

Disarming the Nation, Disarming the Mind:
Exploitation of the American Progressive Education Movement in Japan's Postwar Education
Reform, 1946-1950

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Introduction

On February 26, 1946, five months after the end of World War II in Asia, a cohort of 27 esteemed American professionals from across the United States boarded two C-54 aircraft at Hamilton Field, a U.S. Air Force base near San Francisco. Following a stop in Honolulu to attend briefings with University of Hawaii faculty, the group was promptly jettisoned across the Pacific Ocean to war-torn Japan.¹ Included in this cohort of Americans traveling to Japan was an overwhelming number of educators and educational professionals: among them were George S. Counts, a progressive educator and vice president of the American Federation Teachers' (AFT) labor union and George D. Stoddard, state commissioner of education for New York and a member of the U.S. delegation to the first meeting of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).^{2,3} This group of American professionals was carefully curated by the State Department not only for their diversity of backgrounds but also for their diversity in gender and ethnicity, with the rather democratic goal of creating as “nationally and substantively representative group as possible.”⁴ The cohort of 27 represented the final result of a highly competitive selection process, with the State Department receiving “hundreds of letters, phone calls and personal inquiries” following a national call for nominations.⁵

What, however, were members of the American educational elite doing aboard a C-54 en route to a tattered, war-torn Japan? Indeed, war-torn would not be an understatement in describing the state of Japan in early 1946. Following the war, the country lay in ruins, with its

¹ Beauchamp, Edward R. "Reforming Education in Postwar Japan: American Planning for a Democratic Japan, 1943–1946." *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 11, no. 1 (1995): 14.

² *Ibid.*, 9-11.

³ United States Education Mission to Japan. *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan*. Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off. (1946): vi

⁴ Personal communication, “Memo: United States Education Mission to Japan, March 1946,” Gordon Bowles to Edward R. Beauchamp, August 1979, as quoted in Beauchamp, Edward R. (eds.) *Dimensions of Contemporary Japan: Education and Schooling in Japan Since 1945*. New York: Garland Publishing (1998): 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*

young people—and their education system—bearing the brunt of the war: 18 million students were idle, over 4,000 schools were destroyed, and thousands more were heavily damaged.⁶ Largely, the group consisted of men and women who knew next to nothing about Japan, its history, language, or society, and many even lacked significant experience outside the United States.⁷

This cohort, in fact, was being sent to Japan at the request of General Douglas MacArthur, the World War II general who oversaw the American occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1951.⁸ U.S. Occupation forces had the political goal of demilitarizing Japan, turning it from a foe to a friend—a monumental task that required the re-socialization of an entire people. General MacArthur, who was primarily referred to as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) during Occupation, called for a group of top American educators to assist with the redesign and reconstruction of Japan’s postwar education system.⁹ The idea of having American educators travel to Japan—in what was called the U.S. Educational Mission (USEM) to Japan—came about from concerns raised by Occupation officers themselves. They recognized that as military personnel, they lacked the “authoritative reassurance” and professional credentials to issue recommendations on Japan’s education system that lifelong educational professionals would possess.¹⁰ Indeed, the objective of the USEM had well-reasoned—almost strategic—

⁶ National Archives, Record Group 718, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, “Educational Situation at End of the War: Monthly Summary No. 1” (n.d., likely November 1945), p. 199, as quoted in Beauchamp, Edward R., and James M. Vardaman. *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (1994): 52.

⁷ Beauchamp (1998): 83.

⁸ Nishi, Toshio. *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press (1982).

⁹ Hall, Robert K. “Staff Study on Proposed Education Mission (CIE, GHQ, SCAP)” (December 1945) in Beauchamp and Vardaman (1994): 71-72.

¹⁰ Personal communication, “Memo: United States Education Mission to Japan, March 1946,” Gordon Bowles to Edward R. Beauchamp, August 1979, as quoted in Beauchamp (1998): 74.

intentions: Occupation officers in Japan recognized a shortcoming in their own backgrounds and requested General MacArthur's assistance, who then commissioned the USEM.

In theory, the education professionals on the USEM were to "advise and consult" with Japanese educators, with the goal of maintaining a collaborative two-way dialogue.¹¹ However, the USEM became an opportunity to superimpose American conceptions of education of the time onto a foreign culture and a defeated people.¹² During a moment in history when the United States has just emerged from World War II and many Americans are increasingly anxious about the rise of the Soviet Union, the ability for the United States to maintain power and spread democracy was of utmost importance. By combining the histories of education and of postwar reform in Japan, it becomes unequivocally clear that Occupation forces exploited the increasingly popular theories of social reconstructionism to condition the minds of young Japanese schoolchildren—and society at large—towards democracy. For Occupation forces, disarming the nation was not enough; they sought to disarm the Japanese mind.

The history surrounding the U.S. Educational Mission to Japan—and of postwar education reform in Japan at large—has properly focused on the shortcomings of the USEM. Historians Misao Makino and Ken Kempner explained critically that while the mission was slated to be one month, it consisted of one week of briefings upon arrival, one week of consulting with SCAP and Japanese officials, less than one week of observing the educational system, and a final week to craft the mission's report.¹³ For any observer, this was an extraordinarily brief period of time to create suggestions on how to restructure the educational

¹¹ Beauchamp (1998): 81.

¹² Passin, Herbert, *The Legacy of the Occupation—Japan*, Occasional Papers of the East Asian Institute. New York: Columbia University Press (1968): 10.

¹³ Kempner, Ken, Misao Makino, and Osamitsu Yamada. "The Legacy of Imposed Reform: The Case of the US Educational Mission to Japan" (2006).

system of an entire nation, especially by individuals who had no previous experience in Japan. Historian of Japan George Sansom observed in a meeting with Occupation leaders regarding the USEM that “Americans seemed to think that Japan can be supplied with a new system of education as a tailor might furnish a new suit.”¹⁴

Scholars have also called attention to the failure of the USEM to create recommendations that were aligned to the cultural context of Japan. When members of the USEM arrived in Tokyo, Minister of Education Yoshishige Abe greeted them with a disarming speech, insisting that they “must not try to impose ideals on the Japanese educational system which are not yet realized, even in your own country.”¹⁵ On a similar note, Foreign Minister Yoshida Shigeru implored that the group “consider the fact that Japan has its own culture and may want to be democratic in a way different from America.”¹⁶ But as Edward Beauchamp puts forth, the recommendations of the USEM—decentralization, individualization of instruction according to student needs and abilities, inclusion of moral education, a 6-3-3 school ladder, and an emphasis on student counseling—were “unquestionably traditional American educational practices,” with many not even universally practiced in the United States.^{17,18} American educator Willard Givens, in an interview with the *Honolulu Advertiser*, described the mission’s recommendations and purpose at large as being “to teach each child to think for himself and use his own head.”¹⁹ This

¹⁴ Sansom, Katharine, *Sir George Sansom: A Memoir* (Tallahassee: Diplomatic Press, 1972), p. 154, as quoted in Tsuchimochi, Gary H. *Education Reform in Postwar Japan: The 1946 U.S. Education Mission*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press (1993): 54.

¹⁵ *The Mainichi Shibun*, “The First Conference of Japanese Educators and the U.S. Education Mission: Minister’s View to Promote Our Own Virtue, Gave a Good Impression” (March 1946) as quoted in Tsuchimochi (1993): 68.

¹⁶ Givens, “Tokyo and Return”; Educational Policies Commission, *Learning the Ways of Democracy: A Case Book of Civic Education*, Washington, D.C., National Education Association of the United States (1940), as quoted in Tsuchimochi (1993): 103-104.

¹⁷ The 6-3-3 school ladder refers to an education system of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior high school, and 3 years of high school.

¹⁸ Beauchamp (1998): 83.

¹⁹ Givens, Willard in the *Honolulu Advertiser* (March 1946), as quoted in Beauchamp (1998): 82.

was, as Beauchamp points out, a reflection of how American ideals of individualism were being prescribed for a society that had historically been group-oriented.²⁰

The most influential scholarship analyzing the USEM too have focused on how the mission shaped the path for education reform in Japan. A broad consensus exists among scholars that the USEM was a crucial component in achieving the primary goals of Occupation: the democratization, demilitarization, and decentralization of Japanese society.²¹ Edward Beauchamp and James Vardaman explain that reorienting the educational system through the USEM was an indispensable element in achieving these goals, especially that of remaking Japan into a functioning democracy.²² In the words of Beauchamp, the reforms recommended by the USEM and later implemented by the Ministry of Education “socialized the younger generation to life in a democratic polity.”²³ Thus, the current history of the USEM has largely been a history of shortcomings, of cultural misunderstanding, and of spreading American democracy through education. While existing scholars have indeed explored the ways in which the USEM’s educational reforms were exploited to advance America’s postwar geopolitical power, none have explored *how* the traditions of progressive education in the United States were used as the tools to do so, thus making progressive educators complicit in the formation of America’s postwar empire.

Thus, this study considers how the American occupation of Japan relied on the unique role that progressive education plays in political reconstruction. By linking U.S.-led education reform in postwar Japan to the tools of American progressive educators, it enhances our

²⁰ Beauchamp (1998): 81.

²¹ National Archives, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 387, Japan, Joint Civil Affairs Committee 48, “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (August 1945), pp. 7, 18–19, as quoted in Beauchamp and Vardaman (1994): 51.

²² Ibid.

²³ Beauchamp (1998): 85.

understanding of how education can be used as a political strategy to control and subdue a wartime enemy towards pacifism and peace. In this way, it seeks to elucidate how the USEM to Japan not only provided a blueprint for postwar education reform in Japan, but also the blueprint for *sociopolitical* reform—a type of reform that, with the tools of American progressive education, would intentionally infiltrate deep into minds to rear “a new kind of Japanese man.” First, it traces the history of progressive education in the United States, and in particular the rise of social reconstructionism within the movement, by engaging with the histories and ideas of George Counts and George Stoddard, two leading social reconstructionists. Next, it engages primary source literature from Counts and Stoddard to argue how the tools of social reconstructionism were leveraged and exploited by the education reformers and Occupation forces at large. Finally, it argues that postwar education reform in Japan had the core mission of pursuing U.S. empire building in the East Asian theater, a project that would only intensify as the contours of the Cold War emerged.

The Rise of Progressive Education

To begin telling the story of progressive education, one must traverse back across the Pacific to the United States, where the progressive education movement was becoming increasingly popular. In 1919, nearly three decades before the USEM, a small group of Washington educators from private and public schools gathered to bring progressive education to public schools across the United States.²⁴ Bringing into focus the then-scattered attempts at educational reform occurring in pockets across the country, the Progressive Education Association (PEA) was created.²⁵ Stanwood Cobb, one of the founders of the association,

²⁴ Palm, Reuben R. "The Origins of Progressive Education." *The Elementary School Journal* 40, no. 6 (1940): 442.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

characterized progressive education as a “forward movement toward greater freedom and interest and joy in school life, and as an alliance between the sciences and idealism, the expression of a new attitude towards childhood and youth.”²⁶ At its founding, PEA focused primarily on elementary education pedagogy, with specific interests in the project-based method and student-centered learning.²⁷

Despite the formal founding of the PEA in 1919, the principles embodied in progressive education were not at all novel, and certainly not exclusive to the United States. As historian Reuben Palm explains, in 1828 Swiss writer and educator Albertine-Adrienne Necker de Saussure published the first two volumes of a work establishing her theory and ideas about education.²⁸ The principles of education set forth by Necker have a striking resemblance to those established by the PEA. Necker argued for the freedom for children to develop naturally, stressed the importance of interest as the motivating influence for children, the role of the teacher as guide and leader, and the necessity of intelligent design of pupil development.²⁹

Necker’s ideas on progressive education were also strongly influenced by those of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Locke, an English philosopher commonly regarded as the father of modern education in England, believed in the value of discovery as a natural part of the learning process, and that knowledge arises “out of observation and experience rather than manipulation of accepted or given ideas.”³⁰ In his 1690 work *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke articulated his theory of mind, describing the mind as a *tabula rasa*, or

²⁶ Stanwood, Cobb. “The Romance of Beginnings.” *Progressive Education* 6 (1929): 67.

²⁷ Graham, Patricia Albjerg. *Progressive Education from Arcady to Academe: A History of the Progressive Education Association, 1919-1955*. New York: Columbia University Teacher’s College Press (1967).

²⁸ Palm, 443.

²⁹ Necker de Saussure, Albertine-Adrienne. *L’éducation progressive, ou Étude du ours de la vie*. Paris: Garnier Frères. [*Progressive Education*]. Translated from French. Boston (1835).

³⁰ Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: Oxford University Press (1689).

“blank slate.”³¹ In his seminal *Some Thoughts Considering Education*, which was published in 1693, Locke built upon this idea, arguing that a proper education of the mind uses three distinct methods: the development of a healthy body, the formation of a virtuous character, and the choice of an appropriate academic curriculum.³² Rousseau used Locke as a foundation for his explorations of educational philosophy. In *Emile, or On Education*, Rousseau’s treatise on the nature of education, he argues that the subordination of students to teachers and rote memorization of facts would not lead to an education.³³ He also advocated for an educational process that utilized the natural potential of the child and its curiosity, achieved through placing the child in real-life obstacles and experiences rather than by teaching facts.³⁴

Locke, Nesser, and Rousseau are largely regarded as the forerunners of ideas that would later be developed by theorists such as John Dewey and Francis Parker. In fact, most scholars today argue that the movement culminating in the formal organization of the PEA in 1919 has its origin in the work of Parker, who from 1875 to 1902 was an aggressive advocate for improved methods in elementary education in the United States.³⁵ Parker, much like that of Rousseau, emphasized the importance of recognizing motor expression in children and recognizing the child’s own desires, interests, and emotions as the fundamental core in learning, and adamantly protested against mechanical, memorization-based drills.³⁶ As Palm explains, this became known as the “new education fad,” and established itself among educators in both practice and in theory.

³¹ Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Kenneth P. Winkler (ed.), pp. xix (Editor's Introduction) and 33–36 (Book II, Chap. I, 1–9), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996 (1689).

³² Locke, John. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. London: Printed for A. and J. Churchill (1693).

³³ Bertram, Christopher. "Jean Jacques Rousseau." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018). Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/rousseau/>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Palm, 446-447.

³⁶ Palm, 447.

At the turn of the 20th century, when Parker's ideas had become mainstream throughout the progressive education community, Dewey published numerous works presenting his beliefs on education, society, and democracy. In *My Pedagogic Creed*, published in 1897, Dewey noted the changing nature of society, and argued that the purpose of education is not a place to gain content knowledge, but rather to realize one's full potential to adapt to a changing world.³⁷ He explained that it is "impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now, hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions. To prepare him for the future life means to give command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities."³⁸ Interestingly, Dewey was particularly interested in the role of students in society, arguing that "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform."³⁹ He explained that "through education, society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move."⁴⁰ Dewey looked to education as the primary means of social transformation. To him, it was "par excellence the method of social reconstruction," and that schools have a role and a responsibility "in the production of social change."⁴¹

Such assertions were not unusual for the progressive education movement of the 1920s and 1930s. In her recent history of the American progressive education, historian Kelly Vaughan argues that the movement can be separated into three branches: moderate (child-centered), radical (critical reconstructionist), and conservative (social behaviorist).⁴² Moderate progressives

³⁷ Dewey, John. "My Pedagogic Creed", *The School Journal*, LIV, no. 3 (1897): 77-80.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Feffer, Andrew. *The Chicago Pragmatists and American Progressivism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1993).

⁴² Vaughan, Kelly. "Progressive Education and Racial Justice: Examining the Work of John Dewey." *Education and Culture* 34, no. 2 (2018): 39-68.

focused on the interests of the child and took an experientialist approach to pedagogy.⁴³ It is important to note that moderate progressives like Dewey did indeed believe in the potential for education to bring about social change. They believed that if schools supported children and helped them to become active citizens and community members, they could bring about social change.⁴⁴ However, they are distinguished from radical progressives in that radical progressives, like George Counts, believed that the purpose of education was to prepare students to *directly* create a more just society.⁴⁵ Radical progressives believed that it was the role of schools to help teach students to reconstruct society.⁴⁶

According to historian Claude Bowers, who in 1967 wrote a chapter tracing the evolving ideologies of progressive education, after 1930 the most “dynamic and creative faction” within the progressive education movement grew to be social reconstructionist educators.⁴⁷ Like Vaughan argues, this faction went beyond Dewey by arguing that schools themselves should direct the course of social change.⁴⁸ Bowers explains that this branch of radical progressivism reached its peak in 1936—nearing the end of the Great Depression and President Roosevelt’s New Deal—with the adoption of Marxist class-conflict theory, as seen in the advocacy of direct indoctrination in the classroom and violent revolution in society.⁴⁹ Bowers explains that the rise in radical progressivism of the 1930s led to further separation from the child-centric progressives who existed on the opposite end of the progressive education spectrum.⁵⁰ In fact, Bowers

⁴³ Ibid., 41-42.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bowers, C. A. (Chet). "The Ideologies of Progressive Education." *History of Education Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (1967): 459.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bowers, C. A. (Chet). *The Progressive Educator and the Depression: The Radical Year*. New York: Random House (1969).

⁵⁰ Bowers (1967).

maintains that radical progressives left the PEA in droves in the 1930s when the child-centric progressives of the PEA refused to accept their proposals.⁵¹ Having left the PEA, radical progressives founded the *Social Frontier*, a journal published under the editorial direction of George Counts, George Hartmann, William H. Kilpatrick, and Harold Rugg, leading social reconstructionists of the time. Based out of Columbia University's Teachers College, the *Social Frontier* urged educators to use the school as an agent of social change. According to Kilpatrick, who authored the journal's first piece "Launching the Social Frontier," the journal provides a medium for education professionals who believe that "education has an important, even strategic, role to play in the reconstruction of American society."⁵²

The *Social Frontier* proved to be a success within the overall progressive education movement, signaling the increased popularity of social reconstructionism. In its first year, the journal reached its largest audience, as circulation rose to more than 6,000 by the end of the first publication year.⁵³ In fact, Archibald W. Anderson, a historian of education and the first Editor-in-Chief of *Educational Theory*, explained that the *Social Frontier* was "the fighting spearhead and the only organ of the social liberals in American Education."⁵⁴ While the *Social Frontier* indeed predominantly featured the voices of liberal educators, it also published pieces from a number of Marxist writers. For example, Theodore Brameld, in one of the more controversial issues argued that it was part of the teacher's professional responsibility to reveal the vast difference in wealth in American society—and that since teachers were the creators of wealth, they should align themselves with the working class.⁵⁵ Despite a splintering in the movement

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kilpatrick, William. "Launching the Social Frontier." *The Social Frontier* 1, no. 1 (1934): 2.

⁵³ Bowers, C. A. (Chet). "The Social Frontier Journal: A Historical Sketch." *History of Education Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (1964): 170.

⁵⁴ Anderson, Archibald W. "The Task of Educational Theory," *Educational Theory* 2, no. 1 (1951): 11.

⁵⁵ Brameld, Theodore. "Karl Marx and the American Teacher," *The Social Frontier* 2, no. 2 (1935): 53-56.

from supporters of child-centric education, Bowers notes that social reconstructionist educators were seen as the leading theoreticians and spokespeople for progressive education.⁵⁶ In 1947, the American Education Fellowship, the new name for the PEA, adopted unanimously and officially adopted their philosophy of education.⁵⁷

Social Reconstructionists Aboard the USEM: Stoddard and Counts

Counts was among the most vocal proponents of the progressive education movement's social reconstructionist faction. Born in 1889 near Baldwin City, Kansas, Counts graduated from Baker University in 1911 and graduate school at the University of Chicago in 1916, with a doctorate in education and sociology, as the student of Charles Hubbard Judd and Albion Small.⁵⁸ Judd and Small were a psychologist and sociologist respectively, interested in the confluence of their disciplines with education.⁵⁹ In particular, Judd was a psychologist who promoted the use of scientific methods in the study of educational problems, with research analyzing the psychological foundations of pedagogy.⁶⁰ Similarly, Small was a sociologist who saw educators in the forefront of the groups that could change society.⁶¹ In fact, under the leadership of Judd and Small, who were respectively the director and dean of Chicago's now-defunct School of Education, the School took on the goal of establishing a plan for the science of education, with the larger goal of changing society.⁶² With a peak in the belief in social reconstruction through education, it's certainly not surprising that the University of Chicago

⁵⁶ Bowers (1967): 459-460.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gutek, Gerald. *The Educational Theory of George S. Counts*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica Eds. "Charles Hubbard Judd" Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Hubbard-Judd> (accessed March 15, 2019).

⁶¹ Ansbro, James M. "Albion Woodbury Small and Education" PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 1978.

⁶² Gutek, 1971.

espoused similar goals. Indeed, the role of Judd and Small as academic mentors and influential figures to George Counts' own philosophies on education should not be understated.

Following his doctorate at the University of Chicago, where he focused on the sociological dimensions of educational research, he was appointed the head of Delaware College's Department of Education. After similar short stints at Harris Teachers College, the University of Washington, Yale, and the University of Chicago, Counts joined the faculty of Columbia University Teachers College, where he would spend much of his career.⁶³ At Teachers College, Counts quickly rose to prominence in the education community with his research interests in the "origin, history, and development of man."⁶⁴ His first works were *The New Russian Primer* (1931) and *The Soviet Challenge to America* (1931), which he published after study tours in the Soviet Union in 1927 and 1929. Counts grew impressed by Soviet efforts at social planning, in particular with regards to education, and attributed the devastation of the Great Depression to a lack of proper planning in the United States.⁶⁵ Following the success of these comparative studies on the Soviet education system, Counts wrote his seminal work *Dare the School Build a New Social Order*, which was shared widely among the Progressive Education Association, the Department of Superintendence, and the National Council of Education.⁶⁶

In *Dare the School Build a New Social Order*, which was organized as a collection of eight essays, Counts recalled his Soviet planning tours, and called for schools and teachers to help foster a planned collective economy, imploring that teachers should serve as social leaders

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Eddy, John Paul. "George S. Counts after 50 Years of College Teaching." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 48, no. 10 (1967): 504-09.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

and agents of social change.⁶⁷ First, Counts begins by lamenting the current state of American democracy, explaining that it is in peril due to the rise of private enterprise, the spread of economic institutions, and the advent of technology.⁶⁸ Counts identified a fundamental clash between extant democratic systems and emerging economic systems that “increasingly partakes in the nature of industrial feudalism,” noting that the destruction of democracy is inevitable should the existing path continue.⁶⁹ While he believed that the American public is committed to democratic values, they are “by no means adequately equipped to guard and apply those values.”⁷⁰ Counts adamantly believed that the American people are losing their sense of democracy, making them susceptible to fascist ideology.⁷¹ Despite the precarious future of democracy, Counts saw this as an opportunity for teachers and a “responsibility unique in the annals of education.”⁷²

Counts also noted the value of teachers and education during a time when American society was just beginning to emerge from the Great Depression. He and his followers believed that the institution of education—including the schools, teachers, and students that comprise the system—could play a critical role in the process of social reconstruction that was necessary post-Depression. Counts is incredibly emphatic in his belief that this task—that of creating a new vision for a future America “immeasurably more just and noble than the America of today”—inherently and undeniably belongs to teachers.⁷³ In particular, the rhetoric employed in parts of *Dare the School* is emotionally charged, suggesting that fate itself brought this task to teachers:

⁶⁷ Counts, George S. *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* New York: Arno Press (1969).

⁶⁸ Counts, George S. *The Prospects of American Democracy*. New York: John Day Publishing (1938).

⁶⁹ Counts, *Dare the School...*, 45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Counts, *The Prospects of American Democracy*, 356-357.

⁷² Counts, *Dare the School...*, 49.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 55.

The fact that other groups refuse to deal boldly and realistically with the present situation does not justify the teachers of the country in their customary policy of hesitation and equivocation. The times are literally crying for a new vision of American destiny. The teaching profession, or at least its progressive elements, should eagerly grasp the opportunity which the fates have placed in their hands.⁷⁴

What's rather troubling, however, is Counts' belief in social engineering as the end result of education and his deep interest in the psychology of a child's mind, largely owing to his close relationship with Judd and Small during his time at the University of Chicago. In a later publication, *The Prospects of American Democracy*, Counts argued that the development of a new democratic society ought to be a "task of social invention and engineering," calling for a "reconstruction of the social outlook" through education.⁷⁵ He was unfettered and vocal in expressing his support for the ability to reconstruct society by starting with schoolchildren, a philosophy that too affected his outlook on teachers and teacher training. He believed that in addition to mastering their subject matter, teachers should acquire a basic understanding of the "nature of the child and of man"—much like he did.⁷⁶ To Counts, this meant an understanding of the biology of humans, hereditary forces, and interestingly, the laws of "maturation and the development of character and personality, of the whole process of the induction of the young into the life of the group."⁷⁷ Specifically, Counts also urged teacher-trainees to fully understand the "process of induction of the young into the life of the group," especially on the scientific level as it concerns child psychology.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁵ Counts, *The Prospects of American Democracy*, 356.

⁷⁶ Counts, George S. *Education and American Civilization*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University (1952).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 462.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 460-461.

Further, the rhetoric Counts uses in much of his work suggests that he unhesitatingly believed in using the school to construct a “new social order” by exploiting the minds of schoolchildren. In Essay III of *Dare the School*, Counts encouraged teachers to fashion the curriculum and procedure of the school in order to positively influence the “social attitudes, ideals, and behavior of the coming generation.”⁷⁹ In *The Social Foundations of Education*, Counts put forth that the purpose of education is to “re-furnish the minds” of schoolchildren with knowledge, ideas, and attitudes capable of functioning “effectively and harmoniously in the new reality.”⁸⁰ Separately, in Essay II of *Dare the School*, where Counts articulates a series of fallacies that exist in education, a common motif that emerges is the school’s social mandate to influence the minds of schoolchildren. First, Counts presents his first fallacy: that the child is good by nature. Counts refutes this, arguing that on entering the world, an individual is neither good nor bad. Rather, they are a “bundle of potentialities” which may be “developed in manifold directions” depending on the cultural context of the group. Counts follows on a similar vein that a “good” socio-cultural context is not given by nature, but rather must be “fashioned by the hand and the brain of man” in order to achieve a “molding of the child.” Second, Counts’ seventh fallacy is the common belief that education is primarily an intellectual endeavor in its processes and goals. Counts bucks this conviction, arguing rather that the ability to influence culture is what gives meaning to education. In fact, Counts surmises that modern society is “fearful of molding the child” because they are aloof about the demise of democracy, believing such molding through education is in vain.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Counts, *Dare the School...*, 28.

⁸⁰ Counts, George S. *The Social Foundations of Education*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons (1934).

⁸¹ Counts, *Dare the School...*, 15-17.

Fundamentally rooted in Counts' belief in the ability to inoculate the minds of schoolchildren is his concept of imposition. In Essay I of *Dare the School*, Counts is immensely critical of the state of the progressive education movement, which, up to the emergence of his ideas, were dominated by child-centered Progressives. He criticized this faction, arguing that they failed to articulate any conception of a good society, growing preoccupied with individual growth at the expense of democratic solidarity.⁸² Further, he argued that the views of child-centered Progressives largely reflected only the viewpoints of the upper class, who Counts insists could not be trusted to dictate educational theory and shape educational programs. Rather, he called on progressive education to “emancipate itself” from the influence of the upper class, and begin to address social issues while becoming less frightened at the “bogies of imposition and indoctrination.”⁸³ Here, *imposition* refers to the ability to impose certain ideas into students—and in extreme form, would be indoctrination. Counts, in fact, argues that all education contains a large element of imposition, and that the existence and evolution of society depends on it.⁸⁴ In Counts' conception of imposition, an individual is imposed upon a body of culture that surrounds it. For him, this act of imposition is liberating for youth: it “releases the energy of the young, sets up standards of excellence, and makes possible great achievement.”⁸⁵

With *Dare the School* and *The Prospects of American Democracy*, Counts quickly rose to prominence in the education community, jettisoning himself to the forefront of the social reconstructionist movement—and of progressive education at large. In fact, in a speech at the College of Education at Michigan State University, where Counts briefly taught as a faculty

⁸² Counts, *Dare the School...*, 15.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

member, Counts was commended for his scholarly inquiry in education and his impact on sociology and education:

For half a century, with prophetic insight and unstinting courage, you have blazed the social trail for education. You perceived the gulf separating the school's traditional program from the vastly different social and political reality emerging in the world. With startling clarity and fearless conviction, you described the new society with its conflicting ideologies and uncompromising forces. You disturbed our complacency but elevated our sights when the title of one of your books queried: 'Dare the School Build a New Social Order?'⁸⁶

Following the success of *Dare the School*, Counts was elected as president of the American Federation of Teachers in 1939, a position he would remain in until his departure in 1942—just a few years before the conclusion of WWII and the USEM. Through the tenure of his career, Counts published twenty-nine books and hundreds of articles, contributing tremendously to the evolving discourse on democracy and education.⁸⁷

Counts was certainly not alone in his conviction that schools could be levers of radical social change—and that teachers and students should count among their goals building a better social order. Among Counts' contemporaries as leaders of the social reconstructionist movement was George Stoddard, then the New York State Commissioner of Education and president-elect of the University of Illinois. Stoddard was formally trained as a psychologist: following his undergraduate education, he studied psychology at the University of Paris under Théodore Simon, who co-founded the Binet-Simon scale, which remains today as one of the most widely used measures of child intelligence.⁸⁸ Stoddard's teaching career began at the University of Iowa, where he received his doctorate in 1925 and remained to teach psychology, eventually

⁸⁶ Eddy (1967), 508.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 504.

⁸⁸ The New York Times, "George Stoddard Dies at 84; Educator Led 4 Universities," NYTimes.com. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/12/29/obituaries/george-stoddard-dies-at-84-educator-led-4-universities.html> (Published 1981, Accessed March 15, 2019).

becoming chairman of the department.⁸⁹ Much of Stoddard's academic tenure focused on child psychology, and he eventually became the director of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station (ICWRS), which pioneered research into child development.⁹⁰ In particular, Stoddard was concerned with the nature of intelligence and the usefulness of intelligence testing, arguing vehemently that environment and intelligence influenced each other as opposed to being purely based on heredity.⁹¹

In September 1942, Stoddard became president of the University of the State of New York and Commissioner of Education. By this time, he had already established himself as the preeminent authority on child development, and had a national platform through the ICWRS.⁹² Although the ICWRS's purported mission centered around basic research—to investigate and assure the development of children through a scientific lens—the research institute took a different turn under Stoddard's leadership. Historian of psychology Mitchell Ash revealed that Stoddard emphasized the approach of improving the development of children by altering their living conditions with “projects that are engineering in type.”^{93,94} Indeed, this is consistent with Stoddard's position as an interactionist, which is the argument that environment and intelligence influence one another. Stoddard thus expressed a commitment to social change *through* basic research, a position that had been advanced by the likes of George Counts in the social reconstructionist movement.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ McNutt, Steve. "A Dangerous Man: Lewis Terman and George Stoddard, their Debates on Intelligence Testing, and the Legacy of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station." *The Annals of Iowa* 72 (2013), 1-30.

⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁹³ Ash, Mitchell G. "Cultural contexts and scientific change in psychology: Kurt Lewin in Iowa." *American Psychologist* 47, no. 2 (1992): 198-207.

⁹⁴ Stoddard, George. "The Second Decade: A Review of the Activities of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, 1928–1938," *University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare* 15 (1938): 17-18.

Through the ICWRS, Stoddard oversaw research conducted by Kurt Lewin, a psychologist most recognized for his contributions to applied social psychology and group dynamics. Lewin and Stoddard conducted pioneering research on the formation of democratic leadership in children's play groups.⁹⁵ For example, in one experiment, Lewin and Stoddard studied group activity to better understand "total group behavior, its structure and development," and articulated "authoritarian" and "democratic" styles of group activity among children. In the "democratic" group, the leader acted as a member of the group, facilitated decisions on how to proceed, and provided overall advice.⁹⁶ Indeed, as historian Sarah Fieldston has argued, and as the work of Stoddard and Lewin illustrates, progressive educators of the time were deeply concerned with the workings of democracy, particularly with the role of child-care programs in the quest to transform Japan from an authoritarian state into a functioning democracy.⁹⁷ Stoddard took his interest in democracy one step further, with his interest in pursuing "projects that are engineering in type" to spread democracy.⁹⁸ In 1945, given his experiences in education and democracy, Stoddard was selected as a member of the United States delegation to the first general meeting of the recently-formed United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an organization with the goal of promoting international peace.⁹⁹

Like many individuals of the American elite in the early 1940s, the start of World War II, Stoddard was also actively concerned about the direction of American foreign policy, particularly as it concerned American relations with the Japanese. Stoddard, in particular, was quite vocal about his views. In 1942, Stoddard published "Frontiers for Youth" in the journal

⁹⁵ Ash (1992), 198.

⁹⁶ Lewin, Kurt and Ronald Lippitt, "An Experimental Approach to the Study of Autocracy and Democracy: A Preliminary Note," *Sociometry* 1 (1938): 292–300.

⁹⁷ Fieldston, Sara. *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2015).

⁹⁸ Ash, 1992 and Stoddard, 1938.

⁹⁹ The New York Times, 1981.

School and Society, in which he argued passionately the importance of reorientation for the Japanese, the Italians, and the Germans. He believed that this task of “reorientation” was the exclusive responsibility of Americans: it was their undertaking to “guide, educate, and reform any nation whose social reconstruction is deemed essential to America’s welfare.”¹⁰⁰ His views on the future of Japan were largely in accordance with the intention of the U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan: “to ensure that Japan will not again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world.”¹⁰¹

Immediately following the surrender of Japan, questions emerged surrounding the implementation strategy for the Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan. Policymakers understood the “ultimate objective” of Occupation as laid out in the Post-Surrender Policy: that is, to ensure that Japan would no longer threaten the peace and security of the world.¹⁰² Accomplishing this goal necessitated ensuring “the abolition of militarism and ultra-nationalism in all their forms;...the strengthening of democratic tendencies and processes in governmental, economic, and social institutions; and other encouragement and support of liberal political tendencies in Japan.”¹⁰³ Thus, changing the prevailing political ideology in Japan was clearly understood to be one of the main goals of Occupation forces—but to what extent should American occupation forces utilize *education* to alter the political ideology? The occupation authorities did indeed recognize that the educational system had played a major role in prewar Meiji Japan, by inculcating nationalism and militarism in Meiji youth. At the same time, they realized that these

¹⁰⁰ Stoddard, George. “Frontiers for Youth” *School and Society* (1942).

¹⁰¹ National Archives, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 387, Japan, Joint Civil Affairs Committee 48, “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (August 1945), pp. 7, 18–19, as quoted in Beauchamp and Vardaman (eds.), 1994: 51.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ National Archives, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 387, Japan, Joint Civil Affairs Committee 48, “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (August 1945), as reprinted in Beauchamp and Vardaman (eds.), 1994: 51.

same schools could now be used to build a new democratic society during the period of Occupation. The State Department concluded that “only a democratically educated Japanese people would be able to stimulate and defend political progress and build upon a frame of mind conducive to peaceful cooperation with other nations... The goal of the educational programs would be the reeducation of the entire Japanese population.”¹⁰⁴ Education was used during the pre-war Meiji period for advancing national development and territorial expansion.¹⁰⁵ Now, it was to be used to achieve the goals of democratization, demilitarization, decentralization, and, thus, the creation of a peaceful and democratic society.

In October 1945, Occupation authorities found themselves facing a formidable task: having to decide on a new educational system that would transform Japan into a nation that “would never want to go to war again.”¹⁰⁶ Pressure to achieve this goal was mounting within the Civil Information and Education (CI&E) section of the SCAP, the division within Occupation forces that was primarily responsible for the future direction of education in Japan. In particular, as Herbert Passin, a distinguished scholar of Japan, noted that stakes in the case of Japan were especially high following the return of Germany as a “menace of the civilized world,” despite a series of post-WWI disarmament policies, occupations, and reparations.¹⁰⁷ With the postwar policies imposed on Germany having proved futile, policymakers realized at the start of Occupation in Japan that a “true change of heart” was needed. Amidst acute pressure both internally within the CI&E and externally by the public, the State Department suggested the idea of an education mission given a lack of familiarity in education issues among Occupation

¹⁰⁴ Marshall, Byron K., *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*, Boulder: Westview Press (1995): 143, as quoted in Beauchamp, Edward R. (eds.) *Dimensions of Contemporary Japan: Education and Schooling in Japan Since 1945*. New York, 1998: 70.

¹⁰⁵ Beauchamp (1998): 71

¹⁰⁶ Passin, Herbert, “The Legacy of the Occupation—Japan,” *Occasional Papers of the East Asian Institute*, New York: Columbia University Press (1968): 4, as quoted in Beauchamp (1998), 73.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

officers.¹⁰⁸ The notion of an educational mission, the U.S. Educational Mission to Japan (USEM), was formally proposed and accepted within the CI&E in October 1945.¹⁰⁹

In preparation for the Mission, the CI&E would need to prepare a list of initial nominations for members of the USEM to be approved by General George Marshall in Washington, D.C. and General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo.¹¹⁰ In comprising this list of members, who would effectively be individuals armed with the goal of constructing a new Japan through education, it is certainly not surprising that Stoddard and Counts were among those chosen. Their accomplishments signaled that they were not only among the best of the American educational elite, but also that they would be incredibly useful as individuals who understood social reconstructionism, an approach that was increasing in popularity in the education community at the time. By this point, Stoddard had made a name for himself in education as an expert in the social engineering aspect of psychology, particularly in the context of childhood development. In his analysis of education reform in postwar Japan, historian Gary Tsuchimochi emphasized the role that “Frontiers for Youth,” which was published just three years prior to the planning of the USEM, had played in Stoddard’s selection for the Mission.¹¹¹ The article signaled that the War Department and the State Department both regarded Stoddard as a person who had studied the theory and practice of “reorientation” in enough depth to be nominated as chairman.

However, Tsuchimochi largely understates the critical role that Stoddard’s involvement in UNESCO played. Following the formal acceptance of the USEM, the CI&E and State

¹⁰⁸ Beauchamp (1998), 74.

¹⁰⁹ Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, Chronological Record, Educational Mission of the United States, Joseph Trainor Papers, Box 49, as quoted in Beauchamp (1998): 74–75.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Tsuchimochi, 1993: 68.

Department went through several back-and-forth revisions and iterations of the USEM roster, a winding process that began in October 1945 and ended in February 1946.¹¹² While the core 27 individuals of the USEM roster was selected in late 1945, it wasn't until February 6, 1946—just two weeks until the departure of the Mission—that Stoddard's name was included as the chairman of the group. The following day, Stoddard formally accepted the request by Assistant Secretary of State Benton, who was organizing the USEM on the American side.¹¹³ However, the timing of the events leading up to the selection of Stoddard, an educator with no background in Japan, ought to be examined, as they shine light on the specific intentions of American occupation forces. In November 1945, just one month after the USEM was announced, Stoddard was selected for and attended the organizing committee of UNESCO in London as one of the four representatives from the United States.¹¹⁴ On the surface level, in comparing the objectives of UNESCO and the USEM, it is easy to see why a UNESCO leader would be selected to lead the USEM. The United Nations Charter, which formally established UNESCO, was used to create a reorientation policy for the Japanese. The article "Ultimate Objectives" in the U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan mentions the goal of "[bringing] about the eventual establishment of a peaceful and responsible government which will respect the rights of other states and will support the objectives of the United States as reflected in the ideals and principles of the *Charter of the United Nations*."¹¹⁵ The similar goals of the United Nations/UNESCO to that of the USEM mean that it was only natural that a UNESCO leader would be chosen to lead the USEM.

¹¹² Ibid., 17.

¹¹³ Ibid., 40.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁵ National Archives, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 387, Japan, Joint Civil Affairs Committee 48, "Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan" (August 1945), pp. 7, 18–19, as quoted in Beauchamp and Vardaman (eds.), 1994: 51.

But a deeper analysis of UNESCO reveals more ominous objectives from the organization. In November 1945, UNESCO was established in London with the goal of building peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and cultural understanding. With 44 governments convening in London, including Stoddard representing the United States, the UNESCO Constitution was introduced and ratified. The Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution declared that “...since wars begin *in the minds of men*, it is *in the minds of men* that the defenses of peace must be constructed”.¹¹⁶ At the same meeting in London, British social scientist Dr. Julian Huxley was elected to be UNESCO’s first Director-General. As historian Glenda Sluga explains, at the time, Huxley had made a name for himself as a cultural cosmopolitan of sorts. In the late 1930s, Huxley was named a trustee to the Council for Education in World Citizenship (CEWC), a now-defunct organization that was the brainchild of the League of Nations and essentially served as the precursor to UNESCO.¹¹⁷ CEWC aimed to make world citizenship a “habit of the mind and the will,” with the goal of ending “provincialism in thought.”¹¹⁸ To achieve these ends, Huxley and the CEWC encouraged practical methods of inculcating international understanding, including international service trips, that literally moved intellectuals across national borders to aid in the development of—in the words of Huxley—a “league of minds” and a “universal conscience.”¹¹⁹ Thus, Huxley’s public status as a cultural cosmopolitan seemed to make him a perfect fit to lead UNESCO, and his experience with the CEWC was in line with UNESCO’s global mission of tackling chauvinism and fostering international understanding.

¹¹⁶ UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*, (1945) available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ddb73094.html> (accessed March 15, 2019).

¹¹⁷ Sluga, Glenda. "UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley." *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 393-418.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 398-399.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 398.

UNESCO took an interesting biological approach under the leadership of Huxley, who was formally trained as an evolutionary biologist and held strong beliefs in eugenics. To Huxley, the evolving world consciousness that was part of the quest towards global citizenship was tied to “the established facts of biological adaptation and advance brought about by means of Darwinian selection.”¹²⁰ Huxley identified as a natural scientist, and emphasized the environmental causes of differences in human development and capacity, much like Stoddard’s interactionist views on the role of environment and human intelligence. He harbored rather eugenic beliefs, arguing for the biologically intrinsic inferiority of the “less developed races” and lower classes.¹²¹ As Sluga argues, Huxley’s eugenic worldview and his understanding of Darwin’s theory of evolution provided the template for the beginning of UNESCO’s work in 1946. Huxley believed that a sense of internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and world citizenship would mark a “new world order” and represent the “next step in our human evolution.”¹²² To Huxley, UNESCO was the vehicle that would facilitate the “emergence of a single world culture...unifying the world mind.”¹²³ Further, Huxley emphasized that these international prerogatives were the responsibility of “the white race.”¹²⁴ Startlingly, as the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution emphasizes, the organization would reach into “the minds of men” to encourage peace and work towards a “new world order” of mutual understanding and global citizenship.

Historians of Japan including Tsuchimochi link Stoddard’s selection to lead the USEM to its similar objectives with UNESCO—that is, the goal of establishing world peace and ending

¹²⁰ Huxley, Julian. *Memories II*. London: George Allen and Unwin (1973): 15, as quoted in Sluga (2010), 400.

¹²¹ Sluga (2010), 401.

¹²² Vitray, Lauren. “UNESCO: Adventure in Understanding,” *Free World* (1946): 24, as quoted in Sluga (2010), 400.

¹²³ Huxley, Julian. *UNESCO: Its Purpose and Philosophy*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press (1947): 8.

¹²⁴ Sluga (2010), 405.

war. However, I contend that Stoddard's involvement in and leadership of the USEM to Japan came from a unique understanding of UNESCO's methods. In selecting Stoddard to be chairman of the USEM, the State Department understood that Stoddard was familiar with the methods of UNESCO under the leadership direction of Huxley, who wanted to reach into "the minds of men," an objective parallel to those of American occupation forces in Japan, which were to craft a new Japanese psyche against militarism and towards democracy.

In preparation for the USEM to Japan, Counts also emerged as a natural pick for the roster, for reasons similar to those of Stoddard. By February 1946, Counts was serving as Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) teachers' union, which brought him a level of prestige to be noticed by the USEM. But perhaps what was more attractive to USEM's organizers, I argue, was his background in social reconstructionism. In fact, as historian C. A. Bowers explains, social reconstructionism was seen as the most important faction of the American progressive movement at the time.¹²⁵ As it turns out, social reconstructionism is exactly what the Occupation forces wanted to carry out in Japan.

On February 15, 1946, less than two weeks before the beginning of the USEM, the State Department's Joint Civil Affairs Committee sent a memo to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) aptly titled "Reorientation of the Japanese." The document highlights the ways in which Occupation forces knowingly used the emerging ideas of social reconstructionism to control the minds of the Japanese, and lead the country towards democracy. Appendix B of the document highlights the degree to which Occupation forces were familiar with the intricate nature of the pre-war Japanese psyche. It explains the three salient elements that compose the shared Japanese "attitude of mind:" the glorification of the military, a cult of emperor-worship,

¹²⁵ Bowers (1967): 459.

and an anti-foreign complex.¹²⁶ According to the memo, these unique elements of the Japanese psyche have “motivated the Japanese people as a whole in the pursuit of chauvinistic and militaristic policies.” Thus, in seeking to achieve the goals of demilitarization and eventual peace, it would be necessary to create “new attitudes of mind conforming to the basic principles of democracy and fair dealing.”¹²⁷ Further, the memo emphasized that because of the ambitious nature of reorienting an entire nation, the process cannot be restricted to formal education or a mere reform of the educational system. Rather, “it must be developed in such a manner as to reach into the minds of the Japanese through every channel.”¹²⁸ Occupation forces understood that the emphasis that the Japanese place on education—and used this to achieve reorientation: “...this fact, coupled with their habit of obedience to authority and uncritical acceptance of the teachings of their leaders, makes them receptive to a process of ideological reorientation which is properly presented” (emphasis my own).¹²⁹ The language used in this memo illustrate the way in which Occupation forces combined their own extensive understanding of the pre-war Japanese psyche with the practice of social reconstruction, seen in phrases like reaching into “the minds of the Japanese” and the goal of an “ideological reorientation.”

The recommendations provided in the Report of the USEM illustrate in detail the ways in which recommendations for education reform all pointed towards the goal of social reconstructionism. These included (1) decentralization; (2) an expanded curriculum beyond the single-textbook model; (3) individualized instruction; (4) compulsory integration of moral education; (5) nine years of compulsory schooling; (6) expansion of educational opportunities for

¹²⁶ National Archives, Record Group 218, Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, CCAC 014 Japan (9–20–44) SCC. 4, as reprinted in Beauchamp (1994), 79.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

women; and (7) emphasis on guidance in schools.¹³⁰ Further, an analysis of a Ministry of Education document from September 1946 shows that two highly emphasized aspects of postwar education reform were the abolition of the “wartime system of education” and the introduction of social and moral education.¹³¹ First, military education was to be completely eliminated in schools. Instead, research centers and organizations formerly connected with war activities were instructed to re-direct their efforts toward peace-related research objectives. Second, the Japan’s Ministry of Education, in conjunction with Occupation forces, called for the promotion of social and moral education, since the construction of a new Japan is “grounded in improving the morality of the nation and the people’s educational standards.”¹³² These efforts were also accompanied by steps designed to foster greater individuality, freedom of inquiry, the development of the “whole child,” coeducation, greater flexibility in the curriculum, and a radical reform of Japan’s written language.¹³³ These reforms undoubtedly modeled the American models of education. Democratic in nature, the reforms would be the guise through which Counts’ and Stoddard’s social reconstructionism would be accomplished in postwar Japan.

Empire Building in the Cold War

Postwar occupation reforms in Japan must also be contextualized by the political atmosphere in the United States and Europe, in particular the growing anti-communist movement. In March 1946, the same month as the U.S. Educational Mission to Japan, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave his famous “Iron Curtain” speech, warning of the

¹³⁰ United States Education Mission to Japan. *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan*. Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off. (1946).

¹³¹ Osamu, Kanda. “A Guide for the ‘New Education’ (*Shin Kyoiku Hoshin*),” Tokyo: Gakuyo Shobo (1973): 309-314, as reprinted in Beauchamp, 1994: 90-95.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Beauchamp, Edward R., “Education and Social Reform in Japan: The First U.S. Education Mission,” in *The Education of Japan*, ed. Burkman, 175-192, as quoted in Beauchamp, 1994: 8.

“iron curtain” of communism descending to the west from the Soviet Union. In his speech, Churchill argued for a division between the free West and the communist East, effectively pushing the United States into the Cold War.¹³⁴ Churchill’s 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech was followed by a wave of policies that further supported the United States’ anti-communist agenda. Most notably among these were the Truman Doctrine in 1947, American foreign policy with the stated purpose of countering Soviet geopolitical expansion, as well as the Marshall Plan in 1948 which provided economic assistance to Western European economies to prevent the spread of communism. Thus, despite most extant literature on Occupation in Japan claiming that Occupation reform efforts pursued peace and security in the East Asian theater, it was clear that with the Soviet threat, this postwar era was *not* going to be a time of peace and uncontested rule. Certainly, the pursuit of peace was one objective—we see similar reforms in Italy and Germany post-World War I that had the similar agenda of demilitarizing those regions. However, scholars fail to consider that reform efforts in the case of Japan also had the goal of subverting emerging communist ideology in East Asia. In this way, these projects and foreign policy agendas would be America’s method of running a postcolonial global empire after World War II.

The first hint that Occupation forces were increasingly concerned about emerging fascist and communist ideology came in the Positive Policy for Reorientation of the Japanese, a policy memo written by Occupation planners in July 1945.¹³⁵ In it, planners recount the inadvertent failure of similar policy reforms in Italy and Germany. In the case of Italy, they note that the failure to establish policy resulted in continued internal conflict and border instability. In Germany, similar lack of advance preparation is also resulting in poor results. Thus, Occupation

¹³⁴ Ryan, Henry B. "A New Look at Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' Speech." *The Historical Journal* 22, no. 4 (1979): 895-920.

¹³⁵ The National Archives of the United States, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 014 Japan (April 13, 1944), Sec T-A (excerpts), as quoted in Beauchamp (1994): 45.

planners leave a note warning that a similar failure in Japan will leave the country and the region open to other interests:

Failure or refusal of the United States to take the lead in providing such a program for Japan will leave the field open to other interested elements, who will not hesitate to enter it. The probable result would be prolonged unrest and civil strife, coupled with the development of a political hegemony inimical to be the best interests of the United States and the future peace of the world. (emphasis my own)¹³⁶

Without directly naming any ideologies, Occupation planners warn against the potential entry of a “political hegemony inimical” to the United States and to future peace. With increasing the second Red Scare in the United States and the Cold War looming in the distance, it’s clear that the emergence of Communism was on the minds of Occupation planners.

The latter half of Occupation saw an exceptional increase in anti-communist sentiment, likely a domestic representation of the situation in the United States and Europe. Known notoriously as the “Red Purge,” General MacArthur ordered the Japanese Cabinet to fire communists and their sympathizers from private companies, government offices, and all educational institutions.¹³⁷ American educator Dr. Walter Eells, one of the SCAP advisers on higher education, became one of the most vocal individuals in Japan’s Red Purge. In a convocation address by Dr. Eells at the opening of Niigata University, Eells called for the dismissal of Communist professors from their positions. He explained that “communism is a dangerous and destructive doctrine since it advocates the overthrow of established democratic governments by force....in the very name of academic freedom, therefore, the most important

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Myojin, Isao. “Reddo paji kenkyu no igi—Shiso ryosin no jiyu o meguru genkyo kara [Special Significance of the Study on the Red Purge in the Postwar Period of Japan: In Relation to the Present Condition of ‘Freedom of Thought and Conscience’],” *Kushiro Ronshu* 38 (2006): 72, 81, as quoted in Kumano, Ruriko “Anticommunism and Academic Freedom: Walter C. Eells and the ‘Red Purge’ in Occupied Japan” *History of Education Quarterly* 50 (2010): 513-537.

right and any duty of a university, we dare not have known Communists as university professors.”¹³⁸ Between July 1949 and May 1950, the CI&E dispatched Dr. Eells to a total of 30 national universities to call for the removal of communist ideology in education.¹³⁹

Anti-communism had indeed been an integral part of the thinking of Occupation administrators since 1946. By bucking any possible emergence of communism, while at the same time establishing and maintaining a democratic Japan through education, Occupation officials set up Japan as a stalwart of democracy in the East Asian theater. Indeed, we see here how anti-communist sentiment worked hand-in-hand with a social reconstructionist approach to education reform: youth were inoculated against the lures of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and fascism. With the Cold War rapidly approaching Asia, Occupation planners had a vested interest in establishing democracy in Japan and protecting U.S. spheres of interest.

Conclusion

Evidence supporting the notion that postwar education reform in Japan relied on theories of social reconstructionism raises concerns about how education can be used for political objectives and to inculcate a particular system of beliefs. Indeed, as we have seen with the case of Occupation-led education reform, education is inherently ideological, aligned with politicians, policy, and state ambition of the time. The French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser articulated this in 1970 with his seminal essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” Althusser argued that states use two mechanisms to ensure that its people behave according to its rule: Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).¹⁴⁰ RSAs

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press 1971; Translated from French by Ben Brewster, originally published in *La Pensée* (1970).

are those that enforce behavior directly, such as the police force and prison system. On the other hand, ISAs are institutions that generate *ideologies* that the subjects of the state internalize and act in accordance with.¹⁴¹ Althusser argued that schools and the institution of education act as an ISA by generating a system of ideas and values, teaching students a certain “know-how” that ensure subjection to the state and to the ruling class.¹⁴² Subjects come to internalize and follow these state-led ideologies because of the structural and unconscious nature of ideology: that is, they are psychosocial, and aim to inculcate ways of seeing, thinking, and evaluating.¹⁴³ Thus, ISAs disseminate ideologies that reinforce control of the state.

For education in particular, ISAs conceal and mask the ideology of the state behind the “liberating qualities” of education. Education as an ISA essentially prepares students to capitulate—without a sense of agency—to the aims of the state, preparing them to unconsciously accept a life of exploitation:

But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the ‘rules’ of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labor, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labor and ultimately the rules of order established by class domination.¹⁴⁴

By placing the case of Occupation-led education reform in Japan—a type of reform that was used to inculcate democracy and rear a “new kind of Japanese man”—into Althusser’s conceptual framework of ideological state apparatuses, we see how education in Japan was used for social control and to perpetuate state goals. In the case of Japan, Occupation forces acted as

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Whitehead, Patrick. *Education in a Postfactual World: From Knowing to Understanding*. New York: Brown Walker Press (2018): 107

¹⁴⁴ Althusser (1970), 132.

the state, perpetuating a notion of subservience to democracy and peace. For years to come, in Japan and elsewhere in the world, we see time and again how education can be exploitative, used as a tool to perpetuate state agendas.

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