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Education for Children of the Poor
A Study of the Origins and Implementation of
the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

by

Julie Roy Jeffrey

A THESIS SUBMITTED
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PREFACE

When Lyndon Johnson so unexpectedly became president in November 1963, he discovered plans underway for an attack on poverty. The new president enthusiastically supported the planners' efforts and made the War on Poverty into a major part of his 1964 legislative program. From the seeds of the antipoverty program grew the vision of the Great Society, "a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our¹ labor."

For Johnson, who often stressed his own humble origins, the idea of an attack on poverty with its implications for a better world, was most congenial. Congenial, too, for the former school teacher, was the poverty program's major emphasis on educational solutions. The conventional picture of education as "the only valid passport from² poverty" accorded with Johnson's view of his own past. Education, of course, was also the acceptable liberal method of achieving worthy social goals without social strife.

Johnson, therefore, worked hard to ensure that the educational aspects of the antipoverty effort became realities. The Economic Opportunity Act passed in 1964 encouraged community action groups to establish educational programs and subsidized work--study arrangements. But the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the administration's major educational assault on deprivation. One billion

dollars flowed to almost every school in the country to pay for special programs for poor children. In the confident rhetoric of the mid-60's, Johnson described the bill as "the first giant stride toward full educational opportunity for all of our schoolchildren. . . . It will help five million children of poor families overcome their greatest barrier to progress--poverty."³

The support of federal aid to education as a crucial element in the attack on poverty rested on the belief that schools were effective agents of upward mobility in American life. Achievement in school, poverty planners thought, explained later socioeconomic status. With the help of ESEA funds, schools would help poor students perform like middle class students. Then they would find good jobs, earn good money⁴ and escape from the world of poverty.

This study of the origins and implementation of the ESEA explores whether poverty planners were justified in making these assumptions in developing the War on Poverty. It examines why planners emphasized an educational solution to poverty and tries to determine whether the ESEA reached its goal of overcoming the great barrier to progress, poverty. Finally, the study tries to place the act in the context of the last 100 years of educational reform.

Investigating the ESEA ultimately raises questions about the nature of policy making in government and the dynamics of twentieth century reform. Do planners, for example, examine assumptions underlying social reform measures? What effect do political pressures have in the way in

which money and power are allocated? Do planners consider the nature of institutions they wish to reform realistically? Can social change occur when traditional institutions operate new programs? Does the process of government planning itself destroy the chances for successful reform?

The ESEA of 1965 serves as a vehicle to explore such questions, to suggest some answers. The study's viewpoint is that pressing social problems like poverty and discrimination demand solutions formed realistically enough to yield results perhaps, but useful information certainly. Goodwill in social planning is not enough in the face of rising expectations among disadvantaged groups.

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION AS A SOLUTION FOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The ESEA of 1965 marks the most recent chapter in the history of American educational reform. Liberal educational ideology had no better spokesman than Lyndon Johnson who viewed the ESEA as a major measure in his War against Poverty. As the president pointed out, "very often a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom. The cause may lie deeper--in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in a lack of education and training."¹ By allocating federal funds to improve the education of poor children, the administration hoped to help them escape a future of deprivation and misery. "With education," Johnson said, "instead of being condemned to poverty and idleness, young Americans can learn the skills to find a job and provide for a family."² Yet, confident as administration planners were that education provided an exit from poverty, their measures fell far short of their expectations. By 1970 it was apparent ESEA funds had had a minimal impact on the conditions of poverty. Poor children in ESEA programs did not improve their skills significantly. In many cases middle class school boards diverted federal money away from the children of the poor to their own children.

The ambitious social goals planners held for the ESEA are similar to goals reformers of the two previous reform movements in the mid-nineteenth century and the late nineteenth century supported. The

mid-nineteenth century proponents of free tax-supported education (the common school), for example, were middle class intellectuals worried over the pernicious effects of industrialism. They viewed the school as an institution capable of rescuing poor children from "the vicious habits of low bred idleness, which abound in certain sections of all populous districts." Schools would give these children a setting where they might learn "not so much . . . intellectual culture, as the regulation of feelings . . . the extirpation of vicious propensities . . . and the formation of lovely and virtuous character."³ Education would tame the lower classes. At the same time Horace Mann, the great Massachusetts reformer, pointed out, "if education be equably diffused, it will draw property after it by the strongest of all attractions; for such a thing can never happen as that an intelligent and practical body of men should be permanently poor."⁴ Educational reformers wanted both to enforce traditional values and roles and to provide social mobility.⁵

Some of the reformers' energies centered around efforts to systematize education. They supported grading in schools, regular attendance, supervision. At the same time as reformers sought to bureaucratize education, however, they also hoped to change teaching methods, to arouse the child's natural interest in learning.⁶ Yet bureaucratization ultimately led to a rigidity in education which worked against flexible classroom reforms.

The mid-nineteenth century movement was one which proposed mobility and tried to impose stability. Many reformers argued in favor of

establishing free high schools. The available evidence, however, suggests that middle class children went to these schools, not lower class children.⁷ One historian observed, "the extension and reform of education in the mid-nineteenth century were not a potpourri of democracy, rationalism, and humanitarianism."⁸

The reform impulse coming to fruition during the progressive era originated in the 1870's. Urban reformers started without a specific program, but with a feeling public schools were unsatisfactory and urban bureaucracy congealed.⁹ Educational reform came to share the concern over the poor that other social movements of the period exhibited. As one observer pointed out, "to look back on the nineties is to sense an awakening of social conscience, a growing belief that this incredible suffering was neither the fault nor the inevitable lot of the sufferers, that it could certainly be alleviated, and that the road to alleviation was neither charity nor revolution, but in the last analysis, education."¹⁰

Educational reform had a variety of goals. Many progressive reformers tried to restructure the political control of education. Others focused on making changes in the school system to allow it to incorporate more children. Some reformers like John Dewey were concerned with rethinking education itself. Dewey hoped to transform education to include the child and his life, thus, implying a change in classroom and teaching methods.¹¹

Two specific measures of this period will illustrate the complexity of progressive educational reform. The kindergarten movement and the

efforts to establish vocational education both sought to counteract the environment of poverty through special school programs.

The first kindergartens for slum children were established in the 1870's in St. Louis, Boston, Cambridge and Chicago.¹² The school superintendent in Haverhill, Massachusetts, exemplified the thinking underlying the movement in 1897. "In my opinion," the superintendent stated, "the kindergarten should be established not for the benefit of those children who come from homes of culture and refinement; but on the contrary, it should receive those children that have had little, if any, good home training. If it were established in such a portion of our city, and were properly conducted, it would furnish a happy transition from those homes and the unwholesome influences of street life to the healthful schoolroom surroundings."¹³ Rescued from their environment, taught suitable habits, the children would return to teach their own families in turn. Teacher visits to children's homes¹⁴ would also serve the same purpose.

Wealthy patrons and charitable organizations supported the first kindergartens. Gradually, however, public schools assumed control over kindergartens. By 1914, for example, seven of the largest cities in Massachusetts maintained public kindergartens. Although early public kindergartens continued the humanitarian aims exhibited by private kindergartens and sought to regenerate the urban environment, these goals gradually faded. Home visits ceased; kindergartens became more and more a preparation for regular first grade.¹⁵ Discussions about

poor children now focused on helping them through schools into suitable jobs.

The attempts to incorporate vocational education into public school curriculums shared in the moral fervor surrounding the establishment of kindergartens.¹⁶ Supporters of vocational education saw heavy immigration from central and southeastern Europe and recognized the immigrant's interest in schooling.¹⁷ The 1905 study by the U. S. Immigration Commission revealed that 57.8% of the children in public schools in the nation's thirty-seven largest cities were of foreign parentage. Schoolboards now reformed by progressive groups, were small upper middle class bodies fearing the threat posed by immigrant groups, yet valuing democratic ideology.¹⁸ Vocational education offered a way to satisfy complex demands and attitudes. "With its attempt to channel immigrant children into manual labor, industrial education was another answer to the swift upward thrust of the new immigration," one historian commented. "In short, a growing apprehension that competition for position and prestige was becoming too keen, is an important factor in the industrial education movement. The zeal with which progressive pursued industrial education into the lowest grades of the public school cannot be understood if this factor is overlooked."¹⁹

Despite much of the positive rhetoric of the previous two reform movements, results have been disappointing. Public schools continued to operate in the interests of the middle not the lower classes.²⁰ The increased numbers of those going to school for longer and longer periods of time have not led to any equalization of income.²¹ Schools have

sorted people out by devices like testing and different programs of
²²study. Educational reform has been ultimately a substitute for more
²³substantial social actions.

The failure of earlier reform movements to live up to their
 promises stemmed partly from the ambivalent intentions of reformers.
 True, reformers did want to solve urban problems and help the poor. But,
 at the same time, they wanted to ensure social order and class stability.
 Public education could teach the poor middle class habits, and train
 them for a productive, if inferior, station in life. Furthermore,
 reformers tended to underestimate the rigid nature of city school
 bureaucracies. Bureaucracies had little sympathy for the poor and were
 incapable of carrying out individual reforms in the way reformers
²⁴intended.

Educational reform in the past, then, had limited results just as
 the ESEA had. But how well does the entire historical pattern fit the
 reform movement of the early 60's? What kind of attitudes did educators
 have towards the poor in the early 60's? Did they consider the nature
 of the public school system and the functions of education realistically?
 Was, in fact, education a replacement for a more direct attack on
 social problems? To begin to answer these questions, it is necessary to
 examine the concerns of educators, their values and goals, which formed
 the intellectual basis for the government's school reform measure in
 1965.

Interest in the plight of poor children only re-emerged in the
 early 1960's. Educators in the 50's had paid little attention to the

problems of poverty. Their interests lay in developing the gifted child. As leading educator, John Gardner, pointed out in Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too? (1961), "the sorting out of individuals according to ability is very nearly the most delicate and difficult process our society has to face."²⁵ Gardner was confident that the emphasis on talent did not imply discrimination by the schools. "Differences in educational opportunity will never be eradicated," he admitted. "They must be reduced in scope and significance. But it would be wrong to leave the impression that stratification of educational opportunity is still a dominant feature of our system. It is not. The vestiges of stratification still exist, but the great drama of American education has been the democratization of educational opportunity over the past century. This has been one of the great social solutions. In emphasizing that much ground remains to be won, we must not belittle the victories already achieved."²⁶

By the early 60's, however, educators were beginning to face the issue of poverty directly. Few children attending urban public schools in the 50's were considered disadvantaged. But by the early 60's educators estimated that one of every three children in public schools in the country's fourteen largest cities was disadvantaged.²⁷ The racial proportion of students in urban schools had shifted, too. The black migration to Northern cities after World War II coincided with the move of white families to the suburbs. In some cities like Washington, D.C. and Newark,²⁸ New Jersey, blacks were now in the majority.

City schools faced with disadvantaged black students were failing. Black students scored far below their white counterparts on achievement tests. 60% of non-whites entering school dropped out before finishing.²⁹ The civil rights movement focused on the inadequate performance of public schools and pressured educators to respond to the problem.³⁰

Educators were genuinely concerned over the schools' failure to meet the challenge of deprived children. In the late 1950's, superintendents of fourteen cities began to develop school programs for these children. This Great Cities School Improvement Program attracted Ford Foundation interest and funds. A series of conferences on the problems of educating the poor were held. In 1962, the Teachers College of Columbia University sponsored a two week work conference on education in depressed areas. In September, 1963, the U. S. Office of Education, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and the National Institute of Mental Health supported the two week long Dedham Conference, focusing on education of the poor.³¹ Other conferences attracted specialists from various fields to discuss how schools should meet the challenge of poverty. The volume of books and articles on culturally deprived children, the educational term for poor children, grew. Frank Riessman's The Culturally Disadvantaged Child, the National Education Association's Education and the Disadvantaged, Daniel Schreiber's Guidance and the School Dropout, articles by Benjamin Bloom, Martin Deutsch, Edmund Gordon, all testified to the truth of the observation, "the culturally deprived are now in the spotlight."³²

Concern was evident, but not always the reason for it. James Conant's influential book, Slums and Suburbs, which appeared in 1961, was candid, however. Conant came right to the point. "I am convinced," he wrote, "we are allowing social dynamite to accumulate in our large cities . . . in slum neighborhoods, I have no doubt that over half of the boys between sixteen and twenty-one are out of school and out of work. Leaving aside human tragedies, I submit that a continuation of this situation is a menace to the social and political health of the large cities."³³

Fear of disorder in the inner cities pervaded Conant's book. The central problem facing the schools, Conant felt, was how to deal with the inadequate performance of students in school and how to prevent students from dropping out of school onto the streets. Both situations were caused by influences of community and family. "One needs only to visit . . . a [slum] school," Conant pointed out, "to be convinced that the nature of the community largely determines what goes on in the school."³⁴ But it was fruitless to await changes in the social setting. "New housing," for example, Conant said, "works no miracles."³⁵ Time was short; Conant believed the public school had a central role to play in controlling the frightening world of city slums.³⁶

Other educators shared Conant's concerns and his feeling that the school offered a remedy for the problem of poverty. Much of the literature described the life situation of the poor and then elaborated on the favored solution of compensatory education.

In its 1962 publication, Education and the Disadvantaged American, the National Education Association (NEA) stated, "the problem of the disadvantaged arises because their cultures are not compatible with modern life."³⁷ The poor did not need money but changes in their values and lifestyle. Educators delighted in describing this environment of poor children. Brought up in broken families, deprived of normal family communication, attention and all the toys and physical objects found in any middle class household, the deprived child was damaged by the time he reached school. Not only did he lack basic experiences necessary for learning, he also had no sense school was even important.³⁸ Almost immediately such a child realized he could not function in the classroom. As Martin Deutsch, an expert in child education, noted, "the lower-class child enters the school situation so poorly prepared to produce what the school demands that initial failures are almost inevitable."³⁹ The older the child grew, the more each weakness reinforced the others. By high school, the poor student was years behind the average middle class student in achievement and was likely to drop out of school altogether. Unable to wait for future rewards, the deprived teenager could see no reason to continue in school.⁴⁰

The NEA claimed it wanted to provide "all people [with] a fair chance to meet the challenges of life." No one institution could ensure equal opportunity, but "the school can have a profound influence in this direction."⁴¹ Compensatory education was the tool the school would use in its attempt to offer equal opportunity.

The idea behind compensatory education was simple. The school would make up for the child's failure to have middle class experiences at home. The earlier this occurred, the better. Preschool programs were especially popular. In preschool small groups of poor youngsters would have books, toys, attention from sympathetic teachers. The teacher was to view the child's alien background, "not as a judge, but as a student."⁴² In such a setting, children would develop the skills, motivation and self concept necessary for success later on.⁴³ If possible, teachers would visit the children's homes and draw parents⁴⁴ into the child's school experience.

Many compensatory projects in elementary and secondary school stressed reading with extra remedial teachers, specialists and new reading materials. Changes in classroom methods such as team teaching, ungraded classes and small group instruction were encouraged. Guidance counselling was one component of compensatory programs. Enrichment activities featuring trips to museums and other city sights were often stressed. Most projects tried to interest parents in the school through⁴⁵ home visits and different activities held at school.

By changing the way of instructing poor children, by enriching their experience and expanding services, compensatory education expected to bring deprived children up to the achievement level of middle class children. Educators stressed, "these disadvantaged children who live in the depressed core of the city--have the same intellectual potential as other normal children. They are not inherently dull or stupid; many are,

or would be, bright and alert, if their basic physical needs were met, if they were given experiences that would encourage them to want to learn the ways of the middle-class world, if they were carefully and devotedly taught by able teachers who believed in their potential and sought to release it through all the many means of excellent education."⁴⁶

If schools could succeed in raising deprived students to the academic level of middle class students, "then the regular learning procedures of the school which are quite effective for the advantaged children are also likely to be effective for the culturally deprived children."⁴⁷

Compensatory education had an implied goal of teaching lower class children middle class habits and values. The learning problems of poor children were rooted in the child and his environment most educators⁴⁸ believed. The child must leave his environment behind and make the necessary internal changes. The school would remain essentially the same; any modifications in the school system were minimal ones like reducing class size. Few educators contemplated altering external⁴⁹ social conditions directly.

The support of educators in the early 1960's for compensatory education as a remedy for poverty was similar to the support reformers gave to education during earlier reform movements. There was a genuine desire to help the deprived move out of their poverty. But there was also a strong wish to maintain social stability and to teach the lower classes middle class standards. Educators in the 60's as earlier reformers had, assumed that city bureaucracies were capable of implementing changes creatively and did not consider transforming the structure of education itself.

But in the early 60's most educators did not wish to keep the poor in their lower class situation. They assumed the American social structure had room for the able poor to move up the social scale and that schools with the aid of compensatory programs could promote mobility in American life.⁵⁰

The belief in compensatory education as a partial solution for the problems of poor children was emotionally satisfying but surprising in the face of evidence. Only a few state and local projects were actually operating.⁵¹ Most served blacks. From 1961, for example, New York allocated \$200,000 annually for local projects on a matching fund basis. California, Connecticut and Pennsylvania also supported compensatory efforts.⁵² The projects initiated a variety of activities; most diverted only a small amount of money for poor children.⁵³

Returns from programs were just beginning and were not altogether hopeful. Enthusiastic, impressionistic descriptions were plentiful. But as one authority pointed out, "it is clear . . . that the state and local programs for educationally disadvantaged children provided an important testing ground for many different kinds of activities without clearly demonstrating that any were certain to be effective."⁵⁴

In St. Louis, for example, the Banneker project attempted to improve student motivation and self confidence and to stimulate teacher expectations. Better motivation, it was hoped, would raise student scores. Activities included assemblies to give students contact with successful people and pep rallies. Spirited efforts were made to draw parents

into school activities. At parent meetings, for example, school officials tried to encourage parents to help and inspire their children. Home visits served the same purpose. No special changes were made in the curriculum although reading was emphasized. Despite all these efforts, however, tests indicated that Banneker children did not improve relative to white children.⁵⁵ The Higher Horizons Program initiated in 1959 in New York City and ending in 1962 also tried to motivate disadvantaged children. Curriculum changes, enrichment activities and remedial teaching all attempted to change the low achievement scores of participating students. Instruction was in small groups. The cost of the program came to \$62 per pupil. Results from data showed, however, that students in Higher Horizon schools did not perform significantly better on reading and arithmetic tests than students at control schools.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the Early Training Project in Nashville, Tennessee, did show small I.Q. differences favoring children participating in summer programs and receiving home visits.⁵⁷

Results from actual compensatory programs should have moderated the enthusiasm of educators who supported them as an approach to poverty. In proposing education as a solution for social problems, educators were reasserting their traditional belief in the schools as an agent of upward social mobility. Yet studies from several disciplines suggested that this belief was a myth. The relationship between education and upward mobility was not the simple causal one educators assumed.

Patricia Sexton considered her 1961 Education and Income: Inequalities

of Opportunity in Our Public Schools as a breakthrough in educational literature. Sexton sensed an "inertia, indifference, and opposition to an understanding of the Reality of our schools and our society."⁵⁸ Rejecting as a myth the belief that education traditionally fostered mobility, she claimed children from the lowest socioeconomic class did not succeed in school and never had.⁵⁹ True, a few lower class children did make it through the school system, but Sexton pointed out that a Russian worker's child had "twice as good a chance of going to college as his U. S. counterpart."⁶⁰ The typical situation, Sexton suggested, was what her study of the 285,000 students, 10,000 teachers and nearly 300 schools in Detroit disclosed. Achievement and I.Q. scores had a direct relation to the student's socioeconomic status. Poor students had low scores. Middle class students had high scores. Since scores determined a student's program, poor students did not participate in special educational activities.⁶¹ Often they were even excluded from remedial reading classes.⁶² Schools were sorting students in a way which reinforced social and economic distinctions.

Sexton's picture was clear. But why did the well-to-do appear more able than the poor? Not because poor people had limited abilities, Sexton insisted. There was "not a shred of proof," she claimed that low I.Q. scores indicated inferior abilities.⁶³ Poor children did badly in school because they were badly taught, because they were relegated to an inferior academic status, because their schools were insufficiently financed. What was responsible for the situation? First, Sexton claimed,

too many educators accepted I.Q. scores as a justification for stratification. Second, a large number of people were indifferent to the poor. Many "in and out of schools" believed "preferential treatment ⁶⁴ should be given to upper-income groups." Finally, since school boards were usually controlled by upper income groups, they allocated rewards as they chose. Poor parents did little to pressure the school ⁶⁵ boards into changing their policies.

A succession of articles published in the 50's and early 60's disagreed with Sexton. The school did not deny poor students opportunity. It was the family background which affected the student's school performance. In a 1958 study appearing in the British Journal of Sociology, Basil Bernstein, for example, stressed that the family's speech pattern influenced how children learned. The simplified "public" language which the lower class child used affected how he conceptualized ⁶⁶ and made formal academic work difficult. To change the situation would be complicated. It was necessary to modify the social structure or to change speech itself. The latter solution was both delicate and hazardous. Bernstein concluded, "the integration of the lower-working class into the wider society raises critical problems of the nature of society and the extent to which the school, by itself, can accelerate ⁶⁷ the process of assimilation."

A 1954 study emphasized the family not only provided a stimulating ⁶⁸ environment for children but encouraged high aspirations. Social class was a vital factor in explaining school achievement and in determining who would continue into higher education. "Over and above differences

in ability, the financial, educational, and cultural differences in ability which are indicated by the occupation of the father clearly play an important role in determining which high school graduates enter college."⁶⁹ An article appearing in the American Sociological Review in 1957 presented data on all high school seniors in Wisconsin. Controlling for the effects of intelligence, the authors also concluded that "the present tests lend support to the sociological claim that values specific to different status positions are important influences in levels of educational and occupational aspiration."⁷⁰

Sociologist Peter Rossi summarized research on school achievement in 1961. After recapitulating the research on social factors influencing achievement, he investigated in-school factors. The research he reviewed⁷¹ found teacher contributions to be "minimal" at least in the short run. Research on different curriculums was not clear but "failed to reveal that differences among schools and different educational practices contribute a great deal to the scores of students on achievement tests."⁷²

Several studies suggested that it was the social class composition within the schools which had an effect on students. In 1959, Alan Wilson published his survey of thirteen California high schools. Wilson discovered students with similar social class backgrounds and I.Q. scores had different educational aspirations in schools of different social class composition. Lower class students in middle class schools shared the aspirations of their classmates.⁷³ Natalie Rogoff's impressive study of 1961 supported Wilson's conclusions. Rogoff used data from a

national sample of 35,000 high school seniors, combining it with other data such as the size and social class composition of local communities. Rogoff found that the school's composition had a clear effect on aptitude scores and college plans. "No matter how privileged or underprivileged the kind of family from which they came," Rogoff observed, "high school seniors at least double their chances of scoring in the top fourth in aptitude if they attend a school where most of their classmates are from the upper strata."⁷⁴

None of these studies was complete enough to establish without question the relationship between schooling and social class. But they suggested, despite what educators wished to believe, that family and community factors influenced student achievement more than school factors. Within the school, social class composition did affect achievement. Yet, the whole idea of compensatory education implied teaching the deprived student separately in his own lower class school not integrating him with more advantaged students.

The belief that the school was an agent of upward mobility rested on the assumption that years of education related directly to job possibilities. The increasing number of years of education completed by the general population was regarded as a sign of increased opportunity and mobility. In 1910, for example, only 13% of men between twenty-five and sixty-four had finished high school. 4% had gone on to complete college. In 1960, 44% of the men from this age group were high school graduates while 11% received college diplomas.⁷⁵ But upper class

students still received more education than lower class students;
 social inequalities still explained educational inequalities.⁷⁶ And
 as educational levels rose, so too did job requirements. Increased
 education did not lead to income equality, especially for blacks.⁷⁷ The
 belief that more years of schooling led to mobility was unsubstantiated.⁷⁸

John Folger and Charles Nam completed a study in 1964 weighing
 the relationship between education and occupation. Using data on non-
 farm white men between thirty-five and fifty-four in 1940, 1950 and
 1960, the authors concluded that while there was some relationship
 between job and education, it was "declining." "The educational upgrading
 of the population," wrote the authors, "will very likely continue to
 be more rapid than the shift in the occupational structure."⁷⁹

"A Skeptical Note on Education and Mobility," by sociologist C.
 Arnold pointed out in 1961 that upward mobility depended on the number
 of openings higher up in the social scale.⁸⁰ While education affected
 mobility, clearly many rising into a higher class did so without a good
 education. Conversely, well educated workers were likely to lose
 status if they were not competent in high status jobs.⁸¹ Formal education
 did not provide many qualities necessary for job success. Ability and
 motivation, Anderson felt, explained much individual mobility.
 "Education," he wrote, "is but one of many factors influencing mobility,
 and it may be far from a dominant factor."⁸²

Two other impressive works examined the cause of mobility in
 American life. Natalie Rogoff's 1953 Recent Trends in Occupational

Mobility and Seymour Lipset's and Richard Bendix's 1959 Social Mobility in Industrial Society both concluded that mobility was related to industrialism. "The rate of social mobility is high in all industrial societies," Lipset and Bendix pointed out.⁸³ "Economic expansion and industrialization are more significant in determining the extent of social mobility in a given society than variations in political,⁸⁴ economic, or cultural value systems."

Mobility did exist, but did lower class people get the jobs at the top? Anderson's 1961 study pointed out some did. Other evidence suggested most high status jobs did not go to members of the lower class. Lipset and Bendix noted that between 1771 and 1920, about two-thirds of each generation's successful business leaders came from established families.⁸⁵ Bernard Barker showed corroborating evidence in 1961. 57% of business leaders in 1952 had a college diploma. 19%⁸⁶ had attended college. Combined with data suggesting middle class students had a greater chance of going to college than lower class students, the figures supported the idea that members of the lower class did not get many high status jobs.

Proponents of compensatory education overlooked troubling evidence suggesting education was not a vital factor in producing social mobility, that it had only a limited effect on children. Why did educators fail to examine this evidence? Like reformers of earlier periods, most educators and liberals of the early 60's did not wish to redistribute wealth and power. Nor were they committed to promoting a thorough socioeconomic and racial mixture in the nation's public schools. But

the problems of race and poverty demanded some kind of solution. Educators chose to ignore relevant evidence and fall back on compensatory education in the schools as a panacea for social problems.

Concern over poverty and race was not, of course, confined to educators. The early 60's saw growing interest among intellectuals and liberals in government circles in these problems. Dwight Macdonald's essay, "Our Invisible Poor," which appeared in the New Yorker in 1962, summarized the growing body of poverty literature. To Macdonald, it was clear that the country's "two gravest social problems" were mass poverty and the race issue.⁸⁷ As interest in these issues grew, many people began to accept the compensatory education scheme as a remedy.

John Galbraith's article appearing in Harper's Magazine in 1964 shows how eagerly liberals adopted the compensatory solution. Galbraith began his discussion by stating, "the elimination of poverty at home and its mitigation abroad are jobs for liberals. They will not be accomplished unless liberalism is a determined faith."⁸⁸ Poverty could be eliminated by continuing efforts in "civil rights, education, slum abatement, the rest." But, Galbraith suggested, one further step had great potential. Accepting the assumption that education caused prosperity and ignorance caused poverty, Galbraith maintained, "there is no place in the world where a well-educated population is really poor." The federal government, Galbraith suggested, should set aside funds for education in the hundred poorest areas of the country. Funds would pay for "truly excellent and comprehensive school plant(s)," an "elite body

of teachers," and small family grants for food and clothing for school children.⁸⁹

Such an approach offered every indication of succeeding. "Can anyone argue," Galbraith asked, "that youngsters with these facilities and this training would share the dismal fate of their parents?"⁹⁰

Most educators and liberals were prepared to agree with Galbraith. Few offered more sweeping solutions for the problems of urban poverty. Job creation programs, a family allowance system or a negative income tax plan were occasionally discussed but had few adherents. Such plans were too expensive to be attractive. Compensatory education, on the other hand, need not be expensive. It did not disrupt social arrangements. Few educators even visualized far-reaching changes within the schools themselves. And compensatory education did seem to offer a way to meet urban problems.

In their eager acceptance of compensatory education, educators of the 1960's appeared to follow the pattern of their predecessors. Their reform offered education as the solution for social problems; it sought to help lower class children adopt middle class ways; it underestimated the rigidity of the bureaucracy controlling education. But in the early 60's, educators did not seek to keep poor people in their place. Supporters of compensatory education thought it would give poor people upward mobility. Only later would compensatory education be used as a device to prevent the poor from rising.

Educators, of course, did not draw up national educational legislation. They merely provided the ideas which government planners could

adopt and adapt. In the course of planning the War on Poverty, it perhaps would be possible for policy makers to evaluate the ideas of educators, to measure these ideas against the evidence, even to reject the approach of compensatory education altogether.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION IN THE EARLY WAR ON POVERTY

When government planners were formulating an antipoverty program in late 1963 and early 1964, they agreed that education offered one of the most effective ways to attack poverty. From November, 1963, to February, 1964, Walter Heller, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, headed a task force composed of Council members and members of the Bureau of the Budget. This task force developed a poverty bill with a community action title and an education title. The education title which granted funds for compensatory education to areas with heavy concentrations of poor children was the precursor of the ESEA of 1965. In early February a new task force led by Sargeant Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps, rejected most of Heller's legislative plan. Their poverty bill, a conglomerate measure with six titles, retained some educational emphasis although it did not allocate money directly to the public school system. This bill, the Economic Opportunity Act, passed Congress in early August, 1964, and was signed by President Johnson on August 20.

The initial decision to use an executive task force to develop a poverty program was President Kennedy's; Johnson agreed with his predecessor's decision when he so unexpectedly became president in November, 1963. Both men were dissatisfied with traditional methods of planning which left agencies responsible for drawing up legislative

proposals and sending them on to the White House staff and the Bureau¹ of the Budget for approval. Kennedy and Johnson, concerned about bringing new ideas into government and coordinating plans for government policy, turned with greater and greater frequency to outside task forces and executive groups to make policy. Gradually, task forces² became a means of absorbing agency powers.

Although using task forces to develop administration programs represented an attempt to introduce fresh ideas and to rationalize planning within government, in this case the attempt failed. For the most part, the two poverty task forces in 1963 and 1964 stayed close to traditional proposals, neither exploring the many possible alternatives for action, nor probing their own assumptions which impelled them towards certain solutions. Too much task force time and energy centered around battling the vested power of agencies and plotting Congressional strategy for the task forces to live up to expectations.

An examination of the task force's deliberations on the educational measures of the War on Poverty shows that planning was not the careful process it should be. Members of the task forces did not question whether education really represented an effective way of coping with poverty. They eagerly adopted the educators' solution of compensatory education without investigating whether compensatory programs seemed to be working. Nor did planners ever consider carefully what role the public school system itself would play in an educational reform favoring the poor. When Shriver's task force rejected the formal educational measure worked out by Heller's group, the decision rested not on intellectual,

but on political grounds. Although the Heller solution did not become part of the Economic Opportunity Act, it would reappear in modified form the following year as the ESEA.

From the earliest days of planning the War on Poverty, education was considered a vital part of the approach to the problem. But why were planners so quick to adopt an educational solution? First, major administration anxieties suggested a program focusing on the young, the blacks and the unemployed. Education appeared to offer something for these groups. Second, leading task force members were interested in education and predisposed to accept educational solutions. That their framework of reference might not be appropriate for the antipoverty effort apparently did not occur to task force members.

Unemployment and inadequate economic expansion were two administration anxieties which troubled Kennedy and his advisors since 1961. The economy, however, picked up after a low in 1960 and 1961, but unemployment did not improve much. The annual unemployment rate in 1961 was 6.7%. The next year it fell to 5.6%, but dropped no further in 1963. Walter Heller sought to reduce unemployment to 4%.³ By the spring of 1963 he was able to persuade Kennedy that a tax cut was both necessary to stimulate the economy and to create two to three million new jobs for the unemployed.⁴ Yet a tax cut would not end unemployment. "Those caught in the web of illiteracy, lack of skills, poor health and squalor would not be able to make use of . . . exits" the tax cut would provide, Heller realized. For these unfortunate people, then, new

measures focusing "sharply and specifically on removal of the road⁵ blocks of poverty" were essential.

Worries about the country's unemployment rate were also worries about youth. Young people made up an unnecessarily large part of the unemployment rolls. In 1962, the rate of teenage unemployment averaged⁶ about 13%. The President's Committee on Youth Employment warned in 1963 that the youth problem had reached crisis proportions. Kennedy recognized the situation was serious when he presented the Vocational Education bill to Congress in 1963 and when he initiated a summer program to persuade dropouts to return to school. Yet something more was necessary for these unemployed young people.

The problem of what to do for black America probably worried Kennedy most of all. The 1960 census indicated that most poor people⁷ were white and lived in rural and suburban areas. But poor blacks clustered in decaying urban areas, in 1963 had an unemployment rate 112%⁸ that of whites, and were becoming increasingly aware of their plight. In June, 1963, Kennedy spent a major part of his cabinet meeting discussing Negro unemployment and asked for staff papers on the problem.⁹ The March on Washington in August sharpened the demand of blacks for civil rights and jobs. Kennedy felt the mood of blacks that summer was "ominous."¹⁰ It was impossible to forget the events of April and May when civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, collapsed into rioting and violence.

Lyndon Johnson inherited major administration concerns in November

and added the one of time. Presidential elections were less than a year away. To wage an effective campaign, Johnson had to establish an image for his presidency as rapidly as possible. Initial work had already started on a poverty program; it could probably be pulled into shape quickly. Moreover, the program was not publically identified with his charismatic predecessor and fit in with Johnson's view of himself as a New Deal social reformer.¹¹ Johnson told Heller, "that's my kind of program," two days after the assassination urging the economist¹² to continue work "full speed ahead."

Various external pressures thus were pushing the government towards the rapid development of an antipoverty program focusing on urban areas with large numbers of young unemployed blacks. There were, of course, many different alternatives for action. Interests of Heller task force members, however, made them immediately sympathetic to an educational solution.

When Kennedy had first expressed interest to Heller in the poverty problem in December, 1962, Heller had asked Robert Lampman, one of the staff members of the Council of Economic Advisors and an economist, to pull together data on poverty. Lampman had done a study, The Low Income Population and Economic Growth, for the Joint Economic Committee in Congress in 1959. The study which Lampman now revised for Heller stressed that while general economic growth helped much of the population, some groups still remained in poverty. Lampman's work described the statistical attributes of the poor. Poverty groups often exhibited

"handicapping characteristics" like color, sex and low education, he
¹³
 pointed out. Lampman's analysis influenced task force members who
 made vital causal connections between inadequate education and poverty.

An October 29 memo from Michael March, task force member from
 Bureau of the Budget, to Bureau Director, Kermit Gordon, shows the use
 the task force made of Lampman's material. March reported that the
 task force had met twice, had studied the statistics of low income
 population, and discussed the effects of the proposed tax cut. March
 recalled, "it has been assumed that [the tax cut] . . . would not help
 many of the 20% of the people who are below the poverty line. Among
 these people low education is heavily associated with poverty . . ."
 March's memo indicated that the task force interpreted Lampman's
 statistics to support education as a cure for poverty. March continued,
 "the group's consensus leans toward relying on a wide range of programs.
 Preventive and remedial programs, such as improved education, training
 and health services deserve first priority." Then March reported, the
 task force had gone on to discuss possible specific compensatory
 measures like enrichment programs and rural and slum community school
¹⁴
 projects.

Walter Heller's interests reinforced the general tendencies of the
 group. As an economist, Heller was concerned with the question of the
 country's long term growth. Full employment, while important, would
¹⁵
 not generate a satisfactory growth rate by itself. Other measures
 were necessary to assure future growth. Heller believed, for example,

the country had to channel a larger part of its wealth into expanding human resources than it had done in the past. Investing in education was just as important as putting money into plant equipment. "This acceptance of education is long overdue," he argued.¹⁶ To Heller, education meant the public school system, the "essential instrument for achieving the higher productivity, technological advance, and broad understanding which underlie economic growth."¹⁷ He supported federal aid for schools since, in the long run, "the big pay off will come from basic education."¹⁸

David Hackett, Executive Director of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime established in 1961, also supported an educational solution to poverty. Hackett was informally involved in poverty discussions during the summer of 1964 and was invited to offer his suggestions for a program in early November.¹⁹ By mid-December, Hackett provided the coordinating theme of community action for the incipient program.

In his work as Director of the President's Committee, Hackett had adopted the viewpoint of two social scientists from the Columbia School of Social Work, Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin.²⁰ Cloward and Ohlin believed juvenile delinquency was the result of blocked opportunity. Delinquents were lower class youths, they said, who turned to crime because unsympathetic institutions frustrated their will to succeed.²¹ Any solution to the problem of delinquency implied changing institutions to make them more responsive to the poor.

These were the changes Hackett sought to instigate in the programs the President's Committee supported. The Committee gave funds to sixteen communities to work out comprehensive plans to eliminate delinquency. Each program should "have identified many sources of the problem and have proposed to seek changes in many institutions." ²² As the program coordinator of the President's Committee remarked, "we believed that the answers to lower-class delinquency and poverty lay in a massive reform of institutional practices in schools, social-welfare agencies, and employment services. We believed with fervor that a combination of refined intellectual understanding of problems, mixed with political 'clout' and new funds would be the magic ingredients in the war on delinquency." ²³

Since Hackett saw an intimate relation between crime and poverty, he visualized his delinquency program as a model for an antipoverty effort. ²⁴ His emphasis on changing the public school system, through comprehensive planning, tied in with the views of other members of the task force who agreed that education provided an escape from poverty.

The Ford Foundation was also involved in projects stressing a coordinated community approach to social problems and incorporating the Ohlin strategy of social change. Since the late 50's the Ford Foundation had been experimenting to improve the social conditions of central cities, under its public affairs program director Paul Ylvisaker. ²⁵ One key focus of Ford Foundation strategy was the public school system. Ylvisaker pointed out, "we have placed the Ford Foundation's first bet

not on the central business district of the city but on its school system, and more on school outlook and methods than on buildings."²⁶

By fostering educational experiments the Ford Foundation tried to inspire the teachers and the system to have new and more positive attitudes towards the poor.²⁷ The Foundation eventually hoped that schools could reach out to serve the whole community, children and adults.²⁸ Ylvisaker, too, participated in task force deliberations in mid-December and had the weight of the Ford Foundation's money and experience behind his words.²⁹

Both the President's Committee and the Ford Foundation emphasized "changing the environment, rather than the individual and both recognized education and vocational opportunities as crucial aspects of the environment. Reform, they both believed, must grow out of a much more coherent integration of relevant institutions."³⁰

The basic beliefs of Lampman, Heller, Hackett and Ylvisaker reinforced the attractiveness of an educational solution for poverty and accorded with the controlling interest in youth, race and employment. But actually, members of the task force had different perceptions of what poverty was and how formal education could affect it. As Heller visualized poverty, "much of the problem and much of the solution was economic in nature."³¹ Spending money on public schools and training would foster general economic growth and help poor people get jobs. For Hackett, however, poverty resulted from the social class system. Poor people were poor because middle class institutions like schools prevented them from succeeding in life. Hackett hoped that granting

money to institutions would stimulate them to reform. In addition to these two views, task force members slipped into cultural explanations of poverty, which implied that the problem of the poor was psychological, not economic or social.³² Poor people had self-defeating values and habits which made them unable to succeed in school. Special compensatory programs to help the poor overcome the effects of a deprived background were necessary although schools were basically satisfactory as they were.

Each of these viewpoints saw a different relationship between education, the public schools, and poverty. Each was administratively vague. Exactly how would federal money bring about change in the schools, for example? Although it was the task force's responsibility to distinguish between their approaches and to evaluate them, they do not appear to have done so. In a similar way, the task force did not recognize that its members held a number of views about how institutional change could be instigated through community action either. As one study pointed out, "few of the participants argued against the ideas of others so much as they argued for their own."³³

Why did the task force never discuss or notice major differences in interpretation? Why did members never question whether education had a causal relation to social and economic status? The ideological framework within which task force members worked appears to have encouraged them to accept educational solutions, to have prevented them from probing vital issues. Heller's recollection of the planning process emphasizes,

"obviously, we were deep in the realm of social goals and values."³⁴

Early task force memoirs stressed the importance of providing opportunity, of letting the poor help themselves.³⁵ They did not plan to disturb the system. Heller proposed a tax cut, not a massive increase in social services for the poor.³⁶ Even Hackett hoped somehow institutions would transform themselves. Later, participants pointed out that they never seriously considered radical alternatives.³⁷ Then, too, Johnson wanted the War on Poverty to be cheap. Education neither threatened the social order, nor demanded massive funding. Traditional ideology furnished comfortable support for the view that schools provided social mobility in American life.

The task force's method of operation also helped to prevent careful examination of ideas. Instead of formulating its own program, Heller's group canvased governmental departments for "imaginative new" program suggestions on November 5.³⁸ Once recommendations started flooding in, the task force became immersed in the job of evaluating and costing them out. Since the task force found itself flooded with proposals, it never worked out its own approach. Then, too, the task force had to confront practical problems of how to deal with agencies pressing to have their proposals included in the new program and to answer troubling questions such as who would run the poverty program. The task force's most original contribution to the early poverty program was its decision to adopt Hackett's proposal of community action as the central theme. Yet even this was a desperate rather than a creative

response.

The specific educational solution developed by the Heller task force was a compromise based on an HEW proposal and Bureau of the Budget criticisms. HEW's initial response to Heller's November 5 memo asking for suggestions was to revive parts of Kennedy's 1963 National Education Act. Francis Keppel, Commissioner of Education went over this plan with Wilbur Cohen, Assistant Secretary of HEW in charge of legislation, on November 13. Keppel visualized two bills, one offering general school aid for construction and teacher salaries, and the other establishing grants for "experimental and action projects designed to improve educational opportunity and achievements of students attending schools in areas -- both urban slums and rural depressed -- marked by high rates of unemployment and school dropouts and by low per capita income and educational achievements."³⁹ The HEW plan would award funds to state educational departments and local school districts. This ensured control of the program to the substantial members of local⁴⁰ communities.

On November 19 Cohen sent HEW's suggestions on to Heller. His memo revealed that HEW was making a bid for major control over the new poverty program. "The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is vitally concerned with the prevention and alleviation of poverty. All of our programs are directed -- in one way or another -- towards the conservation and development of human resources and the opening of⁴¹ opportunities for more satisfying individual and community life."

Cohen's list of proposals offered a traditional HEW program of improving social security benefits, providing vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, meeting the needs of the aged and supporting work relief and training programs.

Although Cohen included Keppel's poverty grant plan, he warned that the task force should not interpret the plan to mean a diminution of "our strong support for the portions of the 1963 proposal relating to teacher salary increases and urgently needed school construction."⁴² Cohen cast familiar demands for aid for construction and teacher salaries in the new poverty spirit. Federal aid would help all schools he admitted but "enactment would be particularly beneficial in economically and educationally deprived areas where teacher salary increase and school construction needs are especially urgent and severe. The urgency of enacting legislation to meet these needs should be given great emphasis in the instant program to widen participation in prosperity."⁴³ For the following two and a half months, HEW was fighting for a general aid to education bill.

William Capron, one of the leading members of the Heller task force, and Michael March, from the Bureau of the Budget, evaluated the HEW package on November 21. Disliking the heavy emphasis on welfare type of programs, they reported that the suggestions were "Quite light on the really useful programs relating to youth." They felt the best bet was the grants proposal with funds for poor areas. Perhaps underestimating HEW's devotion to general aid, the two task force members felt it would

be a good idea to allocate funds HEW wanted for general aid "into a really significant anti-poverty program."⁴⁴ Even though the task force found HEW's educational suggestions limited, it made the educational grants proposal a major part of its program.

Task force members did not seriously question whether the proposal had any chance of fulfilling the major expectations held for education. Although Heller had sought new ideas, the task force accepted an old one, keeping discussion close to its provisions. It was true that HEW was a powerful agency, with many ties to educational associations and interest groups. It was able to exert pressure on the task force. Nevertheless, in view of the crucial role education was to play in the poverty program, the task force's failure to investigate the proposal, to see how it related specifically to improving education in the public school system and to eliminating poverty was surprising.

In early December much of the task force's energy was devoted to an attempt to pull the poverty effort together into a coherent and attractive piece of legislation. Central though the education theme was, it did not provide a new look or unify the program as the task force desired. Nor did the theme protect the task force from other departments wanting the task force to include their own programs. David Hackett played an increasingly important part in task force deliberations and provided the answer to the dilemma. When Hackett suggested the community action concept to the task force in November, he was thinking in terms

of having a few demonstration areas experiment with community action programs. By mid-December, William Cannon, a member of the task force from the Bureau of the Budget, took up the idea and suggested establishing ten community demonstration areas. These "corporations" would plan a total community program aimed at eliminating poverty, select the component parts and coordinate them. A memo by one of Heller's assistants announced, "this may be the way to really make something out of this poverty program."⁴⁵

The task force eagerly accepted community action because it was new, it pulled elements of an attack on poverty together, and it was a way to escape departmental pressures. Each community would select its own programs.⁴⁶ Yet the task force thought in terms of coordinating educational grants with community action programs as a December 18 memo⁴⁷ indicates.

Joining the educational grants proposal to the community action proposal offered an opportunity for task force members to perceive the different views they had about education. The educational grants proposal gave money to schools for projects aimed at poor children. But community action as understood by Hackett and his President's Committee associate, Richard Boone, sought to instigate reform in institutions like the schools. Yet no clarification of the two views appears to have occurred.

Disagreements between the task force members in the Bureau of the Budget and HEW continued into January. Secretary Celebrezze was loathe to give up general aid and wanted to see an education bill with both a

general aid provision and the educational grants proposal. The Bureau of the Budget disagreed. A January 8 memo pointed out, "it must be recognized that the elementary-secondary education bill may go down the drain, and the Administration would not only lose this significant education measure but also a key element in its attack on poverty."⁴⁸

But there were other "far reaching" differences between the task force and HEW as a series of January Bureau of the Budget memos revealed.⁴⁹ Bureau of the Budget task force members felt the plan for educational grants proposed by HEW was rigid and tied too closely to traditional educational power structure of state and local public authorities. HEW favored automatic state allotments of funds based on the number of low income families in the state. State education agencies would approve projects and determine priorities. Local public schools would have the major responsibility for carrying out projects.

The Bureau sought a flexible approach pinpointing "federal resources to a limited number of high priority projects."⁵⁰ It recognized correctly that the HEW proposal was in fact "too much a competitor of the new poverty program."⁵¹ Bureau members favored moving outside of the normal educational structure. They did not like the idea of automatic state allotments with state education agencies selecting projects. Responsibility for project approval, they felt, belonged to the Commissioner of Education. Project priority should go to areas already having community action programs. Public schools could be project sponsors, but so should universities, private agencies and other units of local

52
government.

The Bureau of the Budget feared that the educational bureaucracy would absorb funds, use them unimaginatively outside the spirit of the new program. The Bureau emphasized that the public school bureaucracy was cautious and conservative rather than stressing the fact that the local bureaucracy represented the views of the community's upper middle class who might not be particularly interested in poverty.⁵³ Then, too, the Bureau was concerned to find a way to ensure that parochial school children enjoyed the benefits of the bill. This is the main reason why the Bureau supported private sponsors for projects. If federal money went only to public schools, constitutional strictures might prevent parochial student participation. As a January 14 outline stated, "provision should be made for projects outside the framework of the public school system as the best means of providing services for children irrespective of their regular attendance at public or nonpublic schools."⁵⁴

The Bureau's preference for a bill actually raised vital issues which were only partially explored. Something was wrong with the public school system, but what? The nature of the local public educational structure, its relation to projects oriented to poor children, the nature of conventional curriculum offerings, the necessity for reform within the system were matters the Bureau's memos touched but only indirectly.

HEW revised its proposals, in response to the Bureau of the Budget criticisms.⁵⁵ By the end of January, a compromise emerged as the second title of the community action bill. HEW dropped general aid for the

educational grants proposal. But in return for this concession, HEW had won much. A complex automatic formula determined the amount of state allocations, although state education departments had now lost the power to determine criteria for selecting project proposals and awarding grants. The Commissioner of Education had these duties. The new title represented some attempt to escape public school orientation. Local and welfare agencies were to advise and assist in the development of projects. Community action agencies had to approve special education programs. But significantly the public school was to develop plans and administer the program. The local school system representing the upper middle classes thus had the vital power of how to spend project money.

In all the discussions over the educational proposal, there had been little about the bill's educational content or purpose. The goal of the title, "Educational Improvement in Low Income Areas," was "to encourage and assist in the development of programs to meet the special educational needs of children and youth in areas with high concentrations of low income families."⁵⁶ \$140 million was allocated for this purpose in the first year of operation. Projects were to be "of sufficient variety, scope, and size as to give reasonable promise of substantial progress toward meeting the special educational needs of young people."⁵⁷ The bill did not define key terms like "reasonable promise" and "substantial progress". No evidence exists to indicate the task force ever considered what these terms meant either. The title's purpose was thus

vague and success would be hard to measure.

The bill did suggest some typical compensatory programs suitable for funding, however, These included strengthening teaching of reading and mathematics, providing guidance counselling and services for students, supporting after school study centers and cultural enrichment programs. The Bureau of the Budget had originally tried to broaden the scope of activities but only to include programs for the handicapped and health
58 services. The effort to widen services failed. Bureau members, however, did not question the effectiveness of the compensatory solutions in meeting special educational needs of poor children. Several compensatory projects like New York's Higher Horizon project and the Banneker Project in St. Louis already suggested that these kinds of compensatory programs for deprived children yielded few measurable academic results.

The title did convey the sense that something was wrong with education for poor children. The grant set aside 15% of the funds for teacher training and research, demonstration projects to develop "new or
59 improved methods" of teaching the poor and migrant programs. Universities and other organizations could sponsor these projects as well as the states. But most of the title's money did not stimulate curriculum or organizational changes but encouraged doing more of the same kind of things school were already doing. The title reflected the hope that money alone might transform public schools into effective institutions for the poor.

The compensatory solution the title proposed was weak, the view of educational change, vague. Nor did the title represent an effort to gain knowledge about the educational process for deprived children. The title established a committee to review and evaluate projects funded by the title. But since there were no provisions for reports from local areas, and since educational goals were imprecise, this provision would probably yield little useful information.

By the end of January, 1964, the task force was ready to go ahead with a poverty bill which had a community action title and a compromise education title. The draft bill was no victory for rational social planning. The task force had not explored either title fully. The education title offered an inadequate compensatory solution and had no clearly worked out idea of educational change. Yet this title would reappear in a slightly modified form as the ESEA in 1965.

Some alternative must have come to the attention of the task force. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, commented on the task force plan. Wirtz' argument was that the War on Poverty should stress employment since the cause of poverty was shortage of money. Community action programs promised few jobs. Although education proposals were attractive,⁶⁰ Wirtz warned they paid off only in the long term. The task force⁶¹ rejected Wirtz' arguments. The tax cut would provide jobs.

Then, too, Wirtz made a series of speeches dealing specifically with educational reform. At an AFL-CIO convention on November 8, 1963, for example, Wirtz suggested that a war on ignorance would necessitate

building schools with living quarters for the poor. Poor children needed to escape the environment of poverty. Wirtz also, called for more training for those teaching deprived children. These measures, Wirtz suggested, would make education into a real business and solve unemployment as well.⁶² On December 20, 1963, Wirtz spoke at the University of Michigan. "The school system is no longer preparing enough people for the jobs that need to be done," he said. "The job needs have changed, the educational system hasn't."⁶³ Wirtz went to some of the central issues, such as the relation between education, the home environment, and poverty, and the nature of the school system. But Wirtz was disregarded.

The task force had not only failed to come up with a carefully thought out bill to attack poverty, it had also failed to please the president. Dissatisfied with the group's delay in putting a poverty program together and its failure to resolve departmental rivalries and realizing the need for aggressive leadership, Johnson appointed Sargeant Shriver, head of the Peace Corps, to lead the effort on February 1, 1964.⁶⁴ The evening after his appointment Shriver asked Charles Schultze, Assistant Director of the Bureau of the Budget, to describe the Heller task force's approach and its plan. During an all day meeting including department representatives, White House staff and other experts on February 4, Shriver observed departmental disagreements over the community action emphasis. Willard Wirtz attacked community action, arguing once more that the War on Poverty must emphasize job creation and training. Such an approach Wirtz maintained would bring immediate and visible

results. Other voices joined Wirtz urging a multifaceted attack on
⁶⁵
 poverty.

A shift in emphasis away from reliance on community action and formal education occurred primarily motivated by political not intellectual considerations. Shriver recognized the obvious fact that the poverty program must justify itself almost immediately if Congress ⁶⁶ were to reappropriate funds the next year. Furthermore, the November election was fast approaching, and the president needed an achievement for his campaign. Johnson and the news media had already begun to create expectations in the country. The Heller task force bill, Shriver found too modest in its reliance on a few community action programs and educational grants. Both titles would take too long to get going and would disappoint both the president and the country. As Schultze noted on February 8, Shriver was beginning from scratch, looking for easy to start programs, with "relatively quick payoffs." Finally, Shriver sensed the hunger of the departments and agencies for their share of the poverty program. Departmental pressures had partly immobilized the Heller task force. Shriver was willing to expand the program to include the departments. As Schultze also pointed out, Shriver "has obtained papers from the various departments on possible programs and is now about where we were three months ago--completely at sea."
⁶⁷

Shriver quickly gathered a new group of advisors around him including department representatives like Daniel Moynihan, Assistant

Secretary of Labor, and James Sundquist, Under Secretary of Agriculture. His chief aide was civil rights expert, Adam Yarmolinsky, on loan from the Defense Department. Scores of outsiders were consulted. The members of Heller's task force found themselves thrust out of the principal decision making process although at first they did not realize it. On February 8, Charles Schultze thought he had persuaded Shriver to go along with the Bureau of the Budget's limited project - oriented approach which concentrated funds.⁶⁸ But his hopes were dashed when antipoverty efforts spilled out in many directions as the month⁶⁹ continued.

To the community action proposal, the new task force added provisions pushed by agencies like the rural loan title, and the title establishing a National Service Corps, now called VISTA. Under the influence of Labor Secretary Wirtz, the group incorporated the Youth Conservation Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps in the bill. Shriver had been impressed with Wirtz' argument about job creation and training. On February 18, he tried to persuade the cabinet to initiate a public works program, to be financed with \$1.25 billion coming from a 5% cigarette tax. Johnson, however, brusquely rejected the suggestion.⁷⁰ This was the year to cut taxes, not impose new ones. Even though there would be no public works program, Shriver, was trying to put together a broad bill which would reach many people and which promised to get them⁷¹ into jobs quickly.

As were being added to the new poverty bill, education lost its

prominent place in the antipoverty effort. Shriver disliked the community action - education package from the start, feeling it would not go over in Congress.⁷² School bills traditionally ran into trouble in Congress. Nor did Shriver wish to channel money through the public school system. Grants to schools would not bring quick, visible pay offs. Shriver wanted federal control, not control by the local power structure. As Bureau of the Budget's Bill Cannon reported on February 13, "Shriver still appears to be highly distrustful of (the) willingness or ability of local people to do a proper job."⁷³ As six weeks went by, training measures began to assume importance. Adam Yarmolinsky recalled, "we decided that the Poverty Program should concentrate on preparing and training the poor to get and hold better jobs . . . It was this decision which led to a heavy emphasis not only on Community Action, but also on the Job Corps, and other vocational and pre-vocational training programs."⁷⁴ For the new task force, education⁷⁵ became no more important than other approaches.

Shriver's first thought was to assign \$200 million to the community action title for educational projects sponsored by both public and private groups. Competition for funds might jolt the public school system into being more responsive to the poor.⁷⁶ A February 13 memo reported, "Keppel has agreed . . . to let Shriver call the shots on his program, but HEW will probably resist the other features of the current approach."⁷⁷ Since Shriver offered Keppel's Office of Education the opportunity to develop education programs under the community action title, the

Commissioner supported the new measure. Keppel had decided, in any case, that the educational grants would not pass Congress alone. Moreover, the Shriver plan had the advantage of offering money to public and private schools which Keppel favored.

Church - state issues were of major importance in working out the educational components of the community action title in a satisfactory political form. But as the effort to develop a solution to the church-state issue proceeded, the specific educational grants proposal disappeared. The February 24 draft bill listed some educational activities like preschool and guidance counselling as examples of possible community action projects.⁷⁸ But since so many new training and health activities were now included in the program, the amount of money available for education dwindled.⁷⁹ When members of the task force realized Congress might make suggestions into legislative requirements,⁸⁰ they dropped the list of suggested activities.

The final Economic Opportunity Act sent to Congress in mid-March, 1964, had six titles establishing many programs aimed at different age groups. As Shriver had hoped, the bill offered everyone something even if the offering was not new. Shriver countered the accusation that the Economic Opportunity Act was old hat by asserting the programs had proven themselves through experience. They were not just the result of "some theatrical new ideas that somebody has."⁸¹ Administration witnesses in hearings insisted that the bill represented a rational, coordinated plan to wipe out poverty.

The bill proposed to "eliminate the paradox of poverty . . .by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."⁸² Although the bill retained an educational emphasis, aid for schools no longer spearheaded the attack on poverty. The shift to training was clear. Title I allocated \$412 million for the Neighborhood Youth Corps, work training programs and one of the new bill's major offerings, the Job Corps. These programs aimed at salvaging young people already out of school. The Job Corps set up boarding schools to offer basic education and training. There was some thought that Job Corps would be a rival to the public schools but nothing much came of this. Job Corps centers later focused on character building and training, not on⁸³ developing an approach to education which might succeed with the poor. In Title II, community action programs were eligible for a total of \$345 million to coordinate community efforts, including education, in the fight against poverty. Education of all kinds would not receive as much money under Title II as it would have in the \$200 million grants proposal.

Shriver's task force presented a bill which did not specifically try to encourage the school system to reach out to poor children nor did it establish viable educational alternatives to public schools. Critics of the bill pointed out these weaknesses during hearings and highlighted the fact that the Shriver task force had thought no more about major educational questions than had the Heller task force.

Hearings opened in the House on March 17 and in the Senate on June 7. In both hearings, committee members wondered why the bill did so little with formal education. Perkins, chairman of the house subcommittee, stated that a massive attack on education on the elementary⁸⁴ and secondary level was necessary. In the Senate, Representative Freylinghuysen pointed out, "it is my very strong feeling that if we have this kind of defect in our educational system, if the children of the slums, if this is what we are aiming at, are not receiving the quality of education that they should and the Federal Government must therefore take them out of their environment and put them somewhere else to learn to read and write, then what we should be worrying about⁸⁵ is the adequacy of the schools they have been at."

In the House, Attorney General Robert Kennedy agreed the school system needed reform. Poor children had inferior schooling. "The local⁸⁶ community . . . must face up to the problems," he said. The Federal Government should spur local communities, indeed require "them to do that in order to get help and assistance of the Federal Government; otherwise in my judgement the money is wasted."⁸⁷ Kennedy came closest to presenting a coherent picture of school reform through the Economic Opportunity Act. In the Senate, however, Shriver claimed, "this office is not being created or proposed . . . to give advice about what ought to be done about public education. After all, that is the Commissioner⁸⁸ of Education's responsibility at the Federal level." The difference of opinion between the two men betrayed how little thought had gone into

the whole problem of how education, formal or informal, related to the goals of the poverty program.

Yarmolinsky later recalled that the task force spent only a week talking about general questions. After that attention centered on practical matters as it had in the Heller task force.⁸⁹ So it was, perhaps, no surprise that Kennedy and Shriver disagreed in hearings on matters which were never discussed.

Yet the fact the task force did not explore intellectual issues does not excuse its failure to ask the one vital question. Did education have much to do with eliminating poverty?

No one asked such a question during hearings. There is no suggestion that anyone ever asked the question in the process of working out the attack on poverty. Policy makers assumed that formal education provided an exit from poverty because they were sure education led to a job. They were imbued with a sense of confidence about the entire antipoverty effort. As Shriver emphasized in house hearings, "this country, with its enormous productivity, the mobility of its people, and the speed of its communications, has both the resources and the know-how to eliminate grinding poverty. Furthermore, we now have a greater understanding of the complex causes of poverty, what makes people poor and what keeps them that way, too often from generation to generation."⁹⁰ Heller echoed Shriver's faith. "All that is required is the will to do the job and the specific ways to strike at the stubborn roots of poverty."⁹¹

Policy makers and Congressmen just never looked at the evidence of what schools did. Studies were scattered, but they suggested that schools confirmed children in their socio-economic class and that outside factors were far more important to achievement than schools were. Compensatory education projects had inconclusive results with poor children. Various studies showed that the relation of formal education to economic growth and job was far from the simple one which Heller⁹² believed. Education and socioeconomic status had some relationship but not enough to support a major offensive in the War on Poverty. Real experiments, too, indicated that it was not easy to reform the outlook and practices of the school establishment. The Ford Foundation's Grey Area Program had tried to stimulate changes within the school system with its funds. The Foundation negotiated with city school systems about the kinds of programs to initiate in the public schools. But little thought went into the mechanics of change. When city superintendents were lukewarm about reform and school personnel misunderstood or resisted⁹³ different approaches, the Ford Foundation did not know what to do. New York's Mobilization for Youth tried pressure tactics on the school⁹⁴ system. The school system resisted. In Boston the school department was eager to absorb money for programs, but they were "hardly bold and experimental." Most were "simply extensions of schemes already in⁹⁵ operation in the system."

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Daniel Moynihan reached. Moynihan felt the government just did not know what it was doing when

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it worked out significant parts of the poverty program.

To blame the task force for its failure to establish a firm foundation for social policy does not mean that social policy can only proceed on the basis of proven theory. But planners should look at available evidence before proceeding. And they should plan their measures in a careful, experimental way so that they can provide useful information for future social action. At no time during the two task force deliberations did planners recognize the shaky basis underlying their programs nor did they realize successful experimentation needed more than a haphazard foundation.

The task forces did consider some alternative courses of action. Shriver's task force replaced formal education with job training, and rejected a job creation program which could cost as much as \$4 billion yearly.⁹⁷ Michael Harrington and writer, Paul Jacobs, reminded Shriver's group that there must be far-reaching changes in the social structure to⁹⁸ alleviate poverty, but no one heeded their advice. Other alternative approaches to the poverty problem were never considered. These alternatives included measures like housing programs for the poor, subsidy programs such as a family allowance system, or a negative income tax plan. These plans would be expensive. One expert estimated the negative⁹⁹ income tax proposal could cost between \$2 to \$5 billion a year. When Yarmolinsky looked back on these planning days, he remembered, "the¹⁰⁰ rejection of an income strategy was assumed to be politically unavoidable."

Many options were excluded for budgetary reasons. The total poverty budget was only \$962.5 million. \$462 million came from transferring

budget requests from other areas to the Economic Opportunity Act. The War on Poverty was not to be an expensive handout but a handup.

The press of events also explained why the two task forces never seriously entertained alternatives. The time was right for an attack on poverty, and Johnson urged the task forces on to rapid solutions. Shriver explained in house hearings, "I cannot really justify or explain, perhaps in detail why it turned out to be timely now to do it. There is simply the fact that people are interested in doing it now Fifteen or twenty years from now they might not continue to be. But now they are."¹⁰¹ One Shriver task force member emphasized, "we haven't got time to study; we have to act."¹⁰²

Kennedy and Johnson had both been dissatisfied with traditional methods of formulating policy through the traditional bureaucracy. They were groping for a more innovative, intelligent method of planning in their use of executive task forces. But the experience with the two poverty groups suggested that it was not easy to develop consistent policy within the task force framework. The task forces did not have a clear idea of their function nor an established power base. Task force members relied on the departments for suggestions. They did not feel free to develop their own plans but adopted ones they did not like. Moreover, the task forces were unable to resist the pressure powerful departments could exert.

Task force planning had, however, produced a poverty bill and expectations. The War against Poverty could be won through attacking

several fronts at once. Although formal education did not have a central role in the Economic Opportunity Act, it clearly represented one of the most hopeful ways of overcoming the problem. As Johnson himself maintained, "when we consider these problems, when we study them, when we evaluate what can be done, the answer almost always comes down to one word: education."¹⁰³

The poverty bill left unfinished education business. California's Governor Pat Brown pointed out in poverty hearings in the House, "the bill before you makes no separate provisions for the sort of massive assault on illiteracy which I am convinced must be made before the poverty program can succeed. I support this program as a beginning of the end. I am confident that the administration enters the battle in the same spirit."¹⁰⁴ The next attempt to organize an educational attack on poverty would revert to the familiar methods of legislative planning within the departments. The question was whether this approach would lead to greater reflection on substantive intellectual issues than task forces had provided.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PASSAGE OF THE BILL

During the hearings on the Economic Opportunity Act in the spring and early summer of 1964, administration spokesmen sold the proposals to Congress and the public as a major attack on the roots of poverty. Yet privately men like Francis Keppel, Commissioner of Education, and Anthony Celebrezze, Secretary of HEW, realized that the Economic Opportunity Act was not a vigorous attack on either the educational deficiencies due to poverty or the weaknesses of the public school system. In July, 1964, Keppel admitted in public that the poverty bill was limited and that a more massive educational attack on poverty was¹ necessary.

The main contribution of the poverty hearings to the eventual passage of an aid to education bill was the argument witnesses developed that inadequate education and poverty were linked. As Secretary Celebrezze recalled, "we found, no matter in which direction we went, we always ended up with the problems of education. We had to educate . . . [them], we had to retrain them . . . [but] we weren't doing² a thing for primary and secondary education." If an education bill borrowed the politically persuasive rationale from the Economic Opportunity Act, it might successfully overcome the political obstacles to federal aid to education. HEW was already working on a school aid bill during the poverty hearings. Since Keppel felt the bill would have

a poor chance of passing the 88th Congress, he did not plan to present it that spring.³ But the 89th Congress which would meet in 1965 might offer better opportunities for a school bill.

The case for federal aid to education definitely needed a new context. Since World War II, all attempts to pass a school bill had failed. The supporters of federal aid pointed in vain to the shortage of teachers and classrooms, to the inability of local areas to pay for education. The major issues of race, religion, federal control and⁴ distribution of funds interacted to defeat one bill after another. By mid 1964 the race issue had temporarily disappeared with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Title VI of the act forbade racial discrimination in any program receiving federal funds. The explosive question of whether segregated schools in the South would receive federal aid seemed answered. But any bill still had major political hurdles of religion, federal control and money. Because school aid was fraught with so many political challenges, the major efforts in developing an education bill came to focus on finding the vehicle which could pass Congress. As planners devoted themselves to questions of political strategy, they neglected to examine evidence suggesting that education did not provide an exit from poverty, that compensatory education was unproven, that local school boards were inflexible and disinterested in problems of the poor. The very skills which led to a bill which Congress would accept, in fact, contributed to the development of a bill resting on fragile intellectual and practical foundations.

During the summer and fall of 1964 the search for legislation which could avoid political defeat went on within HEW and the Office of

Education. This education bill would be an agency measure. But planners were not sure in these early months what approach offered the best chance of pleasing Congress. One possibility would be to revive the agency's traditional type of school bill offering public schools general aid for construction and teacher salaries. In his June 5 memo to the Assistant Secretary, Wilbur Cohen, Philip des Marais, Deputy Assistant Secretary of HEW, considered this alternative. He thought perhaps a large electoral victory for Johnson might make a general aid bill feasible even though this approach had failed in the past.⁵ The form of the bill, however, would have to have the kind of content which could attract public attention des Marais pointed out. On June 11, Peter Muirhead, Assistant Commissioner of Education, sent Keppel a memo weighing a bill offering general aid against a bill focusing aid on poor children.⁶ Muirhead was undecided which alternative to choose.

The poverty approach had definite possibilities and was natural in the context of Great Society legislation. Moreover, an interesting legislative exploration of this idea under the guidance of Senator Wayne Morse, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor, was already in process. On February 20, 1964, Morse had introduced a bill in the Senate to provide local educational agencies with assistance for the education of children from needy families and in areas of high unemployment. Morse argued that local areas could be affected by poverty just as they were by the presence of federal installations. He, thus, offered his bill in the form of an amendment to the popular impacted areas bill which distributed education funds to areas with federal bases.

Morse did not think his bill actually had much chance of passing the 88th Congress, but he hoped to hold hearings on it and publicize its rationale. At this time, Morse had little sympathy or aid from HEW. In response to Morse's request for an opinion on his proposal, Secretary Celebrezze rejected Morse's approach out of hand on March 2. Acknowledging the relationship between poverty and inadequate education, Celebrezze stated that the efforts under the Economic Opportunity Act along with the passage of a general aid bill were sufficient to deal with poverty problems.⁷

By June, however, HEW had realized the political possibilities of Morse's bill even if the department was not yet convinced the bill represented the most effective political approach. Morse held his hearings on July 29 and 30. At this point, Keppel acknowledged that the educational possibilities of Economic Opportunities Act were limited.⁸ But even though HEW was already considering the idea, Keppel publicly insisted Morse's proposal needed much more study. There were troublesome administrative questions and few reliable guides to the bill's cost.⁹ Keppel did not like the way the bill distributed funds. Promising that HEW would consider Morse's proposals carefully, Keppel stated that the administration could not support the bill at that time. Keppel himself still had lingering thoughts of revising the educational grants proposal used by the Heller task force.¹⁰ Morse was annoyed by the administration's cold shoulder and told Keppel, "I am just aghast to understand an administration that is given an opportunity to come forward to support a bill but which says to the subcommittee this morning

through you, we are going to stall."¹¹

Keppel explained later what effect the hearings had on HEW. "The central point that he (Morse) made was, if we wanted this bill to pass, it would be wise to hitch it up to a piece of legislation that has plenty of Congressional support (namely, the Impacted Areas Bill) and to the problems of the poor. His advice was excellent."¹²

By September 17, a bill giving the disadvantaged educational priority was beginning to shape up.¹³ Although the bill was far from final form, during this month a group in the Office of Education began the essential political task of working out the formula for distributing funds.¹⁴ Rejecting the formula used in Morse's bill as unwieldy and complicated, the group tried to develop a simpler formula with a good rural-urban distribution of money. These were the areas of greatest poverty; just as important, they were also areas with the congressional votes necessary for passage of a school aid bill. By November 13, work on the formula was completed. The final formula distributed funds to states based on the total number of children from families on welfare and from families with an annual income under \$2,000 and on the state's average per pupil expenditure. Ordinary census data yielded most of this material.¹⁵ Furthermore, and this was a matter of vital political importance, the formula allowed immediate computations on the amounts each congressional district could receive.¹⁶ This would be a strong asset in persuading Congress to pass the bill.

By the beginning of November, the work of drafting an actual bill began.¹⁷ During the month Keppel explained in detail why planners

finally chose the impacted areas approach. An emphasis on giving money to the needy child rather than the school offered a good chance of avoiding the whole religious question which focused on whether federal aid should go to parochial schools. Avoiding a religious controversy was politically fundamental in Keppel's opinion. Moreover, the poverty theme was politically popular as the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act indicated. As Keppel pointed out, "it is not easy to oppose a combination of the existing impacted areas program and an added program for the poor."¹⁸ Of course, since the bill did not offer general aid, none of the major interest groups would be entirely satisfied. Yet Keppel noted the bill offered each group something, making opposition difficult. The various titles of the bill which spread money to those who were not poor would have the same effect of disarming opposition. Finally, the formula emphasized the priority of urban and rural areas with their essential Congressional votes. In Keppel's mind the political issues had been the predominant ones in developing the bill and selecting the impact approach. But the concern with political issues left little time for considering whether the impact approach was educationally sound.

During the months of deciding how to formulate a school aid bill, HEW had enjoyed the president's vigorous support. Upon coming to the presidency in 1963, Johnson had unequivocally committed himself to the passage of federal aid to education.¹⁹ With the expansion of the National Defense Education Act and several education measures in progress during the winter and spring of 1964 and Keppel's reluctance to work with the

88th Congress on elementary and secondary school aid, Johnson never presented a bill in 1964. But he continually renewed his pledge to do something about education. When his presidential campaign got underway in the late summer and early fall, he made the passage of an education bill into a major issue.²⁰ As Keppel said of Johnson, "education was one of his real interests--genuine interests."²¹ Education, Johnson²² felt, had made his own rise from poverty possible. From a political viewpoint, the president felt that Americans were interested in education and finally ready to support an education bill.²³

In his speeches Johnson consistently tied the improvement of education to the goal of creating a Great Society.²⁴ His theme repeated over and over, was that the nation must offer each child the best education he could take if the country were to realize its own possibilities.²⁵ It was now time for a revolution and breakthrough in education, Johnson affirmed.²⁶ "Unless we act," he warned, "our educational system is going to be deficient, and it will really crack under the pressure."²⁷ Acknowledging that there were stumbling blocks obstructing²⁸ the passage of a federal aid bill, he insisted they must be overcome. Personally, Johnson saw no reason why a compromise over religious issues could not be worked out as it could over other issues.²⁹ This delicate task he left to Keppel with directions to avoid a church--state controversy.³⁰ Finally, Johnson emphasized the relationship between a school aid bill and the War on Poverty. In a succinct November policy paper, the president stated, "our war on poverty can be won only if those who

are poverty's prisoners can break the chains of ignorance."³¹

Johnson triumphed at the polls on November 4. His victory spurred planners developing the school aid bill on. As November progressed, the impact approach received some criticism. On November 20, Kermit Gordon, Director of the Bureau of the Budget, discussed the drawbacks of the impact formula. It spread funds too widely. "It is unlikely that such an approach would effectively provide sufficient funds in many districts to accomplish significant results," Gordon noted.³² The Bureau of the Budget felt that the bill needed at least \$5 to \$10 billion, not the meager \$1 billion planned.³³ In response to this criticism, HEW added provision for extra grants for some local educational agencies. Generally, however, the impacted areas approach was there to stay. No one had given it substantial criticism. After Thanksgiving, Johnson gave his approval to the plan and told HEW to begin drawing up the legislation in detail.

So finally HEW dropped general aid to education for a poverty-oriented school bill. But the selection and development of the legislative vehicle was not the only political task to be done. As work went on in HEW on the bill, Keppel was negotiating with the major interest groups over the religious issue. The two most important groups were the National Education Association (NEA) and the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The first group had traditionally favored general aid which excluded parochial schools while the Catholic group had insisted its schools get some share of federal funds too. The NEA and the

National Catholic Welfare Conference had interacted to kill many a federal aid measure, but Keppel now hoped to lead them into a coalition supporting the new bill. His personal ties with the two groups were good. In 1962 and 1963 he had consulted with them over the passage of Kennedy's Omnibus Education Bill.³⁴ By 1964, they were both willing to compromise over elementary and secondary school aid. As Keppel noted, "there was a genuine desire on everyone's part to solve the educational problem of the children."³⁵ The defeats of Kennedy's school bills in 1961 and 1963 indicated that no federal aid bill would pass without religious compromises. These defeats had also convinced the administration that it must avoid a rigid stand over aid to parochial schools.³⁶ Keppel felt that the bill's impacted approach stressing aid to the child rather than the school would satisfy Catholic and Protestant alike. "The details of the legislation . . . were never discussed in an organized fashion at these meetings," Keppel recalled. "It was rather a matter of sensing moods, of feeling out how far the several groups would be willing to go."³⁷ The interest groups felt, as John Lumley of the NEA put it, that Keppel "got the emotion out of the issue."³⁸

IBJ's tremendous electoral victory gave the final push to religious cooperation. Catholics now feared the revival of a Kennedy type bill denying parochial students aid.³⁹ They were glad to accept the reality of funds even if they were less than what Catholics once had demanded. As for the NEA it realized that HEW might ignore its advice during the crucial stage of implementing the bill if it opposed the new effort.⁴⁰

On December 16, therefore, the NEA announced its acceptance of aid to parochial students.⁴¹ As Keppel remarked, "in a nice way, the administration in effect said, Do you dare oppose this one? In fact the parties did not, and actually they gave generally favorable testimony when asked their views by the committees of Congress."⁴²

During these summer⁴³ and fall months, Johnson's task force on education, headed by John Gardner, and made up of thirteen members mostly from the academic and business world, had been working on a report of the nation's educational needs. Unlike the Heller task force, this group did not develop a bill. That task belonged to HEW. But the task force did have a role to play in aiding the passage of the bill.⁴³ Publicly, Johnson claimed that the function of all his task forces was to help identify major problems and suggest legislative programs.⁴⁴ In actuality, the education task force did not contribute any new insights into educational problems or much material for the bill.⁴⁵ Nor did it treat the substantive issues like religion or funding which occupied so much of HEW's attention.⁴⁶ Keppel admitted that the task force, "didn't have anything to say about the political combination that made up the ESEA -- call it if you want to be a little more sardonic, the 'House of Cards.'⁴⁷ "

The task force apparently existed to give an attractive identity to Johnson's educational program. One of its members, David Riesman,⁴⁸ agreed the task force was a legitimizing device. Comments made by Secretary of Labor, Willard Wirtz, and Secretary Celebrezze, on November

14 in Austin reinforce this interpretation. The two men told newsmen at a press conference that Johnson would structure most of his 1965 legislative program around the task force reports. They also mentioned that the programs were far from being formulated.⁴⁹ This, of course, was untrue. The education bill, at least, had been in the works for weeks. But it would do the bill no harm to have people believe that the distinguished task force was responsible for the legislation when, in fact, it was an agency bill.⁵⁰ Since the administration never released the task force report, no one had the opportunity of comparing it with the final bill.

The ESEA was sent to Congress in early January 1965. So convinced was Johnson that the time was now right for a school bill, that he decided to start his 1965 legislative program off with the ESEA and Medicare. The momentum created by the passage of these two would provide impetus for the rest of his program the president reasoned.⁵¹ Johnson had thought out this legislative strategy carefully. For as he admitted, "I worked like hell to become President, and I'm not going to throw it away."⁵²

The ESEA, so many months in process, was now under the scrutiny of Congress and the public. The bill established two noble goals, seeking "to strengthen and improve educational quality and educational opportunities" in the nation's schools. Title I was the heart of the bill where most of the money was concentrated. Focused on the children of poverty, Title I recognized their "special educational needs . . .and

the impact that concentrations of low income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs." It was "the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance . . .to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low income families," the title declared, so that these agencies could, "expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children."⁵³ Local areas could use ESEA funds for many kinds of projects, including construction, if the projects helped meet the special needs of educationally deprived children from poor areas, and were of "sufficient size, scope, and quality to give reasonable promise of substantial progress toward meeting those needs." Control of funds⁵⁴ must be with the public agency. Local educational agencies were responsible for formulating projects and programs which the state education agency would send on to the Commissioner of Education for his approval according to "such basic criteria as the commissioner may establish."⁵⁵ Local educational agencies were also responsible for including parochial school children in special services and arrangements. Finally each local agency also was required to make an annual report to the state on its programs.

The other four titles of the bill generally relating to the goal of improving educational quality did not distribute money according to the poverty formula of Title I. In Title II grants were established to

provide library books and other materials for the use of private and public school children. Title III set up supplementary education centers both to furnish educational programs and services unavailable in the local school and to serve as models for regular schools. Children and even adults might be involved in center activities. Title IV sought to support regional centers of research, and the last Title gave funds to state departments of education to be used for the purpose of making them stronger, more efficient and responsive.

Despite the new framework, the content of the ESEA was, in several respects, similar to the education title supported the year before by Heller's task force. Even the same phrases recurred. Both bills proposed to fund programs of sufficient size, scope and quality to meet the special educational needs of poor children in areas having a high concentration of such children. Neither bill defined the key phrases. In both bills the Commissioner of Education was responsible for drawing up requirements for the programs; the clear indication was that they would be compensatory in nature. Then, too, both bills gave substantial power and control over funds to local public school systems. The Heller group and HEW agency planners were aware that local school systems needed reform. They had failed to educate poor children; all too often those controlling local education felt little sympathy for the poor. But planners of each bill assumed that once local school boards and superintendents received federal funds, they would transform themselves. They neglected, in fact, the difficulties of institutional change.

Since each bill allocated most or all money on an automatic formula basis, the Office of Education had only the powers "to coax and cajole localities."⁵⁷

In some ways, however, the ESEA represented an advance over the Heller bill. Title I offered far more money for educating the poor than Heller's bill had. Title V tried to strengthen state departments of education. Title IV acknowledged inadequate knowledge about the process of education and funded educational research. Title III sought to stimulate imaginative school programs. But the essential questions still remained unasked: did education contribute directly to ending poverty, did compensatory education work, were local power structures likely to change? Samuel Halperin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation in HEW, indicated why such questions never occurred to planners of the ESEA. "The first task of the Administration's legislative team . . . was to devise a bill which was politically viable." Vagueness would ease political passage. "In time, one reasoned, the legislative process would remedy any imperfections or omissions in the original ESEA concept."⁵⁸

The president and HEW were satisfied with the bill, however, because it had a good chance of passing the new Congress. The election had given the Democrats control of Congress. Senate Democrats increased their liberal majority with a gain of two liberal seats. In the House where education bills so regularly died, Democrats acquired thirty-eight seats. If liberal Republicans voted with Northern liberal Democrats,

the education measure would pass. The House Subcommittee on Education and Labor, always a trouble spot for federal aid legislation, saw the addition of five Democrats and one Republican favoring federal aid.⁵⁹

The future, therefore, looked promising for the ESEA when the house subcommittee began its hearings on January 22. Nevertheless, the administration was realistic enough to realize that old passions and arguments might still erupt to destroy the bill. As Laurence O'Brien wrote to the president, "the greatest danger to this bill is that enactment will be stalled enough for religious and racial problems to arise."⁶⁰ The administration determined to hurry the bill through the House, discouraging all amendments, and then to maneuver the Senate into passing an identical bill so that there would be no need for a House-Senate Conference.⁶¹ In this plan the administration was amazingly successful.

Secretary Celebrezze and Commissioner Keppel led off the ten days of house hearings with their testimony supporting the bill. Celebrezze described the bill as a major innovation designed to break the cycle of ignorance--poverty--ignorance and to bring the children of poverty into the economic mainstream. The bill's proposals, Celebrezze said, offered "fundamental and eminently sound solutions to problems of very long standing." Keppel affirmed that the bill was massive enough "to make a real difference" and went on to comment, "it is well we face the issue frankly, interfaith cooperation is essential."⁶² Neither Celebrezze nor Keppel was specific on how the bill would interrupt the poverty

cycle.

Republican opposition to the bill was led by Charles Goodell of New York. Most of his criticism was traditional. He hammered away at the issue of federal control, but the religious question occupied him most. How would private school students and schools really participate under the bill he demanded?⁶³ Would a public school teacher be able to teach in a private school?⁶⁴ Under Title II were not books actually going to private schools not the children?⁶⁵ Goodell warned that the supplementary educator centers, established by Title III, might fall under parochial control.⁶⁶ Debate over these issues became heated and tangled. At Goodell's insistence, Keppel returned to clarify the religious issues. But Goodell political position was weak from the beginning. The major interest groups did not support him. They saw no church--state conflict in the bill, they claimed. The bill had their backing. Keppel had done his work well.

Goodell, however, did raise some educational issues of importance. Pointing out that much educational research indicated that the child's early years were the most fruitful for educational intervention, Goodell observed that the bill gave no particular emphasis to this age group.⁶⁷ Instead, the bill focused on children between five and seventeen. Other witnesses stressed the same point.⁶⁸ HEW had chosen the five to seventeen year age group because this span of years represented the traditional school period.⁶⁹ States wanted to work with this familiar group. To Goodell the administration merely replied that the bill did not exclude

preschool programs; money was already set aside for young children under the Economic Opportunity Act.⁷⁰ The age factor did not become a serious issue.

John Brademas, Democrat from Indiana, expressed other doubts. How could Congress be sure, Brademas asked, that the bill really would improve the quality of education? Money might be spent wastefully. Indeed, how much was really known about educational programs for the poor, he asked?⁷¹ Dr. George Bloom, an authority on early childhood education from the University of Chicago, replied, "I would say clearly we do not know everything, but we do know enough actually to implement a great deal of educational practice in this area."⁷² But later in the hearings, Dr. Arthur Singer, of the Carnegie Corporation, commented, "I think there has not been a lot of advance in understanding the problems of education for the disadvantaged people."⁷³ Brademas felt money⁷⁴ should not be concentrated on Title I programs, but on research. Yet, although he raised some vital questions, Brademas did not cause enough doubts about the bill's foundations to cause any loss of support. The important issue remained that of the bill's passage. The subcommittee voted to send the bill to full committee by a vote of 6-0. The disgruntled but powerless Republicans boycotted the meeting.

In the Senate hearings over which Senator Wayne Morse, Democrat from Oregon, courteously presided, the religious issue did not emerge with any intensity. But the Senator from New York, Robert Kennedy, raised basic educational questions time and time again. The problems of

poverty and education Kennedy noted were not due solely to environmental deprivation, but also due to the schools themselves. "If you are placing or putting money into a school system which itself creates this problem or helps create it, or does nothing, or little to alleviate it, are we not just in fact wasting the money of the Federal Government . . . investing money where it really is going to accomplish very little, if any good?"⁷⁵

Keppel answered Kennedy by reasserting his own belief in the possibility of change within the school system, in the fact that evaluation reports would give evidence of the program's successes or failures. Kennedy, however, was not convinced, and returned to these issues throughout the hearings. He had raised valid and troubling questions. But beyond strengthening requirements for evaluation, Kennedy's criticisms caused no substantive changes in the bill.

The ESEA, thus, emerged from hearings in both the House and the Senate with few modifications, even as the president had wished. Public school control over funds and materials was strengthened as were evaluation requirements. Congressional debates covered much of the same ground as the hearings and exposed some of the political compromises which had been made. Goodell again emphasized that Title I's focus on children from five to seventeen skipped the promising early years

between three and five.⁷⁶ But Republican Albert Quie's amendment to change the terms of Title I to cover only children from three to seven, failed.⁷⁷ The religious question flared up in the first day of debate with tempers beginning so heated that representatives were shouting at

one another across the aisles. It became clear that the bill was vague⁷⁸ on what services would be available to private school students. The New York Times reported, "some Democrats, believed to be lined up to support the bill, looked puzzled as they listened to the debate."⁷⁹ Even the leaders of the debate were confused, as Representative Cahill, Republican from New Jersey, pointed out, no matter what the services were, which were provided under the child benefit theory, the parochial school child would not get equal treatment.⁸⁰ Republican Robert Griffin of Michigan perceived that "the discussion we have had this afternoon, which has consumed most of our time, may be some indication⁸¹ that this bill does not avoid that religious issue."

Prolonged discussions ranged around the formula. The allotment each state would receive was based not only on the number of deprived children but also on the average amount the state spent on each pupil's education. This formula provided the rich state with more money than the poor state with an equal number of poor children.⁸² Although the bill's supporters replied that education was more costly in wealthy states, Mrs. Green, Democrat from Oregon, who offered an unsuccessful formula amendment, remarked there was a fairer way to divide funds if one really⁸³ wished to help culturally deprived children.

Debate in the House, therefore, illuminated some of the religious and monetary compromises the developers of the bill had made. All amendments, however, were defeated, and the bill passed the House triumphantly on March 29 by a vote of 263-153. During the debate little

attention was paid to educational goals or issues. The old questions were still foremost even if they were resolved enough to allow the bill's passage.

As Senator Morse remarked when debate opened in the Senate on April 7, even the opposition agreed on the needs of lower income⁸⁴ children. The new rationale had indeed won friends and disarmed foes. Morse, interested though he was in poverty, relentlessly pushed the bill through the Senate with as little controversy as possible. Reminding the hesitant that they could amend the bill the next year, he⁸⁵ told the senators that Johnson wanted the bill passed quickly. Much of the criticism in the Senate centered around accusations of administration railroading.

None of the bill's basic problems were resolved in the Senate. Republican Senator Dominick of Colorado saw the commitment to overcoming cultural deprivations was incomplete. He thus offered several amendments⁸⁶ to focus all five titles on this problem instead of just the first. Morse deflected these attempts by warning of the hazards of a joint House-Senate conference. Moreover, he implied that Dominick misunderstood⁸⁷ that the bill after all had more than one aim. True, on the one hand Title I concentrated on the deprived. Yet on the other hand, the rest⁸⁸ of the bill offered benefits to a wide range of ages and people. Even under Title I, 95% of the nation's counties were eligible for funds. The bill was in some ways a general aid bill, Morse suggested.

Morse countered the inevitable demands for modifying the formula by claiming it cost more to educate students in rich states than others.

Robert Kennedy supported Morse, pointing out that New York would pay⁸⁹ more in taxes than it would receive from the bill. Near the end of the debate, Senator Ralph Yarborough, Democrat from Texas, exposed the weakness of this position. What states spent on education, he commented, reflected not only the costs of education but also its quality. Differences in the cost of living were not so great as the differences⁹⁰ in federal grants to be awarded under the proposed bill. Despite such arguments, the formula amendments, like all the others, failed. The bill passed on April 9 by a wide margin of 73 - 18. The entire legislative process had taken less than three months.

Federal aid was now a reality. Not surprisingly the three days of Senate debate like debate in the House had pointed out but not resolved some of the uncertainties of the bill. In the Senate Morse defended conflicting provisions and perplexing issues when they were noticed. As a politician, he was committed to passing federal aid to education, to glossing over problems in the bill. As he candidly admitted, "let us face it. We are going into Federal aid for elementary and secondary⁹¹ schools in the bill through the back door."

It probably did not occur to Morse that the bill he supported so ably might not help deprived children escape from their lives of poverty. Morse concentrated on getting federal aid to education passed quickly as Johnson and HEW planners desired. The bill which planners had developed was an attractive political measure. Planners finally had created an education bill which could leap the hurdles of hearings and

debates in Congress. Troubling questions, although raised, never had to be answered.

The political success of the bill was, however, self-defeating. So intent were planners on developing the political framework for the bill that they never questioned whether education represented an effective remedy for poverty. Nor did they carefully consider whether local community leaders would be interested in helping their poor children, whether public schools would reform themselves.

The ESEA was a political masterpiece, but it rested on the liberal faith of planners. The next few years would reveal whether faith was enough of a justification for social policy.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLEMENTATION

The President was jubilant at the passage of the ESEA which he described as "the most significant education bill in the history of Congress." At a reception to celebrate the bill's success, Johnson told the assembled Congressmen, "you take it from me. I worked harder and longer on this measure than on any measure I have ever worked on since I came to Washington in 1931--and I am proud of it." He reminded his listeners of the bleak years since 1945 when school legislation had failed as the same issues divided legislators again and again. Now, all that was over, and the President felt the responsibility for the bill lay with the executive. "We must carry on and we must administer it. And I have a very keen sense of that obligation to each of you . . .to make certain that the program is carried out swiftly and efficiently." ¹ Yet the confidence in the act's future which Johnson so enthusiastically expressed was to fade. As the ESEA finally got underway in 1965 and 1966, the very problems which critics of federal aid had envisioned for so many years plagued the program. Opponents of school bills had long claimed that federal aid would create difficulties in federal-state-local relationships, problems over money, race and religion. The great triumph of 1965 had been to nullify these prophecies with skillful political compromises. During the next years, ironically, the compromises embodied in the bill helped

create the problems in its implementation. As Harold Howe II, Commissioner of Education from 1966 to 1968, noted the "ESEA was the only type of federal activity in education which was likely to be politically viable in 1965I doubt that anyone could have dreamed up a series of education programs more difficult to administer and less likely to avoid problems in the course of their administration."²

By 1970 there was widespread scepticism over the act and claims that Title I had "failed." The absence of a comprehensive study on the operation of the ESEA made a final decision about the act's performance difficult. But although no conclusive study existed, piecemeal evidence on the workings of the act was plentiful. Congressional hearings on the ESEA were held in 1966, 1967 and 1969. The Comptroller General, the HEW Audit Agency and the Office of Education all issued reports on Title I's implementation in the states. In 1970 the Office of Education published results of the largest evaluation of Title I which covered the operation of the bill in 4000 of the nation's elementary schools. In addition to these official, often statistically oriented, studies, the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children, which the act established in 1965, was responsible for reporting on the ESEA's progress to the president and Congress each year. Finally, private organizations like the NAACP, the Washington Research Project and the Center for Urban Education in New York City carried out and published their own studies on the ESEA. The evidence accumulated by these different researchers supports the conclusion that

weaknesses in the act's operation stemmed not only from its uncertain intellectual foundations, but also from the political compromises made to secure the bill's passage in 1965. In their eagerness to get the bill passed, policy planners had refused to face the difficult questions of how the ESEA would really operate on the federal, state and local levels.

But in April, 1965, the day of scepticism and disillusion was far away. Administration efforts concentrated on getting the act into operation. This took some time. In March an extensive and necessary reorganization of the Office of Education had begun.³ This upheaval, which left some members of the bureau unable to find their new offices, sought to enable the Office of Education to break with its timid past and assume the new responsibilities and image which the legislation demanded. Work also began in April on the essential task of drawing up regulations and guidelines which would help local and state officials understand the act's meaning and their own obligations. Much would depend on how they were received at the state and local level. Since this task was of such crucial importance, developing the guidelines took several months. During this period Keppel and members of the Office of Education met with state and local officials to discuss the proposed guidelines and to make necessary changes in them. These meetings gave state and local officials some feeling of the purposes of the act and calmed fears over federal control, but meetings were time consuming. Thus local districts began planning projects before guidelines actually

became available in December, 1965. It was January, 1966, before⁴ guidelines were ready in final form for distribution.

This was not the only delay, however. Congress took several months to vote funds for the ESEA. Not until September 23, was an appropriations bill finally passed. Money did not reach some areas until April, 1966, almost the end of the school year and a year after the act's passage. Because funding was so late, many schools hastily initiated summer programs. That first year of operation, 2,500,000⁵ children participated in Title I summer projects. The next year Title I projects reached an average of 9,000,000⁶ children, although not all were disadvantaged. By 1969, 20,000 Title I projects were in operation. Still, HEW estimated that the projects did not reach much more than half of those elementary school students considered severely⁷ disadvantaged. Even if the ESEA did not help all the disadvantaged, the act was affecting millions of poor children and their schools as no other federal education program had.

Among the damaging compromises made to pass the bill was one involving money. From the first days of drafting the bill, a group within HEW had searched for the appropriate formula which would channel funds to the urban and rural areas where poverty was concentrated. If the bill were to have any impact on poverty, channelling money was vital. But politically it was essential to distribute funds widely enough to attract significant Congressional support. The final formula was complicated. It determined the funds available to local areas on the

basis of two figures. First, for each school district, administrators calculated the number of children both from families earning less than \$2000 and also from families on welfare. Then they multiplied this number by the average amount of money the state spent educating each child. Finally, this sum was divided by two to determine the federal money due the district under Title I. The formula offering had political appeal since it made 95% of the country's counties eligible for funds. But the formula had the practical disadvantage of favoring rich industrial states with high educational expenditures at the expense of poor rural states.

Inequities in the operation of this formula quickly became apparent. In the 1966 house hearings, a knowledgeable witness pointed out the glaring flaw in the distribution of funds. "It seems inconceivable," he said, that "that many (90-95%) districts are seriously affected by poverty."⁸ Wealthy districts already had enough to help the poor children living there. The formula cheated poor districts by awarding them less money than richer districts. And furthermore, low income districts faced not just one problem, but all the interrelated problems typical of poor communities. A 1970 HEW survey supported this criticism revealing that poor children actually were concentrated in only a few areas. Although 80.6% of reported low income children lived in 31.8% public school districts (with 300 or more pupils enrolled in school),⁹ the ESEA did not concentrate funds in this way. What the operation of the formula actually did, then, was to give some children

in poor districts more than other poor children in other areas. A 1968-1969 survey by HEW reflected this truth. High expenditure districts spent an average of \$257 per target child in Title I money, the survey pointed out, while low expenditure districts spent only an average of \$149.¹⁰ This was a serious problem since 46%¹¹ of the nation's poor children went to school in low expenditure districts. The third HEW annual report on the act summed the situation up. "Under the legislatively prescribed formula Title I funds . . . do not flow to school districts and their disadvantaged students proportionately to their needs."¹²

During the next few years other inequities in the formula became clear. The formula had used 1960 census data to calculate the number of the nation's poor children. By 1967 and 1968 the census figures were no longer applicable. Using out-of-date data posed a special problem for central cities where migration brought more and more poor children needing special services into the public schools. Yet these new children were not counted in the formula allocations. Out-of-date census data favored other areas, however, which found their numbers of poor decreasing. In a prosperous Long Island community, for example, the small population of poor were relocated outside the district after 1960. But the school district was eligible for Title I aid and found the offer of free money too tempting to reject. One official revealed, "the district's major objective with regard to its Title I grants was to ensure the complete utilization of its fund entitlement."¹³

Keppel and his colleagues in the Office of Education had made one necessary compromise over the formula. They made another over the total amount of money to be allocated for Title I. They agreed to the \$1 billion figure which Johnson favored, realizing it represented only an initial attack on the problem of ignorance and poverty. They assumed, however, that appropriations would increase dramatically over the first few years. But Johnson who had been such a staunch supporter of the ESEA made another decision invalidating these assumptions. As expenditures in Vietnam rose, the President kept the program going at its \$1 billion figure. Representative Hugh Carey recognized what was happening in 1966 hearings. "We are being forced to make a choice here¹⁴ between books and bullets," he said. But the choice was made. By 1969 only an average of \$113 was available for each needy child. Yet, the same year Secretary of HEW, Robert Finch, admitted that between \$538 and \$805¹⁵ was required for each deprived child. John Brademas, Democrat from Indiana, observed in 1969 house hearings, "we have in fact not been spending increasing sums of money or really very large sums of money at all, at least as seen in the perspective of the enormity of the problem."¹⁶ The War in Vietnam hurt the ESEA before it ever got going.

Money was not the only political issue which had forced policy makers to compromise. The bill's developers realized they must resolve the religious questions if the bill were to satisfy both parochial and public school interest groups. Only with their backing could the ESEA

pass Congress. The compromise embodied in the bill was acceptable. The ESEA did not give funds directly to private schools, but instructed local school districts to include parochial students in "special educational services and arrangements (such as dual enrollment, educational radio . . . television . . . mobile educational services and equipment), to the extent consistent with the number of educationally deprived children" enrolled in private schools.¹⁷ Specific arrangements for parochial school children were left to local public and parochial school officials to work out.

The fears of those who had opposed aid to Catholics were unfounded. There was no holy war in American school districts nor was there a Catholic attempt to absorb the public school system. Instead what Hugh Carey had warned about in the 1965 house debate happened. Poor Catholic children did not participate in Title I programs in proportion to their numbers. The National Advisory Council had already sensed this as a problem in its 1966 report.¹⁸ Pursuing the problem in its 1969 report, the Council studied seventeen communities and concluded that only a few offered parochial students "genuine" opportunities to take part in Title I activities.¹⁹ In 1969 house hearings, the Superintendent of Roman Catholic Schools in Brooklyn contended that 15% of New York City's deprived children went to parochial schools. Yet they received only 4% of Title I services.²⁰ The Center for Urban Education provided some supporting figures. Despite the fact that 15% of deprived children attended parochial schools, the school budget for

the 1967-1968 school year set aside \$2,877,000 for programs for needy private school children, but \$49,371,000 for children in public²¹ schools.

So many initial complaints on the issue of private school participation were made that the Office of Education commissioned two Boston College professors to do a study on private schools and Title I. The professors investigated ten large, ten medium and ten small school systems between 1966 and 1968. While their study showed "a wide range of differences in almost every aspect that has been considered," it revealed underlying reasons why Catholic and other private school²² children often did not get the Title I services they needed. To avoid a church-state controversy in Congress, the bill had determined that activities for private school children were to take place almost²³ always in the public schools. Moreover, public school officials administered funds and owned equipment. The result of this arrangement was two-fold. On the one hand, Title I activities were often scheduled at times when it was difficult or inconvenient for Catholic children to attend. In one New England city with 45,000 children attending parochial schools, for example, only sixty-five participated in Title I after-school programs in 1966-67. None of these children were in the first three grades since young children had a difficult time getting to late²⁴ afternoon activities. State laws forbidding the bussing of private school pupils also made Catholic participation in Title I programs unlikely in many states. On the other hand, since public school

authorities often did not consult their Catholic counterparts in planning projects, they could and did use Title I money in public schools to reduce class size or to provide teacher training. Clearly such expenditures were of no value to parochial school students.²⁵

The Boston College study pointed out that the minimal involvement of Catholic children in Title I projects was not only due to public school control but also due to the bewildering variety of Catholic authorities operating Catholic schools. Frequently no one person could speak for all the Catholic schools in his area. The report concluded that this factor "posed problems of communication" between public and Catholic school officials.²⁶ In one midwestern school system public officials were not even sure whom they should contact in Catholic schools.²⁷

The act had provided for indirect aid to Catholics and given local public school authorities the task of actually providing needy Catholic children with the Title I services. Too often the public schools took the responsibility lightly. As one Title I coordinator commented,²⁸ "involving people takes time." He just didn't have that time. In 1969 house hearings, Catholic school superintendents made a plea for tightening the law to ensure adequate Catholic participation. Although the subcommittee was sympathetic to the superintendents, their plea was ultimately ignored. Title I funds did not go to many needy children whose misfortune it was to attend Catholic schools.

The question of whether federal aid would go to segregated schools in the South had given the fatal blow to many an education bill since

1945. After passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which permitted terminating federal funds going to segregated institutions, the issue was submerged. It did not surface during the debate over the ESEA. But in the final vote in the House, 54 of the 57 Democrats voting against the bill were from the South as were 15 of the 17 Republicans.²⁹ The only opposing Democratic votes in the Senate were from the South. As these Southerners realized, there was a distinct possibility that ESEA funds could be used as a weapon to force desegregation. This was indeed Keppel's hope. In his April 13, 1965 memo to Secretary Celebrezze, Keppel noted that the act "makes possible a new approach in handling civil rights problems in education." Rather than lose the vast sums of federal money, Keppel felt poor Southern school districts would think it worth their while to comply with desegregation guidelines drawn up under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Keppel did not expect radical changes immediately but saw the Office of Education prodding local officials to move towards desegregation as fast as their communities would accept.³⁰

During the spring of 1965, as HEW was setting the framework for the operation of Title I, it also grappled with drawing up desegregation guidelines to make formerly de jure segregated Southern schools eligible for ESEA funds in April. HEW issued its General Statement of Policies describing acceptable desegregation procedures. Those districts under court order to desegregate were responsible for providing HEW with a copy of their final order as well as a Compliance Report. In the

Compliance Report the district was to furnish information on the racial composition of schools and the methods it was using to desegregate them. HEW required, from areas which were still segregated but not under court order, an Assurance of Compliance, an initial Compliance Report and voluntary desegregation plans. These plans could provide for desegregation by forming non-racial school attendance zones, by establishing freedom of choice or by offering a combination of these possibilities.³¹ HEW took a firm stand on the necessity of desegregation, giving the South only three years to achieve desegregation in all twelve grades.³²

HEW's determination to stimulate desegregation through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act was given tremendous support by the passage of ESEA which turned federal school aid from a trickle to a flow. There were several unanswered questions, however. The first was whether the promise of funds would be sufficient to induce Southern districts into the process of desegregation. Another was whether the threat of a fund cut off would discipline a district which was either making only token efforts to desegregate or misusing funds. The last was whether under the free choice plan ESEA funds might not be used to reinforce segregation. Since Title I emphasized that services should be focused on the deprived children, school districts in the South with freedom of choice plans might use federal money to encourage poor black children to stay in their segregated schools.

The question of whether Southern districts were interested in federal funds was quickly answered. In early July, three months after the bill's passage, the Commissioner of Education had received only 352 desegregation plans as the prerequisite to ESEA money. By mid-July 1800 school districts, over half of the segregated districts in the South, had replied. But by the end of July the Office had returned 700 plans for revision and was exerting pressure on the 400 school districts which had not yet submitted their plans. By August 17, 200 districts still had sent nothing to HEW. Keppel informed state superintendents of his intention to begin fund cut offs at the end of the month and emphasized this to Congressional delegations. To aid districts which as yet had no plans, HEW developed a special model plan needing only the appropriate signatures.³³ On August 31, Johnson recognized the "deeply encouraging" results of the summer's efforts. He noted, "the heartening evidence of Governors, school officials, and other citizens to assume that respect for the law remains a virgorous force everywhere in the country." And he proudly related the figures. "One week ago," he said, "there were 172 school districts which had taken no action to meet the requirements of the Civil Rights Act. Today the figure is 135--and it is shrinking rapidly."³⁴ By the end of the effort all but a "handful" had sent their plans.³⁵

Plans for desegregation were of course not the same as desegregation. Only time could tell whether Title I would be the lever to encourage desegregation or not. Soon disquieting signs began to appear that ESEA

funds were being used to maintain segregation. The National Advisory Council reports of 1967 and 1968 both noted this misuse of Title I money. Dr. Sidney Marland of the Council warned the House Subcommittee on Education and Labor in 1967, "these are my words to say somebody had better get on the stick and find a way for the distribution of these funds to avoid segregating children by means of the compensatory education program."³⁶ The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1967 pointed out, "under free choice . . . improvement of substandard Negro schools itself inhibits desegregation."³⁷

Jean Fairfax of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and M. Hayes Mizell of the South Carolina Community Relations Program gave examples of how the ESEA could be used to strengthen segregation in their 1967 testimony before the Senate subcommittee. In Lincoln County, Georgia, for instance, when free choice was initiated, Negro schools began to serve free lunches paid for by Title I funds. The Negro South Warren School in North Carolina received trailers bought with ESEA funds to relieve overcrowding. Yet a white school only one-half a mile away had vacant

³⁸ desks. Such signs of attention and improvement in black schools all too often persuaded black students to stay in their own schools.

Children who moved into integrated schools sometimes found that they lost out on their Title I funds.³⁹

Although the Office of Education issued memoranda in April, July, and August, 1966, and February and March, 1967 stating that services could "follow the child," Howe admitted in August 1967 that they had "not been adequately implemented," and were⁴⁰ "therefore depriving the Negro youngsters of valuable academic programs."

Beyond futile exhortations HEW did have the authority under the Civil Rights Act to cut off funds from districts which were using them to enforce segregation. Many Southern school districts probably felt as a county board member did in Virginia, where 95% of the county's black students were in segregated schools. "As long as the school system was receiving Federal funds, the board thought it was in compliance with Federal requirements."⁴¹

Some action was necessary to show Southern districts that this was wrong. But HEW felt terminating funds was a drastic remedy. The administration did not favor it. Moreover, each decision to cut off funds entailed compiling a detailed legal case against the district no matter how glaring the racial discrimination. Speaking of these bureaucratic requirements for termination procedures, David Seeley, head of HEW's compliance system, ruefully noted, "thirty-five million people had to be brought . . . [in] and convinced for the routine case."⁴² These sentiments and necessary bureaucratic procedures strengthened the tendency of the government to do nothing. By February, 1967, Commissioner Howe had only cut off funds from thirty-four Southern districts and had initiated proceedings against 157.⁴³ In 1969 the Civil Rights Commission estimated that only one-eighth of the school districts in Southern states were completely desegregated.⁴⁴ Threatening to cut off funds had failed. HEW tacitly acknowledged the failure of this procedure when the Secretary announced jointly with the Attorney General on July 3, 1969, that government efforts to encourage desegrega-

tion would henceforth be through litigation not through administrative⁴⁵ proceedings and the threatened termination of funds.

In many cases, even when funds were withheld, the action backfired. In Anadilla, Georgia, for example the school district lost \$200,000 in Federal funds in 1968. Except for \$25,000 all this money had been used in Negro schools. The community managed to raise the \$25,000 for the white schools, but the money going to the black was just gone, so far as the white community was concerned. When HEW cut off ESEA funds in Coahma, Mississippi, seventy-one teachers were fired. Most of the seventy-one were black and had been hired with Title I money. David Sheldon, President of the American Federation of Teachers suggested, "this occurrence which finds only black teachers and black personnel being paid from Federal funds, is hardly accidental. It is simply a cruel form of reprisals."⁴⁶ Black teachers and black children lost out, not whites. HEW, while acknowledging the truth of such observations, felt the permanent gain of integration "far outweighs the temporary loss⁴⁷ of Federal programs which comparatively few Negro children must suffer."

Jake Ayers of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party pointed to one inevitable result of the government's policy. Faced with the⁴⁸ possible loss of benefits, Negro parents were likely to keep quiet. Since HEW mainly depended on public complaints to find out what was happening in Southern schools, it never had an accurate picture of⁴⁹ Southern compliance. There were few general complaints. Information on the operation of the ESEA sent to HEW by the states was sparse.

There were, for example, no breakdowns on the racial composition of Title I schools. The states only had to offer sample cases.⁵⁰ HEW had little way of discovering whether their funds maintained segregation. All too often it appeared they did.

HEW officials had focused their attention initially on desegregation problems in the South. As it turned out, the first big test of HEW's authority to pressure school districts to desegregate by withholding funds took place in Chicago. Examples of de facto segregation abounded in the North as the cores of central cities turned into black ghettos. But although segregation existed in both North and South, there was no legal basis for efforts to overturn de facto segregation. Nor was there⁵¹ wide public support for combatting this kind of segregation. It was not surprising that the Office of Education had never formulated a policy to deal with de facto segregation.⁵² But by the end of August, 1965, HEW had received complaints of discrimination against fifteen Northern school districts. The Office temporarily held up action on funds for these communities until an investigation into the charges could be made. Keppel was reluctant to move. But the new Secretary of HEW, John Gardner, was eager. As an associate recalled, he "seemed⁵³ to have no trouble in deciding to go ahead."

The decision was made to start with Chicago. On July 4, the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations, an energetic civil rights group, had sent massive, well documented evidence charging the Chicago School Board and the Superintendent Benjamin Willis with

consciously maintaining segregation. In September the Office of Education investigating team began its work in Chicago. It found Willis uncooperative. Meanwhile Congress passed its appropriations bill for the ESEA and reports began to circulate on how Superintendent Willis planned to use his funds. Willis had chosen three target areas. Two of the three were white and included areas whose median income was \$8,000. Willis had also implied that he would use some of the money to buy mobile classrooms disparagingly called "Willis Wagons" by those⁵⁴ who realized the classrooms were a method of avoiding desegregation. Keppel was angry at the intended uses of ESEA funds and on September 30 wrote to the Illinois state superintendent asking him to withhold Chicago's \$32 million under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act until the⁵⁵ charges were thoroughly investigated.

Keppel had hoped to solve the problems in Chicago quietly. His hopes were naive. The state superintendent demanded more information on the charges than the Office of Education had. Mayor Daley was furious. On October 3, he and Johnson were in New York where the president was to meet with Pope Paul VI. Daley spoke to the president. Johnson set Keppel and other HEW officials straight when he returned to the Capitol. Undersecretary of HEW, Wilbur Cohen, flew to Chicago immediately to⁵⁶ free the funds. Cohen did win a few desegregation concessions, but Illinois' Representative Pucinski was right in describing the negotiations as "an abject surrender by Keppel--a great victory for local government,⁵⁷ a great victory for Chicago." The incident was certainly a great

defeat to HEW's hopes to use fund cut offs as any weapon, North or South. HEW's publicized failure imbued the Office of Education with a strong sense of caution and sparked the hopes of those seeking
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 a way around desegregation guidelines.

It was hardly surprising that HEW found itself unwilling to force desegregation with Title I funds. The department lacked information, cooperation, and both administration and public backing. Congress too, after the moment of consensus in passing the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, found itself once more divided over the race issue. In 1966 and 1967 there were attempts to amend the ESEA so that the Commissioner of Education could not deny new ESEA funds to a district suspected of noncompliance under the Civil Rights Act until hearings had been held. Hearings meant delay while funds continued to flow to the suspected districts. In 1966 this amendment failed. In 1967 it passed the House. Southern senators threatened to stage a filibuster unless this amendment were
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 inserted in the Senate bill. The filibuster was avoided only when Secretary Gardner promised Senator Russell of Georgia and other Southern senators that HEW would not cut off funds without giving at
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 least a six months notice to the district. Despite this concession, still another attempt to weaken HEW's enforcement powers took place in 1968 and in following years. HEW, sensitive to such attacks, could not push for desegregation through Title I too hard. The HEW Evaluative Report released in 1970 showed that Title I had indeed failed to bring

racial mixing. The report indicated that in elementary grades at least 83% of Title I children were in classrooms where 90% or more⁶¹ of their classmates were of one race.

Opponents of federal aid had long argued that aid to education would have so many strings attached that the federal government would end up by running local schools and by deciding what should be taught. To calm these fears, the policy planners worked out a relationship that would leave substantial power and freedom at the state and local level. They pictured a vigorous Office of Education creating the major outlines of the program and giving advice on the bill's operation. The states with their power to pass on project applications would select projects with care and ensure local compliance. Accurate state reports would enable federal officials to gauge the bill's success and to provide information for improvement. But the greatest responsibility lay with local areas. Here projects were conceived and operated. Here money was spent. Here were the needy children. And here, too, were the schools which would have to transform themselves if they were to help the poor. The bill giving local areas extensive freedom and power was thus a test case for the theory of local control. It was also a test of the planners' faith that schools under middle class control would reform themselves if they had money.

The test case failed. Prosperous school board members showed little responsibility or initiative in their dealings with children of poverty. They diverted funds to their own children and their children's

schools. The relationship the bill's developers had constructed was as much a mirage as were their hopes of eliminating poverty through education, of inspiring reforms on the local level.

Those opposing federal aid had always implied that the Office of Education held enough power to force its will on local communities. Actually, the Office of Education was traditionally weak, and those formulating the bill, while hoping to invigorate the Office, changed the situation very little. At first glance, the powers the ESEA assigned to the Office of Education appeared significant. The Commissioner of Education, for example, distributed money to local areas. But since the amounts were set by law, this power had little actual meaning. More important, the Commissioner determined "basic criteria" setting conditions for the kinds of projects which could be funded under the act. Even in establishing basic criteria, however, the Office of Education had felt it necessary to consult with state and local officials and modify the criteria. Once it had developed the ground rules, the Office of Education had slight control over the projects funded. The Office merely checked applications which the states sent to Washington. These applications gave little information since they were only two page letters in which the state educational agencies assured the federal government that a local project conformed to the law.⁶² Such a minimal application ensured states Title I funds.

The actual authority over the act's operation given to the Office of Education was meager. The National Advisory Council reports of

1966 and 1969 concluded that the Office of Education had "found no way except through issuance of basic criteria and through exhortation to try to ensure sound projects or to secure revision of projects of low quality."⁶³ Most officials in the Office of Education found this approach was congenial. Keppel's reorganization had not infused the Office with any new sense of mission. As one official pointed out, "other than making sure states got their money and making sure it was spent, there was no role for the Office of Education. I don't know anyone around here who wants to monitor. The Office of Education is not investigation-oriented, never has been and never will be."⁶⁴

Federal officials were very eager to maintain friendly relations with states and local communities in this new experiment with federal aid. This desire for good relations partly explained the Office's hesitant race policy. Moreover, the Office constantly feared that Congress might accuse the Office of trying to control education and supplant the ESEA with a block grant to states which would allow them to spend funds as they wished.⁶⁵ A block grant would rob the Office of Education of even the power to establish criteria or pass approval on projects. This fear was not without foundation. In 1967 Republican Albert Quie led a spirited attempt in the House to substitute a block grant for Title I. Although Quie's attempt failed, the danger remained vivid for policy makers.

Generally, then the Office of Education shied away from imposing its point of view on the states. Not until 1969 did the Office of

of Education even carry on a review of Title I's operation in the states, and then it did so only under pressure.⁶⁶ Although the act required states to evaluate their programs periodically and report them to the Commissioner of Education, no one pushed this requirement. Massachusetts, for example, never fulfilled its obligations under the law.⁶⁷ The Office of Education feared arousing the states to cries of federal control. Nor did it think many states had a trained staff which could carry out an evaluation. Finally the Office of Education was hesitant to push for evaluation realizing these might show the act was not working and thus provide the enemies of federal aid with political ammunition.⁶⁸

Even if the Office of Education did not require states to furnish detailed information in the ESEA, the Office knew in a general way how the act was operating. By 1971, the HEW Audit Agency had carried out audits in forty-one states to determine how they were spending Title I money.⁶⁹ As the National Advisory Council said in its 1971 report, these audits clearly showed instances of "naivete, inexperience, confusion, despair and even clear violations of the law".⁷⁰ The second audit report of Massachusetts, for instance, found that the state did not even have written guidelines for its own audits on local communities and had audited local areas irregularly or not at all. Because of poor management,⁷¹ Massachusetts had failed to use over \$1 million a year of Title I money. The HEW Audit Agency forwarded such findings to the Office of Education. But until 1970 the Office of Education never even filed a suit against

a state for noncompliance with the ESEA. Even in 1970 the Office did not withhold funds.⁷² Instead the Office of Education urged states to take corrective steps. Superintendents felt free to ignore such gentle pressure.⁷³ Massachusetts Title I Director said, the Office of Education "won't come out flatly and say what you can't do. I don't feel any kind of control. It just isn't there."⁷⁴

Occasionally the Office of Education has tried to influence the act's operation by issuing guidelines. In most cases those attempts resulted in overwhelming local and state opposition. Faced with stiff resistance, the Office of Education has backed down. As Dr. Nolan Estes, Associate Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education, recalled, "we have time and time again attempted to establish criteria in Title I . . . that would provide a more significant return and each time we have attempted to do this, there have been pressures, there have been forces brought to bear which substantially nullify the impact or the influence that we have had in this area."⁷⁵

The Office's attempts to have Title I funds focused on some rather than all disadvantaged children offer an example of how it has retreated. On April 14, 1967, the Office issued criteria stating that the amount spent on each Title I child should equal about half the amount both the state and local area spent educating the child.⁷⁶ This implied a substantial concentration of Title I funds. Within ten days local and state complaints to Congress forced the Office to back away from this stand. The Office thus issued a "clarifying" memo

stating that its discussion guides might "not be fully applicable to every project application."⁷⁷ Another strong draft memo on the issue never got off Commissioner Howe's desk on November 20, 1968.

Political pressure resulted in rewriting and emasculation. The final memo issued later the same day merely encouraged state school officers to plan their programs "so that by 1970 the average Title I expenditure per child in high priority areas is raised to a significant level."⁷⁸

The states were left to interpret the key terms. Eventually Congress wrote concentration requirement into law but delayed its implementation until 1972. Clearly the Office of Education guided neither Congress nor the states and local communities.

Even if the Office of Education had had the aggressive drive or the formal powers to impose its interpretation of Title I on the country, its staff was inadequate to carry out an active policy. As of January, 1970, there were no more than thirty professionals working on all areas of Title I. Such a small staff would hardly furnish advice to local areas forming their projects or check up on Title I operations even had it wished to.⁷⁹ Until 1970 the Office had only three area desk officers for the whole country, and these men had other responsibilities in addition to their Title I work. As one area desk officer described his job as one "of trouble-shooting, answering complaints, and providing services." He admitted he had no time to find out what was happening at the state level, and that he thus depended on the goodwill of state officials for his information.⁸⁰

The states recognized their powers exceeded those of the Office of Education. This was how it had always been, and, they believed, how it should be. In 1968 the Council of Chief State School Officers gave their opinion of the federal role in education. "The Federal Government should assist the states financially, but it should not seek to require uniformity . . . through regulation or other techniques affecting eligibility of state or local educational agencies to receive federal funds."⁸¹ The ESEA essentially confirmed this view.

If HEW had areas of control, so too did the states. The bill entrusted the states with vital responsibilities. First, the states were to see that Title I operated as intended on the local level, and, second, they were to report to HEW on the programs. The bill authorized states to approve or reject local projects and to ensure that money was really spent on deprived children. They were also responsible for making evaluations of projects, which would include information on test achievement and conclusions about how effectively local areas spent Title I money. The state appeared to stand in a powerful position to enforce the bill on the local level and to control what information got to Washington.

Studies show that while each state was different, few of them lived up to their obligations under the bill. In 1971 the National Advisory Council reported, "there are few examples of exemplary state administrative techniques."⁸² The HEW Audit Agency found evidence of poor administration in twenty-five of thirty-eight states audited. Ohio's

local audits for example consisted of verifications that it had proof⁸³ of cash receipts and local expenditures. Moreover, states failed to take their job of reviewing project applications seriously. The Center for Urban Education discovered that New York approved projects which had no objectives or means of implementation. The Board never tried to discover how schools were selected to participate in local projects. Nor did it ever make constructive suggestions on the proposals. In one project the Board's comment was that the supplementary reading was out of date and uninteresting. The research staff concluded that the New York Board had "never to our knowledge, refused even one approval⁸⁴ of a project." Other studies and one HEW audit made the same point.⁸⁵

States also failed to oversee the operation of projects. In 1970, the General Comptroller issued a study of Ohio which gave examples of the state's carelessness. Cleveland worked out a special arts project for 1500 educationally deprived children for the summer of 1968. Since the city was actually planning to open the project to all children, the state board turned down Cleveland's application twice. Finally on May 31, the state approved the application which now answered some of the board's criticisms. After that, however, the state never bothered to see whether the project went according to plan. It did not. Only 593 students took part, and of those students an estimated 71% were not⁸⁶ educationally deprived. Title I monies were in essence misspent.

When the federal government drew such information to the state's attention, change was not assured. In a special report to the Office

of Education in March 1969, the HEW Audit Agency outlined administrative weaknesses and evidence of misused funds which the audits had uncovered. In each case state and federal officials discussed the audit findings, and the state had the opportunity to justify its actions. Occasionally, the states made necessary changes. Some did nothing. In four states a second audit showed the same violations as the first audit had uncovered.⁸⁷ Indiana was an extreme example of recalcitrance. There "the state representatives did not avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations presented in our report at the exit conference arranged for that purpose. They stated, instead, that they wished to be quoted as neither agreeing or disagreeing with our findings⁸⁸ and recommendations."

So, although the state had more power than the federal government had over the ESEA, it did not exercise its authority effectively over local districts. The 1971 National Advisory Council drew attention to this point. "Only in a few states," the report stated, "is there significant interaction between the SEA (state educational agency) and IEA (local educational agencies)."⁸⁹ Too often the state neither knew⁹⁰ how money was spent nor whether projects were successful. In the absence of information, there could be no organized effort to improve projects.

There were several reasons why the states did not live up to their responsibilities. State departments of education, like their federal counterpart, are understaffed. Although Title I set aside 1% of the

state's Title I grant to pay administrative and evaluation costs, this sum was too small to have real impact on departments of education. In 1968 Massachusetts, for example, received a mere \$160,000. The state had only five full time people working on more than 440 Title I projects.⁹¹ With other staff duties, this staff could not even hope to visit the many projects during the year.⁹² It certainly could not do a thorough investigation to see how Title I was working in local communities. But more important than understaffing was the attitude normally pervading state education departments. Although each department saw itself as superior to the federal government, it still viewed itself as inferior to local and state capital political pressures. In fact, state educational departments have had little practical power over local districts and the way these districts spent their money. Moreover, as the New York Times noted on December 1, 1969, state education departments were subject to control by the state capitals. Recognizing the charges of laxity the Times commented, "unfortunately, the charges sound plausible. The educational outlook of too many state education departments remains routinely conservative. Dominant political pressures on these education officials, many of whom continue to be elected on political party tickets, come from legislatures whose philosophies are at once antiurban and neglectful of chronic rural poverty areas. With much of the control over the distribution of funds in the hands of these conservative power centers, the interests of the urban and rural poor are often badly served."⁹³

In reality, it was the local areas which had the most critical role to play in implementing Title I and which provided test case of whether local control worked. And the actions of local communities would show how clearly government planners saw the mechanism of reform. Local communities selected eligible areas for Title I projects, identified educationally deprived children and submitted project applications to the state for its approval. And most important, local communities carried the projects out. Power rested with local leaders. Fewer than 10% of local areas were subjected to audit reviews.⁹⁴ Under the formula arrangement allocation of money was more or less automatic. A local area neither had to compete for funds nor match them.⁹⁵ Nor did it have to do much to deserve them.

The way in which local areas viewed federal funds was, therefore, an important factor in how Title I money would be spent. In 1966 one statistical survey of local and state officials revealed that 70% felt that Title I funds should not be allocated on the basis of poverty.⁹⁶ The implication was clear. Local authorities wanted federal money with no strings attached. The National Advisory Council Report of 1966, sensing this mood feared Title I funds would be used as general aid.⁹⁷ In the 1971 report the Council noted using Title I funds as general aid was a recurring violation and pointed to an "apparent lack of compliance mindedness."⁹⁸ Other reports and Congressional hearings substantiated the accusation that local areas used federal funds in this way. In some cases services and equipment were available to all children. In

Indianapolis, Indiana, for example, Title I funds paid for five school buses which were used most of the time for regular runs and occasionally for trips for Title I children. In Camden, New Jersey, more than \$240,000⁹⁹ went to areas which did not have large numbers of low income children.

In other cases, the money did not provide extra benefits but merely brought poor schools up to the other schools in their district. Then, too, money and services were spread so thinly that their educational value disappeared. As the General Electric study of Title I programs in five school districts concluded, "there is a general tendency to allocate . . . 20% of Title I funds to a very small number of pupils and to allocate the other 80% over such a large number of pupils that in most cases the funds amount to less than \$5 per pupil."¹⁰⁰ Occasionally the local community failed to identify its target children precisely.

The Center for Urban Education stated, "as far as we can determine, Title I projects in New York City are neither based on an assessment of pupil need, nor are they particularly closely related to the characteristics the Board lists as describing its eligible children."¹⁰¹

The result of such a haphazard policy of selecting target children was inevitable. Title I benefits went to children who really did not need them. An HEW survey of elementary schools for 1967-68 reinforced this point. Title I benefited a larger number of scholastically able children from economically solid families than disadvantaged children. In cities over 500,000, 18% of Title I children came from such backgrounds.¹⁰² In the suburbs over 50% of Title I children were not disadvantaged.

Many community projects showed poor planning, and not surprisingly, little knowledge of the problem of treating educational deprivation. Local people just did not have the knowhow or the commitment to live up to the many responsibilities the ESEA created. Of course, in 1964, the formulators of the bill had had little idea of how to deal with educational problems of poverty since they did not look at available evidence. It was not surprising the ESEA never presented clearly defined goals. Title I funds were to be used for "programs and projects . . . designed to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children" and which were "of sufficient size, scope, and quality to give substantial progress toward meeting those needs."¹⁰³ Key phases were vague because knowledge was vague and because the creators of the ESEA wished to avoid accusations of federal control.

The lack of definition had significant consequences. Local areas had to respond creatively to the problems of poor children. Moreover, they had to develop programs to grapple with the failures of the school system which neglected the poor for so long. Unless the local areas responded to these challenges, unless they changed the schools substantially, the impact of the ESEA on poor children would be minimal.

Unfortunately, local areas did not meet the challenges successfully. In the first year of the ESEA this failure was to be forgiven. Local districts were inexperienced in the task of formulating and implementing projects aimed at their needy students. Since money came late in the school year, local districts had to think up ways to use their allocations

quickly. Of necessity, many initiated summer projects and made substantial investments in equipment and construction.¹⁰⁴ In 1966-67, the first full year of ESEA funds, there was less emphasis on equipment and construction. The proportion of Title I money spent on these categories dropped from 21% to 12.7%. At the same time money going for instruction rose from 51.6% of total funds to 65.8%.¹⁰⁵

There were, of course, a great variety of projects established in the course of five years. Some provided instruction in remedial arithmetic, others reduced class size, initiated individual tutoring or tried to foster positive self images in their pupils. Remedial reading classes were a favorite. In 1967-68, 47% of money spent for Title I instruction in elementary schools went to special reading programs.¹⁰⁶

Other projects supported services like guidance counselling. 80% of Title I programs included some health care.¹⁰⁷ Helpful as such activities sounded, they often were poorly planned and lacked clear goals. In looking over New York City project proposals, the Center of Urban Education noted that "one is struck by the lack of conformity between statements of objectives located in different sections of the proposals, as well as by the difference in the degree to which they are specified. In addition, the proposals list the objectives without any explicit indication of their relative importance."¹⁰⁸ This kind of poor planning and uncertain direction had predictable results. Many Title I programs offered deprived children little new. Evidence from two years of Title

I programs in large city schools, for instance, indicated minimal
¹⁰⁹ change in traditional teaching practices. A regional laboratory
 survey of Title I showed that over half of the Title I teachers had no
¹¹⁰ special training in dealing with educationally deprived children.
 The HEW survey of elementary schools reported that 70% of Title I
¹¹¹ children received less than four hours academic instruction a week.
 In 1967 a group within HEW, troubled by lacklustre programming, formed
 a Committee to Form Strategy for Improving Title I. The group commented
 that "the record shows that the Title I program is fast bogging down to
 nothing more than an extra teacher or two, a few more trips into town,
 or a few minutes a day with (a) remedial reading teacher. The Office
 of Education is in danger of losing its chance to provide leadership in
 the education of hard-core disadvantaged children as our program
¹¹² settles with fixed general aid." Despite this genuine concern, the
 National Advisory Council concluded in 1968 "only a small portion (of
 Title I money) was spent on genuinely new approaches to guiding and
¹¹³ stimulating learning."

These miscellaneous, poorly directed, often inadequately funded
 programs offered little chance of breaking the pattern of failure and
 educational weakness which poverty children exhibited. HEW Secretary,
 Robert Finch, told assembled Congressmen in 1969, "as I say, from the
 massive evidence we have, I do not think we can claim unqualified
 success . . . many curriculum developers are not aware of the best methods
 of meeting the educational needs of poverty children. Schools and

school districts differ greatly in their capacity to provide quality educational programs for disadvantaged children."¹¹⁴

Yet few denied that some ESEA programs were promising in raising achievement levels. In 1969, using careful work by the American Institutes of Research, the National Advisory Council published its conclusions on successful Title I programs. The Council's "highly restricted" definition of success meant measurable gains in the language or arithmetical skills of Title I children over those gains made by a comparable control group.¹¹⁵ The features which the Council isolated as producing these results included careful planning of programs with clearly stated objectives, small groups with intensive instruction and teacher training. The study concluded that mere service without planning would not work and adding teachers without training would not result in "real compensatory education."¹¹⁶ The Council's findings implied that effective compensatory education would be expensive. Since Title I provided only \$120 per child in 1969, local areas would have to concentrate their funds for results unless the government increased appropriations dramatically. This was not how local districts spent their money, however. In the 1967-68 school year HEW estimated that about \$68 per child was spent on reading skills, \$23 on mathematics and \$27 on cultural enrichment.¹¹⁷ These meager sums hardly added up to strong programs.

The operation of the ESEA was a disappointing commentary on the possibilities of local control. Local control in this case meant poor

administration and programming and only a half hearted commitment to serve the poor whom federal planners sought to help. In 1967 Robert Kennedy summed up his feelings about the ESEA. "I will say this from my experiences in travelling around in these communities. I question whether anything is being accomplished in a major way . . . I also very seriously question whether the people in the ghettos feel that anything is really being done."¹¹⁸

The people in the ghettos, however, reacted to the local power structures's failure to respond to poverty problems. As was the case with the Economic Opportunity Act, the ESEA provided an opportunity for the poor to mobilize. Local authorities were bitter. The assistant superintendent of the Hicksville public schools in New York summed up the prevailing feelings. "As I travel about the country, I see a crescendo of bitter disagreements about the whole underlying purpose and concept of ESEA Title I expenditures . . . local poverty groups have appointed themselves prosecutor, judge, and jury, and have bitterly blasted many fine schoolmen with wild charges about misappropriation and misuse of ESEA funds. They have tried smear campaigns and terrorist activities in some communities in an attempt to force local school administrators to use ESEA funds only in ways which are acceptable to these local poverty leaders."¹¹⁹

The assistant superintendent overstated the organization and power of local poverty groups. But both federal and local government began to feel the uncomfortable pressure of the poor. In 1967 community

groups appeared before house hearings to ask for increased community participation in Title I programs. Money was misused locally, they claimed. The board of education had "deaf ears." The ESEA was failing¹²⁰ because the power structure was unresponsive to the poor. In 1968, Commissioner Howe invited sixteen poverty representatives to Washington to discuss the complaints of the poor. "We spent considerable time¹²¹ discussing the operation of Title I," Howe recalled. Representatives had a clear idea of their grievances. The federal government, they said, had to put its foot down. Money for the Board for Education was money down the drain since the Board did not solve poverty problems. In fact, "middle-class people are benefitting just as much from federal funds as the poverty stricken people." "Can we get the power to¹²² implement these things ourselves?" they asked.

The NAACP and the Washington Research Project sensed the growing militancy of local community and poverty groups. In 1969 they added fuel to the fire by releasing the McClure Report, a scathing expose of how Title I funds were mismanaged and misused at local, state and federal levels. The report gave examples of the failure of local officials to¹²³ involve parents and give them information on Title I. Testimony by¹²⁴ the poor before the Senate subcommittee in 1969 confirmed the picture. One Harlem father explained that the poor were coming to view the ESEA¹²⁵ as "a first step for community control."

The voices of the poor began to get some results in Washington. The McClure Report jolted the Office of Education into adding twenty

more professionals to its staff.¹²⁶ Howe's 1968 meeting with the sixteen representatives of the poor "reinforced the Commissioner's decision to provide for involvement of the poor in federal programs through specific regulations and guidelines."¹²⁷ The Commissioner could not require participation of poor groups since the ESEA only provided for "cooperation" between school boards and community action groups.¹²⁸ But HEW did issue a series of memos to encourage parent involvement. On April 14, 1967, the Office of Education had already called for "appropriate" parent participation. Almost a year later (March 18, 1968), HEW suggested that parents be included "in the early stages of program planning and in discussions concerning the needs of children in eligible attendance areas." But on July 2, 1968, the Office of Education went too far. Its memo stated that "local Advisory Committees will need to be established." Predictably the Office retreated from this bold position seventeen days later under pressure from local, state and Congressional groups. The final memo in this series, dated October 30, 1971, merely provided for "system wide" parent councils. As usual, the Office of Education had succumbed to the public school lobby. But now the poor, too, had become a pressure group, and had prevented the Office of Education from retreating completely from its position on parent participation. As one member of the NEA remarked, "USOE has been getting pressure from some groups I've never heard of. I don't know whether they represent a constituency or not." Moreover, failure to achieve parent participation through guidelines

instigated HEW to push for changes in the act itself.¹²⁹

Local poverty and community action groups also exerted pressure locally. In New York City, for example, the New York Council against Poverty and local educational committees tried to force the Board of Education to consult with them on Title I plans. Although the Board agreed to make a "reasonable" effort to cooperate, community groups wanted more power than the Board was willing to yield.¹³⁰ Decentralization in 1968 aided local groups, but the struggle was not yet resolved. As the Urban Research Center observed, "the great potential for local community participation had not been realized even in those projects specifically designed for the purpose."¹³¹ In Coahoma City, Mississippi, on the other hand, local groups were able to find out the purposes of Title I and demand participation in planning projects.¹³² In Providence, Rhode Island, too, Title I officials were forced to spend \$96,000 their Title I grant for clothing. Parents felt clothes were important to the child's self image and the teacher's view of the child, and were persistent enough to impose their reasoning on Title I officials.¹³³

Local parent groups also began pressuring the local educational establishment through the courts. Using the ESEA as their weapon, they won some significant victories. The Federal District Court in Maine handed down a decision on October 20, 1970. In this case the court decided Title I parents did have the right to bring suit to enforce Title I.¹³⁴ A year and a half later, the court ruled again on the case. The ruling provided for an elected Parents Advisory Committee for Title I

with powers to help develop proposals, receive evaluations of programs, and hear complaints. In San Jose, California, another suit against the school district resulted in a consent decree establishing guidelines for parental participation in Title I projects.¹³⁵ Slow as the judicial method is, it provided one tool with which poor people could force middle class power groups to respond to their demands.

The first five years of the ESEA brought to life problems concerning money, religion, race and federal-state-local relations just as opponents of federal aid had prophesized. In most cases, however, the problems were the opposite of those conservatives envisioned. Catholics did not get their share of Title I funds, blacks did not push their way into white schools, the Office of Education did not dominate state and local authorities. Local areas used funds as they wished. In many ways, the ESEA had realized the conservatives' dreams.

But for the liberals, the dream had ended. In 1970, one of the act's developers wrote, "the euphoria of 1965 has now given way to grim soul searching."¹³⁶ The original faith that once the public school system received the dollars it craved, it would reform from within and reach out to poor children whom it had neglected for so long, now seemed naive. The dream faded because policy makers never questioned whether education could solve poverty, because they never faced up to the nature of the public school system. Some wondered "if the ESEA has yet had a fair trial."¹³⁷ Indeed it had. But the promises of the legislation left the poor "embittered." They had seen "precious little change for the better in the quality of their children's education."¹³⁸

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION

On September 14, 1970, President Nixon reviewed the government's varied educational efforts of the 1960's. "Congress was extraordinarily generous in its support of education, particularly in its enthusiasm for trying to compensate through education for the environmental disadvantages of our least fortunate children," he noted. "Much of this activity was based on the familiar premise that if only the resources available for education were increased, the amount youngsters learn would increase, so . . . we thought we knew what education was all about." But the president suggested, it turned out, that "the programs and strategies . . . are . . . based on faulty assumptions and inadequate knowledge." It was hardly surprising Nixon wished to disassociate himself from the efforts of the previous administration. Measures like the ESEA now had little political appeal because of their administrative weaknesses and operational difficulties, and as Nixon pointed out, "it is time to realize that every time we invest a billion dollars in a compensatory program we raise the hopes of millions of our disadvantaged citizens, whose hopes are more than likely to be dashed."¹

Practical failures, disappointed expectations and doubts about the intellectual assumptions of the educational components of the poverty program were all evident in 1970, as Nixon had said. The most serious challenge to the ESEA, and other educational attacks on poverty was

perhaps intellectual. The 1966 Coleman Report, Equality of Educational Opportunity, and the 1967 Civil Rights Commission Report, Racial Isolation in the Public Schools, both implied that the approach embodied in the ESEA was unlikely to improve the academic achievement of poor children. Instead the reports proposed either social or racial integration in the schools or a direct attack on the environment of poverty itself. The two reports were substantial enough to cause grave misgivings about the value of compensatory education. But at the same time that the reports' conclusions were becoming known, other data maintained that compensatory programs, if generously handled and well directed, could and did succeed with poor children. What was needed was a greater effort in the education of the poor. The conflicting evidence created a situation in which it was impossible to decide definitively whether the ESEA approach was the right one or not. But some clear facts did emerge from the confusion. An extraordinary remedy and an extraordinary commitment from the American people were essential if poverty were to be banished from the nation as the first warriors on poverty had so confidently expected.

The first study undermining the intellectual foundations of the ESEA began before Title I was even in operation. One section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act had directed the Office of Education to document the unequal opportunities different racial, religions and ethnic groups faced in the nation's schools and colleges. In early 1965, the Office of Education commissioned the study under the direction of James S.

Coleman, Professor of Social Relations at Johns Hopkins. Aided by a staff of experienced behavioral scientists, Coleman gathered and interpreted data for his report which was released in July, 1966.

Equality of Educational Opportunity, popularly known as the Coleman Report, was one of the most extensive surveys ever made of American education. The basic concern of the survey was clear. "Public schools are the principal means in our society for providing opportunity by developing mental skills and imparting knowledgethe question of this report becomes a simple one: How well do the schools of our Nation provide such opportunity for minority group children?"² To answer this question the survey administered achievement tests and questionnaires in late 1965 to more than 600,000 pupils in the first, third, sixth, ninth and twelfth grades in 4,000 schools. In addition to material provided by students, 60,000 teachers and numerous principals also filled out questionnaires. In all, the survey used forty-five measures to evaluate school facilities, characteristics of student bodies, student backgrounds and attitudes of both majority and minority groups. The major goal of the research was to relate these factors to student achievement scores. Although achievement test scores were far from the ideal way of judging education, the report argued that using these measures was valid. The test assessed "the skills which are among the most important for getting a good job and moving up to a better one, and for full participation in an increasingly technical world. Consequently, a pupil's test results at the end of public school provide a good measure of the range of

opportunities open to him as he finishes school."³

Some of the results of the survey were hardly surprising. The study documented the achievement gap between whites and minority groups. Of all minority groups, blacks scored the lowest.⁴ And since blacks were the major minority group, their performance was really crucial in an evaluation of the schools.⁵ Coleman's report showed that minority children in the first grade were already testing lower than average white children. Over the years the gap in achievement scores widened.⁶ In overall ability, for example, the typical Negro sixth grader in the metropolitan Northeast was over a grade and a half behind his white classmates. By the twelfth grade he was over three grades behind. Math scores of Negroes were even lower. The average Northeastern metropolitan Negro did math on a fourth grade level when he was in the sixth grade. By the twelfth grade he was scoring only at the seventh grade level in mathematics.⁷ Overall, 85% of black twelfth graders in public schools had test scores below the average white senior.⁸ Other studies had duplicated these kinds of results. The Armed Forces Mental Tests which examined the general abilities of all draftees made the same points for example. In 1965 the Surgeon General's Office had issued an annual report on eighteen year olds showing that 19% of the white draftees failed the Armed Forces Test but 68% of the blacks.⁹ Southern Negroes had the lowest scores of all the blacks.

So the gap between black and white achievement was not an unexpected finding for Coleman and his colleagues. But other results definitely

were. Coleman reported, "as we examined the performance in different kinds of schools, we found a fact which occasioned some surprise on our part and some reassessment."¹⁰ The researchers had fully expected that they would document the traditional explanation for differences in achievement. Black and white schools would prove to be highly unequal in their facilities and curricula offerings. But these findings never surfaced. It appeared that blacks and whites had roughly equal school facilities, services and curricula.¹¹ When different schools were compared, there was very little variation in their impact on students. Greater differences lay in the achievement of different pupils within the schools than between them. As the Report concluded, "most of the variation in achievement could not possibly be accounted for by school differences, since most of it lies within the school."¹²

If achievement differences did not result from unequal facilities, what did they result from? The answer to this question would have a significant impact on efforts like the ESEA which relied on programs within the schools to break the cycle of poverty. The survey suggested an insight into the problem of what contributed to student achievement which was familiar to sociologists but not to the public at large. Using information concerning the socioeconomic background of the students' families (urbanism of background, parents' education, structural integrity of family and its size, items in the home) and information on the perceived interest of parents in education, the survey discovered that these factors had a far more important effect on the outcome of

education than did the school itself. Background factors explained between 30% and 50% of the total variance in achievement for all groups¹³ and between 10% to 25% of the difference in individual achievement. The results also seemed to indicate that the family's socioeconomic position explained more of the variance in achievement in the early years than in the later years. This was not an unreasonable finding since the family had greater influence on the young child than on the older child who was more open to other influences.

The second finding which Coleman and his coworkers uncovered was that the qualities of other students in the school affected minority student achievement more than either the school facilities or the attributes of the staff.¹⁴ The study measured the characteristics of the school student body by determining the educational background of the students, their educational aspirations, the degree of student mobility in the school, school attendance and the average amount of homework as reported by the student.¹⁵ The study found that children with similarly deprived home backgrounds showed different patterns of achievement in schools with different student body characteristics. Student bodies coming from solid socioeconomic environments, with high aspirations stimulated their classmates from poor families. The student who already had a strongly supportive background, however, was less sensitive to the influence of his peers. For white twelfth grade students, the characteristics of the student body explained only 2.01% of the variance in verbal achievement for instance, but for twelfth

grade Negroes the figure was 6.77%.¹⁶

Such findings had obvious racial implications. The Report had found that, "the great majority of American children attend schools that are largely segregated - that is, where almost all of their fellow students are of the same racial backgrounds as they are. Among minority groups, Negroes are by far the most segregated."¹⁷ Since most minority groups ranked low in social and economic class, this meant most minority students went to schools with children from similarly deprived backgrounds and never had the stimulating environment which students from higher social and economic classes could provide. Thus, Negroes in typical integrated middle class schools would do better than they did in lower class segregated schools.¹⁸ Coleman concluded, however, that improved performance was not due to racial mixture. "The higher achievement of all racial and ethnic groups in schools with greater proportions of white students is largely, perhaps wholly, related to effects associated with the student body's educational background and aspirations."¹⁹

Coleman summed up the major conclusions of the Report. "Altogether, the sources of inequality of educational opportunity appears to be first in the home itself and the cultural influences immediately surrounding the home; then they lie in the schools' ineffectiveness to free achievement from the impact of the home, and in the schools' homogeneity which perpetuated the social influences of the home and its environments."²⁰

The Report did not explain why the schools had failed to overcome student

deprivation nor did it suggest how or why the schools could overcome²¹ them. As Coleman noted, "the survey results do not lend themselves to the provision of simple answers."²²

Yet even though the survey itself carefully refrained from drawing out the implications of the data, the Report had significant meaning for education in general and for the War on Poverty's educational components like the ESEA in particular. It was true that Coleman observed typical public schools and typical programs, but it was just these kinds of schools and programs which usually resulted from ESEA efforts. The study emphasized that "differences in school facilities and curriculum, which are made to improve schools, are so little related to differences in achievement levels of students that, with few exceptions, their efforts fail to appear in a survey of this magnitude."²³ Thus, the study suggested, although it did not state, that money and conventional improvements which programs like the ESEA provided would do little to break the cycle of educational deprivation. The Report implied that massive changes were necessary to solve the problems of poverty. Either there would have to be a direct attack on the student's home environment or a complete transformation of the schools themselves.

Coleman observed, "it is hard to believe that we are so inept in educating our young that we can do no more than leave young adults in the same relative competitive positions we found them in as children."²⁴ He did not feel that changes were impossible. "It is not, I suggest, that schools cannot have a powerful effect in reducing inequality. It

is rather that they have not yet learned how to do so."²⁵ Whether efforts sponsored by the ESEA would teach the schools how to approach this formidable task was, however, questionable.

When Coleman and his staff finished the Report, they sent it on to the Office of Education. There, understandably, the reaction was one of dismay.²⁶ The House Committee on Education and Labor was finishing its deliberations in executive session on the two year extension of the ESEA.²⁷ The conclusions of the Report seemed to undermine the bill's approach and could offer political fuel to those opposing school aid. Officials within HEW decided to draw attention away from the survey by issuing a summary of the Report. Coleman noted that this summary appeared "'flat', lacking in emphasis and policy implications," and saw this flatness as due partly to "the government agency's uneasiness with survey findings that may have political repercussions."²⁸ The language of the summary was tentative. What appeared in the actual Report as a statement that average minority pupils suffered more in low quality schools than did average white children, for example, was changed into a conditional statement. "The average minority pupil's achievement may suffer more in a school of low quality than might the average white pupil's."²⁹ The major conclusions of the Coleman study were played down. The summary stated somewhat deceitfully that the survey's first finding was "that the schools are remarkably similar in the effect they have on the achievement of their pupils."³⁰ The Report and the summary were released just before the

4th of July, no doubt in an effort to minimize further the possibility that the Report's implications would be discussed in the press and in Congress. Initially, the Office of Education's attempts were successful. Newspapers hardly referred to the surprising findings of the survey, no staff members of either Senate or House education committees ever read the entire report.³¹ There were no memos or reports made on the Coleman survey for legislators involved with educational matters and little Congressional interest.³² When the ESEA came up for discussion³³ in the next few years, Coleman was hardly ever mentioned.

Interest in the Report continued within HEW, however. Commissioner of Education, Howe, called on a group of social scientists and educators to help his department understand the complexities of the Report and to aid the government in responding to the Report's conclusions. The group, which included Daniel Moynihan and Kenneth Clark, gathered on October 2, 1966, with the Commissioner. Howe went over the Report's conclusions that social class factors had a larger effect on achievement than racial factors. He told one group that he interpreted the survey to mean that changing school facilities was less useful than attacking³⁴ the problems of the social environment. Surprisingly, the specialists at the meeting did not appear to understand the Report's implications. Howe, who had originally hoped to use the group to advise him on a continuing basis, announced, "we have a lack of imagination."³⁵ He decided not to call the group again and moved away from his radical impulses on changing the social environment. Within government, then,

the Report had minimal initial impact.

In educational circles the reaction to the Coleman Report was "sluggish" which was hardly surprising in view of the Report's damaging³⁶ conclusions about the schools. Silence appeared the best defense. In research circles, however, there was a lively response to the unusual findings. While the Report received support, it also aroused³⁷ some harsh condemnation. Two noted critics,³⁸ for instance, claimed that "almost every finding is counteracted."³⁹ Criticism on the Report centered around several points. A series of researchers claimed the overall design of the survey was flawed. Some insisted that Coleman had chosen the least important school characteristics to⁴⁰ measure, others that the design was weighted against school factors. A second group of criticisms pointed out the inadequacies resulting from the responses to the survey. A significant number of large city school systems had refused to cooperate with the survey. For example, only⁴¹ 59% of the high schools participating gave a complete set of answers. Another group of reviews alleged there were technical limitations in the analysis of data. The linear regression technique which Coleman had used they claimed was illsuited to his material. It had been a mistake to control for social class before weighing the influence of⁴² school factors on achievement. Finally there were obvious weaknesses in the survey because all the information was gathered at one point in time. There was no possibility of using this information to determine the initial intelligence of pupils or to judge correctly the impact of

the schools over time.⁴³ These criticisms initiated a lively debate over the methods used and the results of the survey. This meant that the Report was in many ways in a state of "perpetual suspension," and that few firm policy judgements were immediately appropriate.⁴⁴

Many of the technical criticisms made of the Report were valid. Furthermore, it was true as Coleman admitted that the methods used in the Report did not prove that different factors like student environment caused the variations in minority achievement. Statistically the Report merely showed that the various factors studied were related to differences in achievement. But despite the validity of some of the criticism and the conditional nature of some of the Report's conclusions, the major findings of the survey stood up under attack and restudy. A massive re-examination of the Coleman data at Harvard which corrected many of the original study's technical weaknesses reaffirmed Coleman's most important finding that the family had a more significant influence on achievement than did the schools. This part of the restudy directed by sociologist David Armor, used the individual school as the basic unit of analysis instead of all the schools as Coleman had. This change Armor felt offered a more accurate means of evaluating the relative influence of school factors and social background factors.⁴⁵ Armor's data on 1562 schools showed few differences between school facilities for blacks and whites, between teacher quality except for verbal achievement, or between expenditures in black and white schools within major geographical regions.⁴⁶ Armor documented differences in black and

white achievement scores similar to those found by Coleman and reaffirmed⁴⁷ the social class differences between white and black schools. Armor's restudy once again established that variations in family backgrounds best explained variations in achievement, although he did not feel⁴⁸ that schools were without influence on their pupils. He also confirmed that the social class and racial mixture within the school did have an important effect on achievement. Blacks performed best in schools in⁴⁹ which they composed 1-25% of the student body, Armor discovered. But Armor stressed the significant finding that black students in white middle class schools still did not achieve as well as their white classmates even though they out-performed comparable blacks in lower class schools.

Armor judged that mixing schools by social class and race was not a sufficient remedy for overcoming the damages of a deprived background. "The policy implication here," Armor stated, "is that programs which stress financial aid to disadvantaged black families may be just (as) important, if not more so, than programs aimed at integrating blacks into white neighborhoods and schools."⁵⁰ Armor concluded, "there does not seem to be any way for blacks to catch up with whites if family⁵¹ factors are ignored." By 1970 another re-evaluation of the data claimed that the data had finally been milked dry. "The overall results should be clear to policy makers and researchers alike. With regard to the differences among schools in resources that we conventionally measure and consider in making policy, there are few that give us great⁵² leverage over students' achievement." Simple manipulations all too

often supported with ESEA funds would have little effect.

The Coleman Report not only had major implications for the educational aspects of the War on Poverty, but it also brought the racial issue into prominence by documenting the pitiful academic performance of many black children relative to whites. Before the release of the Coleman Report a more specific discussion of the problems of race and education was already in process. On November 17, 1965, President Johnson had requested the US Civil Rights Commission to investigate racial segregation in the schools and report their findings to him. "As a first and initial step, the Nation needs to know the facts," Johnson said. The president was hopeful that this report might have useful policy results. He remarked to the Commission, "I trust that . . . your findings may provide a basis for action not only by the Federal Government but also by the states and local school boards."⁵³

In carrying out the study, the Commission established an advisory committee made up of educators, sociologists, economists and psychologists. The head of the advisory committee, Thomas Pettigrew, was an associate professor of social psychology at Harvard and an authority on racial matters. The committee gathered all kinds of information, holding hearings in different cities and commissioning special in depth studies and papers. Their focus was on cities and metropolitan areas since⁵⁴ two-thirds of American children went to urban schools. The committee also undertook a reanalysis of the Coleman data. This reanalysis involved

not just going over the Coleman Report's conclusions but examining⁵⁵ raw material on the IBM tapes. In reworking the Coleman data, the Committee concentrated on information on twelfth grade Negroes in the metropolitan Northeast and on ninth grade Negroes in eight regions. Instead of merely examining the racial composition of entire schools, the committee studied the racial divisions in individual classrooms.

The report, entitled Racial Isolation in the Public Schools, was released on February 20, 1967, echoing Johnson's hope that it would 'serve as a basis for remedial action by local school authorities, the States, and the Federal Government.'⁵⁶ The study's first finding emphasized that racial segregation in public schools was widespread and increasing. In a survey of seventy-five cities, for example, the report noted that 75% of black elementary school children went to schools which were 90% or more black. 88% of elementary school white⁵⁷ children were in schools which were essentially white. In the South the proportion of black children in all black schools had decreased,⁵⁸ but the actual numbers increased. Having established the extent of racial isolation in the public schools, the study went on to discuss the effects of such isolation. In this section, the report reached far more emphatic conclusions about the relation of racial integration to achievement than Coleman had with the data. Coleman felt that social class differences accounted for the improved achievement scores of blacks⁵⁹ in integrated learning situations. Although the Civil Rights Commission study acknowledged that the social class composition of the student body

was the most important school factor affecting achievement, it maintained that race had a separate influence on achievement. "The complexity of the problem of educational disadvantage should not be allowed to obscure the central fact," the report proclaimed. "Racial isolation is the heart of the matter and . . . enduring solutions will not be possible until we deal with it."⁶⁰ The difference between Coleman's conclusions and the Commission's could be explained either by the statistical techniques Coleman used which confused race and class or by the regression analysis which used the school rather than the classroom as the basic unit of study.⁶¹

The study provided evidence to support the Commission's belief that the racial composition of a classroom had a separate influence on achievement apart from social class background. No matter what the racial composition of the entire school, the study discovered that Negro achievement scores in individual classrooms rose when a majority of their classmates were white. The amount of the improvement varied with the situation. "When disadvantaged Negro students are in class with similarly situated whites," the report pointed out, "their average performance is improved by more than a full grade level. When they are in class with more advantaged white students, their performance is improved by more than two grade levels."⁶² Ninth grade middle class blacks in middle class black schools were 2.6 years behind middle class whites in verbal achievement, but if they were in majority white middle class classrooms they were only between 2.4 and 1.8 years behind.⁶³

There was a possibility that such improvements resulted from better education in the white schools rather than the racial mixture in the classroom. But an examination of this possibility indicated that most improvement was not due to facilities or curriculum.⁶⁴ Nor did the quality of teachers have a significant effect. Disadvantaged Negroes in lower class white schools with poor teachers still performed better⁶⁵ than disadvantaged blacks in black schools with better teachers. Moreover, the longer blacks went to integrated schools the better their achievement was. A deprived black ninth grader in a lower class school in the Metropolitan Northeast was 2.6 grades behind white average verbal achievement if he had been in a desegregated situation in his first three years of school. But had he never been in desegregated classes, he was 3.4 grades behind by the ninth grade. For an equally deprived child who had been in desegregated classes in the first three school grades and⁶⁶ who also was in a middle class school the gap was only 1.8 years. Such information indicated that black students needed not merely integrated schools but integrated classrooms. The major conclusion appeared simple: "The analysis thus suggests that changes in the social class or racial composition of schools would have a greater effect on⁶⁷ student achievement and attitudes than changes in school quality."

The Commission's emphatic conclusions did not attract the vigorous⁶⁸ attacks which the Coleman Report had. Yet the findings, though suggestive, were hardly conclusive. On May 10, 1967, Coleman wrote to Commissioner Howe about Racial Isolation in the Schools. "Our interpre-

tation of the data in the report," he commented, "is that racial integration per se is unrelated to achievement insofar as the data can show a relation."⁶⁹ Moreover, an in-depth longitudinal study of Contra Costa County, California, by Alan Wilson, included in the Commission's report did not support the Commission's viewpoint. Wilson's survey led him to the conclusion that "racial composition of the school, while tending to favor Negro students in racially integrated schools, does not have a substantial effect - not nearly so strong as the social class composition of the school."⁷⁰ Wilson did feel, however, that in the long run social and racial segregation would have harmful effects on achievement.⁷¹ Wilson himself pointed out that his sample was too small to allow a comprehensive study of blacks in all the possible social and racial classroom situations.⁷² In November, 1967, when the report was released, Pettigrew suggested other reasons for Wilson's findings. It was possible, for example, that disparities between Wilson's data and the Commission's could be explained by Wilson's use of the school rather than the classroom as the unit for analysis.⁷³ But whether Wilson's study was flawed was almost beside the point. Faced with contradictory evidence, the Commission decided to accept the racial explanation as valid. This has led to the accusation that the Commission was trying to work up a case for integration to reinforce its Congressional request for a racial imbalance law.⁷⁴ Yet it was not of great importance ultimately if the Commission overstressed the racial aspect of achievement. Since only one-quarter of the black population

was middle class, lower class black children would have to go to
schools with whites if they were to have social class integration. ⁷⁵

The implications of Racial Isolation in the Public Schools
further undermined the assumptions of the ESEA. In some ways the study
appeared more positive than the Coleman Report since it emphasized the
role the school could play in overcoming poor achievement due to
poverty. But this emphasis was actually misleading. Although the
study acknowledged the influence of family background on achievement
which Coleman had delineated, it minimized its importance. Noting that
data suggested "on the average, the social class of a student has a
strong relationship to his academic success," the study devoted only a
few pages to the whole subject. ⁷⁶ The overwhelming amount of discussion
concerned integration, and the report thus gave the impression that
changes in schools rather than changes in the social environment were
of first importance. The study did not stress the achievement gap
between blacks and whites present even in integrated situations. This
gap had led David Armor to maintain that social changes were probably
more important than changes in the schools themselves.

Yet even beyond the fact that the report focused on the less
promising avenue of changing conditions through the schools, its conclu-
sions did not support the premises of the ESEA. If the report were
correct, integration plans on a scale defying political reality, not
ESEA programs, were needed to change the poverty patterns of achievement.
The ESEA itself had no desegregation requirements and in many cases,

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reinforced racial and social class isolation. Compensatory education could occur in segregated or integrated settings. But the method of allocating funds encouraged treating poor children separately. Thomas Pettigrew made these points to the House Research Technical Programs Subcommittee in 1967. "Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is a clear example of the wrong way to attack problems of poverty," Pettigrew said. "Its large extension to over one-and-a-half billion dollars in 1966 by the 89th Congress further exemplifies the total neglect by the Congress of even social research directly called for by Congress itself. The basic weakness of Title I is that it encourages (though it does not require) that something special be done educationally for disadvantaged children apart from advantaged children. Yet . . . the principal resource public schools can provide for disadvantaged children is close educational contact with advantaged children. By fastening further economic and racial separation in the nation's public schools, Title I is contributing directly with federal money to the educational retardation of America's poorest children."

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The Civil Rights Report also devoted attention to compensatory education programs carried on in segregated schools. Pettigrew's comments to the House Research and Technical Programs Subcommittee had reflected the Report's conclusions. The Commission discovered in its survey of ten cities in 1965-66 and three cities in 1966-67 that a majority of ESEA funds established compensatory programs in schools with student bodies which were 50% or more black. This finding preceded

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other studies like the 1969 McClure Report which later confirmed that local school districts often used funds to maintain racial separation in the schools. If it were true that compensatory funds went to segregated schools, it was important to establish whether they worked in all black environments.

In all, the Commission investigated twenty-three programs in
⁸⁰black schools. Although Title I funds did not necessarily initiate these programs, the programs themselves were well known and often models for Title I efforts. The Commission determined that it would judge a program successful only if it resulted in measurable improvement in academic performance. For Racial Isolation in The Public Schools the Commission included its findings on three programs, the Banneker project in St. Louis, Higher Horizons and The All Day Neighborhood School Program in New York City. In St. Louis the program which began in 1957-58 sought to increase achievement through raising teacher's expectations, motivating the students and their parents. No extra funding existed for Banneker Schools. In New York, Higher Horizons, established in 1959, sought to reach disadvantaged students through teacher training, guidance, cultural environment and remedial help. In 1962 an average of \$50 to \$60 was spent on each Higher Horizon child in addition to the base state expenditure. The All Day Neighborhood School Program, held in elementary schools, provided special teachers and after school programs designed to offset the destructive effects of the environment
⁸¹of poverty. These services came to \$60 per child. The results of

these three projects and the other city programs which the Commission explored showed mixed results. Often the data were incomplete, and there were complaints of inadequate funding. Nevertheless "in most instances," the Commission found, "the data did not show significant gains in achievement."⁸² The Commission concluded, "compensatory education programs have been of limited effectiveness because they have attempted to solve problems that stem, in large part, from racial and social class isolation in schools which themselves are isolated by race and social class."⁸³

A further section of the Commission's study of compensatory education compared the achievement of black students in compensatory programs in Syracuse, Berkeley, Seattle and Philadelphia with the achievement of similar black pupils in white schools (in the same cities)⁸⁴ which had no compensatory programs. In Philadelphia, for example, the Commission investigated students participating in the Education Improvement Program which tried to improve reading scores and encourage student aspirations, students in slightly higher class black schools without a special program and students bussed to white schools. The Commission reported that the Education Improvement Program failed to raise reading scores significantly of students who performed behind both those going to the slightly higher class schools and behind similarly⁸⁵ deprived students sent to white schools.

The Commission did not reject the possibility that compensatory education could overcome the effects of poverty. It merely stated that, so far, compensatory education had failed.⁸⁶ Commissioner Howe saw the

Commission's conclusions as tentative since the programs investigated⁸⁷ were so poorly funded. Howe felt more money would bring success.

But for the Commission the problems were not only the obvious ones like inadequate funding. The weakest link in compensatory education lay in the "attempt to instill in a child feelings of personal worth and dignity in an environment in which he is surrounded by visible evidence which seems to deny his value as a person. This does not appear to be a problem which will yield easily to additional infusions of money. More funds clearly are required and investments in programs that will improve teaching and permit more attention to the individual needs of students undoubtedly will benefit many children. The evidence suggests, however, that the better services additional funds will provide, will not be fully effective in a racially isolated environment, but only in a setting which supports the teacher's effort to help each⁸⁸ child to understand that he is a valuable person who can succeed."

Equality of Educational Opportunity and Racial Isolation in the Public Schools were two massive studies suggesting that the approach embodied in the ESEA was not the best one to eliminate the academic disadvantages of the children of poverty. The one study indicated the need for either basic social changes or widespread changes in the schools, the other for massive racial integration. Neither study could offer a definitive case for its point of view, but each offered substantial evidence to support its stand. The remedies called for were far reaching and would be politically difficult to enact. Yet as one authority said of the Coleman Report, "if the Report's analysis is

correct, then most of the money now being spent to improve the public schools is going down the drain."⁸⁹

Money down the drain was perhaps politically more acceptable than the solutions the large studies seemed to indicate. It was not until specific reports of Title I failures began to trickle back to Congress that legislators at last began to consider seriously the specific question of whether the compensatory effort supported by the ESEA was successful. A controversy was brewing, and the sides were lining up. In 1969, Carl Perkins felt the hearings of the House Committee on Education and Labor he held had shown "this is the greatest program which has ever been enacted by the Congress . . . the critics to a great extent have outmoded information."⁹⁰ The grass roots support for the legislation, Perkins remarked, was unbelievable.⁹¹ Robert Finch, Nixon's new Secretary of HEW, disagreed with Perkins. "There is an uneven quality to the performance of these various programs across the country," he noted. "We would like to evaluate these programs."⁹² Later in the day Finch was more specific. "From the massive evidence we have," he stated, "I do not think we can claim unqualified success."⁹³

The controversy over whether compensatory efforts under Title I succeeded, raised the issue of what the goals of the ESEA actually were. The rhetoric surrounding the enactment of the bill had stressed the importance of breaking the cycle of poverty and ignorance in which so many of the nation's children were caught. But this long range goal could not be effectively measured for many years. In practical terms,

therefore, it appeared that the bill's clearest objective was to eliminate the achievement gap which existed between middle class white children and their deprived black and white contemporaries. Arguments on the success or failure of compensatory education, thus, focused on improvement or lack of improvement in test scores of children in Title I programs. It was assumed that better scores would eventually produce the long term aims implicit in the legislation.

Many problems stood in the way of even deciding whether Title I had raised test scores of the nation's poor children significantly. As HEW admitted in 1969, evaluation of Title I's impact "often seems to produce results which are more confusing than they are illuminating. At times . . . the results are even conflicting."⁹⁴ Inadequate data caused most of the confusion. A major part of the ESEA information came from states and localities which, in 1969, were responsible for reporting on the 20,000 ongoing Title I projects. The bill had directed that evaluations must include "objective measurement of educational achievement."⁹⁵ But since school districts had successfully resisted using uniform national tests, each district was free to select its own achievement test.⁹⁶ The data districts provided were so varied that it was difficult to see how the program was working out on a national scale.⁹⁷ Districts also reported evaluation information in different ways. For example, some areas reported changes in median scores of Title I children while others used mean scores. No true comparison between the two was possible. Other evaluations gave figures on the

proportion of successful projects rather than the numbers of children showing improvement. Moreover, it was not unusual for states and localities to offer incomplete data. It was both time consuming and expensive to carry out a careful evaluation, and few areas had the means, talent or will for such an effort. Massachusetts, for example, took the entire evaluation requirement so lightly that its study yielded little useful information about Title I's impact.⁹⁸ One Massachusetts area described a project as successful in which Title I children appeared to improve in reading scores compared to nontitle I children. Actually neither group improved; Title I children merely lost ground more slowly than the others.⁹⁹ Often reports on Title I projects did not have information on control groups or had poorly matched controls. This made it difficult to discover whether target children were improving more than children not receiving special help. Such data did not yield enough material to allow definite generalizations about the impact of Title I.

The inadequacy of data not only stemmed from the freedom states and localities had in submitting their ESEA evaluations. Even more basic problems were involved in the evaluation process itself. The typical way of determining whether a program was successful was to test the selected children before and after their exposure to the program. Any improvement in scores was attributed to the program. Actually, however, improvement might be due to the natural development of the children or to extraneous influences.¹⁰⁰ Pre and post test results did not yield

definitive information on the program's success or the reasons for it. Moreover, the method of testing at only two intervals was obviously unable to detect long range effects of programs; few school districts followed up on Title I target children over the years.¹⁰¹ It was no surprise that no clear answer was given to the question of whether Title I was obtaining its goals.

A few large scale studies carried out during the first five years of the ESEA avoided some of these problems. But these studies, too, created an unclear picture of Title I's impact. In 1965-66 and 1966-67 General Electric investigated selected compensatory education programs in fourteen large cities. The study planned to compare the two years and relate any changed test scores to the compensatory program stimulated by Title I. The study ran into typical problems in data collection. Five cities did not have suitable material to be included in the evaluation. Test score information provided by the cities varied. More important, different children took the tests in the two years because most school systems test selected grades every year not the same children. Finally, few of the school systems kept detailed financial records so that it was impossible to form an overall picture of how much money was really being spent on compensatory education.¹⁰²

G.E.'s report was, in the words of one Congressman, "not entirely one which gave us pause for optimism."¹⁰³ G.E. concluded that although the lowest achievers improved slightly, the average performance of the sampled grades declined.¹⁰⁴ When it could correlate financial, program,

and test change information, the study found no meaningful relationships beyond the fact that concentrating resources in large amounts was useful.¹⁰⁵ Yet though these results seemed disappointing, as one commentator remarked, the G.E. study didn't show much of anything at all. "It showed only how hard it is to find out anything about input-output relations in education, especially from a quick, low budget project using existing data."¹⁰⁶

In 1970 HEW issued its own study of the ESEA. Far larger than any other survey on Title I, HEW's study covered 4,000 elementary schools and had the results from 65,000 reading tests. As usual, the tests were of several different types. But since almost three-quarters of the children participating in Title I programs during the 1967-68 school year took reading, reading scores were considered key to any judgement about Title I activities.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately HEW found that it could use scores for only 11,490 students, 12% of the sample, because it did not have the necessary comparative data for the other students. HEW did not consider this 12% to be representative of the entire sample. Most of the 12% came from urban areas and a large proportion of them belonged to minority groups.¹⁰⁸ Yet even though the data were not completely satisfactory, it did "offer some indications of the impact of compensatory reading programs upon the pupils."¹⁰⁹ The results of the survey, as seen by HEW, were depressing. "Compensatory reading programs did not seem to overcome the reading differences that stem from poverty."¹¹⁰ Each grade tested showed a slightly different

pattern. Title I pupils in the second grade whose reading scores were below those of children not in the program caught up with these children¹¹¹ at the end of the year. But in the fourth grade Title I children did not catch up. The gap between them and the children not in the¹¹² program remained the same. In grade six the gap between Title I and nontitle I children was larger than in grade four, but the gap itself¹¹³ did not increase over the year. Thus, poverty pupils, the survey suggested, never caught up to other children and, in fact, showed less progress than children from better financial backgrounds who had taken¹¹⁴ part in the programs.

At first glance, the findings of the HEW data corroborated the conclusions of the Coleman Report. Increased spending brought few concrete results. The survey pointed out that students attending schools with students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds improved more than¹¹⁵ those attending school with deprived classmates. But although the survey supported the Coleman Report and although HEW gave a negative interpretation to the data, it still did not prove the failure of the ESEA. For example, the tests measured growth only over the period of a year. Even HEW concluded, "while there is no indication that compensatory reading programs are eliminating the deprivation of participants within¹¹⁶ one school year, this is an unreasonable expectation." Furthermore, the survey used test information about different pupils at different grade levels instead of following the same Title I pupils over several years. The survey did not, therefore, provide any evidence of the

cumulative effects of the ESEA. Perhaps exposure to several years of special programs would begin to close the gap at the fourth and sixth grade levels. Finally, as the report emphasized, compensatory programs were inadequately funded. Only about \$68 were spent in helping each disadvantaged child in special reading programs, and these funds were woefully insufficient to overcome educational deprivation. ¹¹⁷

Another large study of an educational component of the poverty program did give some cumulative results. In April, 1969, the Westinghouse Corporation released a preliminary report on Headstart programs. Unlike the ESEA, Headstart aimed exclusively at helping preschool children. Many of the programs were directed toward adjustment rather than learning which made it difficult to do meaningful evaluations. ¹¹⁸ In the wide variety of learning projects possible, however, Headstart was similar to the ESEA and equally hard to measure.

The Westinghouse study followed up children who had been at ¹⁰⁴ Headstart centers for their first three years of school. The scores of these Headstart children were compared with a group of control children who had not been to Headstart. The study made points similar to other evaluations. Summer programs had no discernible effect on achievement. Full year programs showed some but not significant results in the first and second grades. The third grade sample was too small to make a positive statement. ¹¹⁹ Still the children tested below the national means on most tests. ¹²⁰ These results predictably caused an uproar. The White House and President Nixon, eager to minimize support for

Headstart, accepted the findings although Finch, Secretary of HEW, proclaimed that the study "contained insufficient facts and the data was sloppy."¹²¹

Although the Westinghouse Survey confirmed the negative conclusions of other studies of compensatory education, it still did not establish the failure of all compensatory aid. The study itself was, on the one hand, attacked on statistical grounds and, on the other, called, "the most vigorous national assessment of Headstart which has been undertaken since the program's conception."¹²² Some argued that the public schools which Headstart children had entered had destroyed benefits or that other children entered a period of rapid growth in their first years and thus caught up with Headstarters. Others felt that there had been no "over all, systematic changes" as a result of Headstart.¹²³

The truth was that the Westinghouse Survey and other evaluations were not, in the short term at least, able to prove anything conclusively about compensatory education. But the lackluster results were suggestive. "The spate of negative results across a whole gamut of programs betokens a series of important shortcomings," wrote one observer.¹²⁴ Compensatory education as most often organized, did not appear able to overcome the effects of poverty. As Daniel Moynihan pointed out, "compensatory education as we now have it, doesn't seem to do much. It doesn't follow that compensatory education and the way you could have it wouldn't do much; its just saying that the present system doesn't have many effects."¹²⁵ Much more testing and experimentation were evidently

in order to see whether compensatory education could be an effective part of a national policy against poverty.

The National Advisory Council pursued the problem in its 1969 report which showed that Title I projects could succeed in certain circumstances. The American Institutes of Research studied twenty-one programs selected from a total of 400 which showed pupils making significant gains in language or arithmetic. The National Advisory Council carefully pointed out that "significant" gains did not merely mean improvement. Gains "had to exceed" those made by a control group over a similar period. ¹²⁶ Project R-3 in San Jose, California, was an example of such a program. Mexican American children in the eighth grade whose test scores in math and English were between one and two years behind their grade level participated in a special learning program designed by the school district and Lockheed Missiles and Space Company. The program began in February, 1967, with thirty-seven children who ¹²⁷ received a second year of help in the ninth grade. Tests compared reading and arithmetic gains of project children with the program of a random sample of forty students serving as a control group. In the 1967-1968 program boys gained 1.7 years in reading and 1.2 years in math against the controls' gain of 1.3 and 0.5 years. Usually deprived children progressed only seven months (0.7%) in a ten month school year. Yet, although progress of the Title I children was significant, they still did not test at grade level. Moreover, students chosen to be part of the experimental group were already performing above disadvantaged

norms, and would be expected to show progress. Still, a few other programs with less selective standards also duplicated favorable results. The cost for such a program was substantial. Approximately \$300 per child per year was needed for the special instruction in addition to the normal per pupil expenditure.¹²⁸ Other programs studied by the American Institutes of Research spent significant amounts on deprived students.

The National Advisory Council tried to isolate the factors which made the twenty-one programs so successful. Admitting that it was offering "analytical judgments rather than inevitable demonstrations," the Council concluded that success relied on careful planning and good management.¹²⁹ Teacher training and small group sessions also appeared to be important factors in teaching poor children.¹³⁰ These conclusions which suggested compensatory education as a possible way to attack educational deprivation did not contradict the implications of the Coleman Report. Successful programs were quite different than normal compensatory school programs and concentrated attention and resources on a scale unusual in most public schools. Moreover, the programs did not bring the deprived achievement up to national norms. To do this more fundamental changes in school and society might well be necessary.

The Council's description of fruitful compensatory programs implicitly raised several issues. Out of 400 programs the Council had characterized only twenty-one. These appeared to be typical Title I efforts. Was, then, successful compensatory education likely under the present

legislation? Careful planning and management demanded firm commitment and energetic leadership from local communities. As the first five years of the ESEA had amply documented, the bill gave excessive freedom to those controlling local education who all too rarely responded with any real commitment to the poor. Moreover, successful compensatory education apparently would demand focusing the available money on only a few, a difficult political task for school districts, or increasing federal funds substantially. David Cohen, Professor at the Joint Center for Urban Studies at MIT and Harvard, estimated that the federal government would have to spend between \$100 and \$160 billion in the first ten years in order to have an effective Title I program.¹³¹ This large a sum would necessitate rethinking in Washington and a new estimate of national priorities.

The Council's report on successful compensatory programs raised other questions too. By accepting improved scores as the sign of success, the Council was retreating not only from the program's rhetorical goals of ending the poverty cycle but also the goal of breaking the achievement gap. Was this merely a short term adjustment or a lowering of sights for the whole program? Probably no one ever considered this issue. No where did the Council broach the central problem of why the achievement gap still remained. Was it because changes were not massive enough or was it because students were receiving help too late? Or was it because the program was still in its beginning stages? Would the gains the Council hailed be lasting or would they disappear as the Headstart

gains had done? One authority speculating on some of these questions did reach a conclusion. "A poor child receiving a good educational experience at an early age has many chances to dissipate the value of the experience before he reaches an age when it can directly benefit his earnings; that is the nature of the poverty environment, and it does not lead to putting weight on educational programs."¹³²

Altogether, even though the Council showed that compensatory education could achieve limited success despite its overall lacklustre record, it was apparent that no one could decide, without more information, whether compensatory education represented the most effective approach to deprivation. What was needed was not just more funds as David Cohen had indicated but more funds plus an ambitious plan of systematic experimentation.¹³³ Different programs had to be carefully compared and the same programs tested under different conditions so that promising approaches could be isolated.¹³⁴ Reliable estimates of costs were necessary. Target children should be followed into the job market to see whether compensatory education made any difference in the long run. As one social planner noted, "the federal should undertake the design and evaluation of social experiments as a major task in the 1970's."¹³⁵

By 1970, the lack of clear results for compensatory education strengthened the voices of those who felt an alternative approach to educational deprivation was needed. Dr. Neil Sullivan's testimony in 1970 Senate hearings exemplified this practical shift from typical Title I efforts. Sullivan described the Berkeley schools' experiences

with ESEA funds. Initially the school system spent up to \$1200 on compensatory services for each deprived child. But the efforts were disappointing. "The results after two-and-a-half or three years clearly indicated that not only did the child in the inner city not improve, he had retrogressed."¹³⁶ Berkely decided to try buses and enlarge its integration program. Although the results of integration were not final because of incomplete or flawed evaluation studies, Berkeley's experience was the same as other communities such as Hartford, Connecticut.¹³⁷ Students in integrated schools performed better than those in schools with compensatory education.¹³⁸ Integration studies were much more consistent in showing raised achievement levels than compensatory education studies. The HEW survey itself had noted deprived students in high socioeconomic schools made greater gains than those in majority lower class schools.¹³⁹

In 1970 a newly appointed National Advisory Council issued a report concentrating on "what is best for the children."¹⁴⁰ Reviewing the contributions of the ESEA, the Council pointed out, "a summary of the benefits of Title I ESEA would include the national commitment to upgrading the education of the poor, identification of the educationally deprived, and some excellent attempts to conquer the problem."¹⁴¹ These were hardly impressive results. The Council then turned to the issue: "to integrate or to compensate?"¹⁴² Still maintaining that compensatory education could result in higher achievement for segregated black pupils, the Council nevertheless, came out in favor of integration

with special compensatory help for black pupils. This approach, the Council argued, was less expensive than compensatory education in racially isolated settings.¹⁴³

Other experts agreed that integration was necessary but contended that compensatory education in deprived schools had little potential. Coleman, for example, testified in 1970, "although the results of our survey do not say it is impossible to provide equality of opportunity in all-black schools, the results of other research do not show promising methods for doing so."¹⁴⁴ So far, Coleman remarked, educators had not found the way of setting up compensatory programs which substantially improved black school performance. Thomas Pettigrew was equally unenthusiastic about compensatory education. "I don't think it is completely wasted," he said. "I think it is better than complete neglect or something; but we do know that compensatory programs do work in interracial and interclass situations."¹⁴⁵

The failure of segregated compensatory programs to prove themselves clearly and the consistent, if not conclusive, evidence in support of integration undermined the basic approach of the ESEA which treated disadvantaged children separately.¹⁴⁶ In reality, as the large HEW survey documented, 83% of Title I students sampled attended classrooms where 90% or more of the students belonged to the same race.¹⁴⁷ The combined approach of integration with compensation supported by the National Advisory Council appeared the most promising, least expensive and most democratic solution to deprivation. There was, of course,

nothing to prevent using available ESEA funds to encourage and support social and racial integration. But this kind of integration was becoming more and more difficult as the nation's central cities turned increasingly into lower class black ghettos. Local white communities were often intransigent and did not wish to use ESEA funds for integration. Bussing for racial purposes aroused hostility and occasionally violence in suburban areas. Congress was unwilling to encourage outright integration in North or South by modifying the legislation. Yet if poverty were to be dealt with effectively, some revisions and reinterpretation of the ESEA were necessary.

Unsatisfactory and inconclusive as much of the evidence was on the relative merits of the ESEA vs. integration, neither approach appeared able to overcome the educational effects of poverty. The indications that no school program could wipe out the achievement gap led back to the Coleman Report. "In effect, what educators have found, to their dismay," Coleman noted in 1970, "is that school is not as effective a means of increasing opportunity as it has been expected to be."¹⁴⁸ Educators were searching for new ways to improve the school's effects on poor children, but so far it appeared they had been too cautious. By 1970 several facts were becoming clear. Typical compensatory education programs were usually next to useless although inadequate evaluations did not give enough information to know why. Carefully planned projects had some initial effect on target children, but the elements of success were not identified. Integration also had a continuing effect on achievement. No program lived up to the original expectations

of the War on Poverty or the intent to eliminate the achievement gap. Goals perhaps had to be reduced or bolder measures taken. "If improved student achievement is one goal," wrote one authority, "the Coleman Report's implication is obvious: we must alter the whole social system rather than just tinker with the schools."¹⁴⁹

Some rejected the continuing controversy over whether education could overcome the effects of poverty as meaningless. Test scores, so often cited as proof of success or failure, measured only limited areas of knowledge and intelligence. Schools were more than the sum of their reading scores. Thus, the argument went, the ESEA could not be evaluated merely by its ability to change scores. As the National Advisory Council itself remarked in 1969, no one even knew whether improvement in reading and arithmetic would really break the cycle of poverty.¹⁵⁰

Early sociological studies suggested that they did not. But more detailed evidence relating test scores to jobs and economic success were needed.¹⁵¹

Even if reading scores did improve, HEW noted, it was impossible to tell what part of the improvement resulted from the Title I program.¹⁵²

Finally Nixon's 1971 Urban Education Task Force pointed out that the ESEA was not a traditional attempt to bring about educational change. The aims of the bill were vague and vast.¹⁵³ But such attitudes which denied the importance of evaluation evaded the real problem of social reform. There had to be some attempts to measure how well a program was achieving its goals. Without such an attempt there would be little progress in dealing with the real problem. There would be no

abandonment of ineffective programs. Some beginnings at evaluation, however inadequate, were imperative. What was needed was strong government leadership in the whole area of measuring social policy.

It was clear that Title I had not lived up to the rhetorical claims made for education in the early days of the War on Poverty. Gains were modest, although it was hard to argue that they were of no value. The real question was whether there were better ways to get results. Policy planners were now faced with the issues they had evaded in 1963 and 1964. If education could not help poor people break out of their poverty, if the liberal belief in education as a panacea was false, a new approach to poverty was necessary. The question was, however, whether policy makers still wanted to deal with poverty in the 1970's.

CHAPTER SIX

TURNING AWAY FROM EDUCATION

The fragile foundations underpinning the educational components of the War on Poverty stood revealed. Studies pointed out schools, as they were, could do little to overcome poverty. The disinterest shown by school boards and others in charge of educating the poor indicated that reform would hardly come from within the school system itself. In some ways the message of the 60's was clear: if Americans were serious about solving social problems like poverty, they would have to experiment, to support sweeping and expensive measures like income transfer and work programs. But the country and the new administration seemed unwilling to accept such a message.

Richard Nixon reflected the new mood in 1969. The goal of overcoming poverty no longer seemed attainable. "In the maze of anti-poverty efforts," the president remarked, "precedents are weak and knowledge uncertain. These past years of increasing Federal involvement have begun to make clear how vast is the range of what we do not yet know, and how fragile are projections based on partial understanding."¹ Nixon's uncertainty about the possibility of eliminating poverty matched his skepticism about the role education and the schools might play in these efforts. "One of the mistakes of past policy," he pointed out in 1970, "has been to demand too much of our schools: They have been expected not only to educate, but also to accomplish a social transfor-

mation." All too often such efforts were "tragically futile," the president observed, and ended up by using rather than serving the children.²

Disillusionment with antipoverty programs was widespread partly because it was so hard to evaluate the causes of failure. The ESEA, for example, had weak intellectual foundations, poor implementation and inadequate funding. Which factor was the most important? What was the answer to the familiar educational question: how could the nation provide its poor and oppressed children with equal educational opportunity?

Familiar though this question was by 1970, concern had shifted slightly away from poverty to race. As two sociologists noted, "in 1965 . . . The issue was poverty; the enemy inertia; the answer, effective, immediate action. Now the issue is race and power; the enemy is whitey; and the answer has to deal with participation, black self-sufficiency, and a redistribution of influence."³

Despite the continuing focus on the problems of the urban child, there was little consensus over the role education could play in providing the poor with educational opportunity. Most agreed that compensatory education had failed both to break the poverty cycle and to eliminate the achievement gap between blacks and whites. In fact a few went so far as to see the whole effort of the previous years as a cynical gesture to the poor. "Compensatory education was to be carried out with a certain flair and rhetoric," wrote one observer, "so as to

disguise its basic quality, that of offering more of what hadn't worked in the past." Others did not agree that compensatory education was a liberal sop to the poor, but merely saw it as an inadequate, misguided effort. For these critics, education needed to be reshaped or even radically reformed. They still believed, however, that education had a definite part to play in dealing with poverty. For still others, the period of reassessment led to a startling different conclusion. The experience of the 60's had proved one thing; education had not and could not alleviate poverty in a meaningful way. Society must devise other methods if it were determined to grapple with its social problems.

Among those who felt that education still mattered, Charles Silberman spoke for the conservatives. His popular book, Crisis in the Classroom, acknowledged that there had been a serious breakdown in the nation's schools. "I am indignant at the failure of the public schools," Silberman proclaimed. "What grim, joyless places most American schools are," how sterile in atmosphere, how contemptuous of children. The real problem in American schools, Silberman felt, stemmed from the mindlessness of educators who refused "to think seriously about educational purpose," who were reluctant "to question established practice." Mindlessness resulted in the acceptance of ordered silent schools which emphasized rules and traditional performance. Grim though the schools were, Silberman still believed the necessary changes could be made within the public school system. Can existing institutions, he asked, "reverse the reign of error that leads to failure"? His reply was positive.

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"The answer is that it can be done in the public schools."

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If the schools were to come to life, Silberman observed they must adopt a spirit of flexibility, warmth, humanity and purpose. To exemplify the difference this warmth could make, Silberman described several of the "open schools" he had visited in England. The lack of traditional classroom structure there seemed to produce a real enthusiasm for learning.¹⁰ In the United States, Silberman pointed to schools experimenting with the open school concept and to some normal ghetto schools where a humane atmosphere, Silberman claimed, produced high achievement without extra expenditures or extraordinary equipment.¹¹ Silberman's problem came when he tried to describe how schools were to create this new spirit. Introducing an open school format was not sufficient because the format itself was actually "less an approach or method than a set of shared attitudes and convictions about the nature of childhood, learning, and schooling."¹² A different system for training teachers and a new relationship between public schools and universities were also necessary, Silberman maintained, if the new spirit was to flower in public education.¹³ But such proposals were vague, even "semi utopian."¹⁴ Without a definite, clear plan for achieving educational change, Silberman offered a conservative, impractical directive for those concerned with improving education for the poor.

A more radical group of educators rejected Silberman's approach of working with the public school system as it was. This group of reformers saw the present system as hopelessly rigid and resistant to any real

innovation or concern for children. The first step in reform was to restructure the public school system and the second to redistribute political power to parents and the community. The rationale for this approach came partly from the Coleman Report which emphasized the detrimental effects powerlessness had on blacks and partly from the general belief that free competition caused improvements. Reformers developed several major proposals for reshaping the schools. In some cases implementation even began on an experimental basis.

Kenneth Clark called for a system of competition among schools and choice in selecting schools in an article published in 1968. In the early days of the War on Poverty David Hackett had talked of the necessity of challenging established institutions like the school system. Now, Clark resumed this line of thought. "The rigidity of present patterns of public school organization and the concomitant stagnation in quality of education and academic performance of children may not be amenable to any attempts at change working through and within the present system." Clark concluded, "alternatives--realistic, aggressive and viable competitors--¹⁵ to the present public school system must be found." The alternatives Clark visualized were new schools, financed by universities, labor unions, industry and even the army. These schools could bring dynamism and vitality back into education Clark suspected, and their example¹⁶ would instigate the public system into reforming itself. As Clark pointed out, "truly effective competition strengthens rather than weakens¹⁷ that which deserves to survive." Implicitly Clark's scheme offered

parents the opportunity to choose among schools for their children and to influence school policy.

Clark did not discuss how new schools would actually learn to teach deprived children effectively. In an article written in 1967, James Coleman had considered the problem of stimulating innovation in teaching. Viewing the public school as "trapped by its own organizational weight," Coleman proposed "the transformation of schools from closed institutions to open ones."¹⁸ An open school was the home base which would do some teaching and which would coordinate the students' outside activities. Teachers within the school would teach basic reading and arithmetical skills but so too would outside contractors. Since contractors would only be paid if students' test scores improved, Coleman felt they would be eager to discover successful teaching methods. Every time a contractor did succeed, the school would learn an effective teaching method. Success would also challenge how the school was¹⁹ handling its own programs.

The open school plan had several other advantages. Its flexibility²⁰ could encourage racial and social mixing in outside programs. The plan also gave the parents some control over education. Parents decided whether their children would learn in school or with contractors. As Coleman pointed out, "the parent could, for the first time in education, have the full privileges of consumer's choice."²¹

Harvard associate professor of education, Christopher Jencks, and his colleagues developed the most complete plan for competitive education under a 1969 grant from the Office of Education. Working along the lines

of Coleman and Clark, Jencks suggested improving public schools by freeing them "from the restrictions which inevitably accompany their present monopolistic privileges." For Jencks, the answer was the educational voucher plan. Jencks pointed out that legislators, school boards and educators had practical control over education. Parents²² needed some way to make those in charge respond to their demands. In Jencks' scheme all local, state and federal education funds went to the Educational Voucher Agency which distributed vouchers worth the area's average per pupil expenditure to every parent. Parents were free to use the vouchers to pay tuition at any voucher public school they liked for their children. As Jencks remarked, "one of the most important advantages of a voucher system is that it would encourage diversity and choice within the public system."²³ Parents had a real choice of schools for their children and financial power over schools. Unless schools could provide programs parents liked, they would have neither students nor money.

But although the plan had positive points, Jencks did not think it was sufficient to reverse the trend of educational failure he perceived. The voucher system must involve both private and parochial schools as well as the public schools. "Only if private initiative is possible," Jencks observed, "will the public sector feel real pressure to make room for kinds of education that are politically awkward but have a substantial²⁴ constituency." Basic guidelines for private and parochial participation were, of course, essential. It was vital to make sure that private

schools did not charge any child more tuition than the value of one educational voucher and that schools accepted all applicants if they had room for them. Furthermore, vital information on educational facilities and expenditures must be public. As Jencks emphasized, schools were not the business of taxpayers and politicians, but of parents, who chose them, and children and teachers who went to them.²⁵

Variety, innovation and free choice all played a part in this voucher plan. But Jencks also wanted to ensure that disadvantaged and black children went to schools having the stimulating mixed student body Coleman felt was important for achievement. Realizing that a voucher system could encourage economic and racial segregation, Jencks emphasized that a system without safeguards "would be worse than no voucher system at all. Indeed, an unregulated voucher system could be the most serious setback for the education of disadvantaged children in the history of the United States."²⁶ The control on tuition, the rule that all applicants must be admitted while openings existed, obviously sought to ensure minority attendance. If a school had more interested students than places, Jencks determined that half the vacancies be assigned by lot and the remainder filled in some other nondiscriminatory way. Beyond these control mechanisms, Jencks established an incentive for private schools to accept deprived students. Each poor student was worth extra money for the schools. Jencks himself suggested valuing the deprived child at two vouchers.²⁷

Although Milton Friedman and John Coons, among others, formulated

alternative voucher plans, Jencks felt his sytem offered not only the hope of variety and better education, but also had "far more safeguards²⁸ for the interests of disadvantaged children" than the other schemes. His proposals led to a lively debate over the practical possibilities of the system. Critics pointed out, for example, that the voucher plan would involve new educational expenditures of \$5 billion a year, would not necessarily bring special opportunities for the deprived and might well create a new bureaucracy to run voucher schools.²⁹ Other critics had more general complaints. The whole idea of vouchers they felt was unrealistic since it demanded "a political commitment to values which are weak and vulnerable in America today: a committment to equality of wealth, power, and race."³⁰ These writers saw the United States as a racist country, basically uninterested in either desegregation or improved education for the poor.³¹ In answer to these criticisms, Jencks could reply that radical as his proposal seemed, communities in California, Washington and Missouri were eager to try it out. Not all Americans were racists, not all legislators "such a bad lot."³² True, vouchers would hardly be the panacea for all the ills of education, but Jencks concluded that new ground rules might produce real changes. "A properly regulated system," he observed, "could inaugurate a new era of innovation and reform in American schools."³³

The educational voucher system and the proposals of Clark and Coleman stressed three elements important in restructuring education. Parents must have the significant power to make choices for their children.

Schools must be accountable for the performance of their students. Schools had a primary responsibility for meeting the needs of their black and white poor pupils. Although proponents of community control offered quite different solutions for educating the disadvantaged, their schemes accepted the same concerns as a basic part of any educational reform.

In suburbia some form of community control over schools was common, but within the central cities bureaucracy had reigned supreme since the late nineteenth century. Many impulses fed the often disruptive movement in the late 60's calling for community control to replace that of the bureaucracy. The Economic Opportunity Act which fostered community activism, for example, spread the idea that the community developed³⁴ itself through participation. Then, too, blacks influenced by community action and the black power movement, felt an increasing sense of identity and desire to run their own affairs. Finally, as Kenneth Clark noted, many demanding community control once led the struggle for³⁵ integration. Now they were disillusioned; integration in the central city seemed no more than a dream. These early supporters of integration sought realistic substitutes for integration. By the late 60's, many had rejected the solution of compensatory education. Programs like the ESEA had promised to accomplish much through the conventional channels³⁶ of the public schools but had actually accomplished almost nothing. City bureaucracies had sucked up funds, yielding little in return.³⁷ Now the black community was impatient. As one writer noted, "the poor and

the black are now searching out ways for the lower classes to circumvent the poverty of inner city schools as more prosperous groups have been able to do."³⁸

The demands of those favoring community control differed. Stokely Carmichael epitomized the spirit, however. "Black people have a right to run their own schools," Carmichael claimed.³⁹ "White decision-makers have been running . . . schools with injustice, indifference, and inadequacy for too long."⁴⁰ Some only sought to enable parents to advise the schools.⁴¹ Radicals, however, wished to give the community the power to elect its own school board which in turn would select teachers to work out the school budget, allocate funds and decide on programs.⁴² The school must respond to the community's wishes and be responsible to the community.⁴³ For its part, the community had to reach out to involve itself in school matters and to give the school active support.⁴⁴

Some critics viewed these demands as a political manoeuver with little intellectual coherence.⁴⁵ It was true that community control envisioned a basic redistribution of political power, but there was also evidence of a real concern with educational goals. Community control⁴⁶ seemed a way to give the black child, at long last, quality education. As Floyd McKissick, Director of CORE, noted, "if the school is organized and run differently, and if the school is more involved with the forces which it now treats as outside its concern, student achievement would rise."⁴⁷

The belief that, as McKissick put it, "educational excellence without integration is possible," rested on a selective interpretation of the Coleman Report.⁴⁸ Coleman had discovered that Negro pupils felt less in control of their environment than whites and that this attitude was strongly correlated to educational achievement.⁴⁹ Supporters of community control claimed this finding called for schools under community (black) supervision. Such schools, they reasoned, would create a sense of control in black children and would, therefore, trigger achievement. But these conclusions ignored the massive evidence Coleman presented on the importance of having a mixed socioeconomic student body. Unlike Jencks and similar white intellectuals, many blacks could not accept the idea that middle class students represented a key factor in black achievement. But warm support for the black position came from whites who either despaired over the possibilities of integration or who wished to perpetuate de facto segregation. Columnist Joseph Alsop reflected these sentiments when he wrote, "there is something arrogant, there is something even disgusting in this strange view that ghetto children can never be rescued, can never be educated, unless they are subjected to the benign classroom influence of white middle-class children."⁵⁰

Proposals for community control and the chaotic school events in New York City in 1968 and 1969 created bitter discussions over how to educate black children. Brief experiments, of course, yielded few concrete results. Some found the community control movement educationally

unrealistic, seeing it merely as segregation in reverse.⁵¹ Others recognized the political realism of the movement while accepting its educational weaknesses.⁵² Another group of critics either rejected the whole turbulent idea of community participation or failed to acknowledge⁵³ that any valid community existed in the modern city. Nevertheless, despite the controversy the ideology and the experiments stirred up, community control became a central part of the new educational climate.

Although conservatives and radicals of the late 60's did not agree how to redistribute power and restructure the school system, both continued to believe education might help deal with aspects of poverty. But to some, the experience of the 60's led to the inescapable conclusion that education had little to do with poverty. Those seeking to reform education were involved in a futile task. As one observer pointed out, "there is . . . no evidence that changing the framework of choice in education will have much effect. It may be that the school's 'failure' to affect the transmission of status from generation to generation will only serve to focus attention on the political arrangements governing education, rather than on the more important need to⁵⁴ directly attack the underlying social and economic inequalities."

Education, for example, did little to overcome the central problem of poverty: inadequate income. Thomas Ribich's 1968 study, Education and Poverty, exemplified this viewpoint. Using techniques of benefit cost analysis developed by economists, Ribich explored whether education really did increase the income of the poor. Information on the educational aspects

of the War on Poverty was incomplete. Ribich's method of translating test score gains and future income was far from satisfactory. Yet Ribich argued that without a short-term measurement of gain, "the economic evaluation of educational innovations will have to be postponed for intolerably long periods."⁵⁵

Ribich's tentative conclusions were "not particularly encouraging." For example, the cost of special compensatory education programs exceeded predicted monetary benefits for those participating in them.⁵⁶ Increasing pupil expenditures over the entire school career also yielded few benefits.⁵⁷ Gains resulting from such programs were probably insufficient to help children move out of the cycle of poverty.⁵⁸ Vocational programs, Ribich concluded, yielded "a higher rate of payoff" than general education.⁵⁹ Moreover, he noted that although there were many benefits from education aside from the financial ones, other solutions for poverty also could create some of these same benefits.⁶⁰

An approach complementing the very tentative findings of Ribich's work showed that outside factors prevented education from paying off financially. In Poverty and Discrimination the economist, Lester Thurow, studied the relative effectiveness of poverty programs. Thurow concluded that discrimination prevented education from raising black incomes in the same way as white incomes.⁶¹ S. M. Miller and Pamela Roby agreed with these findings in The Future of Inequality. "The roots of black poverty lie in the discriminatory practices of the larger society as well as their own lack of education. As long as discrimination exists,

education alone will not solve the problems of redistributing incomes and occupations between whites and minority members." ⁶² Any program which sought to eliminate poverty, therefore, had to "operate on racial discrimination" itself. ⁶³ Such studies insisted that society at large must be involved with any attempt to deal with poverty.

Disillusionment with purely educational approaches to poverty provided the impetus for other schemes. ⁶⁴ Education, even if it were successful, took too long. Riots and violence demanded a more direct remedy. ⁶⁵ Discussions of reforming the welfare system, guaranteeing poverty families an annual income, introducing a negative income tax attracted political and intellectual support. These new approaches dealt expressly with the environment of poverty which Coleman had pictured as inimical to learning and seemed to hold out some promise of success.

In 1969 a new and bitter factor entered into the whole discussion over the failure of education. Arthur Jensen's article appearing in the Harvard Educational Review started on a relatively noncontroversial note. "Compensatory education has been tried and it apparently has failed." ⁶⁶ Jensen pointed to familiar evidence showing that programs like the ESEA and Headstart had not closed the achievement gap between blacks and whites. So far Jensen's article was unexceptional. But then Jensen went on to attack some of the basic arguments of compensatory educators: that all children were inherently equal in basic intelligence and that environmental deficiencies and the cultural bias of tests explained the

⁶⁷
 achievement gap. After examining the explanations for differences
 in mental ability, Jensen concluded that the evidence suggested that
 genetic factors were more important in explaining ability differences
⁶⁸
 than environmental factors were. The social implications of
 Jensen's argument were obvious. Writing later, he claimed, "the major
 races are simply breeding populations that have a relatively high
 degree of inbreeding and differ from one another in the relative
 frequencies of many genes. They differ in so many known gene frequencies
 in fact, that it seems highly improbable that they would not also
 differ in the frequencies of genes related to behavioral traits such
⁶⁹
 as intelligence."

Reduced to the simplest level, Jensen was saying that the average
 black had less native intelligence than whites. This lack of intelligence
 explained the failure of compensatory education, "a misguided hope,"
 and the failure of any other schemes which tried to achieve equal academic
⁷⁰
 results. Yet Jensen's work was not entirely negative in tone. Special
 school programs, Jensen felt, could improve habits, motivation and
⁷¹
 values of disadvantaged students. Jensen saw a significant difference
 between the learning patterns of advantaged white and disadvantaged black
 children. Whites could think abstractly while black children were skilled
⁷²
 at learning by association, associative learning. Since schools catered
 exclusively to abstract thinkers, they frustrated blacks. Schools had
⁷³
 to develop new approaches to tap associative abilities. Schools, thus,
 had a conservative, not a radical, function in society. "Equality of

performance is a misguided hope," Jensen concluded. "The important thing for the welfare of children and society in general would seem to be to try and create conditions that will maximize the proportion of the population that can learn and work successfully."⁷⁴

Jensen's article triggered controversy and debate continuing to the present.⁷⁵ Critics admonished Jensen for making claims unwarranted by the evidence.⁷⁶ The furor caused Jensen to retort, "the only sensible conclusion one can draw from a perusal of this evidence is that the key question in everyone's mind about racial differences in ability--are they genetic?--has, in effect been ruled out as a serious alternative hypothesis in the search for the causal factors involved in inequalities of educational performance."⁷⁷ Social scientists pointed to studies which indicated environment had a large effect on I.Q. scores. Others rejected the antidemocratic implications of Jensen's work. His argument furnished convenient support both for those opposing integration and for those favoring cut back in educational expenditures.⁷⁸ Yet the debate continued since Jensen's theories could neither be proved or disproved with the present state of scientific knowledge.

After five years of social experimentation in education, serious doubts existed about whether education could improve the performance of poor children, whether education had any role to play in the larger task of combatting poverty. Little faith remained in compensatory education. Several of those concerned with education, like Clark, Jencks, Coleman, came to the conclusions Michael Katz had in his studies of the earlier reform movements: that the institutional arrangements controlling

education blocked reform and had to be changed. But there was little agreement on how these changes should occur and what effects they might have on the poor. Few drew radical conclusions from the failures of educational measures like the ESEA and spoke out clearly for sweeping social reform. The optimism had gone out of the movement. Michael Katz observed that "the drive and dynamism" had disappeared.⁷⁹ The movement lacked direction.

The lack of direction in intellectual circles was similar to that within the government. Hesitancy about social reform was already germinating in the last years of Johnson's presidency. Two HEW planning deputies for education and income maintenance recognized "the flaw in the domestic policy of the Johnson Administration was that it depended on the assumption that spending money on education, job creation, training would lead to effective resultsThe unfulfilled promise of ineffective programs has contributed to the awful malaise which this country suffers from now." Evaluation chiefs in the Office of Economic Opportunity reflected that the faith in action had led social experimenters to "push aside the fact that we had neither the benefit of experience nor much of a realization of the difficulties involved in developing effective techniques."⁸⁰ These men had already realized by 1969 that they did not know the causes of social problems and, therefore, could not solve them.

When he came into office, Nixon moved along with the current tide of scepticism in intellectual and government circles. A retreat from the

programs of his predecessor fit in with his own conservative political ideas on the role of the federal government and his desire to control government spending. He could not, of course, abandon social programs altogether. On February 19, 1969, Nixon had to reaffirm a commitment to wipe out poverty. "The blight of poverty", the president said, "requires priority attention." In what soon became a standard part of Nixon's rhetoric, he stressed the need for "full debate and discussion" in dealing with inherited programs.⁸¹ "There still is a great deal to be learned about what works and what does not," Nixon pointed out.⁸² Having made the ritualistic gestures to the poverty program, he began to dismantle its organizational features, claiming it was inefficiently run.⁸³ Nixon's own antipoverty program focused on payment rather than services: welfare reform, food programs, tax exemption for lower income groups and help for minority businessmen. In many cases these programs were held up in Congress or insufficiently supported by the administration. Nixon's original welfare proposal, for example, only asked for \$1600 allowance for a family of four. Yet in New York State, the figure already allocated was \$3,600 in the early 70's. Philip Pruitt reflected a growing feeling about the administration when he left the Small Business Administration in July, 1969. "There's been lots of rhetoric⁸⁴ in Government . . . but no money has been forthcoming."

After his resignation, in 1970, James E. Allen, Nixon's first Commissioner of Education, analyzed the president's approach. "In my opinion," Allen said, "the principal strategy of this Administration

is one of accommodation, that is, of going only so far as is necessary to keep as many people as possible placated. In and of themselves, many of the proposals and many actions of the Administration such as the Family Assistance Program, the desegregation efforts . . . are good, but they are not good enough as solutions for problems which threaten the existence of our country."⁸⁵

What was markedly absent in Nixon's expressed concern about poverty, was the belief that education had a central role to play in overcoming it. Indeed, Nixon seldom even referred to education during his first year in office. Ex-commissioner Allen felt the president had little real interest in education. "I felt," Allen recalled, "that what was lacking was a sense of urgency with respect to education, and that in the absence of this sense of urgency educational policies were shaped more in terms of fiscal constraints than in terms of the nation's educational needs. The vast influence of those persons in the White House and in the Bureau of the Budget who were dealing with education was exerted primarily in terms of economic goals."⁸⁶

In 1970 Nixon developed a clearly defined educational policy which he shared with the nation in three major addresses in the spring. As he had with the poverty program, he made a ritual bow to the 60's. The learning lag of poor children was "the most glaring shortcoming in American education today," the president declared.⁸⁷ The keynote of the March 3rd address was reform. "American education is in urgent need of reform" and "thoughtful redirection" Nixon asserted.⁸⁸ The present

disjointed programs did not make up a comprehensive educational policy. Compensatory programs like the ESEA had not succeeded. These programs had been "ambitious, idealistic, and costly . . . based on the assumption that extra resources would equalize learning opportunity and eventually help eliminate poverty." Nixon concluded, "we must recognize that our present knowledge about how to overcome poor background, is so limited that major expansion of such programs could not be confidently based on their results."⁸⁹

As Newsweek commented, "if there are any lingering doubts that the education boom of the 1960's is indeed over, President Nixon's message . . . should finally dispel them."⁹⁰ Nixon's intention to hold back funding the ESEA was already evident. As one member of the House General Subcommittee on Education reflected bitterly in 1970, "the President has not asked for one nickel since he has been in office to increase Title I funding. We have had to fight him every step of the way to keep the program going."⁹¹ In January, 1970, Nixon vetoed an appropriations bill for fiscal year 1970 which increased funding for the ESEA \$300 million above the budget request. Congress upheld the veto. But in the late spring Congress passed an appropriations bill for fiscal year 1971 which once more gave the ESEA substantially more money than the president had requested. On August 11, Nixon vetoed the bill, only to see both houses override his decision within a week. Justifying his actions, Nixon claimed a large education budget was inflationary and that Title I had many weaknesses.⁹² Such arguments failed to convince Congressmen whose districts now expected ESEA funds. The president was

not going to be able to kill ongoing educational programs, but he was clearly going to keep them at starvation level if he could.

As Nixon held back on funding the ESEA, he refused to start new programs similar in spirit to Johnson's. He never implemented the final report of his Urban Task Force for Education, for example, which pictured urban education needs as a major national priority calling for vast increases in federal funding.⁹³ The report which appeared in 1970 reasserted the liberal faith of the mid 60's that "the poverty child does not have to repeat the poverty pattern of his parents if he receives a valid and saleable education."⁹⁴ Nixon received the report coolly. Allen who supported the report's recommendations sadly concluded "that hopes for a major attack on [the weaknesses of] urban education and for substantial increases in funds for other purposes would have to be brought into accommodation with both the need and the Administration's emphasis on building into the educational system better capacity for reform and renewal."⁹⁵

The keynote of reform and re-examination justified the cautious stance the administration adopted and reflected the uncertainties among educational reformers. As Allen noted, "we were at a point in history that called for some reappraisalAt the end of the sixties starts had been made in many directions, but there was a growing recognition of the need for evidence of their effectiveness."⁹⁶ But one vital factor about reform was that "it did not require, at least immediately large sums of money."⁹⁷ Nixon's educational recommendations were, from the

beginning, thrifty.

In March, 1969, Secretary of HEW, Finch, had outlined Nixon's first educational proposal. Finch told the House Committee on Education and Labor that the administration wanted \$25 million to establish experimental schools which could isolate and develop "successful approaches and promising new ideas in education." Finch envisioned the development of totally new educational approaches, but when he failed to work up enthusiastic support, he modified the plans to find existing schemes⁹⁸ which appeared promising. This, too, failed to spark interest. As the head of the NEA testified before a Senate subcommittee, "it is beyond belief that anyone can imagine that such a project will in any way cure the ills brought on by . . .frustrated neglected pupils in our rural as well as urban schools."⁹⁹ Congress did not fund these requests.

By the March 3, 1970, education message a new, equally thrifty, plan had been developed. Nixon maintained, "as the first step toward reform, we need a coherent approach to research and experimentation."¹⁰⁰ What Nixon suggested was setting up a National Institute of Education. Staffed by a group of scholars, the Institute would conduct some basic research and contract out other research projects. Pressing concerns of the Institute would be the development of evaluation techniques to assess the success of education programs, a thorough investigation of compensatory education and a study of the role of television on learning. When in full operation, Nixon envisioned a \$25 million budget for the Institute.¹⁰¹ Nixon also repropoed the Experimental Schools Program.

On April 5, 1971, Nixon revealed another major aspect of his educational program: a plan to increase local control over education through a system of special revenue sharing. Nixon's recommendations rested on the experience of the previous decade with aid to education. Piecemeal federal aid made genuine reform difficult and meaningful evaluations of what programs helped children learn almost impossible. Nixon proposed consolidating the funds of thirty Office of Education programs and redistributing the \$3 billion on an automatic formula basis to the states. Broadly defined purposes like providing equal educational opportunity and care for handicapped children would indicate where the money should be focused. But states and local areas did not need to submit plans for review or approval. As Nixon noted, "the Federal Government can help provide resources to meet rising needs, but state and local education authorities must make the hard decisions about how to apply these resources in ways that best serve the educational needs of our children."¹⁰² The good intentions of the federal government, Nixon felt were no substitute for local understanding and local energy.¹⁰³ Critical as Nixon had been about the failures of the Title I efforts under the ESEA, he ignored the part localism had played in this failure. The bill had given wide leeway to communities to make their own decisions and ample evidence existed to show middle class leaders decided to use money for other purposes than the act established. Nixon did not acknowledge the fact that local areas lacked commitment to many noble purposes like equal educational opportunity. His overriding

determination to "see to it that the flow of power in education goes toward, and not away from the local community" made him ignore the indications that local control was no panacea or even a partial solution
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for social problems.

In many ways cutting back on the ESEA, supporting research and consolidating program funds all incorporated the results of experience. It was obviously useless to pour money into programs which were ineffective without knowing why they did not work. Money alone was no answer; accountability was essential. Nixon also based much of his program on Coleman Report findings that conventional school expenditures yielded few academic results. As Nixon reflected in his March 3, 1970, message, "we do know that the social and economic environment which surrounds a child at home and outside of school probably has more effect on what he learns than the quality of the school he now attends."¹⁰⁵ Daniel Moynihan admitted to the New York Times that the president had drawn heavily from the Coleman Report. Coleman himself remarked, "the President's message says a lot of things I might have said myself."¹⁰⁶

But as much as Nixon's conclusions fit the findings of the Coleman Report, many found fault with his overall tone. The president appeared to be using social sciences to justify a reduced commitment to education. Loathe to increase educational funds significantly, he awaited the slow process of feedback from modestly financed research. Nixon's attitude so worried Commissioner Allen that he wrote Nixon on May 5, 1970. "I am writing you . . . to express my very deep concern over the critical

needs of education and our Administration's current posture towards themReform cannot be achieved in a vacuum. The system of education must be sustained and nourished at the same time change and innovation are sought. The children and youth in school today . . .cannot be placed in deep freeze . . .while the institutions are being expected to undergo fundamental reform."¹⁰⁷ Allen proposed an increase of \$1 billion for education in fiscal year 1972. Nixon ignored his advice, never answering Allen's letter. A month later Allen was forced to resign because of his disagreement with the administration over the Cambodian issue and his educational viewpoint.

Nixon's education program was actually indifferent to the problems of the achievement gap and educational inequality. Even though the public schools could not eliminate poverty, they should, indeed, be able to teach all students, not just middle class white students, basic skills. But if the schools were to learn how to teach effectively, more funds would have to be devoted to the effort than Nixon wished. Nixon's interests lay with appealing to the majority of Americans, now little concerned about the education of the poor, not to minority groups.¹⁰⁸

As Nixon's term advanced, it became clear that the only aspect of education concerning the president was the race issue. Although perhaps Nixon had originally hoped to avoid becoming entangled with such an explosive subject, court decisions, political strategy, an evaluation of the temper of the country all joined to make this a major concern of government. By March, 1970, Nixon, himself, acknowledged "now the focus is on race."¹⁰⁹ Gradually the administration clarified its

intention to retreat from fostering racial integration, as it reaffirmed a belief in the neighborhood school concept and condemned bussing to achieve integration.

Various pressures forced the administration towards a position. First of all a series of court rulings indicated a radical change in the pace of Southern desegregation would be required. In March, 1967, the Fifth Circuit Court ruled in the case of U. S. vs Jefferson Board of Education that "the only school desegregation plan that meets constitutional standards is one that works." In essence, the court was rejecting freedom of choice plans which preserved "the essentials of the dual school system while giving paper compliance with the duty to

desegregate."¹¹⁰ The Green vs. County School Board of New Kent Co. decision of May, 1968, lent the weight of the Supreme Court to desegregation. "The burden of the school board today is to come forward with a plan that promises realistically to work now," the court ruled. Freedom of choice was unacceptable if other methods promised "speedier¹¹¹ and more effective conversion to a unitary, nonracial school system."

In October, 1969, the Supreme Court ruled again in Alexander vs Holmes County. "Under the explicit holdings of this Court," the unanimous court declared, "the obligation of every school district is to terminate dual school systems at once and to operate now and hereafter¹¹² only unitary schools."

As court pressure on Southern school districts multiplied, racial discrimination in education increasingly became a vocal concern in

Congress. Because compensatory education had apparently failed to provide equal opportunity for the black, white and brown poor, liberals searched for another solution. In the Senate, hearings on Equal Educational Opportunity which began in 1970, stressed the importance of school integration. Issues of desegregation and integration came to occupy a major part of all other educational hearings from 1969 on. Coleman now became a familiar witness at government hearings and was joined on some occasions by other race experts like Thomas Pettigrew and Arthur Jensen. In both 1969 and 1970 liberals presented bills on the floor of Congress to improve education in urban ghettos and to end ¹¹³ de facto school segregation. Meanwhile conservatives and Southerners tried to amend both appropriation and education bills to prevent ¹¹⁴ bussing. A conflict over the direction of education for blacks was taking shape which called out for administration leadership.

The race issue was hotter than poverty, and the administration could hardly ignore it. But it could and did avoid giving forceful direction to those attempting to deal with racial and educational problems for some time. As one observer of Southern education noted in 1970, Nixon seemed "locked in a pathetic drifting paralysis on the great issue of ending ¹¹⁵ separation in our public schools."

Nixon's failure to come to terms directly with the race issue had already been apparent in his 1968 campaign speeches. Assuring the country that he supported the Brown decision overturning de jure segregation, Nixon equivocated on how far his administration would go in

fostering desegregation. In a television broadcast on September 12, 1968, Nixon remarked, "when you go beyond that [the] Brown decision and say that it is the responsibility of the Federal Government and the Federal courts to, in effect, act as local school districts in determining how we carry that out, and then to use the power of the Federal treasury to withhold funds or give funds in order to carry it out then I think we are going too far."¹¹⁶ On numerous occasions, Nixon also came out against bussing to achieve racial balance. What all these statements actually meant about the support Nixon would give to desegregation efforts was still unclear. But it appeared very early in Nixon's administration, that support for desegregation would be neither vigorous nor enthusiastic.

In practice, despite occasional noble words, Nixon's policy developed in the direction of delay and compromise in the South and inaction in the North.¹¹⁷ On numerous occasions pressures from the White House forced HEW to back down from a hardline stand on final desegregation plans and avoid using fund cutoffs as a weapon against recalcitrant districts.¹¹⁸ A blatant example of the administration's intentions occurred in the summer of 1969 in Mississippi. There thirty districts had developed new desegregation plans with HEW which would replace the now inadequate freedom of choice plans. Desegregation was to begin at the opening of school that year.¹¹⁹ Probably responding to threats from Mississippi's John Stennis, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, that he would refuse to act as floor leader for the A.B.M.

authorization bill, the administration asked the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to delay implementation of the plans. The excuse the administration gave was that the short time remaining before school opened would cause "chaos, confusion and a catastrophic educational setback" if the new plans were carried out. Although the Supreme Court upheld the deadline, Nixon apparently felt "he had won a longer war . . . he had ended nearly a year of ambiguity on the desegregation question in a posture that was clearly conciliatory to the South. He had improved his political credentials in the South, and . . . had slowly begun to develop the machinery to bring the H.E.W. bureaucracy under

control."¹²⁰ A few months later in February, 1970, Leon Panetta, the activist director of HEW's Office of Civil Rights was forced to resign.

Soon pro-integrationist James Allen followed in June.¹²¹ Acquaintances of Allen's mentioned that while Commissioner, Allen had said "privately that he could make no headway with this administration but stayed on in an attempt to try."¹²² The attempt had obviously failed. In September,

1970, the U. S. Commission for Civil Rights concluded that Nixon's approach was a "major retreat in the struggle to achieve meaningful school desegregation."¹²³

Nixon unsuccessfully tried to quiet some of the controversy by explaining his policy on desegregation issue on March 24, 1970. Reasserting his support for the Brown decision, Nixon pointed out that the law left many vital points unclear. "Lawyers and judges have honest dis-¹²⁴agreements about what the law requires." When issues were in doubt,

Nixon remarked, "my responsibilities as Chief Executive make it necessary that I determine, on the basis of my best judgment, what must be done."¹²⁵ In Nixon's judgment, it was necessary to support the neighborhood school and to resist bussing.¹²⁶ This implied the president did not mean integration, or racial mixing, when he spoke of desegregation. Indeed, Nixon found recent progress towards desegregation, encouraging. It was important, the president went on, to keep the overall objectives of increasing educational opportunities for all children and of ending racial barriers in mind.¹²⁷ Nixon then brought up what was becoming a familiar theme. Not too much could be expected from schools since the home environment was the most important factor in educational achievement. As Nixon put it, "it is not really because they serve black children that most of these schools are inferior, but rather because they serve poor children who often lack the environment that encourages learning."¹²⁸ Other institutions had to take some of the pressure off the schools, the president said.

Nixon suggested the need for innovative shared-time programs where children of both races would gather for special events, and expressed his recurrent plea for more data. Present knowledge supported this cautious plan. But was this so? Actually Nixon only partly accepted the information available. Coleman, for instance, had written and testified in favor of an active integration policy. Appearing before the Senate Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, Coleman remarked, "turning back to the question of effective quality of educational opportunity,

matters look much different than before. Children are subject to inequality of opportunity by virtue of the very economic and racial homogeneity of the schools they attend."¹²⁹

Despite his marked lack of enthusiasm for the cause of desegregation, court induced pressures on the South impelled Nixon to aid the desegregation process. On May 21, 1970, Nixon sent the Emergency School Aid Bill to Congress. The bill diverted \$1 $\frac{1}{2}$ billion from existing programs to help school systems desegregate. Three kinds of districts were eligible for funds: districts in the process of desegregating which were under court orders or HEW plans, districts voluntarily trying to reduce de facto segregation and districts unable to desegregate which needed programs to overcome the effects of racial isolation. In the Senate, Jacob Javits, leading Republican member of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, initially refused to introduce the bill because of provisions forbidding the use of Federal funds for bussing.¹³⁰ The administration agreed to drop the provisions temporarily at least. To many Congressional committee members, Nixon's bill seemed to incorporate reservations over racial desegregation even though they greeted the bill as a step in the right direction.

One feature which immediately drew criticism was the emergency aspect of the measure. HEW Secretary Finch justified the two year appropriation by claiming, "we are here trying to deal with an immediate, short term crisis."¹³¹ Claiborne Pell, chairman of the Senate subcommittee considering the bill, disagreed with Finch. "I think we are

going to have the problems of segregation in schools going on for
 a long time," he said.¹³² Another aspect of the bill which created
 suspicion was the fact that it offered aid primarily to the South.
 The administration pointed out that the South had no choice but to
 desegregate, yet many liberals could only see money flowing to the
 very areas which had for so long resisted desegregation.¹³³ Too little
 help was going to go to de facto segregated districts outside the
 South which also faced massive racial and educational problems.¹³⁴
 As Pettigrew mentioned in his testimony on the bill, there were more
 children that were in racially isolated schools in 1970 than in 1954 when
 the Brown decision was handed down, and the problem was most acute in
 the cities.¹³⁵ Nixon's hesitancy in dealing with de facto situations
 had been apparent in his March, 1970 message. There he stressed that
 the government had no constitutional mandate to deal with de facto
 segregation, and it was hardly surprising his bill concentrated on the
 South.¹³⁶

Critics also claimed the bill lacked vital controls. The ESEA gave
 plentiful examples that local areas used federal money as they wished.
 Already indications existed that desegregated Southern schools were
 actually segregated. Blacks and whites were in the same school
 building but attended different classes, changed rooms at different
 times and ate lunch separately. The 1970 NEA task force reports on
 conditions in Mississippi and Louisiana turned up numerous examples of
 such practices. Moreover, Southern states even diverted education funds

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to private segregated schools. Since the bill provided funds for schools not actually desegregated but in districts which were, and because there were few strict controls over how money would be spent, the fear of misused funds was quite reasonable.

The kinds of projects which the bill suggested as worthy of support turned out to be the old familiar ESEA programs. As Carl Perkins said, "my fear is that we are not going to accomplish the goals that we really want to accomplish by reiterating things that we can presently do." 138 Perkins felt it was necessary to strike out in a drastically new direction. The administration denied that the bill proposed warmed over solutions by claiming that aid was pinpointed 139 at desegregating districts. Few were convinced. One suspicious fact was that compensatory education, seemingly rejected by Nixon as a failure, had reappeared. In large cities and other areas where integration seemed impossible, federal funds would support compensatory programs. Coleman, himself, suggested that this provision be deemphasized since he viewed the legislation as "an incentive to school systems to 140 carry out school desegregation." Nixon had already clarified his own point of view when it came to a choice between racial balance and compensation. "Considering the always heavy demand for more school operating funds," he noted on March 24, 1970, "I believe it is preferable, when we have to make the choice, to use limited financial resources for the improvement of education . . . rather than buying buses, tires and gasoline to transport children miles away from their neighborhood 141 schools."

Nixon's intentions became fully clear on March 16, 1972. In a television broadcast, Nixon informed the country that he would ask Congress to call a moratorium on all court ordered bussing for racial balance in the schools and to pass a bill imposing permanent controls on future bussing. These actions implied an end to further integration efforts which depended on bussing in many areas. Claiming that these requests were in the interests of quality education, Nixon said, "what I am proposing is that at the same time that we stop more busing, we move forward to guarantee that the children currently attending the poorest schools in our cities and in rural districts be provided with education equal to that of the good schools in their communities."¹⁴²

To promote quality education Nixon suggested an Equal Educational Opportunities Act which would offer \$2.5 million for the education of black and other minority children in racially and socially isolated settings.

Nixon's proposals clarified his disinterest in the educational problems of poor minority groups. Although the Coleman Report and other social science studies pointed out that socioeconomic integration did not wipe out the achievement gap, it did seem to reduce it. But Nixon rejected this material and the solution of more integration. Instead he revived the compensatory approach which he had himself rejected earlier as unsuccessful and unworthy of support. Nor did he plan to provide new funds for the proposed bill. The \$2.5 million would be diverted from the ESEA and the Emergency School Aid bill.

While policy planners in 1963 and 1964 had used education in place of more radical solutions for social problems, they had probably done so unknowingly. For Nixon this was not the case. Nixon was well acquainted with what education could and could not do. He refused to fund research on a scale which was necessary if the schools were merely to learn how to educate poor children. He turned his back on integration. He proposed more compensatory education as a solution for the schools' failures with the poor. He offered pretense for action. On March 16, 1974, Nixon had, indeed, completed the classic pattern of educational reform movements.

Unlike the Johnson administration, then, the Nixon administration turned away from leading the nation forward in matters of race, education and poverty. Of course, the failures of the Johnsonian measures had destroyed the necessary consensus; there was neither overwhelming pressure nor powerful support for bold political departures. Congress and the nation were hesitant. One survey of middle class attitudes toward poverty discovered, "the vast majority of those interviewed showed little or no concern or insight."¹⁴³ Some respondents refused to acknowledge any problem existed. Some Congressional liberals still believed in the possibility of social change through the schools. Yet when votes¹⁴⁴ came up liberals divided. As Senator Mondale recognized, "we now face the task of rearguing issues we thought were settled."¹⁴⁵ The mood of conservatives was clearly hostile to social change through integration especially when it involved bussing.

Indecision in Congress merely reflected indecision in the nation. Ideals of social justice, hopes of ending poverty no longer seemed so easy to support as in former years. No simple solutions existed for social problems. As Yale law professor, Alexander Bickel, pointed out, goals competed and conflicted.¹⁴⁶ Hard choices had to be made as to whether Americans wished to grapple with the problems of poverty, inadequate education and racial discrimination. Walter Mondale reflected, "this goal of equal education is one which I am sure most Americans would agree with me. But the approaches to this goal can be as elusive and controversial as the attempts to define and answer the problems of poverty and other forms of discrimination."¹⁴⁷

Mondale was actually summing up the experience of the 1960's. Approaches to social goals were elusive and controversial. In 1965 the ESEA had offered hopes of overcoming the patterns of poverty by diverting special funds for educating the poor. Now it was clear the goal had not been achieved; the approach had failed. Yet, although it was a failure, educational reform did have several valuable lessons. Education, despite popular belief, did not solve major social problems. Sweeping and expensive solutions were demanded to ameliorate the nation's ills. Still, schools could succeed in teaching minority and poor students basic skills. More money had to be devoted to research, schools might have to be restructured and integration supported if these students were to learn. The irony of the ESEA was, however, that few within government attended to these lessons. Instead, they revived the solution of more education for the poor just as it was discredited, when political events demanded.

CONCLUSION

By 1970 the somber educational pronouncements of Richard Nixon had replaced the confident rhetoric of the mid 1960's. It seemed evident that the alluring promises of educational legislation were empty. Headstart, the ESEA and other measures, no doubt, brightened the lives of many poor children who had better equipment and care than they would have had without the War on Poverty. But special educational programs did little to eliminate poverty. Nor had they succeeded in destroying the pattern of low educational achievement which deprived children exhibited.

The crucial question which this study has asked is why an educational measure like the ESEA failed to produce the significant social or educational changes implicit in its objectives. In answering this question, it becomes clear that intellectual and political factors interacted to produce the failure of the ESEA. First, policy makers neither examined assumptions underlying their program nor looked at relevant evidence on educational mobility; for political and ideological reasons, they accepted existing institutional arrangements, giving power over the program to local schools who had no stake in assuming new functions; third, once the program floundered and indicated that its approach was unsound, government planners backed away and refused to incorporate knowledge gained from the ESEA in new programs.

The conclusions of this work are, then, that successful educational

and social planning must involve two things: sufficient knowledge and a realistic appraisal of institutions. Programs based on inadequate and unquestioned ideas usually have little chance of bringing about meaningful change. Nor do programs which fail to confront the institutional realities of reform. Without steady pressure, institutions may not transform themselves. Money is not a sufficient catalyst for change.

In the early days of the War on Poverty in late 1963 and early 1964, planners gave little consideration to what was known about education. They did not carefully examine their assumptions which took for granted that education was a "cure" for poverty, and the public school an agent of social mobility. This failure to probe ideology allowed planners to make education into a basic part of the War on Poverty and to work through the public school system, as it existed, instead of seriously contemplating alternatives.

No doubt policy makers did not explore basic beliefs because evidence on the relation of education and poverty was scattered. More important, an emphasis on education fit the ideological framework of the planners and the projected War on Poverty. Then, too, the sense of urgency which planners felt to get programs going prevented any careful consideration of basic issues. The moment was politically right for an attack on poverty and the ESEA. Planners wanted to get legislation on the books. Johnson, concerned about establishing his place in national life, hovered in the background, urging planners onwards.

The structure of government itself also contributed to the intellectual failure at the planning stage. When a multitude of agencies have overlapping and conflicting interests in programs, coherent planning is difficult. Piecemeal solutions are inherent in this bureaucratic arrangement.¹ By creating the Heller and Shriver task forces, the administration hoped to go around bureaucracy and to ensure a unified approach. But, actually, the task forces responded to agency power. Heller's group adopted HEW's educational proposal as its basic solution although task force members thought the plan traditional and HEW unimaginative. Later, political pressures led Shriver's task force to incorporate a variety of stalled agency measures in the poverty program. The Economic Opportunity Act ended up as a conglomerate bill. It seems unlikely that coherent policy can emerge from this method of making policy.

Centralised control of planning ended in mid 1964 with the passage of the poverty bill. When the ESEA was formulated in the fall of 1964, HEW was in charge. Gardner's secret task force played only an insignificant role in shaping the bill. Still, agency direction did not result in a carefully considered approach. The ESEA was similar in content to the educational title supported by the Heller task force. Those developing the ESEA spent most of the time working out a format to unify different interest groups and win Congressional approval. This concern with political problems meant that basic assumptions again were not examined and also led to major compromises. To heighten the bill's

political appeal, the legislation adopted additional objectives such as money for parochial school students, financial aid for most school districts, local control over programs. Adding objectives had damaging consequences as one educational expert pointed out in 1971. "Perhaps multiple objectives in large-scale federal programs," he said, "is a formula for insuring no single objective will be substantially accomplished."² Then, too, little concrete knowledge emerges from "broad-aim social action programs" which are difficult to evaluate.³

It appears from this analysis of the origins and formulation of the ESEA that ideas and action enjoy a haphazard relationship in government planning. Policy making often takes place at too many levels, with too many concerns to result in a carefully thought out proposals. The experience of the ESEA suggests successful social reform rarely emerges from such a framework.

The failure of planners to examine guiding ideas matched their failure to consider the problem of reforming the public school system realistically. Although flaws in the system were apparent, no one wished to raise the issue of federal control. The ESEA imposed few obligations on local districts. Planners hoped money would be sufficient to stimulate basic reform. As Harold Howe pointed out the ESEA offered, "money aimed at helping states and local school districts . . . bring about changes in . . . institutions so that they would be more up-to-date and thus serve certain groups better (particularly those children who happened to come from poor families.)"⁴ But

locally controlled money proved to be an inadequate incentive for change. Schools absorbed Title I funds and used them as they wished.

The experience with the ESEA suggests that changes in the nature of institutions must precede or at least accompany educational and social reform.⁵ Otherwise institutions, may well continue to operate in a traditional manner.⁶ Institutional changes are possible but not if planners are naive about the difficulties involved in bringing them about.

The Coleman Report, the Commission for Civil Rights study, HEW and independent evaluations of Title I all illuminated the fundamental intellectual and administrative weaknesses of the educational approach to poverty. Education as it was presently organized in public schools had little to do with achievement. Title I funds often did not reach their targets. Yet neither Congress nor Nixon administration planners were prepared to learn from the studies. Congress ensured the continuance of the ESEA as it was. As one witness testified in hearings in 1971, "in my view, Congress has been much more concerned with who gets the money rather than the classroom programs that have resulted."⁷ Another witness noted that although certain liberals were interested in reform,⁸ Congress as a whole was not. President Nixon gradually indicated he was unwilling to promote integrated schools which studies showed had at least a limited effect on educational deprivation. Nor was he prepared to support research into the problems of education and poverty on the substantial scale demanded.⁹ When the bussing issue

became prominent, Nixon revived the unsuccessful solution of compensatory education. Finally Nixon's Emergency School Aid Program reproduced many of the unsuccessful administrative arrangements of the ESEA, while his suggestion for local control of federal educational funds flew in the face of several years of ESEA experience.¹⁰ It was no surprise that observers speculated that Johnson's War on Poverty "may have heralded only a transitory period in American public policy."¹¹

The experience of the mid-60's indicates that education is not the essential factor in ending poverty and providing social mobility. But as recent studies suggests, education has never fulfilled these functions.¹² Public schools have long served as a sorting device in American life. Tracking, testing, vocational education have all helped match people with their class.¹³ "The available data suggest that the number of years of schooling attained by a child depends upon the social class standing of the father as much in the recent period as it did fifty years ago," says one authority.¹⁴ Another comments, "the truth is that the mobility of white lower classes was never as rapid nor as sure as it has been traditional to think."¹⁵

Educational reforms like the ESEA have had many noble purposes but generally have not produced significant changes in the schools' function.¹⁶ Educational reform movements have tried to grapple with social and political problems but have also been concerned to maintain social order.¹⁷ Planners of the ESEA shared similar concerns. But unlike some earlier reformers, those developing the ESEA clearly sought to provide the poor

with upward mobility. Not until Nixon's 1972 suggestion for more compensatory education in place of integration was education used as a means of reinforcing the low status of the poor. Nixon's move completed the historical pattern.

This study raises a fundamental question. Why has the faith in formal education persisted for so long in American life if education does not provide substantial upward mobility for the poor? Why has education been proposed so often as a solution for the country's social problems? One historian of educational reform suggested an answer which this study supports. "An official ideology that emphasizes the importance of free enterprise and shuns state intervention has limited alternatives with which to approach major social problems, such as poverty. Massive income redistribution or broad-scale intervention in the economy generally has not been acceptable. Education, on the other hand, has appeared to be an immediate and effective solution to social problemsThe illnesses of society become diagnosed as simply a lack of education, and the prescription for reform becomes more education."¹⁸ Furthermore, education is an attractive solution because it is individualistic. The burden lies on the child to make his way from poverty, not on society to change his condition.¹⁹ Retaining belief in education allows people to "continue to identify democracy with education and equal rights to education with social and economic democracy."²⁰ The education bills of the mid-60's fit into the traditional pattern.²¹ No one considered more sweeping solutions.

The present disillusionment with education as a means of eradicating poverty stems not only from its failure in Johnson's War on Poverty but also from the realization that education has never really been a way out for large numbers of the poor. Educational reform has been a substitute for social reform. Enough information exists to indicate that changes in housing patterns and family income distribution will probably do more to eliminate poverty than education. But it is not clear whether Americans are willing to accept such a message, whether the country is willing to make the greater efforts needed to do away with poverty.

The ESEA has not been a fruitless exercise if Americans realize that education can play only a limited role in social change. Moreover, the ESEA has dramatically shown that schools do not know how to educate poor children. Schools should be able to teach all children basic skills.²² But so far, few schools have been responsive to the poor. The operation of the ESEA suggests that those running the schools must be encouraged to take a creative response to poverty, either by parents, perhaps by teachers or by a different way of distributing power. One expert, for example, suggests withholding funds from schools which disregard the poor, increasing overall federal funding to make it more significant in the local district's overall budget, and creating positive incentives by awarding more money to those schools which succeed²³ with the poor.

The experience of the last few years has given many hints about an appropriate approach to social reform. Social reform measures should

not proceed on a haphazard, unexamined basis. It is true that planners often face social problem with complex and unknown causes. But after careful examination of what is known, experiments can proceed on an organized basis. The federal government should organize and support systematic types of experiments and evaluate them carefully so that social reforms increase the fund of knowledge. But this implies that the federal government is willing to enter into the field of systematic experimentation with its "enormous problems of organization and execution," and so far there have been few signs that the government is willing to take on the burden.

FOOTNOTES

PREFACE

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CHAPTER ONE

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CONCLUSION

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