

University of North Carolina at Asheville

The work of a Super-Patriot: Allen Zoll
and the
National Council for American Education.

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“I know of no better way to wreck everything that we think is good in America than to begin to destroy ourselves, one by one, institution by institution, community by community, throughout the land.”¹ This was part of a speech given by Willard Goslin, then superintendent of Pasadena schools, as he was asked to resign due to his progressive style of educating youth. This particular part of his speech characterizes the turbulent times in education taking place in the early 1950’s.

The early 1950’s proved to be a tumultuous time given the advent of the Cold War where the two main superpowers, the U.S.S.R and the United States realized supremacy over the rest of the world. This era of bipolarity in the world spawned a war between Democracy on one side and Communism on the other with the battleground being set over ideology. In the U.S. at the time various groups and individuals felt that the ‘American way of life’ was being threatened by the infiltration of Communism, with the public schools serving as the vehicle. No one perceived the threat of Communism permeating the American school system more than Allen A. Zoll. Zoll, a passionate anticommunist, created a hypercritical organization called the National Council for American Education in July of 1948.² Its main purpose was to “eradicate from our schools Marxism, Socialism, Communism and all other forces that seek to destroy the liberty of the American people.”³

¹ David Hulburd, *This Happened in Pasadena* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), 152-153.

² Robert C. Morris, “Era of Anxiety: An Historical Account of Right Wing Forces Affecting Education during the years 1949 to 1954” (Ph. D. diss., Indiana State University, 1977), 144.

³ Allen A. Zoll, *They Want Your Child! The Real Meaning of Federal “Aid” to Education- Showing its Relation to the Whole Marxist Movement* (New York: National Council for American Education, 1949), 23.

Allen Zoll and his organization the National Council for American Education (NCAE) had a view of how the schools were to educate America's youth. Historians recognize Zoll and the NCAE as the leading group in the battle to bring about change within the schools of mid twentieth century United States.⁴ To date Zoll's techniques and methods of criticizing the schools have not been examined. By looking at the pamphlets produced and distributed across the nation in communities experiencing a battle in the school system, one conclusion can be drawn about Zoll and his propaganda. Examining the sources written by Zoll and published by the NCAE, I will argue in this paper that Zoll, who was trying to uphold and strengthen democracy in the hearts and minds of American youth in the public school system, actually used undemocratic practices in criticizing educators of the Cold War era, taking away from and eroding the democratic ethos of the time period.

In his book *Red Alert!*, historian Stuart Foster regarded Allen Zoll as "one of public education's most poisonous opponents."⁵ Writing a volume titled *The Communists and the Schools* in a series designated *Communism and American Life*, historian Robert Iversen spoke of how pervasive Zoll was. He wrote, "Yet the fact is that Zoll took his toll. He, his followers, and his literature can be found near the center of many postwar campaigns against the schools."⁶ Zoll's literature proved to be his primary vehicle for attack upon the schools with pamphlets enjoying mass circulation. Typically, the publications were laced with emotional rhetoric, vivid imagery, and a particularly

⁴ For a detailed account of Allen Zoll and the NCAE, see Robert C. Morris, "Era of Anxiety" and Stuart J. Foster, *Red Alert! Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public Schools, 1947-1954* (New York: Lang, 2000) and Joel H. Spring, *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Education Policy since 1945* (New York: Longman, 1989).

⁵ Foster, 62.

⁶ Robert W. Iverson, *The Communists and the Schools* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), 246.

direct style. Above all they were influential due to their endorsement of American values and warning of the emergent dangers of un-American and alien ideologies.⁷ The scholars that have looked at Zoll in the past have focused on his influence on the educational sector in general. The work I have conducted differs in the fact that it goes a step further. I explore Zoll's ideas and views that the American school system is lacking progress and show that his methods breed an undemocratic feeling contradicting his main purpose. Without the feeling of insecurity that many citizens felt in post World War II America, a person of Zoll's nature could not have risen to such influence.

With national leaders wandering throughout the country warning of communist subversion and conspiracy, the dangers of an imminent nuclear war, and the need for planned national defense and security, citizens became gripped by a paranoiac reaction that saw left wing subversives hiding behind every door.⁸ The power of the red scare allowed it to reach the realms of politics, society, as well as public education. This is evident in the fact that the Office of Education under the Federal Security Agency developed a civic education program to promote the fostering of democracy in American schools; it was called the Zeal for American Democracy.⁹ In the October 1947 issue of *School Life*, the official journal of the Office of Education, U.S. commissioner of education John W. Studebaker presented the main purpose of the Zeal for American Democracy program that would be launched soon thereafter, he described it as "A vigorous program designed to vitalize and improve education in schools and colleges

⁷ Foster, 62-63.

⁸ Joel H. Spring, *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Education Policy since 1945* (New York: Longman, 1989), 3.

⁹ U.S. Office of Education, "National Security to be Strengthened Through Education." *School Life: Official Journal of the U.S. Office of Education* 30, no.1 (1947): 3-5.

throughout the United States with respect to the ideals and benefits of democracy and to reveal the character and tactics of totalitarianism....”¹⁰

Historically, public schools and public school teachers have been obvious targets for red scare attacks. However, with the emergence of anti-communist sentiment and super patriotic zeal in the years following World War II, their vulnerability increased.¹¹ Most associate the red scare with Joseph McCarthy, the republican senator from Wisconsin, who in the early 1950’s was able to spread the hysteria. McCarthy broke into the spotlight with his famous speech on February 9, 1950 at the Ohio County Women’s Club in Wheeling, WV. In his speech, McCarthy shocked the audience with the declaration that, “I have here in my hand a list of 205 people...members of the communist party and who are nevertheless still working and shaping policy for the State Department.”¹² News agencies across the nation hurried to cover the sensational story. Of course his rise to prominence could not have occurred had the socio-political time not been ripe for his ascendancy. By the February 1950 speech, the suspicions McCarthy voiced were already deeply embedded in the American culture. By this time, to contribute to the suspicions, the Soviet Union acquired the atomic bomb, Klaus Fuchs, a British scientist working on the Los Alamos atomic bomb, was charged with spying for the Russians, and China became Communist.¹³ Not only did McCarthy and others within government disseminate the red scare, but also individuals and organizations from the private sector.

¹⁰ John W. Studebaker, “Zeal for Democracy,” *School Life: The official Journal of the U.S. Office of Education* 30, no. 1 (1947): 2.

¹¹ Foster, 3.

¹² Ibid. , 5-6.

¹³ Foster, 7.

The acknowledged pioneer among private organizations fighting communism was the American Legion, which, with its auxiliary, numbered almost four million members.¹⁴ This inevitably led the organization to look to the schools for possible subversion of American democracy given that many members had children being educated in America. In 1890, high school enrollment in the United States was estimated at 200,000; by the early 1940's, the figure approached seven million.¹⁵ Schools became one of the few public institutions that affected the lives of nearly every citizen. Schools are abundant in nearly every community, making them convenient targets for that reason alone. Moreover, because schools were perceived as a vital force in the control of the minds of America's children, the battle for their domination became intense. Joel Spring in his book *The Sorting Machine*, explains, "The public schools seemed like a perfect target for communist subversion to win the hearts and minds of the American people and erode the foundations of democracy."¹⁶

The warning of communist subversion was not isolated to just the schooling of the youth but also the process of deciding what to teach. The Red Scare with its power and ubiquity penetrated educational policy making. For instance, in the 1950's the military and industrial establishment influenced the federal government to adopt policies designed to change public-school curricula so that more engineers and scientists would be educated to meet the needs of military competition with the Soviet Union.¹⁷ Fears caused by the Cold War resulted in direct federal involvement in defining educational priorities and in regulating American schools. The government's major interest in schooling

¹⁴ Iverson, 242.

¹⁵ Foster, 3.

¹⁶ Spring, *The Sorting Machine*, 3.

¹⁷ Joel H. Spring, *Conflicts of Interest: The Politics of American Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1993), 95.

during this period was meeting national objectives in the areas of foreign policy and social and economic development. Consequently federal intervention in education was directed toward achieving specific purposes in terms of national policy with the ultimate result being the 1958 National Defense Education Act. This supported math, science, and foreign language programs in the public schools.¹⁸ Well on its way, the flaring of the red scare fire had engulfed education practice as well as education policy-making, and a united front to criticize subversion in the public schools began.

Although criticism of public schools in America had been present as long as schools had, the criticism that was taking place in the mid twentieth century had a new characteristic; it became an often-repeated charge that schools were consciously undermining American ideals and encouraging subversive activities.¹⁹ The influx of progressive education in many school systems made it an easy target to blame for the newly subversive nature of public education. Progressive education is not easily defined but rather thought of as a culmination of ideas. Some of these include the rejection of rote learning and authoritarian discipline. The essential core of progressive education comes from the notion that the child's interests should be used to promote a democratic learning environment.²⁰ In the late 1940's, a number of organizations began to focus their attention on progressive education. They saw progressive education as volatile because of its newness and what the critics believed to be practices that resembled collectivism or communism. The practices they spoke of were a lack of emphasis on the

¹⁸ Ibid. , 107.

¹⁹ Spring, *The Sorting Machine*, 1-10.

²⁰ Arthur Zilversmit, *Changing Schools: Progressive Education Theory and Practice, 1930-1960* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1-18.

teaching of the three R's and risky practices like group work.²¹ These organizations included: the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the American Council of Christian Laymen, the Anti-Communist League of America, the Christian Nationalist Crusade, Defenders of American Education, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Sons of the American Revolution.²²

In addition to these better known and respectable organizations was one that brought the most passion and enthusiasm to the fight against the subversive, progressive public school system; it was called the National Council for American Education. Listed among the trustees was Allen A. Zoll who would later serve as executive vice president of the organization. According to one of the pamphlets published by the organization that he was a trustee of, Zoll was born in Kansas in 1895 “of distinguished colonial American stock, and was reared in Arkansas and Texas.”²³ Zoll being a veteran of both World War I and World War II was no newcomer to the ideology of Communism and Collectivism.²⁴ After World War I, in which he served as an infantry officer in the AEF, he entered the graduate school of Harvard University. According to the NCAE pamphlet, *They Want Your Child*, it was there that “he was first awakened to the objectives and sinister methods of Communism and their friends.”²⁵ Kern Dodge, the first president of the NCAE, acknowledges in the introduction to the pamphlet Zoll's early awareness of the possible infiltration by the Communists in the sector of education. Kern writes that

²¹ Spring, *The Sorting Machine*, 1-10.

²² Mary Anne Raywid, *The Ax-Grinders: Critics of Our Public Schools* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 50.

²³ Zoll, *They Want Your Child*, 2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Zoll “became aware of the vast potential of this infiltration and the greatness of the stake involved. For whoever can dominate American education can dominate America.”²⁶

Zoll, who referred to himself as “a successful sales consultant,” for which he is “internationally known,”²⁷ founded in 1937 the American Patriots Inc.²⁸ Three years later the American Patriots Inc. was placed on the Government’s list of subversive organizations by Attorney General Francis Biddle.²⁹ As reported by Jack Steele, a writer for the *Washington Daily News*, “Mr. Zoll called this a ‘New Deal Smear,’ but his group remained on the list until the Eisenhower administration.”³⁰ The fact that the group remained on the list well past the term of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the architect of The New Deal, disproves Zoll’s claim.

A good example of Allen Zoll’s character can be seen from looking at a protest he took part in. In 1939 Zoll served as one of the leaders in a picket line around New York’s radio station WMCA as a protest against the dropping of Father Coughlin’s radio broadcasts.³¹ According to a February 1951 issue of *The Nation’s Schools*, Zoll allegedly “double-crossed his followers by agreeing to call off the picket line if the station would pay him \$7500. He was arrested in the act of collecting \$200 advance payment (in marked money) from WMCA president Donald Flamm. Zoll was never brought to trial.”³² In 1939 Zoll again would give us insight into his character by his stance on a political appointment. Pointed out in the same article, Skaife writes, “When Felix

²⁶ Zoll, *They Want Your Child*, 2.

²⁷ Zoll, *Progressive Education Increases Delinquency* (New York: National Council for American Education, 1950), 2.

²⁸ Morris, 145.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jack Steele, “Extremist Had Job on Goldwater Group,” *The Washington Daily News*, 7 January 1965, sec. I, 4, quoted in Morris, 146.

³¹ Morris, 146.

³² Robert A. Skaife, “They Oppose Progress,” *The Nation’s Schools* 47, no.2 (1951): 32

Frankfurter was nominated to the Supreme Court, Zoll opposed his appointment at a U.S. Senate hearing on the grounds that Frankfurter is Jewish.”³³

During World War II Zoll tried to join the first group to be trained at Peekskill, N.Y., by the Civilian Military Training Corps. His application was passed on to army intelligence for a routine checkup. When they learned of Zoll’s uneasy past, his name was quickly stricken from the list of possible trainees. At the end of World War II the bipolarity that emerged as a result of The United States and the U.S.S.R surfacing as the two main World powers, created the ideological battle of Communism against Democracy; Totalitarianism against Representative government. The hysteria over Communism possibly penetrating American borders only strengthened Allen Zoll’s arsenal for the anticommunism crusade.

This new fervor over communist infiltration seemed like the perfect opportunity for him to plan his own new agency. Incorporated under the laws of New Jersey in July 1948, the National Council for American Education got off to an impressive start. He managed to persuade a number of responsible Americans to endorse his project, including such prominent persons as General Jonathan M. Wainwright, Senators McKellar and Vandenberg, Representatives Mundt, A.L. Miller of Nebraska, and Stanley High, a *Reader’s Digest* editor.³⁴

However, the impressive start would be dealt a crushing blow from a *New York World-Telegram* article on August 25, 1948. The article titled “Zoll, Hate Monger, Promotes New Racket” reported a detailed account of Zoll’s activities in the past.³⁵ The

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Arnold Forster, *A Measure of Freedom* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1950), 76.

³⁵ Skaife, “They Sow Distrust: Commission exposes ‘front’ organizations as enemies of public education in America,” *The Nation’s Schools* 47, no.1 (1951): 27.

organization Friends of Democracy that exposed the activities of movements and individuals that were seen as anti-democratic compounded this setback. L.M. Birkhead, the director of Friends of Democracy issued a report on Allen Zoll's background shortly after the establishment of the NCAE and sent it to the 35 individuals listed as supporters of the organization.³⁶ Twenty of these individuals that permitted their names to be used were prominent enough to be listed in *Who's Who in America*.³⁷ Subsequently when the individuals had received the information they immediately withdrew their support from Mr. Zoll's organization. Some of the comments sent to the Friends of Democracy included:

Stanley High, an editor on the staff of *Reader's Digest*: "I am sorry and chagrined that I did not know more about the National Council for American Education when I allowed my name to be used by it...I am sure that it is not a group with which I wish myself or my name to be associated."

Gene Tunney, former heavyweight boxing champion: "People like myself who are active in business enterprises find it very difficult to keep track of the sincerity of organizations alleging to promote Americanism...I am resigning as of today from the advisory committee."³⁸

The condemnation that Zoll and his organization received was short lived for Zoll had plenty of opportunity to bring himself back into the approval of many patriotic Americans. The controversy over federal aid to education provided Zoll's NCAE with material for endless propaganda. In a speech entitled "Education Our First Line of Defense: Learning Alone can Combat Tenets of Communism," President Truman called for federal aid to be used to get schools up to functioning level. He said, "The Congress

³⁶ Skaife, *They Oppose Progress*, 32.

³⁷ Foster, 222-223.

³⁸ Skaife, *They Oppose Progress*, 32

should enact legislation authorizing Federal grants to the states to assist in meeting the operating expenses of elementary and secondary schools.”³⁹

The idea of Federal aid to education meant something entirely different to Allen Zoll and the NCAE. Zoll believed Federal aid to education would only be a part of the subversive techniques that Communists were to use to undermine America. Outlined in his pamphlet *They Want Your Child*, Zoll saw federal aid to education as part of a subversive technique he called concentration of power. He explained using a hypothetical example, “If your city has, say, forty-eight separate electric generating systems, and some group wishes to take them all over so as to turn off the city lights, obviously it will have to organize forty-eight separate gangs of saboteurs.” He goes on further to explain how they could do it more efficiently by getting rid of the “forty-eight separate control boards, and advocate having only one control board for the entire city.”⁴⁰

Zoll uses this example to show that federal aid to education would only aid the Communists in their endeavor. By the Federal government giving aid to States for education, Zoll saw this as a concentration of power, making the system susceptible to outside takeover. Zoll explains, “In the educational field, this attempted concentration of power comes under the high-sounding and innocent title of ‘Federal Aid to Education’ ...the greater the concentration of power, the easier it is to infiltrate and control.”⁴¹

Allen Zoll and the NCAE anticipated the infiltration of Communism into the American school system not only through federal aid to education but also through the

³⁹ Harry S. Truman, *Education Our First Line of Defense: Learning Alone can Combat the Tenets of Communism*, Speech delivered at Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, March 8, 1949

⁴⁰ Zoll, *They Want Your Child*, 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

use of progressive education in the schools. Zoll's most blatant attack on Progressive education came from his pamphlet titled: *Progressive Education increases Delinquency* with the subtitle *Progressive Education is Subverting America*. In the introduction Zoll lays out before the reader the seriousness of this trend in education taking shape.

Commenting on the effects of progressive education he writes, "...we are dealing, not with a mere academic school problem of concern only to professional educators, but with a vital national problem that directly affects the whole social, economic, moral, and even political structure of our Republic."⁴² Zoll in an uncanny way outlined for the reader how progressive education due to its nature was turning American youth into thoughtless, immoral beings ripe for the takeover of Communism and State Socialism.

The first point of contention Zoll uses is that progressive education is pragmatic. Zoll claims that the progressive education movement has become impregnated with the philosophy of pragmatism. He asserts, "The basic affirmation of pragmatism is that no such thing as absolute truth exists."⁴³ Zoll reasons that "if there is no absolute truth, isn't one opinion as good as another? Why study to get at the true nature of things if there is no true nature of things."⁴⁴ Here Zoll gives a small example of how one might view him as undemocratic. When most think of democracy most would also think that one person's opinion is as good as anyone else's. Zoll expresses that his idea of democracy involves the belief in an absolute truth with opinions having to fall in accordance with that absolute truth.

In addition Zoll concluded that if the pragmatic nature of progressive education was denying the belief in an absolute truth then the student receiving education in this

⁴² Zoll, *Progressive Education Increases Delinquency*, 2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

manner would not be able to believe in a divine being, taking away from the moral platform that the United States was founded on. Zoll laments the notion of American youth not receiving the education that would perpetuate strong convictions in the moral values that the founders of this country received. However, he does not mention anything about our forefathers having the moral standing to institute separation of church and state, which includes the schooling of children. Zoll declares that it was the “generations of men and women impregnated with sturdy moral and spiritual values...that gave to our American nation its strength and its glory among nations.”⁴⁵

The notion that progressive education was curtailing learning in the minds of American youth would be Zoll’s next point of assault. He argued that it “encouraged students to ‘think’ without the labor of learning the facts necessary to accurate thinking.”⁴⁶ He viewed this as a fundamental change from the education of our forefathers where the knowledge of facts was important because the knowledgeable person “was much less likely to swallow economic or political buncombe.”⁴⁷ That is, the knowledgeable youth would be less likely to fall to Communist pressure. Here Zoll as he often did took the argument too far. It is true that part of the basis of progressive educational thought is to not rely on learning through the memorization of facts but to critically think about what you are learning. Zoll tries to convey to the reader of his pamphlet that progressive education takes the learning of facts out of educational practice all together, where in actuality it does not call as much attention to the learning of facts.

Cultivation of the individual and its implication for society was Zoll’s next area within progressive education to attack. Zoll argued that progressive education wrecked

⁴⁵ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

the individual by attacking competition in the schools. He supposed that “The object of education under this ‘progressive’ system, is not to impart information, but to ‘enable the child to get along with his own age-group.’”⁴⁸ He explains that this is a very dangerous aspect of progressive education because it is not instruction at all but rather the “inculcation of currently popular herd ideas on a mass basis.”⁴⁹ Zoll goes on to tie this idea to his personal thoughts on democracy. He writes:

Currently it is popular to plug hard for the democratic equality of all men, and often the political equality before the law guaranteed by our fundamental instruments of law is stretched like a rubber band to include belief that all individuals are on a dead level in everything, and that it is a modern sin to believe anything else.⁵⁰

Zoll sees this problem materializing in the phase of progressive education that he calls automatic promotion. Under this system no one can fail and each pupil is pushed along through graduation to ensure that he/she can fraternize with his or her own age group.⁵¹ What kind of product will come out of such misuse of the educational system in America, Zoll questions. Zoll predicts the results to be a generation of adults that will be without the essential elements of education, without the ability to think for themselves, “fit only to be citizens of the authoritarian state. In actuality this is the very purpose behind the whole diabolical scheme.”⁵² Without teachers pushing students to their fullest ability Zoll claimed this to be a de-emphasis of competition and would serve as his next point of disapproval over progressive education.

Zoll asserts that progressive pedagogues regularly attack competition as one of warping influences upon the life of a child. And he writes, “Their stupid point of view is

⁴⁸ Ibid. , 7.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid. , 8.

based upon the popular but infantile theory that a child who is able to ‘develop his own inner security’ apart from external competition, will be in a better position to hold his own...”⁵³ Zoll maintains that by doing this to the pupil it only wrecks the individual because when he/she is launched into the competitive world he/she can not cope. He then connects progressive education with socialism with some bold sarcasm. A socialist society of course would be the only type of society to come out of education that prepares children for a world where competition has been eliminated.⁵⁴ “So-called progressive education denies the necessity of every factor necessary for our survival as a free people...it spawns its millions mentally conditioned only for the collectivist state...”⁵⁵ Zoll and the NCAE used such daunting language as to suggest we were on the brink of a Communist takeover had a reverberating effect on the everyday American citizen. The pamphlets published by the NCAE would have a profound affect in communities where even just the slightest criticism of the public school system was taking place.

The attacks on the public school system seemed to follow somewhat of a pattern. The attacks were investigated and studied by many committees and commissions. The National Education Association initiated the most notable of the committees and commissions. Involved in maintaining democracy in American schools, the National Education Association (NEA) created a commission in 1941 that would take part in the task. In the early 1950’s, the NEA had an affiliated membership of 850,000 and was one of the most influential educational groups in the United States.⁵⁶ The NEA stated:

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. , 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid. , 15.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Fine, “3 R’s Taught Well Now, Study Shows,” *The New York Times*, 2 July 1951, pg. 25, col. 1

In 1941 the National Education Association organized the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education and assigned to it specific responsibilities among which are: (a) to bring to the general public a fuller understanding of the importance of a better education for all of our people if our American democracy and way of life are to be maintained; (b) to defend teachers, schools, and the cause of education against unjust attacks and to investigate charges involving teachers, schools, educational methods and procedures, justly, fearlessly, and in the public interest; (c) to work for educational conditions essential for the perpetuation of our democracy.⁵⁷

Commonly known as the Defense Commission, the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education was one of many groups that sponsored a pamphlet titled *Danger! They're After Our Schools!* In the pamphlet they outlined what a template of strategy that the attacks were following. A description of a typical attack is as follows:

First a few citizens who are especially eager to keep taxes low are corralled into a self-styled and self-appointed 'citizens council' or 'school development council.' These misguided individuals are then featured in press releases denouncing school leaders, demanding 'action' from school boards and rehashing the 'dangers' of present day education.

After showering the community with demagogic pamphlets and leaflets, an invitation is issued to all who are dissatisfied with the schools for any reason whatsoever to join a local 'council' or one of the national groups.

Then comes the heavy pressure campaign!

Demand that the schools return to the '3 R's.' Attacks on textbooks that encourage inquisitive and individual reasoning. Attempts to malign leading modern educators and any teachers, principals or members of the local school board who dare to defend modern education. A hue and cry about the need for greater 'discipline' in the schools. Calls for a legislative investigation of teachers, textbooks and school administrators.

Mounting pressure to eliminate the 'frills and fads'—by which are meant such vital services as nurseries, classes for the handicapped, testing and guidance, programs to help youngsters understand and appreciate their neighbors of different backgrounds, and all other activities which make the school a nerve center of an intelligent modern community.

⁵⁷ National Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education, *Report of an Investigation, Mars Hill; North Carolina: A case involving the coercion of teachers through political pressures*, (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1951), 2.

The entire school issue becomes confused and charged with emotion. Epithets such as ‘communist,’ ‘socialist,’ ‘collectivist,’ ‘secularist,’ and ‘un-American’ are thrown around freely to exploit the sentiments of genuinely patriotic, anti-communist citizens. Teachers are intimidated, school boards coerced.⁵⁸

When looking at Zoll and his pamphlets, one can see that his method of attack falls in line with the template. Zoll is not the immediate start of the attack but more detrimentally the spark that ignites the firestorm. The indignant citizens that are eager to keep taxes low are already in the community. All Zoll had to do was step in with a few pamphlets on how federal aid to education or the frills and fads that come with progressive education will raise taxes. Zoll and the National Council for American Education found the perfect place to do such a thing.

This pattern of attack was not seen more clearly in any other community than in Pasadena, California. Pasadena was the first community to find its school system in the national spotlight.⁵⁹ The national attention came from a battle being fought over the newly acquired superintendent of Pasadena schools; his name was Willard Goslin. The new superintendent was president of the American Association of School Administrators and recognized as one of the country’s outstanding superintendents.⁶⁰ The row in the community had to do with some citizens viewing Dr. Goslin as a progressive style educator. The dispute in Pasadena was an opportunity ripe for Zoll to step in and disseminate his literature.

⁵⁸ Archibald W. Anderson, “The Cloak of Respectability: The attackers and their Methods,” *Progressive Education*, January 1952, 67.

⁵⁹ James B. Boyle, “Pasadena, Calif.” *The Public School Crisis: SRL Turns the Spotlight on Six American Cities. Saturday Review of Literature*, September 8, 1951, 7.

⁶⁰ National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education, *Report of an Investigation, The Pasadena Story: An Analysis of Some Forces and Factors that Injured a Superior School System*, (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1951), 10.

Shortly after his arrival in the summer of 1948, Goslin was subjected to pressure for action from such groups as the League of Women Voters, women's civic groups and young business men. They indicated that the educational program had been static for some time and encouraged him to implement new ideas.⁶¹ The changes the new administration made were not in subject matter but method of operation. In the previous administration the central office made decisions and bulletins were sent out to the staff showing the method by which these decisions were to be carried out.⁶² The new administration wanted to do things differently and one could say more democratically. Dr. Goslin would bring all members of the staff together, place the problems before them, and allow the staff to resolve them so that group conclusions could be reached.⁶³ This process that was instituted in the fall of 1948 would stay in use throughout the two years of the Goslin administration.

Another new implementation by Goslin was the utilization of summer workshops for the teachers and staff of the Pasadena school system. At the summer workshop of 1949, leaders were brought in to speak and engage in the workshop. Among them was Dr. William H. Kilpatrick, a leading educator in the progressive field, who would later be bitterly attacked by certain factions in the community.⁶⁴

Around this same time a small group of parents got together to discuss education in Pasadena. Eventually they would form as the "School Development Council with their chief activity the first year being to protest against certain phases of the Goslin budget."⁶⁵ Falling in accordance with the pattern of attack outlined previously, the 'school

⁶¹ National Commission, *The Pasadena Story*, 12.

⁶² *Ibid*, 13.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

⁶⁵ Hulburd, 56.

development' had generous support from the local presses. The Pasadena tabloid, *Independent* asked citizens to write in with their dissatisfactions with the Pasadena school system so that they could later be printed. The 'school development council' would also be able have their declaration of policy printed.⁶⁶ The council made little impression until the proposed increase in tax limitation came before the public, when it emerged as the spokesman for all opposing forces.⁶⁷ It soon became clear that its real attack was on the schools and the current administration. The report on the investigation conducted by the Defense Commission stated:

Testimony indicates that irresponsible charges were made with little basis in fact; that it was very astute in using harmless matters for harmful purposes; that educational terms, loosely defined to include anything objectionable, were used as political slogans; that Dr. Goslin's interest in camping, the United Nations, and better human relations were labeled subversive and attempts to indoctrinate children in Communism; that the schools were described as godless institutions which failed to teach the 3 R's, were lacking in discipline, and were actively engaged in undermining parental influence.

The question arises as to why an administration that began under such favorable conditions came to such an unhappy end in a little over two years. What influences could have been the catalyst to project this community into an all out crisis over the public school system. In Archibald Anderson's article on the "Attackers and their Methods", he writes, "At the height of the school controversy, Pasadena citizens found copies of [a] pamphlet on their doorsteps when they went to pick up their morning newspapers."⁶⁸ It was titled, *Progressive Education Increases Delinquency*. The Defense Commission reports that the leaders of the school development council referred to and quoted with approval the National Council for American Education and its executive vice-president,

⁶⁶ Hulburd, 67-75.

⁶⁷ National Commission, *The Pasadena Story*, 15.

⁶⁸ Anderson, 70.

Allen A. Zoll.⁶⁹ They stated that they copies of *Progressive Education Increases Delinquency* were circulated and memberships for the NCAE were solicited and that the materials were used because they seemed to serve their purpose.⁷⁰ As mentioned in the introduction Goslin was asked to resign after pressure from the school development council had mounted on the Pasadena Board of Education to take action. The Defense Commission ends its report on the investigation in Pasadena with the following words:

Every forward-looking community has a responsibility for alertness in recognition of the use of such propaganda devices as misrepresentation, unsupported charges, and attempts to discredit individuals or groups. These devices never furnish a solution for problems involved in living and working together constructively. Objective consideration and mature thinking are essential for reaching sound solutions to community problems in a democratic society.⁷¹

The Defense Commission's closing words ring true even today. Objective consideration and mature thinking are a necessity when living in a democratic society where problems will arise and solutions will be needed. Allen Zoll and the NCAE fell short of objectively considering and maturely thinking about the issues that were facing American society during the Cold War era and their was a heavy toll to pay because of it. The payment was in the form of erosion of the fundamental democratic principles that all Americans were and still are proud of. By ignoring the past, we are encouraged to repeat its mistakes. We need to take this lesson and realize that we cannot once again let possible subversion from an outside entity (whether it be Communism, Terrorism or something else) erode our democratic traditions and principles.

⁶⁹ National Commission, *The Pasadena Story*, 22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 22-23.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 39.

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