

**Establishing a Democratic Religion:
Metaphysics and Democracy in the Debates Over the
President's Commission on Higher Education**

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World War II stands as a defining moment for American higher education. During the crisis of international relations that existed by the late 1930s, American thinkers of various stripes felt compelled to mobilize the country's intellectual and educational resources in defense of democracy, thus creating "a great ideological revival of democracy that accompanied the war."¹ The war aims of the United States—as enunciated in the Atlantic Charter and popular portrayals of the "good war" in which the United States fought to free the world from the grips of evil dictatorships—gave tremendous legitimacy to these efforts, which built into a national discussion on the goals of higher education. Between 1943 and 1947, at least five major reports on general education or liberal education appeared, three of which explicitly treated the relation of such education to "democracy" or "free society."²

As the United States emerged from the war seeing itself as the world's beacon of democracy, this discussion reached such a fever pitch that Harry S Truman called a President's Commission on Higher Education (1946-1948). The Commission's report, *Higher Education for American Democracy*, cited a "crisis in human history" and argued that "the future of our civilization depends on the direction education takes."³ Of all the reports, it probably attracted the greatest attention, and therefore stimulated the most extensive debate about the meaning of democracy and its relation to specific educational policies and practices.⁴

Contemporaries of the Commission and later scholars often focused on the Commission's many powerful practical proposals, such as those for increased access to higher education, as the center of its plan for strengthening American democracy. To be sure, the Commission's bold recommendation for the outcome of increased access—that

undergraduate enrollments should soar from 1.4 million in 1940 to 4 million in 1960—generated fierce debate. The Commission linked its goals for increased access to two other factors it believed were critical for achieving its vision of democracy. First, the Commission believed that higher education for American democracy should happen primarily in state-controlled institutions; it proposed that the entire enrollment growth of 2.6 million students would occur in state-controlled institutions while enrollment in privately-controlled institutions stagnated.⁵ Second, the Commission believed that higher education for American democracy required a new *kind* of education. Both of these impulses sprang from the intellectual framework within which the Commission worked, especially the way it conceptualized democracy.

Higher Education for American Democracy manifested a philosophy of education, crafted largely by John Dewey, which defined democracy as a quality of communal experience and set this understanding of democracy as the ultimate goal of human existence and the proper end of all education. In this view, democracy was not merely a political procedure, but “a way of life,” a characteristic mode of social relations. Even more dramatically, this philosophy held that democracy had a “religious” quality. Dewey discarded traditional “religion” and its association with the supernatural, which he believed was discredited. In its place, he spoke of certain kinds of experience, such as democratic living, as having “a religious quality” because they unified human beings and made real the ideal possibilities of humanity.⁶ In his view, democratic process rather than any relationship to a transcendent realm of reality brought human beings to perfection.

This philosophy had important implications for both institutional control and curriculum. Its concept of unified democratic community led to a preference for state

institutions; private institutions (especially religiously-affiliated ones) might nurture particularistic beliefs among their constituents, thus threatening unified democratic community. In Dewey's view, the realization of democracy required that all individuals be brought into unified community; for anyone to be outside was anti-democratic. He argued that schools should cultivate "state-consciousness"—"the idea that the state life, the vitality of the social whole, is of more importance than the flourishing of any segment or class"—by performing the "infinitely significant religious work" of bringing students together "on the basis of what is common and public."⁷ In light of these views and the Commission's general adherence to a Deweyan philosophy, it is notable that the Commission attempted to spur the growth of state-controlled institutions at the expense of privately-controlled ones by proposing that Congress disperse funding for current expenditures and capital outlay only to the former.

With respect to curriculum, the Commission believed that knowledge should be organized and presented to undergraduates according to life problems rather than according to academic disciplines; it assigned the contested term "general education" to this approach. The Commission's concept of general education differed from others because of its methodological instrumentalism. It viewed knowledge as an *instrument* that nurtured a student's capability for democratic living rather than as a pathway to ultimate reality, and it saw the curriculum as a specific *method* of organizing and presenting knowledge instrumentally that would lead to growth in students' democratic capability. The Commission argued that state institutions, enrolling a much broader swath of the nation's youth and providing to all undergraduates this kind of general education, would most effectively build a unified democratic community.

In using this intellectual framework to build the first major U.S. government pronouncement on the goals of higher education, the Commission used its position as a bully pulpit to preach its vision of democracy as the highest aim for American higher education. In essence, it attempted to establish its religious vision of democracy through state institutions of higher education. Not surprisingly, dissenters railed against the Commission's position. The disagreement between the Commission and its dissenters was not fully unique to American higher education; it reflected an important debate of western civilization on the philosophical and institutional foundations of democracy.⁸ The Commission and its dissenters agreed on the need to promote democracy, but they disagreed sharply on what it meant and how to do it. The Commission believed that democracy was an end in itself, that it required no religious or metaphysical foundations, and that state-controlled institutions of higher education were essential for strengthening it. The opposing position maintained that democracy was a means to other ends, that it required religious and metaphysical foundations, and that privately-controlled institutions of higher learning were essential for strengthening it. Unpacking these issues is essential for understanding the Commission's plan to transform American higher education.

Both the Commission and its dissenters wanted to focus higher education on the development of persons and democratic citizens rather than on research for specialized knowledge. Because of core philosophical differences about metaphysics and democracy, however, they disagreed on both the kind of institutions and the type of education needed to reach these ends. With educators and intellectuals divided on these matters, the Commission's major policy recommendation, federal funding as a means of expanding and equalizing access to higher education, floundered. The disagreement inhibited a

unified movement to install educating persons and democratic citizens at the center of American higher education and left the field open for specialized research to triumph as the driving force and organizing principle for universities.

INSTITUTIONAL DEBATES

Two closely related debates about the institutional foundations for strengthening democracy played a central role in originating the Commission and in arguments over its membership and its prescriptions: the respective roles of state- and privately-controlled institutions of higher education, and the extent of federal government involvement, especially financial assistance, in higher education. These heated conversations centered on questions about the proper role of the state in democracy and about what type of institution best promoted democratic values. Proponents of both privately- and state-controlled institutions insisted that their type promoted democracy more effectively.

The President's Commission marked the U.S. government's first effort to set national goals for higher education. Responses to the war, especially the proliferation of democratic rhetoric and of federal government agencies charged with national planning, influenced the formation and shape of the President's Commission. The U.S. Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR), one of many government agencies created to deal with wartime exigencies, provided the immediate impetus for the Commission. Former Antioch College professor J. Donald Kingsley, a leading scholar of public administration and head of the OWMR manpower division, was the foremost advocate within the administration pressing Truman to create a commission on higher education, and he suggested potential Commission members with the help of OWMR

director John Snyder.⁹ Kingsley advocated federal support of higher education and believed “the struggle between private and public higher education” was “the most controversial question.”¹⁰ By making Kingsley rather than someone from the Office of Education the White House representative to the Commission, Truman signaled that he saw the Commission as a means to press higher education into national service more formally.¹¹ Kingsley’s OWMR manpower division had the task of converting veterans back to civilian life in a manner beneficial to them and the country as a whole, and Truman apparently saw the Commission’s work as related to that task.

Concern about whether the Commission would favor either state- or privately-controlled institutions shaped responses to its membership. Two episodes illustrate the importance of this institutional issue. Ralph McDonald, Executive Secretary of the National Education Association’s Department of Higher Education, criticized the choice of George Frederick Zook (1885-1951), President of the American Council on Education (ACE), as chair of the President’s Commission on the grounds that it would mean “the domination of the private and sectarian point of view.”¹² He sent Truman a scathing telegram asserting that the “most serious stumbling block to democratic education . . . has been private sectarian opposition to free nonsectarian schools and colleges.”¹³ Clearly, McDonald viewed the expansion of state-controlled institutions as essential to achieving democratic aims.

Yet McDonald’s concern seems misplaced given Zook’s background and published views. Zook had been a professor at Penn State and President of the University of Akron; he had also served as chief of the Higher Education Division of the U.S. Bureau of Education and as Franklin Roosevelt’s first Commissioner of Education before

resigning in protest after only a year because Roosevelt shunned his advice to include federal aid to education in New Deal economic recovery plans.¹⁴ In his 1945 Inglis Lecture at Harvard, Zook advocated federal aid to the states for schools and colleges. He specifically argued that “the long-time support of privately controlled schools and colleges from public funds, including those supplied by the federal government, [should] be fought out at the state level” to avoid federal control, and he admitted that private colleges would most likely be shut out in such a scenario.¹⁵

McDonald was not the only person worried about the Commission’s position on these questions. Several months into the Commission’s work, Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the Commission, ostensibly for scheduling reasons but possibly disgruntled over the same state-private tension. She mentioned in her resignation letter to Truman that some people believed the Commission was placing emphasis on privately-controlled rather than state-controlled higher education.¹⁶ Ironically, the Commission’s final report favored state institutions as it proposed something unprecedented: that Congress make specific appropriations to the states for “maintaining and expanding publicly controlled institutions of higher education.”¹⁷ The appropriations would be used for current expenditures and capital outlay, thus enabling state institutions to expand their physical facilities to accommodate the broadened access to higher education that the Commission desired. The Commission projected that private institutions would not take part in increasing access, and therefore they would not require the federal funds earmarked for that purpose.

Two of the twenty-eight Commission members—Frederick G. Hochwalt (1909-1966), a priest and executive secretary of the National Catholic Educational Association,

and Martin R.P. McGuire (1897-1969), a classics professor and dean at the Catholic University of America—fumed at the blatant exclusion of private institutions from the proposed federal largesse.¹⁸ They attached a four page “Statement of Dissent” to “Financing Higher Education,” the fifth and final substantive volume (a sixth volume contained numerical data cited in the other volumes) of the Commission’s report. “We could have disagreed with many things in other volumes,” Hochwalt wrote to a fellow priest. “It seemed to us, however, that the main objection should be centered around the question of financing higher education. Rather than be put in the position of protesting too much or too often, we held our fire until volume five and wrote a rather lengthy dissent on the question of federal aid.”¹⁹ Their dissent argued that the Commission based its recommendation on the false “assumption that American democracy will be best served by a mighty system of public higher education to be financed by local, State, and Federal taxes, and to be controlled, managed, and supervised by governmental agencies.” They feared that in such a system, “government in the United States might easily use the Nation’s public colleges and universities to promote its political purposes.” To support this claim, they argued 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.”²⁰ 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 World War II. Ironically, while many Americans such as Dewey and the polemicist Paul Blanshard tagged Catholicism as authoritarian and inherently antithetical to democracy, Catholic scholars urged that the

Commission proposal would betray the American constitutional system by furthering government centralization.²¹

While Catholic educators voiced the loudest opposition to the Commission's plan to channel federal funds only to state-controlled institutions, others joined them. Gould Wickey, General Secretary of the United Lutheran Board of Christian Education, complained about the federal government's centralizing tendencies in education and the danger that its funding policies would destroy private schools, and thus be undemocratic by limiting freedom of choice.²² He argued that the Commission's proposal to grant federal funding for operating expenses and capital outlay only to state-controlled institutions "will result in a totalitarianism destructive of the very democracy in which [Commission members] seem to be interested."²³ Byron Hollinshead, the President of Presbyterian-related Coe College (Iowa) who had been a research associate for the Harvard Committee on General Education, thought it "unfortunate that the membership of the Commission was so heavily loaded with those disposed to view education as a function of the state."²⁴ He agreed with the Catholic dissent regarding federal funding and added another argument: state institutions could not guarantee academic freedom for the pursuit of truth in the way that private ones could. Some religious leaders, however, endorsed or even contributed to the Commission's views. Commission member G. Bromley Oxnam, Methodist Bishop of the New York Area, actively opposed the granting of federal aid to church-related educational institutions and was part of a five-member committee of the newly-formed Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State that authored a manifesto, "Separation of Church and State."²⁵ The impetus for this organization was largely opposition against efforts to

secure federal funding for Catholic schools, on the grounds that such aid was a threat to religious liberty.

Opposition to the Commission's position on limiting federal aid to state institutions was not limited to representatives of religiously-affiliated institutions. Private institutions found influential advocates among professional scholarly organizations such as the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), an umbrella organization "devoted to 'the advancement of the humanistic sciences,'" which in 1940 appointed a committee charged with making a statement on liberal education in a democracy.²⁶ The committee included two representatives each from private and public institutions. Unlike the President's Commission, which hoped that state-controlled higher education could become the norm, the ACLS committee argued that bolstering American democracy required continuing the diverse balance of privately-controlled and state-controlled institutions. The ACLS committee's definition of democracy emphasized private initiative, and it argued that "the magnificent contribution to education which endowed institutions of all types have made in this country during the last three hundred years is a clear indication of how much can be accomplished in a free society by private initiative." It acknowledged, however, that "private institutions have in the past not been able to provide adequate educational facilities for the entire population, and it is this deficiency which a democratic government must correct . . . The continuing need for . . . tax-supported institutions is apparent."²⁷ The ACLS committee thus agreed with the President's Commission that state-controlled institutions must play an important role in expanding access to higher education, yet trumpeted the importance of privately-

controlled institutions—which the President’s Commission downplayed—for building democracy.

Although the ACLS committee recognized the importance of access, the issue was largely lost in the debates over federal funding. Instead, the issue of institutional sponsorship became critical in light of the debate over the meaning and foundations of democracy. For those who sided with the dissenters, only a mixed system of privately-controlled and state-controlled institutions could provide the freedom of choice that they believed lay at the heart of democracy. For those who sided with the President’s Commission, state-controlled institutions held the most promise for achieving Dewey’s vision of democracy; privately-controlled institutions were suspect because they might nurture particularistic beliefs, especially religious ones, that could hinder the formation of unified democratic community.

ORGANIZING KNOWLEDGE FOR DEMOCRACY

Just as underlying philosophical beliefs drove the debate between the President’s Commission and its dissenters over issues of institutional sponsorship, so those same beliefs drove a debate over the goals and content of undergraduate education. Since the mid-1930s, three concerns animated fervent discussion of these issues. A backlash against specialization that began shortly after 1900 became more intense during the 1920s and 1930s and propelled a desire for unity or integration in the curriculum; the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe spurred Americans to think about the role of higher education in preserving democracy; finally, the war itself generated practical concerns that shaped discussion: first, preserving liberal education during in the face of intense

demand for quick technical education aimed at the war effort; second, providing postwar higher education for those demobilizing from service abroad or at home. The President's Commission and its dissenters reflected all these concerns, and often proposed different solutions to the same problems.

Both the Commission and its dissenters reflected an overriding concern to achieve unity or integration in the college curriculum, but proposed vastly different ideological and curricular solutions for doing so. The Commission wanted Dewey's vision of democracy, like pan-Protestantism and "culture" in earlier eras, to be the unifying force for American higher education, to "infuse and harmonize all teaching and all campus activities."²⁸ Like proponents of those paradigms, the proponents of Deweyan democracy as the goal of higher education suggested a specific curricular strategy to achieve it. "The crucial task of higher education," according to the Commission, was "to provide a unified general education for American youth." A proper understanding of what the Commission meant by "unified" is essential to understanding its plan for American higher education. The Commission did not believe that a unity of truth or knowledge existed toward which all intellectual endeavors converged. Rather, it believed unity was a *sine qua non* of democratic culture—"some community of values, ideas, and attitudes is essential as a cohesive force"—and that one specific method, general education, could help create that democratic unity.²⁹

General education was a contested concept. It became popular after 1900, and especially after World War I, as a response to the perceived overspecialization and intellectual fragmentation of American higher education. In the interwar period, institutions such as general colleges, general education curricula, and general courses

sprang from various understandings of general education and became widely known.³⁰ The movement grew along several lines of thought: a metaphysical approach trumpeted by Robert Maynard Hutchins; a humanist approach inspired by Irving Babbitt; and a methodological instrumentalist approach from Dewey's pragmatism that the President's Commission adopted.³¹

The Commission distinguished general education from traditional liberal education, professional education, and research as the method of education most suited to produce its version of democracy. It believed general education differed from the specialized research model with respect to both the purpose and organization of knowledge. Whereas the research model portrayed the expansion of knowledge as its own end, the Commission's general education model saw knowledge as "means to a more abundant personal life and a stronger, freer social order."³² The Commission delineated several basic outcomes of general education that contributed to such personal life and social order: to develop "ethical principles consistent with democratic ideals," to participate actively as a citizen in solving social problems, "to recognize the interdependence of the different peoples of the world and one's personal responsibility for fostering international understanding and peace," and "to attain a satisfactory emotional and social adjustment."³³ The Commission amplified the last goal by insisting that general education was not purely intellectual but "should make growth in emotional and social adjustment one of its major aims."³⁴ This aim testifies to the Commission's understanding of democracy as a quality of social experience.

With respect to organizing and presenting knowledge, the Commission's concept of general education held that knowledge should be organized around the problems of

human life rather than by academic discipline. For the Commission, general education encompassed “those phases of nonspecialized and nonvocational learning which should be the common experience of all educated men and women” and aimed at “the transmission of a common cultural heritage toward a common citizenship.”³⁵ Yet the Commission insisted that general education was neither a body of knowledge (core knowledge) nor a set of courses (core curriculum), both concepts antithetical to methodological instrumentalism. Rather, general education was a mode of organizing knowledge that structured courses in a specific way. The Commission believed that any subject “can be taught as special [for a student majoring in that subject] or as general education, depending on the choice of content and the emphasis in method.” In general education, “the student and his rounded development will be at the center of instructional activities, and subject matter at the periphery.”³⁶ To facilitate such education, “general courses” must be developed outside of the standard subjects.³⁷ The Commission distinguished survey courses, which introduce students to a field of study, from general courses, which serve “as preparation for understanding the place of such subject matter in an intelligent life.” The combinations of subject matter in general courses could be “intimately related to the psychological processes which human beings use in dealing with everyday matters.”³⁸ Other general courses “may be organized around major human problems” rather than fields of knowledge.³⁹ The Commission also believed student activities outside formal courses—it disdained the standard “extracurricular” terminology—“should contribute immeasurably to the outcomes of general education” because “they can provide invaluable experience in the practice of democracy.”⁴⁰ This belief reflects an early Dewey idea, his emphasis on experiential learning of social

ideals—living out such ideals in schools organized as mini-communities rather than learning them as doctrines.⁴¹

The Commission's claim that its instrumentalist version of general education furthered democracy more effectively than liberal education organized by intellectual disciplines became one of the major flashpoints in the debate over *Higher Education for American Democracy*. The Commission argued that "the two differ mainly in degree, not in kind. General education undertakes to redefine liberal education in terms of life's problems as men face them, to give it human orientation and social direction, to invest it with content that is directly relevant to the demands of contemporary society. General education is liberal education with its matter and its method shifted from its original aristocratic intent to the service of democracy . . . by broadening the basis of government to include all the people, democracy has made it necessary to give to all citizens the education formerly reserved for a privileged class."⁴² A closer reading of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, however, reveals that the Commission did *not* want to extend the "education formerly reserved for a privileged class" to all citizens; it wanted all citizens to have a *new* kind of education based on methodological instrumentalism.

The President's Commission's claim that traditional liberal education was aristocratic and unsuited for democracy appalled the defenders of such education, who spoke through at least three prominent organizations: the ACLS, the Association of American Colleges (AAC), and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). During the World War II era, all three of these bodies undertook specific studies of liberal education. The NCEA began to focus on liberal education in 1934 at the instigation of William Cunningham, Professor of Education at the University of Notre

Dame and Executive Director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities that year. This thread of discussion lasted almost twenty years and manifested itself in publications such as the NCEA's *College Newsletter* (1937-1952), proceedings of a 1951 workshop on *The Curriculum of the Catholic College* (1952), and Cunningham's 1953 book *General Education and the Liberal College*. An NCEA committee formed in 1943 also drafted a report, "Liberal Education in a Democracy," which was never published because of internal squabbling, largely over the question of integrating vocational or professional education with liberal education.

The ACLS and the AAC held overlapping discussions of liberal education, and each issued its findings in 1943. Princeton University's McCosh Professor of Philosophy, Theodore M. Greene, served as the chair and chief visionary of the ACLS committee on the goals of liberal education in a democracy.⁴³ Greene drafted a preliminary report for the ACLS committee, *Liberal Education and Democracy*, and presented it at the 1941 AAC meeting. Following further research and rewriting by the whole committee, the ACLS issued its final report as *Liberal Education Re-examined: Its Role in a Democracy* (1943). Meanwhile, U.S. entry into World War II inspired the AAC to create in October 1942 a Commission on Liberal Education (CLE) "to keep continuously before the American people the wisdom of maintaining liberal education during and after the war."⁴⁴ That Commission subsequently appointed in February 1943 "a special committee on The Restatement of the Nature and Aims of a Liberal Education," which two months later submitted its report, *The Post-War Responsibilities of Liberal Education*.⁴⁵

The AAC, the ACLS committee, and the NCEA all articulated a similar understanding of liberal education that contrasted with the President's Commission's.

Indeed, at a 1943 meeting of the NCEA Higher Education Department, its leaders specifically praised the other two bodies' views on liberal education. Roy Deferrari, a classicist and patristics scholar at Catholic University and one of the leading Catholic voices on liberal education in the World War II era, noted that he could "think of no better statement than that made by Professor Green[e] of Princeton in his recent [ACLS committee] report on what constitutes the arts program. Curiously enough Green[e] enumerates religion, philosophy, and history as essential elements in his liberal program." In addition, "Father [Matthew] Fitzsimons quoted from a report issued by the Association of American Colleges and stated that the report admirably set forth the traditional liberal arts ideal and the Catholic position."⁴⁶

The AAC Commission on Liberal Education (CLE) most directly confronted the President's Commission's claim that traditional liberal education did not sufficiently further democracy. At the AAC's 1949 annual meeting, the CLE proposed a resolution, passed by the full AAC, that private and public colleges of liberal arts "have served the American democratic tradition from the beginning," and that the AAC therefore "deplores the implication in the Report of the President's Commission that liberal education is aristocratic and hence that the liberal arts colleges are unable to assume the principal task of higher education in a democratic society."⁴⁷ An episode involving T.R. McConnell, a President's Commission member who strongly shaped its concept of general education, reflected the intensity of this conflict.⁴⁸ McConnell sat on the CLE, and proposed to exclude the CLE report criticizing the President's Commission from the business approved by the full AAC, but his proposal failed.⁴⁹

The defenders of liberal education differed from the President's Commission on how the curriculum should be organized and integrated. The Commission believed that Deweyan democracy, which made no reference to anything transcendent, should integrate the college curriculum, and that courses of study should be organized around problems of life in a democratic community. The defenders of liberal education believed that transcendent values should integrate the curriculum, and that specific fields of study were crucial for discerning those values and were thus indispensable to a liberal education. The Catholic scholar Julius Haun argued that "a college-taught subject does not become one of the liberal arts, or a part thereof, by being so labeled. It belongs to the arts or it does not belong, by its own inner nature. An arts subject is aimed at the unfolding of the inner capacities of the man, his power to think and to be intellectually informed, his power to react emotionally on a high plane to what is fine, his power to will the noble."⁵⁰ The AAC Report on Liberal Education argued that transcendent values were "peculiarly embodied in the arts and literature and in philosophy and religion. The power of such human achievements raises man's consciousness to the direct and critical appreciation of those values which are above the flux of the time process and which make man a being capable of responsible judgment. A great work of art or literature, a great philosophical insight or religious belief, do not 'date' or become old-fashioned, although produced at a particular time. With their aid man can achieve the essential core of a liberal education—a capacity to judge wisely and become a free and responsible agent."⁵¹ Such arguments, reminiscent of those used decades earlier by the advocates of "liberal culture" as the central purpose of higher education, were completely absent from *Higher Education for American Democracy*.⁵²

The defenders of liberal education placed special weight on philosophy as a discipline that integrated the various liberal subjects, and thus gave it a central place in the curriculum. This position contrasted with the President's Commission's emphasis on social science. The ACLS committee urged that philosophy, along with history, performed a critical synthesizing role in liberal education.⁵³ As of 1948, when the President's Commission report was fully published, 133 of the 165 Catholic colleges surveyed by the NCEA required 12 or more hours of philosophy for all students. In the Catholic view, the study of philosophy trained human reason to access transcendent truths, and thus should form the framework for a liberal education.⁵⁴ Dewey, by contrast, believed the purpose of philosophy was not access to transcendent truth but cultural criticism and social reconstruction. Although a professional philosopher, he hoped that philosophy as a distinct discipline would eventually fade into oblivion as its primary task became more widely shared among the members of democratic community.⁵⁵

According to its defenders, liberal education supported democracy because its peculiar disciplines by their very natures introduced students to the intrinsic values, written into the structure of the universe, upon which democracy was based. Liberal education was necessary to preserve the knowledge of these values for future generations.

DEMOCRACY, METAPHYSICS, AND RELIGION

For both the Commission and its dissenters, underlying philosophical beliefs gave rise to prescriptions on institutional control and curriculum. The Commission tapped a philosophy to which Dewey had given significant voice in his 1916 book *Democracy and Education* and elaborated in *The Public and its Problems* (1927) and *A Common Faith*

(1934), among other works. Following Dewey, the Commission characterized democracy in religious terms and suggested that it was the ultimate goal of human life and the condition which most fully realized human potential. To be sure, the Commission's concept of democracy was no carbon copy of Dewey's; the Commission placed more emphasis on the individual whereas Dewey placed more emphasis on society, and Dewey probably would have disliked the Commission's reference to a "democratic creed." Yet by endorsing a generally Deweyan concept of democracy as the goal for all of American higher education, and by joining him in rejecting the traditional metaphysical basis for democracy, the Commission left itself open to critics who urged that its concepts and prescriptions were inadequate.

The Deweyan character of *Higher Education for American Democracy* is not surprising given the allegiance of one of its most important authors, Newton Edwards. The Commission retained a consultant to shape each substantive volume of the report. Edwards, Professor of Education at the University of Chicago, was the consultant for Volume I, "Establishing the Goals," which laid out the Commission's philosophy. Edwards was a founding member of the John Dewey Society, an organization that congealed in the mid-1930s and aimed to promote the scholarly study of how education could be a vehicle for social reconstruction and the achievement of democracy.⁵⁶

The Commission's concept of democracy, following Dewey, held that "democracy is much more than a set of political processes. It formulates and implements a philosophy of human relations. It is a way of life—a way of thinking, feeling, and acting in regard to the associations of men and of groups, one with another."⁵⁷ Dewey had argued that "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode

of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience”; the “association” concept that the Commission adopted was a favorite of Dewey’s.⁵⁸

The Commission’s argument that American higher education “at all its levels and in all its fields of specialization . . . shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and processes” and must promote above all else “a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living” emerged from the Commission’s conviction that “an educational system finds its guiding principles and ultimate goals in the aims and philosophy of the social order in which it functions.”⁵⁹ This belief that education must find its principles in and aim to produce the desired social order also revealed the influence of Dewey, who redefined not only democracy, but also its relationship to education. For him, education was “a freeing of individual capacity in a progressive growth toward social aims.”⁶⁰ Since democracy was the ultimate social aim, it was the goal of education. Moreover, because democracy was “a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration,” it was “more interested than other communities” in education.⁶¹

The Commission set forth several “abiding elements” of democracy: “Its respect for human personality, its insistence on the fullest freedom of belief and expression for all citizens, its principle that all should participate in decisions that concern themselves, its faith in reason, its deep obligation to promote human well-being.”⁶² The Commission believed democracy was “dedicated to the proposition that all men are entitled to an equal chance to be free and to seek happiness” and assumed that “every human being is endowed with certain inalienable rights.”⁶³ Most importantly in its estimation, “the fundamental concept of democracy is a belief in the inherent worth of the individual, in

the dignity and value of human life.”⁶⁴ Clearly the Commission attempted to legitimate its work by using language reminiscent of the Declaration of Independence. Yet the Commission’s wording—“all men are entitled to an equal chance . . .” rather than “created equal” as in the Declaration—obscured the philosophical debate over whether democracy and social change required a metaphysical and religious foundation.

The Commission followed Dewey when it described democracy in religious terms. The Commission’s ascription of purpose, power, and glory to democracy, as if to a god, exhibits this tendency. The Commission repeatedly referred to “the democratic faith,” and it called democracy “a living faith and an inspiring dream for the American people.”⁶⁵ *Higher Education for American Democracy* portrayed democracy as an object of faith and educational institutions as the “churches” of this democratic faith when it argued that “it is imperative that American education . . . inspire faith in the democratic way of life.”⁶⁶ The Commission sounded rather doctrinaire (and implicitly repudiated the primacy of specialized research) when it proclaimed that “the task of college faculties is to inspire in our young people a consuming enthusiasm for the democratic way of life.”⁶⁷ It spoke of democracy in religious terms when it called democracy a creed and cited it as a source of moral standards: “Some persons will find the satisfactory basis for a moral code in the democratic creed itself, some in philosophy, some in religion.”⁶⁸ It used the language of religious transformation when it implied that democracy should “weave its spirit into the innermost fiber of the students.”⁶⁹ The Commission wanted regenerate democratic human beings, and it believed higher education could be the finishing school of regenerative activity.⁷⁰ The regenerating agent was not any divine being but rather democratic process itself; Dewey called this strategy the unity of means and ends.

The Commission's proclamation that American higher education should aim to inculcate a democratic faith in its students perturbed educational leaders who held more orthodox religious views. The NCEA College and University Department met in Washington DC on February 13-15, 1948, immediately after the last volume of *Higher Education for American Democracy* appeared, to produce a review of the report. The NCEA did not publish the review, but circulated it for discussions among Catholic educators.⁷¹ The review was so popular that Hochwalt sent out a postcard telling inquirers that "the demand for copies of the Review of the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education has so far exceeded expectations that we find it impossible to send more than five copies to one institution as a gratuity. Additional copies can be purchased from this office for 25 cents per copy."⁷² Hochwalt wrote to one of the authors of the review that "more than 100 colleges have asked for copies of the material to be used in faculty discussions."⁷³ Edward B. Rooney asked Hochwalt for 10 copies of the review "via AIR EXPRESS" to discuss at the upcoming meeting of the Executive Committee of the Jesuit Education Association in Los Angeles.⁷⁴

Catholic educators lauded aspects of *Higher Education for American Democracy*, but they blasted the Commission's concept of democracy as naturalistic, relativistic, and even totalitarian. They argued that the Commission, rather than furthering American democracy, actually crippled it by removing its religious and moral foundation. They noted that when the Commission cited the Declaration of Independence's notion of inalienable rights as the basis of democracy, "Jefferson's reference to God as the source of these rights is omitted."⁷⁵ Indeed, "there is no escaping [the Report's] elimination of God, of man as a moral being with a spiritual nature, of sanctions other than the needs

and purposes of contemporary democratic society, of Christian democracy as the founders and framers of our government understood and handed it down to us.”⁷⁶ Even worse, “the Report turns democracy into the Good Life, making of it a religion, an end; and man, the student, is projected as a means, an instrument to serve this end [as] man is made to serve the totalitarian state.”⁷⁷ Allan Farrell remarked that “the report’s social philosophy . . . is that youth should be trained for the democratic state and that the democratic state is a sort of religion, with public education as its church.”⁷⁸ Catholic educators believed that the Commission wanted to use state-controlled educational institutions to achieve Dewey’s quasi-religious vision of democracy.

Other voices added similar criticism. Wickey decried the Commission’s implicit argument “that religion is not absolutely essential for human welfare, for the education of the free man, and for American democracy.” He saw “secularism” in the Commission’s failure to list “moral and spiritual qualities” as “necessary for effective teachers,” its neglect of ministers and religious workers when discussing occupational needs, and its call for increasing the enrollment in state-controlled institutions of higher learning while keeping enrollment constant in privately-controlled institutions.⁷⁹ Hollinshead also insisted that flourishing democracy required Christianity. “If we are to propagandize democratic processes, then Christian processes must go along as a bulwark. For real Christianity and real democracy are handmaidens which serve each other as well as the people in whose midst they flourish. If Hitler was smart enough to see that democratic and Christian processes must be eliminated if the Nazi system were to endure, we ought to be smart enough to see that these two elements are essential to all civilizations if we

are to endure.”⁸⁰ Hollinshead was less specific on the philosophical issue than other dissenters, but agreed with them that democracy had religious foundations.

The ACLS committee chaired by Theodore Greene stood in sharp opposition to the President’s Commission by defining education as a search for truth and democracy as only a means to that end. In so doing, it used language reminiscent of Dewey’s philosophy that would dominate the President’s Commission several years later, yet appropriated that language to its own quite different meanings and thus subverted it. Like the President’s Commission, it argued that “our young people need to be educated in the democratic way of life.”⁸¹ Yet unlike the President’s Commission, the ACLS committee warned that “men tend to make a fetish of democracy when they forget that democracy is only a means, though an all-important means, to ultimate social and cultural ends,” and it emphasized that “democracy and education are both merely means to an ultimate end.”⁸² It defined that end, “the good life,” as involving the search for truth—a concept conspicuously absent from *Higher Education for American Democracy*. In a veiled attack on Dewey, it asserted that scientific method was not the only pathway to truth: “liberal education, in its concern for truth, attaches as great importance to the best available insights and the wisest conclusions, where no rigorous demonstration is possible, as it does to the most assured demonstrations of the scientist and the mathematician.”⁸³ The ACLS committee believed democracy was a means to the good life because it enabled the individual to seek truth through the liberal arts; “the authoritarian state cannot afford to let any citizen search for the truth wherever the search may lead. Only in a democratic state is the luxury of free speech and untrammelled inquiry possible.”⁸⁴ Here the ACLS committee subverted Dewey’s language of “inquiry.” It argued that “absolute truth is the

ideal aimed at in all honest inquiry,” whereas Dewey argued that the aim of inquiry was the refinement of experientially-determined values. Whereas the President’s Commission believed general education should produce Deweyan democracy, the ACLS committee believed that liberal education “is to enlighten, to promote understanding, not to proselytize . . . in a democracy, it dare not even proselytize for democracy itself.”⁸⁵ In its view, democracy and liberal education worked together to enable a good life characterized by the search for truth, goodness, and beauty.

The different positions on the college curriculum between Greene’s ACLS committee and the Dewey-inspired President’s Commission ultimately stemmed from the core philosophical difference between Greene and Dewey, and from the consequent differences on the character of truth and religion and on the source of values. Greene specifically chastised Dewey for his naturalism, his faulty definition of “the religious,” and his rejection of objective values. By contrast, Greene argued for a reality created by a knowable Deity (the fount of all religion) that contained objective values for humans to discern. Human statements were true insofar as they correctly mapped this reality and discerned its values.

In a 1946 piece, “Christianity and its Secular Alternatives,” Greene championed Christianity and pegged Dewey as a chief representative of naturalism, one of the secular alternatives. Greene charged that Dewey and his disciple Sidney Hook purveyed a “highly sophisticated and aggressively anti-religious and anti-Christian” naturalism and that they attempted to deny that such “naturalism is destructive of the values associated with democracy, including belief in the dignity of man and the worth of human life,” which according to Greene were grounded in “the dogma that all men are created by God

and equal before Him.”⁸⁶ The Christian, according to Greene, “must continue to point out the nihilistic implications of [Dewey and Hook’s] basic naturalistic position . . . despite their insistence that they do not destroy human values but rather accept them at their face value for what they are found to be in actual experience.”⁸⁷ It is especially noteworthy that Greene charged Dewey’s naturalism with being “destructive of the values associated with democracy,” because Catholic educators leveled the same charge against the President’s Commission. Indeed, this disagreement over whether democratic values required metaphysical foundations anchored the larger debate over the philosophical foundations of democracy.

Greene again and with greater precision distinguished between his views and Dewey’s in a 1949 lecture series, “The Basic Tenets of a Liberal Christian Theology.” There he acknowledged that “we are in the presence of a reality which we can in some measure know” and that “Truth will then be a characteristic . . . of our thought regarding Reality.”⁸⁸ He went on to argue that “values are objective and constitute an essential dimension of Reality itself,” that “we place the Deity squarely on the side of Reality, as that which man can encounter,” and that “God is the very source and center and matrix of all values.”⁸⁹ Greene noted that his philosophy repudiated two of Dewey’s positions. First, it “immediately throws out John Dewey’s account of ‘the religious’ completely” by contradicting Dewey’s “radical antitheism.” For Greene, Dewey’s concept of “the religious,” which the Commission implicitly adopted, “isn’t religion at all: it’s humanistic, self-initiated, self-directed endeavor. As such, it is noble and it is possible, but it isn’t religious.”⁹⁰ Second, Greene’s position on the source of values meant that “we have to part company with John Dewey, who denies the objectivity of all values.”⁹¹ The differing

educational prescriptions of the Commission and those opposed to it ultimately rested on these philosophical disagreements.

CONCLUSION: THE FAILURE TO ESTABLISH A DEMOCRATIC RELIGION

Despite the ever-increasing rhetoric portraying the United States as the world's defender of democracy in the face of totalitarian menace, leaders of American higher education disagreed on the meaning and implications of democracy and on what educational methods and institutions would most effectively further it. Opposition to preferential treatment for state institutions undermined the Commission's proposals for federal aid to higher education. The Commission's vision of instrumental general education to nurture Deweyan democratic community did not become the driving force of American higher education. Yet neither did a philosophy-heavy curriculum aimed at discovering objective values become dominant. Instead, general education became a boilerplate phrase for courses that all college students have to take.

Ironically, the lack of intellectual consensus among those who desired higher education to have a unified center—whether the center was Deweyan democracy (the Commission) or transcendent values (the dissenters)—enabled the triumph of the specialized research model that both opposed. In the postwar era, universities' curricula remained largely specialized and increasingly pushed students toward research and professional training rather than toward fuller development as persons and democratic citizens. Clark Kerr implied the lack of any intellectual core in the American university when he famously called it a “multiversity,” which he described as “a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking.”⁹² This

situation differed dramatically from the Commission's ideal that a professor's primary task was to inculcate in students "a consuming enthusiasm for the democratic way of life."⁹³

Indeed, one of the most striking features of the President's Commission report was how little it said about research. Volume I, "Establishing the Goals," devoted only five of 103 pages to the subject. To be sure, the Commission promoted basic research and called for "vastly increased public appropriations" to that end.⁹⁴ Yet its strongest emphasis was on the social science research that would facilitate "the development of social technology."⁹⁵ The Commission believed such social technology was essential for a methodological instrumental general education that would produce a fuller realization of democracy. It proclaimed that "it will be a little short of tragic if provision for social research is not included in the program of Federal support and organization planned under a National Science Foundation. Certainly the destiny of mankind today rests as much with the social sciences as with the natural sciences."⁹⁶ The early NSF, however, gave little support to social science.

The "crisis" atmosphere of the 1940s provided an opening for instrumentalists with a high view of the state's role in higher education to propose a federally-sanctioned solution for troubled times. Yet they could not overcome the two-part challenge posed by the dissenters—that democracy required a foundational metaphysical belief that "all men are created equal" as the basis for social change, and that the Commission's attempt to give preferential funding to state-controlled institutions and thus quash the diversity fostered by the public/private system of higher education violated a fundamental First Amendment principle—that the state cannot have a monopoly on truth.⁹⁷

¹ Philip Gleason, *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 235.

² “The Post-War Responsibilities of Liberal Education: Report of the Committee on the Re-Statement of the Nature and Aims of Liberal Education to the Commission on Liberal Education of the Association of American Colleges” [Hereafter AAC Report], *Association of American Colleges Bulletin* 29.2 (May 1943): 275-299; A Committee Appointed by the American Council of Learned Societies, Theodore M. Greene, chairman, *Liberal Education Re-Examined: Its Role in a Democracy* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1943); Harvard University, Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society, *General Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee*. With an introduction by James Bryant Conant (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945); The Cooperative Study in General Education, *Cooperation in General Education: A Final Report of the Executive Committee of the Cooperative Study in General Education* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1947); President’s Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy: A Report of The President’s Commission on Higher Education*, 6 vol. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947-48); hereafter *HEFAD*, with the volume indicated by roman numeral. Gleason refers to “an avalanche of writings on the liberal arts and what came to be called ‘general education’”; *Contending With Modernity*, 247.

³ *HEFAD* I, 92, 7.

⁴ On the Commission’s enduring impact, see Philo Hutcheson, “The 1947 President’s Commission on Higher Education and the National Rhetoric on Higher Education Policy,” *History of Higher Education Annual* 22 (2002): 91-109.

⁵ *HEFAD* VI, 20.

⁶ John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934); cf. John Herman Randall, “The Religion of Shared Experience,” in Sidney Ratner, ed., *The Philosopher of the Common Man: Essays in Honor of John Dewey to Celebrate His Eightieth Birthday* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940): 106-145.

⁷ John Dewey, “Religion and our Schools,” in Joseph Ratner, ed., *Education Today* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1940), 78, 84.

⁸ Edward A. Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (1973).

⁹ Janet Cecile Kerr-Tener, “From Truman to Johnson: Ad-Hoc Policy Formation in Higher Education” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1985), 57, 55, 59. The OWMR consolidated two earlier agencies and existed from October 3, 1944 to December 12, 1946. <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/250.html>

¹⁰ Kerr-Tener, “From Truman to Johnson,” 57, 69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁴ Philo A. Hutcheson, “Zook, George Frederick,” *American National Biography* online; Kerr-Tener, “From Truman to Johnson,” 68. As Commissioner, Zook appeared on the cover of *TIME*, 9/18/1933.

¹⁵ George F. Zook, *The Role of the Federal Government in Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 34.

¹⁶ Kerr-Tener, "From Truman to Johnson," 71-72. Kerr-Tener portrays Roosevelt as a champion of public higher education and mentions her "notorious battle with Cardinal Spellman over the 1949 aid to education bill," in which Roosevelt opposed federal aid to Catholic schools and Spellman accused Roosevelt of anti-Catholic discrimination. See also Philip A. Grant Jr., "Catholic Congressmen, Cardinal Spellman, Eleanor Roosevelt and the 1949-1950 Federal Aid to Education Controversy," *American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia Records* 90 (1979): 3-13.

¹⁷ *HEFAD V*, 5.

¹⁸ On McGuire see "In Memoriam: Dr. Jan Willem Philip Borleffs and Professor Martin McGuire," *Vigiliae Christianae* 24.1 (1970): 1-3.

¹⁹ Frederick G. Hochwalt to Brother Emilian, F.S.C., Ammendale Normal Institute. Maryland, n.d.; National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Records, American Catholic History Research Center, Folder: "Committee – To Analyze the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education." For the dissent see *HEFAD V*, 65-68.

²⁰ *HEFAD V*, 66. Interestingly, Dewey had anticipated this criticism prior to the war. In recommending a "national" system of education for the U.S., he distinguished it from a "nationalistic" system such as those found in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the U.S.S.R. "Toward a National System of Education," *Social Frontier* 2 (June 1935).

²¹ Paul Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949).

²² Gould Wickey, "The President Studies Higher Education," *Christian Education* 31.1 (March 1948): 100.

²³ Ibid., 102.

²⁴ Byron S. Hollinshead, “The Report of the President’s Commission on Higher Education,” *American Association of University Professors Bulletin* 34 (1948): 268. On Hollinshead see Anita Fay Kravitz, “The Harvard Report of 1945: An Historical Ethnography” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994), 117, 142-144.

²⁵ Reprinted in *The Christian Century* 65.3 (January 21, 1948): 79-82.

²⁶ The ACLS discerned “various forces in American culture, and trends in American education, which threaten[ed] the very basis of all scholarship”; these threats prompted it to call the committee. ACLS Committee, *Liberal Education Re-examined*, vii.

²⁷ Ibid., 29.

²⁸ HEFAD I, 49. On previous eras see Jon B. Roberts and James Turner, *The Sacred and the Secular University* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Non-Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

²⁹ HEFAD I, 49.

³⁰ Russell Thomas, *The Search for a Common Learning: General Education 1800-1960* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962); Gary E. Miller, *The Meaning of General Education: The Emergence of a Curriculum Paradigm* (New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1988). The Commission briefly noted the movement, mentioning that “attempts to

reach conclusions about the ends and means of general education have been a major part of debate and experimentation in higher education for at least two decades.” *HEFAD I*, 49.

³¹ Miller, *The Meaning of General Education*, chapters 3 and 4; William P. Martin, “The Dewey-Hutchins Debate on General Education, 1929 to 1945: A Case of Progressive Historical Bias” (Ed.D. Diss., Temple University, 1991). For Hutchins’ approach see his *The Higher Learning in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), esp. Ch. III. On the intellectual lineage of the Hutchins camp, see Anne H. Stevens, “The Philosophy of General Education and its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins,” *Journal of General Education* 50.3 (2001): 165-191.

³² *HEFAD I*, 49.

³³ *Ibid.*, 50-57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁷ The “general course” arose in the 1920s. During that decade, according to Thomas, “For the first time since Eliot [introduced his] elective principle, an intensive and concerted effort was made to review the idea of liberal education and to take constructive measures for restoring to the curriculum and integrity and a breadth of learning which had long been absent.” Thomas, *The Search for a Common Learning*, 69.

³⁸ *HEFAD I*, 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14. For Dewey's views see his *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900).

⁴² *HEFAD I*, 49, 62. Even as it made a seemingly clear statement of the difference between general education and liberal education, the Commission conflated the two, referring once to a "liberal general education."

⁴³ ACLS Committee, *Liberal Education Re-examined*, vii.

⁴⁴ AAC Report, 275.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 277.

⁴⁶ "Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting" of the NCEA Higher Education Department, June 16-17, 1943, Buffalo NY, *College Newsletter Supplement* 6.4 (May 1943): 2. It is not clear how minutes of a June meeting appeared in a May newsletter. Most likely the newsletter did not actually appear until after the June meeting despite its May date.

⁴⁷ Association of American Colleges Commission on Liberal Education, "Report of Commission on Liberal Education," *Association of American Colleges Bulletin* 35 (1949): 162.

⁴⁸ On McConnell's importance for the Commission's concept of general education, see John Young Reid, transcript of interviews with Dr. Earl James McGrath [another important Commission member who shaped its concept of general education, and founding editor of the *Journal of General Education*], February-November 1977, Part 7, 32, University of Arizona Library.

⁴⁹ “The Official Records, Minutes of the 35th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Colleges, January 10-12, 1949, Hotel Commodore, New York City,” *Ibid.*, 183.

⁵⁰ “Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting,” 2.

⁵¹ AAC Report, 286-287.

⁵² On liberal culture see Veysey, *Emergence*.

⁵³ ACLS Committee, *Liberal Education Re-examined*, 70-78.

⁵⁴ James F. Whelan, ed., *Catholic Colleges of the United States of America at the Middle of the Twentieth Century: A Compilation of Information Submitted by Constituent Members of the Department of Colleges and Universities, National Catholic Educational Association, on the Questionnaires of the Committee on Membership* (New Orleans: Bookstore, Loyola Univ., 1952), 120.

⁵⁵ Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 371-373.

⁵⁶ Daniel Tanner, *Crusade for Democracy: Progressive Education at the Crossroads* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 105-106. Prominent President’s Commission member George Stoddard was also a founding member of the Dewey Society.

⁵⁷ *HEFAD I*, 11. The Commission regularly referred to “democracy as a way of life,” a common mantra among certain intellectuals in the 1940s; *Ibid.*, 102. See for example Fred W. Beuttler, “Organizing an American Conscience: The Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, 1940-1968” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 1995). T.V. Smith encouraged the “way of life” terminology in *The Democratic Way of*

Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), a book that Dewey lauded; see Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1927), 147n.1.

⁵⁸ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 101; cf. *The Public and Its Problems*, 143.

⁵⁹ *HEFAD I*, 102, 8, 5.

⁶⁰ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 115.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶² *HEFAD I*, 102.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13, 11.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁰ Higher education would be the finishing school because the Deweyan concept of democracy already permeated the K-12 public school system. Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961).

⁷¹ A group of Catholic educators who attended the NCEA meeting did publish a short pamphlet-style book; Allan P. Farrell, ed., *Whither American Education? The Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education* (New York: The America Press, 1948).

⁷² Postcard signed by Hochwalt, Folder: "Committee – To Analyze the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education," NCEA Records.

⁷³ Hochwalt to John A. Elbert S.M., University of Dayton philosophy professor, March 5 1948, Folder: "Committee – To Analyze the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education," NCEA Records.

⁷⁴ Edward B. Rooney to Hochwalt, March 20, 1948, Folder: "Committee – To Analyze the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education," NCEA Records.

⁷⁵ Farrell, ed., *Whither American Education?* 15.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁸ Allan P. Farrell, "Report of the President's Commission: A Critical Appraisal," in Gail Kennedy, ed., *Education for Democracy: The Debate over the Report of the President's Committee on Higher Education* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1952), 102.

⁷⁹ Wickey, "The President Studies Higher Education," 98.

⁸⁰ Byron Hollinshead, "Which Way Salvation," *AAC Bulletin* 29.3 (Oct. 1943): 389.

⁸¹ ACLS Committee, *Liberal Education Re-examined*, 39.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 23, 43.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁸⁶ Theodore M. Greene, “Christianity and its Secular Alternatives,” in Henry Van Dusen, ed., *Christian Answer* (London: Nisbet and Co., 1946), 84, 87. At this late stage of Dewey’s life, Hook was significantly involved in helping Dewey prepare letters and manuscripts. Martin, “Dewey-Hutchins Debate,” 217-218.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁸ Theodore M. Greene, *The Basic Tenets of a Liberal Christian Theology* (Henderson Home Report Service, 1949), 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15, 16, 19.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹² Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 20.

⁹³ *HEFAD I*, 14.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹⁷ In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* 268 US 510 (1925), which invalidated Oregon's Compulsory Education Act of 1922 that required parents to send children only to public schools, the unanimous Supreme Court held that “the fundamental liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only.”