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A HISTORY AND CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY' IN THE

SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE UNITED STATES

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A HISTORY AND CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE COURSE
'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY' IN THE
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE UNITED STATES

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A HISTORY AND CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE COURSE
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL STUDIES
IN AMERICAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

The social studies as a field of specifically instructional materials was developed for the purpose of helping the students of the secondary schools to learn how to become more effectual members of American democratic society. The social studies are an area where the content of subject matter deals basically with human behavior in its relationship to social living. The teacher of the social studies has the task of reorganizing the material learned in the scholarly social sciences of college into a simplified form for the student in the high school. The role of the teacher of the social studies is concerned with curriculum developments. This is particularly true in the teaching of a course entitled 'Problems of American Democracy', one of the more recent additions to the curriculum initiated into the secondary schools just prior to World War I and frequently found to combine the subject matter of geography, sociology, economics, and government.

The research in the social studies that concerns the disciplines of sociology, economics, government, and history only can be traced less than

a century, but the history of these behavioral sciences goes back into the transitional period between the medieval and modern ages. History has to do with the past of humanity, and to know the story of human activities is to appreciate the men of antiquity and grasp their spirit and point of view. Pioneering among the Renaissance humanists was the Spanish educator, Luis Vives, who saw the pedagogy of this period known as the Renaissance, the result of self-expression of individualism rather than a reawakening of antiquity. Education was emerging from a cocoon that encased it in the rigid hold of ecclesiasticism that learning was for the life beyond to the movement toward the self-expression of the individual in all avenues of living. The writings of Vives were characterized by his ability to move back and forth from the medieval world to the modern world in his ceaseless response to the best in both. His sensitivity to the changing philosophy of education found expression in the heart stirring problems of social life for Vives had an enthusiasm for the democratic spirit that he foresaw:

I see from the depths a change is coming. Amongst all the nations men are springing up of clear, excellent and free intellects, impatient of servitude, determined to thrust off the yoke of this tyranny from their needs. They are calling their fellow-citizens to liberty.¹

He believed there was unity in all of life and that the modern world would find a new unity of impression and combine it with expression. The medieval scholar of Spain manifested a democratic spirit in all of his writings on education. A fusion of spirituality and sensuousness was transformed into the social principle of democracy that possessed an

¹Foster Watson, (Translator), Luis Vives, El Gran Valenciano 1492-1540, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1922), p.32.

elementary dynamic force. Taking the old and new experiences and transfiguring them with the richest spirit of humanism Luis Vives conferred upon youth a feeling and consciousness of the dignity of personality. It is in this dignity that democracy recognizes and honors, understands and respects the true quality of humanity. In this vein of thought he wrote:

Nothing is more vital than that due care should be taken in formation by the young of right and sane opinions. They should know the aims and advantage of each element of welfare, its essential proportions, and how to estimate it. Youth, will then become liked tried goldsmiths, with a Lydian stone, which serves as an indication of values (positive and negative) of such factors in life as money, possessions, friends, honours, nobility, dignity, sovereignty, outward form, physique, pleasure, wit, erudition, morality, religion.... They will be drawn rather to those studies which lead to the consolidation of morals and the building up of life. No one is outside the scope of religion; and the mass of the people will be in literature....²

The definition of a good citizen as prepared by the Special Committee of the Commission on the Reorganization of the Secondary Education stated a person would always actively and intelligently cooperate with his fellow members of society in all of the activities for the betterment of the entire community. The bulletin released by the United States Bureau of Education in 1915 had been prepared by J. Lynn Barnard, F. W. Carrier, Arthur William Dunn, and Clarence D. Kingsley for the National Education Association on "The Teaching of Community Civics." A similarity of thought may be noted in the writings of the German monk, Martin Luther, who believed that the welfare of a city rested in the able and learned citizens working together for the advantage of the entire community.

²Ibid., pp.78-79.

Although the cathedral and monastic schools of the Middle Ages dominated the curriculum of schools everywhere during the four centuries from 1450 to 1850, there were overtures of modern theories and practices of education. The belief that knowledge was the outcome of action was revealed in the Discourse written by Rene Descartes, the French philosopher, who is often called the father of the social sciences. He wrote that a store-house of factual knowledge was an advantage only if it helped the student to discipline his judgment. The best thoughts of the ages are to be found in good books, and according to Descartes the reading of such books, especially histories, was the ideal way to arrive at understanding and to form judgment.

The schools of Colonial America possessed no such innovations but evolved themselves from the medieval church. The keynote of the education in the colonies was religion. This interest continued to be long after the war for independence had been won and the new nation had made progress. The dominance of the church was shown in the early years of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The parents had attended to their educational duties if their children could read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country. All of the New England Colonies accepted the belief that the universal education of youth was essential to the well being of the State. According to the Act of the General Court of Massachusetts in 1642, there had been evidence of neglect in education, and the obligation rested with the parents. Shortly afterwards the Massachusetts General Assembly passed the Old Deluder Satan Act requiring the State to enforce this obligation and determine the kind of education the children should receive. Massachusetts, the pioneer in the educational experiments, and Connecticut followed the plan of the schools being controlled by a theocratic government of the narrow convictions of

Puritanism. The only colonial schools of New England that were not under the patronage and control of the Church were in Rhode Island.

The Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania left education to the private and parochial efforts since there was no sectarian majority. Colonial Virginia was in many ways an imitation of English society in which the autocratic governing class controlled and the people obeyed. The Royalist Governor Berkeley in 1671 wrote that the colony of Virginia was blessed in having no free schools or printing presses, for learning would only bring disobedience and heresy. With the plantation system the social status became rigid and the environment proved most unfavorable for the development of public schools. However, there were friends of education, among the more notable were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Benjamin Franklin was a man of action, whether he was doing a scientific experiment, writing a treatise on morals or politics, or planning a curriculum for a practical academy in Pennsylvania. Thomas Jefferson sought equality of opportunities and this was best expressed in his educational project.

The democratic yearning for independence of the social, economic, and political fervor found its way into the educational system of Colonial America for the people had a passion for progress, for learning, for culture, and these longings would be satisfied. According to Colyer Meriwether's observations,

As pioneers facing the severity and roughness of life in a new land, transferring civilization across the Atlantic to a home amid wild forests, harassed by barbarous natives, they of necessity would develop an independence of judgment and a readiness of adaption that would show themselves in education and in all walks of life.³

³Colyer Meriwether, Our Colonial Curriculum, 1607-1776, (Washington, D.C.: Capital Publishing Co., 1906), p.54.

The social studies were incidentally brought into the colonial curriculum at Harvard and Yale Universities. An unquenchable desire for advancement, for knowledge and skill, and the cultural things of life was reflected in their curriculums which showed an insight to the future and the need for the practical disciplines of the social studies. Nevertheless, the histories studied in the early days of Colonial America were dull, uninteresting, and dogmatically steeped in the prevailing theology.

The evidence of allowing the students to engage in verbal disputes began in theology but spread to the philosophical branches that included discussion of topics pertaining to political economy. In fact, all the questions on the simplest plane to the more grave propositions of pedagogical interests were washed in the acid of the mind. The educators believed little was learned unless it was masticated by the tooth of disputation in the solution of any problem. Youth attending Yale University learned to develop their debating powers from the two volumes on logic authored by Bartholomew Keckerman. In his first chapter entitled 'Disputation', he refined the essence of education as being the power to weigh, to analyze, to criticize, to arrange and combine ideas that may concern not only theological, ethical, but also political problems. Throughout the history of colonial education these victories in verbal fighting were the physical counterpart of modern athletics in the extra curricular activities of the secondary schools of America. Mr. Keckerman's textbook on logic produced the steps in developing thought that runs parallel with John Dewey's book How We Think. The specific three rules included limiting the question by defining the problem, inquiring for, and confirming the truth. The general rules included the hypothesis or forecasting the evident propositions and separating the fundamental arguments and sifting for the truth. The defend-

ers of this form of training believed it to be admirable while others believed disputations bred skepticism. Cultivated criticism could come only by careful observation of nature, investigation, and careful questioning to advance knowledge. In a lengthy list prepared by Professor E. J. Young for theme topics suitable for the Master of Arts thesis from 1655 to 1691 are two subjects pertinent even today:

Does Civil Government originate from compact?
Whether the present passion for college education
is for the advantage of this State?⁴

The formal curriculum having disputation died with the colonial period but no branch of knowledge is entirely lost. It may be cast aside, it may decay and be considered dead, "but there are rootlets or fibers or jagged ends and rough edges that stand as testimony of what has been."⁵

A study and interpretation of the educational history of American schools would by its very nature include a story of textbooks used in the colonial curriculum. A popular spelling book was Coote's The English School Master published in 1596, being a thin quarto of seventy-two pages that included not only spelling but arithmetic, history, and writing lessons, with an additional part devoted to prayers, psalms, and a short catechism. One of the few books George Washington studied was entitled The Young Man's Companion, which contained practical knowledge of book-keeping, the writing of deeds, bonds, and wills while the concluding pages were devoted to the Rules of Civility. The handsomest speller of colonial days was Watt's Complest Spelling-Book, that contained with the spelling book matters, a portion of the scriptures, and "A Short History of England."

⁴Ibid., p.235.

⁵Ibid., p.282.

As early as 1743, Benjamin Franklin had written a plan for a new type academy but this project had been set aside. Again in 1748 he began to envision a college for Pennsylvania similar to William and Mary College in Virginia. New Jersey had the College of New Jersey (later named Princeton University), Massachusetts had Harvard University, and Connecticut had Yale University. A straight-forward and serious pamphlet was written by Franklin which he entitled Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania. It was his belief education had been neglected in the colonies and his proposal was to find "persons of leisure and public spirit" who would found and conduct an academy having a curriculum of the most practical subjects. Franklin thought much useful knowledge could be acquired through the reading of good history for the tendency would be to fix in the minds of youth deep impressions of the beauty and usefulness of virtuous living and the desire to become more public spirited. The reading of history meant the study of geography, chronology, ancient customs, the story of commerce, and morality. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin revealed the study of morals had the advantage of temperance, order, frugality, industry, and perservance. Another reason advanced for the reading of history was that it afforded the study of Civil Orders and Constitution. He believed public disputes warmed the imagination; the art of reasoning was to discover the truth and arguing was to defend it. The academy was opened January 7, 1751, and the Charitable School in the following fall, with an exuberant program for boys from the ages of eight to sixteen. These two schools were incorporated in 1753, and Franklin served as the president for three years. He continued to correspond with the Board of Trustees from time to time. Letters revealed the academy should be provided with a library having maps of all

the countries and globes; the teachers should be men of good morals, scholarly in the pursuit of knowledge, and possessing an understanding of youth. The educational philosophy of Franklin was embodied in the following words:

The Great Aim and End of all Learning is the Ability to serve Mankind, One's Country, Friends, and Family: which ability is (with blessing of God) to be acquired or greatly increased by True Learning.⁶

In 1782 Noah Webster, an enterprising, self-reliant, and persevering worker published his spelling book, The First Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language. This book featured Percepts Concerning the Social Relations, which were lessons on the evils of drinking and profanity; marriage and the management of the family finances; and fables on teaching virtues. This "Old Blue-Back", as were all the editions of Webster's spellers, possessed a certain crudity and primitiveness but it "stands unrivalled among American books in circulation and length of life"⁷ because the textbook was suited to the times and the regions of America, particularly in the South and West until after the Civil War.

Tutorial education was prevalent throughout the South as was evident by an advertisement that appeared in The Virginia Gazette, a newspaper of Williamsburg, Virginia. A certain John Walker, teacher from London, was engaged in the education of youth as a teacher of Ancient and Modern Geography and History. In colonial days, geography was not only a "diversion for a winter's evening" but a knowledge of geography was needed to enter Harvard University as well as Princeton University. The curriculum of the latter college included geography; history and chronologie; "Eloquence

⁶ Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, (Editors), Readings in American Educational History, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p.80.

⁷ Clifton Johnson, Old-Time Schools and School Books, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1904), p.184.

and Criticism", and Moral Philosophy in three parts: ethics, politics, and jurisprudence according to the biography of James A. Bayard,⁸ who entered Princeton in 1781.

The first geography textbook was The Columbian Reading Book or Historical Preceptor which was a collection of authentic histories published in 1799. The pioneer of American authors writing school geography was Jeridah Morse, a graduate of Yale University, who wrote Geography Made Easy in 1800. This voluminous work covered four hundred pages of interesting and picturesque materials on the varied subjects of astronomy, the doctrine of the spheres, the use of globes, and a general description and history of the discovery of America. A social studies textbook of the twentieth century could not have been more inclusive as each state was described in detail. Mr. Morse discussed such topics as religion, military strength, literature, the Constitution and its history, and he forecast the American population would be 160,000,000 by 1900. This geography textbook was not dull reading because it had many innovations for the period, including maps of the world and the continents.

Another public-spirited citizen of equal rank with Benjamin Franklin was Thomas Jefferson, who also influenced education in America. He understood well the meaning of democracy and its problems and he continually searched for ways to experiment with democracy and elucidated the significance of education in the "Bill for the Diffusion of Knowledge". Thomas Jefferson was a leader in the philosophy of government, in education, and the useful arts. He was an idealist and a dreamer whose literary taste ran the gamut from the classics, to history, and back again to political

⁸Morton Borden, The Federalism of James A. Bayard, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p.19.

theory. As a youth he was tutored by a clergyman but his training came from practical experience in the Virginia legislature where he authored four bills of interest to education. In those days the colleges were merely academies or secondary schools with no fixed curriculum. Jefferson had written a letter to the Richmond Inquirer on September 7, 1814, explaining the plans for a future university for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The curriculum should include every branch of science that would be useful to man. These sciences were to be divided into three departments with language, geography, and ancient and modern history in the first division; mathematics in the second division; and philosophy of five divergences in the third division. The latter branch of the curriculum would include ideology, ethics, law of nature and nations, government, and political economy. The one restriction Jefferson would place on instruction was that the teachers of government must be required to be favorable to the republican institutions. Believing that freedom and responsibility of all citizens are essential to good government and to progress he wrote, "The aim of public education is for human happiness and welfare."⁹ An understanding of pedagogy was evident by Jefferson's writings that education should be adapted to the years, capacity, and condition of each student. He opposed the study of the Bible on the premise the students were not mature in their judgment but he favored the reading of Grecian, Roman, European and American history because he thought history gave the true appraisal of the past and would enable the student to gain ability in judging the future. With great articulation he expressed this idea as follows:

The first elements of morality may be instilled into their minds, further developed as their judgments advanced

⁹Charles Flinn Arrowood (Editor), Thomas Jefferson and Education In a Republic, (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 1930), p.70.

in strength, may teach them how to work out their own happiness, by shewing (sic.) them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.¹⁰

Reading history was one way to receive boldness and independence of mind; hence, Jefferson, deeply attached to learning, felt a certain sum of money should be appropriated annually for the purchase of good books to replenish the libraries in the schools of Virginia.

The educational facilities in America had been limited primarily to the private and denominational efforts in maintaining the academies. The Latin Grammar Schools and the Academies in the colonies had contributed only partially to the character of secondary education during the transitory period when the educational system of the colonial times gave way to the laissez faire attitude toward education under the newly organized national government. The academy had met the demands for training the young men for service and leadership and it had been a powerful means of social control, but the leadership of educational institutions was passing from the conservative and aristocratic class to the progressive and democratic middle class. The movement for the organization of the American high school came because an institution was needed for the new and aggressive democracy generated by the new needs of the merchants, artisans, and tradespeople. The experimentation and standardization of the high school from 1821 to 1865 were chiefly in Massachusetts. The gradual evolution of secondary education came as one result of the insistence of various labor societies, but it was a long and arduous struggle before public

¹⁰ Ibid., p.84.

opinion would justify public control and support of the high school.

In 1829 the Working Men of Philadelphia asked for an equal and general system of education. The same year at a General Meeting of Mechanics and Workingmen of New York City, the union workers expressed their interest in education to be, next to life and liberty, the greatest blessing for mankind. The Platform of the Boston Working Men's Party requested a liberal system of education attainable for all as stated:

That provision ought to be made by law for the more extensive diffusion of knowledge, particularly in the elements of those sciences which pertain to mechanical employment, and to the politics of our common country.¹¹

The curriculum, according to the general consensus of opinion, must be closely related with the needs of the social, civic, and industrial life in America as shown by "An Early Educational Survey" by the faculty members of the University of South Carolina. This opinion poll expressed the theory that to guarantee common justice to all, the poor must be educated for "no person could be a good citizen if he were not able to read and understand the Constitution."¹² A differentiation of the curriculum was noted throughout the development of the high school as a wide range of subjects was offered that today would be classified as social studies. These varied subjects included ancient geography, ancient and modern history, the Constitution of the United States, and political economy.

A question proposed for discussion at the Fifth Annual Convention of

¹¹ Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, (Editors), Readings in American Educational History, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 247.

¹² Ibid., p. 333.

the American Lyceum was "Ought political economy to be taught as a branch of common education?"¹³ The reaction against the old formal aristocratic Latin grammar school was so pronounced at first the high schools avoided the traditional curriculum such as moral philosophy and offered instead the course, political philosophy. This was true in many schools of note, namely, the Boston Public Latin School, the Phillips Exeter Academy, and the Boston English Classical High School.

During the period from 1825 to 1850, the number of school subjects increased and it logically followed that the publication of textbooks multiplied. The format of these books showed a marked improvement as the material was printed on better paper and the illustrations of pictures, maps, and charts were more distinctive. The textbooks were conservative in the treatment of politics and economics and in many incidents were noted for their narrowness and crudity. One such book by William Sullivan entitled Familiar Letters on Public Characters, and Public Events From the Peace of 1783, to the Peace of 1815, lauded the Federalists and condemned the Jeffersonian democracy. In fact, the first textbook to contain political science was written by Elhanan Winchester specifically to stem the rising tide of Jeffersonian democracy and its title explains its contents, A Plain Catechism Intended For Use in the United States of America, wherein the Great Principles of Liberty and of the Federal Constitution are Laid Down and Explained by Way of Question and Answer, Made Level to the Lowest Capacities.

Only a few books were written from that time until 1830. One such textbook written in 1824 by James Mill named Elements of Political Economy

¹³ Ibid., p.153.

treated labor, capital, rent, wages, and the Malthusian theory of population. The four chapters were characterized by their simplicity and dealt with such topics as production, distribution, interchange, and consumption. The practical aspect of the book was expressed "political economy is to the State, what domestic economy is to the family."¹⁴ A frequently mentioned textbook for its excellent treatment of the study of the Constitution was Francis Wayland's The Elements of Political Economy, which contained some fundamental concepts of sociology. The elements were blended with the social principles of man. It had been abridged for use by the academies and the general appearance of the book was poor. The outstanding feature was the exercises that followed each chapter. These exercises contained problems to be studied and this appears to be the first concrete example of the social studies being concerned with problems of American democracy.

By 1850 the formative period in the development of textbooks was over. A general education was necessary to safeguard and stabilize the republican form of government. The influence of the periodical literature and the political press had a marked influence upon the tone of feeling and the general character of the American populace. Universally acceptable was the belief that the diffusion of political knowledge was essential for the public prosperity and the security of lives. An excellent example of this kind of history concerning the rise and progress of the political parties appeared in 1855 in the book, The American Statesman: A Political History written by Andrew W. Young. The fourth chapter explained the origins, the nature, and the practical operation of the constitutional

¹⁴ James Mill, Elements of Political Economy, (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1824), p.1.

government in the United States. The appendix contained the historical documents of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution as well as statistics on the electoral vote from 1789 election to 1853. Another feature of this unusual textbook was the list of the Presidents' Cabinet Members, the Supreme Court Judges, and the Speakers of the House of Representatives. One division gave an account of the imports and exports from 1821 to 1850.

The history of the social studies necessitates an explanation of the development of economic thought in America and the discipline of political economy would include the story of the formation of society and its relationship to the economic system. An influential school of economic thought known as the Historical School from 1843 to 1883 was concerned with the social psychology and the interconnection of the individual social processes with society. An American apostle of optimism and a strong advocate that the principles of economics come from human action was Henry C. Carey, who published a textbook, the Principles of Political Economy, in 1840. He believed in the nascent industrial capitalism and advocated a balance between agriculture and industry in his works on the Principles of Social Sciences, published in three volumes in 1858. Writing as an authority on economics but with the bearing of a social scientist, Mr. Carey foresaw that the complexity of modern society would result in an interdependence of human beings who would not understand one another. He saw the conflict between individualism and socialized living and his answer was as follows:

Social science treats of man in his efforts for the maintenance and improvement of his condition, and may now be defined to be the science of the laws which govern man in his efforts to secure for himself the

highest individuality, and the greatest power of association with his fellow-man.¹⁵

Carey founded the Nationalist School of Economics. One of his memorable observations was the evidence in the North of the growing feeling for the responsibility for education while the South prohibited by the most stringent laws the education of the laboring population. The third volume of the treatise on the social sciences emphasized the branch of political economy about which Mr. Carey delineated:

Social science treats of the laws which govern man in the effort for developing his own powers, and thereby obtaining entire control over the great forces of nature--at each step gained, turning her batteries against herself, with a view to make her subjugation more complete.¹⁶

Numerous textbooks expressed a similar view that political economy should be a part of the social sciences. This trend appeared at the time of the Civil War and continued until the turn of the century. A majority of these books stressed the history of Merchantilism, the Physiocrats founded by Quesnay, The Industrial School of Economists of Adam Smith, and T. R. Malthus' theory of population.

Sociology as a branch of political economy appeared in a textbook, A System of Political Economy by John Lancelot, printed in 1877. He believed that human conduct was determined by the great complexity of motives. The first mention of teaching the theories of socialism and communism was found in American textbooks dated 1885. Columbia University offered the teachers enrolled in secondary education a course based on the theories of socialism and communism. The reason given for this was to point

¹⁵H. C. Carey, Principles of Social Sciences, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1858), I, p.63.

¹⁶Ibid., III, p.469.

up the urgent need for instruction in the high schools of a simple and elementary kind of economics as a division of civics. The teaching of this new science of civics as outlined by the "Massachusetts Council of the American Institute of Civics" was to present the rudimentary principles of the five subjects as a combination of ethics, civil polity, economics, history, and jurisprudence. The new textbooks for this civics course would be of an unorthodox type of textbook in the form of a study which would provide a practical and everyday view in making the lessons in citizenship both interesting and lively. The teacher would be required to combine many books for the working plan and this demanded that the teachers of the science of civics must be thoroughly informed on many related subjects.

A well written manual on the moral and political side of science was published in 1888 by Emile De Laveleye. An idealistic approach to sociology, economics, and politics was the purpose of the author as he humanized his subject by his strong humanitarian spirit and his sympathy for the working classes.

A number of textbook writers felt that political economy was the basis of the social sciences and the logical place for its teaching would be in the high schools. Since 1870 there had been noted a rapid expansion of political economy and it was natural that the impact of this subject be felt in the high schools. The subject should have as its aim, "to fit pupils to form rational judgments in accordance with economic laws" by giving them "a clear knowledge of definitions, of established theories, and first principles."¹⁷ The schools had yet to recognize their immense power. To be of benefit to the citizenry of American democracy the course of political

¹⁷ W. E. Burchill, "Political Economy in Schools", Education, XII, 1, (September, 1891), p.95.

economy would train every student to think intelligently on social questions so he might be able to formulate sound judgments. The majority of students requires the active assistance of a teacher in every stage of progress. The master teacher would search the minds of the students to see what they were able to comprehend or were unable to comprehend. The fundamental principle of every lesson in political economy should be illustrated, emphasized, and enforced according to a textbook on the First Lessons in Political Economy by Francis A. Walker prepared in 1889 especially for high school students from the ages of fifteen to seventeen. The cardinal doctrines of wealth and value, production, and the labor problems were incorporated in an interesting and instructional manner.

The pedagogical literature teemed with information concerning the new course of civics in the school program. A scholarly paper was prepared by Mr. William T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education and read before the Department of Superintendence at its session at Richmond, Virginia, in February, 1894, entitled, "The Curriculum For Secondary Schools." He related the secondary schools were the weakest segment of the entire school system. The teachers had failed to instruct in the acquirement of the techniques of reading in a comprehensive manner the social studies of geography, history, and sociology. History may be vital or dead according to the sociological viewpoint. This argument was advanced in an essay, "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," by John Dewey, who wrote,

The ethical value of history teaching will be measured by the extent to which it is treated as a matter of analysis of existing social relations, that is to say,

as affording insight into what makes up the structure and working of society.¹⁸

The genesis of the American secondary schools came as a result of the association of human freedom and national unity into the democratization of public opinion. The gradual development of the institution commonly called the American high school was a progression of steps taken by the people toward liberty, efficiency, and toleration. Striving to hold precious the belief in the dignity of man enveloped in social living made it imperative that students master new skills and accept great changes in the nature of modern society. The school as an important national institution of democracy would have to increase its quality as well as its quantity of knowledge to enable the students to meet the changed condition of this new and vastly complex civilization. New and ever more different social, economic, and political problems awaited solution; therefore, an urgency for a broad, general diversified training adapted to the needs of the future rather than to the past or even the present was felt among the educators. One of these early educators to sense this urgency was Arthur William Dunn, a high school teacher, author of social studies textbooks, and later a United States Commissioner of Education, who believed a curriculum change to prepare the students for increased social efficiency must come. Little known facts of the educational philosophy of Mr. Dunn are available except what one reads in the prefaces of his textbooks, especially, The Community and The Citizen, published in 1907. He had the conviction that a student should be trained as an efficient and serviceable member of society by arousing his consciousness of the meaning of community

¹⁸ Charles McMurray (Editor), The Third Yearbook For the Scientific Study of Teaching, Publications of the National Herbert Society, 1895-1900, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), p.21.

life. The teacher's power lies in his ability to kindle the student's interest and to build upon the student's experiences through the medium of observation, analyses, and drawing conclusions. The premise of Dunn's citizenship training was to help the student discover his worth to society and how he may serve society to his own self-satisfaction. The only true function of the public school was to train the student in civic efficiency so he may develop social ideals and attitudes.

Since the Civil War, the thinking men and women of education were convinced the high schools should utilize the social sciences more fully by increasing the time spent on the social sciences. A radical reorganization of the curriculum to include more of the social studies was a movement begun by the American Historical Association and the Political Science Association. These two organizations agreed upon a definition as follows:

The social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relates directly to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups.¹⁹

A revised curriculum for the secondary schools would at last include social studies courses founded upon the interests and the needs of the students. The reorganization of the secondary education was the contribution of the National Education Association and the Committee on the Social Studies reported formally on its finding in 1916 which included a new course 'Problems of American Democracy' on the twelfth grade level. This newly created course would not be a formal social science but would be developed on concrete problems in their variable sociological, economic, and political aspects. The paramount importance of the course would be its unique function

¹⁹U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 28, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1916), p.9.

as explained by the committee's study as follows:

The student "have experience and practice in observation of social phenomena as he encounters it;" that he should be brought to understand that every social problem is many sided and complex; and that he should acquire habits of forming social judgments only on the basis of dispassionate consideration of all facts available.²⁰

The students enter the high school with varying capacities, aptitudes, social heredity, and destinies. The purpose of democracy is to develop their personalities through activities that will prove beneficial to both the individual and society. Education's greatest problem is related to the development of civic judgment gained through the acquisition of knowledge and proper social attitudes coupled with a sense of moral responsibility for decisions made. The 'Problems' course, designed as part of the curriculum for a troubled society, was made to give the student a more intelligent grasp of subject matter and the ability to evaluate evidence. The critical problems of social, economic, and political organization in a rapidly changing society must keep pace with the maturity of its citizens. How are these problems and issues discovered and utilized? They are determined after the students read daily newspapers, weekly magazines, book reviews, and have made a canvass of the available library books. Harold O. Rugg, a recognized specialist in the revitalization of the curriculum of the social studies suggested asking eighty specialists in the fields of industry, population, national government, and world politics to select books of distinctive merit irrespective of economic or political faith. With the hope of creating a society capable of directing social change instead of being overwhelmed by it made education

²⁰ Ibid., p.56.

swing from the ancient intellectualism into a functional process. The curriculum expert, Dr. Rugg, suggested that students trained in solving social problems must follow the following procedure:

1. Find problems and issues of modern life.
2. Find particular questions to be answered in order to consider all angles of the various problems.
3. Select typical episodes to illustrate facts.
(Narrative, descriptive, graphic, pictorial or statistical form-needed to discuss the question or problem)
4. Clarify and fix essential matters, discover basic generalizations that guide our thinking about society.²¹

Democratizing the curriculum development by the teachers and citizens in the early thirties was questioned by William Chandler Badley, the Essentialist, who saw the direction that education was taking and he was not pleased. He believed that the educational innovations, such as the socially reconstructed curriculum build directly around the problems and forces of contemporary society was a too rapid change and he strongly advocated that educators apply the brakes. He suggested that the only way to keep pace with the technological and social needs the educators would have to unify the concepts of the social studies and base them on the qualitative rather than the quantitative ideal. His argument was a direct rebuttal to the United States Bureau of Education's report in 1932 that the upbuilding of the curriculum had been hampered by the iron hand of tradition. To progress meant to accept the best of traditional pedagogy, according to Mr. Badley, but instead the progressive educators would reorganize the social studies subject matter by dethroning the textbooks as the first rule over teaching.

²¹ Guy Montrose Whipple, (Editor), The Social Studies in the Elementary and Secondary Schools, Part II: Twenty-second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co., 1932), p.266.

Learning to make a success of democracy was the burden of the social studies and it was not an easy task because its demands were so many and varied. The students may be able to grow to adequate citizenship only as they become familiar with the problems of democratic civilization. These problems become more highly complex and interdependent as the industrial economy of the United States develops. The study of political science will continue to be dependent upon sociology and economics for a complete understanding of the three disciplines is to know human life. As the student learns about the democratic function of government, he recognizes the proximity of every social and economic activity in his life. To judge adequately the functions of government, he must understand economics and sociology.

Professor Franklin H. Giddings wrote,

To teach the theory of state to men who have not learned the first principles of sociology is like teaching astronomy of thermodynamics to men who have not learned the Newtonian laws of motion.²²

Another social scientist, Harry Elmer Barnes, believed that sociology was the only social science that viewed the social processes in a comprehensive fashion and his philosophy of a new history was a record of man's development conditioned by his social environment. The course 'Problems of American Democracy' requires an intellectual background to understand the present everyday problems. If democracy endures there must be a union of economic stability and political freedom and only through the process of living may the power of reason be changed. Democracy to be genuine must be in a climate where the student can experience freedom in making intelligent choices; his freedom of action will be dependent always on an informed

²² William Fielding Ogburn and Alexander Goldenweiser (Editors), The Social Sciences and Their Interrelations, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), p.330.

intelligence developed by an education that is devoted to the ideal of experimentation.

In the secondary school, the responsibility for teaching the principles of the democratic way of life is the greatest. If a soft policy is adopted democracy is gravely endangered; therefore, a reexamination of the social studies curriculum in the American secondary schools must be forthcoming. Is the American youth being adequately prepared to understand the rapid pace of the relentless social, economic, and political problems? Charles A. Beard described the nature of the social disciplines as:

Out of the raw materials of the world and life, out of immense accumulation of ideas and traditions incorporated in the written word, must be made the social science to be taught in the schools and the purpose governing its presentation.²³

Does the contents of the 'Problems' course effectively prepare the American youth to understand the world he lives in so he may achieve the highest goals and values of the democratic life? Traditionalism will continue to dominate the curriculum of the social studies until the teachers show an initiative in updating and reorganizing the content materials with as much vengeance as they have utilized in revising the methodology in teaching the social studies. Secondary education in America can no longer ignore the social, economic, and political trends in the contemporary world.

²³Charles A. Beard, A Charter For the Social Sciences, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p.16.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF THE COURSE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENTITLED 'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY' FROM 1916 to 1960

The gradual development of the Course 'Problems of American Democracy' was the result of the formation of a new philosophy of education. Interwoven through this dynamic philosophy was a new aim for education. The task of the school should go beyond the cultivation of the mind; it should develop character and benevolent convictions in the student but simultaneously give him practical experience in the art of constructive and harmonious living. New theories in educational psychology were influenced by the biological ideas of William James and John Dewey. They believed in the pragmatic theory of knowledge that should function in the experience of the learner. Charles Darwin's work Origin of Species published in 1859 released a potent force which effected the social sciences through the moral philosophy of history. Recognizing a branch between knowledge and social action was a group of American historians: James Harvey Robinson, Carl Becker, Charles Austin Beard, and David Saville Muzzey. Traveling a quadrivial circuit of lecturing and writing, they emerged with a 'New History.' James H. Robinson had studied with William James and he expressed this psychology and pragmatic attitude in a book, The Mind in the Making, published in 1921. The old story of wars, territorial aggrandizement, and social institutions gave way to the development of ideas, human beliefs, and knowledge. Charles A. Beard, a political

scientist, assisted James H. Robinson in founding a school called a "New School for Social Research," where the social, scientific, and intellectual progress of mankind were stressed rather than the mere political happenings. Carl Becker, who had a deep concern for the use of history for the betterment of international relations and of mankind, became a very influential member of this group by giving lectures to various teachers' organizations throughout the United States. Another to champion this broad historical view was David S. Muzzey, a leader in "The Society of Ethical Culture." These four college teachers represented an intellectual force whose idea of teaching the 'New History' included economics, politics, intellectual life and culture that embraced all of civilization. Their real forte was an analysis of thought and philosophy in action.

Arthur W. Dunn, a specialist in Civic Education for the United States Bureau of Education, was influential in focusing the attention of educators upon the fact that youth must be prepared to maintain and improve American democracy. This could be achieved through a new secondary school social studies curriculum, according to Mr. Dunn, the leader in the civic education movement.

Prior to the Civil War the educators of the United States had organized a National Teachers' Association. In 1859 the social studies section of the curriculum had been given new focus when Mr. Daniel Read of Wisconsin read a paper entitled, "The Importance of Civil Policy as a Branch of Popular Education." Once during the Civil War the National Teachers' Association held a general conference which had on the agenda a report on the teaching of the principals of government. The next emphasis placed on the social studies occurred in 1869 when the delegates to the National Teachers' Association approved a resolution stating that one very important duty of

the schools was to inculcate the principle of intelligent citizenship coupled with the teaching of United States History in all of the public schools. This suggested course to be included in the curriculum was to incorporate the principles, the structure, and history of the political institutions. Within the next decade a marked degree of success had come from the resolution to encourage the practical knowledge of citizenship and the study of United States history. The delegates representing teachers as well as administrators listened to a report on "A Course of Study From the Primary School to the University, U. S. history in all district schools, and U. S. Constitution in all high schools."

An experiment with the teaching of sociology and economics as an integrated course on the secondary level was being tried in New England as early as 1890. A syllabus of sixty lessons on political economy was provided the teachers. The course of study contained the following general divisions:

- Society
- The Science of Sociology
- Economic Life
- Economic Life--Historical Product
- Economic Stages
- Industrial Revolution
- Features of Modern Political Economy
- The Science of Political Economy¹

In this experimentation it was found that the introduction of sociology enhanced the teaching of the science of economics. According to Mr. Charles J. Bullock,

Our economic life so deeply conditions all other departments of social existence that a study of political economy gives a very con-

¹Charles J. Bullock, "Political Economy in the Secondary Schools", Education, XI, 9, (May, 1891), p.547.

siderable survey of the whole of those actions of man which go to make up his social life. ...Object of our economic life is not to acquire wealth for its own sake, but as a means of realizing such a condition of living as shall conduce to the completest personal development.²

Interest in the social studies never materialized beyond reports and recommendations until 1892 when the National Education Association took the lead in the construction of the secondary school curriculum. In July of that year a Committee of Ten was appointed to study and report upon the secondary curriculums in the nine major areas of Latin, Greek; English; other modern languages; mathematics; physics, astronomy, and chemistry; natural history (biology, including botany, zoology, and physiology); history, civil government, and political economy; and geography (physical geography, zoology, geology, and meteorology). The ten member conference to study the role of history, civil government, and political economy in the American high school included:

Charles Kendall Adams, President of the University
of Wisconsin, Chairman
Edward G. Bourne, Professor of History, Adelbert
College
Abram Brown, Principal of Central High School,
Columbus, Ohio
Ray Greene Huling, Principal of High School, New
Bedford, Massachusetts
Jesse Macy, Professor of Political Science,
Iowa College
James Harvey Robinson, Associate Professor of
European History, University of
Pennsylvania
William A. Scott, Assistant Professor of Political
Science, University of Wisconsin
Henry P. Warren, Head Master of Albany Academy
Woodrow Wilson, Professor of Jurisprudence and
Political Economy, Princeton College
Albert Bushnell Hart, Assistant Professor of History,
Harvard University, Secretary³

²Ibid., p.541.

³Report of Committee of Ten on Secondary Studies, (New York: American Book Co., 1894), p.201.

The only session of this committee was held in Madison, Wisconsin, during the month of December, 1892, with six of the original ten members present. They developed five new ideas in the teaching of the social studies and suggested means of implementing them. A course of formal government having an intensive historical background should be taught in the last year of high school. Political economy would not be a separate discipline but would be integrated into the government study. The basic American history textbooks should list a number of collateral readings. Albert Bushnell Hart, a prodigious writer and collector of documentary materials, championed this broad historical view. No doubt he influenced the committee's decision for the required readings in American history. The final judgment of The Committee of Ten on Secondary Studies concerned the comparative study of American and foreign systems of government and the observation of both the local and the state government.

Public opinion already had begun to be crystallized on the need for a study of local and state government as seen in an article appearing in an educational journal earlier that year. Mr. W. M. Beardshear of Ames, Iowa, wrote,

The study of the town, the county, and the state government; the getting the principles of the Declaration of Independence into the mind and heart of the child, the analysis of the Constitution and an acquaintance of the leading men of American history will do children and the nation more good than extra years of mathematics and should have the first rank in the curricula of our higher institutions of learning.⁴

⁴W. M. Beardshear, "State Education--Its Purposes and Needs", Education, XII, 5, (January, 1892), p.297.

Continuing to influence the secondary curriculum was a meeting of the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association in 1896. Within two years this committee formulated the results from the questionnaires sent to three hundred schools asking for information describing the courses taught on the secondary level. The results of the work of the Committee of Seven became a land mark in the teaching of history from the seventh to the twelfth grades. A large majority of the four year high schools that answered the questionnaire reported that American history and civil government were taught as a single subject, usually in the senior year.

In 1908 the minutes of the Committee of Eight of the American Historical Association revealed that the course of American history and civil government should include the study of political economy and sociology. There seemed to be an expediency on the part of the college professors to urge the high schools to require a more comprehensive survey of the social studies in the history course. The separation of American history and government into two distinctly different disciplines was the major consideration of the Committee of Five of the American Historical Association that convened in 1910. By the year 1913 the leadership in secondary education had progressed to the National Education Association, who had appointed a committee known as The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. A total of fourteen committees began the study of the American high school. A preliminary report made by the Committee on Social Studies showed there was ample evidence that a study of community problems was urgently needed. Of the twenty-one members serving on this committee there were thirteen men who were engaged in public school work. This was the first time a committee engaged in the revision of the curriculum did not have a predominance of college professors. A special committee composed of J. Lynn

Barnard, F. W. Carrier, Arthur W. Dunn, and Clarence D. Kingsley prepared a syllogism entitled "The Teaching of Civics". This bulletin effected radical changes in the teachings of civics. It altered the connotation of the word 'civics' by shifting the emphasis from the machinery of government to community welfare as given in the definition of a good citizen as follows:

The good citizen may be defined as a person who habitually conducts himself with proper regard for the welfare of the community of which he is a member, and who is active and intelligent in his cooperation with his fellow members to that end.⁵

An innovation coming from the guidance movement was introduced into the curriculum of the teaching of civics. Being able to make a living was important but "the student should choose a vocation wisely and be adequately prepared."⁶ The first task of the teacher was to demonstrate proper citizenship in the belief that "right action depends not only upon information, interest, and will, but also upon good judgment."⁷

Dr. Carl Becker, Professor of History from the University of Minnesota, addressed a group of Kansas history teachers at a High School Conference in Lawrence, Kansas, on March 17, 1916. A summary of Dr. Becker's speech revealed the need for a radical reorganization of the curriculum because history was losing rather than gaining favor with school teachers and administrators. He challenged the teachers to replace the distinct courses in history, economics, civics, and sociology with a contemporary history. His advice was to,

Organize a single course of one, two, three, or four years, which would embrace all that the high

⁵U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 23, (Washington D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915), p.9.

⁶Ibid., p.14.

⁷Ibid., p.13.

school gives in the so-called social sciences; a carefully coordinated course in which history, economics, civics, and sociology should all find their proper place.⁸

According to an editorial by Charles Hughes Johnston the leading curriculum issue in the public schools was to replace the course of history, civics, and economics with a course in the social studies. This new subject would require a change in the educational aims and the instructional materials. The organization of such a course designed around contemporary problems signified a change in philosophy of education. Dr. James H. Robinson foresaw this contest and jeopardized his academic reputation to endorse such a course by saying,

...there has always been a struggle between interests entrenched in law, institutions, and social convention, and the requirements of further enlightenment and emancipation. 'A nation must be habituate to think in terms of problems and of the struggles to remedy them before it is in the grips of forces which create the problems.'⁹

A similar idea was advanced by Dr. Ernesto Nelson, Director of Secondary Education, Argentina, in a paper he read before the Pan American Scientific Congress, Washington D. C. He theorized that the secondary school should be unshackled from the dominance of the university and respond to the demands of modern life. To secure knowledge there must be a corresponding educational activity. The crux of his address was "education is not only a knowledge giving agency, it is the maker of man himself."¹⁰

At long last an agreement was reached at a conference between the American Historical Society and the American Political Science Association on

⁸ Carl Becker, "History in the High School Curriculum", Educational Administration and Supervision, II, 6, (June, 1916), p.378.

⁹ Ibid., p.400.

¹⁰ U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 10, (Washington D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1915), p.24.

the definition of "the social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relate directly to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups."¹¹

The report of the Committee on the Social Studies of the Commission of the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association made the cultivation of good citizenship the specific purpose for the teaching of the social studies. The general aim of this "social efficiency" was to instill in the student an appreciation of the nature and laws of social life; to make him aware of his responsibility toward society; and to help him develop his intelligence and will to participate effectively in the advancement of the social well being of others as well as himself. To be a thoroughly efficient member of society a citizen's loyalty and sense of responsibility must go beyond his city, state, and nation and include the human race and the entire world community. The only feasible way the committee could satisfy the demands of the several social studies, at the same time maintain the requirements of general secondary education was to organize the instruction of the social studies on the basis of concrete problems of vital importance to society and of the immediate interest to the pupil. It was not the intent of the committee to discard one social studies course in favor of another, but to study actual problems, or issues or conditions, as they would occur in life with their political, economic, and sociological background. These problems would of necessity vary from year to year and class to class according to the society. The work of the Committee on the Social Studies included three documents: a preliminary report; a pamphlet, 'The Teaching of Civics' printed in

¹¹Ibid.

1915; and the final report published in 1916. This latter official statement of facts had a circulation on 27,000 copies that were sent to administrators and teachers.

A comprehensive Six Year Program to promulgate the social studies was adaptable both to the "6-3-3" and the "8-4" plans of school organization. Informal instruction of these subjects was suggested for the primary grades. Civil government, United States history to the seventeenth century, and local geography were to be assimilated in the curriculum from the sixth through the eighth grades. Revolutionary recommendations were made for the social studies in the senior high schools of four years as follows:

- I European history to the 17th century
- II European history (including English history)
from the 17th century to the present time
- III American history from the 17th century to the
present time
- IV Problems of American democracy¹²

The suggested course 'Problems of American Democracy' was to be the culminating course of the social studies. Its purpose was to give a more definite, intelligible, and deeper knowledge of some of the vital problems of social, economic, and political life in contemporary society. In concise, but true language this idea was recorded as the reasons for the proposed course:

It is impractical to include a comprehensive course in each of the social studies and unjust to the student that his knowledge of social facts and laws are limited to one.

The purposes of secondary education and not the intrinsic value of any particular body of knowledge should be the determining factor.¹³

¹²Ibid., p.17.

¹³Ibid., p.56.

The new course should be designed as a functional procedure of learning and this was shown in the following statement:

Student would "have experience and practice in observation of social phenomena as he encounters it;" that he should be brought to understand that every social problem is many sided and complex; and that he should acquire the habit of forming social judgments only on the basis of dispassionate consideration of all the facts available.¹⁴

The Committee on the Social Studies candidly noted that certain obstacles must be overcome if the course 'Problems of American Democracy' developed into an effective part of the secondary school curriculum. The major difficulty was to counteract the traditional teaching of the separate disciplines of sociology, economics, and political science into one social studies course. It was a recognized fact there were no suitable textbooks to inaugurate such a course. A greater fear was the lack of trained teachers who could put into practice new methodology necessary for such a course. Only skillful teachers could vitalize the instruction. In conclusion, the report reiterated the success of the course was dependent upon the courageous role of the social studies teacher who dared to accept a new viewpoint in dealing with actual life situations. A plea was given to teachers who would be experimenting with this unique social studies to record all of the details in the methodology they would employ.

The United States' participation in World War I caused a dearth of experimentation from 1917 to 1921; nevertheless, the 'Problems Course' had been introduced into the curriculum of California secondary schools. Miss Anne Stewart, a teacher in Los Angeles High School, reviewed the practice

¹⁴Ibid.

of making the social studies course function. A simple three step procedure was used:

- (1) State the problem
- (2) Survey it historically
- (3) Consider possible solutions¹⁵

If the primary purpose for the study of history was to enlighten the present and to prepare for the future, this innovation in the secondary curriculum would acquaint the student with life. Various publications other than the National Council for the Social Studies revealed an overwhelming interest among school administrators in the organization of 'Problems' course for the twelfth grade. Nevertheless, there was no course in the high school where such uncertainty prevailed as to the type of materials to be taught. It was a generally accepted fact that basic textbooks would be the answer, but a peripheral difference among educators continued. Was there any disciplinary value in this course in 'Problems in American Democracy?' Many historians bound by traditionalism saw little value in such a broadened course of study that included the whole of the social sciences: economic, sociology with the basic study of government in a historical background. This adverse criticism was answered by some classroom teachers writing of their experimentations with the course; surveys; and opinion polls made during the years following World War I. One such report by Mr. R. O. Hughes, a teacher in Peabody High School of Pittsburg, related the State Department of Education in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania had introduced the course 'Problems of American Democracy' in the twelfth grade. The classroom techniques used by Mr. Hughes included a series of problems selected by him. The final decision of the particular

¹⁵ Anna Stewart, "The Social Sciences in Secondary Schools", The Historical Outlook, XII, 2, (February, 1921), p.55.

problems to be studied was the responsibility of the students, giving them the opportunity to learn, to lead, and to follow.¹⁶

In interest and popularity the course was ranked high by the students; however, the majority of opinion surveys rated the course only fair in the mastery of new and difficult subject matter. This definitely showed the desire to vitalize the organization of society not through history but through an analysis of modern problems was advancing with greater rapidity than the facilities for giving it effectively.

A critical analysis of six prominent textbooks were examined for social problems that faced the average American family. A social studies instructor in the University High School of Eugene, Oregon, found a great variation in the contents of the texts. Less than two per cent of the pages dealt with basic problems and only one textbook gave as much space as thirty per cent to problems.¹⁷ A preponderance of instructional materials came straight from these textbooks according to the Rugg-Judd-Marshall Study on Textbooks. This study found only one per cent of the civic textbooks examined made mention of initiative, referendum, recall, direct primary, and international relations. The economic textbooks gave little space to the discussion of investments and insurance.

The educational surveys on record from 1916 to 1924 revealed there was no field in education in a greater turmoil than in the social studies. Many of these surveys portrayed John Dewey's philosophy of education by recommending courses whose starting point was the experiences and the needs of the student. According to Dr. Franklin Bobbitt, the 'Problems' course

¹⁶R. O. Hughes, "The Twelfth Grade Course in Problems of American Democracy", The Historical Outlook, XV, 5, (May, 1924), pp.206-209.

¹⁷Rollien Dickerson, "What Do Social Textbooks Contain?", The Historical Outlook, XV, 9, (December, 1924), pp.397-398.

provided a real experience and study of life. The educational literature of the middle twenties frequently mentioned group dynamics and the socialized recitation as being ideally suited to the course combining economics, sociology, history, and government.

The fifth annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association in Cincinnati, Ohio, in February of 1925 learned that considerable emphasis was being placed on the importance of the social studies in the scheme of modern education. The morning session of the second day was devoted to the newly organized course of 'Problems of Democracy' by Miss Kathryn E. C. Carrigan, Atlantic City; Miss Marguerite Morey, Ft. Thomas, Kentucky; and Mr. A. E. Erickson, Watertown, South Dakota. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction of California, Mr. W. C. Wood made a plea for adequate instruction in history, economic, sociology, and government. He recommended these social studies should be organized in a single course unless the high school had an enrollment that would warrant the teaching of them as separate disciplines. The standards for the teaching of the social studies would have to be raised to a minimum of thirty-six hours of college work in the four basic social sciences.

Within two years, unfavorable criticisms began to be heard in many educational circles. Mr. W. G. Kimmel, Chairman of the Committee of Current Information of the National Council for the Social Studies, reported on the Hyman Meltzer Study entitled "Children Social Concepts." This study was conducted in 1926 by personal interviews of 333 students. The pupils were questioned about 297 ideas pertaining to economic, social, and political concepts. The result of this study showed the pupils had only the

precise use of 31 fundamental concepts.¹⁸

Emerging from such bewilderment was heard the voice of the 'New History.' The American Historical Association listened to Professor Harry C. Barnes of Smith College define history as "A record of man's development as conditioned by his social environment."¹⁹ Another defender of the 'Problems' course was Mr. William H. Ellison, who believed students should be trained to take their place as intelligent citizens and dynamic social beings. His greatest fear was that teachers may lack the intellectual background for this course and therefore the students would be prone to make superficial judgments.²⁰

Throughout the late twenties, unfavorable comments continued to be written about the one unified course in the social studies taught in the senior year. There appeared to be an overlapping of content and subject matter in forty-one textbooks examined in the fields of civics, economics, sociology, and 'Problems' course. This was considered a serious weakness in secondary education because the majority of teachers taught wholly from textbooks and very few teachers required outside readings. The textbooks used in the 'Problems' course were merely enlarged civics textbooks although the greater number of textbooks examined covered the entire social studies field in a general way. The reason for the elimination of economics and sociology as separate disciplines was advanced by authorities in psychology who believed "the mind of the adolescent was unable to grasp

¹⁸W. G. Kimmel, "Recent Happenings in the Social Studies," The Historical Outlook, XVIII, 1, (January, 1927), p.209.

¹⁹Harry E. Barnes, "The Essentials of the New History", The Historical Outlook, XVIII, 5, (May, 1927), p.209.

²⁰Ibid., pp.210-211.

highly organized subject matter."²¹

Revolutionizing the teaching of the social studies were three divisions of closely correlated doctrines of modern education. The primary aim of education was to prepare the individual for effective, creative, and satisfactory membership in a democratic society he was destined to live. The second requisition was that the individual must be trained in attitudes to natural life experiences having a wholehearted purposeful activity. Thirdly, all of the educational activities must be measured quantitatively. The basic question resulting from the numerous innovations in the social studies curriculum brought the fundamental inquiry:

Are there any prerequisite intellectual or educational entities called history, geography, civics, economics, and sociology; or, are these simply artificial collections of facts and principles, soon to be dissolved and their content, in whole or in part, organized in new and more special disciplines?²²

A national survey of secondary education made in 1932 showed that within thirty years the high school enrollment had increased from ten per cent of the population of the high school age to more than fifty per cent. This study, urged by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and published in a Monograph No. 21 by the United States Department of Education, revealed unfavorable comments on the 'Problems' course because of the different kinds of organizations. By reason of the multitudinous character of the content and subject matter, there was confusion of value and it was difficult to formulate a balanced social studies program. The 'Problems' course had a variety of titles according to reports

²¹ Edwin J. Dahl, "The Overlapping of Content Material in Senior High School Social Science Textbooks," The Historical Outlook, XIX, 2, (February, 1928), p.97.

²² Clayton C. Kohl, "Educational Theory Versus the Integrity of the Social Studies," The Historical Outlook, XXI, 7, (November, 1930), p.325.

from ten city school systems. In the eastern cities the course was offered only in the twelfth grade, while in the western cities it was one of a series of electives. Two plans of organization used by Rochester and San Francisco were studied, and four courses of study with pedagogical literature were examined. Two trends were noted in this survey. The course was favored by the state departments of education more than by the city systems. In larger cities, separate courses in economics, sociology, and civics were offered more often than the 'Problems' course. This fusion course was favored in small town schools. Another trend worth noting was that the more capable students enrolled in practical curriculums that included the 'Problems' course. Why had this course 'Problems of American Democracy' survived when many thought it to be a fad? This question was asked often during the trying years of the Great Depression and the only answer was of a dual nature. Many of the students might never go to college, but through the reading and the discussion of economic and social problems they were able to learn many fundamental facts that could be put into practice at once. The conceded opinion was the course could be taught successfully if schools were given good equipment, good libraries, good books, and good teachers.

An interesting study was conducted in 1932 when letters were sent to a hundred of the largest high schools in America having an enrollment of 70,000. The questionnaire requested the title, the author, the publisher, and the date of publication on the basic textbooks used in the American history and Problems of Democracy courses. Less than half of the schools answered the questionnaire, but the majority of the school systems were agreed upon four standard textbooks used in each of the two courses. The 'Problems' course was so recent and so little standardized

that the task of selecting problems was duplicated. The survey showed the history texts were inadequate for economic and social problems; therefore, there was a need for both of the courses as efficient agents in the training for citizenship. American history furnished the background material, as it stressed political problems to a greater degree than social problems. There was not enough overlapping in subject matter between the two courses to justify the omission of the 'Problems' course, but Mr. Oliver R. Floyd, believed,

Only the development of fusion courses of study to supplant the traditional courses in American history and problems and application of these experimental organizations to actual classroom situations can ever solve the problem.²³

During this period of distress and unemployment, the foundation of the society in America was reexamined. The social studies had the task of preparing the coming generation with an accurate and comprehensive account of the lives of ordinary persons. It also was charged with tracing the evolution of the ideal of democracy and of the peaceful arts and culture. The industrial civilization of the United States demanded an integrated economy with politics. The social studies had the challenge of describing the numerous conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society and of advancing the quality of the content and subject matter of the social studies in the public schools.

An intensive body of printed material illuminated the modern world and expressed the spirit of industrialism. The great social trend in technology required that the high school students sense and define the problems

²³ Oliver R. Floyd, "Overlapping Between the Senior High School Courses in Problems of Democracy and American History," The Historical Outlook, XXXIII, 6, (October, 1932), p.302.

occasioned by tensions arising in a never-ending movement of ideas and interests. These students of the mid-thirties believed that society should be reconstructed with a great ethical principle to guide and to formulate programs of welfare for all Americans. In an address at Harvard University on March 15, 1935, Mr. Arthur A. Hitchcock, Educational Advisor, 1103rd Company of the Civil Conservation Corps of Goshen, Massachusetts, said:

C. C. C. men want a good world in which to live, and they want an understanding of, and adjustment to, that world.²⁴

The most desirable study for stimulating interest was the 'Problems' course, and it was thought to be the logical field for occupational guidance. The weakness of the social studies program was the dull methods used in teaching the background course of history, according to a survey in this C. C. C. camp. The men also complained that the social studies didn't arouse their interest in current happenings. This indictment ran counter to the idea expressed in an essay, "John Dewey and the Activist Movement," by Mr. Edwin H. Reeder who wrote,

All problems in social studies should spring from immediate current political or social situations. Such a theory would make the social studies curriculum grow out of current events of social and economic problems.²⁵

An active force in the social science movement was Dr. J. Lynn Barnard of Pennsylvania who believed in the program for the fusion of the social studies. He wrote "In life we face problems, not subjects."²⁶

²⁴ Arthur A. Hitchcock, "What C. C. C. Men Think About the Social Studies," The Social Studies, XXVII, 1, (January, 1936), p.21.

²⁵ The Historical Approach to Methods of Teaching the Social Studies, (Philadelphia: McKinley Publishing Co., 1935), p.48.

²⁶ Ibid., p.78.

An interesting study on the place of economics among the social studies revealed that the course was offered only to seniors because the students lacked the proper background material and they were too immature. This opinion survey took the form of a questionnaire sent to 518 city school systems. There were social studies courses offered in 422 of these schools, but economics was either an integrated course of 'Introduction to the Social Studies' or in a 'Problems' course. The schools were attempting to contribute to a better social order, but the path of the educator was a thorny one because the experts in economics, sociology, and political science disagreed. The deduction was that young people needed to be taught to reach their own decisions, but the different economic and political attitudes made it a difficult task for the teacher. There was an urgency on the part of educators that the arts of propaganda must be incorporated into the social studies curriculum. Interwoven qualities of history and the social studies would eventually bring the discourse of such topics as population, poverty, disease, propaganda, and public opinion to explore the historical background of each problem. The relationship between the social studies would become more evident the farther the method of investigation could be carried in such an integrated course as 'Problems of Democracy.'

The purpose of education in American democracy was to prepare future citizens to be economically literate and to accept their civic responsibilities. Education in the social studies continued to be too concerned with facts and too little concerned with values. An unique experiment, "The Eight Year Study," was piloted by the Progressive Education Association. Chosen to participate in the special study designated as "Democracy in Action" were five high schools of Tulsa, Des Moines, Cleveland, Rochester,

and Schenectady, representing the agricultural areas of the south and middle west and the industrial areas of the north and east. The study revealed that no school had used the problem approach exclusively in the social studies; however, the topical treatment of contemporary issues was a method that was growing. The most difficult task was not in the selection of the problems nor to guide the students to see the relationship between the past and present, but the student's inability to reach tentative decisions of their own. A leader in the social studies movement, Mr. Samuel P. McCutchen, wrote "Educational institutions are content with academic sterility."²⁷

During the late thirties pedagogical literature was dominated by a sociological philosophy of education. Interrogation of the value of the social studies continued. Were they merely a slogan or did the social studies perform a service to education? The results of a 1937 opinion poll showed the social studies was firmly entrenched in the secondary schools. The majority of the questionnaires answered by 1500 teachers concurred that the objectives of the social studies were individual responsibility and social cooperation. A dynamic program would necessitate a new approach to the civic, social, and economic subject matter in the terms of problems.

Experimentation with the 'Problems' course continued at a rapid pace. In the spring of 1938 a study conducted among 200 high schools in Pennsylvania showed 25 per cent of the curriculums included the 'Problems' course, which was offered only to seniors. The full time teachers of the

²⁷ Samuel P. McCutchen, "Eight Year Study-Progressive Education Association," Social Education, II, 4, (April, 1938), p.231.

social studies were considered more effective but there was little effort on the part of all the schools to have a written course of study. Although the 'Problems' course was reported an important study, 81 per cent of the schools signified the course had become static rather than dynamic. A fourth of the textbooks in current usage had been published prior to 1932. The objective to bridge the gap between school and society was being realized in schools on the west coast; namely, Los Angeles and Oakland, California, and Eugene, Oregon. The scientific method of attacking problems was used in the Sacramento, California high schools. All of the schools recognized the inseparability of the social, economic, and political problems, but the weakness of the course was in the fact its content or subject matter was spread over too wide an area.

In retrospect, the course introduced in 1916 as the 'Problems of American Democracy', had gained a foothold by 1923, and it was offered in 900 schools located in 38 states within a five-year period. By 1933 the course, having an enrollment of a half million students, constituted a fitting capstone for the social studies program because its great emphasis were on contemporary affairs in history, civics, and economics. The reaffirmation of the importance of the social studies came often. Only if the electorate was well informed and able to arrive at some intelligent opinion, would America be able to maintain a democratic society. The depression years high pointed the crisis in democracy, and many influential persons began to sense the weaknesses of the 'Problems' course. The process of selecting only non-controversial problems to be studied did not produce the disciplined citizenship that was needed in such a crisis. Entrusting the course to inadequately trained teachers who relied solely on outdated textbooks without using reliable supplementary data was described

as 'the forsenic exchange of ignorant opinion.'²⁸

Studies continued to be made on the status of economics and sociology in the curriculum of the secondary schools. The result of a survey directed by the University of Omaha in 1942 showed sociology continued to be a major division of the 'Problems' course. A trend to increase the use of current material was noted among all the schools. The forgotten course of the academic curriculum was 'Economics', although consumers education was included in the four broad fields of study offered in certain 'Social Problems' courses designated for seniors. Some progressive schools had departed from the traditional theological information and discipline curriculum to a type of functional teaching, unhampered by departmental boundaries. One such school to experiment with this kind of teaching was Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles. The course was rated superior or above average by 90 per cent of the 838 replies to the questionnaires. The values of the course were as follows:

- (1) Opportunity to discuss things
- (2) Learn to receive other opinions
- (3) Increase knowledge
- (4) Opportunity to work on what pupils deemed worthwhile.²⁹

Its greatest weaknesses appeared to be the lack of planning and organization on the part of the teachers. A similar study conducted by the Southern Illinois Normal University found the majority of teachers in seventy Illinois high schools were poorly trained for teaching the 'Problems' course. Another censure was that civics, economics, and sociology were introduced too rapidly into the curriculum. Contrasting these arguments were the teachers' reprimands of the prevailing textbooks. They charged that

²⁸Erling M. Hunt, "Twenty-five Years of Problems of American Democracy," Social Education, V, 7, (November, 1941), p.509.

²⁹Paul S. Chance, "A Course in Senior Problems," Social Education, VI, 3, (March, 1942), p.124.

functional teaching could come only by common experiences from a background of common culture. An examination of the pedagogical literature dealing with the social studies revealed that democracy could function effectively only if the citizens were given an opportunity for unbiased reasoning and an enlargement of thought. Any problem of a democratic society could be resolved successfully and intelligently if all of its citizens understood. This understanding would come if every citizen had a knowledge of the mechanics of government, economics, and the forces that affect changes in human institutions.

Designed as a laboratory of life, the 'Problems' course was destined to play a major role in preparing the students for citizenship. Many writers believed the social studies classroom provided future leaders in industry and labor with practical experiences in handling problems. A most extensive study on the evaluation of the 'Problems' course was a test administered by members of the Board of Examinations at the University of Chicago. The Cooperative Test Service of the American Council in Education prepared Form A for the United States Army and Form B for the civilians. The two criteria were objectives set by teachers of the social studies and the best thought on what the course should accomplish. The tests were prepared after an examination of numerous textbooks, courses of study, and current thought of relevant literature. The results of the tests showed the students had gained knowledge and skills necessary for "understanding oral or written discussion of social problems at the level of difficulty of the average newspaper article or editorial."³⁰

³⁰ Jay William and Herbert J. Abraham, "Evaluating the Course in Problems of Democracy," Social Education, IX, 4, (April, 1945), p.168.

The course was valuable in teaching the interpretation of graphs, charts, and tables. An enriched vocabulary was another asset. The students were able to examine critically materials related to problems. They could make analyses of problems by distinguishing between fundamental and irrelevant data. The course had taught the techniques of propaganda, and judging from the test results the students possessed the ability to weigh critically values given to emotionally toned words. Concerning the selection of the topics for discussion the dangers were:

- (1) Problems were of ephemeral nature.
- (2) Course is a compendium of sociology, economics, and political science.³¹

Of paramount importance, was a survey made of the social studies courses in the American high schools during 1944 and 1945. Questionnaires requesting information on the description of the courses were sent to state and city educational authorities. Replies were received from 34 of the 48 states. The cities were chosen in order to obtain a wide spread in size and geographic location, and from 49 inquiries. There were responses from 33 cities. There was a great diversity of course offerings in the last two years of high school. The 'Problems' course was given in 22 of the 34 states and in 18 of the 33 cities; it was required for graduation in 18 states and in 10 cities. The topics receiving increased emphasis were international affairs, social and economic planning, intercultural relations, and community study.³²

Professional literature in the teaching of the social studies continues to be meager. The energies of America were directed to winning

³¹ Ibid., p.169.

³² Dorothy Merideth, "Secondary School Social Studies in 1945," Social Education, IX, 8, (December, 1945), p.349.

the global conflict. With the defeat of Hitler, a certainty in the early spring of 1945, the task of the reorganization of the social studies became focused upon units of study dealing with problems of post-war construction. The problems of citizenship, racial tolerance, and globalism must now be incorporated into the 'Problems' course, as social, economic, and political cooperation was imperative if the United States was to win the peace. A post-war survey of the status of the social studies in the schools of Wisconsin was made in 1946. Judging from the response of 415 out of the 461 schools receiving the questionnaire, a new impetus had been placed on the social studies program. Every school in Wisconsin required one unit of social studies for graduation and the average school required three units. One third of all the high schools of Wisconsin required 'Problems of Democracy', and two thirds of the schools offered the course as a senior subject. The academic preparation of 1146 teachers was examined in this survey. It was found that 52.35 per cent of the teachers had majored in history and 49.04 per cent had majored in social studies, but only 11.5 per cent had a double major of history and the social studies, and 14 per cent had no undergraduate major in either history or social studies.³³ Another interesting fact was the co-curricular activities of the social studies teachers. They were required to perform a multiplicity of duties and to teach many subjects in unrelated areas. The majority of the teachers taught English as well as the social studies. Many teachers had to teach music, mathematics, shop, and foreign languages along with a variety of extra curricular duties as well. These ranged from coaching athletics to debate, drama, and school publications.

³³ Leonard Haas, "The Status of the Social Studies in Wisconsin Secondary Schools," Social Education, X, 5, (May, 1956), p.215.

The schools of Wisconsin followed the traditional national pattern of the abolition of ancient, medieval, modern, and English history and the acceptance of the course, 'Problems of Democracy'. The latter was widely adopted throughout the state. The future trend among the social studies was that a greater emphasis would be placed upon the core courses such as 'Problems' courses and consumers education. A similar report on the status of the social studies was made in New Jersey schools. One half of the total high school population was enrolled in 'Problems of Democracy', and some schools graduated students with only one year's work in the 'Problems' course. This study by Mr. Edwin M. Barton disclosed two tendencies, that of the students having less academic ability enrolled more often in the social studies than the college bound students.

In the decade following World War II, the social studies program of the secondary schools developed into a national pattern of requiring the 'Problems' course more widely than world history.³⁴ This trend was substantiated by a survey conducted by the social studies department of the Seattle Public Schools in 1953. Questionnaires were sent to 118 public schools in cities having a population of 100,000 and responses from 107 schools showed the amount of social studies required for graduation was definitely on the increase. Greater emphasis was being given to the development of citizens skilled in critical thinking. Among the 'Big Four' in the social studies were United States history, government, world history, and 'Problems of Democracy'.

An evaluation of the 'Problems' course often became the question, "Can we teach democracy?" The consensus was that merely learning facts

³⁴Emlyn Jones, "Analysis of the Social Studies Requirements," Social Education, XVIII, 6, (October, 1954), p.258.

of democracy did not make ardent supporters of democracy. To counteract this weakness in the course, it was suggested the students do extensive readings from a variety of textbooks and current literature and then practice democratic discussion. This would enable the students to gain a better understanding of the democratic way of life and a clearer sense of values, if the teacher guaranteed freedom of speech. The social studies had become recognized as a legitimate member of the secondary school curriculum and seemed to surpass the humanities in enrollment and emphasis. On an equality with the natural sciences, the social studies had begun to play a decisive role, not only in the acquisition of knowledge and skills but in the student's dexterity in performing democratic principles in his community, state, nation, and world. The social studies now provide the students with scholarly material concerning human beings and their inter-relationship.

Since 1925, the social studies has been used to acquaint the students with problem solving techniques. The several social studies have given the student a historical background and a world outlook with an intellectual perspective that allows him to think in terms of integration. This points up the research dilemma that educators in the social studies face in the sixties. Perchance a new science of the social man and the relationship between the individual and group membership in democratic society may be unfolding. If so, there is a need for a workable psychology of motivation to supplement, or perhaps replace, the classic theories in economics and politics. The basic value of the social studies would give the student a maximum opportunity to choose what he should be. The contents of the 'Problems' course would be drawn not only from the areas of sociology, economics, and political science, but would include social psychology. The validity

of the course would depend upon the amount of accurate knowledge employed into the course to give the student a chance to develop his many sided personality to live in a complex society. The National Council for the Social Studies accepted the twelve goals or guides to the content of the social studies as follows:

- (1) Reciprocal adjustment of man and nature
- (2) Adaptation of individual and group ideas to an interdependent world
- (3) Recognition of the dignity and worth of the individual
- (4) Use of intelligence to improve human living... and maintenance of free marketplace for ideas and values
- (5) Intelligent acceptance of individual responsibility for personal and general welfare
- (6) Increasing effectiveness of family as a basic social institution
- (7) Intelligent and responsible sharing of power in order to attain justice
- (8) Wise allocation of scarce resources in order to bring about widest material security
- (9) Achievement of adequate horizons of loyalty, a sane and seasoned patriotism and global humanitarianism
- (10) Cooperation in interest of peace and welfare...An increase in conference and conciliation, meditation and arbitration, seeking a consensus.
- (11) Achieving a balance between social stability and social change
- (12) Widening and deeping the ability to live more richly.³⁵

A social studies program constructed on these twelve concepts would give the youth of America more than a dreary chronological study of politics.

The social studies movement in American secondary education, beginning in 1916, inaugurated a new era of pedagogy in the study of human behavior. The history of the course, 'Problems of Democracy', covers a half century "of slow, unsteady, and usually, unassociated growth of scholarship and pedagogy."³⁶ During the early thirties there was cooperative endeavor

³⁵Donald W. Oliver, "The Selection of the Content in the Social Studies," The Harvard Educational Review, XXVII, 4, (Fall, 1957), pp.278-279.

³⁶William H. Cartwright, "The Social Studies: Scholarship and Pedagogy," Social Education, XXII, 5, (May, 1958), p.228.

between scholarship and the art of teaching, but for the most part, the course had grown up in a topsy manner, but occasionally in sharp contrast. The study of ancient history and the classics was crowded out of the secondary schools to make room for the new social studies. Reluctantly, the 'Problems' course became entrenched in the secondary curriculum as the public schools endeavored to educate the masses. This course as characteristic of the entire social studies curriculum, is far from static, but not as dynamic as the founding fathers or the functional historians had wished. A greater need for curriculum improvement is seen by the National Study of Secondary Schools directed by the Civic Education Center at Tufts College, Medford, Massachusetts. This account was made public on April 26, 1960, by Dr. Franklin Patterson, Director of Civic Education Center of Tufts College, at a Convention of the National School Boards Association in Chicago. Dr. Patterson reported,

The hard facts is that the social studies curriculum of the American high school is obsolete and dangerously so. It provides less than adequate treatment for today's pressing problems and barely touches on the lands that lie outside the Western world. The difficult and controversial areas of public affairs are avoided altogether in far too many classrooms. The social sciences other than history and government are ignored. As far as the majority of the high schools is concerned, it is as though the tremendous developments of the sciences of man in the past century had not occurred. Economics gets short shrift. In most cases the findings and insights of anthropology, social psychology, and sociology get little if any attention.³⁷

It appears if the needs of the students are translated into a revised social studies program, a great many revolutionary ideas must permeate

³⁷News and Cues, Education (Washington D. C.: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, May-June, 1960), XIV, 10, p.4.

the entire structure of the secondary school curriculum. Only in this way will the graduating seniors of the American high schools have a fuller understanding of the world now in the making. Perhaps the social studies movement is in the early stages of its development.

CHAPTER III

THE STATUS OF THE COURSE 'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY' IN THE CURRICULUM OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The functional concept of the secondary schools placed the social studies at the very core of the curriculum. Curriculum development under this conception came because the students on the secondary level had need of an intelligent understanding of society, its modes of living, human relationship, and problems. The innovation to develop desirable habits, skills, abilities, attitudes, and understanding in the students found a true expression in the course 'Problems of American Democracy.' Previously, courses of study for the social studies had been held in a vise by the formal training necessary for mental discipline. According to the Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University the one criterion in the selection of content was its contribution to the present living. The scientific method in the reconstruction of the curriculum would utilize the permanent and important issues in the economical, social, and political policies of modern society. Professor H. O. Rugg wrote, "Adequate appreciation of the problems and issues of contemporary society is regarded as the chief goal to be sought in the teaching of social studies."¹ The material selected for study and organized into problem solving

¹H. O. Rugg, "A Unified Social Science Curriculum," The Historical Outlook, XIV, 9, (December, 1923), p.393.

form came through the cooperation of thirty economists, fifteen political scientists, fourteen sociologists, five historians, four anthropologists, and twenty-two editors. This experimental curriculum-making was preceded by a decade of planning for the social studies of history, civics, commercial geography, economics, politics, and sociology to occupy a fourth of the study program in the four year high schools.²

At the close of the Civil War a unique society, The American Social Science Association was organized. Its founder, Mr. H. C. Carey believed the social studies curriculum should include:

Sovereigns in maintaining peace: Nation: Legislators: Farmers: Workingmen: Freemen: Free-Trade Advocates: Advocates of Women's Rights: Anti-Slavery Advocates: Disciples of Mr. Maltus: Philosophers: Reformers: Statesmen: Christian.³

The only major subject not contained in the above course of study was sociology, which was not introduced until the nineteenth century by the French philosopher, Auguste Comte. His theory of Positive Philosophy was an endeavor to treat the social science as a natural science in search for the facts of life in human society. An advocate of such belief was Dr. H. O. Rugg, who spoke at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Social Studies in 1924 on the need for a general social studies course. His attack on the formal curriculum cited the need for rich, varied, anecdotal material that would enable the students to think through difficult problems.

An experimental curricular study on the 'Problems' course by Professor J. Montgomery Gambrill of the Teachers College, Columbia University,

²O. L. Manchester, "A High School Course in Economics," Paper Presented at the Second Conference on the Teaching of Economics, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1911), p.52.

³H. C. Carey, Principles of Social Sciences, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1858), III, p.469.

revealed two principal methods of approach:

1. Study elements of sociology, economics, and political science, using social problems to illustrate fundamental principles or theories of each.
2. Discussion of social problems, going to the social studies for explanation and possible solutions.⁴

The theory that all knowledge is based upon experience was the guiding spirit in developing the social studies curriculum. It was the belief of Mr. H. C. Hill of the University of Chicago High School that such experimentation would be fruitful only if the social studies teachers would accept the challenging creed to "Teach; test; diagnose; teach again." The proposition for a composite, unified general social studies was considered a laboratory course, such as 'Problems of American Democracy.' This was aptly described by a teacher in the Peabody High School of Pittsburg, who had served on the Joint Commission on the Presentation of Social Studies in Schools. Mr. R. O. Hughes reported:

The purpose of the school curriculum is to enable our youth to realize what it means to live in society, to appreciate how people have lived and do live together well; to the end that our youth may develop such abilities, inclinations, and ideals as may qualify them to take an intelligent and effective part in an evolving society.⁵

The New Jersey Association of Teachers of Social Studies met in a state secondary school conference at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, for the purpose of preparing a syllabus for the social studies courses. The president of the organization, Mr. S. B. Howe, a high school teacher from Newark, appointed Henry W. Elson, Dr. Edgar Dawson, and Dr.

⁴J. Montgomery Gambrill, "Experimental Curriculum-Making in the Social Studies," The Historical Outlook, XV, 1, (January, 1924), p.41.

⁵R. O. Hughes, "The Twelfth Grade Course in Problems of Democracy," The Historical Outlook, XV, 5, (May, 1924), p.206.

D. C. Knowlton on this curriculum committee. The committee recommended a two unit course to be taught in the twelfth grade as 'Economics and Problems of American Democracy.' An outline submitted by Mr. Raymond R. Amm-arell was accepted by the committee. This course of study on economics included a survey of the economical conditions before and during the Industrial Revolution. The theories of Adam Smith's laissez faire and Thomas Malthus' population increase were to be comprehended as well as the studies of production, consumption, and distribution. The outline for the 'Problems' course contained the origin of our civilization; meaning and fundamental principles of democracy; comparative governments; national and state constitutions; and American ideals.

During the early 1930's, there appeared a left wing attack upon the formal curriculum. The three basic principles would include only social studies material that had direct functional values; all of the units of learning would naturally be problematic topics; and the total abolition of subject lines. Some educators believed this new approach by the way of fusion or integrated courses in the social studies was merely an abolition of viewpoint, that wisdom comes from balanced knowledge no matter what vehicle is used.

A number of educators adhered to the pedagogy of the problem approach. A campaign to build the curriculum upon permanent and important problems and issues of contemporary life reached a high peak by 1935. The student must be trained to make choices and frame policies on the basis of his cultural heritage and the great social revolution erupting the old ethical and aesthetic values. In an essay, entitled "The Social Foundations of Education," Dr. George S. Counts revived the nascent tenet that democracy would provide a dominant spiritual note in the development of America.

Describing the nature of the social studies incorporated in the secondary curriculum he wrote:

1. The Social Studies prepare coming generation as accurate and comprehensive account of lives and fortunes of ordinary men and women.
2. The Social Studies tell the story of evolution of peaceful arts and culture.
3. The Social Studies trace in broad outline the development of ideal of democracy.
4. The Social Studies recounts in detail the growth of industrial civilization and the emergence of an integrated economy--reunion of economics and politics.⁶

The Great Depression had made it imperative that a new evaluation of contemporary society be made. The paradoxes of poverty with prosperity and privation in plenty needed to be explained. The 'Problems' course would provide the youth with materials for a critical appraisal of the conflicts and the contradictions in contemporary America in the terms of democratic ideals. The first task would be to advance the quality of content material of the social studies teaching in the public schools. The extensive literature needed for this course should illuminate the modern world and contain disciplinary values in training the memory, the judgment, and the imagination of the student. The value of the 'Problems' course according to Mr. Rolla M. Tryon was "to lay a foundation in the social studies both for those who go to college and for those whose education ends with high school."⁷

Adverse criticism of the integration of the social studies began to be felt as early as 1933 but the year 1936 saw an increase in periodicals denouncing the time spent on social studies. The department of the social

⁶George S. Counts, "The Social Foundations of Education," Part IX, Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p.551.

⁷Rolla M. Tryon, The Social Sciences as School Subjects, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p.418.

studies of Dartmouth College reduced the courses in economics, political sciences, and sociology from one year to one semester. This decision was reflected in the report of the Supervisor Director of Curriculum and Research of Detroit Public Schools, Mr. Paul T. Rankin. Integrated social studies were replaced by separate subject courses in geography, history, civics, economics, sociology, and social psychology throughout the Detroit schools. The Denver program in the Eight Year Study recorded that experimentation in the curriculum-making in the social studies had moved very cautiously. There had been a minimum of cooperation between the English and the social studies teachers.

The pedagogical literature of this era was agreed upon one fact. The 'Problems' course had been the most successful in attempting to achieve a broader functional organization by erasing subject matter lines. Professor of Education at the University of Texas, Mr. Fred C. Ayer, wrote, "The social studies dependent on the social sciences for subject matter are in the curriculum to prepare pupils to become effective members of society."⁸ Progress had been made in the experimentation of core courses in the 'Problems of Democracy' in New York, Ohio, Iowa, Oklahoma, Colorado, California, and Oregon. These integrated social studies were essentially based upon pupil activity and interest. This revealed an unbalanced progress in what the schools should be accomplishing in the education of the social studies. To improve the quality of living in modern society, a program of social action should be based upon some accepted values. The National Education Association adopted the following four objectives of education:

⁸ Fred C. Ayer, "The Social Studies in the Changing Curriculum," Education, LVIII, 7, (November, 1938), p.400.

Self-Realization
 Human Relationship
 Economic Efficiency
 Civic Responsibility⁹

Only through a broad, humane, and flexible curriculum could these be achieved.

The students should be able to reach better academic achievements with improved social attitudes, skills, understanding, and above all, a social sensitivity. Therefore, the organization of the social studies curriculum around modern, social, economic, and political problems should be based upon the three fundamental assumptions:

1. American society is dynamic.
2. School can and should share in directing social change.
3. Individuals learn more effectively when activity, interest, and environmental relationships are present.¹⁰

The curriculum would be focused on the present areas of living and the social demands or persistent concern of youth. Individual differences of high school students make the approach to the fundamental concepts of the social studies either directly and immediately or slowly through the medium of social living. For that reason the curriculum of the social studies must be revamped to allow for maturity so necessary in mastering the concepts, theories, and principles of sociology, economics, and political science.

An examination of the various guides on the teaching of the social studies reveals many interesting facts concerning the status of the 'Problems' course. A resume of the publications from the State Departments of Education follows:

⁹National Education Association, The Purposes of Education in American Democracy, Educational Policies Commission, (Washington D. C.: 1201 Sixteenth street N. W., 1938), p.47.

¹⁰Hugh B. Wood, "Modern Problems in the Curriculum," Social Education, IV, 2, (February, 1940), p.90.

<u>State</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>'Problems' Course</u>	<u>Description of the 'Problems' Course</u>
Alabama	1954	Elective	Study problems resulting from social change
Alaska	1961	Not Indicated	No response
Arizona	1957	Required	Study government and economics
Arkansas	1961	Not Indicated	No response
California	1957	Elective	Study socio-economic problems from local to international level
Colorado	1961	Not Indicated	No state course of study
Connecticut	1954	Required	Problem solving approach through teacher-pupil planning
Delaware	No Date	Elective	Study problems resulting from social change
Florida	1961	Elective	No state course of study
Georgia	1957	Required	Study problems related to civics, sociology, and economics
Hawaii	1961	Required	Course of study in process of revision
Idaho	1961	Not Indicated	No response
Illinois	1961	Not Indicated	Course of study in process of revision
Indiana	1954	Required	Study modern American problems
Iowa	1950	Required	Personal adjustment to social, economic, political, and international aspects of contemporary world
Kansas	1956	Required	One semester government may include economic and social problems
Kentucky	1953	Required	Study problems of American life--second semester elective in economic, sociology, international problems or social psychology
Louisiana	1958	Elective	Study documents for understanding of contemporary social, economic, and political problems
Maine	1958	Required	Course included in study of government
Maryland	1956	Not Indicated	Bulletin on social studies out of print
Massachusetts	1961	Not Indicated	No state course of study
Michigan	1961	Elective	No state course of study
Minnesota	1955	Not Indicated	Course of study not available for examination

Mississippi	1961	Not Indicated	Course of study being prepared
Missouri	1961	Not Indicated	Course of study not available for examination
Montana	1961	Not Indicated	Course of study in process of revision
Nebraska	1953	Elective	Problems studied to develop attitudes and behavior which constitute loyal, informed, patriotic American citizen- ship
Nevada	1961	Not Indicated	No publication since 1950
New Hampshire	1956	Not Indicated	Course of study out of print
New Jersey	1956	Required	Course of study not available for examination
New Mexico	1959	Required	No state course of study
New York	1961	Elective	Course of study not available for examination
North Carolina	1954	Not Indicated	Study economic, social, and political problems and their implications from local to international level
North Dakota	1961	Not Indicated	Course of study in process of revision
Ohio	1961	Not Indicated	No state course of study
Oklahoma	1961	Elective	Tentative draft of state course of study-contemporary problems of pol- itical, economic, and social nature from local to international level
Oregon	1953	Required	Study problems of economic, social and political nature from local to international level
Pennsylvania	1951	Not Indicated	Ten specific problems studied as an extension of American history
Rhode Island	1961	Not Indicated	No response
South Carolina	1956	Required	Study perplexing problems of socio- logy, economic, and government from local to international level
South Dakota	1961	Not Indicated	No publication since 1950
Tennessee	1961	Not Indicated	No response
Texas	1957	Elective	Study economic, social, and political problems from local to international level
Utah	1961	Not Indicated	No response
Vermont	1961	Required	State Course of study, 1943, des- cribed fusion of course with liter- ature

Virginia	1961	Not Indicated	Comparative government with emphasis on economic aspects from local to international level
Washington	1961	Required	Course utilizes background material from American and world history. Study problems affecting mankind
West Virginia	1960	Elective	Course of study not available for examination
Wisconsin	1961	Not Indicated	State course of study (1943) described problems course from geographical approach
Wyoming	1961	Not Indicated	Correlation course with American literature

This survey¹¹ of the state courses of study describing the 'Problems' course indicates a great need for the development of a social studies curriculum on the state level. Since 1950 only forty per cent of the state departments of education have developed a course of study explaining the objectives of the 'Problems' course. The course continues to go under different titles although the general description of the course appears to have a degree of conformity. The states that have developed courses of study on a local level are as follows: Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Ohio. The long-range well being as well as the immediate depends upon a well educated citizenry; therefore, it should be evident that the social studies curriculums are inadequate in dealing with contemporary knowledge and achieving this end.

¹¹The information was obtained from correspondence with the fifty State Departments of Education in the spring of 1961. Twenty-three courses of study were examined.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE 'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY:'

1932-1960

As religious forces dominated the schools during colonial America, so technological forces dominate the schools of the twentieth century. From 1900 until 1932 the high school enrollment had increased from ten per cent of the population of high school age to more than fifty per cent.¹ European educators believed the American high school was attempting to educate too many, while American educators feared they were not educating enough. The first professional responsibility of the American high school is in the study of democracy. To promote the general welfare is to decrease the lag between the social institutions and the needs of the high school students. These needs are to understand the democratic way of life and how it may provide a wholesome, constructive, and abundant life for all.

According to the Seventy-Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association in 1937, the social studies were in the early stages of development. The way of the educators was difficult because the experts in the field of social sciences were not in agreement on the interpretation of social phenomena. Especially difficult had been the task to construct

¹U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 17, (Washington D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1932), p.1.

a balanced program within the social studies because of the multitudinous character of the available content material. The course 'Problems of American Democracy' had one prime purpose and that was "to teach students to make intelligent judgments on social problems; emphasizing not what to think but how to think."² The teachers of the social studies were in one accord that secondary education needed democracy and that democracy strengthened the individual by requiring much of him. This educational theory was advanced by a Princeton University Professor, Theodore M. Greene, who wrote:

The school's first responsibility to a free society is to teach its students the basic structure and essential processes of a democratic community... to infuse in them a life-long respect for, and devotion to, our precious freedoms and everything that contributes to their continuance and enhancement.

The school's second social responsibility is to try to cultivate in its students an enduring realization that there is nothing sacrosanct or absolute in any form of social and political democracy...³

There was harmony of opinion among the administrators, teachers, and philosophers of education that the schools should provide a place for honest criticism of any flaw in the social order of American democracy; the opinions of the minority groups must be respected in a free society through dispute upon controversial subjects.

The 'Problems' course developed so rapidly in the years following World War I because the draft revealed great deficiencies in the citizenship training. It was believed that more enlightened citizens could be developed if the students studied problems of contemporary America; but

²G. Ballard Simmons, "Social Science in the P. K. Yonge Laboratory School," Education, LVII, 3, (November, 1936), p.139.

³Nelson B. Henry, (Editor), Modern Philosophies and Education, The Fifty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p.132.

the first handicap of the course was in identifying the problems to be studied. The political problems received greater treatment than either the economic or social problems.

In the early development of the course, there was no attempt made to weave the content material into one organized whole but grouped the political, economic, and social problems in three separate divisions of the course. From the very beginning, the 'Problems' course attracted the less capable students who felt a need for the more practical studies. During the depression years the social studies were found to be a part of the curriculum that was avoided by the academically gifted students not because of the content of background material but because of the dull methodology employed in the course. This was noted by a mature group of Civil Conservation Corps men who desired the 'Problems' course "to be taught in a lively, forceful, and informal manner."⁴ They believed "for stimulating spontaneous interest, the modern problems courses are most desirable."⁵

The entire approach to the integration of the social studies would be away from textbooks and the only way "integration could be achieved would be by breaking down departmental barriers in the study of problems."⁶ The techniques of propaganda and modern advertising would have to be a part of the social studies curriculum if the schools contribute to a better social order, and the young people are taught to reach their own opinions. According to many administrators, the object of the 'Problems' course was to bridge the gap between the school and society. They believed the art of getting along in the world socially, economically, and politically

⁴ Arthur A. Hitchcock, "What C. C. C. Men Think About the Social Studies," The Social Studies, XXVII, 1, (January, 1936), p.21.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Harry D. Gideonse, "Integration of the Social Sciences and the Quest for Certainty," The Social Studies, XXVII, 6, (October, 1936), p.366.

was to liberate the mind. This was evident by the fact that the social studies curriculum had gained in favor by 1940 when the United States Bureau of Education reported that 70 out of 100 high schools offered the course 'Problems of American Democracy.' The schools that reorganized the social studies courses on the basis of problems reported equal or better academic achievement with improved social attitudes, techniques, understanding, and social sensitivity.⁷ The problem-solving technique had not done away with subject matter, it made better use of it.

A survey of the current social textbooks was made by the National Association of Manufacturers, an organization well known for its conservatism, which endorsed the freedom of study for the American youth.⁸ At the same time many weaknesses of the 'Problems' course were noted. The process of selecting problems of non-controversial nature and teaching them in a purely descriptive or historical background would not "develop the disciplined citizenship needed in a time of crisis for democracy."⁹ Another criticism was the lack of planning and organization on the part of the teachers, who relied too much on textbooks (which were outdated) and neglected the up-to-date supplementary data. School administrators should accept the responsibility to appoint competent teachers who are adequately trained in the basic social sciences; to cooperate in securing sufficient materials; and to develop in the community a sympathetic understanding of what the course 'Problems of American Democracy' is attempting to accomplish.

⁷ Hugh B. Wood, "Modern Problems in the Curriculum," Social Education, IV, 2, (February, 1940), p.93.

⁸ Erling M. Hunt, "Twenty-five Years of Problems of Democracy," Social Education, V, 7, (November, 1941), p.508.

⁹ Ibid., p.509.

Another reason administrators were enthusiastic about the courses 'Problems' was due to the increasing number of vocational students. Every citizen needed to know the mechanics of government, the workings of economics, and the knowledge of the forces that affect changes in human institutions. The course offered the greatest opportunities to teach human relations, but it was in this area that the unbalanced development of the social studies appeared. The students were encouraged to talk about social problems with a finesse of forensic ignorance. The social studies did not equip the students with a single social skill that was usable in ordinary human situations. This serious chasm between the actual practice of social science and the guidance of human relations was described as, "The standard of intellectual achievement is high; the knowledge of acquaintance of actual human situations is exceedingly low."¹⁰

The value of the course depends upon the academically well prepared teacher who has read widely in the fields of politics, sociology, and economics and has the ability to utilize supplementary materials and audio-visual equipment to the fullest extent. The problems selected for study usually are of a controversial nature; thus, the teachers believe the 'Problems' course gives them an opportunity to help develop desirable attitudes and habits toward the solution of the problems.

The goals the social studies teachers endeavor to reach are "to develop intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, the habit of analysis, and suspended judgment."¹¹ These objectives can be reached only when the

¹⁰John Madge, The Tools of Social Science, (New York: Longman, Greene & Co., 1953), p.29.

¹¹William A. Hamm, "The Teaching of the Controversial Subject," Education, LIII, 4, (December, 1932), p.210.

program of social studies instruction goes beyond including a body of knowledge and thought but will introduce the students to new and current source material and a practical way to inquire, examine, criticize, and verify truth. The course presents a problem to the social studies teachers, that is, of restoring to the individual student a sense of his own status in society so he may function in a modern society. Charles A. Beard expressed it as follows:

The social studies must objectify itself in the development and improvement of individuals, institutions, human relations, and material arrangements already in the course of unfolding in the United States.¹²

The criterion used in selecting materials for the newly organized social studies classes would have to contribute to the development of the socially effective citizen. This was the agreement of a great number of teachers interrogated. The scheme of organization of the material depends solely upon the vision of the teachers and their ability to assemble the subject matter. The reunion of the disciplines of economics and politics should be placed in the broad outline of this kind of a study of democracy. One of the values to be gained from this integration of the subject matter is the teacher may be able to trace in detail the growth of the industrial civilization and the emergence of an integrated economy.

The prerequisites to the study of controversial problems are that the teachers demand an acquisition of a wide knowledge of facts for training the students to think. A number of studies verified the fact the students need new words to challenge their thinking and to extend their vocabulary. There is a positive correlation between an increased vocabulary and the

¹²Charles A. Beard, A Charter For the Social Sciences, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p.56.

courses offered in the social studies curriculum. The wise teacher will not only permit but encourage the students to hold different opinions if they have intelligent basis. Education determines the way the students make adjustments between social thought, social practice, and economic realities.¹³

Many teachers were critical of the 'Problems' course because the course of study attempted to spread over too wide an area. The one way this could be corrected would be to make the content material increasingly flexible and realistic. The most accepted course in the experiment of the social studies was the 'Problems' course which utilized the techniques for group discussions and parliamentary procedure. The Eight Year Study revealed that no school had swung the social studies exclusively to the problem approach, but this type of organization had been accepted by a larger number of teachers. Using the problem-solving and pupil-teacher planning techniques seem to be the one method the students gain ability to think reflectively and act democratically upon world problems.

In the 'Problems' course, the teacher doesn't have to follow traditional patterns and hold to academic sterility. The competence of the teacher and a sympathetic understanding of the public may erase the cultural lag in the social studies. This can be accomplished if the teacher understands the needs of the students and tests only a few problems by encouraging the reading of appropriate literature in the areas of economics, politics, and sociology.

The gravest weakness of the 'Problems' course is that the teachers are confused by the modern approach of problem solving. They consider the course

¹³Samuel P. McCutchen, "The Real Task of the Social Studies," Progressive Education, XII, 8, (December, 1935), p.547.

too broad and too complicated to handle in an environment of group dynamics. The materials are inadequate, unsuitable and out of date.¹⁴ To counteract this latter objective, the social studies teachers of the secondary school are compelled to read historical and social literature and great historic documents that are classics of social thought in order "to achieve familiarity with methods and instruments of inquiry in the social sciences with historical criticism, analysis, verification, and authentication."¹⁵ The knowledge of such source material possessed by the social studies teachers with the ability to utilize practical methodology would transform the 'Problems' course into a more valuable segment of the social studies curriculum.

The philosophy of secondary education centered upon the great debate of what the high schools should teach. The Great Depression of 1930 challenged the high schools to teach more about community life and subordinate the traditional disciplines of sociology, economics, and political science to the demands of citizenship training. The schools were only one agency for the development and the distribution of knowledge. A wide knowledge of facts and disciplines in thinking were not the end of education but were essential to the aims of education. They were prerequisites to any fruitful consideration of controversial questions in the 'Problems' course. Charles A. Beard wrote in A Charter For the Social Sciences to "guard against the opinion the public schools can solve problems of democracy or at least prepare a way for an easy solution."¹⁶

¹⁴ J. D. McAulay, "Two Major Problems in the Teaching the Social Studies," The Social Studies, LI, 4, (April, 1960), p.135.

¹⁵ Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Commission, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p.61.

¹⁶ Charles A. Beard, A Charter For the Social Sciences, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p.41.

The public schools never accepted the responsibility of social reform but they recognized it was their duty to help train students to participate in social change.

The educational philosophy was adapted to the spirit of the times and secondary education was set within the frame of a noble dream; that is, loyalty to a democratic order, a well trained citizenry, and the equalization of opportunities for an education. To realize those ideals was to recognize that readjustments were needed. This cultural lag was well expressed:

American society is no longer a fairly simple order of agriculture and manufacturing, in which prudence, talents, industry, and thrift are automatically assured places and achievements. It is instead a highly complicated association controlled by a close mechanism of working rules, public and private, which must be effectively observed to assure anything like an adequate functioning of either economy or government.¹⁷

In the essay, My Pedagogic Creed, John Dewey believed that education was the fundamental method of social progress and reform. Thus the true aim of general education for the American youth would be a balanced interaction of the two types of mental attitude: practical as well as theoretical. As the students reach maturity the surest way for them to understand the economic, industrial, social, and political problems of the present society would be to learn the facts and laws through an acquaintance with everyday social applications.

In the course 'Problems of American Democracy' the students experience a unity of economic stability and political liberty; only through the

¹⁷The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy, Educational Policies Commission, (Washington D. C.: National Education Association, 1937), p.65.

process of living may the power of reason be developed. The educators' responsibility is two fold:

First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present and that it is within the range of the capacity of the students; and secondly, arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas.¹⁸

In practicing democracy through problem-solving the students have the freedom of observation and of judgment to be exercised in behalf of purposes that they deem to be intrinsically worthwhile. In searching for more information and in developing a deeper sensitivity toward the problems of society the students view "the democratic constitutional government in the perspectives of both history and contemporary world."¹⁹ The great issues of modern America would include pertinent facts of human geography; a sympathetic study of many different cultures; the distribution of population and resources; the sober and realistic understandings of the origins of wars; instabilities of the capitalist economy; the drives of interest groups; the struggle of social classes; and the totalitarian movements threatening the peace of the world.

The modern curriculum for America's secondary schools must offer a program that will meet the needs of its students and also of society. The students are coming more and more from the lower economic levels,²⁰ possessing fewer intellectual interests, and having less verbal type of intelligence; nevertheless, many have high intelligence and creative behavior.

¹⁸ John Dewey, Experience and Education, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1939), p.97.

¹⁹ George S. Counts, Education and the Promise of America, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1946), p.154.

²⁰ William H. Burton, "Education and Social Classes," The Harvard Educational Review, XXIV, 4, (Fall, 1954), pp.243-256.

The curriculum must be more useful, much more challenging, and less bore-some and unpleasant to these students as well as to those students who are more richly endowed with intellectual and artistic talents.

They must grow not only intellectually but socially, physically, and emotionally as well as adjust.²¹

Too often the curriculum of the public schools has been geared to the aims, ambitions, morals, or ethical standards of the white, prosperous, middle class, Protestant and the teachers coming from the middle class have no idea of the beliefs and motives of these less fortunate children. Our modern age of complexities requires that the curriculum be geared to give the young people a thorough education. This general education sometimes spoken of as a liberal education must cultivate, equip, and liberate the intelligence. Thus education must integrate ideas and experiences to create within a person both self-stability and security, yet liberal and free, within an ever-expanding body of knowledge and an increasingly integrated yet conflicting society. The only opportunity that many youth have to understand world affairs is in the social studies classes of the high school; hence, the social studies curriculum needs to be reexamined. Does the central core of all the social studies in the secondary curriculum really equip man to live in society which is dynamic in economic and social change?

Education is burdened with the rapid disintegration of family life and the crisis in the civic and the political conscience. In the secondary schools, the curriculum is becoming more sensitive to the goals of democratic society and its reorganization must reaffirm faith in the dignity

²¹Harl R. Douglas, "The Modern High School Curriculum," The School Review, LXII, 1, (January, 1955), p.16.

of man. There is an increasing demand for a course in the social studies that will help develop the adolescent intelligence in becoming mature in its judgment. The 'Problems' course is one social study that could maintain the essentials of humanistic education and be adapted to the requirements for the general welfare. Its two fold purpose is to form the man and free the mind. Confronted by the social, economic, and political problems the students are given the motivation for critical thinking. To be critical would mean they are equipped to question authority and habit and to examine thoroughly any experience before they would be free to use it. Such action would involve searching and inquiring for ideas that would enable the students to consider alternate conclusions and to possess the understanding to select among many judgments. Human relationships or group dynamics play an important role in such perception in the formation, testing, and modifying the general representation of the cause of effect of any problem in the social studies. Every student in the 'Problems' course must be equipped with past experiences and a reservoir of relevant knowledge at his command. In the words of John Dewey:

To be genuinely thoughtful, we must be willing to sustain and protect (sic.) that state of doubt which is the stimulus to thorough inquiry, so as not to accept an idea or make a positive assertion to a belief until justifying reasons have been found.²²

The teacher's task is to encourage the transfer of training but there are at least two grave dangers. In summarizing the free group discussion the teacher may be too final in his conclusion or the student's judgment may be chaotic and meaningless because of the freedom and spontaneity of the

²²John Dewey, How We Think, (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1933), p.16.

discussion. The changing role between the teacher and the students demands a hard core of discipline which is the first essence of democracy. The prime purpose of the course 'Problems' is to help the students learn to live effectively in American democratic society. There are myriad things they must learn if their education is to prepare them for living in a democracy. The universal problems faced by them include:

...getting a living, mating, rearing and education of children, establishing some concept of property, determining the rights of individuals and groups, providing protection, and satisfying the urges for beauty, play, and some understanding of the unknown.²³

The first duty of the school is to refine skills, techniques, procedures, which constitutes the science of learning. The second duty of the school is to teach meanings, theories, knowledge, and the principles necessary for the advancement of the art of learning. In training the intellect, the curriculum has three basic obligations to society, namely: to teach the processes of a democratic community and a sense of civic and political obligations to guard freedom; to cultivate the art of critical thinking; and to teach the students an earnest concern for social justice, peace, and harmony both in America and throughout the entire world. Therefore, the task of the curriculum is at a two-forked way and in the dilemma today education must consider the emergence and the satisfaction of the personal needs of the students as well as learning of the purely intellectual powers. Academic education is not a mere collection of facts but ways of thinking. A disciplined mind is important to the individual as well as to society and the vital function of education is to advance moral

²³Raymond F. Bellamy, A Preface To The Social Science, (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 1956), p.19.

conduct, responsible citizenship, and social adjustment. The secondary school must provide a liberal, humanizing, and flexible curriculum. The question then is not what the high schools should teach but what can be taught that the students can learn. The course aptly named 'Problems of American Democracy' presents the greatest opportunities to teach human relationships by utilizing materials from sociology, economics, and political science and bringing them to bear on a few well-selected problems to be studied. The democratic method of problem solving may be adapted to an effective use of human energy of the entire community. The teacher's task is to stimulate the development of ideas by encouraging interest and action. The experiment is unique in democratic education; it needs only to be revitalized by the curriculum specialists. The fruits of freedom to make intelligent choices shall be given the students because they better understand the cultural, social, economic, and political forces in action in our democratic society.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE 'PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY:'

BACKGROUNDS AND ADEQUACIES OF THE TEACHERS

Pioneering in the teaching of the social studies demands a magnanimity in mind and soul. Possessing an inquisitive mind that has the ability to discern the truth is the first prerequisite to teaching the variegated course of 'Problems of American Democracy.' A successful teacher must be carefully and specifically trained with a broad foundation in economics, sociology, political science, geography, anthropology, and social psychology within the matrix of history. Acquiring such talent for teaching the social studies comes from many hours of solitude with great books; executing such talent comes from being in the swift moving current of life. Thus a master teacher is blessed thrice with a profound scholarship; with a desire to actively participate in democratic society; and with a love for eager youth.

The new frontiers of the social studies demand teachers who are worldminded. This was once only a gossamer of day dreams called the New History but today's space age makes it nearing reality. Such idealism was expressed by Dr. Carl L. Becker as he described,

The Great Society of the future; A Federal World State, Democratic in its political organization, without armies or navies, sustained by an educated consciously willing race, inspired by the religion of brotherhood, directed by critical and

scientific knowledge, devoted to the exploration of the unlimited possibilities of the human spirit.¹

The task of the teacher is to help the student function in this modern age through an understanding of the social and political problems. This requires of the teacher not only an open, inquiring, and critical mind but also a social sensitivity based upon responsible, dependable, and purposeful citizenry. Democracy must be rediscovered in each generation by the way of effective instruction and experience in critical analysis of social and civic problems. Democracy can be taught only by those teachers of the 'Problems' courses who practice it. Planning the units for study is then the joint work of both teachers and students. Mr. Otis C. Ames wrote,

Emphasis in teaching democracy should be on the development of the individual's ability to think and on finding means of liberating and enlarging thought.²

Genuine democracy exists only when the teachers and the students are free to make intelligent choices. Freedom comes only when the teachers and the students possess informed intelligence. Ideal democracy will give voice to the majority, with a tolerant and permissive respect for the variance of the minorities.

A teacher, who is a scholar, will possess humility and honesty; industry and intelligence; accuracy (meaning to check and recheck) and generosity (sharing knowledge); and courage and constancy in striving for wisdom as well as knowledge. The paramount aim of education in the social

¹Carl L. Becker, (Editor), Everyman His Own Historian, Essays on History and Politics, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1935), p.186.

²Otis C. Ames, "Instruction is Effective in Teaching Democracy," School and Society, LVI, 1447, (September 19, 1942), p.246.

studies is to train students as worthy, sympathetic, and helpful members of society. The teacher of the 'Problems' course is the agent for this task. The task is no longer the straight and narrow path of a conventionalized training in citizenship but the development of skills needed in critical thinking. These skills necessary for facing life's problems are to recognize and define the problem; analyze the problem and form a tentative hypothesis; collect, evaluate, and organize data; and draw conclusions and develop a plan of action. Both subject matter and students are the center of the learning process. To assist students to develop, change, and fortify their behavior entail more than acquisition and retention of facts. Therefore, the social studies teacher should depend less on textbooks and more on current as well as classic books, periodicals, newspapers, up to date brochures and pamphlets, audio-visual materials, and field trips.

The teacher improves his teaching through continuous revision of the course of study. This is accomplished by uninterrupted succession of academic training in the social studies. The pioneers in curriculum making believed that the obligation of education was to help develop a body of informed citizens whose knowledge of political, economic, and social processes was mature enough to provide a continuing source of intelligent and informed criticism of American democracy. Too many teachers and administrators are reluctant to begin the upgrading and reorganizing the curriculum content in a meaningful, effective way. According to Mr. Thomas C. Barham, the basic screening question should be:

How does the content of the course contribute to the effective preparation of American youth to understand the world in which their future is interlocked, and to achieve the highest goals

and values of the democratic way of life.³

The curriculum of the social studies has failed to coordinate the educational agencies, namely the press, radio, television, films, civic, and industrial life of the local community. Another failure of the social studies may be traced to the inadequacy of the teacher in the fundamentals of social psychology. Too often attempts are made to stamp social patterns on the individual when the desired end is the development of individual social personalities.

The paramount task of the teacher in the course of 'Problems of American Democracy' is to democratize the social studies curriculum. In broadening the democratic values of education the teacher should guide the students toward enriched personalities, economic competence, civic responsibility, and international understanding. Such a scheme of organization depends upon the vision of the teachers of social studies in understanding the cultural, social, economic, and political forces of action in society. One of the most frustrating and disheartening phenomena is the lack of sensitivity to the rapid social and economic changes which makes society so dynamic.

Two specific responsibilities of the teacher of the 'Problems' course are to eliminate all the materials that lead to prejudice, intolerance, and antagonism and teach only content materials that entice an understanding and appreciation of beauty, truth, and goodness. Following untraditional patterns of instruction, the teacher would not only help the students to describe and feel societal conflict but lead them to define alternative ways in regulating human affairs. This carries with it the grave obligation

³Thomas C. Barham, "Ignore the Social Studies," The Clearing House, XXXIV, 8, (April, 1960), p.445.

that the students are morally responsible for their decisions in all matters but particularly in a democracy.

The importance of teaching democracy was noted as early as February 4, 1887, when the Massachusetts Council of the American Institute of Civics met in Boston and heard a paper read, a part of which follows:

In all our schemes of education, those studies that relate to citizenship are placed in the foremost rank; they stand only to those pertaining to man as man, to the cultivation of morals and religion. ...those things that fit a man for living in society, for doing intelligently and well his part in the body politics, are among the most vital and important that can come into education.⁴

The prerogative of teaching democracy has always been inspiring the students with a desire to improve society.

The task of teaching the social studies is difficult because it concerns human behavior, the most complex of all phenomena. Herein lies the need for the teacher to possess a storehouse of knowledge tempered by wisdom; an understanding of social psychology and a discernment of the needs of the students living in a democracy.

To make the world intelligible is the true aim of education. To realize this goal the teacher of the 'Problems' course has the opportunity to open the door of world literature to all students but especially to the gifted ones. In this way they receive primary knowledge from the writers with important theories or great ideas. The classics of social thought within historical literature are books that are contemporary in any age. The galaxy of thought surveying the spectacle of life are found in ideas advanced by such men as Plato, Machiavelli, More, Grotius, Malthus, Darwin,

⁴James E. Vose, "Methods of Instruction in Civics," Education, VII, 8, (April, 1887), p.531.

Adams Smith, Kant, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Locke, Franklin, Jefferson, Ibsen, Galsworthy, Marx, Tolstoy, and Veblen.

Teachers and students alike should follow the advice of John Locke in Some Thoughts Concerning Education when he said:

The tutors should know the world well; the ways, the humours, the follies, the cheats, the faults of the age he is fallen into, and particularly the country he lives in.⁵

The social studies more than any other part of the curriculum are concerned immediately with life, institutions and the far-reaching policies of America in their relationships with world affairs. Before the teacher can introduce students to world literature he must receive a special kind of training in a college offering a broad curriculum of the humanities.

Institution for preparation of social studies teachers introduce them to realistic knowledge of trends, tensions, and conflicts of American society in its world settings, for bringing them into close and living connections with all the great systems of social thought--ancient, modern, and contemporary, and for revealing to them the magnificent potentialities of science in the realization of the finest dreams of mankind.⁶

The integration of world literature and the study of democracy will have little value unless they are closely related with the needs and problems of the social, civic, and industrial life in America. A teacher must have the vision and the courage to dare to introduce both the literature of modernity as well as antiquity. The criteria are to discipline the emotions of youth and to educate them for useful and efficient living in a modern democratic society.

⁵Robert Ulich, (Editor), The Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p.365.

⁶Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Commission, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p.113.

No course in the social studies curriculum requires of the teacher a more balanced interplay between the two types of mental attitudes, the practical and the theoretical, than does the 'Problems' course. Another reason that great versatility is demanded of the teacher is because of the delicate interaction between the individual freedoms and the social progress. The teacher of social studies must recognize the wide range of human personality: the differences in intelligence, artistic ability, and dexterity in the practical arts. Never is the method of teaching the 'Problems' course outside of the subject matter by reason of the three modes of experiencing: the intellectual endeavor, the aesthetic attainment, and the practical approach.

The teacher's approach is changed only after a thorough study of the curriculum has been made by a council of wise and experienced experts and teachers. The course of study is of little value unless it is a way of tackling problems, not a set of solutions to problems of democracy. The study of democracy becomes a way of finding out what is the best to do. The useful materials would be chosen and arranged in order to develop civic intelligence and in stimulating a devotion to the democratic way of life. To be a competent teacher demands a grasp of the subject matter of the related subjects of the 'Problems' course and the ability to activate them into the lives of the students. Perhaps the three most neglected instructional areas are: the basic training in the ability to speak and to write the English language, the activities of modern economy; and a clear understanding of the techniques of propaganda gained through the study of social psychology as a segment of sociology. An educator wrote:

...the art of making the mind actually able to set free and manifest its creative insight and making it really master of its power of expression--an art of neglect of which is harmful to modern youth, who often lose their sense of worthiness and accuracy of words, and become unable to compose, when they enter upon practical life, a clear and articulate report on commercial or industrial matters.⁷

The teacher-training programs within the College of Education must have a closer inter-departmental ties with the Social Sciences and the Humanities. In the areas of geography, economics, and sociology the teachers of social studies are the least prepared for instructing the youth. Too often they are not in the possession of the basic economic concepts which would enable them to train the students in participating as intelligent citizen-consumer in the everyday activities of our modern economy. The teacher-training program in the process of being streamlined must meet the needs and problems of the youth. The courses in secondary education methodology should stress quality as well as quantity. The principle theory is to teach teachers not only the knowledge of practical purposes but the ability to know what is useful for when the principal parts of the subject are mastered the details may be acquired with ease. The knowledge of geography, sociology, and anthropology is essential background material for the completion of the social studies. Revolutionizing the contents of the social studies and the humanities would entail the pruning of materials until only that subject matter that could explain the twentieth century to the students would be retained.

⁷ Jacques Maritain, Education at the Crossroads, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p.56.

Two areas of instruction being revitalized within the social studies are in economic teaching and vocational orientation. The teacher of the 'Problems' course must realize the importance for emphasizing economics because:

First, the increasing complexity of business and industry which has greatly accelerated the need for economically competent manpower.

Second, the need to preserve and strengthen our free society and its institutions which requires a higher level of economic understanding by all citizens.⁸

The classroom teacher is confronted by the complicated subject of economics both in methodology and content material. Many social studies teachers are inadequately trained in economics; therefore, if any immediate reforms are to be introduced in economic instruction, there must be a collaboration of the business world and the curriculum makers of the social studies. Occupational information is another facet of modern education in which the teacher of the 'Problems' course has a major responsibility and should be trained to guide and counsel youth.

The role of the social studies teacher becomes ever more complex and only a diligent person can gain success. The ideal teacher full of sympathy, with a broad and vivid imagination, a youthfulness steeled with moral character may be able to endure. For that teacher must have in his dual dimension the capability of loving and thinking; a social concern for the welfare of others coupled with a power to direct his students in the pathway to knowledge and wisdom. Then there will be a teacher possessing the ethics of conviction that has equivalence with responsibility.

⁸ Julian Street, Jr., "Toward Economic Literacy--A Business and Educational Cooperation," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, XLIV, 258, (October, 1960), pp.159-160.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

The history of the course 'Problems of American Democracy' reveals that the struggle among the social studies persists to the present time. The conflict continues between the traditional disciplines and the functional educational practices. A prevalent concept in modern education is that educators are adrift without purpose and this anxiety reflects itself in the many facets of learning. Today's society discloses a void between the actual practices of the social studies and the practical guidance of human relations. The critical analysis of the 'Problems' course affirms the basic goals of the social studies curriculum to be as follows:

1. Elucidate the process of democracy.
2. Illuminate the basic social, economic, and political concepts.
3. Develop critical thinking.

These objectives may be realized by revitalizing the social studies curriculum, by elevating the qualifications of the social studies teachers, and by developing a more practical methodology in the problem-solving approach to learning.

The 'Problems' course should be a part of a broad and flexible curriculum that enables the student to master a few basic concepts, theories, and principles of sociology, economics, and government. One value of the

course is that the enriched vocabulary benefits the college preparatory student as well as the student whose formal education is terminated with graduation from high school. Quality teaching comes from an intellectual background of the social sciences and the humanities coupled with an understanding of the interests and the needs of youth. The problem-solving approach gives the student training in writing and speaking the English language, accurately, forcefully, and fluently. This skill aids him in critical thinking and becomes more valuable as it is practiced in democratic living.

The 'Problems' course has been in a state of unstable equilibrium within the social studies because the basic courses of study vary widely among the fifty states, the teachers are inadequately prepared in the social sciences and the humanities, and the students are given little practice in critical thinking.

The following recommendations are appropriate for the secondary school of the future. A new curriculum on a national level must be developed for the social studies if the objectives of the 'Problems' course are to be realized. The course would incorporate the three disciplines of sociology, economics, and government from a geographical approach with problem-solving through teaching-pupil planning as its ultimate goal. Each discipline must be taught separately. The three social studies are integrated during the final period of course work which would be devoted to the study of well selected problems, numbering less than ten. A few basic concepts, theories, and principles of sociology, economics, and government are mastered before the unit on problem-solving is attempted. The teacher guides the reading of suitable selections

from world literature taken from antiquity to modern times. The list may range from the classics of Plato to the labor novels by Upton Sinclair for the gifted student and the condensations and the comic books of the classics for the less gifted student. The plan calls for a streamlined guide or handbook containing only the basic concepts, theories, and principles of the three disciplines as subject matter. The teacher's outline or handbook would include appropriate selections from world literature and a list of supplementary materials, such as charts, maps, globes, records, tape-recordings, film-strips, slides, films, pamphlets, and brochures adaptable to the 'Problems' course. The handbook would be constructed in such a manner to enable the teacher to insert or reject a supplement each year containing current book-reviews and descriptions of movies and TV showings pertinent to the subject. Teachers of the 'Problems' course will have to be academically well prepared in the social sciences and the humanities. The certification requirements would include geography, sociology, economics, and political science in the matrix of history. The additional courses in human geography, anthropology, and social psychology are peremptory if the teacher has an understanding of the complexity of society from the local to the international level. The teacher-training program should be streamlined by combining the various courses in methodology into a semester of problems in teaching and the principles of guidance. This would allow ample time for the much needed practice teaching. The college professor of education teaching these courses in methodology should have had successful experience in teaching the social studies on the secondary level within ten years and sufficient graduate hours in the social sciences to be well prepared academically. The preparation for the practice teaching period would be the logical place to teach the psychology of group dynamics and the five steps necessary in the problem-solving approach. The

method preferred in developing critical thinking would be based upon John Dewey's, How We Think. In conclusion, the secondary school should be a prelude to practical life. The proposed handbook would contain the whole subject matter by having a few rules and definitions in simple and concise language comprehensible to the students. The measures to improve the quality of teachers require better recruitment, better selection, and better substantive education in the teacher-training institutions.

The prospects for the future of the social studies are bright if the energy devoted to improving the curriculum of the social studies and the humanities becomes comparable to that devoted to the sciences and mathematics today.

Realistically, the curriculum must be reconstructed so it may be taught by ordinary teachers and learned by ordinary students. The one requirement is to educate so none will lack the material for thinking. Therefore, the trends will be to rewrite the basic subjects of the social studies in a small but practically arranged handbook; revamp the teaching materials as devices for an enrichment program; and retrain a great number of teachers through seminars and in-service training programs. A national committee would collect, classify, and evaluate the existing materials on sociology, economics, and government and select material both objective and appropriate for the age level. A National Curriculum Center would be established as a central planning agency. The national standards and goals for the social studies would be proposed by a national committee made up of administrators, teachers, philosophers of education, experts in the social sciences, government and industrial leaders, and influential lay men and women. This would bring a greater harmony among administrators, teachers of every level of instruction, and the public. The National

Curriculum Center would be dependent upon research. The following areas of research are recommended for the betterment of the 'Problems' course:

1. Measure the educational activities quantitatively of a class in group dynamics versus a traditional class discussion.
2. Psychology of motivation in the fields of economics and politics.
3. Utilization of the teaching aids to secure a balance.
4. Correlation of world literature with the 'Problems' course.
5. How to train teachers to do quality teaching.

The social studies curriculum has the need for the course 'Problems of American Democracy' because it utilizes group dynamics in experiencing democratic living by giving training in critical thinking. The teacher may unite the gifted and the less gifted students in this course recognizing that differences in intellectual ability, artistic capability, and dexterity in the practical arts blend to make democratic society. The 'Problems' course will increase in value if there is a constant upgrading of the social studies curriculum and encouraging quality teachers with a better balanced program to utilize all the supplementary aids. When students and teachers alike strive to be economically literate and socially sensitive, democracy has a better chance of survival because all are helped to the full utilization of their intellectual powers.

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