the nation".¹¹³ The GI Bill also proved to be somewhat unpopular with educators, who feared that the increased accessibility to a college education for returning veterans would lead to a 'dumbing down' of academia. James B. Conant, president of Harvard, stated that he would have preferred a Bill which bestowed Federal dollars upon "a carefully selected number of returning veterans".¹¹⁴ Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, announced in an article written for *Collier's*, entitled "The Threat to American Education", that he believed the GI Bill would lead to universities subverting their academic standards in order to benefit from Federal dollars. Having learned from their behaviour during the Second World War, Hutchins asserted that "educational institutions... cannot resist money. The GI Bill of Rights gives them the chance to get more money than they ever dreamed of and to do it in the name of patriotism".¹¹⁵ This, Hutchins claimed, would lead to a drop in academic standards, as he believed that the colleges would "not want to keep out unqualified veterans; they will not want to expel those who fail".¹¹⁶ Hutchins also suggested that the real reason for the Federal government's passage of the GI Bill was to keep the vast number of returning veterans off the unemployment lines, and the streets, and he resented the use of the education system as a form of welfare.¹¹⁷

Hutchins was correct in his assumption; the main purpose of the GI Bill was to prevent a flood of returning veterans in to the workplace. Rudy supports

Hutchins' claim that the GI Bill was passed in part due to "an abiding fear that the return of masses of veterans might trigger another major depression".¹¹⁸ As historian Edward Humes has noted, "without a plan in place for those millions of returning men and women, the nation's economy, culture, even its democracy could fall apart".¹¹⁹ Education Historian Diane Ravitch also holds this view, asserting in her seminal history of higher education *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945 – 1980* (1983) that "the Federal officials in charge of postwar planning were chiefly interested in preventing joblessness and economic distress. To the veterans, the [GI Bill] was one more 'goody' in the total package; to the planners, it was a promising way to reduce the number of jobseekers in the period after demobilization".¹²⁰ The Bill also enabled the Federal government to delay the vast numbers of returning veterans from entering the workplace. As Thelin has recognised, "the Serviceman's Readjustment Act focused on strategies to suspend returning GIs from the labor market so as to allow factories adequate time to retool for the switch from tank treads to automobile tires".¹²¹ The Bill enabled the Federal government both to 'reward' soldiers for their service to their country during the War, and to skilfully avoid the problems of mass unemployment which the returning servicemen would otherwise have brought.

The GI Bill clearly represented a Federal circumvention of the Tenth Amendment, but the GI Bill did not represent the kind of intervention into the education system that the US would witness post-war. As such, it cannot be considered to be the 'moment' at which the Federal government's approach to intervention in the education system shifted. Whilst the GI Bill represented a massive Federal intervention in terms of economic underwriting, it did not

represent Federal influence in terms of the proposal of educational policy. At the time that it was passed, the United States was also still at war, which left the Federal government in a very different position, policy-wise, to peacetime. The **GI Bill's primary intention was not to increase Federal control of the education system, or to use the system of education to any end other than as a glorified car park for returning veterans; it was created to avoid the chaos which ensued after the First World War, and a return to the Great Depression from which the US had only recently escaped. Returning veterans could spend their first years back in the US in college, rather than the workplace (or unemployed) – or indeed on the 52-20 welfare plan also included in the GI Bill, rather than in the workplace; the education provision was part of a far larger plan, and one which had very little to do with education itself.**

The GI Bill did, however, act as a catalyst to the shift in the Federal **government's approach to intervention in the education system. It was wildly successful and encountered little opposition, thus demonstrating the potential for a Federal role in the education system. The success of the education provision in the GI Bill, and the subsequent impact on higher education, was not anticipated. Early projections assumed that around 8-10% of the returning veterans would take advantage of the GI Bill's education provision, which is not a game-changing number. The main reason why the GI Bill had such an impact on college education far beyond what the Federal government and both supporters and critics of the GI Bill had expected was in fact down to higher education institutions themselves. Many colleges recognised the benefits that an influx of federally sponsored students could have on their institution; higher education**

had struggled throughout the war due to far lower than average matriculation rates and, as the war came to a close, the targeted war research which had taken place on campuses across the nation also ended, which removed much needed funding from the colleges. The GI Bill represented an opportunity to recover from this, as it provided colleges with students – and tuition fees – in never before seen numbers and successfully averted this crisis. College enrolment was 45% higher in 1946 than in 1944.¹²²

The colleges and universities recognised this opportunity and embraced it. **As Thelin has noted, “Harvard, for example, anticipated the postwar changes by initiating a vigorous advertisement and recruitment program among overseas servicemen before the war ended”.**¹²³ College enrolment rates doubled between 1943 and 1946.¹²⁴ Although the government laid the groundwork, it was the colleges themselves who caused the GI Bill to alter US higher education so dramatically. The only role which the Federal government retained in the implementation of the GI Bill beyond its administration was the caveat that an institution had to be federally approved in order for a veteran to attend on the GI Bill; this clause existed because the benefits offered by the GI Bill created a slew of pop-up colleges which in reality were little more than opportunistic diploma mills. Provided colleges could demonstrate that they were accredited by a regionally controlled accreditation agency, the GI Bill benefits were approved.¹²⁵

The benefits to society wrought by the GI Bill also demonstrated how vital education was to the progress and success of the nation. This better educated populace contributed significantly to the explosion of the middle class in the 1950s and 1960s, and widened access to college education not only for the

returning veterans, but also for subsequent generations as it allowed veterans to escape from the class they were born into in vast numbers. The aims of the GI Bill were so successful that, despite the fact that its passage called for a phenomenal financial commitment, the Federal government also benefitted financially as well. Edwin Kiester Jr. has noted that **“for every dollar spent on the GI Bill, the United States government eventually received as much as six dollars return in the form of higher taxes that were collected. These were the taxes that were paid by individuals who were beneficiaries of the advanced education which the GI Bill had made available to them”**.¹²⁶ Kiester Jr. recognised that the GI Bill may well have been **“the best deal ever made by Uncle Sam”**.¹²⁷

The GI Bill does not represent the beginning of the US’s swing towards a formalised federal role in the education system; the Federal government provided a large amount of funding with remarkably few strings attached. Where the GI Bill was concerned, the Federal government were prepared to pay the piper with no expectation of being able to call the tune, because education itself was never the government’s focus where the GI Bill was concerned. It was intended to keep the returning GIs out of the job market, and it did just that. The ease with which the Federal government was able to intervene, however, did demonstrate how open the US public were to intervention. In particular, as Thelin has recognised, the federally funded research projects and the benefits reaped by the GI Bill “indelibly transform[ed] the missions and funding of American higher education in the period following the end of WWII in 1945”.¹²⁸ The conjunction between the Federal government and the education system during and immediately after the Second World War was both successful and popular, and encountered

surprisingly little opposition. As such, it set the stage for a vast increase in Federal involvement in the education system in the post-war years, but the Federal **government's willingness to pay without actually participating did not survive the shift.**

A Case for Intervention

Harry Truman, an ardent New Dealer, ascended to the Presidency suddenly on 12th April 1945. Relatively inexperienced, he described the occasion as like having the moon, the stars and the planets fall on him.¹²⁹ Truman became President, however, at a time of intense change, not just for US society, but on a global scale. Within weeks, the Second World War was over and Truman was required to guide his fellow Americans through to the New World: post war America. Before this world emerged, Truman was called upon to make one of the most important decisions in US history; whether or not to drop the atomic bomb on Japan. When he became President in April, he was not aware that the Manhattan Project had been successful; just four months later, he gave the Enola Gay the order to deploy over Hiroshima. Three days later he would do the same over Nagasaki.

This decision ended the war in the Pacific arena and shaped the course of US foreign policy for the next forty years. It also, however, had an irrevocable effect on US domestic policy. With the release of the atomic bombs over Japan, a new kind of threat emerged; for the first time in human history, mankind possessed the power to bring total destruction to all life on earth. The Second World War was over but, in the Pacific at least, it had been won not by military

might, but by superior scientific prowess. In the months and years after the end of the Second World War, this shift in power caused concern to grow across the world over the role that each nation's scientific advancement would play in the future world order.¹³⁰ An article published in *School Life* in 1947 announced that the USA was "on the threshold of the atomic age"; the anonymous author acknowledged that "accustomed as we are to a mechanized and highly technical civilization we nevertheless face a future of scientific development with considerable anxiety".¹³¹ He also questioned what role this new frontier would play in the USA's future, and asked the question on everyone's lips: "will new scientific developments be employed primarily to kill and destroy?"¹³²

To add to this sense of urgency, the Federal government was struck by a fear that students in the Soviet Union were differently – and better – educated than American students. They feared that the Soviet education system favoured scientific research over liberal arts studies, and therefore a nation of inventors who could, in time, overpower the USA, were being fostered in the only nation realistically capable of becoming a threat to the USA. Additionally, it seemed that Soviet students were taught to love and support their government in a way not yet practised on American soil, which in turn created a fervour for their cause which would be hard to penetrate. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, education researcher George S. Counts translated a Soviet text on pedagogy – *I Want to Be Like Stalin* – which had been intended for Soviet eyes only and therefore offered a unique insight into the aims of the Soviet Union's education system. He summed up the government's fears in his introduction to his translation, asking "What are the Soviet leaders 'up to'?; What are their plans for

the long future?; What may we expect from the Soviet leaders in the years ahead?"; **Counts suggested that "if we knew the answers, we could shape our own policies with more assurance"**.¹³³ Educators and politicians alike recognised the important role which the education system could play in this non-military conflict and feared losing by being 'left behind' by the Soviet Union's potentially superior practices.

President Truman established that the future of the American nation would depend on the education level of its citizens in his Reorganization Plan, **issued in 1946, and claimed that "over the years the prosperity of America and its place in the world will depend on the health, the education, the ingenuity and the integrity of its people and their ability to work together and with other nations"**.¹³⁴ Moreover, Truman established that this improvement to the population was the **responsibility of the Federal government, and stated that "the most basic, and at the same time the most difficult task of any country is the conservation and development of its human resources. Under our system of government this is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and local governments, but in it the Federal government has a large and vital role to play"**.¹³⁵

Truman re-labelled the American people as 'human resources', thus establishing them as a commodity equal to energy resources or food resources. **The use of this 'resource' was the responsibility of the Federal government, to be directed by the government in order to maximise its potential.** Just as food and energy resources are redirected to the troops during a hot war, human resources would be redirected to impacted areas in order to meet the demands of a cold war. **Truman demonstrated the Federal government's understanding that it was no**

longer suitable for it to play merely a financial role in promoting education as it had done through the GI Bill; it now needed to play a part in the creation and direction of education policy in order to protect national security.

President Truman then established that the Federal government would **develop education “through its research, advice, stimulation and financial aid”**.¹³⁶ Truman again reiterated his reasons for financially supporting the education system two years later in a communication to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in which he stated

“I regard the proper education of our youth as a matter of paramount importance to the welfare and security of the United States. It is necessary and proper that the Federal government should furnish financial assistance which will make it possible for the States to provide educational facilities more nearly adequate to meet the pressing needs of our Nation”.¹³⁷

Both this communication, and his Reorganization Plan, were publicly available and copies of each were republished and circulated to the schools, colleges and **universities through the government’s *School Life*** magazine. Truman did not attempt to covertly infiltrate the education system, but instead openly declared it to be the domain of the Federal government, as was everything which was important to national security. He established that Federal involvement in the education system was not only acceptable, but necessary and proper.

The difference between the Federal government’s approach to education prior to the end of the War and after it is not only attributable to the deployment

of the atomic bomb and the subsequent alterations to the perception of the importance of education to society. The very fact that Harry Truman was in a position to make that historic decision is notable in itself. After the sudden, albeit not unanticipated, death of President Roosevelt, Truman, a man who had held the office of the Vice President for less than three months, became the most powerful man in the United States, which by 1945 meant one of the most powerful men - if not the most powerful man – in the world. The new President Truman demonstrated two particularly relevant traits during his time in office: He betrayed a keen interest in education (particularly in the importance of education to shaping society, and in turn the need to reduce the barriers to higher education including **financial and racial**) and a **penchant for ‘big government’** – for the Federal government to play an expanded role in shaping US society in areas in which it had traditionally had no role. These areas included, among others, race relations, medical care and the US education system.

As a young man Harry Truman was focused on education. He was known around his home town of Independence for being studious or, in his own words, **“a sissy”**.¹³⁸ Truman was one of only eleven boys at Independence High School alongside 30 girls, as it was not the norm in Missouri at the time for boys to attend high school – work was usually considered to be more appealing and more immediately needed.¹³⁹ Biographer David McCulloch noted in his seminal study of Truman that, during his adolescence, Truman **“grew dutifully, conspicuously studious, spending long afternoons in the town library, watched over by a white plaster bust of Ben Franklin”**.¹⁴⁰ He did well in school, and liked his teachers, he later described them as **“the salt of the earth”** and reminisced that **“they gave us**

our high ideals, and they hardly ever received more than forty dollars a month”.¹⁴¹ His favourite teacher was Miss Margaret Phelps, a history teacher, and Truman himself also recalled that “reading history to me was far more than a romantic adventure. It was solid instruction and wise teaching that I somehow felt that I wanted and needed”.¹⁴² Truman stated that the influence which his teachers had in shaping his life was second only to that of his mother.¹⁴³

His first plan upon graduating was to try for West Point. He was rejected due to his eyesight. Due to wild speculation and poor business sense, however, Truman’s father also lost all of the family’s money and property when Truman came of age for matriculation and, as McCulloch has noted, “college of any kind was out of the question”.¹⁴⁴ Ferrell illuminates that college was “something that the son had wanted to do”.¹⁴⁵ In a clear demonstration that Truman still wished to further his education in a formal setting despite his two earlier setbacks, he signed up for an accounting course at Little Spaulding’s Commercial College in Kansas City, MO, but his family proved too poor for Truman even to pursue this route. He instead went to work on the Santa Fe Railroad as a Construction Timekeeper. Truman later recalled this experience, and described his first job in pedagogical terms as “a very down-to-earth education”.¹⁴⁶

Education clearly penetrated Truman’s world view, and he pursued it throughout his life, despite his troubled beginnings. Journalist Merle Miller described Truman as “a self-educated man” but noted that “he mispronounced a lot of words, which in the beginning puzzled me. Then I realised that while he had often read them, he had seldom, if ever, spoken them aloud, not even in many cases heard them spoken aloud”.¹⁴⁷ Truman’s lack of college education

continually bothered him. As McCulloch has noted, when he served in the First World War, Truman “felt he was in over his head, having never been to college, and worried constantly that he would fail. The mathematics was all at the college level”.¹⁴⁸ On 17th April 1952, when asked by a news reporter about rumours that he would take a teaching position in the history department of a North Carolina University, Truman joked with that “I am no historian. I have no college degrees except honorary ones that they have given me since I have been in the Senate and the President of the United States, and I don’t believe that there is any college in the country that would consider me qualified to teach history – or anything else!”¹⁴⁹

This self-depreciation was unfounded. Truman biographer Roy Jenkins noted that Truman “was at least as well read in history and biography as was Roosevelt. He was steeped in the history of the Republic and particularly of the presidency, but he was also a considerable expert on the lives of the Roman emperors and of almost every great military commander in the history of the world. Yet his knowledge sat less easily on his shoulders”.¹⁵⁰ Still, education remained important, and almost sacred to him. He received an honorary college degree from “a little college out in Iowa” which, in his own words, he “did not know they were going to confer... on me or [I] would not have been there – it was too late when I found out about it not to let them go ahead with their plan – [I] did not want to upset the apple cart”. At this point in 1952 he had no plans to accept another, however, despite hundreds of invitations, because “I am not very strong for honorary degrees if you have not earned them”.¹⁵¹

Truman valued education and, as his opinion on the importance of **teachers demonstrated, believed that the education provided to a nation's citizens** played a definitive role in shaping the society of that nation. Truman was also thwarted in his own pursuit of higher education, not due to inability, but access. **Writer James McMurtry Longo has noted that "he never forgot the pain of wanting to continue in school but not having the money to pay for it".**¹⁵² It is no **surprise, therefore, that one of Truman's** main focuses when discussing the need for education in the modern world was the ways in which he could utilise his Presidential power in order to widen opportunities for students from less traditional backgrounds (no doubt also influenced by the success of the GI Bill) and to explore the ways in which education could be centrally organised to ensure **that teaching the superiority of 'democracy' in theory and practise held pride of place** within it.

Finally, a third factor was intrinsic to the shift in the approach which the Federal government took towards the education system during the years after the **Second World War: the expansion of 'big government'. War engenders societal change, and the Second World War was no different; as Martin Francis has observed, "most Western democracies embarked on comprehensive programmes of social reform in the aftermath of the Second World War".**¹⁵³ In Britain, post war society meant the establishment of the Welfare State by newly elected Prime Minister Clement Attlee, based on the recommendations made in the 1942 Beveridge Report. In the US, Truman mirrored this post war widening of **government's involvement in society and attempted to establish the Fair Deal.** Both programmes utilised the post war chaos to attempt to institute new

government policies which were radically different from what each country had seen before.

Truman's pursuit of the Fair Deal program demonstrates that he was fully committed to establishing a long-term expanded role for the Federal government in domestic policy. Truman was no doubt influenced by FDR's New Deal, and Second New Deal; Truman intended his programs to take the form of governmental support, however, rather than governmental relief. The Fair Deal was not about short-term survival, but government-sponsored long-term equality, a fairer society and prosperity for all Americans. It was announced by Truman in his State of the Union address on 5th January 1949; Truman **announced that "every segment of our population and every individual has a right to expect from our government a fair deal".**¹⁵⁴ He called for anti-inflation measures, a national health service, reforms for farmers, the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, the expansion of social security, a \$0.75 minimum wage, housing programs, and increased Federal aid to education among a host of other programs.

Few, if any, of his Fair Deal proposals were new; he had proposed the majority already in his first, post-FDR, term, but had been continually thwarted by the 80th (do-nothing) Congress. Some of Truman's **proposals were successful;** social security was doubled and coverage extended; the minimum wage was **increased and a public housing program was pursued;** some of Truman's farm policies passed, as did his bid to expand Federal power over rural electrification programs and flood control programs.¹⁵⁵ **Steven Casey has noted that "even after winning the presidency in his own right" in 1948, however, "Truman then made**

so many basic mistakes in managing Congress – from refusing to press for straight up-down votes to leaving Washington at crucial moments – that his Fair Deal program soon stalled”.¹⁵⁶

Truman’s pursuit of the Fair Deal was largely unsuccessful in comparison to Britain establishment of the Welfare State. The major reason for this is **Truman’s continuing** inability to handle Congress and a lack of support from Southern Democrats who saw the Fair Deal as an attack on their keenly-held **belief in States’ rights**.¹⁵⁷ In addition the growing power of the Republican **opposition, the US’s entry into the Korean War in 1950** (which saw many domestic policy-focused liberal Democrats replaced with foreign policy-focused conservative Republicans); and the strength of private corporations in the US compared to the UK (especially where healthcare was concerned) also contributed **to the failure of Truman’s liberal agenda**.¹⁵⁸ The intention of the program was clear, however; to engender an expanded role for the Federal government on behalf of the people and the nation. Where the education system was concerned, Truman pursued this with particular vigour.

The US and the UK’s post war approaches to alterations in the education system, however, were fundamentally different. Britain’s approach to the expansion of the role of the government within the education system after the Second World War took the form of increased attention to secondary education. During the War, the Education Act (1944), more commonly known as the Butler Act, had been passed in the UK, raising the school leaving age to 15. This created an impetus after the War to provide these teenagers with a more substantial educational offering in return for their lengthened commitment, and ensured that

education was considered as a part of the creation of the UK's post war Welfare State.¹⁵⁹ As Claudia Golding has recognised,

“nothing more clearly demonstrates the difference in schooling between the United States and Britain than the simultaneous passage by the Labour **Government of the 1944 Education Act [and the 1944 Servicemen's Re-adjustment Act by Franklin Delano Roosevelt]**. The American GI Bill paid tuition and a stipend for attending college, while the British Education Act of 1944 did no more than guarantee to all youth a publicly funded grammar or secondary-**school education**”.¹⁶⁰

Britain was focused on widening educational opportunity for secondary school age children during this period, whereas the US centred its attention on higher education.

This was largely due to the fact that the USA had already addressed the issue of secondary education on a wide scale prior to the outbreak of the **Second World War. The 'High School movement', which took place in the US from 1910-1940** sought to make secondary level education universally available to US children. America was virtually alone in providing free and universally available secondary level education prior to the Second World War.¹⁶¹ Goldin notes that **“compared with Britain and France... the United States by the 1930s was three to four decades ahead in post-elementary education and educational gaps remained large at least to the 1950s”**.¹⁶² This difference, among other factors, was due to the **structure of the American education system, and primarily the fact that “the Federal government had virtually no involvement” with the expansion of secondary education during this period.**¹⁶³ Expansion was a purely local or State

matter, and this greatly contributed to the US's success, as did the opposite contribute to Europe's failure.

Firstly, competition between both the local and State governments to attract domestic migrants to the area spurred the creation and building of schools, which greatly furthered the availability of secondary education.¹⁶⁴ This local impetus was lacking across Europe, however, as the national governments exerted a significant amount of centralised control over the expansion of education, thus reducing inward competition. Secondly, centrally controlled programmes sought to ensure that there existed a standardisation of educational provision across the newly created institutions, which inevitably slowed the progress of expansion; the lack of centralised control in the US meant that the level of education being provided was often less of a concern than the fact that it was being provided, which in turn ensured speedy progress.¹⁶⁵ **The US's lack of** central intervention also contributed to lower educational standards however, as it was not possible to pursue a standardisation of educational provision across the new and expanded schools.¹⁶⁶

The United States' pursuit of universal access to secondary-level education provision enabled the Federal government to focus on higher education whilst Europe focused on post-elementary education. The education provision **contained within FDR's Serviceman's Re-adjustment Act (GI Bill) couldn't have** happened had the High School Movement not been as successful beforehand.¹⁶⁷ As it was, upon entry to the Second World War in 1941, some of the most successful US States could boast secondary enrolment rates of over 80%, which placed the returning servicemen in an ideal position to take advantage of an

expansion in higher education provision for graduating high school seniors which built on the success of the GI Bill. This difference meant that the US had the option to train its citizens to a higher standard of education on a grander scale earlier than the UK, and much of the rest of Europe. This in turn meant that the US Federal government was in a better position to begin utilising its students to help in the Cold War effort, as university graduates were capable of supporting the nation in ways that secondary school graduates were not ready to. The expansion of higher education also contributed to the US economy, which further **supported the USA's post war status as a superpower** - a world leader -which was also vital to its Cold War effort.

Truman and the Federal government understood that the US education **system was vital both to the nation's military success in the Cold War through rigorous training in nationally useful subjects, and to America's continuing commitment to democracy and democratic ideals both through the shaping of students' ideals, and because the system itself could embody these ideals by** improving access to it for students from non-traditional backgrounds. Both domestically and militarily, these factors – the increased importance of a highly educated citizenry to national security created by the deployment of the atomic **bomb; Truman's commitment to education and access to education; and his participation in the post war trend for expanded governmental roles within domestic society - converged after Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death in April 1945 to create optimal 'goldilocks' conditions for the Executive branch to attempt to expand the Federal government's influence over the organisation and usefulness of the US education system.**

Conclusion

From the earliest days of the Republic, the Federal government has used the education system to avert or assuage national emergencies, and has used national emergencies to direct the education system to serve its own ends. This chapter has demonstrated both the patterns that have defined Federal intervention into the US education system throughout American History, and the issues which have surrounded this involvement. The Federal government have sought to utilise the education system in order to ensure the continuation of a republican form of government, for example through the establishment of West Point; it has **used ‘necessary and proper’ means to interfere in the day-to-day** administration of the education system in order to ensure that it complies with the law, as was the case with African American education after the Civil War; it has appropriated the resources of the US education system in order to provide for the common defense of the USA, both directly and indirectly, such as the Morrill Land Grant Acts and the Smith Hughes Act; it has also been prepared to utilise the education system as an overflow for the job market in times of severe, or potentially severe national unemployment, such as during the Great Depression and towards the end of the Second World War.

Each time the Federal government appropriated the services of the education system during a national emergency, it was protected by its constitutional right to protect the nation and its republican system of government, and was able to demonstrate that the education system played a vital role in this. The impetus for Federal involvement has always been driven by the need to utilise the education system to improve or protect the nation. As a result

students have often been viewed as resources to be used to achieve a greater goal, not as individuals who have goals of their own. Whenever the Federal government has been involved in education, students have rarely enjoyed as much autonomy to choose which subjects to study, where to study them, and in some instances what career to enter into after university or which political party to affiliate themselves with. Federal intervention in the education system has always occurred in order to achieve one goal: to somehow benefit the nation as a whole.

Whenever the Federal government encountered opposition to their intervention, they fought it, sometime lost, and still continued unabated in their mission to reroute the education system to serve the nation. When the founding fathers were denied their request to establish a national university, Thomas Jefferson instead established West Point, a national military school that was headed by an academic not a soldier, required students to learn academic subjects alongside military strategy, and insisted upon a certain political outlook from its students. Justin Morrill encountered opposition to his Bill from Southerners who **feared that segregated schools would be ‘discriminated’ against when funds were distributed**, but quickly passed the bill when the Southern opposition were not in Congress.

Each success further broke down the opposition’s arguments against Federal involvement. When the right factors converged in the late 1940s – a shift in the relationship between education and national security, the ascension of Harry S. Truman to the Presidency and a global re-evaluation of the relationship of central government to the welfare of the people – the government, and in particular the Executive branch, was able to create a serious bid for Federal

intervention in to education, and it was able to do so without widespread notice or protest. These factors, coupled with the long-term nature of the Cold War, led to a fundamental shift in the position of the Federal government in the education system. Whereas every other national emergency had prompted Federal **involvement in the education system ‘for the duration’, the Cold War continued** for longer than a generation. By the time the crisis had passed, Federal involvement had become a feature of the education system, and was normalised for a generation of voters. As will be explored later in this thesis, education became a central part of election campaigns and grew to such a state of normalcy that even the Executive branch could not prevent Federal involvement when it wanted to. Throughout American history, opposition to Federal intervention in the education system has enjoyed little success in thwarting the Federal government. From the earliest days of the Republic, the Federal government has utilised whatever means were available to it – constitutional right, national need, and a few dirty tricks – to ensure that when the nation has needed to utilise the education system, the education system has been available to be used.

EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

The Federal Government, the Cold
War and the US Education System

“It has always been my opinion that an improved approach to the education of the rising generation is necessary if we expect to continue as leaders of the free world” – Harry S. Truman.¹⁶⁸

Opposition to Federal control over the education system has long existed in the USA, and this opposition has feared and fought against a centrally run education system for centuries. The aim has always been to ensure the freedom of the American education system by protecting it from fluctuations in the wants and needs of the political system. Historian Paula S. Fass recognised in *Outside In: Minorities and the Transformation of American Education (1989)* that “the American system of education was great because it was democratic, and it was democratic because it was responsive to local needs and free of central control **and direction**”.¹⁶⁹ Fass demonstrates that in order to ensure a democratic education system, the needs of the nation at large, as identified by the US Federal government, must not be a factor in its development and structure. This in turn prevents the subjugation of the student body to the vacillations of governmental whims.

In order for the education system to remain a democratic institution, it is protected from interference by the US Federal government. During the early years of the Cold War, however, the Executive branch of the US Federal government made the decision to intervene within the US education system in order to protect and defend democracy, both within the education system and without it. As discussed in Chapter One, the important role which education was to play in the burgeoning Cold War became clear shortly after the passage of the **GI Bill; it did not represent the beginning of the US Federal government’s post war fascination with education, but it was not far ahead, and served to remind the Federal government of the possibilities which lay within its power. The world’s entry into the atomic age alongside President Truman’s personal commitment to**

education served to galvanise Executive interest in the US education system. The threat posed by the Soviet Union and the spread of Communism across Europe convinced the Executive branch that special measures must be taken in order to protect the US system of democratic government.

Historian Andrew Hartman has demonstrated that panic over the efficacy **of a nation's education system is a common side effect of a nation's uncertainty** over its future.¹⁷⁰ Whilst the nation was fiscally comfortable, the powerful position which the USA found itself in after the Second World War was far from assured. Moreover, the threat of a third world war – this time a nuclear war – hung over the heads of every American during this period. Furthering the cause **of 'democracy' was seen as the cure** for both of these problems. Commitment to democracy protected the United States against the evils of a communist system; the loss of this commitment, however, contained untold peril. To cope with this **anxiety, Hartman has elucidated, "national citizens must collectively imagine a national future"**.¹⁷¹ Hartman expanded his theory by positing that **"perhaps the most important symbolic guarantee of a nation's future is its children"**.¹⁷² Therefore, in order to reduce the sense of anxiety caused by an uncertain future, **a more solidly grounded future must be created through the nation's youths, and** the easiest method through which the Federal government could ensure this was by increasing its level of control over the education system.

Steady in the belief that strengthening democratic education in US schools was the most positive direction in which the US education could move, the Executive branch attempted to centralise the organisation of several pertinent features of the education system during the early years of the Cold War. It was **not the Federal government's intention to formally seize control of the education**

system during this period, merely to subtly influence the matters which it perceived to be of direct importance to national security. No changes were ever forcibly imposed on the education system, nor were there any overt instances of formal Federal control over education. The story, however, lies in the extent to which US Federal government, and in particular the Executive branch, attempted to influence the content and direction of US education, its unorthodox and innovative utilisation of the powers available to it to do so, and how much these methods enabled it to increase its influence over the workings of the education system. These factors alone are worthy of note.

This chapter will detail the way in which the Executive branch of the Federal government utilised the powers available to it during the Truman Administration to make a concerted attempt to expand Federal influence over the education system. **Truman's personal commitment to education and his belief in** an expanded Federal government combined with national fears over the rise of communism to create a window of opportunity for change. The establishment of **the President's Commission on Higher Education** (Truman Commission) represented an intentional attempt to use a power from one area of the Executive branch to overcome a lack of power in another. First, a discussion of the nature of presidential commissions will be presented in order to demonstrate that expansion of power is a recognised and longstanding utilisation of the Executive power to create presidential commissions. Secondly this chapter will establish **that despite this fact, Truman's utilisation of this power in the matter of education** represented a significant departure from the previous presidential administrations. As is explored in Chapter One of this thesis, several events combined at the end of the Second World War to place education policy in a far

more prominent position within the **Executive branch's agenda** than it traditionally occupied; as such, **Truman's motives for establishing the Commission** will also be examined.

This chapter will then demonstrate the methods which the Executive branch of the Truman Administration employed during the establishment of the Commission, including a carefully worded letter of appointment, and scrutiny **over the selection of the Commission's members**, in order to give the Commission **the best possible chance of finding in favour of the Executive branch's policy agenda**. **Subsequently, the Commission's report will be examined in order to demonstrate the success of the Executive's agenda in establishing the Truman Commission**, and how it worked both within and without the traditional framework of a presidential commission in order to advocate for an expanded Federal role in the US education system. In addition, scrutiny of another, non-federal education commission which was in session during the same period as the Truman Commission will be presented in order to demonstrate the significance and impact of the Federal government's influence over the Truman Commission.

Finally, this chapter will explore the short and long term impact of the Truman Commission on the US education system. The impact which it had upon Congress, upon the Executive branch and its subsequent forays into education policy and upon the activities of the education division of the Executive branch – the United States Office of Education (USOE) – will all be explored. Federally sponsored programmes **such as the US Commissioner of Education's 'Zeal for American Democracy' programme** will be explored; through this, the influence of **the Executive branch's agenda and success in implementing it is made clear**. A discussion of the opposition to the Federal encroachment into the traditionally

State- or independently-controlled sphere of American education will also be presented in order to demonstrate both the issues raised in objection to the work of the Executive branch and the Truman Commission, and how ineffectual these objections were in denting the **Federal government's will and ability to gain** influence over the education system in the early years of the Cold War.

The Structure and Purpose of Presidential Commissions

The 'presidential commission', in one form or another, is a power that has been utilised by the Executive Branch since its inception, and yet, as historian Amy B. Zegart has recognised, **"surprisingly little has been written" about them.**¹⁷³ Early commentator Carl Marcy has suggested that this is because their very nature makes the presidential commission particularly difficult to study. They have many and varied purposes and focuses, their often low budgets limit their secretarial capacity and they usually have an informal structure, which Marcy **blames for "much of the difficulty in studying and evaluating them".**¹⁷⁴ The foremost commentator on presidential commissions, Thomas R. Wolanin, has **defined a presidential commission as "(1) a corporate group created by a public Act, (2) which is advisory to the President, (3) all members of which are appointed directly by the President, (4) which is *ad hoc*, (5) at least one member of which is public [i.e. not an employee of the Executive branch of the Federal government] and (6) whose report is public".**¹⁷⁵ Presidential commissions are often popularly assumed to be an obfuscation of a problem; a way for a president to appear to be addressing a problem without ever having to actually address it.¹⁷⁶ Those who have written extensively on this subject, however, disagree.

Carl Marcy, writing in 1945, claimed that “the value in the use of commissions, committees, boards and similarly designated multi-partite bodies as instruments of government has long been recognised... there can be little doubt that the President needs Commissions to help him... when the President of the United States determines policy, recommends policy or administers policy, he must have facts and expert advice”.¹⁷⁷ Thomas Wolanin noted 30 years later, in 1975, that “The common view of journalistic and academic commentators on presidential advisory commissions is that the primary purpose of the President in creating them is to evade issues and avoid taking action... the evidence indicates, quite to the contrary, that commissions are created to be instruments of action, reform and change, not of obfuscation and standpatism”.¹⁷⁸ Amy B. Zegart, a more recent commentator, also discussed the assumption in 2004. She accepted that commissions intended to “defuse, defect or delay Presidential action on some controversial domestic issue without producing much in the way of substantive policy change” have existed³ and these types of commissions have received “the bulk of attention in the popular and scholarly literature”.¹⁷⁹ Zegart continues to state, however, that this type “constitutes a surprisingly small share of the commissions actually used by Presidents”.¹⁸⁰

The presidential commission is in fact a widely accepted method through which the power of the Executive branch can be extended beyond the traditional remit bestowed upon the office of the Presidency. Whilst Wolanin formally identifies the purpose of a commission as follows: “the stated goal for every Presidential Commission is to be a policy analyst. They are instructed to make a

³ Zegart cites the Warren Commission on Kennedy’s Assassination, the Kerner Commission on the 1967 race riots and the Lockhart Commission on Obscenity and Pornography.

study assessing a specific problem, to evaluate current efforts to solve it, and to recommend whatever actions they deem appropriate to more successfully solve **the problem**”, he also quotes the insider perspective of an aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson. This anonymous aide shared his opinion during an interview with Wolanin, and established the benefit of a presidential commission to the Executive branch thusly: presidential commissions, he claimed, are **“a way to get the establishment to bless something... to minimize the accusation that the decks are stacked”** and to **“dignify and give persuasive expression to the advocacy of ideas or to possible changes”**.^{181:182}

As identified by Johnson’s aide, the true purpose of a presidential commission is often to enable legislation to pass Congress more easily, to popularise a certain viewpoint or policy change, and to add legitimacy to an **Executive’s intentions by creating external and expert endorsement of his ideas**. A member of the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress stated in an interview with Wolanin that **“the role of the commission is to show a consensus where one was not apparent before”**.¹⁸³ This demonstrates well the purpose of presidential commissions, and their benefit to the Executive branch. Both this quote and the **sentiments from Johnson’s aide together suggest one thing however: that the ‘consensus’ in question has usually already been decided upon by the White House**. One of President Truman’s aides has directly supported this theory by remarking to Wolanin in a private interview that, during the Truman Administration at least, commissions were most often used **“to build a case for something that they were already convinced on”**.¹⁸⁴

Wolanin also suggests that the very act of establishing a commission can act as an endorsement of, or at least an advertisement for, **the President’s ideas**.

Wolanin suggests that this is because “presidential commissions are highly visible” due to “the eminence and prestige of their members, and the fact that they represent an extraordinary action by the President giving them a **Presidential mandate... The daily actions of the President are still front page news**”.¹⁸⁵ In creating a presidential commission, a president announces to the watching world that this line of enquiry is worthy of study long before the results are published, and the very act of establishment therefore can, in itself, begin to legitimise a concept or pursuit.

Of course, during the process of investigation, it is possible that the commission members could find against the President’s **position** or statement of intent. Wolanin suggests that this original legitimacy, established through the very creation of the commission, in fact has the power to influence all subsequent actions of a commission. He highlights that

“**commissions are not** expected to find that the problems they are dealing with are insignificant, or that no Federal action is necessary to solve them, or that Federal action cannot contribute significantly to their solution. The decision to have a commission implies a judgement that a problem is important, that some action is necessary, and that action by the Federal **government will probably be appropriate and effective**”.¹⁸⁶

In direct contrast to the popular claim that commissions are usually deliberately created in order to obfuscate a problem, it is significantly more likely that the majority of presidential commissions have instead been established to achieve what Wolanin refers to as ‘window dressing’. He defines ‘window dressing’ as the **commission’s commitment to “sell or market a proposal to which the president is already committed**”.¹⁸⁷

Wolanin's research revealed that this was at least a secondary purpose for almost all of the commissions during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon eras. Commentator Daniel Bell has identified the presidential commission as **“one more means of increased government manipulation of ‘public opinion’”**.¹⁸⁸ The presidential commission enables the President and the White House to extend the scope of Executive power by utilising expert opinion to legitimise already-formed plans or to provide an alternative – and usually more appropriate – voice with which to popularise these ideas. Bell recognises, however, that this expanded use of Executive power is not all-encompassing, as, **he states, “the government is not a monolith... but a hydra-headed body”**, therefore if power is unduly increased in one branch, it still remains limited by the other two.¹⁸⁹

Merton has argued that **“from the beginning, presidents of the United States have... had their commissions**. Washington began with a commission to look into the Whiskey Rebellion: ever since, presidents or Congress have instituted one or another kind of commission, at first sporadically and then, in this century, at a **greatly quickened pace”**.¹⁹⁰ Wolanin argues, however, that Washington's Whiskey Commission bears little to no resemblance to the modern day commissions, and that instead these 20th-**Century commissions are “basically a product of the dramatic enlargement of the Federal government in the 20th Century, and the correspondingly larger role routinely played by Presidents, even in the absence of crises”**.¹⁹¹ The first half of the 20th Century saw a dramatic increase in the use of presidential commissions by the Executive branch. The fifteen years prior to **President Truman's creation of the President's Commission on Higher Education** saw a **“six fold increase... from the first 30 years of the century”**.¹⁹² Marcy

identified in 1945 that “the last decade...has found Congress increasingly relying on investigations and reports prepared by presidential commissions”.¹⁹³ The climate in which the Truman Commission was established in 1946 was certainly a promising one, even if this political climate had shifted dramatically by the time the Commission’s report, *Higher Education for American Democracy* was published in 1947.

The Purpose and Structure of the President’s Commission on Higher Education

Similarly to earlier presidential commissions, the President’s Commission on Higher Education was created in large part in order to lend legitimacy to the Executive branch’s already-established plans for the US education system. The specific establishment of the Truman Commission was recommended by John W. Snyder, head of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR) in order to investigate how “higher education can be made to contribute most effectively to the economic and political welfare of this country”. He stated that “no matter is more important to a democratic government than the adequate education of its youth”.¹⁹⁴ Snyder’s statements demonstrate clearly that he favours a stronger link between the Federal government and the education system in the future. The Truman Commission was established in order to investigate a specific agenda – they were tasked with discovering the ways in which higher education *could* contribute to the welfare of the nation, not *whether* it *should*. The latter is arguably the more important debate, but that debate was never bestowed upon the Truman Commission; that decision had been made before the members were brought together. The remit was laid out before the

Commission by President Truman, and, in line with earlier commissions, it was not expected to find against it.

As Wolanin has identified, presidential commissions provide a voice for ideas which would be dismissed if they emanated from the White House, and this was the purpose of the Truman Commission.¹⁹⁵ The Executive Branch had a clearly established agenda months before the Commission was created, as President Truman had already made attempts to involve the Federal government in the education system. On 21st January 1946, President Truman asked Congress for Federal grants to State educational systems, but was rejected.¹⁹⁶ He also stated **in his memoirs that Federal aid to education was “essential to the welfare of the country”**.¹⁹⁷

The attempt to pass a Federal aid bill through Congress demonstrates clearly that President Truman intended for the Federal government to have an expanded role in the US education system, but also that he would require either expanded powers to pass his recommendations without Congress – which was unlikely – or further research and a different approach in order to convince Congress to follow his plan. As Wolanin has identified, **“congressional consent is essential for most major presidential initiatives and is often not easily forthcoming... White House counterarguments to the fears and objections voiced in Congress are naturally suspected of being less than candid. It is hoped that a commission saying much the same thing as the White House will solve the credibility problem”**.¹⁹⁸ Truman had been unsuccessful in raising this issue, and the Tenth Amendment prevented him from directly forcing the issue further by himself. In establishing a commission made up almost exclusively of educators,

he created a voice for his recommendations which brought with it authority and some much needed distance from the Executive branch.

The Executive branch utilised the powers available to it in order to reach the ends which could not be achieved directly; the President's Commission on **Higher Education lent legitimacy and support to the White House's plans.** This use of this power is not in itself illegal or unconstitutional, but when applied to the education system, it certainly falls into a grey area. As Marcy has recognised, **"in domestic affairs, the President's power to create commissions to assist him in the faithful execution of the law appears in theory at least to be unlimited"**, but also had not previously been used with regards to influencing American education; the Truman Commission was the first to do so.¹⁹⁹ Truman did not go against the Tenth Amendment, but he did use the powers available to him in order to *circumvent* the Tenth Amendment. As the work of the Commission later served to normalise the presence of the Federal government in the education system, **Truman's bold move is particularly significant.**⁴

President Truman had little regard for the 'small government' advocated by the Tenth Amendment, and education was not the only area which Truman believed would benefit if the Federal government was able to play a larger role. When discussing the idea of federalised medical care, Truman remarked that

"I have never been able to understand all the fuss some people make about government wanting to do something to improve and protect the health of the people. I usually find those who are the loudest in protesting against

⁴ Eisenhower, Kennedy and Nixon all subsequently established Commissions on education. The long-term impact of the Truman Commission is discussed in more detail later in the chapter and in the Conclusion to this thesis.

medical help by the Federal government are those who do not need help. But the fact is that a large proportion of our population cannot afford to **pay for proper medical and hospital care**".²⁰⁰

When considering the problem of State and local jurisdiction over this matter, **Truman developed his point even further and stated that "the answer is simple.** Too many local communities have not met this responsibility and cannot meet it **without help**".²⁰¹ He did not view an expanded governmental role as an encroachment, but rather as a means of organised support, both for citizens in need, and for struggling local and State governments.

The later creation of a Department of Health, Education and Welfare, suggests that health and education were viewed by Truman as being of one ilk, possibly as both were necessary for the welfare of the nation. His approach mirrored that of the Labour government in power in the UK; the creation of the Welfare State in Britain created a new role for the government in numerous areas of domestic policy including education, medical care, elderly care and social security, the very thing that Truman strove to organise. Among other issues, **Truman's strained relations with Congress alongside the growing attention he** was required to pay to foreign policy issues due to the rising Cold War placed the US development of social welfare in a vastly different and far less successful position to that of the UK.

Although the creation of the Department was first suggested by Truman, it was not actually created until the Eisenhower Administration. In his recommendation, however, **Truman suggested that "the government's programs** for health, education and security are of such great importance to our democracy that we should now establish an **Executive department for their administration**".

²⁰² **Truman noted that such a department was necessary because “we must make possible greater equality of opportunity to all our citizens for an education. Only by doing so can we insure that our citizens will be capable of understanding and sharing the responsibilities of democracy”.**²⁰³⁵ Although he never explicitly stated his views on the importance of the Tenth Amendment where education was concerned, his attempts to establish Federal financing for education – a move outside of the remit of the Amendment – and his views on the importance of Federal involvement in medical care, jointly suggest that he viewed it with little regard.

Increased Federal involvement in traditionally privatised- or State-matters was not the only item on the President’s list when he established the Truman Commission. As was common for presidential commissions, the President gave the Commission members several areas of enquiry to investigate, and all were clearly weighted to the President’s agenda. In a letter to commission President George F. Zook, Truman explained that

“among the more specific questions with which I hope the Committee will concern itself are: ways and means of expanding educational opportunities for all able young people; the adequacy of curricula, especially in the fields of international affairs and social understanding; the desirability of establishing a series of intermediate technical institutes; the financial structure of higher education with particular reference to the requirements for the rapid expansion of physical facilities”.²⁰⁴

⁵ Louis W. Koenig added in *The Truman Administration: Its Principles and Practice* that “the Congress declined to approve it, and it was not until the administration of President Eisenhower that a Department of Health, Education and Welfare was established”.

This quote both demonstrates Truman and the White House’s intentions for the Committee, and corroborates the idea that expanding or extending the GI Bill was not Truman’s primary concern. He references it, but it is not the focus of the letter. Instead he called for a “re-examination of our system of higher education in terms of its objectives and in light of the social role it has to play”. This clearly demonstrates firstly that the Executive branch wanted to see expanded opportunity⁶ and secondly that the Executive clearly believed that academia both *had* a social role to play, and that it was time they began playing it. In short, the **President’s Commission on Higher Education was charged with proving that a symbiotic relationship between the Federal government and the US education system was beneficial to both parties and should be pursued with haste.**

Interestingly a draft version of the letter to Zook included far more **discussion of the ‘international situation’ and the importance of ‘protecting the national security’ and the ‘preservation of democracy’.** Truman states that “few matters more closely affect our national welfare or our national security” than education and that

“our democracy has been strong in large part because of the excellence of our schools and colleges and because of the relatively high educational level of our people... it will continue to be strong only as that level is raised and as our schools and colleges are strengthened. In the atomic age, ignorance or lack of social understanding can spell disaster for the entire world”.²⁰⁵

⁶ This is not the same as more university places as was provided for in the GI Bill. It is discussed specifically with reference to groups who were under-represented in higher education, namely African Americans, Jewish students and low income students – the only viable solution for which was a Federal push towards integration and Federal grants for scholarship.

Such heavy handed language was not included in the final letter, but it once again **betrays some of the Executive branch's primary motivations for establishing the committee.**

Carl Marcy has identified that the primary purpose of 'opinion guiding' commissions such as the President's Commission on Higher Education is to "lay the groundwork in public discussion, [and] to prepare the way for legislation which may later follow", and the report of the Truman Commission did just this.²⁰⁶ The act of establishing the Commission to explore these ideas immediately invested both the initial concept and the subsequent recommendations with more legitimacy than they would have had, had they **emanated from the Executive branch directly. As Wolanin states, "commissions have members and staff who are said to be *competent* and *qualified* to examine the problem with which the commission is concerned"** [emphasis in original].²⁰⁷ The Truman Commission was made up of a highly capable membership, almost all of whom were directly involved in the highest levels of the education system (the majority were university or college presidents), and who could count among their number a former Commissioner of Education, a future Commissioner of Education and Eleanor Roosevelt. The members were qualified to explore the areas which the President had assigned to them and their recommendations carried both more weight and less baggage than if they had been made by the Executive branch.

Further to this, the process of forcing the debate over the future of higher education through the establishment of the Commission allowed the many positive reasons in support of Federal intervention to actually be heard, rather than immediately dismissed simply because they came from the Executive

branch. As Daniel Bell has identified, “the distinctive virtue of the government commission arrangement is that there is a specific effort to involve the full range of elite or organised opinion in order to see if a real consensus can be achieved”.²⁰⁸ Bell highlights the fact that the process of debate is often as important to public policy as the consensus reached or the direct implementation of policy: in the case of the Technology, Automation and Economic Progress Commission, he states, the “labor people” had to confront their ideological presuppositions about employment; in the case of the President’s Commission on Higher Education, the members were given the opportunity to publicly explore their own ideological and logistical standpoints concerning increased Federal involvement in the education system and its benefits to the nation.²⁰⁹ It was, therefore, the first government-appointed body to formally suggest a number of controversial changes including Federal aid to education and the desegregation of the schools, and was able to provide a wide variety of well-thought-out reasons for doing so.

Truman’s Selection of the Members ²¹⁰

The very concept of presidential commissions allows for the President to wield a large amount of control over the nature and shape of the debates which they pursue, and the conclusions to which they come. One way in which this is possible, which President Truman and the White House utilised in 1946, is **through the Executive branch’s right to select the members of the commission.** This power enables the President to stack the odds in his favour by purposefully choosing members who favour his own point of view. As Wolanin has identified, “for the requirement that all members must be ‘appointed by the President’... none of the members may be appointed by a subordinate of the President”; the

President commanded complete control over the selection process.²¹¹ In choosing the members for the Truman Commission, President Truman did rely largely on Francis Brown, George F. Zook and the American Council of Education (ACE) for recommendations. All three, however, also had longstanding reputations for advocating for greater Federal involvement in and financing for the US education system.²¹²

Those who supported Truman in his selection of the members also supported his agenda for the Commission, and this was reflected in the final decisions over membership. J. Donald Kingsley, the head of the OWMR Manpower Division, also played a significant role in selecting the members of the Commission. As Ethan Schrum has noted, **Kingsley “advocated Federal support of higher education”**, therefore it is reasonable to assume that his choice of participants reflected this viewpoint.²¹³ **Kingsley’s connection to the manpower** debate also means that he would have been aware of the employment issues in post war America; there was a desperate need for trained personnel in some areas, alongside a glut of trained personnel in others. It is, therefore, also reasonable to assume that he understood the benefit to the USA if the Truman Commission advocated for the education system to become more connected to the needs of the nation as a whole.²¹⁴

None of the members of the Commission were outspoken opponents of Federal involvement in the US education system, but several members were **outspoken advocates of it. The commission’s secretary, Francis Brown, was** arguably the most controversial appointment as he had previously personally authored a plan to **“create a Federal Commission with unprecedented power over higher education institutions”**.²¹⁵ Ralph McDonald even wrote to the President

personally on behalf of the National Education Association (NEA) to complain that **“Brown’s consistent sponsorship of measures to circumvent and override State education authorities and State constitutional provisions on education make his appointment to the key post in the commission the key cause of great alarm”**.²¹⁶ Brown was undoubtedly in full support of increased Federal involvement in the education system, and there is no way President Truman could have been unaware of this fact. Regardless of his obvious bias, Truman both appointed him to be the Secretary for the Commission, and enlisted his support in finding other members.

McDonald continued his criticism of Truman’s selection by opposing the investiture of George F. Zook as President of the Commission. ²¹⁷ Zook had been a firm advocate of Federal involvement in education for over a decade. In 1934 he wrote an article entitled **“Federal Aid to Education”** which was published in *School and Society*. Similarly to Brown, in this article he advocated for a Federal agency which could allocate Federal funds to the education system. His resignation from the post of Commissioner of Education in 1934 came due to **Roosevelt’s refusal to include a programme of Federal aid for education in the New Deal**, and just one year prior to his appointment as President of the Commission, he had delivered a speech advocating greater Federal involvement in the education system at Harvard University.²¹⁸

In addition to Brown and Zook, Truman appointed several more members who were outspoken in their support of Federal involvement in education. These included Agnes Meyer, education activist and wife of Eugene Meyer, the owner of the *Washington Post*, who worked in support of Federal aid to education and the establishment of a Department of Health, Education and Welfare throughout her

life. Lyndon Johnson later cited Meyer as having had the greatest influence over the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) and his education policies in general.²¹⁹ Among others Frederick G. Hochwalt was also a very prominent advocate of Federal aid, and spearheaded the Catholic Church's support of Federal aid to non-public schools in the USA from 1945 until the passage of the ESEA.²²⁰

Crucially, however, the Commission could still be argued to have been 'representative', as presidential commissions were expected to be. Truman appointed men, women, African Americans, Northerners, Southerners and representatives from Protestant, Catholic and Jewish institutions. This move was intentional, as was highlighted in a memo from Steelman to Kingsley in 1946. Steelman stated that "those appointed to the Commission were chosen to represent adequately 1) geographical 2) religious 3) character of institution (whether university or college; public or private; land-grant or integrated) and 4) major currents in educational thinking and leadership".²²¹

The Commission's Recommendations

The members of the Truman Commission met seven times between their appointment and the publication of the first volume of *Higher Education for American Democracy*. At the first meeting, they formed five sub-committees which each focused on one aspect of the final report, and these sub-committee meetings took place alongside the regular Commission meetings. The topics of each sub-committee were as follows: 1) the responsibilities of higher education; 2) ways and means of expanding educational opportunity; 3) the expansion of higher education; 4) financing higher education and 5) staffing higher

education.²²² This chapter will be primarily concerned with the outcome of the first two subcommittees, which was subsequently translated into the first two volumes of *Higher Education for American Democracy*.

Through its recommendations the Truman Commission created “a national rhetoric on higher education” which was a “well-crafted and deliberate attempt to persuade national, State and institutional policymakers about the purpose and needs of higher education”.²²³ The first volume of the report of the Truman Commission, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, opens with the words “The President’s Commission on Higher Education has been charged with the task of defining the responsibilities of colleges and universities in American democracy and in international affairs”.²²⁴ This statement outlined the direction that the rest of the report would take – an examination of the ways in which the US education system could support the preservation and protection of American democracy by any means, and a consideration of the ways in which this would be affected by international affairs.

The Commission’s fear over the nation’s future is clear from the beginning of the report. On page two the threat caused by the ‘atomic age’ is highlighted; the Commission stated that “the coming of the atomic age, with its ambivalent promise of tremendous good or tremendous evil for mankind, has intensified the uncertainties of the future”.²²⁵ The Commission continued “it has underscored the need for education and research for the self-protection of our democracy”.²²⁶ The ‘uncertain future’ is immediately linked to two maxims which permeate the report as a whole: the need for the preservation of democracy and the idea of the education system as its saviour. By page 6, this ambivalent promise had escalated,

and the Commission stated that “atomic scientists are doing their upmost to make us realize how easily and quickly a world catastrophe may come”.²²⁷

These themes are not always the main focus of the report. Other areas which President Truman charged the Commission with exploring, such as expanded opportunity or the need for technical education were made the focus, **but the need for increased Federal involvement and a concern for the nation’s security** act as undercurrents to the report, and resurface time and time again both in their own right and as further persuasion for the main focuses of the volumes. They are used to underscore both the vital need for change and the urgency with which the Commission perceived the need for such change. As **Clark, Leslie and O’Brien** have identified, the Commission demonstrated that “**education** would be instrumental in overcoming totalitarian governments abroad and prejudices within the nation, thereby re-enforcing the focus on access **and equity**”.²²⁸ These themes created a stronger argument and one which was harder to undermine. It shifted the debate from the circumvention of one aspect of the Constitution to the total destruction of democracy in the West.

A ‘Societal Role’ for Education

The members of the Truman Commission established early on in their report that they believed that the education system had a responsibility to the nation. They stated that

“**all too often the benefits of education have been sought and used for personal and private profit, to the neglect of public and social service. Yet individual freedom entails communal responsibility. The democratic way**

of life can endure only as private careers and social obligations are made **to mesh, as personal ambition is reconciled with public responsibility**".²²⁹

The Commission linked the continuation of the American way of life with a fundamental alteration in the make-up and administration of the education system. It established the education system as the last bulwark between the USA and chaos, and placed the dizzying task of saving it on the shoulders of educators and students across the USA. The Commission members did not mince their words when discussing the extent to which education was able to support and **save post war America, and stated that "effective democratic education will deal directly with current problems"**.²³⁰

The Commission made it clear that it no longer believed that it was viable for the US education system to continue on without adapting to the pressures of **the atomic age. The new 'societal role' was not to be optional: "American colleges and universities" the members claimed "face the need both for improving the performance of their traditional tasks and for assuming the new tasks created for them by the new internal conditions and external relations"**.²³¹ This was partly justified as the Commission laid the blame for the creation of the atomic age squarely on the shoulders of the education system as well. The Commission highlighted the fact that this was one of the reasons why it was its responsibility to protect the USA **from it: "the scientific knowledge and technical skills** that have made atomic and bacteriological warfare possible are the products of education and research, and higher education must share proportionately in the task of **forging social and political defenses against obliteration"**.²³²

The Commission identified the Soviet Union in particular as an important **area of study in the modern world. The USSR was referred to as "one of the**

world's greatest powers" whose "policies and deeds [were] of supreme importance", and yet, claimed the Commission, "the average American college graduate knows almost nothing about Russia".²³³ The Commission highlighted the need to better understand the Soviet Union's ways of thinking and living in **the new atomic age. They stated that knowledge of Soviet life "must be given an important place in American education"**.²³⁴ The members further blamed the colleges and universities for not providing this type of education by stating that it could not even be undertaken immediately as around 500 books on Soviet culture would be required by an institution's library **before they could properly offer such a course, but "these books cannot be bought. They do not exist; it will take a major publishing enterprise to make them available"**.²³⁵ The Commission criticised the education system both for creating the problems inherent in the atomic age, and for not being prepared to fix them. In doing so, it subtly created a need for the Federal government to step in and support the education system in saving the **nation, as it clearly could not be trusted to 'go it alone'**.

The report of the Truman Commission noted **that "American colleges and universities must envision a much larger role for higher education in the national life. They can no longer consider themselves merely the instrument for producing an intellectual elite"**.²³⁶ Yet it did not explain why US colleges and universities must make this shift for reasons outside of the framework of its benefit the nation. At no point did it demonstrate a particular benefit to the education system or the individuals within it – a way in which it would improve the *education system* – only that the new post war America required it to alter, and therefore alter it must. The Commission also acknowledged on the same page that defining the responsibilities of higher education to American **democracy was "the task that**

President Truman assigned to this Commission” – the members were not tasked with defining the responsibilities of higher education to academia.²³⁷ This section **is even entitled ‘E Pluribus Unum’** – a clear statement that the Commission intended to recommend that the education system subvert the needs of the individual in favour of the needs of the nation.

Curriculum Adjustments

The Truman Commission made some far more specific recommendations in *Higher Education for American Democracy*. It recommended that US colleges and universities should adjust their curriculums to include the teaching of **democracy as both a political standpoint and a way of life. US students’ training** in the tenets of democracy, it suggested, needed to stretch far beyond the confines of a general education level citizenship or government course. It **stated that “it should become instead a primary aim of all classroom teaching”**.²³⁸ The nation’s need was now so great as to advocate the reorganisation of the curriculum with the teaching of democracy at its heart, regardless of the subjects being studied. **The report confirmed that “nothing less than a complete reorientation of our thinking will suffice if mankind is to survive”**.²³⁹

The Commission also recommended that students be trained in democratic thinking. It stated that merely living under a democratic system of government and understanding that government was not enough. Students, it claimed, must be taught by the colleges and universities to *think* like democratic people. This, it demonstrated, was achieved by inculcating strength of character, firmness of conviction and integrity of purpose in the student. Students must be trained not only to understand democracy, but to want to take part in it, to uphold

it, and to protect it. Personal ambition, the report stated, must be made to mesh with public responsibility as isolationism could no longer play a part in any aspect **of American life, “personal or national”**.²⁴⁰ The members of the Truman Commission made it clear that accountability lay with the universities and colleges; the **report declares that “it is the responsibility of higher education to** devise programs and methods which will make clear the ethical values and the concept of human relations upon which our political system rests. Otherwise we **are likely to cling to the letter of democracy and lose its spirit”**.²⁴¹

In order to ensure the future security of the USA, the Truman Commission encouraged colleges and universities to refocus their curriculums in order to **incorporate the wishes of outside forces. The report stated that “the first and most** essential charge upon higher education is that at all its levels and in all its fields of specialization it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals and processes”.²⁴² Once again espousing the need for higher education to commit itself to the needs of the many over the needs of the few, the report declared that **“teaching and learning must be invested with public purpose”**.²⁴³ To further underline the necessity for students to experience democracy at every turn, the report recommended that even administrative processes be reorganised to **prevent “campus life [being] carried on in an authoritarian atmosphere”**.²⁴⁴ Even the clerical tasks were deemed too important to the safety of the nation to be left for higher education to organise independently.

Education for Peace

A further curriculum adjustment recommended by *Higher Education for American Democracy* was the addition of programmes which ‘educated for

peace'. The Commission noted that **“education for peace is the condition of our survival and it must have a high priority in all our programs of education”**.²⁴⁵ The members took pains, however, to define peace as something other than simply the absence of armed conflict; peace, they argued, required a commitment to the spirit of co-operation, and international understanding and acceptance.²⁴⁶ Their words foreshadowed the burgeoning Cold War, as the report states specifically that peace was not **“national strength and balance of power agreements”**.²⁴⁷

The solution, the members agreed, was to train the USA's youth in the ways of peace, not war. They quoted the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and declared that **“wars begin in the minds of men, and it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”**.²⁴⁸ The Commission recommended that, in order to support the cause of peace, universities and colleges should greatly expand their provision within the social science disciplines, and especially within international relations. It acknowledged that in order to preserve and protect peace **“men will have to invent and perfect institutional forms – such as the United Nations, UNESCO and the International Monetary Fund and yet others – through which this cooperation can effectively take place”** but in order to make this a viable prospect, **“these institutional arrangements will have to be built upon and buttressed by an understanding among people”**.²⁴⁹

In order to achieve this, the report suggests that the universities and colleges would have to accept responsibility for teaching **“cultural heritage, value premises, political ideology, legitimate national interests, folkways and patterns of sentiment and feeling”**.²⁵⁰ The Commission declared that

“this will involve providing expanded opportunity in colleges and universities for the study of all aspects of international affairs: the nature and development of other civilizations and cultures; nationalism in its relation to internationalism; the tensions leading to war, as well as war itself; the ways in which war has been used as an instrument of national policy and the attitudes which nations have had in each war with respect to the justice of that war as they saw it – in other words, an analytical study of war and its causes as these have developed in the past”.²⁵¹

Later in the report, the Commission continued by highlighting that “the task of the colleges here is to make the transition from a curriculum centred almost exclusively on the American-West European tradition to one that embodies the intellectual experience of the whole of mankind”.²⁵²

The commission did not make it explicitly clear whether it expected each university and college to provide one required course which covered all of this information, or whether, in a bolder and more invasive move, it expected the ideas inherent in this description to permeate all instruction across the course catalogue. The latter hypothesis seems ambitious, but is in fact more likely as it is supported by **President Truman’s statement, made upon the report’s publication in 1947, that “sweeping changes in curriculum are needed. Students must be given opportunities through all their courses and their campus life to understand and to practise citizenship in our democracy”.**²⁵³ Furthermore, the President stated that **“freedom is the function of the mind and the spirit. Responsibilities for the development of the qualities which make for free men cannot be left as at present to some few courses or a few departments in a college”.**²⁵⁴ It is clear from this assertion that the Truman Commission, and by extension President Truman,

sought to influence the curriculums on offer at higher education institutions across the nation. In conjunction, they sought to protect and preserve democracy **through the utilisation of the higher education system. The Commission's vision** for the future of the social sciences amounted to the overhaul of an entire discipline and the creation of wholly new courses for the study of education for peace in countless colleges and universities across the USA.

Federal Involvement

Having established higher education's role in the atomic age, the report also established that working with the Federal government in order to meet this challenge was the right thing for the education system to do. American **education's most important function, the Commission's members highlighted,** was to act as an instrument of social transition in order to ensure the kind of civilisation which a democracy demands. It was also important, they noted, that **all institutions undertook this task, as "there must be sufficient unity of purpose** in this essential diversity of higher education to produce a community of values **and ideals among educated men".**²⁵⁵ In other words, any college or university not heeding the advice of the Truman Commission was endangering everyone. At one point the Commission even referred to the role of education in a democratic **society as that of a 'servant'.²⁵⁶** That the Truman Commission viewed the education system as a tool to be used to achieve other ends, rather than as an end in its own right, is made obvious throughout the report. Members made it clear that colleges and universities should not exist separately from the Federal government, but instead were irrevocably tied to it, not as an equal, but as a subordinate to be directed.

It is made clear in *Higher Education for American Democracy* that the Federal government *should* have a role in the education system, despite the traditional separation between the two. The Commission explicitly underlined **the Federal government's right to intervene in the closing paragraph of the first volume**, when it **invoked the Federal government's** constitutional right to intercede. It **stated that "the Federal government assumes** responsibility for supplementing State **and local efforts in military defense against the Nation's** enemies without; surely it may as justifiably assume responsibility for supplementing State and local efforts against educational deficiencies and inequalities **that are democracy's enemies within**".²⁵⁷

The Commission answered the criticism that the Federal government **traditionally held no authority in the education system by declaring that "to** assume that all we need to do is to apply to present and future problems **'eternal'** truths revealed in earlier ages is likely to stifle creative imagination and intellectual daring. Such an assumption may blind us to new problems and the **possible need for new solutions**".²⁵⁸ Although no specific call is ever made for a constitutional amendment or some more formal alteration of the rules which governed the relationship between the Federal government and the US education system, the experts who made up the members of the Truman Commission made clear to the public that Federal involvement in the education system was both necessary and inevitable.

Federal Funding

The Commission acknowledged in its report that none of the changes which it recommended were easy or cheap, especially as the Commission recommended

that the education system should implement its recommendations both on a widespread scale and a short timeline. The recommendation for fixing it was Federal funding to education. The Commission stated that

“the radical character of the adjustments required in higher education, their magnitude and the pressure of time, all mean that neither individual institutions, nor national educational organizations have the resources to effect the necessary changes without outside stimulation and financial assistance. These, the Commission believes, will have to come from the Federal government”.²⁵⁹

This was the very thing which Truman had been attempting to achieve since the beginning of his presidency, and would continue to fight for throughout both his terms, albeit unsuccessfully.

The Commission stated that the reasoning behind its recommendation was **“partly a matter of the numbers to be educated and partly one of the kind of education that is to be provided”**.²⁶⁰ One of the main drives for Federal funding to education is to enable the education system to provide for the expansion of opportunity and access to poorer and more disadvantaged students who, the Commission fervently argued, were equally as capable of performing at a tertiary level, but not equally as able to pay for education at a tertiary level. The discussion of the **‘democratic’** need to offer greater equality of opportunity was often **accompanied, however, by discussion of the “critical need” for such expansion** due to the changing world situation. In this instance it argued that the unique demands and pressures created by the atomic age required that all able students were trained accordingly, as the nation needed all the trained manpower it could

muster.⁷ Once again this allowed the Commission to overcome the constitutionality of **the argument, as, the members stated, “aid to higher education is a proper concern of the Federal government because the health and strength of higher education is a matter of serious national import”**.²⁶¹

Frederick Hochwalt and Martin R. P. McGuire wrote a dissent to the fifth volume of the report, *Financing Higher Education*. In their dissent they noted that if public education were to be supported by Federal financial aid, as the report proposed, then they feared that the **“government in the United States might easily use the nation’s public colleges and universities to promote its political purposes”**. They continue that **“exclusive control of education, more than any other factor, made the dictatorships of Germany, Italy and Japan acceptable to an ever increasing number of their populations”**.²⁶² Ethan Schrum has stated that **“in Hochwalt and McGuire’s view, the Commission flirted with an undemocratic centralization reminiscent of what the United States had just spent so much blood and treasure to destroy in WWII”**.²⁶³

It is important to note however that Monsignor Hochwalt and Dr. McGuire (Graduate Dean of the Catholic University of America) were not, in fact, opposed to Federal financial support for the education system, but merely to Federal financial support specifically and exclusively for public education and not private (Catholic) education, and had the Commission’s recommendations been for Federal funding inclusive of private universities, it is unlikely that they would have dissented.²⁶⁴ The concerns they raised are telling, however, as they demonstrate that the Commission did fully understand the implications of the

⁷ Discussed further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

recommendations which it was making. Despite this, the Commission brought the issue of Federal funding for education in order to equalise access for rich and poor students into the mainstream of academic discussion, and it was positively received. It remained a central concern until widespread Federal funding for education was achieved with the passage of the NDEA in 1957.²⁶⁵

The Truman Commission and the Executive Branch

The fact that the recommendations for Federal involvement, and the subsequent shift they caused in the acceptance of Federal involvement in education, were made by a federally supported committee, is not to be overlooked. The importance of the *Federal* origins, sponsorship and guidance of the Truman Commission to the recommendations it eventually produced is further illustrated **when considered alongside Thomas Dewey's Temporary Commission, which was** in session in New York during the same period that the Truman Commission was in session in Washington DC., and which also discussed the improvement of **higher education. John B. Clark, W. Bruce Leslie and Kenneth P. O'Brien's 2010** work *SUNY at Sixty: The Promise of the State University of New York* discussed **the work of this commission in detail, but Clark, Leslie and O'Brien also briefly** compared the work of the two simultaneous commissions. They discovered that, as both were discussing the same system at the same time, both commissions discussed broadly similar themes, such as the need to end discrimination, the need to expand access, especially with regard to the returning veterans, the need for greater organisation and efficiency in higher education and the need for more students to study for medical and health-related professions (there was an acute shortage during this period). Most interestingly, however, Clark, Leslie and

O'Brien noted that the Truman Commission studied one further area which Dewey's Temporary Commission did not – 'general education'. The Truman Commission, they noted, focused far more on the benefit that the American higher education system could be to American society generally, and they attributed this focus to the brief they were given by President Truman when he established the Commission.²⁶⁶

More importantly, however, they demonstrated that President Truman gave the Commission this mandate where Dewey did not precisely because the Truman Commission operated within the Federal sphere, and the Dewey Commission did not. The Federal commission had reason to consider the impact of American higher education on society and the ways in which it could be of benefit to America generally because these were the questions that were relevant and important to the Federal government, whereas the Dewey Commission, specifically concerned with the higher education system in New York State, was less concerned by the international situation and the wider implications of education on American society and safety.²⁶⁷ As a State commission, it could offer few relevant commentaries on how its work, confined as it was to one State, could have a wider impact on American foreign policy.

Clark, Leslie and O'Brien note their surprise at what they term to be an 'ambiguous' environment for education policy to be discussed in; they identified that there was "no clear role for the Federal government in education" and highlighted that the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution actively cautioned against Federal involvement within American education.²⁶⁸ The difference between the work of the two commissions – that one was concerned only with matters that were important to the education system whereas the other discussed

how the education system itself could be important to the nation – illustrated well the fears that opponents to Federal involvement in education often voiced: that the Federal government were more concerned with the freedom of the nation generally than the freedom of the education system specifically.

The recommendations which the Truman Commission made were inherently tied to the wants and needs of the institution which established it – the Executive branch. The main concern of the Executive branch was the developing **international situation. Even though President Truman established in his ‘Letter of Appointment’ to the Commission members that his main concern was “to assure that all qualified veterans desirous of continuing their education have the opportunity to do so”, this was not, in fact, his main focus.**²⁶⁹ A staff member on the Commission heard Truman say privately that the **“returning veterans were only a temporary problem and that he was more concerned with the long-term development of education”.**²⁷⁰ Zook also clearly understood Truman’s position, as he wrote in a letter to Steelman in April 1947 that the Commission needed more time to adequately complete its **task because “we are not thinking in terms of immediate and changing problems, but of long range issues that should have a continuing effect upon the development of higher education in the United States”.**²⁷¹

Rather than considering the immediate pressures on the education system, or the direction in which the education system needed to take itself in the modern world – both legitimate concerns – the Truman Commission instead chose to focus on the direction which the Federal government needed it to take in light of the burgeoning international situation; specifically, the advent of the atomic age and growing international tensions. The first atomic bombs had been

detonated less than a year before the establishment of the Truman Commission, and both the destruction that the bomb could create and the fear that other nations would soon develop the same technology were cited as motivations for its **recommendations in the Truman Commission's report.**²⁷²

The oncoming Cold War also clearly influenced the recommendations that the Truman Commission chose to make in their report. Although the Cold War had not yet begun at the time the Commission was established, it had done so by the time the report was published, and it could be argued that portents of the looming conflict were clear even before the first meeting took place. Josef Stalin gave a speech in which he suggested World War III was inevitable on Feb 9th 1946, **and Winston Churchill delivered his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech in March 1946.** Although President Truman publicly disavowed this speech, he had previously **approved it, and at the same time that he publicly condemned Churchill's speech,** he privately remarked to Averell Harriman that Soviet refusal to withdraw from Iran could mean war anyway.²⁷³

It is clear from the Truman Commission's report that it understood a conflict between totalitarianism and democracy was on the horizon, and this clearly influenced its recommendations as to the social role it believed education should play in the post war world. Early on in Volume I, it **stated that "within** recent decades democratic principles have been dangerously challenged by authoritarianism, and World War II did not by any means resolve the conflict. The issue of **a free society versus totalitarianism is still very much with us".**²⁷⁴ The Commission also made recommendations that the universities and colleges should incorporate more teaching about Russia and Russian civilisation into their curriculums.²⁷⁵

In addition, the **report is peppered with discussions of ‘democracy’, ‘the need for democracy’ and ‘the protection of democracy’, which makes clear that** the members perceived it to be under threat. This threat appears to be so great that it does not tally with the fact that the USA was victorious in the Second World War less than a year prior to the establishment of the Commission. It is clear from the language used in *Higher Education for American Democracy* that the members of the Truman Commission already beheld another conflict on the horizon which posed a great threat to the American way of life. Philo A. Hutcheson, who has written extensively on the Truman Commission, has stated **that “[the report] balanced the details [concerning what supporting the education system would cost the Federal government] against a precise statement of the national need for such support”. The report itself stated that the “outlays are both investments in and insurance for the democratic future of a free people”.**²⁷⁶

The atmosphere created both by the post war situation and the atomic age, and by the oncoming Cold War offered a legitimacy and an urgency which helped to circumvent the lack of constitutional right for the Federal government to intervene in the education system – firstly the very existence of the Presidential Commission and the recommendations it made, and secondly the specific recommendation it made for further Federal involvement within its report. That concerns over national security were enough to overcome arguments over the **Constitution is further supported by the framework set out in Aaron Wildavsky’s ‘Two Presidencies’ thesis.**⁸ The serious fears in post war USA created by the

⁸ Wildavsky’s 1966 article claimed that Presidents had a 70% success rate in garnering congressional support for foreign policy objectives, compared with only a 40% success rate for domestic policy issues.

invention of the atomic bomb and the spread of Communism in Eastern Europe, and the role of the colleges and universities in protecting the USA from the ‘atomic age’, enabled the Truman Commission to ally the education system with the military, thus situating their recommendations closer to ‘foreign policy’ objectives than ‘domestic policy’, the traditional domain of the education system.⁹ This reclassification worked to legitimise the Executive branch’s claims to involvement in this State matter.

The vernacular used consistently throughout the report suggested that education was directly relevant to foreign policy initiatives. When viewed through Wildavsky’s ‘Two Presidencies’ thesis, which argues that the Executive wields greater power over matters connected to foreign policy than domestic policy, this language gives the report a legitimacy and strength that it would not otherwise have had.²⁷⁷ This language also set the pattern for the discussion of education by the Executive branch for the next decade. Education was seen to be vitally connected to the security of the nation, and therefore was a matter of foreign policy and a concern of the Executive branch.²⁷⁸ Karen Toombs Parsons demonstrated in her article “Exploring the “Two Presidencies” Phenomenon: New Evidence from the Truman Administration” (1994) that Truman’s first term fits well into the ‘Two Presidencies’ thesis as he was significantly more successful in garnering bipartisan support for foreign policy legislation during this term than he was for domestic policy – the idea that partisan politics ‘stops at the water’s edge’ – therefore it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Executive branch of the Truman Administration also understood the benefit of

⁹ The growing comparisons between students and soldiers is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

demonstrating the positive effect legislation could have on the nation's foreign policy and ultimately, therefore, its security.²⁷⁹ Toombs however also demonstrated that this phenomenon waned after 1947, therefore the emphasis on **the foreign policy implications which permeated the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education** were little help to the Commission in influencing Congress after the report was published.²⁸⁰

Although this language did not aid the Truman Commission in the formal acceptance of their recommendations in Congress, it certainly did aid them in the widespread acceptance of the concept of Federal involvement in society generally. After the publication of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, Hutcheson **has recognised, the “national discussion about Federal financing of higher education experienced a shift from questions about the propriety of Federal assistance to how the Federal government should offer assistance”** – it was no longer a question of ‘if’, but ‘in what form’. For example in 1949, Senator Warren Magnuson commissioned another study on Federal aid to education, and this study also found that Federal aid was vital to the education system in order to protect national security.²⁸¹ Hutcheson also asserted that this widespread acceptance of Federal support for education by the end of the 1940s is surprising to him **“in view of the arguments about the constitutionality of such assistance”**, but has also recognised that, despite this, Federal involvement within the education system did indeed become accepted in the USA by the end of the decade.²⁸²

This acceptance was not without question. After the publication of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, Federal involvement in the US education system was widely discussed, but this discussion regularly acknowledged the

national need for such involvement, and yet rarely acknowledged the constitutionality of the debate. John R. Steelman **stated in 1948 that “in the next few years, I believe we must plan, in the light of the Report of the President’s Commission on Higher Education, the best means by which the Federal government can give scholarship aid to worthy young people who desire to continue their education... If America is to retain its freedom in a world of conflicting ideologies, we must take steps to assure every American youth the opportunity to receive the highest level of education by which he can profit. A Federal scholarship program is a necessary step in achieving this goal”.**²⁸³ The **combination of the Truman Commission’s report having ‘prepared the way’** as it was intended to, and the Cold War imperative with which they framed their arguments enabled a direct representative of the Executive branch (Steeleman was Assistant to the President) to openly voice his support for such a controversial measure.

Even where the constitutionality of the debate was acknowledged, it was **often overcome by fears over the ‘national situation’.** Alfred D. Simpson discussed Volume V of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, ‘**Financing Higher Education**’, in *The Journal of Higher Education* in 1948. In his article he **established that there was “some lack of interest among State political and educational leaders in the higher education of the people”, thereby demonstrating** the need for more direct Federal influence, but simultaneously recognised that this involvement would be unconstitutional.²⁸⁴ He then discussed the efficacy of Federal financing of higher education, and pondered how Federal financing for the US education system could possibly equalise opportunity of access when the **Federal government had no “constitutional ability to legislate directly on**

education”. In short, Simpson identified that the Federal money would not equalise access in itself; that could only come from money given with conditions attached. Yet money given with conditions attached constituted Federal control of education and this was unconstitutional. Simpson then undermined his own argument, however, by acknowledging that “since this objective [Federal funding] is declared to be vital to the existence and strengthening of our democratic way of life, there can be no thought of abandoning it”. Simpson clearly places national security concerns over the unconstitutionality of the Commission’s recommendations, despite recognising them as such.²⁸⁵ For Simpson at least, national security trumped the US Constitution.

The Truman Commission’s Impact on US Education

It is notoriously difficult to accurately chart the immediate and long term impact which a presidential commission has upon its field. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Martin Jaeckel noted in 1975 that “since there are no bodies directly charged with evaluating a Presidential Commission’s findings, its recommendations, and their implementation, this phase of the utilization process remains rather diffuse”.²⁸⁶ The same was true at the time of the publication of the Truman Commission’s report; Marcy stated in 1945 that “the effects of such reports are hard to estimate”.²⁸⁷ Wolanin has stated that impact should be measured through policy change and presidential attention; Zegart, however, argued in 2004 that a Commission’s impact should be measured by how well the Commission carried out its core instructions. Zegart stated that judgement of “the conceptual framework should lead to a more nuanced, and more accurate, measure of Commission impact”.²⁸⁸

Despite the difficulties in measuring impact, the general consensus is that presidential commissions are rarely able to revolutionise their respective fields. **“Presidential commissions as temporary advisory bodies”, Lazarsfeld and Jaeckel have stated, “are neither directly responsible for the implementation of their recommendations, nor for the further processing of the reports they have generated, once they themselves pass out of existence”.**²⁸⁹ Commissions are often overlooked, and in fact are more regularly overlooked than implemented, but those who serve on them still believe the work to be worthwhile even after the fact. **Mack has generalised that “service on a Presidential Commission is deemed worthwhile for the discipline and for the society by those who have experienced it” but that “the probability is high of a disappointing response or no response from the White House to social science findings and recommendations”.**²⁹⁰

This is largely due to the fact that, although governments establish commissions in order to academically assess a situation, once reported, party politics still governs implementation. As Marcy had noted, **“the success of presidential commissions as fact-finders will depend largely on the President”.**²⁹¹ The commission is an extension of the Executive branch, and is, therefore, reliant on the power and will of the President to implement its recommendations. In some cases party platforms have moved on by the time a report is published, so **even if the commission’s report supports the position** it was charged with supporting, this may no longer be the position which the president chooses to ally himself with. Reforms are often too wide ranging to be implemented before the politics of the situation moves on. Politics relies on the zeitgeist to enact change, and the slow pace of adequate research and implementation often belies this. As **Merton identified, “In** this regard, nothing much seems to have been done since

the 1940s (and, one suspects, long before) when a study of policy orientated research [also conducted by Merton] reported [in 1949] that the ‘tempo of policy decisions and action is often more rapid **that the tempo of applied research**’.²⁹²

In addition, if the President himself lacks power and influence, so will the recommendations of the Presidential Commission, regardless of how fervently the President supports it. In many ways this was certainly the case for the Truman Commission. As Roy Jenkins identified in his 1986 work *Truman*, “**in domestic policy, [Truman] turned out to have more battles with Congress than any President since Andrew Johnson**”.²⁹³ President Truman had unusually little power over Congress, and was famously unable to pass the majority of his bills, to the point where the 80th **Congress was nicknamed the ‘do nothing’ Congress**. Truman took office after FDR, a President with a famous track record of exercising greater freedom with legislative matters who often overstepped the bounds of executive power. This was due in part to the national emergencies caused by both the Great Depression and the Second World War. Where President Roosevelt took it upon himself to legislate without Congress, however, President Truman did not have the power or the authority.²⁹⁴

As Truman was facing his own national emergency in 1946 – the establishment of a post war America and the looming Cold War with the Soviet Union, it is reasonable to suggest that he hoped to wield at least a modicum of his **predecessor’s power. Of course Truman was keenly aware that he would not be as powerful a President as FDR**, but it is unlikely that he could have predicted his upcoming struggles with Congress. He was not only unsuccessful where **education was concerned. As Hugh Davis Graham noted in his 1985 article “The Ambiguous Legacy of American Presidential Commissions**”, “**despite Truman’s**

Executive Orders establishing the Fair Employment Practice Committee, and directing the desegregation of the armed forces, he got from Congress only a gesture towards compensating the wartime evacuation claims of the Japanese-Americans".²⁹⁵

Unfortunately for the Truman Commission, the 80th Congress was in session for the entire period in which the recommendations made in its report were likely to make legislative headway: from January 1947 – 6 months after the Commission was established – to January 1949, a year after the report was published. Although Wolanin asserts that “the President expects that these commissions, in reaching a consensus which endorses his proposal will enable him to persuade and educate the Congress and the public”, in reality, Truman’s relationship with Congress had deteriorated so much by early 1948 that there is little likelihood that even the added weight of the expert opinions provided by the Truman Commission could have made significant difference to this ‘do nothing’ Congress.²⁹⁶ This poor relationship essentially put pay to any legislative hopes the Commission or the President may have harboured when the Truman Commission was established in 1946.

It is possible, however, that the Truman Commission recognised the unlikelihood of immediate congressional success and structured its report accordingly. The report of the Truman Commission appears to have been organised to avoid a stringent focus on the unlikely and ‘unachievable’ elements – those which would have required Congress’ support to implement such as Federal financing for higher education – in order to allow the central *ideas* in the report to gain the spotlight – those such as education’s importance to national security and the democratic imperative for widening opportunity and access. As

Lazarsfeld and Jaeckel have noted, “anticipations of the impact and the repercussions of various formulations are known to enter into, perhaps even to **govern, a Commission’s final deliberations**”.¹⁰²⁹⁷ Although Federal financing for **higher education was central to the success of the majority of the Commission’s** recommendations, the volume which recommended it was published last (with **the exception of Volume VI, which contained the Commission’s reference** material). It is likely that it was published last in order to prevent this issue from dominating the discussion and obscuring discussion of the **report’s important ‘ideas’, which had the possibility of changing opinions and directly influencing** impact without the need for Congress.

The Societal Impact of the Truman Commission

The President’s Commission on Higher Education did not have a tangible immediate impact upon public policy in the USA, and few of its recommendations were directly legislated for. As an opinion guiding commission, however, legislation was not its only goal, and by the time the report was published, this may not even have been **its primary goal. One of Truman’s aims when he** established the Commission was to elevate the problems he perceived to be inherent within the education system to the national agenda. A Truman aide even

¹⁰ They specifically highlighted the case of the Population Commission, **which** “divided the publication of its report into three sections – on the diagnosis of the problem, recommendations concerning reproduction, and recommendations concerning administrative measures, respectively, in order to prevent the resulting publicity from focusing exclusively on the abortion **issues**”.

later noted that **“the Higher Education Commission was strictly a study commission to set goals and priorities”**.²⁹⁸ Although this does not tally exactly with earlier statements on the purpose of the establishment of the Truman Commission, it demonstrates well what the Truman Commission came to be remembered for.

As Marcy has clarified, **“the criterion of the successful opinion-guiding commission is not whether legislation results; that is not the purpose. Success is measured by public awareness of the conclusions reached and stimulation which is traceable to the fact that the material was available”**.²⁹⁹ From this definition, the Truman Commission was a resounding success. As Hutcheson has identified, *Higher Education for American Democracy* **“engaged educators at all types of institutions”**.³⁰⁰ The Truman Commission was so successful in its purpose, that Wolanin even chose the Truman Commission as his example to illustrate the ways in which presidential **commissions could greatly increase the Executive branch’s sphere of influence. He stated that “commissions have been active in various extensions of Federal responsibility”, for example, “supporting the expansion of higher education in the interests of national defense (National Commission on Higher Education, 1946-47)”**.³⁰¹

The Truman Commission’s lack of legislative impact also did not prevent the report from having a significant long-term impact upon the US education system. As Merton has noted, **“If [a Commission] produces a body of research,** the socially consequential life of a commission can extend well beyond its existence as a formally convened body. Long after it has been discharged with presidential thanks, the inquiries mounted by the commission can remain

consequential”.³⁰²¹¹ As Reuben and Perkins have noted, “the Zook report is considered one of the most influential documents in the history of American higher education”.³⁰³ Many of the recommendations made by the Truman Commission in *Higher Education for American Democracy* were implemented eventually; in fact, when viewed from the present, the report is almost prophetic. Thelin has stated that “when viewed from the perspective of 1980 or 2000, the report reads like a script for a succession of programs that ultimately became both familiar and famous”.³⁰⁴

Gilbert and Heller have charted the progress of the report of the Truman Commission, and have compared the recommendations made in the report to subsequent changes made to American higher education. They have found that the report essentially created a blueprint for the changes that occurred throughout the remainder of the 20th century.³⁰⁵ This is especially true where the Commission’s recommendations concerning community colleges, funding and expanding access are concerned.³⁰⁶ They have recognised that, whilst the Commission was not the only factor in the change, “the role of the Federal government did change significantly in the decades following the Commission”.³⁰⁷ This increase has been particularly influenced by the passage of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1965. As Gilbert and Heller have shown, the

¹¹ The same is true of several other presidential commissions. Marcy singles out Theodore Roosevelt’s Conservation Commission, and stated that “the value of the Conservation Commission [T. Roosevelt, 1908] is not found in specific legislation resulting from its studies, but rather in the part the Commission played in making the nation conservation conscious” (Marcy, 37).

HEA was heavily influenced by the report of the Truman Commission, and many of the ideas expressed in the act echo those expressed by the Commission 18 years previously.³⁰⁸

As David Truman stated in Wolanin's *Presidential Advisory Commissions, Truman to Nixon* (1975), "basically, the creation of advisory committees marks a recognition of those 'rules of the game' in the United States that prescribe that individuals and groups likely to be affected should be consulted before governmental action is taken. Such consultation is in most cases **prerequisite to the action's being accepted as 'fair'**".³⁰⁹ It is clear from his earlier actions that President Truman wanted the Executive branch to play a greater role in the US education system beyond the administrative role allowed in the GI Bill. In order to do this however, Truman either needed the support of Congress in order to legislate the education system, or to garner the support of the educational community so that they willingly allowed his recommendations to become mainstream without the need for legislation. The 'do nothing' Congress made the first unattainable; the work of the Truman Commission, however, represented a carefully controlled method through which the latter was achieved. The members were carefully selected to support the position of the Executive branch, and therefore so did their recommendations. Importantly, however, they were *their* recommendations, and thus more palatable to the wider education community.

Federal Involvement in Education Immediately after the Commission

The position outlined by the Truman Commission on the relevance of democracy education to national security was supported and perpetuated by a host of government officials. The Administrator of the Federal Security Agency, Oscar R.

Ewing, stated in a USOE *Bulletin* published in 1948 that in order “to preserve and perpetuate the ideals and principles of American democracy it is essential that **they be understood**”.³¹⁰ In order to protect the world, Ewing explained, American students must learn about democracy. The author of the *Bulletin* furthered **Ewing’s point by stating that education of this kind “tends to make dictatorship or totalitarianism impossible from within and thus safeguards freedom from government itself”**.³¹¹

The US Commissioner of Education, John W. Studebaker, announced in **the same year that “first and foremost, education can help to strengthen democracy at home”**.³¹² The second Cold War Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, echoed Studebaker’s position on the changing role of education in 1950.³¹³ He noted that **“in every war we have fought, education has contributed mightily, and must be prepared if need be to increase that contribution”**.³¹⁴ These statements represented a clear departure from the notion of a separation of the Federal government and the US education system in the early years of the Cold War, as the Federal government openly proposed the subjugation of the needs of the individual in order to promote the needs of the country.

From 1948 onwards, education committees, the USOE and politicians involved with education policy became more explicit when discussing the fact that, in order to ensure the survival of democracy in the modern world, it was necessary to imprint a positive image of the democratic system of government upon American students. In 1948 President Truman declared in a press release **written about the report of the Truman Commission that “the Commission emphasises that effective democratic education will deal directly with current problems”**.³¹⁵ The President openly stated to the nation that the American

education system was vital to the war effort, leaving little doubt as to whether or not he intended to utilise it.

Ward W. Keesecker, a writer and professor who regularly wrote on behalf of the USOE, demonstrated in a USOE *Bulletin*, published in 1948, that the ideals of a nation could be changed in a single generation if the youth were taught to **believe a view opposite to their parents' beliefs.**³¹⁶ If the education system was to focus on teaching American students to love democracy, then it would negate the **fact that their parents did not. Keesecker's view compounded that of US** Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, who asserted in an article entitled **"Education and the National Defense", that conversely, "men and women...who** had not been educated to live as free people in a free world could embrace a totalitarian solution to the social and political problems that invariably remain **after the firing stops"; if American students were not taught to love democracy,** then it would not matter if their parents did.³¹⁷

The Executive branch may also have had similar views on the adequacy and effectiveness of those in charge of the education system as it had previously highlighted concerning those in charge of medical care in the USA. After the publication of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, the Executive branch betrayed an overriding belief that those currently in charge of the schools, whether this be the State or local government, the superintendents or the PTA, were not steering it in the **right direction. An article entitled "What are the Chief Threats to American Democracy?"** published in *School Life* in 1948, declared that **"people who have lived at a high emotional pitch through four years of war** must be expected to relax when the immediate danger seems ended in victory. It is a human tendency to grow tired of constant watch keeping.

Yet that very vigilance is a safeguard upon which our basic liberties depend”.³¹⁸

This anonymous staff writer demonstrated well the government’s level of trust in the average American’s disposition. The author understood that the prevailing attitude in the USA during this period was a desire for a return to peace and the family orientated values of their childhood – real or imagined. The American public had to be supported in understanding both that the threat had not passed, and that this time their children and grandchildren were needed to fight the battles. The USOE claimed in 1948 that their ‘Zeal for American Democracy’ programme, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, highlighted “the urgent need for alerting Americans to the developing world crisis and helping meet it by strengthening American democracy through the schools and colleges”.³¹⁹ The Federal government could not trust the general public to ensure that their children were properly versed in their nation’s history and politics, as it did not believe they understood the vital necessity to do so.

An article in *School Life* further demonstrated the Federal government’s distrust of the suitability of the education system for such a task when discussing the quality of the teaching of the Bill of Rights in schools. The author exclaimed that **“I wonder if the teachers themselves understand! I wonder if there is textbook material available for such teaching!”**³²⁰ This distrust of teachers during the early Cold War was, of course, not limited to questions on their preparedness, but also their commitment to the USA, and to democracy itself. The second Red Scare was, in part, focused on weeding out Communist, or, in the majority of cases, merely left-leaning academics who were perceived to threaten the safety of the USA. This attack was focused on, but not limited to, institutions of higher

education where – some estimates calculated – upwards of 20% or even 30% of the academic staff were ‘subversives’. **The Senate Judiciary Committee in Internal Security (1952) even alluded to the existence of “nests of Communists” within academia.**³²¹

The events surrounding academic witch hunts within the USA during the early Cold War period have been widely written about, and therefore will not be dwelled upon here. That said, however, this intense fear that academia was infested with subversives who were intent on bringing down the USA from the inside served to **reinforce the Federal government’s claim that the education system was vital to the safety of the USA.** Moreover, it reinforced the idea that more input and greater monitoring from the Federal government was required in order to ensure that academia was fulfilling this task to the best of its abilities. By undermining the absolute authority of the teachers and professors to rule their classrooms and lecture halls, the Federal government successfully created a gap, which it then filled itself. It removed from the educators the power to dictate their own curriculum, and utilised that opportunity to promote its own replacement.

The United States Office of Education

The USOE served as a particularly useful tool through which the Federal government could influence the US education system in the early years of the **Cold War, but that was not the USOE’s intended function. It was originally** established as a Department of Education, but two years after its founding its Department status was rescinded as a result of heavy opposition over its official status both from within and without the Department.³²² It was made clear after **1869 that the USOE’s function was as a research office. The original charter of the**

USOE stated its function to be as follows: “to collect such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and territories”; to “diffuse such information as shall aid in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems”; and to “otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country”.³²³

Over the years the function of the USOE strayed from its original charter and it sometimes undertook work that fell outside its jurisdiction of research and dissemination, but four years prior to the date that the man who would be in office as the Commissioner of Education at the outbreak of the Cold War, John W. Studebaker, took up the position in 1934, the USOE was reorganised to become, once again, purely a research office.³²⁴ However, when the USOE moved from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1950, it had a staff of three hundred and a budget exceeding \$40 million.³²⁵ Interestingly, when the second Cold War Commissioner of Education, **Studebaker’s successor** Earl J. McGrath, explained how the USOE was **administered in 1951, the USOE’s finances were applied to the following areas:**

“approximately 1 fourth of the total costs of operating the Office [of Education] is used in administering the programs of grants-in-aid. The remaining three fourths is concentrated in the following major areas: (1) Educational organization and administration; (2) methods of instruction; (3) improvement of the teaching profession; (4) international educational relations; and (5) the collection, analysis and publication of basic statistical information – together with (6) the overall planning and administrative services essential to the work in all these areas”.³²⁶

During the Cold War, the USOE expanded its role in the education sphere greatly to include far more than simply research, statistics and dissemination of information.

School Life *Magazine*

The USOE has its own publication, *School Life* magazine, the printing of which was approved by the director of the Budget.³²⁷ During the Cold War the magazine was published by the USOE every month and circulated to a wide range of schools, colleges and universities. Articles in *School Life* were written by a variety of contributors, ranging from staff writers and practising teachers and lecturers to expert educational theorists, politicians and even the President himself. The purpose of *School Life* was, according to the USOE's own message printed in the front of each edition, to aid with the completion of the functions outlined in the charter, which was also printed in each edition of *School Life* during this period. During the early Cold War, however, the USOE worked outside this remit and, rather than just circulating statistics and current research, it used *School Life* to circulate ideas, plans, programmes and recommendations to schoolteachers and college lecturers, the outcome of which was a shift in the focus of the school system from the student to the nation.

Between 1947 and 1951, articles with titles such as “Strengthen Education to Strengthen Democracy in a Divided World”; “What are the Chief Threats to American Democracy?”; “Better Schools Build a Stronger America” and “National Security to be Strengthened through Education” were published by the magazine, and all vehemently directed schools, colleges and universities to prioritise education for the benefit of the Cold War effort over education for the benefit of

the individual. A further group of articles all published within the same period, including “Communism’s Challenge to American Education”; “Fascism in Action”; “The Challenge of Soviet Education” and “I Want to be Like Stalin” warned what could happen if educators did not heed the USOE’s advice. One such article, entitled “Education for the Nation’s Defense”, became a running feature, which updated the reader each month as to what the education system was doing to ensure the national security, and what could still be done. One such feature alone included a section which highlighted the need for trained manpower in Cold War industries, discussed the work of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and explained the benefits of a union between the Federal government and the education system by demonstrating how Land Grant colleges had benefitted from it.³²⁸

The USOE intentionally worked outside of the terms of its charter, and the secondary charter of *School Life* magazine, in order to attempt to influence the schools to alter both their methods of teaching and the subjects they taught. As there was no national curriculum in the USA, it is difficult to assess how successful it was, but historian Andrew Hartman, who has studied the curriculum of American schools during this period extensively, has stated that the progressive style of education, which was favoured at the time the Cold War broke out, became “more conservative” during the early Cold War years as it was “explicitly redirected towards the ends of civil and national defense”.³²⁹ The USOE managed to ‘redirect’ the American education system – the very thing opponents of Federal funding feared most – without spending more than the cost of publishing and circulating *School Life*.

'Zeal for American Democracy'

The most significant way in which the government used the USOE to direct education was through the development of specific plans and instructions as to how schools could translate the rather vague aim of 'defending American democracy' into concrete teaching strategies and curriculum design. The USOE supported the Federal government's attempts to increase education in democracy by establishing an entire programme dedicated to that end only. The 'Zeal for American Democracy' programme was designed, in the words of John W. Studebaker, to be "a vigorous program designed to vitalize and improve education in schools and colleges throughout the United States with respect to the ideals and benefits of democracy and to reveal the character and tactics of totalitarianism".³³⁰ The programme's full title, which was rarely used, was Zeal for American Democracy: Education to implant the ideas and benefits of democracy and to reveal the evil character and tactics of Communism".³³¹ It was launched by the USOE late in 1947, and was, the programme's administrators claimed, "strongly supported by Congress".³³² The intention of the programme was to make "the traditions of our republican form of government more vivid and meaningful" and to ensure that American youths both learned about and practised democracy in schools, thereby gaining a better understanding of why it must be preserved.³³³ The programme was also designed to safeguard American students against the "glamorous and attractive promises and propagandas for the easy solution of all important social and economic problems", namely Communism.³³⁴

Studebaker - the programme's principal architect and a man described by Andrew Hartman as "one of the foremost propagators of the view that the schools

should conform to the nation's foreign policy needs" – intended the programme to be guided by the concept 'democracy vs. communism'.³³⁵ In 1948 he wrote an article entitled "Communism's Challenge to American Education" for *School Life* in which he outlined what the school system could, and should, teach in the classroom in order to support the Federal government in the war effort. Studebaker believed that "Americanism" was inherently and inseparably linked to 'democracy', and that the former could not survive without the latter. He identified it specifically as "the glorious heritage of freedom and democracy that is ours as a people".³³⁶ Specifically, he defined democracy as being "devoted to the enhancement of the individual... [it] encourages tolerance and permits, even nourishes heterodoxy..." and that "our American democratic ideals of government and society have produced the highest material living standards for our people of any ever recorded on the face of the earth".³³⁷ Studebaker asserted that the students should learn how privileged they were to live under the US system of democracy by learning about "the long struggle by which the rights of American democracy were secured".³³⁸

Studebaker declared that "I believe that *every* pupil should have a chance to learn how difficult it was to establish freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of religion, the right to Habeas Corpus, and the other American freedoms".³³⁹ The USOE continued to outline the intentions for the promotion of education for democracy thusly: to establish 1) An understanding of the meaning of democracy, its history, its practice, and its continuing development, together with an understanding of the dangerous *alternatives posed by totalitarianism* [emphasis in original]; 2) Enlightened loyalty to democratic ideals and national traditions; 3) the fundamentals of national responsibility and power, including

world geography and its relation to war potentials and to the economic and strategic foundations of an enduring peace; 4) Understanding of the United Nations, its organization, its accomplishments shortcomings and **possibilities**".³⁴⁰

The USOE supported schools, colleges and universities in setting up their **individual 'Zeal for American Democracy' programmes and provided them with** resource material, teaching aids, programmes of study and examples of good practice gleaned from various school systems and colleges.³⁴¹ The USOE also directed the methods and type of study the students would undertake. This practice ensured that students learned a homogenous and, more importantly, federally approved, version of how the American government was administered. **The USOE dictated that students would "examine carefully all undemocratically operated movements or organizations placing power in the hands of a few leaders"**.³⁴² **In addition, students "should have a sufficient store of knowledge to be able to detect and expose totalitarian methods and practices"**.³⁴³ More concerning, however, was Studebaker's intention for students to also **"weigh wisely the continual criticism levelled at politicians or other classes or groups blaming them for our social and economic difficulties"**; this 'lesson', whilst not suggesting that students *could not* criticise their government, seems to suggest that they would be taught that they *would not* criticise their government.³⁴⁴

The programme was designed and administered with the sole intention of **ensuring that the USA's future citizens would value democracy over alternative** methods of government such as Communism or fascism, in order to protect them from converting the system of government in the years to come. There was little opposition to the programme despite the fact that it represented a vast departure

from standard practice in the teaching of social studies, as the programme was deemed to be vital for the nation and, importantly, involved no direct Federal funding to the education system. The National Council of Chief State School Officers even commended the government on their forthright approach to the **matter, stating that “it is fitting that the official educational agency of our National Government exert leadership in promoting a program which calls for nationwide action. The National Council of Chief State School Officers, therefore, commends the United States Office of Education for its timely inauguration of the nationwide educational program ‘Zeal for American Democracy’”.**³⁴⁵

The year after the programme was launched the proponents of the programme organised a conference **entitled “The National Conference on the Zeal for American Democracy’.** Over the course of the conference, the delegates decided upon the best way to proceed with the programme. Those in attendance **recommended to American schools and colleges that “they devote greater attention to planning and implementing the long range program of developing zeal for American democracy”.**³⁴⁶ This was to be achieved, the delegates announced, by firstly teaching the meaning of democracy – **“both its simple basic concepts and their implications for all segments of American life”.**³⁴⁷ Secondly, **teachers were to strengthen “basic loyalty to and trust of fellow citizens to an extent that the courage, vitality and unity of American democracy will grow and endure and withstand all attempts to divide our people”.**³⁴⁸ What had begun as a vague attempt to improve the understanding among students of their system of government in the hope that they would favour it over the alternatives became, in less than a year, a programme designed to teach students to be loyal to that **government directly. The Federal government’s programme to create a ‘zeal for**

American democracy' became instead a large-scale programme designed to instruct students that their way of government was right. By the end on 1952, 88% of American schools had implemented programs which were specifically intended to promote democracy and civil defense.³⁴⁹

Militarisation for National Security

In the December 1950 issue of the USOE's *School Life* magazine, educator Homer Kempfer announced that "as war belongs to the military, so peace building is the educator's task"; when addressing an educational conference in October 1950, the Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, stated that "politics and programs which were adequate the last time will not do today. 1950 is not 1941... Military know-how and educational know-why... these are the considerations of national policy which may guide higher education in the years ahead".³⁵⁰ In 1948, Keesecker asserted in a USOE *Bulletin* that the schools should be used directly to fight the Cold War and protect American ideals. Keesecker likened the intervention into school business to the recruitment programme often enacted during 'hot' wartime, thereby demonstrating a precedent for the government's intervention into the affairs of the education system. He demonstrated that "in war we provide vocational training to achieve military victory. By the same token should we not educate to promote respect for and devotion to our ideals and principles of freedom? If we believe in American freedom and if we believe it is worth fighting for, ought we not also educate for it?"³⁵¹

It is the Federal government's constitutional right and responsibility to command the military, and in times of war the Federal government are charged with protecting the USA and the American way of life – specifically, a "republican

form of government".³⁵² If in this new war the defence happened to include the schools, then the schools also came under the command of the Federal government. They must, therefore, also do what was asked of them, regardless of the threat to academic freedom. By likening the US education system to the military, the Federal government successfully demonstrated the importance of American schools, colleges and universities in winning the Cold War. The education system was vital to ensure that a republican form of government remained in office in the USA, and therefore it became the responsibility of the Federal government.

To strengthen the Federal government's claim that the schools were as important to the Cold War effort as the military, the language used to describe the schools' involvement in the task became militarised in federally produced literature. By the time Kempfer wrote his article for *School Life* in 1950, the **objective of the schools had been appropriately named 'waging peace'**. Kempfer **stated that the US education system needed to "mobilize our total manpower to win the peace and to keep it won" and likened pupils to soldiers and schools and colleges to training camps:**

"peace that satisfies the democratic spirit can be created when enough people are willing to serve in a world army of peace builders. Like soldiers, they must become aware of their roles and be trained for them. Building awareness and providing the training are tasks for education. If a teacher or administrator deeply believes that men can learn to live together in peace, and that peace is dynamic and must be positively waged, then he is a commissioned officer in the army of education fighting for peace".³⁵³

Kempfer also included a small section within his article which reminded readers **that war in itself could promote the cause of peace; he wrote that “we need to learn** that energy spent in the resolution of human problems all around the world is ***creating peace*” [emphasis in original].³⁵⁴ Kempfer explained to the USOE’s readership that, without the cooperation of the schools to win the Cold War, the Cold War could not be won, and subsequently neither could a peaceful world be created from their victory. **Kempfer’s position was supported by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who also remarked that “no man flying a warplane, no man with a defensive gun in his hand, can possibly be more important than a teacher”.**³⁵⁵ Like Kempfer, he likened students to soldiers, teachers to generals and classrooms to battlegrounds. This language asserted that the Cold War would be fought in the schools, and the students must be trained to fight.**

An article published in *Platform* – a publication of the *Newsweek* Club and Educational Bureau – took this position further when an anonymous author **stated in 1952 that “our institutions of learning are not considered by this school of thought as arenas where the student can test beliefs or, from the side-lines, watch thought do battle”.**³⁵⁶ The author continued to quote the principal architect of the American Conservative movement, the founder of prominent conservative magazine *National Review* (1955) and later Emmy award winning host of the conservative public affairs programme *Firing Line*, William F. Buckley Jr. Buckley had defined the university the year before in similarly militaristic language in his prominent work *God and Man at Yale* (1951) as a “**practice field** on which the gladiators of the future are taught to use their weapons, are briefed in the wiles and stratagems of the enemy, and are inspired with the virtue of their

cause in anticipation of the day when they will step forward and join the struggle against error”.³⁵⁷

The author appropriated Buckley’s position that academic freedom should not extend to a balanced discussion of political models in universities; Buckley defended this position by discussing the argument that teaching students about all prominent political thought models gives the students the opportunity to personally consider the tenets of each, and naturally come to the conclusion that democracy is the superior system. Buckley stated that anyone familiar with **history, however, knew that the ‘truth’ that democracy was the best system did** not always come to the fore, as was evidenced by the Twentieth Century triumphs of socialism, communism and fascism in Russia, Italy and Germany. As such, he argued, US universities had a responsibility to teach democracy as the only suitable political model to ensure that the students were not misled by their own **‘truths’**.

Moreover, all political models that were not democracy must be considered as, and taught as, being **‘wrong’**, even if they were not as **‘wrong’** as communism; to illustrate this position Buckley suggested that although murder was **‘more wrong’** than theft, this did not make theft any **‘more right’**; if socialism was **‘better’** than communism, this still did not make it **‘right’** therefore only democracy could be taught as the **‘right’** political model.³⁵⁸ The anonymous author similarly defined **‘truth’** as “democracy” in his article and asserted that, as such, it was “a teacher’s duty to inculcate this value in others” as to present a balanced assessment was dangerous to the security of the nation.³⁵⁹ The lines defining who was responsible for the nation’s **education and who was responsible**

for the nation's defense became increasingly blurred in the early years of the Cold War.

Opposition

Of course, a few lone voices did challenge the new direction for education which was proposed by the Truman Commission. The objections to Federal involvement which were raised by this small group, however, were disparate. Their protestations were not rooted in the same cause, and therefore the movement, if indeed it could be titled so, lacked strength and unity. One opponent, University of New Hampshire President Harold Stoke, believed that the new direction posed a threat to academic freedom, and the way relationships between universities and outside forces functioned. He believed that universities should be shrouded from outside forces in order to foster individual perspectives, rather than being used as a tool with which to react to societal changes. Stoke stated that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was no worse or dangerous than pursuit of knowledge on behalf of the government, military or industry.³⁶⁰

The report of the Truman Commission attracted some direct negative commentary, as, one reviewer claimed, its recommendations placed private schools at risk of marginalisation. The anonymous critic asserted that **“it is quite obvious that the basic philosophy of the report will tend to the development of an educational program in which the State and Federal control over all higher education will be so tremendous that privately supported schools will be affected whether funded or not”**.³⁶¹ The fear that Federal involvement in the education system would bring the USA closer to a ‘totalitarian’ style of education, however, was the most prevalent concern. A reviewer who discussed the report of the

Truman Commission believed that it promoted a ‘totalitarian approach’ to the government of the education system, and that this was not an acceptable route for the education system to follow, regardless of the end that the Federal government were attempting to achieve. He claimed **that “the recommendations of the Commission, if accepted, would lead to statism, which is a form of totalitarianism”**.³⁶²

Even the dissenters who discovered a few allies found themselves in the minority, however. When money was not involved, the unification of the **government’s objectives with those of the education system was not widely or** forcefully objected to at any point, and democratic education in the classrooms and lecture halls soon came to be viewed as the normal State of affairs. As politicians and educators alike joined together to alter the objectives of the American education system, the line which separated the goals of academia from those of the government quickly blurred. Educator William Stanley Hoole **declared in 1958 that “by the mid-1950s Americans everywhere were saying that the ‘Cold War’ would be won in the classroom”**.³⁶³ He believed that his own statement – **“what happens to American education will eventually happen to America”** – had become a cliché.³⁶⁴ The American public accepted and normalised the concept of students as soldiers, and as their best hope in the daunting conflict.

Moreover, those with the most reason to oppose the government’s plans had no power to do so. Teaching about Communism in American schools, colleges and universities had become a controversial issue in the USA in its own right, not least because rumours that teachers and professors who taught their students about Communism were in fact Communist sympathisers or, worse, Communist

infiltrators, were gathering strength in the USA. For a teacher to add to this a charge that they also opposed the teaching of democracy, or believed that it was wrong to teach American students to love and support their democratic government, was foolhardy. Commissioner Studebaker made the government's position clear when he announced in *School Life* that **“we, ourselves, as teachers, all of us, must believe in democracy, believe in it with a flaming faith based on the clearest intellectual and moral conviction and that we unswervingly communicate our faith to the pupils in our charge”**.³⁶⁵ Teachers were expected to lead the charge for democracy, not undermine it.

The American faculty were also expected to better prepare themselves for the task ahead. In a sweeping statement, Studebaker announced that **“every teacher in every field should have a well-grounded understanding of American democracy and, during the period of pre-service training, should become proficient in the use of democratic classroom practices. Furthermore all teachers must keep reasonably well-informed about the major issues of contemporary society”**.³⁶⁶ Whilst a detailed understanding of American political principles would be vital for a social studies teacher, the benefit of such knowledge for maths instructors could be questioned. That even teachers who would not be directly **involved in the teaching of democracy were not exempt from Studebaker's plan** demonstrates that Studebaker was not prepared to risk students learning unauthorised and unchecked information from any sources whatsoever. Studebaker expected American teachers to portray a homogenous definition of democracy in all aspects of their school life.

The Federal government instigated a campaign, carried out mostly through the medium of *School Life*, which informed teachers exactly why it was

their duty to promote democracy in their classrooms; this included an article written by Keesecker entitled “**Duty of Teachers to Promote Ideals and Principles of American Democracy**”. In this article, Keesecker not only explained to the USA’s teaching staff the reasons why it was their *duty* to imbue their students with a sense of democracy regardless of whether they had one themselves or not, but he also listed all of the State laws which *required* teachers to do so.³⁶⁷ Commissioner McGrath stated in 1949 that “**there is no justification, in principle or practice, for knowingly employing as teachers of our youth those whose commitments are contrary to the foundation principles of freedom itself**”.³⁶⁸

Teachers were not, however, given much chance to demonstrate the kind of sedition that the American public feared, as to circumvent this requirement carried serious consequences. The academic witch hunts, which became such a feature of the early Cold War period, did not only affect the right of educators to dictate what was taught in their classrooms. In addition, these witch hunts greatly curtailed their opportunity to speak out against the new direction taken by the **education system. As Hartman has identified, “just as free speech could be abrogated if it was a threat to the nation, teachers could be fired for political behaviour deemed dangerous or conspiratorial**”.³⁶⁹ Unless teachers were willing not only to lose their jobs, but to be blacklisted from teaching altogether, they were not in a position to raise any concerns over the work of the Federal government in the education system, especially as that work was advertised to be of direct benefit to the Cold War. To speak out against it would not only have been foolish, it would have been dangerous.

The Executive branch of the Federal government utilised the powers available to it to infiltrate the US education system in the post war and early Cold

War period in order to ensure that the education system was serving the nation in its time of need. The establishment of a presidential commission in order to explore the state of the US education system enabled the Executive branch of the Truman Administration to utilise the powers that it did have at its disposal in order to expand its power and influence elsewhere. The careful selection of the members in addition to the clear mandate delivered to them upon appointment worked alongside persuasive contextual factors provided by the escalation of the Cold War **and Truman's personal commitment to education and disregard** for small government to create a Commission prepared and willing to advocate for Federal involvement within the US education system as a priority, and even a necessity.

The report of the Truman Commission created a discussion among educators, publications and the general public which highlighted its perception of the pressing need for increased Federal involvement in education, and began to normalise the concept of Federal involvement within education. This in turn enabled the various educational outreaches of the Executive branch such as the USOE and its publication *School Life* to begin playing a greater role within education. The familiarity of the debate coupled with the cautionary Cold War rhetoric associated with the alternative – that no Federal involvement could have catastrophic consequences – and enabled the Executive branch in its many forms to easily quell opposition to its new venture. As issues of national security crept into the classroom, they brought the Federal government with them, and this shift had a deep and long-lasting impact on the administration and curriculum of the US education system.

A CASE OF INTERVENTION

The Federal Government in the
Sciences

“The danger lies in the future”³⁷⁰

With the detonation on the atomic bomb in 1945, the world was irrevocably changed. Scientific advancement was made as vital to national security as military development, and scientists as important as soldiers. **This “atomic age”, made possible through the efforts of an educated few, brought with it a sense of panic and uncertainty across the world.** Despite being the only world power at the time to possess atomic weapons, the USA did not escape this pervading anxiety. By 1947, John R. Steelman, the Assistant to the President (a position later renamed to the White House Chief of Staff) noted in his report to the President, *Science and Public Policy*, that **“scientific progress is a prime requisite for national security, since without it our economic and military strength cannot keep pace with potential competitors”**.³⁷¹ Steelman feared that if the USA did not continue to make significant advances in science and technology, it would neither be able to protect the world from undemocratic forces, nor defend itself.

Regardless of the USA’s current scientific prowess, the government greatly feared being overtaken by hostile powers. This dread was compounded by the knowledge that the USA would soon have neither the scientists nor the facilities to compete with the rest of the world. Its manpower pool was running low and, due to the fast pace of scientific progression, its laboratories were rapidly becoming obsolete. **In 1947, the report from the White House’s Program for Research and Development declared that the USA was “in danger of falling behind the rest of the world technologically”**.³⁷² The report attributed this **situation to the fact that “like Germany, we had a shiny new industrial plant to compete with a world bogged down by vested interests in obsolescence.** But capital investment nearly stopped in the thirties, [and] was directed to the

specialized needs of war in the early forties. And when Europe rebuilds its **industries, it will have the shiny modern equipment**".³⁷³ This fear only grew after the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb in 1949. By 1952, the US Office of Education stated in its *Bulletin* that **"the survival of our democratic life may depend upon our increased technological progress... Our supply of scientists and engineers is already getting dangerously low"**.³⁷⁴ It believed that **"the battle for the freedoms we so fondly cherished may be lost in the laboratory"**.³⁷⁵

As M. H. Trytten, the Director of the Office of Scientific Personnel in the National Research **Council, identified, "technology has already raced forward in** new directions, and it is evident that warfare in the future will bring forth new **and startling instruments"**.³⁷⁶ Any foreign developments which the USA could not match on home soil, it feared, left the world susceptible to the wills of stronger, more advanced, governments elsewhere. Maintaining its lead in the scientific **community became a vital component of the nation's survival in the early years** of the Cold War. As historian Audra J. Wolfe identified in her book *Competing with the Soviets: Science, Technology and the State in Cold War America* (2013),

"the fundamental characteristic of Cold War Science is the central role that the scientific enterprise came to play in the maintenance of the nation-state... **For all their differences, leaders in both the Soviet Union and the** United States agreed that massive displays of technological might were **critical weapons in the international battle for hearts and minds"**.³⁷⁷

Wolfe continued to highlight that **"scientific achievement had apparently won the** war for the Allies; it would presumably be the critical factor in deciding the Cold War as well. This assumption transformed the scale and scope of scientific

investigation".³⁷⁸ In order for the US to remain militarily strong, significant advancements needed to be made in the scientific disciplines, and at speed.

Scientific advancement was not just required for military matters. As the Cold War developed, a greater focus was placed on the everyday lives of US citizens. The battleground shifted to domestic matters, and it became important to the US Federal **government's Cold War effort to be able to demonstrate** advancement in these areas as well as in weapons advancement. Research and development in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths – commonly referred to today as STEM subjects, as they will be throughout the remainder of this thesis – played a major role in this endeavour. Improvement in STEM fields had the potential to improve living standards, medical care, food production and a host of other areas which affected the day-to-day living standards of average Americans. Newly developed labour saving devices, medical advancements and agricultural inventions reinforced the idea of the American dream and of the USA as a land of promise and prosperity. This in turn enabled the USA to remain a **paragon of progress and domestic bliss on the world's stage** – a vital victory in the ideological battle of the Cold War.

Domestic scientific achievements could also be used to directly improve **the USA's standing overseas, and to foster positive relations** with third world nations. As Wolfe has identified, when US scientists collaborated with Indian scientists in order to develop more productive and nutritious varieties of wheat, **it was hoped that "this project, supported with funds from the Department of State and the Department of Agriculture, and American seed companies, [would] prevent starvation and accompanying unrest among the exploding population on the Indian subcontinent"**.³⁷⁹ **The USA's assistance in reducing famine, in turn,**

preserved the fragile Indian democracy and kept India from succumbing to the advances of its **Communist neighbours**. **“From the Indian perspective”, Wolfe has argued, this US government funded project “offered the quickest route to modernisation and, they hoped, economic independence”**.³⁸⁰ From the American perspective, the project enabled the US Federal government to defend democracy without deploying troops. Scientific research was used as a weapon in the fight against Communism, and was successful. Wolfe has demonstrated that this experience, and others similar to it, confirmed to the US Federal government that **“the products of science could, therefore, offer multiple foreign policy rewards, from promoting goodwill and developing alliances to ensuring economic dominance. Science could be a carrot as well as a stick”**.³⁸¹ Science was designated as a weapon, and weapons were the responsibility of the Federal government.

As the Federal government intended to utilise STEM research both to **improve the USA’s military knowledge and to demonstrate** the superiority of the American way of life to the watching world, the creation of a program of scientific research and development that was at the cutting edge was doubly important to the US government. This factor significantly altered the state and status of STEM education in the USA in the years after the Second World War. The effects of the burgeoning atomic age upon the education system can be seen as early as 1947, **when John Dale Russell, the Director of the USOE’s Division of Higher Education, recognised the important role which STEM would play in the Cold War. Russell stated that “the contributions of science to the winning of the [Second World] War have deeply impressed all thinking people”**. Russell was not alone in his observations; he noted that **there was now a “distinct national trend**

toward emphasis on science”, and this national trend would undoubtedly affect the US education system.³⁸²

Russell highlighted the fact that a greater focus would have to be placed on science education in schools, colleges and universities in order to improve the **USA’s abilities in STEM fields. He correctly assessed that “this trend will inevitably affect colleges as to curriculum; staffing and requirements for instructional equipment/laboratories etc.”.**³⁸³ George F. Zook, head of the **President’s Commission on Higher Education (Truman Commission)**, made the same connection in 1948. Zook made it clear in Volume I of the Truman Commission’s report, *Higher Education for American Democracy* (1947) that training the new generation of scientists and engineers was not only the domain of higher education institutions, it was their responsibility. He asserted **that “the scientific knowledge and technical skills that have made atomic and bacteriological warfare possible are the products of education and research, and higher education must share proportionately in the task of forging social and political defenses against obliteration”.**³⁸⁴ STEM subjects in high school and, more importantly, in college and university level education, were quickly **identified as vital components of the USA’s plan to utilise scientific advancement** in order to successfully fight the Cold War, and this made them central to the **Federal government’s plan of attack.**

This chapter will demonstrate the ways in which Cold War concerns encouraged the Federal government, led by President Harry Truman, to become involved in shaping institutions of higher education during this period. It will assess the ways in which the Federal government justified this interest despite the lack of a Department of Education to act on its behalf, or Constitutional

authority to act under its own steam. Moreover it will discuss the ways in which the manpower shortage which the USA experienced in the years after the Second World War threatened national security, and how the steps which the Federal **government took in order to solve the USA's scientific manpower problems** affected both the concept and reality of earning an undergraduate or graduate degree for college students in the early years of the Cold War and beyond. Finally, **this chapter will explore how the Federal government's increased interest in turn affected this campus research, and the implications of the Federal government's** program of scientific research in colleges and universities. The majority of scholarship concerning Federal involvement in higher education in STEM fields has previously focused on the effects of the National Defense Education Act (1958), passed as a result of the Sputnik Crisis of 1957. This chapter will demonstrate, however, that the Federal government had already placed a number of controls over university and, to some extent, elementary and secondary school science departments long before this event thrust science education to the forefront of the national consciousness.

The Role of 'Basic' Research

One of the major factors that affected the relevance of higher education to national security, and therefore brought it to the attention of the Federal government during the early years of the Cold War, was the burgeoning **importance after the Second World War of 'basic research', also known as 'fundamental' or 'pure' research. Basic research is the undertaking of scientific** research for its own sake, with no specific goal or invention in mind. This type of research allows for the exploration of fundamental principles. This research is

then funnelled through to applied research, and informs its direction or application. It is a key component of scientific advancement, and without it, applied scientific research has no starting point. The Federal government **understood how pivotal basic research had been to the Allied powers' success in the Second World War, and how vital it would become to the USA's success in the Cold War.** President Truman stated in 1952 that

“during the last decade we have seen how basic scientific research can alter the foundations of world power. We have seen that this research yields a stream of new knowledge which fortifies our economic welfare as well as our national strength. We have learned that a strong, steady and wide ranging effort in science is as essential to our sustained national security as the production of weapons and trained military personnel”.³⁸⁵

Steelman also singled out basic research as both the most important and yet the most **vulnerable area of scientific research. He highlighted the USA's need for basic research in *Science and Public Policy* (1947).** Steelman recounted how **Britain's deficiency in basic research prior to the First World War had negatively affected its national security, and explained to the President that “particularly in the basic industries, British facilities and technology were older and less efficient than its German counterparts. The balance of power in Europe was upset primarily as a result of this fact and the world was plunged into two devastating wars”; Britain, Steelman elucidated, was not able to keep Germany at bay before the First World War primarily because it lagged behind in science and technology.**³⁸⁶

There was, however, distressingly little basic research being conducted in the USA or in friendly overseas nations in the early years of the Cold War, which

left the USA exposed and vulnerable to hostile powers. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the USA had relied heavily on European nations to conduct basic research on its behalf. Yet, by the end of the Second World War much of Europe had either been ravaged by war, or was lost behind the Iron Curtain, and the USA's sources of basic research had dried up. The 1947 report on the White House's Program for Research and Development highlighted that "we can no longer import basic research as we did before the war".³⁸⁷ Importantly, the report also highlighted the fact that

"This country has never been strong on pure science. Typically, we apply and industrialize discoveries made in Europe. During the war, basic research practically stopped. It will be years before the shattered laboratories and universities of Europe are re-established. If we want a stock of increasing knowledge about the nature of the physical world we'll have to build it ourselves".³⁸⁸

The same issue was discussed in *Higher Education for American Democracy* in 1947:

"In the past, American scientists have contributed more to technical development than to fundamental science [basic research]. We have depended largely on the men and the laboratories of Europe for advance in basic research. This we can no longer do, partly because conditions in Europe do not promise much strength in science for some time to come, and partly because the free exchange of ideas among scientists of all nations is, temporarily we hope, impeded by the unsettled state of the world. America is now on her own in accumulating a stockpile of

fundamental scientific knowledge as a basis for technological **development**".³⁸⁹

The reports warned that **"the fact that only a thin trickle of scientific knowledge** is today reaching us from other countries constitutes an emergency and a **challenge**".³⁹⁰ If the Federal government intended to protect national security, as was its clearly stated constitutional responsibility, then the output of basic research conducted on American soil had to be increased, and quickly.

Steelman recommended in 1947 that "in the future... the relative emphasis of the Federal program ought to shift towards the support of basic research on an **unprecedented scale**".³⁹¹ **In the same year, the President announced that "to meet** this challenge we must promote the rapid growth of basic research, the cross-fertilization of ideas among our scientists, and the maturing of a new generation **of scientists who will think boldly and daringly**".³⁹² George F. Zook proclaimed in *Higher Education for American Democracy* (1947) that **"it is imperative that basic research, largely suspended during the war, be resumed and expanded"**.³⁹³ Basic research drew the focus of the Federal government, and as a result, so did **the USA's higher education system.**

The Federal government identified the need to improve the USA's output of basic research as a matter of national security, but whilst applied scientific research was carried out in many quarters, including industry and the **government's own research laboratories, basic** scientific research was then, and remains today, primarily the domain of universities and colleges. This caused several problems for the Federal government. The first was financial; whereas applied research was regularly funded by corporate contracts, this was not the case for basic research carried out on campuses during the years of the Cold War.

As there is no fixed outcome from studying basic science – and therefore no foreseeable line of profit – industry funding was scarce. Even the small amount of funding that research in higher education usually received prior to 1941 had **dramatically decreased during the war years. Zook noted that** “in 1930, university expenditures were 12% of the total national budget for research and technical development in the natural sciences; whereas during the period 1941 – 1945, university expenditures averaged only 2% of the total excluding amounts for **research in atomic energy**”.³⁹⁴ This dramatic drop in funding, coupled with the fact that funding had been low to start with, meant that the output of basic research from university and college campuses was neither high enough to yield the results the government had hoped for, nor did the institutions have the means to increase their output independently. The only avenue open to the Federal government to both increase and improve basic research was to pay for it itself.

The second problem was one of access. As Steelman identified in 1947, the **“colleges and universities... are the key to the problem”** and he recommended that **“the most productive approach to support of basic research is through providing financial aid to college and university laboratories”**.³⁹⁵ Direct Federal funding, however, was associated with direct Federal control, and therefore would have raised significant questions concerning academic freedom. The Federal government neither had nor has any specific constitutional right to involve itself, financially or otherwise, in the research undertaken in institutions of higher **education. Section 8 of the Constitution does provide to Congress “the power... to promote the progress of science and the arts, by means of patents and copyrights”** but, as Good and Teller have recognised, there is nothing to suggest that the **Founding Fathers “considered the relation between school education and**

progress in science and the arts”.³⁹⁶ As a result, merely giving money to the education system in order to improve it was not an option for the Federal government.³⁹⁷

Without the funding required to complete the work, the universities and colleges remained the weak link in the government’s plan. The Federal government was forced once again to rely on the ‘Cold War imperative’ – and its constitutionally protected right to defend the nation from hostile attacks. In order to do this, the Federal government had to establish that basic research fell under the umbrella of protecting national security. This automatically established university and college research as relevant to national security, and therefore not only relevant to, but also the responsibility of, the Federal government. As basic research was vital to applied research, and applied research was vital to the USA’s Cold War effort, demonstrating the link between basic STEM research and national security was not difficult for the Federal government. The next step, however, was devising a palatable method through which this research could be /funded and directed.

The National Science Foundation

The establishment of the National Science Foundation (NSF) was first recommended to President Truman in ***Science and Public Policy*** (1947), a report written by John R. Steelman. The NSF, Steelman explained, would be an organisation through which the Federal government could gain greater access to and control over scientific research in universities. In a press release issued after the publication of ***Science and Public Policy***, President Truman noted that “the report confirms a belief, previously expressed by me, that the national welfare

requires support from the Federal government of basic research in universities and non-profit research institutions, through creation by Congress of a National **Science Foundation**".³⁹⁸ The National Science Foundation (NSF) was established in 1950, and protecting the national defence was listed above health and medicine **in the Foundation's prioritisation of research**.³⁹⁹ Whilst the NSF did provide Federal money for educational institutions (50% of the total budget had to go to educational institutions) its objective was to efficiently program and co-ordinate **"all federally financed research and development"** – giving money for science research in education, but with strings attached.⁴⁰⁰ The NSF was established in order to enable the Federal government to exert an increased level of control over the direction of activities conducted in these institutions in the name of national defence.

The NSF was not the only source of Federal funding available to universities and colleges during the early years of the Cold War, but it was charged with co-ordinating grants for research from all sources to prevent overlap, therefore ensuring as streamlined a national research program as possible. As Steelman had recommended in *Science and Public Policy*, the NSF was to be **"primarily concerned with grants in support of basic research to be conducted by the colleges and universities and with co-ordination of grants for basic research made by other Federal agencies"**.⁴⁰¹ The NSF served to formalise both the link between academic research and the needs of the Cold War effort, and the right of the Federal government to be involved in the direction and amount of basic research that was undertaken in the USA during the early years of the Cold War and beyond. Through targeted Federal funding, the NSF enabled the Federal government to vastly increase the amount of scientific research taking

place on college campuses. In addition, the NSF allowed the Federal government to bridge the gap between the amount of basic research conducted in higher education institutions and the needs of the Federal government, and also enabled it to control and monitor what research was undertaken.⁴⁰²

Traditionally, research carried out in universities was separated from Federal intervention and sanctions (such as enforced secrecy, clearance levels or directed research); in post-war America, however, this independence was put at **risk. The NSF was established in order to “formulate a broad national policy designed to assure that the scope and the quality of basic research in the country are adequate for national security and technological progress”.**⁴⁰³ The focus here is, naturally, on national security. The bestowal of grants from the NSF was **intended to be based upon each project’s value** to the Cold War effort, rather than **its contribution to ‘science’ as an abstract concept.**⁴⁰⁴ This undermined the right of the universities and colleges to study whatever they chose, uninfluenced by the Federal government. Although the Federal government did not force any university to accept research grants, higher education was struggling financially during this period, and grants were hard to come by, especially for basic research. By granting money for targeted research only, the Federal government inexorably altered the direction and focus of basic research in higher education during this period.

The NSF’s control over the focus of the research conducted was not its only caveat. The NSF also had the right and the responsibility to oversee the “co-ordination of grants for basic research”.⁴⁰⁵ This power directly challenged the traditional separation of higher education and the Federal government. It was intended to prevent the overlap of research, a sensible goal; in order to adequately

achieve this, however, the NSF was also required to interfere with what could be studied, where and by whom. This meant that the NSF kept a detailed list of all the scientific and technological personnel in the country, which included researchers working in higher education.⁴⁰⁶ Further to this, the NSF also retained control of the project and its direction after the grant had been approved. The Act in which the NSF was proposed stated that

“as a condition for receiving financial support from the director, each contracting organization or institution or individual, as the case may be, shall make available full data on all inventions, discoveries and other significant findings resulting from research and development financed by the Federal government, and shall submit whatever reports the Director may deem necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act... The Director is hereby authorized and directed to record, collect, edit, publish and disseminate pertinent data on all inventions and discoveries and other findings resulting from federally financed research and development **activities”**.⁴⁰⁷

This was further compounded by the fact that the NSF bestowed funds for such a short period of time – a shorter period than almost all scientific research projects would actually take to complete. Federally funded scholarships and **fellowships were available for only one year’s study for scientists**.⁴⁰⁸ This gave it even greater power to direct research, as scientists faced the ominous threat of having their funding cancelled half way through a project if the NSF was not happy with the direction it had taken. Through the financial power of NSF grants and their careful co-ordination, campus laboratories across the USA were

converted to war work as easily as peacetime factories had been converted to munitions plants in the Second World War.

Opposition to the funding from the NSF, and to other sources of Federal funding such as the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and the Department of Defense (DOD), was minimal. Some Quakers who were working as scientists in university or college laboratories refused Federal funding for basic research on religious grounds, as they could not control whether or not the government would use their basic research to fuel applied research in weapons development. In addition, Lee DuBridge, President of the California Institute of Technology (CalTech), criticised Federal funding, as **he feared the consequences if science was forced to “exist merely from the crumbs that fall from the table of a weapons development program”**.⁴⁰⁹ By 1953, however, **DuBridge acknowledged that CalTech would “go broke” quickly if the university’s** Federal funding were to disappear.⁴¹⁰ In many instances, however, the chance to **contribute was welcomed; as Wolfe has identified, “Many** of the men working within the universities as scientists during this period had served in the Second World War, and viewed their government-funded research with patriotic pride as **an extension of their service”**.⁴¹¹ Even those who were not so keen on the increased Federal presence on the campus accepted it as a necessity. Wolfe argues that scientists in the 1950s were not so different from all the other average Americans during the 1950s, who bought in wholeheartedly to the necessity of the arms race for the national security. They believed that only the development of ever bigger and better weapons could maintain their uneasy peace with the Soviet Union, and basic research was vital to this end.⁴¹² On the whole, the needs of the Cold War

superseded the needs of the individual even in the eyes of the individuals themselves.

Regardless of opposition, however, the NSF's impact on research conducted in universities was not as uniformly positive as Steelman had hoped. In a report entitled *The Relationship between the Federal Government and Education Beyond the High School* (1956), author Richard G. Axt asserted that there had been a negative side to government intervention in university research. Axt asserted **that, whilst “Federal contracts and grants have been the major factor in the expansion of university research”, this had meant that “hundreds of scientists and thousands of graduate students are now dependents on Federal funds for the continuation of their research and graduate education”**.⁴¹³ In less than a decade, the Federal government had assumed control of graduate research as university laboratories had already come to rely on the money it provided.

Federal funding strongly favoured the support of STEM subjects, which was detrimental to the social sciences and the humanities.⁴¹⁴ In addition, even those fields which did receive funding (primarily STEM) were adversely affected **by Federal funding. The NSF's focus when distributing grants among campuses was always based on the benefit to science, not the benefit to education. The NSF had a policy of funding the ‘best science’ – awarding funding to the party considered most capable of carrying out the research, not the department that would most benefit from the money. Axt stated that “there are indications that Federal research projects have affected both the distribution of research and educational facilities in different areas of the country and the concentration of talent in these areas”**.⁴¹⁵

Departments which did not lead in their field before the creation of the NSF were not supported in their growth by the NSF. It also made it more difficult for universities and colleges that were already particularly strong in one area to grow in other departments, as the focus had to be maintained in the areas in which it was already strong. Whilst this policy was a sensible approach for ensuring high quality research, it lead to geographic inequality in the distribution of grants. This in turn meant that different scientific departments prospered at different rates and led to a geographic inequality in the quality of science departments. The NSF grants streamlined the research carried out on campus and limited otherwise broad spectrums of research interests. Students who did not live on the East Coast or in California were greatly affected, as were poorer students who were restricted in their choice of geographical location as it was cheaper to attend a local college than to study out-of-State.⁴¹⁶

Axt also recognised that the research projects which were funded by the government were often a burden as well as a blessing. Whilst the Federal grant covered the costs of the research project itself, universities were often expected to **finance the ‘indirect’ costs and overhead costs (such as paying new research or teaching assistants as the professor was busier, the need for more classrooms due to the increased student body, and the costs of running the building)** as they were not covered by the government. These costs often totalled more than most institutions could easily afford, and in some instances required the redirection of costs from other areas of the department, or other departments, so as not to default on the Federal grant.

Federal money was prolific throughout higher education by the mid-1950s. In 1955, President Eisenhower highlighted **that “next year the Department of**

Defense will spend about \$100 million on research at colleges and universities, exclusive of an additional \$100 million for the operation of large research centers managed for the government by several dozen universities”.⁴¹⁷ Eisenhower continued to state **that “the Atomic Energy Commission has had a large number** of research contracts at universities and colleges over the last decade, and the research grant budget of the National Science Foundation has doubled every year **since the establishment of that agency in 1951”**.⁴¹⁸ The relationship between university research and the Federal government, for better or worse, was firmly established in just five years. In 1956, Axt claimed that of the \$300 million spent annually at colleges and universities on research in science, roughly \$150 million came from Federal sources, including, but not limited to, the NSF. In fields that were considered to be important to the war effort, such as physics, almost 90% of the funding was Federal. This meant that many departments were almost totally reliant on the Federal government for the continuation of their research, which in turn meant that keeping the government happy was vital to their survival. In these departments, a separation between education and the Federal government no longer existed.

The ‘Manpower’ Problem

The USA was progressing towards a future in which basic research would be financially supported by the Federal government in order to protect US national security. Yet despite this development, the Federal government could not honestly state **that this would make the USA ‘safe’**. **In fact, quite the opposite was true.** The increased funds made available for the improvement in the quality of basic research taking place in the universities were useless to the nation if the

quantity of basic research being undertaken still did not fulfil the nation's needs. The 'Washington Report', published in 1947, identified that "for the present, it's not money that limits research as much as a shortage of scientific manpower. The half-million dollars available this year for military research won't all be spent because trained men aren't available to do the work".⁴¹⁹ *Science and Public Policy* recognised that

"expansion in trained personnel has not kept pace with that of our national research and development budget. Whereas that budget increased 100% between 1930 and 1940, our supply of research scientists and technicians rose from 49,500 to 92,000 in the same period, or some 85%. Between 1940 and 1947, the national research and development budget increased **335%, while the supply of trained manpower was expanding only 35%**".⁴²⁰

The Federal government was presented with a new problem: increasing the *number* of scientists willing and capable of undertaking basic scientific research on university and college campuses. No amount of funding for research would **improve the USA's scientific standing if there were not enough scientists to carry** out the work.

Not only was there a shortage of trained scientists in the USA, but the outlook for the future showed no improvement, as the number of students choosing to study science at tertiary level was far below where it needed to be in order to compete with the Soviet Union. In 1947, the Engineering Manpower Commission of the Engineers Joint Council established that

"the number of young engineering graduates who can reasonably be expected to be available for scientific employment over the next ten years will be far below the estimated annual need of 30,000 men. It may drop to

as low as 12,000 by 1952. From 1954 until 1957 it will be about 17,000 per year. After 1957 it should start increasing, but will not equal the annual **need until about 1965**".⁴²¹

Moreover, the report of a committee that was succinctly titled the **'Joint Conference of the Cooperative Committee for the Teaching of Science and Mathematics of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the US Office of Education'** recognised that

"the present annual output of engineers and technicians in the USSR is approximately 100,000 with prospect for rapid expansion. The outlook is not the same for the United States. Present evidence indicates that the supply of scientists and engineers in the United States will not continue to expand at the same rapid rate".⁴²²

Far more Russian students studied STEM subjects at university than did their American counterparts, leaving the USA far behind in its ability to produce basic or applied research at the same rate as its enemies, regardless of funding. The Federal government understood that, without intervention, the USA would continue to lag behind the Soviet Union in this most vital battleground for years to come.

Several factors contributed to the USA's scarcity of trained scientists and engineers during the late 1940s. The Great Depression had affected the birth rate, which in turn affected the number of teenagers available to take up university places in the late 1940s.⁴²³ The Depression also significantly impacted the number of intelligent men and women who could afford to attend college or university – the only institutions capable of training students to a high enough level for a career in scientific research. This already reduced number was then

further impacted by the onset of the Second World War. In addition to the considerable number of capable young men who had been lost on the battlefield, Zook noted that **“the United States did not safeguard its scientific manpower during the recent war as other nations did”**.⁴²⁴ Not only did the USA lose young men with potential, it lost men who had already received training in STEM subjects.⁴²⁵ **Consequently, Zook highlighted, “we now do not have enough trained personnel to staff the research and development laboratories of industry, government and the universities”**.⁴²⁶

The Second World War also directly affected the number of Americans who matriculated in college between 1942 and 1946, as so many college aged men **and women chose to enlist instead of enrol. Steelman recognised that “in the years from 1934 to 1938 about 1400 doctorates in science were awarded yearly and in 1941 nearly 1900 were conferred”, however, “it is estimated that our manpower pool today is smaller by 90,000 bachelors and 5,000 doctors of science than it would have been if pre-war trends continued”**.⁴²⁷ After the end of the Second World War, the GI Bill smoothed the way for the returning veterans, but the number of teenagers who matriculated after the war was reduced as not all capable students could afford to attend higher education. In addition, many who could afford to go chose not to, as employment for men and women who had a high school level education was plentiful and often well paid in the years after the War. This option therefore provided a tempting alternative to campus life.

Of those who did make it as far as matriculation, science was often not the obvious choice for a major. **The program of ‘life-adjustment education’ was seen as the prime culprit. ‘Life-adjustment education’ focused on preparing students for their adult lives rather than their adult careers, and placed a greater emphasis**

on citizenship education and patriotism than STEM subjects. Education historian **Herbert M. Kliebard** has identified that “life-adjustment education was seen as the prime example of the USA’s ‘soft’ education in contrast to the rigorous Soviet system”.⁴²⁸ He asserts that “while American children were learning how to get along with their peers or how to bake a cherry pie... Soviet children were being steeped in the hard sciences and mathematics needed to win the technological race that **had become the centrepiece of the Cold War**”.⁴²⁹ University Professor and native Siberian Demitri B. Shimkin also attempted to explain the reasons why **Soviet pupils were superior to American pupils, stating that “Soviet education is a State training programme preparing personnel for planned, pre-determined positions in the labor force. American Education seeks, in contrast, to develop the inherent capacities of individuals so that they might lead socially useful lives and exercise reasonable judgement as citizens”**.⁴³⁰ As the previous chapter highlighted, high school curriculums during this period often also focused more on education for democracy than on a firm grounding in science and technology. In turn, high school seniors were often more inclined to choose to study the humanities or social sciences at college, rather than the nationally important STEM subjects.

The final factor which affected the availability of trained scientists to carry out basic research on behalf of the Federal government was that, after the end of the Second World War, there was an increased need for trained scientists to work in the industrial sector outside of the university campus. In addition, scientific jobs within the industrial sector invariably offered far higher salaries to graduates than did university or government research, and therefore this plentiful supply of well-paid positions habitually lured the cream of the crop away from campus

research. George F. Zook recognised that **“because of the lower salaries paid in educational institutions, such competition tends to concentrate the manpower shortage in the universities and makes it difficult for them to get and keep the most able men – those who should be training others”**.⁴³¹ John R. Steelman recognised that **“when employment in one sector of the research triangle [higher education, government and industry] increases, there is a corresponding reduction in other sectors – evidence that a limited manpower supply is shifting about”**.⁴³² As a result of the growth in the industrial sector, **the universities’ share of the manpower pool in science, and in turn, the government’s, were directly impacted and fell from a 48% share in 1930 to a 36% share in 1947**.⁴³³

In a statement issued upon receipt of *Science and Public Policy*, President Truman identified this combination of issues and stated that

“the shortage of highly trained scientists is the product of sharply increased demand accompanied by less-than-normal supply. Expenditure for research and development are more than three times as high as the pre-war level. At the same time, curtailment in education during the war deprived us of about half the normal increase in scientists, totalling some thirty-five thousand graduates, including 5,000 doctors of science”.⁴³⁴

President Truman acknowledged both that a convergence of social, economic and military factors had occurred after the end of the Second World War which left the USA with a worryingly small stockpile of scientifically trained manpower at a time when scientific knowhow had become vital to the security of the USA, and that the curtailment of education had to be reversed soon in order to prevent the situation from worsening.

The Federal government attacked this problem with the same fervour with which it addressed the lack of money available to university research programs. The Scientific Manpower Committee noted in 1950 that **“it is of paramount importance to the security of the United States that the nation maintain, in peace and in war, an adequate supply of scientifically and technically trained manpower to carry on progressive research on basic science”**.⁴³⁵ In 1951, the **President’s National Manpower Mobilization Policy** stated that **“we must rely heavily on science and technology and that malutilization of persons having scientific and special skills represents a direct and unnecessary reduction of our defense potential”**.⁴³⁶ The Federal government recognised that the shortage once again posed a threat to the national security, and resolved to address the situation.

The government had two options to assuage the severity of the manpower shortage in the years after the Second World War: **train ‘new’ scientists through the universities and colleges, or tempt ‘existing’ scientists from outside the USA** to make up the shortfall. Initially, the Federal government chose the latter option, and offered asylum to Nazi scientists in return for their expertise in support of **the USA’s scientific programs. Entitled ‘Operation Paperclip’, the Federal government** sought out Nazis with expertise in STEM fields – including Nobel Prize winners – and agreed to absolve their past crimes in exchange for scientific knowledge. Operation Paperclip, however, proved unpopular with academics and the general American public. A telegram sent to the President on 30th December 1946 from a number of prominent academics outlined the opposition. The academics feared that not all of those recruited had truly renounced their fascist views, and therefore were not appropriate people to be shaping the USA’s future. They feared that the **former Nazi scientists would “inculcate those anti-**

democratic doctrines which seek to undermine and destroy national unity”, and therefore would do more damage to the safety of American democracy than science could do to save it.⁴³⁷ The group asserted **that “we hold these individuals to be potentially dangerous carriers of racial and religious hatred. Their former eminence as Nazi party members and supporters raises the issue of their fitness to become American Citizens or hold key positions in American industrial, scientific and educational institutions”.**⁴³⁸ They also feared that these men and their families would receive permanent residency, creating a Nazi community within the borders of the US States.⁴³⁹ STEM research was vital because the government intended to **use it to ensure the USA’s safety in the modern world; conversely, however, Operation Paperclip actively invited ‘subversives’ to make their lives on US soil.** Despite opposition, the government continued with Operation Paperclip. The USA was not the only nation to have had this idea, however, therefore the pool of available Nazi scientists was soon exhausted, and **the Federal government was forced to seek another solution to the USA’s shortage of scientifically trained manpower.**

The Federal government was left with only one solution: to train more scientists. Vannevar Bush was the first to recognise this after the Second World War, and he described it in a report to the President entitled *Science and the Endless Frontier* (1945). Bush stated in a letter to Steelman that **“if we are to develop the scientific activities of the country on a broad basis and on a scale commensurate with the country’s needs, the first requirement is a continuing expansion of the university program in order to develop the flow of new knowledge and the supply of scientists... Only by doing so can the bottleneck be broken”.**⁴⁴⁰ Bush continued to highlight that **“to enlarge the group of specially**

qualified men and women it is necessary to increase the number who go to college. Our engineers and scientists for the next few years must come from the **graduating classes in our colleges**".⁴⁴¹ Later, Frederick Emmons Terman, the Dean of Engineering at Stanford University, identified in a letter he wrote to Steelman following the publication of *Science and Public Policy* that **"universities are our only source of scientific and technological manpower, and they are our principal sources of fundamental scientific knowledge. There-fore, any effort to strengthen the scientific position of the country must start by strengthening and expanding the scientific activities of our universities"**.⁴⁴² Terman, who is also credited with being the co-founder of Silicon Valley, a mecca of scientific activity **and a testament to the USA's scientific ability, firmly believed in** the importance of scientific teaching and research to the nation and the irreplaceable function higher education would play in this endeavour. His letter established that the institutions of higher education were to play a fundamental part in the American **government's effort to win the Cold War** – both in research and training.

In post-war America, however, a significant chasm existed between the number of students who were capable of completing a college level degree, and the number of these students who were actually afforded the opportunity. The **report from the 'Joint Conference of the Co-operative Committee on the Teaching of Science and Mathematics of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the US Office of Education', which was published** towards the end of **the Truman Administration, highlighted the problem that "there is a potential** supply of scientists and mathematicians that needs to be tapped. Only 40% of the high school graduates of college ability are granted a college degree. What happens to the other 60%? What happens to this large pool containing many

potential scientists and engineers? 20% drop out during college, and 40% never **enter college**".⁴⁴³ Commissioner Earl J. McGrath also discussed this fact in *School Life*, stating that

"it is true that a higher percentage of qualified youth go to college and university in the United States than in any other nation; but it is also true that no nation – the United States included – has begun to approach numerical adequacy in its higher education system... A democratic nation can ill afford this continuing loss of its ambitious and able youth who, year after year, are trained below the limits of their potential development".⁴⁴⁴

This, and many other reports published during the Truman Administration, indicated that **"the foremost reason for the failure of these potential scientists, engineers and leaders of our nation to undertake college studies is lack of money"**.⁴⁴⁵

The solution was simple: the Federal government must increase the number of American students who studied STEM subjects at the tertiary level. Yet neither the Federal government nor the academic community had the power either to force Americans to attend an institution of higher education, or to dictate what they studied upon matriculation. This, however, proved to be no deterrent **to the Federal government, as it was able to rely upon the 'Cold War imperative'** to support its endeavours and give weight to its arguments. President Truman had already established that *education*, as well as research, was vital to the national defence, as he had stated in a letter published in 1947 in the widely circulated report of the Truman Commission, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, that

“the coming of the Atomic Age... has deepened and broadened the responsibilities of higher education for anticipating and preparing for the social and economic changes that will come with the application of atomic energy to industrial uses. At the same time it has underscored the need for education and research for the self-protection of our democracy, for demonstrating the merits of our way of life to other peoples”.⁴⁴⁶

Steelman corroborated Truman’s stance, and acknowledged that a drop in trained scientific manpower threatened the safety of the USA, both because “it renders the universities and colleges less able than formerly to expand basic research at a time when such basic research is urgent” and because “it makes it less likely that students now enrolled will receive the rigorous training necessary to the successful expansion of basic research in the future”.⁴⁴⁷ As it was the responsibility of the Federal government to protect the USA, it was the responsibility of the Federal government to respond to this problem.⁴⁴⁸

Steelman was not alone in his view that, as the problem threatened the **USA’s national security, it should be tackled by the Federal government. A *School Life* article from 1947 noted that “to maintain American leadership in scientific research and discovery is a deep concern of those responsible for the national defense”.**⁴⁴⁹ George F. Kennan stated in *Full Strength for the Long Pull* (1950) that **“this need for a substantial and rapid increase in the number of people who go to colleges and universities is a national problem requiring national action”.**⁴⁵⁰ An argument was even made in the ‘**Report of the Joint Conference of the Co-operative Committee on the Teaching of Science and Mathematics of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the US Office of Education**’ that the Federal government should provide financing to students of

higher education in the USA. The attendees highlighted **that “we are spending** large sums of money to develop our material resources and at the same time fail to develop a large part of our human resources. We spend millions of dollars for stockpiles of critical minerals, but we spend little to increase our supply of the most vital instruments of defense – **the scientists**”.⁴⁵¹ This report once again reiterates the common post war tendency to equate scientists with warriors. No longer were the military the first line of defence – scientists had superseded **soldiers as the “most vital instruments of defense” and were, therefore, of national importance.**⁴⁵²

Steelman recognised that the problem was so severe that it would most likely take at least a decade of dedication to increase the stockpile of scientific **manpower until the problem was fixed. He advised the President that “such a program must, however, be our objective, and policies must be directed toward its realization”.**⁴⁵³ A *School Life* article published in 1951 informed readers that the Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, believed that **“maintaining a minimal essential flow of men through the colleges” was vital to the Cold War effort, which therefore made it “a matter of fundamental national interest”.**⁴⁵⁴ University and college student recruitment, at least where degrees in STEM subjects were concerned, was transformed from a matter of individual ambition to a matter of national pride, with an urgency which necessitated Federal intervention.

Student Deferment in Selective Service

Just increasing the number of students who had the opportunity to attend college, however, was not enough; the Federal government also needed to influence the

number of students who *graduated* with degrees in STEM subjects. Yet, soon after this problem had been recognised, the Korean War broke out and presented the Federal government with a unique opportunity to influence this very area of academia. At first glance, the Korean War conferred upon the Federal government yet another barrier to its goal of increasing the number of matriculating – and graduating – students in the USA: this barrier came in the form of the draft. The majority of men eligible for the draft for the Korean War were also of college age, which threatened to further reduce the available pool of college graduates, potentially for years to come. The Korean War also greatly intensified the need for these graduates. Technical manpower provided by the colleges and universities was made even more important to the nation as, in numbers alone, the USA could not match the strength of hostile forces from countries with far larger populations. The Chairman of the Scientific Manpower Advisory Committee, Charles A. Thomas, stated in the Committee’s report that **“in terms of gross numbers of men, the United States is inferior to its potential enemies”**.⁴⁵⁵ It was vital, therefore, that the US army could outmatch hostile forces in other ways, the primary method being superior weaponry designed by college educated men.⁴⁵⁶

The problem was that the USA had still not had time to replenish its shortage of scientists, therefore research was not yet being carried out at a level **commensurate with the nation’s need. The ‘extra barrier’ created by the draft** made the situation even worse, and therefore became the focus of the Federal **government’s plan. The draft bestowed upon the Federal government a channel** through which it could influence the number of students who chose to study STEM subjects at institutions of higher education. The Federal government had

learned from its mistakes in the Second World War, and well understood the need to protect scientific manpower from military service. In addition, it chose to extend this protection to college students who studied subjects which were deemed to be nationally useful. This protection from the draft could then have a **positive impact on the number of high school students who ‘voluntarily’ chose to study STEM subjects at university.** The Scientific Manpower Advisory Committee was particularly concerned with the preservation and utilisation of students with an aptitude for science after the outbreak of the Korean War. It identified that **“the present problem, then, is to create a plan that will assure a continuing supply of men with special training, and to devise a method that will secure the best use of them as well as those who are already trained”**.⁴⁵⁷ The Federal government could certainly ill afford to reduce the potential pool of scientific manpower even further, therefore a plan which safeguarded both trained scientific personnel and those willing to undertake the training required to join them was deemed vital to national security.

M. H. Trytten, the Director of the Office of Scientific Personnel in the National Research Council, had undertaken a study into this very area prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, and had concluded that to indiscriminately induct youths into the army regardless of academic prowess falsely established **the armed forces as the “absolute priority in the defense of the nation”** and presupposed that **“every man can serve his country more effectively in uniform than in any other way”**.⁴⁵⁸ Trytten identified that the draft directly challenged the **nation’s need to protect highly trained personnel.** He stated in his report, *Student Deferment in Selective Service: A Vital Factor in National Security* (1952), better known as the Trytten Report, that **“the maximum strength of the nation can be**

achieved only if the individual serves where he can contribute most. Universality of service in uniform, on the other hand, necessarily results in reduced national **strength**".⁴⁵⁹

His view was corroborated by Charles A. Thomas, whose work for the Scientific Manpower Advisory Committee had identified a similar path. Thomas had stated that

"at present there are about 65,000 scientists and engineers of age 25 or less. They represent less than ONE PERCENT of the civilian male population in this draft age group. A large fraction of these young men are already employed in work of vital importance to the nation and more are needed. When the special skills which they possess are more urgently required by the armed forces, a more adequate number of them should be inducted and assigned to the military speciality which will make the best use of their capabilities. But it is most vital that these trained scientists and engineers are not removed from the defense activities for service in non-specialized military assignments".⁴⁶⁰

Deferment of useful personnel from conscription was of course not a new phenomenon in the USA – the deferment of men in professions such as farming, iron-working or medicine was common in Colonial times – but this was the first time in which college students had been recommended for deferment on such a large scale, and with so few qualifying factors.⁴⁶¹ The reason behind this radical move is simple; the Federal government recognised that a high number of well **trained personnel, especially in scientific fields, were as vital to the USA's Cold War effort as iron-workers and farmers had been to success in previous conflicts.**

Trytten gave the Federal government both the opportunity and the justification to encourage students to choose to study for degrees in STEM subjects over the humanities. He stated in his report that to **“adopt policies relegating [college] training to a position of secondary importance is to invite catastrophe”** and that to **prioritise the military would leave technical warfare in the hands of “the remainder of the population”**.^{462;463} These statements demonstrated that higher education was as important to the nation as the work of the military. As such, Trytten argued, it would be ‘catastrophic’ to allow them to remain solely under civilian authority. Higher education must not be left to the **“remainder of the population”** but must instead be treated with as much care as the military; in short, the government must ensure the safeguarding of useful personnel. Trytten’s report acknowledged openly that the national situation, caused broadly by the Cold War and more specifically by the Korean War (his report was updated and reprinted after the Korean War began), required that the Federal government involve itself directly in matters of higher education.

A national policy of student deferment was unpopular when first proposed as it was seen as elitist and unnecessary. Critics such as Harvard President James Conant labelled it as discriminatory to all but a privileged few students as men who could not afford a college education would not be eligible to apply for the draft exemption. Trytten also noted that Conant believed that it was an unnecessary exemption; as the period of service was only two years, discharged men could simply resume or begin their studies afterwards.⁴⁶⁴ Trytten defended the exemption, however, by demonstrating that it was necessary in order to protect national security. Trytten explained that a mandatory two year service in the armed forces for men graduating from high school would result in all male

students graduating from college or university two years later. In turn this would mean that the USA would have to wait two years longer for a boost in its pool of specialised personnel – a wait that the nation could ill afford.⁴⁶⁵ Trytten also demonstrated that the gap in schooling caused by enlistment would lead to a widespread loss of academic momentum, which could encourage a greater number of students to abandon a college education entirely in favour of either remaining in the military or entering the workforce immediately after their discharge. This, Trytten argued, would strongly affect national security as the USA would lose out on the long term boost in the number of trained scientists that were graduating.⁴⁶⁶

The loss of men to university research programs was not the only problem which Trytten anticipated. He also identified that, as the nation was now involved **in a ‘hot war’ in Korea, the armed forces** also increasingly relied upon specially trained personnel to carry out military duties as a matter of national security. If men were exclusively drafted before receiving a college education, these roles, **which were equally vital to the nation’s safety, would also remain unfilled.**⁴⁶⁷ **General Omar Bradley stated in 1952 that “The military services have the same need, especially during wartime, for first rate men... We must have in the future of American education a method of developing first rate men”.**⁴⁶⁸ Drafting **American men straight out of high school not only damaged the nations’ future** pool of scientific manpower, but also the quality of its soldiers. As the age limit for the draft was twenty-six years old, no exemption would mean that, in just a few short years, no college educated men with vital specialist training could be called up to fight.

The Federal government adopted the recommendations Trytten proposed in *Student Deferment in Selective Service*. After review by a Congressional Committee, his plan to amend the Selective Service Act of 1948 was effected by Executive Order of the President in March 1951. It authorised the President, **“under such rules and regulation as he may prescribe, to provide for the deferment from training and service under this title in the armed forces of the Unites States”**.^{469:470} The Act stated that enrolled, full-time college, professional or graduate students were eligible for **“occupational deferment for study necessary to the national health, safety or interest”, and that the director of Selective Service was “authorized to prescribe a test and to establish qualifying test scores, or scholastic standing, or both, for such deferment”**.⁴⁷¹ Provided the students could meet a certain standard, as determined by the Selective Service College Qualification Test (SSCQT), they were deemed eligible to apply for deferment.

The test, which was based upon the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), was administered to all draft age men who met the criteria. In order to be considered to be eligible, students had to have already secured a place in college, be able to afford the tuition fees or demonstrate that they had already won a scholarship, and wish to be considered for deferment. The test was not mandatory for students who met this criteria, but roughly seventy-five percent of those eligible to take it did so. Eighty percent of those who sat the test were deferred. Deferment was granted if the student either scored above 70 on the test, or if their score placed them in the top half of their class if they were a freshman, the top two thirds if they were a sophomore or the top three quarters for juniors. If the student was attempting to gain deferment for graduate school, he had to

score 70 or above or place in the top fifty percent of his senior class.⁴⁷² These two alternative methods of qualification ensured that elite, selective institutions with a high number of intelligent students would not be discriminated against by being forced to lose the bottom fifty percent of their student body even if they scored over 70. In turn, it also ensured that small, liberal arts schools with a low number of enrolled students would not face losing the majority of their student body as at least the top fifty percent of their classes would be deferred regardless of their score.

Trytten stated in *Student Deferment in Selective Service* that **“the student deferment policy continues to be the means by which the Federal government seeks to answer the question of which young men shall be permitted to continue their training in college and university, and which should be classified as available for military service”**.⁴⁷³ This is a clear acknowledgment that the decision as to which men would be permitted to attend college now lay in large part with the Federal government, and the criteria were far from fair. The test favoured early achievers, as students initially had to place in the top fifty percent of their freshman class. Students who had the potential to blossom over time were not given the opportunity to do so before they undertook military training. Deferment **also required that students remain in “good standing” within their class,** otherwise their deferment status would be revoked.⁴⁷⁴ This meant that if students began to struggle with their work, they could have their deferment status revoked. **It also meant that students’ college experiences could have been vastly altered as they were not given the opportunity to ‘act out’,** as is often so common for college students to do. Indeed, in the 1960s, when college students became known for campus protests, the support for student deferment among the general public

dropped dramatically and draft boards began disregarding SSCQT scores more regularly.⁴⁷⁵

The program of student deferment also favoured wealthy students over working class students of equal intelligence, as students had to have already secured a college place – and more importantly be able to pay for it – before they became eligible to sit the SSCQT. It also favoured white students over students from ethnic minorities as there were far more college places available for white students than there were for minority students. Trytten acknowledged this in his report, stating that **“the college student population does include a disproportionately large representation from the middle- and upper-income groups. Furthermore, members of some racial and ethnic groups and residents of some sections of the country, including rural residents, generally are disadvantaged in access to the opportunity for college education”**.⁴⁷⁶ Trytten offered no solution for this problem however, and instead chose to claim national security as the more pressing matter; **“we cannot afford, in order just to make a gesture toward surface equality, to sacrifice the future development of our society by an action which in the event of full scale war would be futile – or, worse, dangerously wasteful of much needed skills”**.⁴⁷⁷ He did suggest that the Federal government should make hardship loans available to these marginalised students, but no program was ever established alongside this policy for student deferment.⁴⁷⁸

The test purported not to discriminate against students who did not want to major in STEM subjects, and students studying humanities were equally as eligible to take the test as those studying chemistry or physics. Trytten stated that this was a necessary clause as, if the deferment program was subject specific, the

Federal government's interference into affairs of higher education would skew the traditionally varied make-up of the student body. Trytten claimed that this decision had been made for two reasons; firstly, it had been motivated by issues of national security. The conflict was expected to be long and drawn out, and Trytten, in conjunction with other specialists from both the military and the education system, believed that the future of the Cold War could not be foreseen, and as such, neither could the future needs of the country. No one, he explained, could have foreseen the usefulness of a Russian language degree prior to the beginning of the Cold War, or a Japanese language degree prior to the Second World War.⁴⁷⁹ To marginalise some subjects in favour of others, he acknowledged, could prove to be very dangerous to the future of national security. Secondly, Trytten believed that to prioritise some subjects over others would **“undoubtedly increase the flow of youth into some of these various fields of training and would decrease the flow into others”**.⁴⁸⁰ This, in turn, would cause a **serious shift in the output of universities that may, in Trytten's words, “seriously affect the future course of our culture and civilization, since this is determined by the aggregate efforts of those who work in the many fields of intellectual activity”**.⁴⁸¹ Trytten acknowledged that this level of interference into the make-up of higher education would give the Federal government a great level of power over the future of the USA, and therefore was to be avoided.

The program of student deferment, however, *did* favour students who intended to major in STEM subjects. This is not surprising, as STEM subjects had been the driving force of the policy from the beginning, and continued to be the driving force of the policy of student deferment, even if the policy itself did allow for the deferment of students studying other disciplines. Both Trytten and the

other committees who supported the policy of student deferment had come to the same conclusion. Trytten wrote in his report that “it was unanimous and considered the opinion of these committees that the nation’s immediate and long-range security urgently required an uninterrupted flow of sufficient numbers of scientific and specialized personnel into advanced training for subsequent utilization in either civilian or military occupations”.⁴⁸² The purpose of the program of student deferment was to protect and grow the nation’s stock of scientific manpower, and if the program did not favour STEM majors – however subversively – it would not have fulfilled its brief.

To begin with, the SSCQT, the sole decider for deferment, favoured scientifically orientated students. Trytten highlighted in his report that “in engineering, physical sciences and mathematics, the percentage of examinees passing the test was well above average throughout”.⁴⁸³ Despite the fact that the test was split into two parts – one verbal and one quantitative – Trytten acknowledged that students who intended to study science, maths or engineering outstripped humanities students on the quantitative test – a result to be expected – but humanities students’ results virtually equalled those of scientifically orientated students on the verbal portion of the test. This meant that a far greater number of scientific students scored highly on the SSCQT than did humanities students, leaving a greater number of the former free to continue their studies uninterrupted, and a greater number of humanities students were deemed eligible for the draft.⁴⁸⁴ Whilst the local draft boards technically had the power to decide who was deferred and who was inducted, in this case, Donald D. Stewart has noted, the local boards generally followed the Federal government’s recommendations with regards to student deferment. As such, students’ scores

from the federally administered test were the main determining factor in their deferment from the armed forces. Moreover, as the tests favoured scientists and mathematicians, this meant that the Federal government was able to positively influence the number of students who majored in STEM subjects without actually involving itself in student recruitment or registration.⁴⁸⁵

The test was not the only way in which the program for student deferment influenced students to study STEM subjects over the humanities or social sciences. The main reason why the program had been enforced was to protect scientific and technical personnel, and as the Trytten Report was made public, **this information was also public. The program's very existence glorified the study** of STEM subjects in the public eye. Science was designated as necessary to the war effort and scientists were painted as being as heroic as soldiers. Trytten himself knew that this alone would influence students when choosing their major, and even declared as much in another part of the **report: he stated that "any policy, no matter what it is, will work some change in the pattern of higher education and in the pattern of training that is formed by the selections of fields of study by the youth of today, who seek to adjust themselves to a new and different world"**.⁴⁸⁶ Trytten knew that this would affect the nation as well as the schools, as he continued to note **that "whatever the effect, it will be of great significance in the future, not only to the colleges and universities, but to the civilization that is shaped by their graduates"**.⁴⁸⁷ The claim that the policy was enacted with no thought to the effect that it would have on the distribution of students between majors is an untruth.

Finally, the policy of student deferment also had the potential to affect **students' choice of major in a way that Trytten did not acknowledge, but which**

contemporary commentator Donald D. Stewart did. The policy of student deferment allowed for just that, the opportunity to be deferred from military service in order to undertake a college degree. Upon completion of the degree, **students were allowed a period of four months' grace in order to secure employment which was useful to the war effort, or they would then begin their military service.**⁴⁸⁸ Although students in the social sciences, humanities, education, and in related fields were *eligible* for deferment after graduation, **Stewart recognised that in reality “such former students are disadvantaged, for the positions of most are not so likely to be considered “essential” by the local board as those available, for example, to graduates in engineering or the natural sciences”.**⁴⁸⁹ Stewart believed that this clause would disadvantage students in the social sciences and humanities and that they would be more likely to be drafted upon graduation as a result.

Stewart noted that this clause discriminated against humanities and social science students *after* graduation, but he did not identify its potential to discriminate against the humanities or social sciences as disciplines in themselves. This clause, however, also had the potential to affect the make-up of higher education directly. As securing a job useful to the war effort within four months of graduation and therefore avoiding the draft after college was likely to be far easier if a student possessed a scientific or mathematical undergraduate degree, it is foolish to assume that this would not have had an impact on future **students' choice of major. As a result, this clause not only had the potential to disadvantage humanities students upon graduation, but also, once again, to influence students' choice of major in favour of the nationally useful STEM subjects.**

It is true that Congress attempted to level the playing field for deferred students by raising the age of liability for induction from twenty-six to thirty-five years of age. This meant, in theory, that being drafted eventually was likely for all students, regardless of their scores on the SSCQT. As Stewart has also demonstrated, however, in reality this was not the case. Regardless of status, the induction of a man over twenty-six was unlikely during the Korean War for two reasons. Firstly, at the time the policy was enacted, there still existed a policy of exemption for men with dependents. Due to the low median age of marriage in the early 1950s and the high rate of childbirth, most men over twenty-six were likely to fall into this category at some point soon after graduation.⁴⁹⁰ Secondly, there was actually little benefit to the military in inducting a thirty-five-year-old man used to desk work over a nineteen-year-old, and nineteen-year-olds with no aptitude for STEM subjects were not in short supply.⁴⁹¹

High school graduates could not help but have been influenced by the **Federal government's prioritisation of STEM fields** in tertiary education. STEM fields were promoted as being nationally useful, and akin to becoming a soldier (without ever actually having to fight). Majoring in a STEM field also meant that such students were more likely to gain acceptance to university, were more likely to avoid the draft, were more likely to receive funding for their research and they were more likely to secure a high paying job which enabled them to avoid the draft after they graduated. For any student to be deferred in their freshman year they had to have already secured a place at college – the AFQT placed the IQ of college graduates as 20 points higher on average than that of the general population – and then additionally they had to place in the top fifty percent of their class.⁴⁹² It

is not unreasonable to assume that the USA's best and brightest would have been able to connect these simple dots to avoid the draft indefinitely.

Like the students, the Federal government was also aware of the impact that its efforts to increase the number of graduates in STEM subjects would have on education in the humanities and social sciences, and subsequently the balance **of the nation's distribution of knowledge. Commissioner of Education Earl J. McGrath** was quoted in a *School Life* article discussing the fact that

“there is a growing concern among the nation's educators and statesmen over the growing possibility that government action in one narrowly defined area may lead to an undue emphasis on the natural sciences and result in an imbalance in education and in the national culture. The **congress may well consider whether it's necessary and desirable action on** behalf of the natural sciences has not brought upon it further obligation to act with similar effectiveness in the fields of social studies and the **humanities”**.⁴⁹³

The Commissioner of Education openly acknowledged that the actions of the Federal government could have a negative effect upon the quality and quantity of education in the humanities and social sciences. Despite his call for this burgeoning issue to be addressed, no action to this effect was ever taken. It is fair to argue that this is because education in the humanities and social sciences lacked the requisite importance to national security which was needed in order to command the attention of the Federal government.

Trytten took pains to justify the Federal government's move by clarifying that the direction of the American higher education system “touches deeply the future of the nation because what we do with our youth today will determine the

kind of people we have tomorrow, and thus will affect our strength in technology, our culture, our social organization, our economy, and in a special way our **military power**".⁴⁹⁴ With the rise of technical warfare it had become too important to be ignored by the Federal government, as, Trytten highlighted, **"there is scarcely an activity which contributes to the national health, safety or welfare that does not rest squarely upon the knowledge and skill of specialists trained to high levels of competence in colleges and universities. And military defense itself is peculiarly dependent on the specialized personnel of the nation, whether serving in uniform or not"**.⁴⁹⁵ The strength of the military, and therefore the future of the nation, depended in large part on higher education. The institution was needed to serve the nation, and therefore the Federal government was needed to co-ordinate this effort.

In contrast to his earlier statement, at one point in the report Trytten asserted **that "for the first time** in our history, the Federal government finds it necessary to take administrative action which affects indirectly the course of **higher education by affecting directly the youth of college age"**.⁴⁹⁶ This constitutes a rare admission that the Federal government's **Cold War policies on education** circumvented the perceived bounds of its authority over the system. This **statement also demonstrates that the Federal government's decision to influence** the direction of higher education was a conscious decision made specifically to benefit the nation and protect national security for the duration of the Cold War. **Trytten invoked the 'Cold War imperative' to justify the Federal government's actions; "the only defense for student deferment",** stated Trytten, **"is that the nation needs the special skills resulting from college training"**.⁴⁹⁷ Yet whilst this **statement may seem to acknowledge that the Federal government's activities**

could be perceived to be wrong, Trytten was in fact demonstrating that its defence for doing so was impregnable.

The Reserve Officer Training Corps

As the work of the universities began to affect the War effort, the military became increasingly involved in campus life. The program of student deferment from Selective Service was not the only way in which the Federal government exercised power over college and university campuses after the Second World War; the Reserve Officer Training Corps program, more commonly known as the ROTC, had 481 senior ROTC programs running at 235 institutions across the USA in 1951, and opened 36 new units on 33 campuses, 25 of which were new to the program, during that year alone.⁴⁹⁸ In addition the Navy ROTC (NROTC) had 52 units and the Air ROTC planned to open 62 Air ROTC units on campuses throughout the USA to add to its existing 187 units.⁴⁹⁹ 123,336 students were enrolled in ROTC programs in 1951, with a further 12,512 in the NROTC and 62,097 enrolled in the Air ROTC.⁵⁰⁰ Trytten recognised in *Student Deferment in Selective Service* that “the growth of [ROTC] programs since WWII has been great. Many new units have been established and enrolments in the Corps have grown until the number now deferred for reserve officers’ training in the colleges exceeds the number deferred under the student deferment program”.⁵⁰¹

Like the program for student deferment in selective service, the ROTC program greatly impacted college campuses. Richard G. Axt, of the NSF, noted in an address delivered at the President’s Committee on Education beyond the High School in 1956 that although the ROTC program was not taken particularly seriously on campuses prior to the Second World War, it rose in importance

during the War years, and this growth continued after the War.⁵⁰² Before the **Second World War, Axt asserted, the ROTC required “little intellectual effort beyond memory and a little time for preparation of assignments”.**⁵⁰³ Little or no academic credit was given for courses undertaken as part of the ROTC program and in a number of institutions it had become a substitute for physical education. For most members, **joining the ROTC was an ‘extra’ activity undertaken whilst at college.**⁵⁰⁴ By the end of the Korean War, however, the ROTC consisted of a much broader program, which included a variety of non-military courses which often overlapped with regular college courses and included a heavy workload which **required a disproportionate amount of the students’ time to prepare for. Most ROTC programs also accounted for roughly twenty percent of its members’ course load, thereby reducing the amount of ‘regular’ courses which members could take,** thus affecting both their overall college experience, and the breadth of their knowledge upon graduation.⁵⁰⁵ Axt also highlighted the fact that the ROTC was based on college campuses and used college buildings and college resources. Despite the fact that the Federal government expected the colleges and **universities to accept liability for their ‘custody’ of government material (all ROTC resources were housed in college storage spaces),** and, additionally, that Axt had estimated that the ROTC program was currently using \$175 million worth of college facilities, the Federal government had never reimbursed the colleges for their output, nor did it have any plans to do so.

By the end of the Korean War the Federal government and the military had, in some cases, assumed responsibility for providing higher education directly. Axt recognised in 1955 that there were

“substantive programs of education beyond the high school which are provided directly by government agencies rather than by private State institutions and agencies. Largest [sic] of these are the many education and training programs of the Department of Defense. In addition to the well-known service academies, postgraduate and staff schools, there are literally thousands of special courses and programs for both enlisted men and officers”.⁵⁰⁶

The government had chosen on some occasions simply to step in and begin teaching classes itself, rather than attempting to indirectly influence the institutions it was working with. By 1955 about 837,000 military personnel **(almost thirty percent of those who served during that year) received “specialized training”.**⁵⁰⁷ The majority of this training, Axt confirmed, was in STEM subjects, **and much of it “closely paralleled programs offered by the regular public and private educational institutions”.**⁵⁰⁸

Despite the fact that the students were in the armed forces, the Federal **government’s activity still directly affected the freedom associated with higher education.** The program afforded those enrolled the opportunity to study at a tertiary level whilst serving in the military, but they were only offered subjects which were considered to be nationally useful, rather than the range of General Education courses offered on a civilian course. It is also possible that the education they received whilst in the military discouraged them from seeking a formal undergraduate education upon being discharged as they had already received tertiary level training. As a result, the program further affected the ability of the higher education system to offer students the freedom to choose their major

based on individual preference, without having to consider its national importance.

Increasing the number of American youths who graduated with degrees in STEM fields was viewed as being equally as important to the national security as improving the output of basic research, or indeed, ensuring that enough men **enlisted in the armed forces. That the protection of the USA's national security** was the responsibility of the Federal government gave the government enough grounding upon which to base a centrally controlled and organised program **which sought to increase the USA's output of STEM graduates. Once again, the 'Cold War imperative' and national security concerns enabled the Federal** government to intervene in matters of higher education in order to convert the **schools into a production line of nationally useful graduates. The government's** intervention altered the role of the universities; as Trytten had recognised in *Student Deferment in Selective Service*, **"if the emergency continues long enough** the steps we take and the measures we adopt will become all too soon the way of life of the nation and will shape and fashion the nature of the civilization in which our children live. The present international uncertainty seems likely to continue **a long time, in the judgement of most observers"**.⁵⁰⁹ Instead of shaping society, institutions began to be shaped by it, shifting the power to influence the future of the USA from higher education to the current administration, and from individual choice to government recommendations.

Conclusion

The Federal government consistently asserted throughout the early Cold War years that it avoided assuming direct or indirect control of civilian matters. Henry

H. Armsby explained in *Scientific and Professional Manpower* (1954) that “our democratic traditions call for avoidance of direct mandatory controls over the civilian population such as are properly exercised by the armed forces over persons in the military service”.⁵¹⁰ Yet in the case of higher education – a civilian, not military, institution – it circumvented this guideline by establishing that the colleges and universities were *as important* to the war effort as the military. Armsby clarified his remark by reminding his reader that “**military and civilian activities... are mutually interdependent in periods of mobilization and especially in times of war**”; civilian institutions were indeed able to avoid Federal intervention, but only so long as they remained civilian.⁵¹¹ When it was decided that basic research was vital to the national security and that the colleges and universities were, in Steelman’s words, the “**key to the problem**”, the universities and colleges lost the right to assert their academic freedom and to choose for themselves the direction and form their research would take.⁵¹² Equally, when the Selective Service Board defined grounds for deferment from the draft as being “**engaged in an activity which, in the opinion of the board is essential to the national health, safety or interest**”, it classified a college or university education as essential to the national health, safety or interest as well. This action transferred the colleges and universities to the care of the body responsible for the national health, welfare and security, the Federal government.⁵¹³ Colleges and universities held the key to the national security, and it was the Federal **government’s responsibility to take possession of it.**

Kleinman has demonstrated the impact wrought by the Federal government’s **intervention into scientific research in the early years of the Cold War** well, by placing two quotes on the place of science in politics side by side. In

the first quote, spoken by Fiorello La Guardia during his time as Mayor of New York City (1934 – 1945), La Guardia noted that

“science knows no politics. Are we in this frenzy of economy, brought about by those who control the wealth of the country, seeking to put a barrier on science and research...? Science will go on when existing political parties will long have been forgotten... do not seek to put the hand of politics on these scientific men who are doing great work”.⁵¹⁴

The second quote from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, however, was from much later, 1975, and Bourdieu states that **“the ‘pure’ universe of even the ‘purest’ science is a social field like any other, with its distribution of power and its monopolies, its struggles and strategies, interests and profits”.** Between 1945 and 1975, the role science played in politics changed dramatically, and as such, so did the role played by politics in science.⁵¹⁵

National security was the priority of both the Federal government and the military. Trytten took pains to highlight this fact in *Student Deferment in Selective Service*, and stated that **“let it be repeated again and again that our chief concern must be for the national security, today, and in the decades to come. And that security depends on the effective integration of civilian and military activities”.**⁵¹⁶ Trytten explained that **“the welfare of the nation must be the sole criterion for decision”.**⁵¹⁷ Axt recognised the imbalance of the Federal government’s policies regarding higher education. He highlighted that **“existing Federal programs... are intended mainly to further the specialized purposes of the agencies rather than to aid education or educational institutions”.**⁵¹⁸

Axt also recalled a fellow commentator who, when deliberating the Federal government’s position in education, had even entitled his talk ‘Services Required

and Requested of Higher Education to meet National Needs for which the Federal **Government has Special Responsibility**'.⁵¹⁹ Axt asserted that under this heading would fall **“the ROTC programs, Federal research contracts and grants, including support of agricultural experimental research stations, defense related research and medical research, technical assistance to foreign countries – even GI Bill aid to veterans in continuing their education”**.⁵²⁰ Wherever the Federal government could seize control of higher education for the benefit of the nation, it had done so.

During the early years of the Cold War, the government converted education itself into a weapon. The American education system came to form a **part of the nation's armour**; Studebaker briefly discussed how the USA could not survive if the **education system turned out too many 'seconds', meaning inferior students**. It was imperative that the Soviet Union could not find any cracks. Using **language usually reserved for the factory floor**, Studebaker stated that **“now, when our pupils come off the educational assembly line, we must be sure that no one of them lacks anything essential”**.⁵²¹ The industrial language which Studebaker employed when discussing the schools further emphasises the Federal **government's concept of American students as the 'products' of an education factory** designed to produce workers for the nation, not citizens of a nation built on the concept of individual choice. Education became a business that created a product.

The unique pressures of the Cold War enabled the Federal government to influence which students went to college, what they studied when they got there, what career they entered upon graduation, what direction university research should take, who should study it, how long for, and what should be done with the

research upon completion. It had begun to influence every area of higher education, and the focus on the individual had shifted visibly to a focus on the **needs of the nation. As Wolfe has identified, the early Cold War was the “time during which Federal support for science and technology was most strongly associated with military and defense needs”, and this shift came at the expense of a separation of the government and the education system.**⁵²² As the Cold War demanded more of American higher education, the Federal government responded.

DESEGREGATION AND THE COLD WAR DYNAMIC

The Complex Relationship between
the **‘Cold War Imperative’** and Civil
Rights in Education

“The swift movement of events and the growing complexity of our national life and of world affairs make it imperative, at the earliest possible time, to translate our democratic ideal into a living reality”.⁵²³

Regardless of the state of mainstream education in the United States in the early years of the Cold War, the standard of education for African Americans was worse. In 1947, there were significant numerical differences between the number of white and black students who were afforded the opportunity to go to school at all levels. Whereas 97.1% of white children between the ages of seven and nine attended elementary school, for African American students the figure dropped to 89.2%; 82.5% of white teenagers attended high school, but only 71.9% of African American teenagers could expect to attend.⁵²⁴ The disparity within higher education is less easy to measure as integrated institutions often did not keep – and certainly were not keen to divulge – racially defined records concerning attendance.⁵²⁵ Zook asserted in 1947, **however, that “it requires no parade of statistics to know that the situation for young people of minority groups is today unsatisfactory, both in their opportunity to enter college and in the happiness of their college life”** [emphasis in original].⁵²⁶ Figures from 1940 illuminate the situation somewhat; before the USA entered the Second World War, 11% of whites who were aged 20 years or over had completed at least one year of college and almost 5% had finished 4 years, whereas only 3% of the African American population of the same age had completed one year of college and less than 1.5% had finished a full four-year course.⁵²⁷

Although the gap between mainstream education and African American education had begun to close towards the end of the 1930s, progress was painfully slow. What progress was made was largely due to Depression-era intervention from the Federal government. Paula **Fass has argued that “it was only in the context of Federal policies [during the New Deal era] that blacks became part of**

the definition of American pluralism and a problem for the schools... The New Deal and the War made segregation untenable and set the stage for blacks to become the central dilemma for school and social policies in a pluralistic **society**".⁵²⁸ All of the New Deal alphabet agencies which were involved in education offered relief to African Americans on an equal basis with whites. Many Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects called for fairer enrolment practices for African American students at the schools they worked with, and advocated greater equality of pay for black and white teachers.⁵²⁹

Many of these Federal administrations discovered and highlighted greater inequalities than had previously been known.⁵³⁰ **Fass has argued that "for black Americans, the New Deal had helped to confirm the belief, initiated during the Reconstruction... that salvation might lie with the Lord, but educational opportunity would come at the hands of the Federal government"**.⁵³¹ After the War, however, the focus of Federal education policy did not immediately benefit African Americans; a far greater percentage of white veterans than African American veterans benefitted from the GI Bill of 1944, and this achievement gap widens even further for African American veterans who returned to the South.⁵³² This is largely due to the fact that the Federal government did not expect the educational provision included within the GI Bill to be as successful as it was, and as such did not place any stringent controls on how the benefits should be administered by the States. As such, individual State policies created wildly different results for African American applicants.⁵³³ By 1947, black students comprised only 3.1% of the total number of enrolments in higher education, despite the fact that African Americans constituted roughly 10% of the total population of the USA.⁵³⁴

The inequality in numbers was only part of the problem, as African American college students who were able to secure a place at a university or college rarely received an education of the same quality as white students at either integrated or segregated institutions after matriculation. In the North, black students studied in predominantly integrated institutions, but were usually treated as inferior to their white counterparts. At some integrated institutions, black students could be subject to the quota system – a system which allowed for only a limited number of African American students to be accepted to institutions each year, regardless of their academic ability.⁵³⁵ This system severely limited the availability of places for African Americans, and meant that entrance was based less on ability than availability.

Even if black students did gain admission to an integrated Northern college or university, they were also regularly subjected to discriminatory policies and practices within the institution. Within integrated colleges, segregation often still featured; black students were frequently expected to sit separately from white students and were rarely afforded the opportunity to live alongside their white classmates in on-campus housing. For the many African American students who matriculated – or wanted to matriculate – in Northern colleges during this period, the problems of inequality of both access and education were the educational issues which most needed to be addressed. Whilst there were serious issues inherent in the way Northern institutions treated African American students, however, these issues paled into insignificance when compared to the problems inherent in Southern institutions.

In the South, segregated institutions were the norm, and unsurprisingly the schools provided for African American students were far inferior to those

provided for white students. This inferiority occurred at every level and impacted every aspect of school life, from the availability and quality of textbooks and the training level of teachers, to the availability of school lunches and the structural integrity of classrooms.⁵³⁶ Whilst high quality institutions did exist for African American students in the mid-20th century, the majority remained significantly inferior to their white counterparts.

The Executive branch recognised the importance of tackling both discrimination and segregation in education during this period, both to benefit the African American community and the wider Cold War effort. The United States Office of Education's (USOE) *Bulletin* highlighted in 1948 that “the fact that Negroes have not produced their proportionate share of leaders in the different fields of endeavour may be largely attributed to the lack of opportunities to develop and use their **talents**”.⁵³⁷ The Executive branch acknowledged that African American students were not incapable of reaching the dizzy educational heights of higher education, but that they had so far been prevented from doing so in equal percentages to white students because they regularly received a lower quality of education and inhibited access to improvements.

There existed three separate pressures which caused the interests of the Executive branch of the Federal government to converge with those of African American students during the early years of the Cold War: firstly, the logistical problems that a persistently undereducated section of the citizenship presented to the USA's **manpower pool**; **secondly, the impact** that discrimination against African American citizens had upon the USA's image overseas, and thirdly, **President Truman's own personal commitment** to creating equality of opportunity for all American citizens, due both to his own personal opinion of

education and his desire to court the African American vote. These circumstances combined to create a powerful impetus for change within US society in the years after the Second World War.

This chapter will demonstrate that these various pressures on the Executive branch of the Truman Administration to improve access to and the quality of education for African American students during the early years of the Cold War caused it to once again involve itself in the US education system. Thus the Executive branch – **specifically represented by the President’s Commission on Higher Education (the Truman Commission), the US Office of Education, the President’s Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR) and the Justice and State Departments** – identified and acted upon a variety of powers which enabled it to influence the direction of the US education system in order to improve the state of African American education and the **USA’s chances in the Cold War. The** recommendations and impact of the Truman Commission and the PCCR, the work of the USOE with regards to educational equality, and the influence of the Justice Department and the work of the State Department on the passage of ***Brown v. Board of Education*** will be examined. This chapter will establish that the Executive branch in its many forms attempted to influence the development of the US education system in order to benefit both the **USA’s Cold War effort and** the well-being of the African American community, despite the education **administration’s** traditional status as a matter of States’ rights, thus furthering the central argument of this thesis.

This chapter will also further contribute to the existing literature which centres on the Cold War/ civil rights/ Federal government dynamic. Discussion of the complex relationship between the Executive branch of the Truman

Administration and the US education system within this Cold War/ civil rights framework highlights an aspect of this dynamic that has not yet been explored by historians in the field. Examining this interaction within the wider framework of **the Executive branch's approach to mainstream education policy**, offered in the earlier chapters of this thesis, offers a twist to the traditional story of the Federal **government's role in *Brown v. Board of Education*** and the various reasons for this. The Truman Administration identified the vital need for a strong education system in order to create a well-educated and democratic population and place the USA in strong position from which to fight the Cold War. Crucially, the Truman Administration also included the education of African American citizens **within this 'need', thereby creating a 'logistical' imperative for reform.**

Whilst President **Eisenhower continued Truman's pursuit of a better** educated populace, he did not specifically include African American students in this quest; therefore both the personal imperative and the logistical imperative, and their benefits to the Civil Rights movement as motivating factors for change, were lost in the 1952 election. This left only the strategic imperative for civil rights reform to be addressed by the Eisenhower Administration. Current scholarship in this area does not properly situate the Federal discussion of education policy making for the African American community during the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations alongside their wider discussions of education policy generally. **The Federal government's approach to general education policy must be understood in order to recognise the impact which it had on Truman's Executive branch's formulation of their approach to African American education policy making, and to fully understand how notable Eisenhower's absence of African American education policy truly was.**

Where only the headline-grabbing instances of African American **education policy are examined, the Truman Administration's motivations for** intervention into this sub-section of the education system can appear one-sided. When closer examination is made of its approach to education for black students and both less well-known and never-implemented programmes are explored, imperatives beyond the strategic become clear. It is not the purpose of this chapter to offer an **all-encompassing discussion of the Federal government's** approach to education policy making for African Americans, but instead to firmly situate the current discussion within its relevant contextual framework. Without this education history perspective, understanding of Federal intervention into education policy making for African American students is limited, and the motivation for intervention (or lack thereof) is regularly attributed to the strategic imperative alone. This has created an oversimplified understanding of the interactions between the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations and civil rights in education.

Thomas Borstelmann's renowned monograph *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*, published in 2001, discusses the extent to which foreign and domestic policy overlapped during the Cold War, with specific focus on the Civil Rights movement in the USA. Borstelmann presents an original exploration of the extent to which Cold War considerations impacted the progression of civil rights in America, and how the Civil Rights **movement impacted the nation's Cold War narrative. Borstelmann's account** neglects to explore the relevance of wider Federal education policy to Federal policy on African American education, however, and instead chooses to demonstrate that the Federal approach to African American education policy was

only related to **the government's wider civil rights policies**. By not engaging with this important perspective, Borstelmann's assertions are, at times, **limited**.

A one-sided view of Truman's personal commitment to civil rights is presented in *The Cold War and the Color Line*; Borstelmann demonstrates that Truman had only a political and not a personal commitment to civil rights, a view which this thesis does not wholly agree with. Whilst Borstelmann asserts that Truman did not believe in equality, he has not fully explored the extent to which Truman did support equality *of opportunity*, nor Truman's belief that opportunity began with a good education. Had Borstelmann examined Truman's commitment to equalising access to education for all American youths, he would have found a President with a far softer attitude towards equalisation of opportunity for African Americans where education was concerned than the one which he presented in *The Cold War and the Color Line*. President Truman did not view all civil rights protests as equal, and prioritised the pursuit of some over the pursuit of others. As with his wider policy decisions, education was high on his list, but these wider policy decisions must be studied alongside his approach to civil rights in order to fully understand his motivations.

Borstelmann also treats *Brown* as a phenomenon unique to the Eisenhower Administration, which ignores the majority of the Judicial and Federal story. Unlike Dudziak, Borstelmann acknowledges the significant shift in civil rights policy that occurred with the shift in Administrations in 1952, but his lack of engagement with education policy limits this discussion to a generalised **view of Eisenhower's approach to civil rights, rather than a specific exploration of his interaction with civil rights within the education system**. Borstelmann stated that "[Eisenhower's] conservative view of the role of the Federal government in

American society precluded significant Federal intervention in matters of segregation, which he saw as falling under local and State **jurisdiction**” **yet part of** the narrative here is missing.⁵³⁸ Whilst it was certainly the case that Eisenhower had a more conservative approach to Federal intervention than Truman, and did see segregation as a State matter, he was not completely averse to Federal intervention where the wider education system was concerned, despite the fact that this was also a State matter. It should be noted that Eisenhower was *reluctant* to exert Federal power over the education system, but this did not prevent him from pursuing this end, especially in the case of school construction and the **expansion of the USA’s** technical manpower pool, as he also recognised the Cold War imperative of such achievements.⁵³⁹ This demonstrates that his opinions on the matter were more fluid than Borstelmann suggests.

This additional understanding allows a more complex exploration of the Cold War/ civil rights/ Federal government dynamic as it highlights a situation in which there was a convergence of interests between the needs of the Civil Rights movement and the needs of the Cold War, but not the needs of the Federal government. Eisenhower viewed education policy in general as impacted by the Cold War imperative and therefore subject to Federal intervention, but regarded segregation within education specifically as a purely domestic matter. Without a clearer understanding of Eisenhower’s **motivations, full understanding of his** actions is not possible. The two issues – the need to improve the education system for the Cold War, and the will to protect Southern domestic rights to run a segregated system – often conflicted, which forced Eisenhower to choose. Unless these two pursuits are recognised as occurring concurrently, it is not possible to explore whether Eisenhower prioritised his plans to improve education over his

desire not to involve himself in the desegregation of the schools or vice-versa, and subsequently to better understand the true extent to which the Cold War impacted the Civil Rights movement within the education system. As such, **Borstelmann's research is limited in its discussion of the extent to which the Cold War affected the progression of civil rights.**

Brenda Gayle Plummer's 1996 work *Rising Wind: Black Americans and US Foreign Affairs, 1935-1996*, offers a unique perspective on the civil rights/foreign policy dynamic as Plummer begins her investigation prior to both the Cold War and the Second World War.⁵⁴⁰ Plummer instead traces the relationship from 1935 through to the end of the Eisenhower Administration. She is successful in demonstrating that the African American educated classes could boast a far longer history of engagement in foreign affairs than had previously been assumed. Plummer highlights the important role which foreign affairs played in the development of domestic African American-driven civil rights protest, and additionally the value of receiving a quality education to this dynamic; she notes that it was specifically the black educated elite who displayed this interest in foreign affairs.

Plummer does not, however, explore the relevance of this information to **the Federal government's** interaction with civil rights protests during the early Cold War and if it impacted, either negatively or positively, its logistical motivation in the formulation of education policy for African Americans. This thesis seeks to further this scholarship by delineating the relevance which a well-**educated African American populace had to the Truman Administration's** understanding of a stronger USA, in order to satisfy both its pursuit of a greater

commitment to democracy and equality, and its intention to safeguard the nation in the Cold War.

The most relevant discussions within this field are those of Derrick A. Bell Jr. and Mary L. Dudziak. The two similar frameworks developed by each scholar – **Bell’s ‘Interest-Convergence’ theory and Dudziak’s ‘Cold War imperative’ theory** – have existed side by side for over a decade, yet it has not yet been clearly established which theory is more relevant to the scholarship. In light of this new understanding of the complexity of the pressures at play in this situation, this chapter will establish **the primacy of Derrick A. Bell Jr.’s 1979/1980 theory of Interest-Convergence over Mary L. Dudziak’s 1988 theory of the Cold War imperative** as the most suitable framework through which to understand the progression of the Civil Rights movement in relation to the Cold War during its **infancy. In addition, this chapter will offer an addendum to Bell’s theory** which better allows it to account for the nuances of political policy making.

Mary L. Dudziak published “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative” in 1988, and later published a book which furthered the theory posited in her article, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000). Dudziak heavily rooted her article and the theory speculated within it on the lead up to and aftermath of ***Brown v. Board of Education***. Despite this, however, **Dudziak neither discussed the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations’ wider education policies, nor their general approach to the discussion of African American education where *Brown* was not concerned.** Her discussion of education focused on the headline-grabbing ***Brown*** and the 1957 Little Rock crisis which it incited. Whilst of course ***Brown*** and the events which occurred at Little Rock represent the most important education policy decisions during this

period, when discussed in isolation from wider education policy, the strategic gains to the USA's **Cold War effort that were taken into consideration can appear** to have undue importance.

Dudziak asserted in “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative” that “the effect of US race discrimination on international relations during the post war years was a critical motivating factor in the development of Federal government policy. Without attention to the degree to which desegregation served important foreign policy interests, the Federal government’s posture on civil rights issues in the post war years cannot be fully understood”.⁵⁴¹ Dudziak is correct in her identification that foreign policy issues did indeed act as a motivating factor in **the Federal government’s approach** to the segregation debate in the early years of the Cold War. When consideration is given to the effect which the discrimination and segregation had on the US education system itself in addition to the effect which a discriminatory education system had **on the USA’s Cold War effort, Dudziak’s straightforward narrative is complicated. This method** highlights her over-valuation of the importance of the ‘strategic’ imperative and allows for **consideration of the impact which the ‘logistical’ imperative had on** both decision making, and the impact and outcomes of such policies.

This chapter will firstly demonstrate the gaps in Dudziak’s Cold War imperative theory by delineating the relevance of the logistical imperative alongside the strategic imperative, thus further unpacking the concept of the Cold War imperative. Secondly, this chapter will also demonstrate the limitations of **Dudziak’s theory by establishing that the Cold War imperative in both its** manifestations was not the only imperative motivating the Federal government. **By establishing the important contribution of the President’s own personal**

imperatives for change during the Truman Administration, and highlighting the impact of their absence during the Eisenhower Administration, a clearer understanding of the complicated relationship between the Executive branch and the education system is drawn. **Whilst Dudziak's oft-discussed strategic imperative remains relevant to this dialogue, when all three imperatives for change are considered together, the centrality of the strategic imperative to the passage and implementation of *Brown* is noticeably reduced. As such, Bell's theory of 'Interest-Convergence' is more suitable for understanding this topic as it accounts for more varying factors than Dudziak's more linear framework.**

Although the relevance of the logistical imperative as a motivating factor continued into the Eisenhower Administration, his lack of a personal imperative for change, coupled with the obstacles created by the Massive Resistance movement, prevented Eisenhower from acknowledging the logistical Cold War imperative as a motivating factor. As a result, no progress was achieved despite **Eisenhower's prime position as an agent for change**, and the benefits this change could have wrought. **Dudziak's** theory does not account for the fact that this incarnation of the Cold War imperative was *not* strong enough to motivate the Federal government into supporting the Civil Rights movement.

This discussion will also further Bell's Interest-Convergence theory, as Bell did not acknowledge the importance of perception in his work. This thesis, however, will consider the importance of the *acknowledgement* of a convergence of interests between the Federal government and the Civil Rights movement in addition to the *existence* of a convergence of interests. When only the strategic Cold War imperative for change is considered, it is easy to assume that Eisenhower did not intervene because the Cold War imperative had already been

addressed; the USA's overseas critics, as Dudziak notes, were mollified by the *passage* of *Brown*. Understanding of the logistical imperative, however, and its lack of impact upon the Eisenhower Administration, necessitates a caveat to Bell's framework. That the white participants acknowledge there to be a convergence of interests is equally as important as the convergence itself.

Dudziak claimed in *Cold War Civil Rights* that

“the international perspective is not a substitute for the rich body of civil rights scholarship, but another dimension that sheds additional light on those important and well-told stories... It is only through the efforts of the [Civil Rights] movement that the nation and the world were moved to embrace the civil rights reform that emerged from this period of American history”.⁵⁴²

Dudziak's aim was to demonstrate merely that the Cold War played a role in the progression of the Civil Rights movement, not that the work of previous scholars in this field was incorrect, nor to diminish the work of the civil rights activists who fought for their rights during this period. Similarly, in focusing on a Federal/education perspective, this chapter does not seek to demonstrate that the Federal role in progressing civil rights in the US education system was more significant than the roles played by civil rights activists during this period, but instead seeks to build upon the work of other scholars in the field and demonstrate only that there is more to the story of the interaction between Cold War civil rights in education and the US Federal government than has currently been told.

The Cold War Imperatives

*The Strategic Imperative*⁵⁴³

During the Truman Administration, the Executive branch of the Federal government identified that the improvement of educational provision for African Americans would positively impact US foreign policy objectives. This benefit grew out of the impact which the increased global importance of human rights after the Second World War had upon the perception of the USA overseas.⁵⁴⁴ As Dudziak has noted, the USA's image overseas suffered a negative swing after the Second World War. Worldwide perceptions of the need for both greater equality and better education altered dramatically, and US domestic policies which previously had been largely ignored – such as segregation – became major problems for the State Department.

The international attention that was paid to American racism in the early years of the Cold War had the potential not merely to embarrass the USA, but also **to injure the USA's chances of success in the Cold War**. The PCCR acknowledged **this damage in 1947, and observed that “whenever stories of discrimination or mistreatment gain currency abroad... they are considered an affront to the dignity of a country or a continent, even a major portion of the world's population**. A relatively few individuals here may be identified with millions of people elsewhere, and the way in which they are treated may have worldwide **repercussions”**.⁵⁴⁵ **This previously unheard of level of exposure of the USA's treatment of African Americans as less than American citizens, in both unfriendly and neutral countries, threatened to undermine the belief overseas in a vital aspect of the USA's ideology – the USA's commitment to democracy.**

The increased scrutiny of US schools in particular was caused in part by the worldwide focus on the importance of receiving a good education which took hold on a global scale after the Second World War. In *The Attack on American Schools*, Columbia Teachers College's Annual Report to the Trustees, written by President **Hollis S. Caswell in 1958**, Caswell noted that “there is a widespread desire in many nations to increase the role of the common man – making available improved technology for advancing the general welfare, giving labor greater dignity, achieving better health for the mass of the people, improving **community life**”.⁵⁴⁶ This was especially true in the Third World, as so many Third World nations were former colonies who believed a well-educated citizenship was a vital component of independence and successful self-government. It is not surprising, therefore, that Clifford Manshardt, a cultural affairs officer stationed in India in the early 1950s, reported that one of the questions he was asked most frequently was “do Negroes have equal opportunities for education in the US?”⁵⁴⁷

This increased interest in education as a gateway to progress and development in the Third World meant that discrimination against blacks in the American education system was even more closely monitored overseas than other areas of the civil rights debate. A letter written to the Attorney General in 1952 claimed that “school segregation, in particular, had been ‘singled out for hostile foreign comment in the United Nations and elsewhere. Other peoples cannot accept how such a practice can exist in a country which professes to be a staunch supporter of freedom, justice and democracy’ ”.⁵⁴⁸ In his book *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (2001), educator and civil rights activist James T. Patterson also recognised this fact, and asserted that “some blacks predicted that *Brown* would have consequences extending far

beyond schools. For one thing, it would bolster the American cause in the Cold War” .⁵⁴⁹

Education was the most logical area to improve in order to impress **overseas critics of US racism, as it demonstrated the USA’s commitment to** improving race relations, its commitment to bettering the opportunities available to the African American community and its understanding of the emerging global consensus on the importance of education. As such, this strategic Cold War imperative also contributed to the convergence of interests which grew between the Executive branch of the Federal government and the Civil Rights movement during the early years of the Cold War.

The Logistical Imperative

The Executive branch of the Federal government further recognised, however, that the persistent educational under-achievement within the African American community also had the potential to significantly impact the USA’s **success** in the Cold War. As discussed at length in Chapter Three, the USA’s **shortage of** educated manpower presented a significant challenge to the Federal **government’s Cold War effort** during this period; **education was vital to the USA’s** success in the Cold War, and therefore **the utilisation of schools’** talent pools was equally vital. The systematic exclusion of minority students from high educational achievement based on nothing more substantial than their minority status had the potential to undermine this effort. The persistent under-education of otherwise capable African American students created a situation in which a **proportion of the nation’s talent was not made usable in the fight against** Communism.

The Executive branch noted that this was a logistical issue which the nation could ill afford to perpetuate. George F. Zook and the Truman Commission acknowledged in *Higher Education for American Democracy* (1947) that the **USA's shortage of vital manpower was caused in part by "discriminatory practices [which] deprive the nation of a great variety of talent".**⁵⁵⁰ During the early years of the Cold War, the USA allowed a significant proportion of their future manpower resources to be side-lined not because of their inferior quality, but because of their inferior training. **As the nation's need for trained manpower, and especially highly trained scientific manpower, was both acute and directly impacted on the nation's chances of success in the Cold War, this problem, the Truman Commission recognised, needed to be addressed.**

This disparity in the quality of education provision was quickly identified as stemming largely **from the USA's practice** of segregation within education, which caused African American students to endure a fundamentally inferior education compared to their white counterparts. Education provided to African **Americans in integrated institutions, however, was not spared the Commission's** scrutiny. Moreover, these practices were also identified as reducing the quality of white education as well, which further **contributed to the USA's struggle for well-**trained manpower at the time in which it could least afford to struggle.

Through the work of Zook and others, the Executive branch came to **understand that a significant percentage of the USA's potential manpower pool** was systematically undereducated as a result of the colour of their skin; capable and willing African American students were not able to contribute to the nation's advancement in the many war-related disciplines simply because they could not get access to the relevant training; much needed graduate training was

particularly off-limits. This in turn adversely affected their availability to carry out useful war work, thereby threatening national security. Zook acknowledged that any improvements in access to schooling or to the quality of education for **African American students would also positively affect the USA's stock of trained manpower**, thus creating a logistical Cold War imperative for change which contributed to the convergence of interests between the Executive branch and the **Civil Rights movement during the Cold War's infancy**.

Truman's Personal Convergence of Interests

The third important motivation for action on civil rights during the Truman Administration which must be considered was President **Truman's own personal** commitment to the pursuit of equality of opportunity for African American citizens, an extension of his personal commitment to education as explored in Chapter One of this thesis. As Michael R. Gardner asserted in *Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks*, “in an environment relatively free of serious nationwide public pressure to act, Truman decided in 1946 to force a very reluctant and largely segregated Federal government to assume its rightful leadership role on civil rights”⁵⁵¹ and hailed Truman's civil rights record as one of “**moral courage and political recklessness**”.⁵⁵² Moreover, when specifically commenting on Truman's civil rights record, Judge William H. Hastie, former Dean of Howard University Law School and prominent civil rights lawyer, has also asserted that Truman was a man who had “very firm convictions” and that “he would not allow political considerations to cause him to disavow the position that he regarded as morally wrong”.⁵⁵³

Truman's biographer, David McCulloch, takes a slightly more tempered view of Truman's position on African Americans than Gardner, having noted in his celebrated biography that "privately, he could still speak of 'niggers', as if that were the way one naturally referred to blacks", however, he also highlighted the fact that President Truman took his commitment to civil rights seriously.⁵⁵⁴ McCulloch reprinted a letter written by Truman to several Southern delegates in which he rebuffed their attempts to appeal to his status as a Southern President and moderate his position on civil rights. **Truman asserted that "whatever my inclinations as a native of Missouri might have been, as President I know this [treatment of returning African American GIs] is bad. I shall fight to end evils like this".**⁵⁵⁵

Truman's personal commitment to civil rights reform must be viewed from two perspectives, that of his own moral position, and that of the impact such a platform had on his ability to garner the 'black vote', which was identified as being politically significant.⁵⁵⁶ Special Counsel to the President Clark M. Clifford highlighted in 1947 that "unless there are new and real efforts (as distinguished from mere political gestures which are today thoroughly understood and strongly resented by sophisticated Negro leaders), the Negro block... will go **Republican**".⁵⁵⁷ The two pressures together created a President committed to the improvement of equality of opportunity for African Americans; as historian Harvard Sitkoff has recognised, "Clifford's political advice harmonized with Truman's need to do *something* for civil rights" [emphasis in original].⁵⁵⁸

Truman's position on civil rights may not seem particularly radical from the perspective of 2015 – Borstelmann shrewdly identified that Truman courted the black vote merely by treating African Americans as "a legitimate political

interest group” – however it must be noted that for a Missouri politician in the 1940s and early 1950s, his position was unusual, progressive and divisive.⁵⁵⁹ When writing to a friend in Missouri who had urged him to scale back his position on civil rights, **Truman proclaimed that he would not do so, stating that “I am not asking for social equality, because no such thing exists, but I am asking for equality of opportunity for all human beings and, as long as I stay here, I am going to continue that fight”**.⁵⁶⁰ Truman was not advocating for massive social upheaval, but he did believe in a level playing field.

When he established his Committee on Civil Rights on 15th January 1947, Truman asserted **that “I don’t want to see any race discrimination. I don’t want to see any religious bigotry break out in this country”**.⁵⁶¹ After the establishment of the Truman Commission in 1946, Truman personally responded to one letter of support, from Commission to the Chairman of the American Veterans Committee, Charles W. Bolte, stating that

“I am keenly aware of the fundamental problem of discrimination in education to which you have called specific attention, and to the broader problem of intolerance which this discrimination symbolizes. Those who sincerely desire to see the fullest expression of our democracy can never rest until the opportunity for an education, at all levels, has been given to all qualified Americans”.⁵⁶²

Truman continued by stating that “discrimination, like a disease, must be attacked wherever it appears. This applies to the opportunity to vote, to hold and retain a job, and to secure adequate shelter and medical care”. In this letter Truman also likened racism in the USA to Nazism in Germany – **“that which we fought against in the war”**.⁵⁶³ It should also be noted that Truman received

numerous letters congratulating him on the establishment of the Truman Commission, but the vast majority did not receive personal replies from the President, and instead **received standardised ‘thank you’ responses from Assistants to the President John R. Steelman and William D. Hassett.**

Truman was personally committed to advocating for change within the black community in a way that his successor was not. Gardner noted **that “though [in 1954] Truman’s civil rights crusade was not over, incoming President Eisenhower was happy to leave it that way. For States’ rights advocates in both houses of the Eighty-third Congress, as well as for some of the senior racist Southern Democrats in the Senate, it was comforting to realise that the man coming in to the White House ... had a much more cautious view on civil rights than the outgoing president”.**⁵⁶⁴ **President Truman’s personal imperative to pursue equality of educational opportunity for the African American community gave civil rights a powerful and influential ally in Washington, even after Truman’s troubled relationship with Congress is taken into account.**

The significance of **Truman’s influence is largely due to his personal commitment to the expansion of the education system.** As discussed in Chapter **One of this thesis, Truman’s own experiences of unsuccessfully pursuing higher education, alongside his willingness to attempt to extend the Federal government’s remit when he believed** such a move was necessary (nor did he shy away from fully exploring the limits of his Executive power when possible), created ‘goldilocks’ conditions for an expanded Federal role in education. Importantly, Truman extended his definition of expanded access to include minority students. As Gardner has noted,

“President Truman’s own words in creating his committee [on Civil Rights] illuminate his emerging yet highly controversial philosophy about civil rights reform: that the Federal government was the only possible vehicle for correcting the significant yet only partially documented civil rights deficiencies in the United States in 1946... [he] told his newly appointed committee members that the Federal government has the duty to act when State or local authorities abridge or fail to protect the constitutional rights of all its citizens”.⁵⁶⁵

In his own words, when recalling in his memoirs his decision to publicly act on behalf of the African American community in 1948, Truman re-iterated his viewpoint that

“The constitutional guarantees of individual liberties and of equal protection under the law clearly place on the Federal government the duty to act when State or local authorities abridge or fail to uphold these guarantees. I felt that the Federal government was hampered, however, by inadequate civil rights statutes and that the Department of Justice lacked the tools to enforce such statutes as there were. This was a condition that I wanted to see corrected”.⁵⁶⁶

Truman understood that, due to the entrenched nature **of the opposition’s** opinion on this matter, Federal influence would be necessary in order to affect change, and he boldly utilised the powers available to him in order to achieve this.

Truman’s personal imperative trickled down to the remainder of the Executive branch and, largely through the work of the Truman Commission and the PCCR, influenced other departmental policies on civil rights reform. The Executive branch of the Federal government not only recognised both the

inequalities inherent in the education system and the problems they had begun to cause to the USA's war effort, but also the fact that, despite its lack of constitutional authority over the education system, these problems were the **Federal government's responsibility to solve. The PCCR articulated this responsibility in its report, published in 1947, which highlighted that "the responsibility of this Commission can best be emphasized by the fact that approximately 4/5 of the Negro population is in the South, and that practically every Negro in the South looks to the Federal government for protection of basic civil rights".**⁵⁶⁷

The Federal government experienced a triumvirate of motivating factors – logistical, strategic and personal – which created a convergence of interests between the Executive branch of the Federal government and the Civil Rights movement at the beginning of the Cold War. In 1948, the Federal government's own USOE *Bulletin* highlighted the fact that "it is important, from the viewpoint of enlightened self-interest, as well as from the desire to implement the democratic principles upon which the Nation is founded, that the United States assure the Negro group equality of opportunity to contribute its share of potential **leaders for the Nation**".⁵⁶⁸ The disparity between education for white students and education for African American students both adversely affected the USA's Cold War effort and brought into question the Federal government's own commitment to its primary goal of upholding democracy, and adversely affected the everyday lives of ordinary American citizens who lived each day under the shadow of inequality and limited opportunity. For President Truman, the need to solve this nationwide problem triumphed over the need for the direct authority to do so.

The Utilisation of the Cold War Imperatives

The Truman Administration saw the education system as the key to solving a myriad of complicated foreign and domestic policy issues, and endeavoured to gain influence within this area, despite its remit as the responsibility of each individual State. The strategic foreign policy objectives, logistical considerations, **and Truman's** own personal and political imperatives encouraged the Executive branch of the Truman Administration to adopt a new approach to the discussion of equality of opportunity within the US education system. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Truman was not averse to devising creative methods through which to exercise his power, and this extended to the cause of civil rights. **Gardner has noted that "Truman [circumvented] Congress and advanced his Federal civil rights agenda in numerous creative and lawful ways".**⁵⁶⁹ Outside of education, he had utilised his executive authority to desegregate the armed forces and outlaw Federal pay discrepancies based on race. Within education, the Executive branch established a variety of ways in which to utilise the unique set of powers available to it in order to influence schools, colleges and universities to adopt less discriminatory policies towards African American students.

The President's Commission on Higher Education

In 1947, discrimination against African Americans in education was discussed by **the President's Commission on Higher Education**, and, radically, the desegregation of the education system was formally recommended as a viable option by a government body. Indeed, the Commission highlighted that it was in fact the only viable option if equality of educational opportunity was to be ensured. As highlighted in Chapter Two, the discussion of the US education

system by a presidential commission already represented a significant break from earlier Federal involvement with the education system. As John R. Thelin has identified in *A History of American Higher Education* (2011), before President Truman established his Commission, **no other President had ever “deliberately extended Federal inquiry into national educational issues”**.⁵⁷⁰ President Truman effectively utilised the powers available to the Executive branch in order to attempt to gain influence over the US education system.

One of the Commission’s main focuses was the exploration of how access to higher education could become more inclusive, regardless of race, creed or economic background.⁵⁷¹ **Truman’s personal commitment to this goal was vital to** its inclusion in **the Truman Commission’s remit, as it was a topic he expressly** requested the members to discuss. In his letter of appointment to each of the **Commission’s members, Truman stated that “among the more specific questions** with which I hope the Commission will concern itself are: ways and means of **expanding educational opportunities for all able young people”**.⁵⁷² Whilst this is not specific to African American students, when combined with a further influence which the Truman Administration had on the work of the Commission – the selection of its members – its intentions become even clearer.

The Executive branch was responsible for appointing the members of the **Commission, and this power was exercised to ensure the ‘right’ result. George F. Zook** was appointed as the head of the Commission, and his commitment to equalising opportunity for African American students was well documented. In the same year that he was appointed to the Commission, he published an article **entitled “The Government and Negro Education” in which** he categorically stated **that “the inequality of [African American] educational opportunities in**

comparison with the whites is too well known to need elaboration”.⁵⁷³ It must not be overlooked that in the same article, Zook also identifies a conflict between **“one’s belief in State and local control of education on one hand, and a pitiful practical situation on the other”**, and asserts his personal commitment to the belief that **“the Federal government is now obligated to see to it that equal opportunities are open to children of the two races within the respective States”.**⁵⁷⁴ Zook was undoubtedly committed to the improvement of African American education as a priority, and this commitment no doubt impacted both his appointment as head of the Commission in 1946 and the direction of the **Commission’s report in 1948.**

Zook was not the only member whose views on African American citizens was clear prior to their appointment; a number of members with positive civil rights records were appointed. Among others was Eleanor Roosevelt; although she did not remain with the Truman Commission throughout its full term, Roosevelt was appointed to the Commission in 1946, and her commitment to civil rights was widely known. Also notable is Tuskegee President Frederick Douglass Patterson, who in 1943, just three years prior to his appointment, founded the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), a fund established with the precise goal of expanding educational attainment among African Americans. Had Truman expected the discussion of the Commission to come to a different conclusion on the importance of equality in education, it is likely that the selection of its members would have taken a different turn.

As it was, the appointments were a success; the report of the Truman Commission openly acknowledged the inconsistencies between American ideology and practice. As Thelin has identified, the report **“presaged... the**

tensions of racial segregation in public schools that would play out in the **landmark 1954 case**".⁵⁷⁵ It acknowledged that systematic discrimination denied **"to millions of young people what the democratic creed assumes to be their birth right: an equal chance with all others to make the most of their native abilities"** and highlighted that the separate-but-equal doctrine **"contravenes the equalitarian spirit of the American heritage"**.^{576; 577} Segregation specifically was recognised by the Truman Commission to be a particularly serious problem in higher education; it highlighted that approximately 85% of the estimated 75,000 African American students who were enrolled in higher education at the time were enrolled in segregated institutions.⁵⁷⁸ Moreover, in contrast to many discussions of the practice, it did not attempt to offer a defence of segregation on any level, nor did it suggest that in some cases separate **could** be equal. The report unflinchingly espoused the view that segregation was unequal, and inequality clashed with the American way of life.

The Truman Commission eventually chose to devote an entire volume of its report, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, to the need for greater equality in higher education. In this volume, the members firmly recommended that the Federal government pursue a course of desegregation for all education institutions. The Commission began its attack by demonstrating beyond doubt that African American education was inferior to mainstream education. It **established that black schools were "financed at a pitifully low level, they are often housed in buildings wholly inadequate for the purpose, and many of the teachers are sorely in need of more education themselves. Library facilities are generally poor or lacking altogether, and professional supervision is more a name than a reality"**.⁵⁷⁹ The Commission noted that the schools were not just underfunded,

but understaffed as well: **“the District [of Columbia]’s Superintendent of Schools,** in his 1946-47 report to the Board of Education, states that the student-teacher ratios in the schools for Negroes were significantly and consistently higher than those for non-Negroes – from the kindergartens through the **Teachers Colleges**”.⁵⁸⁰

The Commission highlighted that the problem was rarely much improved outside of the South. It noted that **“it must not be supposed that the Negro youths** living in States in which segregation is not legalized are given the same **opportunities as white youth**”.⁵⁸¹ **The Truman Commission explained that “in** these areas, economic and social discrimination of various sorts often operates to produce segregation in certain neighbourhoods, which are frequently characterized by poorer school buildings, less equipment and less able **teachers**”.⁵⁸² The report also highlighted that in many Northern and Western school districts where segregation was not the law, de facto segregation was still in practice and brought with it all of the same problems and issues of sub-standard schooling which de jure segregation suffered.

The Truman Commission acknowledged that where segregation was not the custom – either de jure or de facto – institutions of higher education had instituted different methods of ensuring that the number of African American **students who matriculated was still low. It singled out the popular ‘quota system’,** practised widely in integrated colleges and universities across the USA, for condemnation. It demonstrated that **“at the college level a different form of** discrimination is commonly practiced. Many colleges and universities, especially in their professional schools, maintain a selective quota system for admission, under which the chance to learn, and thereby to become more useful citizens, is

denied to certain minorities, particularly to Negroes and Jews”.⁵⁸³ Colleges and universities who subscribed to the quota system set a limit on the number of students from different ethnic minorities who could attend each year. There was usually a specific number of places for each ethnic minority, and they could often be very low; some colleges and universities allowed only one or two African American students to join their student body each year. The Commission also highlighted the fact that colleges and universities sometimes claimed that they had not had enough applications from suitable candidates, so even the small number of places that were allocated to African American students would not be filled.

Although this information is neither new nor radical by current standards, in 1948 for a government appointed body to highlight these serious issues in a widely circulated government sponsored report represented a significant shift from earlier approaches to this problem. Racism was so entrenched in the South during the early years of the 20th century that, as civil rights historian Fass has **noted, even the classification of such a thing as ‘Black education policy’ was not** truly considered until the Federal government involved itself during the (FD) Roosevelt Administration, despite the fact that formal education for African Americans had existed for generations prior to this.⁵⁸⁴ By the late 1940s, Southern attitudes towards integration had not progressed much further. As Thurgood Marshall **emphasised to the PCCR in 1947, “a great majority of the State Officials in the South have no regard for the rights of minority groups whether they be Negro, labor unions or other minority groups”.**⁵⁸⁵ Yet the Truman Commission clearly and forcefully demonstrated both that African American students did not

receive separate-but-equal opportunities within the US education system – just separate – and that this was unquestionably a problem which needed to be fixed.

The Truman Commission highlighted both the strategic Cold War foreign policy implications and the logistical Cold War complications that the unequal education provision for African Americans created. It highlighted the ways in which discriminatory education policies **negatively influenced the USA's Cold War effort, stating that "these various barriers to educational opportunity involve grave consequences both for the individual and for society"**.⁵⁸⁶ The Commission emphasised the implications for the USA's **foreign policy objectives** if discrimination in the education system was **left to continue to affect the USA's reputation overseas; it reminded the Federal government that "one of the gravest charges to which American society is subject is that of failing to provide a reasonable equality of educational opportunity for its youth"**.⁵⁸⁷ The Truman Commission also stressed the humiliation which the USA was suffering abroad, **and the potential impact of this situation on the nation: "in a world striving for international understanding and permanent peace", the Commission demonstrated, "it is essential that this Nation achieve unity and intergroup co-operation within its own borders"**.⁵⁸⁸ It outlined that **"our statesmen are sometimes embarrassed in their international dealings by racial discrimination within the United States. Its existence weakens our position in international affairs at the same time that its impact exacts economic, moral and political costs at home"**.⁵⁸⁹

The Truman Commission also demonstrated that modification of the education system was a prudent move to stem this flow of criticism from overseas, by emphasising the ways in which the education system was often at the heart of

this embarrassment. It highlighted the high number of overseas students who were forced to endure discrimination at the hands of the American education system, and explained that

“many foreign students now coming to American colleges are from groups which we tend to regard as minority. If our domestic house is not in order, these visitors will be subjected to the same embarrassments, exclusions and social separations in our colleges and local communities as our domestic minorities now experience... Failure to accept these students fully, without discrimination, will interfere with amicable international relations”.⁵⁹⁰

The Truman Commission established what it felt to be a vital, but basic, truth, **and claimed that “if we cannot achieve a fuller realization of democracy in the United States, we are not likely to secure its adoption willingly outside the United States”**.⁵⁹¹

Speaking logistically, the Truman Commission explained how discrimination in education damaged opportunities for African American students, which in turn damaged the USA’s manpower pool. **The members observed that the practice “denies the basic American belief that intelligence and ability are present in all ethnic groups, that men of all racial and religious origins should have equal opportunity to fit themselves for contributing to the common life”**.⁵⁹² **It emphasised that “the low educational attainments of Negro adults reflect the cumulative effects of a long period of unequal opportunity” – and this would inevitably lead to a loss of manpower for the war; “from the viewpoint of society”, it claimed, “the barriers mean that far too few of our young people are getting enough preparation for assuming the personal, social and civic**

responsibilities of adults living in a democratic society”.^{593; 594} The report continued to highlight that **“it is especially serious that not more of our most talented young people continue their schooling beyond high school in this day when the complexity of life and of our social problems means that we need desperately every bit of trained intelligence we can assemble”.**⁵⁹⁵ The Commission concluded that the system of segregation was causing untold damage to the **national stockpile of manpower, which it referred to as the “most precious natural resource in a democracy”.**⁵⁹⁶ It recommended that **“until such action [to repeal segregation] is taken, the opportunities for Negroes to qualify as leaders in education, law, medicine, the church and other areas will be limited seriously. Our national life is made poorer by the lack of such leadership”.**⁵⁹⁷

The Truman Commission also took pains to demonstrate that the continuance of a segregated system was damaging to the American education system as a whole, not just to the African American community. The two tier system was more expensive to maintain than an integrated system, which in turn **drew money away from white students. Zook explained that “to maintain two school systems side by side – duplicating, even inadequately, the buildings, equipment, and teaching personnel – means that neither can be of the quality that would be possible if all the available resources were devoted to one system”.**⁵⁹⁸ In addition, the States which were attempting to maintain this two tier system were the States which could least afford to do so, which further damaged the provision of education to the white students enrolled in these areas.⁵⁹⁹

The Truman Commission addressed its charge to find “ways and means of expanding educational opportunities for all able young people”, given to the

members by the President in their Letter of Appointment, as a logistical problem, not an ethical concern.⁶⁰⁰ Zook, the President of the Commission, did identify the “**outstanding example of these barriers to equal opportunity, of course, is the disadvantages suffered by our Negro citizens**”, but he then clarified his concern by reminding his readers that, after all, “**America’s children are America’s most vital resources**”.^{601; 602} By rebranding African American students as ‘vital resources’ Zook established that all schoolchildren were relevant, even crucial, to the USA’s Cold War effort, and to disadvantage a proportion of this group was to disadvantage America.

The Need for Federal Involvement

Once the problem had been fully established, and the implications of the problem, both at home and abroad, had been identified, the Truman Commission offered a solution, and this solution rested heavily upon the premise of Federal involvement in the education system. Importantly, the report did not only focus on the necessity for Federal involvement in the education system at this time, but **also the Federal government’s right and responsibility to intervene in the education system. This ‘responsibility’** was largely attributed to the Cold War imperatives created by the logistical and strategic pressures on the government; these imperatives made education a national concern, and therefore it was no longer merely a State matter.

The Truman Commission used a systematic approach to outline its position; firstly, it explained that racism in education must be stopped. The Commission played upon the increased interest in human rights and drew a startling comparison between discrimination in the USA and the discrimination

seen in Nazi Germany during the Second World War, a tragedy which was still unnervingly fresh in the minds of the American people. The members of the **Truman Commission explained in its report that “we have all lately witnessed... the horrors to which, in its logical extension, [discrimination] can lead”** and implied that unless action was taken, the USA could descend into tyranny as Nazi Germany had done.⁶⁰³ In likening segregation to the persecution of minorities in Europe, the Truman Commission cleverly established not only a motive for intervention, but also a precedent. It had been appropriate – unavoidable even – for the US Federal government to intervene in affairs which did not directly concern it then (after all, the war was in Europe) and, inferred the Commission, **it was equally as vital and as ‘right’ that it be allowed to do so now.**

Next, the Truman Commission demonstrated that discrimination in the USA must be addressed through the schools in particular, and that no other form of assault would be successful if this flank remained unchanged. This further **supported the Federal government’s right to intervene in the affairs of the** education system, as it established the education system as the front line of the assault on inequality in the USA; education must lead the way in improving the overall condition of the nation. If civil rights could be achieved in schools, then the rest of society would soon follow as the change would inevitably travel up through society alongside the students.

Using the schools was not only effective, the Commission argued, it was actually vital. If equality could not be demonstrated to students in their formative years in schools, any changes which did occur in society would not be sustained – firstly because **inequality would remain ingrained in the average American’s** psyche, and, secondly, because then even if barriers to social advancement were

successfully removed from society through other means, until their access to quality education was improved the African American community would not be in a position to take advantage of these newfound opportunities. The members of the Truman Commission observed that

“We have proclaimed our faith in education as a means of equalizing the conditions of men. But there is a grave danger that our present policy will make it an instrument for creating the very inequalities it was designed to prevent. If the ladder of educational opportunity rises high at the doors of some youth, and scarcely rises at all at the doors of others, while at the same time formal education is made a pre-requisite to occupational and social advance, then education may become the means, not of eliminating race and class distinctions, but of deepening and solidifying them. It is obvious, then, that free and universal access to education, in terms of the interest, ability and need of the student, must be a major goal in American Education”.⁶⁰⁴

The Truman Commission highlighted in its report that “education,... as all the leaders in the making of democracy have pointed out, again and again, is necessary to give effect to the equality prescribed by law”.⁶⁰⁵ It recommended that **“each institution should conscientiously plan and prosecute a well organised program to reduce, and where possible promptly to eliminate discrimination, not only by correcting its policies and practices, but also by educating its students to seek the abolition of discriminatory practices in all their manifestations”.**⁶⁰⁶ **Further to this, it asserted that “educational programs everywhere should be aimed at undermining and eventually eliminating the attitudes that are responsible for discrimination and segregation”.**⁶⁰⁷ To merely force change upon

the society would have had little impact – education itself would be needed to sustain the change. The Truman Commission demonstrated, however, that the Federal government had power at its disposal which it could use to enforce these changes, if it was required.

The Commission highlighted in its report that private institutions (universities and colleges over which, traditionally, no Federal, State or even local governments had much jurisdiction) also employed discriminatory policies and **should not be exempt from the Federal government's overhaul. The Truman Commission demonstrated that private educational institutions "are vitally affected with a public interest. Not only is this reflected in the privilege of tax exemption which they are accorded" – the Federal government could revoke this status to institutions which refused to integrate – "but also in the process of State accreditation in certain States" – this could also be revoked. As they were no less relevant to the Cold War imperatives than other schools were – "and in the recognition that they constitute part of a program of higher education dedicated to the Nation's welfare" – the Commission established that "they are thus genuinely vested with a public interest, and as such are morally obligated to abandon restrictive policies".**⁶⁰⁸

The Commission were able to establish in the report that unless the education system began to work together with the Federal government, the **changes, which were so vital to the USA's global standing and the progression of the Civil Rights movement, would be threatened.** To discover that, if they did not work with the Federal government, the nation could lose the Cold War, was stirring reading for the staff of the colleges and universities who received this report. Discovering that they could lose their tax-exempt status, however, may

have had even more of an effect. The **report's** carefully worded prose made it clear that the Federal government had power which could – and would – be utilised if necessary, and that it was a power which no other authority possessed. This passive-aggressive threat foreshadowed well the events which would take place at Little Rock a decade later.

Throughout its report, the Truman Commission's belief that Federal intervention into the US education system was the only way to improve equality of opportunity for African American students is glaringly clear. The Commission repeatedly discussed the global situation and the precarious position of US national security in order to demonstrate both the *negative* impact which discrimination in US education had had on the **USA's Cold War effort, and the positive** impact fixing this situation could have. As it had demonstrated that the **US education system was vital to the USA's success in** the Cold War, the Commission was able to invoke the Cold War imperative for change, thus adding weight **both to Truman's plan** to desegregate the US education system, and to the argument that the Federal government needed to be the one to do it.

The Impact of the Truman Commission

The recommendations made by the Truman Commission in its six volume report, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, were revolutionary. Thelin has recognised that, although “almost all commission reports succumb to the blandness of compromise and generic discussion”, the Truman Commission suffered no such fate.⁶⁰⁹ Instead, the report recommended that radical and controversial changes be made to the education system, and nowhere were its recommendations more contentious than in this second volume of the report,

Equalizing and Expanding Educational Opportunity (1947). No other government body had renounced segregation in the education system so publicly or in such direct and forceful terms, nor had any Federal committee previously demanded such a direct and uncompromising end to discrimination in education. Not even the PCCR took so firm a position against segregation within the American education system, despite its stance against segregation generally.

Despite this enviable pedigree, the Truman Commission had surprisingly little direct, immediate impact upon the education system specifically in the early years of the Cold War. There are many reasons for the fate of the **Truman Commission's recommendations**. **Firstly, the recommendations made by the Commission initially created debate rather than action.** As Claire Gilbert and Donald Heller have asserted in their article **"The Truman Commission and its Impact on Federal Higher Education Policy from 1947 to 2010"**, **"the sweeping recommendations the report made about higher education in its six volumes were both celebrated and reviled"**.⁶¹⁰ The report was divisive. Some of the **Commission's recommendations were simply too radical for the general educational community, especially those which addressed discrimination in education or desegregation.** Thelin has identified that the recommendations in **the report "moved too far, too fast"; the educational community was simply not ready to accept, let alone implement, many of the Commission's forward thinking suggestions.**⁶¹¹

Secondly, as enthusiastic about education reform as President Truman was, when he established the Commission at the end of 1946, he did not establish a formal link between its findings and the pursuance of congressional legislation. Therefore, when the momentum created in 1948 by the publication of the first

volume of the report subsided due to the debates over the efficacy of the recommendations, there was no formal plan in place to return the Commission's recommendations to the place where they could have the most impact – Congress. Without this formal relationship, Thelin has acknowledged, the report found itself without “**either the precedent or the presidential clout to work its way into Congressional subcommittees**”.⁶¹²

Even if the Truman Commission's recommendations had been seriously discussed in Congress however, it is likely that they would not have been implemented anyway. The hostile relationship which existed between President Truman and the Republican-led 80th Congress (1947-1949) is legendary, and the **Congress was dubbed the ‘do nothing’ Congress** by Truman. Thelin suggests that the report suffered from **bad timing as, at the time of its publication, “Truman was already facing a hostile Congress and an unsupportive press”**.⁶¹³ It is difficult, however, to pinpoint a moment throughout Truman's career in the White House when he did not face a hostile Congress, thus making it unlikely that Truman could ever have been successful in convincing Congress to implement the recommendations made by his Commission.

Although no direct Congressional action was taken with regards to the recommendations made by the Truman Commission immediately after the publication of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, there is no doubt that it had an impact upon the educational community. It had a large circulation and was discussed in detail after its publication – even prompting the publication of a volume of responses, both positive and negative, to the report.⁶¹⁴ It would be remiss to assume that its recommendations were merely forgotten after such deliberation. As Thelin has **acknowledged, the Commission's suggestions were**

made in the wrong political climate but, as the subsequent success of many of the **Commission's ideas has demonstrated, they were not overlooked, just deferred.**⁶¹⁵

As Gilbert and Heller have noted,

“the dialogue that the Commission created on higher education laid the groundwork for subsequent Federal involvement and spurred a great deal of debate and interest within the higher education community, and recent developments and interest at the Federal level point towards a potential realization of even more of the **Commission's aims**”.⁶¹⁶

The recommendations for change made in the report of the Truman Commission, whilst underutilised in its own time, echoed through educational legislation for decades afterwards.

On the matter of segregation, the Commission's radical stance could not be side-lined. As Ravitch has recognised, “the Commission's stern denunciation of segregation and discrimination helped to chip away at the legitimacy of such policies; in the eyes of leading educators, there could be no defense of **discrimination**”.⁶¹⁷ Ravitch demonstrates that, due to the Commission's vocal and **widely heard condemnation of racism in the US education system, “In future** discussions of education and social policy, the issue of racial inequality could no **longer be ignored**”.⁶¹⁸ Although the **Commission's recommendations that the** American education system be desegregated were not immediately acted upon, it brought the issue to the forefront of educational thought and policy, thereby **ensuring that it would remain a ‘hot issue’ whenever education** was discussed.

Other Federal Education Programmes

The Truman Commission was not the only federally appointed body which discussed discrimination in the education system in the 1950s. Among others, the USOE and the PCCR also discussed the problem, as did the Commissioners of Education within the pages of *School Life*. Similarly to the Truman Commission, all involved recognised the need, due to the Cold War, for education for African American students to improve, and for the Federal government to involve itself in the debate. The USOE and the PCCR recommended several programmes which were designed to improve the educational level of the African American community during the Truman Administration, and both bodies utilised the Cold War imperatives in order to demonstrate an impetus for expending time and **funds towards these projects beyond ‘merely’ the improvement of education for black students.**

The Education of ‘Negro’ Leaders

In 1948, the USOE published a *Bulletin* entitled “**Education of Negro Leaders: Influences Affecting Graduate and Professional Studies**”. In it, the USOE acknowledged the logistical need to steadily increase the number of African Americans who had been educated to a high enough standard to be able to take on positions of power and responsibility within the African American community and to act as trailblazers and role models to younger generations. It also advocated for the improvement of African American education in order to enable well-trained African Americans to take on roles in mainstream American society, such as **US ambassadors to overseas nations that were dubious about the USA’s** civil rights record. The *Bulletin* recommended that Federal involvement would be

needed in order to solve this problem, as it identified the local and State governments in the South as both the controlling interest in Southern education and as the root cause of the lack of progress in this area. Only the Federal government, the USOE argued, could control the local, and often white supremacist, governments in the Southern bloc.⁶¹⁹

The *Bulletin* suggested that the main reason why the African American community had so few students progressing to excellence was because African American schools (elementary and secondary), colleges and universities received such a low proportion of the Federal funds set aside for education. The USOE *Bulletin* recognised that, especially in the Southern States, the equally proportioned funds for schools that the Federal government delivered to the State governments, which the State governments passed on in mostly equal proportions to the local governments, were then diverted by the local governments to the white schools, leaving the African American schools to fend for themselves.⁶²⁰ **This was neither the Federal government's fault, nor a misappropriation of the funds as, once the funds were delivered to the local governments, they were the property of the local governments to apportion as they saw fit. There were, of course, no caveats allowed on the apportionment of the Federal government's funds as it had no direct right to interfere with the schools.**

The USOE believed, however, that the local government's use of Federal funds did not reflect the Federal government's intention, and claimed that "whatever the will of the Federal government has been in this matter of equitable distribution of its funds, that will has, by one means or another, been thwarted".⁶²¹ The *Bulletin* recommended that, in order to regain control, the

Federal government should include an equalisation clause in all Federal appropriation Acts, or request that all administrators of Federal educational funds “institute policies and practices in an effort to ensure more equitable distribution of such funds”, the like of which would be dictated by the Federal government.^{622: 623} This would indeed have prevented the local governments from overfunding white schools at the expense of the African American schools, but would have also encroached upon local government rights and would constitute **a move towards a central or ‘big’ government.**

The *Bulletin* justified this overstep in Federal authority by demonstrating that, due to the Cold War imperatives, the Federal government in fact *did* have **the right to institute such a policy. The USOE identified that “from the standpoint of both moral responsibility and national interest, the Federal government has concern in assuring the Negro's equal opportunity for the preparation of qualified leaders for their own group as well as for the nation generally”.**⁶²⁴ The USOE noted the strategic benefit, and demonstrated that

“providing larger opportunities for colored people in America may have two effects... first, it will give further evidence of our sincerity as a nation as we assume world leadership of democracy; and second it will ensure a source of supply of leaders that may be more understanding of the needs of certain groups of these colored peoples throughout the world and who also may be more acceptable to these groups and more effective than white leaders... No better proof could be given to the tens of millions of colored peoples, whose confidence we cherish, that our offer of leadership is sincere than by enlarging the opportunities of Negroes in our own country

to prepare themselves, and to put their preparation to use, both in this country and abroad”.⁶²⁵

The USOE’s *Bulletin* stated that “what an extension of the practice of preparing Negroes in the field of public administration as well as technical and professional fields, would mean to our good neighbor policy, not only in South America, but in Asia, **Africa and the South Pacific, is not difficult to imagine**”.⁶²⁶ It recognised that the improvement of African American students’ access to education would serve to mollify overseas critics of the USA and to improve the USA’s standing in the Third World. In addition, as the Truman Commission had identified, racism in education was also more evident to foreign visitors than many other forms of discrimination as a significant number of non-white visitors to the USA came to study, and therefore experienced first-hand the discrimination non-white students faced in American education.⁶²⁷

In addition to the strategic benefits these new ambassadors could bring, the *Bulletin* highlighted the logistical benefits. It reiterated the nation’s manpower shortage and asserted that “**never before was the need so great for men and women who are trained in the scientific and technical fields, who have an understanding of the human and social implications of these fields and who are imbued with the spirit of service**”.⁶²⁸ For the most part, argued the *Bulletin*, African Americans – especially in the South – were so undereducated that the nation could not hope to expect them to contribute to its progression, and this was an oversight that the USA could ill afford.

Moreover, the USOE acknowledged a snow-ball effect, suggesting that a few well-trained, well-placed ‘**Negro Leaders**’ could inspire the remainder of the **African American community to excel, thus greatly benefitting the USA’s**

manpower shortage. The *Bulletin* demonstrated that an integrated and fair education system could prove vital to the USA's Cold War effort in a number of varied ways. No information exists as to the fate of this Executive recommendation. As it would have required the co-operation of Congress to implement, however, **it is probable that it was abandoned as Truman's** relationship with the legislative branch made it unlikely to have been successful.

Literacy Programmes

Increasing the number of African Americans who occupied high level jobs by making Federal funding fairer was not the only plan which the USOE intended to implement in order to improve the educational level of the African American community during the Truman Administration. Whilst it was attempting to improve education at the very highest level, it was also working towards raising literacy levels among blacks at the very bottom of the educational spectrum. Spurred on by a combination of the shockingly low literacy levels which African American men attained on the Selective Service tests during the Second World War, and the results of the 1940 Census which revealed that roughly two out of every five adult African Americans were considered to be functionally illiterate, the USOE created, sponsored and promoted an adult education programme exclusively for African Americans to improve levels of literacy from the end of the Second World War onwards.⁶²⁹

Commissioner Studebaker discussed the need for the programme at a USOE Conference, and invoked the logistical Cold War imperative by stating that **“we have millions of** adults who are now illiterate at a time when we need their intelligent understanding of our domestic and world problems more than this

country ever needed such understanding before”.⁶³⁰ He was supported in his efforts by General Arthur P. Trudeau, who **acknowledged that “civilian society can determine to reap the benefits of the untapped capacities of many of our adult illiterates”.**⁶³¹ The USOE identified the nation’s **need for a literate populace,** especially during times of war, and noted that illiterate people were often more susceptible to low standards of living and to subversive messages, neither of **which a Cold War USA could afford. The USOE demonstrated that “many of the** ills which affect human beings – disease, poverty, crime and maladjustments – find their greatest incidence among the least educated. Moreover, so large a mass of undereducated people become a drag on the entire population. The lack of national wealth and strength resulting from this untapped reservoir of human **resources is incalculable”.**⁶³²

The programme ran at a number of US higher education institutions, including both segregated and integrated schools; in particular, Atlanta University, Fort Valley State Teachers College, Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State College, Fisk University, Hampton Institute and Virginia State College were especially active.⁶³³ The programme further corroborates the fact **that the USOE, and by extension Truman’s Executive branch, understood that** the nation desperately needed to improve basic education levels among African Americans as a matter of national security; as a man who attended one of these **USOE workshops stated, “you got to have learnin’ before you can do most anything”;** another highlighted the logistical benefits of the programme, and highlighted that **“if only our foreparents [sic] had had this, I wouldn’t be in this fix today”.**⁶³⁴

The President's Committee on Civil Rights

The PCCR, another commission created by Truman, viewed racism and its **elimination as very much the Federal government's problem**, and listed several reasons why the government should lead the way in the fight for civil rights in its **report. Firstly, the Committee demonstrated that “the extension of civil rights today means not protection of the people against the government, but protection of the people by the government”** [emphasis in original], a statement which echoed the **Executive branch's** own argument that it had a constitutional responsibility to protect the nation despite traditional understanding of educational authority or policy.⁶³⁵ The PCCR demonstrated that it is often **“private persons or local public officers” who perpetuate racism, not the government**, and that these people should be made answerable to the Federal government. Secondly, it identified that there were a host of localised issues of discrimination, but it believed that, in general, the American populace as a whole supported the call for improved civil rights for African Americans, therefore the Federal government must provide a strong central leadership in order to eliminate the local problems. Third, the PCCR reiterated the argument that these local issues had global implications, and the Federal government could not safely disregard an issue which posed such a threat to national security. Fourth, the PCCR argued that Americans, regardless of colour, looked to the Federal government to defend their rights, therefore the Federal government must do so.

Finally, and most importantly, the PCCR argued that the Federal government was the only organisation which was in possession of the means necessary to affect change in the USA. The Federal government controlled federal taxes, statutes and a host of other measures, and therefore it was in a position to

impose strictures on State and local governments which would ensure that it acted in line with a federally sponsored plan for tackling racism in the USA. The PCCR believed that the government had a range of political tactics at its disposal which, if properly utilised, could ensure that civil rights were afforded where due. The PCCR clarified its radical plan by informing readers that it was not **recommending that the Federal government use this method “beyond the point of necessity”, for fear that it would interfere with the nation’s freedom.**⁶³⁶

The PCCR took a firm stance against racism in schools, colleges and high schools, and recommended in its final report, which dealt with eliminating racism in all walks of American life, that the Federal government should actually legislate against racism by enacting a Fair Educational Practices Law. This law, it suggested, would apply to both public and private institutions (although not religious institutions) and prevent them from discriminating against students on **the basis of “race, color or creed or national origin, and motivated by prejudice or bigotry” in admissions policies or educational practices.**⁶³⁷ Religious institutions were excepted as discrimination on *religious* grounds was deemed to be central to their purpose. The Committee also recommended that, after a fair period of adjustment had taken place, the Federal government should enforce this law by withholding Federal grants-in-aid from any and all institutions which did not comply with the law.⁶³⁸

Once again, the recommendations fell outside the government’s scope within the educational sphere. To counter this, the PCCR reiterated the **Federal government’s Cold War imperatives**, which the PCCR claimed gave it the right to **take action. The Committee highlighted the USA’s declining reputation overseas**, and included in the report several excerpts from newspapers which decried the

USA's approach to civil rights. These included a clipping from the *Washington Post* from May 1947 that stated that “diplomatic circles said that the two instances of mob violence [in North Carolina] would provide excellent propaganda ammunition for Communist agents who have been decrying America's brand of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’”.⁶³⁹

The PCCR successfully reminded its audience that the USA's two most valued ideological values – democracy and freedom – were repeatedly called into question overseas, to the point where diplomats could predict the fallout before it happened. The PCCR also demonstrated that the Federal government must act with immediacy to tackle the entrenched racism in the USA. As overseas opinion of the USA declined, so did the stability of US imports and exports; the PCCR recognised that it is “more than a humanitarian ideal that is involved here; our economic wellbeing is at stake”, thus bestowing a tangible value upon the abstract concept of racism and its implications.⁶⁴⁰ It is clear from the report that all involved in the PCCR opposed institutional racism and viewed the moral implications of second class citizenry based on skin colour as reason enough to outlaw all racist practices, but Cold War imperatives were repeatedly utilised throughout the report in order to further justify its plans, and to validate Federal involvement within the education system.

The Truman Administration and the Courts

The final method through which the Executive branch of the Truman Administration attempted to gain influence over the developments occurring within education for African Americans was through the Justice Department's submission of *amicus curiae* briefs to Supreme Court trials concerned with

discrimination in education, most notably, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Truman also exerted his **Executive power to make several ‘crony’ appointments** to the Justice Department, and also favoured loyalty over suitability in the four nominations he made to the Supreme Court during his Administration.⁶⁴¹

Although there is no evidence to suggest beyond reasonable doubt that **Truman’s Supreme Court appointments actually deferred to him during their tenure, it is reasonable to suggest that this was Truman’s original intention** when he chose time and again to nominate his political confidantes over more qualified candidates. Indeed, Truman himself even **lamented that “packing a Supreme Court simply can’t be done” which he knew for sure because “I’ve tried it and it won’t work... whenever you put a man on the Supreme Court, he ceases to be your friend, I’m sure of that”**.⁶⁴² **Three of Truman’s four appointments were still** serving on the bench during the *Brown* decision in 1954. One of these nominees, Attorney General Tom C. Clark, was a controversial appointment as he was widely **recognised to be a ‘crony’ appointment at the time. Clark had headed up the** Justice Department during the period in which it began submitting unsolicited *amicus* briefs in support of civil rights cases; however, despite the controversy, he was a popular choice with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which defended his selection.⁶⁴³

Truman’s fourth appointment, Sherman Minton, is also widely considered to be a ‘crony’ appointment; historian of the Supreme Court, Henry Julian Abraham, has noted that **“it is clear that loyal personal and political dedication was once again rewarded”** when Truman named Sherman to the Supreme Court in 1949.⁶⁴⁴ **It must be noted that Minton’s position on civil** rights was also well known before he was appointed; as historian John R. Hale **has noted**, “Minton

had already made his position clear on civil rights during his stint as a senator for **Indiana**".⁶⁴⁵ Minton "regarded his most important vote on the bench to be a silent one: the one he cast with the unanimous justices in May 1954, joining Chief Justice Earl Warren's historic ruling that, free from any either dissenting or concurring opinions, declared compulsory segregation of public schools **unconstitutional**".⁶⁴⁶ More interestingly, it was Sherman that delivered an impassioned speech to the Supreme Court in the final days of the Truman Administration in an attempt to convince the Court to take on the *Brown* case.⁶⁴⁷ Jeffrey D. Hockett has suggested that "the justices who proved most receptive" to the issues highlighted in the *amicus* briefs from the Justice Department "were those who had been appointed by the Administration that brought these matters to the Court's attention – Harold Burton, Sherman Minton, and especially Harry Truman's former Attorney General, Tom Clark".⁶⁴⁸

The final way in which the Truman Administration attempted to circumvent each State's right to govern their own education system was through the submission of *amicus curiae* briefs which highlighted the strategic imperative for civil rights reform to court cases that dealt with discrimination in education.¹² In this instance it was Truman's Justice Department, initially led by Attorney General Tom C. Clark and later J. Howard McGrath and James P. McGranery, and the State Department, led first by Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, and later George C. Marshall and Dean Acheson, which attempted to influence the US education system by utilising the powers that were at their disposal, albeit in an

¹² Truman's Justice Department submitted *amicus* briefs in civil rights cases that focused on a variety of topics, but this thesis is concerned only with those that focused on discrimination in education.

innovative and highly unorthodox manner. The initial concerns were brought to the Justice Department by the State Department, which had experienced firsthand the damage which discrimination in the USA **could do to America's overseas** image.⁶⁴⁹ As Acting Secretary of State, Acheson wrote to the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in May 1946 that it was "quite obvious" that race discrimination interfered with foreign relations, and noted that the State Department had "good reason to hope for the continued and increased effectiveness of public and private efforts to do away with these discriminations."⁶⁵⁰ The Justice Department first intervened in a case in which it was not a party in 1948 in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, a property rights case against African Americans that questioned States' rights.⁶⁵¹

Although this was a power that was at the disposal of the Executive branch, just like the utilisation of the power to create presidential commissions, it had never been utilised in such a way before; the Justice Department had never before intervened in a case in which it was not a party. As Dudziak has noted,

"the Truman Administration's involvement in high profile desegregation cases was a new practice. The United States was not a plaintiff or a defendant in these cases. The Justice Department filed *amicus curiae* briefs to inform the court of important interests at stake beyond those presented by the parties to the cases. Previously, the Justice Department had filed *amicus* briefs only in cases where the United States had a concrete interest at stake. The cases leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education* did not involve a concrete federal interest".⁶⁵²

Clark later stated that the briefs submitted by the Justice Department during the **Truman Administration "gave the [civil rights] case [the] emphasis necessary for**

an expedited decision... I think our joining these cases were [sic] really more effective than if we had filed them ourselves”.⁶⁵³ The most important *amicus* brief filed in *Brown* was filed in December 1952, in the last weeks of the Truman Administration.⁶⁵⁴ This brief noted that school segregation had been “singled out for hostile foreign comment in the United Nations and elsewhere. Other peoples cannot understand how such a practice can exist in a country which professes to be a staunch supporter of freedom, justice and democracy”.⁶⁵⁵ A statement from President Truman at the end of the brief corroborated the earlier sentiments expressed, then stated that “we know the way, we only need the will”.⁶⁵⁶ President Truman clearly demonstrated the will to engender progress in education for African American students.

From Truman to Eisenhower

The PCCR highlighted in 1947 that “the American people have always mistrusted the American government and have feared the evils that flow from it. But we have never hesitated to entrust power and responsibility to the national government when a convincing need for a course of action has been demonstrated”.⁶⁵⁷ The Truman Commission were also clear in their understanding that, if tangible alterations were to be made in the extermination of discrimination in the education system, then the power and might of the Federal government would have to be committed to change. Each organisation’s belief that Federal involvement would add weight and legitimacy to its plans was strong. This belief, however, was misplaced, as this unquestioning support from the Federal government did not materialise at the time at which it was most needed.

On 17th May 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously voted to declare segregated educational facilities to be unconstitutional as, it asserted, separate facilities could never be equal. The ruling was a landmark decision and overturned the earlier Supreme Court decision made in 1896 in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which has established that separate facilities for white and non-white US citizens was constitutionally viable. Yet this historic case, which had begun, and was originally argued, during the Truman Administration, was decided a little over a year into the Eisenhower Administration. This could have been of benefit to the Civil Rights movement – a movement which gained a great deal of momentum from its success with the *Brown* decision; President Dwight D. Eisenhower had a far better relationship with Congress than President Truman had had, and therefore was far better placed to attempt to work with this branch of government in the pursuit of positive change for African Americans.⁶⁵⁸ Ostensibly, the imperative for change had not altered; the Cold War was still happening, and an improved education system for African American students was still equally as worth pursuing. Eisenhower, however, did not share President **Truman’s personal imperative for the pursuit of civil rights. He had opposed the desegregation of the armed forces in 1948, considering it to be ‘disruptive’, and never publicly declared his support for *Brown*.**

In addition, he was in a vastly different political situation to Truman; As a Democrat, Truman had been motivated by his pursuit of the traditionally Republican African American vote – as a Republican, Eisenhower courted the traditionally Democrat Southern white vote. As James T. Patterson noted in *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, **“Eisenhower approached the issue of school desegregation very cautiously. Some**

of his top advisors, noting the gains the Republican Party had made among white voters in the South during the 1952 election, urged him to move carefully, lest the **party forfeit possible political advantage**".⁶⁵⁹ Truman demonstrated both a moral and political imperative for advancing civil rights during his Administration; due to his personal and political situation, Eisenhower could demonstrate neither.

Although Patterson argued that Eisenhower did not support *Brown* at all, he gave no **consideration to Dudziak's research in his monograph**;¹³ Dudziak's acknowledgement of the strategic Cold War imperative adds a new light to **Patterson's straightforward interpretation of the situation. Dudziak has** highlighted that Eisenhower clearly understood the implications which domestic policy had upon foreign policy, as he demonstrated as such during the Little Rock crisis. Eisenhower *only* recognised the strategic Cold War imperative for **integrating America's schools, however, and in 1954 this 'strategic imperative'** did not call for any actual domestic change to the segregated US schools at which the Supreme Court decision was precisely targeted. The press coverage generated by the historic ruling was enough to mollify the USA's **critics overseas, reinforce the perception of the nation's commitment to democracy and equality, and improve the country's global image. With the passage of *Brown*, the strategic imperative for desegregation of the US education system was fulfilled, and Eisenhower's support for its actual implementation – as called for by the logistical imperative – was not forthcoming.**

Historian Michael S. Meyer has noted that "Eisenhower dug in his heels and attempted to put a break on the accelerated rate and scope of change. He

¹³ As Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights* was published only a year before Patterson's book, it is possible that he was unable to take her research into account.

supported the Court's ruling when necessary, but only to the minimum extent he believed the law required".⁶⁶⁰ Eisenhower's failure to acknowledge the logistical aspects of the Cold War imperative for change was impacted by a numbers of elements. Firstly, unlike Truman, he was lacking in motivating factors; there was no political imperative for improving civil rights in the education system as the Republican Party was not courting the black vote, as the Democratic Party had been, but was in fact courting the Southern Democrats, who were significantly more likely to be opposed to desegregation in schools. In addition, Eisenhower had no personal motivation to further pursue equality for African American students; his personal opinions were more closely aligned with *Brown's* traducers than its supporters. Finally, in a major blow to the Civil Rights movement, the powerful Massive Resistance movement established itself in opposition to the integration of the schools.

Those in favour of segregation even had **their own 'Cold War imperative'**. An argument began to emerge that the ever expanding influence of the Federal government, as demonstrated by the overreach of power in the *Brown* decision, was turning the USA into a Communist-like State with an all-powerful central government. Historian George Lewis has identified that this argument

"allowed [segregationists] to expand upon existing claims of nefarious communist involvement in the promotion of civil rights. Second, it handed **southern resistors the ability to recast many of the region's** long-held, traditional arguments in a new light, thus renovating a number of defensive strategies that were in danger of looking increasingly tired and anachronistic. Finally, it offered at least the possibility of transforming

what was perceived, in essence, to be a southern sectional problem of race **relations into an American problem of national security**".⁶⁶¹

One segregationist, speaking in 1956, demonstrated that central power represented a far greater threat to the nation than State power as, he claimed, **"it is much easier to subvert a central government than it is to subvert forty-eight State governments"**.⁶⁶² This utilisation of the Cold War imperative on behalf of the cause of segregation had the potential to greatly undermine the efficacy of the argument **when utilised to underline the Federal government's own cause. Eisenhower's lack of personal or political motivation** to enforce *Brown* alongside the increased difficulty inherent in doing so meant that he did not openly enforce it until pro-segregationists undermined Federal authority and threatened to **damage the USA's reputation once again in Little Rock, AK, in 1957.**

Eisenhower's lack of personal commitment to the Civil Rights movement, alongside the Republican Party's political commitment to establishing a voter base in the Deep South and the powerful support for segregation created by the **Massive Resistance movement, closed Eisenhower's eyes to the existence of a** logistical imperative, to the extent that African American education policy slipped out of consideration during the Eisenhower Administration. That Eisenhower did not comprehend the logistical benefits which an improvement in African **American education provision could bring to the USA's Cold War effort can be** seen clearly in his own exploration into the state of the US education system. In 1956, the fruits of these explorations were published. He received reports from both his White House Conference on Education (1955) and the **President's** Committee on Education Beyond the High School (1956); these reports highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the US higher education system, and

both focused on two specific needs – the need to greatly expand the USA’s manpower pool in order to safeguard the nation in the Cold War, and the need for the Federal government to provide increased funding to higher education, despite not having a constitutional role to play.⁶⁶³

Like Truman, the importance of Federal involvement within the education system in order to protect US national security despite traditionally not having a constitutional right to do so, and the increase of the manpower pool as the method through which national security should be protected, were goals to which Eisenhower was openly committed, but unlike Truman, he did not include African American students at all in his plans to do so. In the report of the **President’s Committee on Education Beyond the High School**, the manpower problem was discussed on three separate occasions, yet the contribution which the underutilised African American community could make is not mentioned at all. In fact, neither African Americans nor desegregation are mentioned at any point throughout the 108-page report. Segregation was discussed in the report of the White House Conference; it **identified that “the relationship of the issue of segregation to the generally accepted goal of equal educational opportunity” was “an area of conflicting opinions not entirely resolved by Supreme Court action”**.⁶⁶⁴

Interestingly, minorities were included in both reports – the need to protect the nation was not so pressing that the needs of women and disabled children were forgotten by the President’s Committee and the White House Conference respectively; discussion of the under-utilisation of women in science was included, as was the need, in a democratic society, to take better care of children identified to have severe learning difficulties. Neither report was particularly ground-breaking, nor were they shocking. In fact, the majority of

what was recommended by each group had already been suggested before (and much of it by the Truman Commission itself).⁶⁶⁵ This places the discussion of African American students in the position of being all the more notorious by its absence. Eisenhower was willing to support *Brown* in order to meet the demands of the strategic Cold War imperative, but without recognition of how important the *actual* improvement of African American education provision could be to the **USA's Cold War effort, the logistical** Cold War imperative was left unfulfilled.

It is not the case that *Brown* had no impact **without Eisenhower's support. The most compelling case is of Arkansas' school districts Hoxie, Fayetteville, Biggers-Reyno and Charleston**, where the all-white school boards chose to comply with the ruling despite no demonstration of support from Eisenhower.⁶⁶⁶ One member of the school board in Hoxie has subsequently stated that he and his **fellows made this decision because "it was the law of the land" and "we thought it was the right thing to do"**.⁶⁶⁷ It is the case, however, that *Brown* could have had **far greater impact had the ruling had Eisenhower's support**. Judge Warren was **clear in his belief that Eisenhower's refusal to offer his support to the ruling** directly contributed to its lack of effect.⁶⁶⁸

After the ruling was handed down, Eisenhower offered no public show of support, and privately often voiced his disagreement with the ruling.⁶⁶⁹ Meyer **has noted that this silence "gave encouragement to Southern States preparing to argue for the slowest possible implementation when the Supreme Court convened that fall"**.⁶⁷⁰ When invited to participate in the oral arguments on implementation, the Southern States that agreed to participate advocated for **slow processes. Meyer asserts that the Southern States' position "can be summed up along the following lines: any attempt to desegregate school facilities would**

encounter grave obstacles”.⁶⁷¹ Indeed, in Arkansas, the positive movement towards integration did not last long after a *Life* magazine article drew attention to the school integration in Hoxie and prompted the arrival of segregationist organisations, bringing an end to the peaceful integration there.⁶⁷²

Where the schools did not voluntarily take steps towards desegregation, Eisenhower steadfastly refused to get involved and repeatedly refused to endorse *Brown* publicly.⁶⁷³ He also attempted to distance the decision from the Administration under which it was made – when reporter Harry C. Dent noted on 19th May 1954 that the decision had been made under a Republican Administration, Eisenhower retorted that **“The Supreme Court, as I understand it, is not under any administration”**.⁶⁷⁴ Unlike Truman, he made few attempts to ‘maximise’ his Executive power on behalf civil rights. Eisenhower believed that, as the Judicial branch had advocated for integration, it was **this branch’s domain** to enforce.⁶⁷⁵ Where he did invoke his Executive power, for example at Central High School in Little Rock in 1957, it was for a combination of strategic motivations and to uphold the sanctity of Federal power, rather than a committed, long-term involvement in domestic civil rights progress.

Eisenhower deployed the **National Guard to Arkansas, and the world’s press praised Eisenhower’s firm stance on the importance of desegregation**. Shortly after the Little Rock crisis, however, their attention was drawn to another important event in the Cold War – the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite. This event overshadowed all that had come before it, and the events of Little Rock quickly dropped out of the papers.⁶⁷⁶ As desegregation was no longer on the **world’s stage, the strategic Cold War imperative** for change was gone once again, **and by the time the school year began in 1959, only one of the ‘Little Rock nine’**

remained enrolled in Central High School.⁶⁷⁷ Without the impetus provided by the strategic imperative, tackling segregation in education once again dropped off the top of the **Eisenhower's** to-do list.

As the PCCR recognised in 1947, “in a world forever tottering on the brink of war, civil rights are at best in a precarious position. In a nation wracked by depression and widespread economic insecurity, the deadly inclination to consider civil rights a luxury will be more easily accepted”.⁶⁷⁸ During the Eisenhower Administration, this became increasingly true. The extra obstacles to progress provided by the Massive Resistance movement coupled with a perceived increase in the importance of the education system to national security after the launch of Sputnik meant that a commitment to improving civil rights in education was increasingly seen as a luxury which the USA could not afford to pursue. Indeed, when Eisenhower was given the opportunity to offer support to the African American community, he did not.

Congressman Adam Clayton Powell attached an amendment to the majority of Federal school funding bills that were submitted to Congress during the Eisenhower Administration. This amendment was intended to ensure that no Federal funding was afforded to any school which had so far refused to integrate.⁶⁷⁹ Every bill failed whilst it had the Powell Amendment attached to it. **Powell's efforts provided President Eisenhower with a prime opportunity to demonstrate the support that Judge Warren had wanted him to. Moreover, Eisenhower's support for the Powell Amendment would more than likely have allowed his own School Construction Bill, a cause to which he *was* committed, to pass.**⁶⁸⁰ **Not only did Eisenhower not demonstrate support for Powell's Amendments, he even asked Powell not to attach it to the National Defense**

Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, for fear it would derail it.⁶⁸¹ In addition, **Eisenhower's** support would have enabled him to uphold the law. Eisenhower did not perceive the logistical benefit, however, of improving educational provision for African Americans, nor did he harbour a personal imperative to do so. As such, for Eisenhower, the benefits of upholding the law did not outweigh the political fallout he would have incurred from supporting the Powell Amendment. Eisenhower could afford to side-line the battle over desegregation, especially after **the USA's** overseas critics had been mollified, but he could not afford to side-line the Cold War.

The 'Cold War Imperative' Theory vs. the 'Interest-Convergence' Theory

Derrick A. Bell Jr. established in his article "*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma" (1979/80) that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the **interests of whites**".⁶⁸² Bell asserted that the Fourteenth Amendment alone was not a strong enough motivator for white Americans to legislate for the progress of civil rights – progress had to benefit whites as well as blacks. He stated that "racial justice – or its appearance – may, from time to time, be counted among the interests deemed important by the courts and by society's **policymakers**" but also that "racial remedies may instead be the outward manifestations of unspoken and perhaps subconscious judicial conclusions that the remedies, if granted, will secure, advance, or at least not harm social interests deemed important by middle and upper class whites".⁶⁸³

This thesis has re-asserted the prominence of Bell's theory of the importance of a convergence of interests between white and black players in furthering the Civil Rights movement during the mid-20th century over Mary L. **Dudziak's more recent theory of the Cold War imperative** – that the Cold War specifically motivated the Federal government to act on behalf of the Civil Rights **movement during this period. This is not to say that Dudziak's theory is wrong, merely that it is limited, and that Bell's theory is a more suitable framework** through which to understand the interactions between the Federal government, the Civil Rights movement and the US education system after the Second World War.

Dudziak's framework grew out of the theory postulated by Bell, yet the benefit of her furtherance has never been fully explored. When closer attention is paid to the tenets of the theory of the Cold War imperative, it becomes clear that although it is useful to a certain extent in **explaining the Federal government's** motivations as impacted by the Cold War, it is not useful as a stand-alone theory apart from the Interest-Convergence theory. Wherever the Federal government was influenced by the Cold War imperative, this influence coincided with a wider convergence of interests which relied on a more complex series of motivating factors; the Cold War alone was not enough to motivate the Federal government to take action on civil rights during the 1950s, and at times it actively prevented it.

Dudziak has attempted to further Bell's theory by demonstrating that the Cold War imperative acted as an addendum to his theory. She demonstrated in **“Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative” (1988)** that the **“Cold War imperative was an important impetus for civil rights reform”** and that it was central to **“the**

government's posture on segregation".⁶⁸⁴ It is difficult to pin down Dudziak's exact argument; broadly speaking, she argues that the Federal government supported civil rights reform in order to fight the Cold War, and broadly speaking, she is correct. The many instances when the evidence does not support her theory, however, are glossed over by Dudziak, and she regularly uses speculation in order to re-inforce her theory.

She is unable to offer a conclusive explanation for why Secretary of State Dean Acheson called for civil rights reform in his letter to the FEPC, as she acknowledges that there is no way to fully resolve the issue of cause and effect in this instance. Was Dean Acheson recommending civil rights reform in order to mollify overseas critics, or was he using the mollification of overseas critics in order to justify his recommendations concerning an issue of domestic policy?⁶⁸⁵ **Both outcomes are accounted for within Bell's Interest-Convergence theory, and the impact – that Acheson influenced domestic policy from a foreign policy perspective – remains the same. The narrow strictures of Dudziak's Cold War imperative theory, however, cause her to assert that it was "unlikely that Dean Acheson... was a closet civil rights activist crafting an argument" despite the lack of compelling evidence provided to support this assertion.**⁶⁸⁶ The constricted, one-track outlook of the Cold War imperative theory has not allowed Dudziak to consider the possibility that both outcomes are true.

Similarly, Dudziak acknowledges that her theory is not generalisable to the Eisenhower Administration, but offers only the fact that the needs of the Cold War imperative had been satisfied by *Brown* as an explanation: Dudziak notes that "once America's image seemed secure, Cold War concerns dropped out as one of the factors encouraging civil rights reform".⁶⁸⁷ This is not incorrect when

applied to the strategic motivations for the Cold War imperative, but Dudziak's narrow interpretation of the role which the Cold War played in the Federal government's interaction with the civil rights debate over education, alongside her side-lining of the relevance of each President's personal commitment to civil rights, limits her understanding of her theory's relationship to the Eisenhower Administration. Dudziak also does not identify how Truman's consideration of African American education was not an isolated incident intended to mollify overseas critics, but was in fact part of a far larger consideration of education and the Cold War generally, with far more wide-ranging goals. The strategic imperative was only part of the story, and at this point quite a small part. The driving force of Federal concern over civil rights in education was as much voting strategy, manpower considerations and personal commitment as it was foreign policy considerations.

Dudziak's decision not to investigate Federal educational policy generally alongside her discussion of Federal education policy specifically for African Americans means that she has not identified the fact that from Truman to Eisenhower, general education policy barely altered, but the discussion of African American students' place within in was radically different. She has not identified how the consideration of African American students could have benefitted Eisenhower's wider policy, and therefore does not note how jarring its absence is. Dudziak is correct in her identification that the Cold War, and by extension the Cold War imperative, supported the movement towards getting *Brown* passed in 1954 but her explanation can be developed to take account of the greater complexity of the pressures at play. Her strength lies in her discussion of the international context of this state of affairs, but it is limited by her lack of

interaction with the wider domestic context. Both are needed to fully understand the relevance, and the limits of the relevance, of the Cold War imperative.

Bell's theory, however, is less reliant on the ebb and flow of policy and politics and the occupants of Executive branch; it is useful in explaining the interaction between the Federal government and the civil rights debate throughout the early years of the Cold War, and therefore is a far more useful framework through which to understand this period. Whilst Bell acknowledges the relevance of the strategic imperative, he also ascribes relevance to “those concerned about the immorality of racist inequality” and “those whites in policymaking positions able to see the economic and political advances at home and abroad”.⁶⁸⁸

Although wider education policies are not considered by Bell, the logistical benefits of desegregation outside of the education system or the Cold War are highlighted; Bell identifies **that “there were whites who realised** that the South could make the transition from a rural, plantation society to the sunbelt with all its potential and profit only when it ended its struggle to remain divided by **State-sponsored segregation”.**⁶⁸⁹ **Bell's article does not explore all of these** contexts in detail, but they are identified as relevant to the complete narrative. Those he elaborates upon, **such as the fact that “there were whites for whom recognition of the racial equality principle was sufficient motivation”** are also mentioned in passing by Dudziak – most likely because they were elaborated on by Bell – however with the obvious exception of the strategic imperative, the motivations that are mentioned by Bell, but that require further exploration, are not mentioned by Dudziak.⁶⁹⁰

Bell's theory does not rely on debateable outcomes or a specific view of events to be relevant; he merely asserts that where civil rights progress occurred in the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, the corresponding benefits to whites involved in the process can be identified, and where civil rights progress did not occur, it was often due to the lack of a corresponding benefit to whites. Bell does not allow for the idea that the convergence of interests must be *recognised* by the whites involved in the struggle for civil rights, but his theory is able to accommodate a more complex narrative which has allowed for further **exploration of the topic without invalidating the framework. Dudziak's Cold War** imperative theory **was intended to further Bell's** work, but is in fact less suited to fully explaining the nuances of the triangular interactions between the Federal government, the Civil Rights movement and the Cold War in the case of **education. As such, Bell's theory should be regarded as the dominant theoretical** framework for the study of this area.

Moreover, this thesis has furthered Bell's theory by highlighting the need for the white players to *acknowledge* that a convergence of interests could be possible, in addition to the existence of such a convergence. The **'convergence of interests' which existed between the Eisenhower Administration and the Civil** Rights movement had no impact upon Federal education policy during the 1950s. Importantly Eisenhower did not acknowledge the important role that African American students could have played in the logistical effort to improve the **nation's educated manpower pool, and** had no personal or political commitment to civil rights in education. As such, although the Cold War was of course very much still occurring, and the contribution which African American students were capable of making to the manpower pool was no more or less useful to the nation

than it had been prior to the *Brown* decision, **Eisenhower's** understanding of the needs of the USA's **Cold War effort** did not tally with those identified by the Civil Rights movement. The benefits wrought by the '**convergence of interests**', which had existed between the Civil Rights movement and the Truman Administration, disappeared with the inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Therefore, **as Bell's** theory predicts, this aspect of the Civil Rights movement received no support from the Federal government.

Conclusion

Overcoming segregation in education was hindered greatly in the early years of **the Cold War by the Federal government's own** Catch 22: Federal intervention was required in order to overcome the powerful opposition to integration and expanded opportunity, but Federal intervention was not legally possible. The Federal government did not have a constitutional right to intervene in the education system or in State matters. In framing its arguments for desegregation and equality of education for African Americans as national security issues rather than civil rights issues, the Federal government attempted to establish its right to **intervene in these matters, as issues of national security superseded States' rights** issues. This seemingly gave the US Federal government not only the right, but the responsibility, to attempt to tackle desegregation and equality in education, as it had done in the matters of education for democracy and science education.

The attempts of the Truman Commission and other official bodies to equalise access and opportunity within the American education system, though largely unsuccessful in achieving its aims immediately after the publication of its report in 1947, began a discourse which gained momentum over time. The

convergence of interests created by the Cold War imperative in both its strategic and logistical manifestations – first explored in the report of the Truman Commission – **and President Truman’s personal and political imperatives for change**, prompted the Executive branch of the Federal government to find ways in which to attempt to circumvent the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution. This enabled it to support the improvement of educational provision for African Americans, which included advocating desegregation in educational institutions in the years after the Second World War.

President Truman’s establishment of the Truman Commission, alongside the remit he outlined for discussions and his careful selection of members, ensured that this unorthodox utilisation of Executive power was in a position to recommend an increased Federal role in the education system in order to improve attention to African **American educational standards. The participants’ status as** members of a Presidential Commission also ensured that they were ideally placed to recommend desegregation in a forum in which their recommendation was **were sure to be heard. Although Truman’s difficulties with Congress coupled with the timing of the report’s publication stunted immediate action on the Commission’s recommendations, the ideas raised by the Truman Commission** had a long-term impact upon the education system, and both benefitted African American students and began to normalise the idea of a permanent Federal role in the US education system.

In addition, the Truman Administration created a number of programmes intended to support and improve African American education, and pursued several innovative attempts to garner the power to do so during the years after the Second World War, with varying degrees of success. All of the programmes

and initiatives, however, included mention of how the programme could be of **benefit to the USA's Cold War** effort in addition to the African American community, thus **re-asserting the importance of Derrick A. Bell Jr.'s Interest-Convergence** theory as a framework for understanding the complicated interactions between the Federal government and the education system in the matter of civil rights during this period.

The discussion of the wider education system and the separate Administrations alongside African American education policy has allowed for the unpacking of **Mary L. Dudziak's theory** of the 'Cold War imperative', **and has led to the understanding that there were in fact at least three 'imperatives' for change** where civil rights in education was concerned – not all of which were related to the Cold War specifically – **instead of Dudziak's one, strategic, imperative**. This in turn has also allowed for a deeper investigation of the limits of the usefulness of the Cold War imperative theory as a framework through which to understand the interaction between the Federal government and the Civil Rights movement in the matter of education during the 1950s. The understanding that general Federal education policy did not change drastically between the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations places a spotlight on the changes that occurred over African American education policy, and as such necessitates the provision of an explanation which goes beyond the discussion of the loss of the strategic Cold War **imperative for change. This exploration also furthered Bell's framework** by highlighting the importance of perception to his theory.

Eisenhower was not opposed to the expansion of Federal authority in the **education system, as evidenced by his continuation of Truman's wider education** policy goals during his Administration. He perceived the logistical Cold War

benefits inherent within these policies, and as such also perceived the education system as relevant to the Federal responsibility to protect national security. He did not, however, acknowledge the relevance of the logistical Cold War imperative for progress in civil rights **to his Administration's Cold War effort due to a number of factors, none of which are directly related to Dudziak's strategic imperative.** He could boast no political imperative as his party was courting Southern Democrats rather than African American voters during the 1950s; his own personal considerations of civil rights in education were more closely, although not completely, aligned with the Massive Resistance movement over the Civil Rights movement; finally, the strength of the Massive Resistance movement significantly increased the ease with which he could intervene in the promotion of civil rights within the education system, and therefore the benefits to the nation of doing so.

The Cold War cannot be claimed **as having been 'useful' to the Civil Rights** movement in the education system. Bell noted in 1979 that, 25 years after the passage of *Brown*, **"most black children [still] attend public schools that are both racially isolated and inferior".**⁶⁹¹ Bell blamed this on a combination of **"demographic patterns, white flight and the inability of the courts to effect the necessary degree of social reform".**⁶⁹² Moreover, it cannot be claimed that the Cold War, and by extension the Cold War imperative for change, improved civil rights in education in the early years of the Cold War as, cumulatively, the Cold War did far more damage to the cause of civil rights in the education system during the 1950s than it did good. This can largely be attributed to the fact that the Cold War imperative was not tied to one cause or mission other than the winning of the Cold War; where it supported the Civil Rights movement, it could

be used to do just that. Equally, however, when the needs of the Cold War effort were better supported by actively **not** supporting the Civil Rights movement, as they often were during the Eisenhower Administration, then the Cold War imperative in fact limited the progress of civil rights in the USA.

CONCLUSION

At the Conference on Higher Education in the National Service in 1950, the pledge read **“we pledge to the President of the United States, Commander-in-Chief of our Nation, the total strength of our colleges and universities – our faculties, our students, our administrative organizations, and our physical facilities”**.⁶⁹³ The pledge continued by stating **“we pledge the resources of higher education to define and promulgate the principles of American Democracy, both among our own people and to the other peoples of the world”**.⁶⁹⁴ Commissioner of Education Earl J. McGrath publicly stated in 1951 that Federal involvement in education had increased in order to achieve federally desired outcomes. McGrath **claimed that “the people of the Nation, without in any way modifying the State and local control, have increasingly employed the Federal government to achieve educational objectives not otherwise attainable”**.⁶⁹⁵ By 1950, the Federal government’s pattern of utilising the education system in times of national emergencies had taken hold, and the shift had garnered little opposition.

The goldilocks conditions created after the close of the Second World War both encouraged and enabled the US Federal government - in particular the Executive branch and, more briefly, the Judicial branch - to expand its role in the US education system. The first step towards this change was the increase in the perceived importance of education to national security. This began after the Second World War and was intensified by the outbreak of the Cold War. Moreover, the post war expansion of centralised government programmes both within and without the USA and the success of the education provisions included within the GI Bill contributed to the provocation of a burgeoning union between **education and politics. This coupled with Truman’s particular concern for the**

education system to initiate **the Executive branch's amplified participation in the** structure and direction of the US education system. Within the context of race, the escalating post war racial tension and protest, particularly present in the South, also converged with both an increased need for a better educated populace (a populace which included black students) and a greater focus on US racial politics due to the increased perception of the relationship between education and **societal progress. When combined with Truman's penchant for expanded educational opportunity, and the Democratic Party's desire to garner black votes,** the USA briefly encountered the right social conditions for educational change.

These changes manifested particularly in the field of science education and research, the development of education for democratic citizenship, and the equalisation of opportunity and access for African American students. Within these fields the Executive branch conceived of a number of innovative methods through which it could increase its involvement in the administration and direction of the US education system. President Truman established a presidential commission focused on education, which represented a significant departure from the earlier mandate of presidential commissions. The Executive branch then worked within the confines of the commission structure, however, to ensure that the carefully selected members presented a report which answered the cleverly outlined mandate conferred upon them at their appointment. The report **supported the Executive branch's intentions in all three areas of concern** – education for democracy, the increase of scientific manpower and the need for desegregation. The use of the commission as a method for intervention was unorthodox, however its unorthodox usage did not prevent it from being subject to the usual problems inherent in presidential commissions; specifically, it was

thwarted in its attempts to catch the attention of Congress, and thus its impact upon the education system was, in part, delayed.

The Executive also utilised what little power it already wielded in the education system, and expanded the powers of the United States Office of Education. The programmes recommended, funded and administered by this Office often directly supported the **Truman Administration's wider goals for the** education system. In particular, programmes designed to increase the curriculum focus on teaching democracy over communism, and those intended to reduce the achievement gap between African American students and white students were particularly successful. Funding for scientific research was also carefully administered in order to ensure that research was carried out in a more streamlined manner than previously, in order to increase the flow of basic research from the universities into the wider US industry. Finally, the government utilised the powers that were already available to it in order to circumvent the need to interfere directly in the education system. It made use of its power to control and administer the draft during the Korean War to both increase the focus upon science as a discipline, and to protect and bolster the **USA's stock of scientifically trained manpower.**

The Executive branch was not successful in every endeavour it pursued during this period. **In particular, Truman's relationship with Congress, and the** propensity of wider national issues to take precedence over the administration of the education system were common roadblocks. The Cold War and the threats it brought to national security did not alter the separation of powers in the US Federal government, and therefore President Truman was limited in his influence. Moreover, his brief attempts to reduce the separation between the

Executive and Judicial branches by ‘stacking the court’ were unsuccessful, and many programmes or initiatives which required support from outside the Executive branch were stunted or delayed. It is the case, however, that many of the Executive initiatives that were pursued encountered surprisingly little opposition from outside the Federal government.

Many endeavours, such as the government’s administration of the draft and the programmes created by the USOE, enjoyed greater success and had a significant impact upon the day to day learning experiences of US students. The **‘Zeal for American Democracy’ programme altered social studies education; the** governmental scientific research grants simultaneously increased basic research in universities and the dependence of US universities on the US government; the literacy programmes enabled illiterate African Americans to begin to progress in their education. Certain initiatives also had long-term impacts, despite not **making an immediate impression in the classroom. The report of the President’s** Commission on Higher Education predicted the direction of the US education system for decades afterwards even though early critics dismissed its recommendations as too radical and wide-ranging to be possible.

This was not the first period in which the US Federal government had gained some influence over the US education system – such influence had been a common feature of the relationship between the Federal government and the US education system throughout US history. Similarly to the situation after the Second World War, this influence was usually pursued during times of national crisis, such as war or economic downturns; it focused upon ensuring that the education system was serving the needs of the nation during the period of crisis. Each administration was innovative in its methods and despite opposition, they

were repeatedly successful in their aims. The innovative methods which the Executive branch conceived of in order to increase its involvement after the Second World War mirrored these earlier examples, as did the reasoning behind its efforts – the perceived need for the US education system to serve the nation in the post war/ Cold War climate. These actions fundamentally altered the structure of the American education system by significantly increasing the level of influence which the Federal government wielded, and this influence has never subsided.

Unlike the Federal government's earlier forays into the education system, the long-term nature of the Cold War left the encroachment with no natural end-date and thus engendered a shift to long-term fiscal and policy involvement on a scale not seen before in the USA. After the passage of the NDEA, the question was no longer 'should the Federal government play a formal role within the education system', but instead, 'what should the Federal government's role be?' This easy shift was no doubt accomplished by the normalisation of Federal involvement in the education system which had occurred throughout the 1950s. **Following the passage of the NDEA, the Federal government's role in higher education was confirmed and, in the subsequent decades, a plethora of federally sponsored programmes and acts were enacted. Greater steps were taken in legitimising the *Brown* decision, as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 called for the withholding of Federal funds from any school district where segregation was still present. As the education system became increasingly dependent on Federal funds, this legislation became ever more powerful.⁶⁹⁶ The NDEA directly influenced the Higher Education Act (HEA), which was approved by Congress in 1965. This Act, passed as a part of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programme,**

appropriated all of the legislation in the NDEA, including scholarship provision and financial support for scientific and foreign language education.⁶⁹⁷ Foreign language provision was further improved by the International Education Act of 1966.⁶⁹⁸

1965 also saw the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA provided Federal funds to every district in the country with the express intention of closing the achievement gap between high income and low income students. The ESEA was created and passed in only 87 days. This speed is undoubtedly due, in part, to the impetus for change provided by the death of President Kennedy and the subsequent Democratic landslide won in the election of 1964. It is also due, however, to the fact that there was little if any serious opposition to the Bill from within Congress or without. This is surprising, as political historian Norman C. Thomas has referred to the ESEA and the HEA as **“the greatest expansion of that role [of the Federal government in education] which has ever occurred”**.⁶⁹⁹ Although the Bill was well received, it included several Federal strictures, such as the requirement that each district submit **yearly reports detailing the “educational effectiveness” of their programmes** to ensure that the Federal money was not wasted on unsuccessful initiatives.⁷⁰⁰ That it passed almost unopposed, and in such a short period of time, is testament to how desensitised the USA had become to the presence of the Federal government in education, despite the fact that no change had been made to Article 10 of the Constitution.

By the 1970s, even the Executive branch found it difficult to stem the flow of Federal funding for the education system. President Nixon vocalised his disapproval of the level of Federal funding which the government allocated for

educational programmes and institutions. He declared during his Presidential **campaign that “it is very easy** for politicians to call for new millions of dollars to be allocated for every new educational spending proposal that spins out of an **ivory tower...but there are times when... [the President] must have the strength to say ‘no’ for the sake of the American taxpayer”**.⁷⁰¹ Despite this clear position on Federal involvement in the education system, however, Nixon was unable to prevent not only its continuation, but also its expansion. In 1972, several amendments were made to the HEA (1965), and these amendments called for a vast increase in both Federal aid to and Federal influence over the education system.

Title XI of these amendments represented the largest encroachment upon **academic institutions’ freedom to govern their students’ day-to-day** experiences. Title XI outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex in any and all educational institutions which received Federal funds, including schools, two and four year colleges and universities, and graduate schools. By 1972, this was the majority of the American education system. The legislation did not only refer to hiring and **firing policies and women’s salary equity, it also included measures which** ensured equal treatment for female and male students in almost all aspects of academic life.

This Federal mandate meant that female students could no longer be denied enrolment onto a traditionally male major, could not be discriminated against in the distribution of academic scholarships, or even athletic scholarships, and high schools could not prioritise male sporting programmes over female sporting programmes.⁷⁰² It also established that students could not be marginalised from campus activities after they were married, and that pregnancy

must be treated the same as any other medical condition. No educational institution in receipt of Federal funds could exclude or discriminate against a female student on the grounds that they had fallen pregnant, regardless of whether or not they were married.⁷⁰³ Title XI greatly impacted the day-to-day running of educational institutions, especially where high school and collegiate sports were concerned, yet despite opposition from many and varied quarters, including the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Title XI has never been overturned.

From the Federal government's perspective, the increased Federal presence within the higher education sector had the desired effect in the first few decades following the passage of the NDEA. The number of graduate students receiving higher degree qualifications – something which had been of great concern in the early years of the Cold War – increased from 120,000 graduates in 1946 to 900,000 graduates in 1970.⁷⁰⁴ Undergraduate enrolment figures continued to rise dramatically; by 1970, 52% of high school seniors were accepted into college, although **the Truman Commission's target figure of 60% was not** reached until 1991.⁷⁰⁵ Throughout the late Cold War, Federal funds supported scientific research on a vast scale, helped to construct bigger and better libraries, trained students in nationally useful foreign languages and served to continually tighten the bond between the Federal government and American higher education.

The immediate impact of the increased Federal presence within higher education was just as its many critics had feared; Federal funding was funnelled into specific programmes with no contingency plan for the decline of other fields. **As Thelin has noted, “not surprisingly, sponsored research projects were**

concentrated in a few fields, particularly physical and biological sciences, health **sciences and engineering**".⁷⁰⁶ In addition to this increased focus on just a few academic fields, only a few academic institutions actually received support. This favouritism emerged shortly after the passage of the NDEA. In 1960, six universities received 57% of the funds, and twenty universities received 79%.⁷⁰⁷ **As Thelin has recognised, "not only did this external funding set twenty universities apart, it also changed the internal dynamics of rewards and priorities. It fractured a research university into " 'haves' and 'have nots' ".**⁷⁰⁸ This system set the higher education sector down a path which, within a generation, would create a damaging hierarchical system within post-secondary education. **Moreover, the Federal government's system of funding focused only on research and allocated no provision for subsidising undergraduate tuition fees or the day-to-day running costs of the buildings and administration. Therefore, even the universities which were lucky enough to be recipients of Federal funding were disadvantaged by it.**⁷⁰⁹

By 1970, institutions had become reliant on increasing external funding and an ever expanding undergraduate student body. Thelin delineates well the impact which Federal involvement in the education system had upon the higher education sector during the decades following the NDEA in *A History of American Higher Education* (2011). He notes that between 1974 and 1979, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education published a series of commissioned reports on the state of higher education in the USA. Thelin **highlights that "the studies were good, but the news in their findings was not"**.⁷¹⁰ **Rather than depicting higher education as a 'growth industry' – a moniker the sector had become used to over the previous twenty years – the report instead**

predicted a ‘new depression’ for the finances of higher education institutions.⁷¹¹

Their expansion had been too fast, and the Federal funding had created an atmosphere which encouraged competition for both money and prestige, but which neglected the sector’s **‘bread and butter’: teaching and undergraduate tuition fees**. As Ravitch has outlined, as outstanding professors became sought **after by many universities, it gave them the power to “negotiate arrangements** permitting them to concentrate on their research and writing, and to teach advanced courses in their speciality, leaving them little time for undergraduates **or for general education”**.⁷¹²

The competition for Federal funding, Thelin recognises, also created a hierarchy within higher education, which in turn caused an homogenisation of the institutions, as each one competed to be considered as prestigious as the next. In an attempt to differentiate between each institution, the Carnegie Council divided each university or college into one of five categories: **‘research university’; ‘doctoral-granting university’; ‘comprehensive university’; ‘liberal arts college’; and ‘two year college’**.⁷¹³ Due to the cachet which Federal funding had bestowed upon research institutions and graduate-focused institutions, Thelin demonstrates, **these categories were immediately perceived as ‘rankings’, which came to define higher education for the next twenty years. As the ‘research institution’ and the ‘doctoral-granting institution’ were perceived to be at the top of the rankings, the Carnegie Council’s categories only served to increase the focus on Federal funding and graduate school programmes at the expense of teaching and undergraduates, as institutions competed to ‘move up’ a category**.⁷¹⁴

This neglect of students proved catastrophic to higher education during the 1980s. Nationwide economic troubles coupled with changes in foreign policy

and US demographics reduced the proportion of American youths who saw a college education as a viable prospect. The end of the military draft meant that fewer youths felt the need to attend college, and a declining birth rate lowered this number even further. The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo, which had drastically raised oil prices, and therefore operational costs, meant that many universities had put off undertaking much needed repairs to campuses. As competition for undergraduates became stiffer, institutions which had not kept their campuses in a good state of repair suffered, as they were less appealing. Stagflation – high inflation coupled with low productivity – in the 1980s also meant that such repairs were far more costly than they had been a few years earlier.⁷¹⁵

Federal intervention in education, however, had become normalised by this point in US history, and the sector once again turned to the Federal government to support it in this difficult time. The result was, as Thelin describes it, **“a belated fulfilment of the 1947 Truman Commission Report’s recommendations”**.⁷¹⁶ In 1972, Congress passed an amendment to the 1965 HEA and established the Basic Educational Opportunities Grants (BEOG). This programme established widespread tuition support for any and all American undergraduate students who met the – relatively low – criteria.⁷¹⁷ The programme was renamed **‘Pell Grants’, in honour of Senator Claiborne Pell** of Rhode Island, and helped both to re-popularise the appeal of earning a college degree and improve affordability just when the sector needed it most.

By the late 1970s, education had firmly established itself as a central issue in Federal politics. The Democratic Primaries for the election of 1976 saw the first endorsements by major educational institutions; the National Education

Association (NEA) endorsed Jimmy Carter, and its rival, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) endorsed Ted Kennedy.⁷¹⁸ Jimmy Carter won the nomination, and the NEA, and its 1.5 million members, supported the Democratic **candidate in return for Carter's promise that, when in office, he would establish a Department of Education.**⁷¹⁹ The NEA hoped that a Department of Education would centralise, **co-ordinate and streamline all of the Federal government's now** many and varied educational programmes.

Although it took him two years, Carter did eventually honour his commitment to the NEA, **and Congress' 13th** Department was established on 27th October 1979. The political wrangling involved in its establishment had **significantly reduced the Department's scope and power, but it nonetheless** represented a massive shift in the administration of Federal educational programmes. **Carter's creation of a Department of Education also signified the Federal government's intentions to continue and expand their involvement with the US education system, as Carter's controversial appointment as his first Secretary of Education was Shirley Hufstедler, a Federal judge from California with few contacts in the education sector.**⁷²⁰ Ravitch has suggested that this was **"an implicit signal from Washington" that a "network of regulations and mandates would be administered by an experienced hand".**⁷²¹

Ronald Reagan pledged to dismantle Carter's Department of Education during his time as President, but the Federal grip on the education system once again proved too strong even for an Executive to direct.⁷²² His first Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell, in fact supported the continuation of the Department, and waged a behind-the-scenes war to ensure that the Department was not disbanded. Bell resigned after four years, and was replaced by William Bennett, a

candidate who better appealed to the religious right and extreme conservatives. Bennett firmly supported the abolition of his own Department. Despite this, however, Congressional support for its continuation remained far too strong to overcome.⁷²³

This battle characterises the **Reagan Administration's entire education** agenda. Reagan was an outspoken critic of Federal involvement in education, and the White House worked hard both to significantly reduce Federal spending in education and to return the majority of power over education to the States. During his time in office, Reagan proposed the reduction of Pell Grants and guaranteed student loans; he recommended a broader interpretation of Title XI whereby it would only apply to those institutions in direct receipt of Federal aid; he **asked for a 'simplification' of the Federal government's approach to vocational** education, and asked that the majority of the power to develop new programmes be returned to the States; and he advocated major cuts to Federal appropriations for higher education.⁷²⁴

On all fronts, Reagan was thwarted by Congress. Pell Grants and guaranteed student loan provision were maintained, and the maximum amount **a student could receive from a Pell Grant was increased; whilst the President's** recommendations on Title XI were upheld by the Supreme Court in *Grove City College v. Bell* (1984), the ruling was overturned in 1988; Congress authorised 28% more money for vocational education than Reagan had asked for, and did not set spending limits for vocational education for the following years.⁷²⁵ Finally, **Congress rejected Reagan's recommendations for major cuts to higher education** and instead made available the sums for higher education including more money for loans and grants, and a wider interpretation of student eligibility for Federal

subsidies.⁷²⁶ **Most interestingly, many of Reagan's proposals were rejected with bipartisan support.**⁷²⁷ It became clear to the White House that Federal administration of, and aid to, education was popular with both parties and the general American public, and in 1988, in order to garner support for a Republican successor, Reagan changed his position on Federal aid to education. In 1988, Reagan asked Congress to increase appropriations for Pell Grants, loans and research; all in all he requested a 30% increase in governmental spending on education on the previous year.⁷²⁸

By the end of the Reagan Era, education was so established as a Federal **concern that George Bush Sr. felt comfortable giving himself the moniker 'the Education President'.**⁷²⁹ Under George Bush Sr., the Federal government made Federal grants available to academic libraries, increased aid to historically black colleges, and financed a range of teacher training programmes. Bush was succeeded by Bill Clinton who, it was well known, saw education as a priority; whilst Governor of Arkansas, he had drastically overhauled the education system **and improved Arkansas's national education ranking. The election of these two education-focused men demonstrates how much the American nation had come to accept the role which the Federal government played in the education system since the beginning of the Cold War.** Indeed, in 1990, Henry Rosovsky, former **Dean of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, stated in *The University, an Owner's Manual* (1990)** that, at least in part, the Federal government had come to **"own" the university; with the Clinton Administration's Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994),** which mandated, among other things, national standards for schoolchildren, curriculum focus and continuing education for teachers, they had

come to ‘own’, again at least in part, the elementary and high school system as well.^{730:731}

The two most recent US Presidents have both placed great importance on **the Federal government’s role in maintaining and improving the American education system; George Bush Jr. reformed Johnson’s ESEA and passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. NCLB called for standardised testing of American schoolchildren, and required any school which received some form of Federal funding to report their results to the government. Schools which did not meet targets were subject to certain strictures, and although NCLB enabled each individual State to set its own standards, each school was ultimately answerable to the Federal government.**⁷³² Most **recently, President Obama created “Race to the Top”, an initiative which seeks to improve US schools through the means of a competition for Federal funding. The White House website describes the programme as one which “offers bold incentives to States willing to spur systemic reform to improve teaching and learning in America’s schools”.**⁷³³ Without ever directly challenging the Tenth Amendment, the Federal government have become indispensable to the education sector. The suggestions that had begun with the Truman Commission in 1947 have, in a little over fifty years, completely changed the make-up of education in the USA.

The many and varied ways in which the actions of the Federal government impacted the relationship between the government and the US education system during the early years of the Cold War offer many options for further study in this field. Many other official bodies concerned with Cold War politics intersected with the education system in the early years of the conflict, and it would be

interesting to explore the extent to which they also attempted to influence the workings of the education system, if at all. It would be of particular value to further investigate the work of the Educational Policies Commission (EPC). As education was a State concern, the recommendations made by the EPC were the closest thing that the USA had to a national curriculum during the early Cold War. By studying the discussions, committees and recommendations of the EPC, it may be possible to track the development of **the Federal government's influence** upon the education system from the other side of the fence.

Another area in which further study would be beneficial to the wider field is the work of organisations not directly connected with the education system. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was established shortly after the end of the Second World War in order to monitor and support the development of the field of Atomic Energy research in the wake of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷³⁴ The AEC has no formal connection to the US education system, but **atomic research was a vital component of the Federal government's plan to stay ahead of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Cold War.** The extent to which **the AEC's work intersected with the Federal government's drive to increase the number of US students who majored in STEM fields** is as yet unmapped, and would contribute to building a greater picture of the development of scientific education before the passage of the NDEA.

The role which female students played in this dynamic also requires more attention. There has been a significant increase in research in recent years which has examined several aspects of the female experience during the first years of the Cold War; *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945 – 1965* (2006) by Linda Eisenmann expertly examines the college experience of women

during the Cold War. The juxtaposition between the ‘happy housewife heroine’, as defined by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* – the idea that women were only encouraged to pursue tertiary education in order to meet a ‘better class of man’, and that they were expected to return to the home once successfully married – and the recruitment drive to both higher education and post-college work which was set in motion in order to assuage the worst effects of the post-war manpower struggle, however, is yet to be studied in detail.

The manpower struggle, coupled with the fear of Soviet advancement, certainly opened up greater opportunities for African American students during the Cold War even whilst other forces were simultaneously trying to limit them. It is likely, therefore, that the Cold War climate also positively impacted female **students’ workplace prospects in some ways. There was certainly an increase in** the number of women who attended college or university and the number of women who entered the workforce during the 1950s. As yet, however, the extent to which the manpower struggle affected opportunities for women during this period, and whether the government’s **drive to encourage students to study STEM** fields directly expanded opportunities for women during the early years of the Cold War, is unexplored. This is an emerging field of study, but it requires closer attention.

The Federal government’s intervention in the education system during the early years of the Cold War was neither wholly positive nor wholly negative, nor was it wholly supported nor wholly opposed. As with anything, there were beneficial aspects of the programmes they put in place, and there were aspects **which damaged the US education system. The Federal government’s focus on** STEM education in the early 1950s came just at the right moment in American

history; without this extra emphasis at both the secondary and tertiary level, it is possible that the USA would have lagged further behind the Soviet Union than **even the media claimed they were. Due to the Federal government's intervention** in and redirection of the curriculum, however, the USA was able to compete in, and win, a global scientific **competition. The Federal government's persistence** also led to vast increases in Federal funding for the education system, from which it has benefitted greatly over the decades.

The Federal government's insistence on redirecting the education system to promote education for democracy, however, removed many of the barriers which traditionally separated the Federal government from the education system and, with it, removed the safeguards which protected the education system from being made subject to political quirks or fads. The US education system has never since been as independent as it was before the Cold War began, nor has it been able to free itself from the stranglehold of political consideration. The Federal government has also never before played a greater role in the education system than it does today; education is now a major factor in Federal politics, and its ups and downs directly impact political successes or failures. The need to demonstrate constant improvement in the education system has created a system in which the measurement of success is as important as success itself.⁷³⁵

The Federal government's intervention in the desegregation of the schools, however, is a far more complicated subject. The desegregation of American schools is a positive, and praiseworthy, goal for any government. The Federal **government's support of the *Brown*** decision remains a positive action for both the Truman Administration, which oversaw much of the preparation of the case, and for the Eisenhower Administration, which was in power when it was passed.

That the Federal government did not follow up on its promises, however, remains as a blot on the landscape. Despite the fact that the Federal government briefly strove to wipe out school segregation by incentivising integration in the HEA, today, the American education system is quickly backsliding into a segregated system once more.⁷³⁶

Consideration of the US education system has formed a central part of the four most recent Administrations, and is now an obligatory aspect of the US Federal **government's agenda** regardless of whether the Executive desires it to be. Of all the post-war presidents, only Nixon and Reagan have openly claimed to be specifically uninterested in directing national education policy, and both were not only forced to recant their positions by the tide of public opinion, but both also enacted wide-reaching education programmes and legislation during their administrations. **Regardless of whether or not the Federal government's** increasing power over the education system represents a positive change or not, **it is clear from recent government initiatives such as NCLB and 'Race to the Top'**, that offering a plan to improve the education system is now an essential aspect of re-election. Since President Truman ascended to the Presidency in 1944, the relationship between the US Federal government and the US education system has been greatly altered, and the change appears to be permanent.

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NOTES

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- ³⁵ *More attention has been paid to Eisenhower's interaction with the field of science and scientists generally, for example James R. Killian Jr.'s Sputnik, Scientists and Eisenhower (1982), but specific non-education histories pay little attention to Eisenhower's education policies outside of Brown v. Board and the events at Little Rock.*
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- ³⁷ *For a more in-depth discussion of the historiography in this area, see Chapter Four of this thesis, where the relevant themes are discussed in more detail.*
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- ¹⁹¹ Thomas Wolanin *Presidential Advisory Commissions, Truman to Nixon* (1975) Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 5. *One commonly accepted way of measuring the importance of central government is by viewing the size of the Federal workforce; greater involvement inevitably leads to a larger staff. The period 1930-1950 saw the largest jump to date. In 1930, the percentage of the population employed by the Federal government was around 0.4%, a rise of 0.1% since 1910; by 1950, it had leaped to 1.4%, and by the end of the Cold War hovered around 1.1% [Hugh Rockoff "By Way of Analogy: The Expansion of the Federal Government in the 1930s" in Michael D. Bordo, Claudia Goldin and Eugene N. White, Ed. The Defining Moment: The Great Depression and the American Economy in the Twentieth Century (1998) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 128].*
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- ²⁰⁵ Draft letter: Harry S. Truman to George Zook, File 1060 - (1945-July 1946), Box 1576, OF, Truman Papers, Truman Library.
- ²⁰⁶ Carl Marcy *Presidential Commissions* (1945) Morningside Heights, New York: Kings Crown Press, 36.
- ²⁰⁷ Thomas Wolanin *Presidential Advisory Commissions, Truman to Nixon* (1975) Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 30.
- ²⁰⁸ Daniel Bell "Comment: Government by Commission" *The Public Interest*, No.3 (Spring 1966) pp. 3-9, 7.
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- ²¹⁰ Members of the Truman Commission: **George F. Zook** [President] – President of the American Council on Education (ACE), had been FDR's first Commissioner of Education but he resigned after only one year because FDR refused to include a programme of Federal aid to education in the New Deal, and had continued to argue for it up until the establishment of the Commission. **Sarah G. Blanding** – first female president of Vassar; **Arthur H. Compton** – President of Washington University, St Louis; **O.C. Carmichael** – President of the University of Alabama; **Henry A. Dixon** – President of Weber College, Mormon, later Director of the Association of Junior Colleges; **Milton S. Eisenhower** – Pres. Eisenhower's brother, President of Kansas State University, Chairman of the US National Commission for UNESCO; **John R. Emens** – President of Ball State University; **Alvin C. Eurich** – President of Stanford; **Douglas S. Freeman** – Editor of the *Richmond News Leader*; **Algo D. Henderson** – President of Antioch College, Associate Commissioner of Education for New York State; **Monsignor Frederick D. Hochwalt** – Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Education Association; **Lewis W. Jones** – President of the University of Arkansas; **Horace M. Kallen** – Philosopher, believed that cultural diversity and national pride were compatible and that ethnic and racial diversity strengthened America, coined the term 'cultural diversity'; **Fred J. Kelly** – Educator, inventor of the Standardised Tests, Editor of *The Journal of Higher Education*, former Director of the Division of Higher Education in the US Office of Education; **Murray D. Lincoln** – President of the National Co-operative Business Association; **T. R. McConnell** – College Dean of the University of Minnesota; **Earl J. McGrath** – College Dean of the University of Iowa, future US Commissioner of Education; **Martin R.P. McGuire** – Graduate Dean, Catholic University of America; **Agnes Meyer** – Wife of Eugene Meyer, supporter of Federal support for education; **Harry K. Newburn** – President of the Oregon University System; **Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam** – Bishop and former college president; **Frederick D. Patterson** – President of Tuskegee [only African American member of the Commission]; **Mark Starr** – Director of Education for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU); **George D. Stoddard** – President of the University of Illinois; **Harold H. Swift** – Businessman in Chicago, but heavily involved in the University of Chicago as a Philanthropist and on the Board of Trustees,

remembered for this not his business activities, played an important role in the appointment of Robert M. Hutchins as University of Chicago president [*“Guide to the Harold H. Swift Papers, 1897-1962” Website of the University of Chicago Library*, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/src/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.SWIFTH>, date accessed 25/11/14]; **Ordway Tead** - Chair of the New York Board of Higher Education; **Rabbi Stephen S. Wise** – President of the American Jewish Congress; **Dr. Francis Brown** - Secretary.

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after 1947, and attributed it to Truman's policies on the Far East, in particular, Republican Chairman Arthur H. Vandenburg's opposition to Truman's plans for Asia (James M. McCormick and Eugene R. Wittkopf "Bipartisanship, Partisanship, and Ideology in Congressional-Executive Foreign Policy Relations, 1947-1988" *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Nov. 1990) pp.1077-1100, 1085).

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- ⁴²¹ Conclusions of the Engineering Manpower Council quoted in Henry H. Armsby “Young Engineers for Industry – How Many?” (June 4th 1951) Circular No. 296, US Department of Health Education and Welfare: Washington DC, 6, File – Circular #207 – #299, Box 43 – Record Copies of Publications, 1875 – 1963, RG12, NACP; *These conclusions are based on current enrolments in engineering colleges, on pre-Korea trends, and on the probable effects of recently announced Selective Service policies with respect to the deferment of college students. The last such estimate was presented before the society at its annual meeting in June 1950. It was based on trends in the birth rate, in numbers graduating from high school, in the percentage of high school graduates entering engineering colleges, and in ‘normal’ graduation ratios in engineering colleges.*
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- ⁴³² John R. Steelman *Science and Public Policy: A Report to the President, Vol. I* (1947) Washington: US Gov’t Printing Office, 18; *The research triangle is made up of the three major employers of scientific and research personnel – Industry, Higher Education and the Government. When one attracted a greater number of scientists, the other areas suffered as there were a finite number of scientists and researchers available at this time.*
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- ⁴⁸⁴ M. H. Trytten *Student Deferment in Selective Service: A Vital Factor in National Security* (1952) Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 74. Trytten stated that "Among students taking the SSCQT, those in physical sciences, mathematics and engineering virtually equalled the humanities and social science students on the verbal material, yet excelled them considerably on the quantitative material. Hence the science students would excel the others on any combination of both types of material".
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- ⁴⁸⁸ M. H. Trytten *Student Deferment in Selective Service: A Vital Factor in National Security* (1952) Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 42. Trytten stated that "it is assumed that the deferred student will ultimately serve in uniform unless it is subsequently decided by his local board that exceptional qualifications make him more valuable to the nation through service in some other role".
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- ⁴⁹⁰ *The median age for men to be married in 1950 was 24. "Median Age at First Marriage by Sex, 1890 – 2010" US Census Bureau Website, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data/acs/ElliottetalPAA2012figs.pdf> Last accessed, 14/5/14.*
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- Although access to education was limited for many races during this period, both the Executive branch and public perception of the issue focused almost exclusively on the plight of African Americans; there was some discussion of discrimination against Jewish students in Higher Education for American Democracy, but for the most part the discussion on educational equality and access during this period focused exclusively on African Americans and low income whites.*
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- ⁵⁴⁰ Brenda Gayle Plummer *Rising Wind: Black Americans and US Foreign Affairs, 1935-1996* (1996) Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
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- ⁵⁴² Mary L. Dudziak *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000) Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press.
- ⁵⁴³ For a detailed and in-depth study of the strategic imperative, see Mary L. Dudziak "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative" *Stanford Law Review* (November 1988) Vol. 41, No. 61, pp. 61-120; Mary L. Dudziak *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000) Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.
- ⁵⁴⁴ John David Skrentny "The Effect of the Cold War on African-American Civil Rights: America and the World Audience, 1945-1968" *Theory and Society* (April 1998), Vol. 27, No. 2 pp. 237-285, 245. Skrentny argues that this was due in part to the increased focus which was placed on human rights after the end of the Second World War. Work on this Human Rights Charter began in 1946, almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, and was adopted on December 10th 1948. The Declaration, coupled with the trials at Nuremberg during which defendants were charged, for the first time, with 'crimes against humanity', "served to institutionalize equal human rights as cultural rules for world society". Skrentny argues that "while unenforceable, the human rights rules began to serve as an important global cultural standard of moral legitimacy". More importantly, Skrentny argues, to not adhere to the new cultural rules could "undermine a nation's desire to be a world leader". It was the USA's failure to adhere to this new standard, by failing to treat African Americans as equal citizens and provide them with basic legal protection, which caused the USA's standing as a global leader to be taken into question, therefore prompting a re-evaluation of domestic policies for the benefit of foreign policy.
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- ⁵⁴⁶ Hollis L. Caswell *The Attack on American Schools; From the Annual Report to the Trustees, 1957 -58* (1958) Teachers College, Columbia, Folder 3, Box 1064 - Commissions--National Commission for the Defense of Democracy, National Education Association Archives (NEAA), Gelman Library at George Washington University (GWU).
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- ⁵⁴⁹ James T. Patterson *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (2001) Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 71.
- ⁵⁵⁰ George F. Zook *Higher Education for American Democracy, Vol. II* (1947) New York: Harper and Brothers, 25.
- ⁵⁵¹ Michael R. Gardner *Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks* (2002) Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 27. Gardner's book fails to fully discuss the first two pressures – the logistical need for improvement, and the impact upon foreign policy. Similarly, Gardner does not properly contextualise the political benefits for Truman in demonstrating a strong civil rights platform. As Michael S. Neiberg asserted in his review of the work: "Gardner is correct to admire Truman's political courage, but wrong to read it exclusively through the lens of political risk" (Michael S. Neiberg "Review: Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks, *American Studies International*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (October 2002), 100). Gardner's discussion of Truman's personal position, however, is well-regarded and considered to be a perspective missing from much of the currently available scholarship. Here Gardner's work has been considered alongside discussion of the political implications of his civil rights platform. See also Peter M. Carrozzo, *Carrozzo on Gardner, Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks*, H-Law (June 2002); Linda C. Gugin "Review: Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks, *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 46, No.1, (January 2004), 101-103; Kevin J. McMahon, *Review: Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks*, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117, No.3 (Autumn 2002), 535-536.
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- ⁶⁶³ *The specific recommendations of the White House Conference were 1) A general education as good as or better than that offered in the past with increased emphasis on the physical and social sciences. 2) Programmes designed to develop patriotism and good citizenship. 3) Programmes designed to foster moral, ethical, and spiritual values. 4) Vocational education tailored to the abilities of each pupil and to the needs of community and Nation. 5) Courses designed to teach domestic skills. 6) Training in leisure-time activities such as music, dancing, avocational reading, and hobbies. 7) A variety of health services for all children, including both physical and dental inspections, and instruction aimed at bettering health knowledge and habits. 8) Special treatment for children with speech or reading difficulties and other handicaps. 9) Physical education, ranging from systematic exercises, physical therapy, and intramural sports, to interscholastic athletic completion. 10) Instruction to meet the needs of the abler students. 11) Programmes designed to acquaint students with countries other than their own in an effort to help them understand the problems America faces in international relations. 12) Programmes designed to foster mental health. 13) Programmes designed to foster wholesome family life. 14) Organised recreational and social activities. 15) Courses designed to promote safety. These include instruction in driving automobiles, swimming, civil defence, etc.* “Report to the President: The Committee for the White House Conference on Education—Full Report”. Washington, D.C., April 1956, File – Committee on Education Beyond the High School, June 1954 – December 1956, Box 1 – Records of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the National Defense Education Act of 1958; President’s Committee on Education Beyond the High School, 1954 – 1957, RG12, NACP; Richard G. Axt “The Relationship Between the Federal Government and Education Beyond the High School” *RoundUp Pieces, President’s Committee on Education Beyond the High School, Draft for Committee Members Only*, File – Committee on Education Beyond the High School, June 1954 – December 1956, Box 1 – Records of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the National Defense Education Act of 1958; President’s Committee on Education Beyond the High School, 1954 – 1957, RG12, NACP.
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