

TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONALS:  
GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES,  
BILDUNG, AND DIDAKTIKS

by

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## ABSTRACT

Overwhelmingly, Americans express that they admire teachers and support public education, yet simultaneously demand greater accountability from and control over them. They argue that teachers are professionals, yet hold them to be technicians. This study explores the historical factors that gave rise to this confusion by examining the histories of the United States and also that of Germany, the model for America's educational system. The German educational philosophies of *bildung* and *didaktik*s are considered, along with the competing ideas of the purpose of education by John Dewey and David Snedden because they do much to explain the past and present of the current state of education in both nations, and clearly show the competing claims at work. Finally, the histories relating to teacher education and the professional standing of teachers in both nations is used to argue for a shift in the perspective of the American teacher, from technician to true professional. This new professional teacher is one that is empowered with authority in the classroom, holds status in the community, and is equitably compensated for the work he or she does. I consider the past to urge action in the future.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, John and Lynn Toland. Without their support, in every sense, this endeavor would not have been possible.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In August of 2017, *The Washington Post* posed the question, “Are Teachers Professionals?”<sup>1</sup> They are not educated and trained like traditional professionals. They are not required to partake in an education that is detailed, lengthy, or results driven. They are not allowed to (or even expected to) use professional judgement in the same ways. The nature of their work differs from other professionals and they certainly do not earn a professional salary – perhaps the single most important professional identity trait in America. A year later, *Time Magazine* seemingly answered the question by pointing out that teachers earn 18.7% less than other comparably educated professionals, the largest education pay gap in history, and they have lost authority over their classrooms through standardized tests and required curricular benchmarks.<sup>2</sup> These conditions coupled with the lack of support from government and the public, limit teachers in their ability to do their jobs optimally. Germany, the inspiration for the American system, on the other hand, has occasionally tested the waters of the notion of teachers’ entrance into the professional class for the past 170 years, but has slowly seen teacher professional standing eroding recently, bringing the status of teachers in the public consciousness to be much more in line with that of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie Struass, “Are Teachers Professionals?” *Washington Post*, August 11, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Katie Reilly, “I Work 3 Jobs and Donate Blood Plasma to Pay the Bills.’ This Is What It’s Like to Be a Teacher in America,” *Time*, September 13, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dolton and Oscar Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Varkey GEMS Foundation Global Teacher Status Index*, October 2013.

The idea of teachers being members of the professional class is an important one to explore. Mohamed (2011) explains that it “affects the role of the teacher and their pedagogy, which in turn influences the students’ ability to learn effectively.”<sup>4</sup> The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education points out that the number of future teachers completing college preparatory programs is declining, having dropped 23% between 2008 and 2016.<sup>5</sup> Young people have begun to see teaching as a career choice that is unappealing. The issue has been a matter of debate for decades by a variety of scholars<sup>6</sup> who argue that “unlike law and medicine, teaching has not been acknowledged as a profession historically” in the United States and has existed “on the very edge of professional respectability.”<sup>7</sup> The label of *professional* allows people to climb up the social hierarchy. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1977) even go so far as to describe it as, “the principal instrument in the symbolic struggle between the classes for the definition of the social world.”<sup>8</sup> Simply stated, a person with a professional status has more cultural capital in society. The term implies a degree of competency that has been derived from an intense intellectual

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<sup>4</sup> Abdul Rashid Mohamed, Teachers’ Professionalism: Prejudices, Problem and Promises, *Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development Report of the international Experience Sharing Seminars (3): Professional Development in an Era of Global Change/Fragility and Education*. Hiroshima, Japan: Hiroshima University Education Development International Cooperation Research Center, May 2011), 83.

<sup>5</sup> Katie Reilly, “I Work 3 Jobs and Donate Blood Plasma to Pay the Bills.’ This Is What It’s Like to Be a Teacher in America,” *Time*, September 13, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Victoria-Maria MacDonald, (1999). The Paradox of Bureaucratization: New Views on Progressive Era teachers and the Development of a woman’s Profession. *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1999): 427-453.

<sup>7</sup> John Rury, Who Became Teachers: The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History.” *American Teachers: Historians on a Profession at Work*, edited by Donald Warren (Washington, D.C.: American Education Research Association, 1989, 9-48.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Luc Boltanski, Formal Qualifications and Occupational Hierarchies: The relationship Between the Production System and the reproduction System. *Reorganizing Education: Management and Participation for Change*. (London, UK. Gage Press, 1977). 68.

discipline.<sup>9</sup> Being a professional “is not a neutral, objective description of a particular reality, but a function of a specific social context that in turn promotes definition that becomes part of and helps social reality.”<sup>10</sup> “If it is a profession, it implies that teaching is more than the development of a collection of techniques. It must embrace the issue of personal judgement which means having a theoretical basis for making that informed judgement as well as knowledge of the unpredictable, personalized nature of teaching.”<sup>11</sup> The historical literature has revealed that three core factors come into play repeatedly when considering the issue of teachers as members of professional class in both the United States and Germany: training, authority, and salary. This study examines the factors that have helped and hindered teachers in becoming members of the professional class through these three factors.

In this study, I examine the intersections between the historical events and cultural factors that impact the social standing of teachers in both countries in order to explore what could be possible if teachers were truly viewed as members of the professional class and explain what happens when they are denied that status. In addition, the goals and approaches of the two education systems and their influence on these evolving historical events/cultural factors are considered, particularly through the German concepts of *bildung* and *didaktik*. It is difficult to translate either of these terms directly as they do not have English language equivalents. Roughly speaking, and for the purpose of this study, *bildung* is the culmination of the learner’s potential from unmolded humanity to possessing the values of civilization and being able to

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<sup>9</sup> Morris Cogan, Towards a Definition of Profession. *Harvard Educational Review* 23 (Winter, 1956), 33-50.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Oppenheimer, *White Collar Politics*. (New York City, NY: New York Review Press, 1985), 68

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Day, *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning*. (London, UK: Filmer Press, 1999). 94.

wield them at one's disposal. This is only thought possible through a rigorous education that provides moral and intellectual development.<sup>12</sup> *Didaktik* is even more difficult to translate due to the evolving nature of its meaning. It began as a response against the dry and unstimulating catechistic approach to education and rapidly evolved to encompass not just the teacher, the student, and information being taught, but the relationship between the three, and their relationship to the greater world. Didactic education was at the center of giving the student the necessary tools for *bildung*.<sup>13</sup> It served as a pedagogical approach for teachers to achieve this outcome.

The history of teachers and teaching tends to assume that teachers either are professionals or are in need of professionalization, which is the first step towards professional status.<sup>14</sup> Instead, I argue that, in the United States, teachers have never been allowed to fully access the potential they could possess if they were allowed the resources of entrance into the professional class, alongside doctors and lawyers. This stands in contrast to Germany, whose history with the issue is more complicated, if not more extreme in its vacillating perceptions of teachers as professionals. By exploring how these histories evolved, I seek to understand how the social structures, events, cultures, goals, objectives, and intentions have shaped the status of teachers, and their authority over student learning. I consider the past in order to urge action in the future.

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<sup>12</sup> Alan Blyth, *Individuality to Character: The Herbartian Sociology Applied to Education*. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (London, UK: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Society for Educational Studies, February, 1981), 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ian Westbury, *Teaching as Reflective Practice: What Might Didaktik Teach Curriculum? Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition* (New York City, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2000), 30.

<sup>14</sup> Abdul Rashid Mohamed, *Teachers' Professionalism: Prejudices, Problem and Promises*, *Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development Report of the international Experience Sharing Seminars (3): Professional Development in an Era of Global Change/Fragility and Education*. Hiroshima, Japan: Hiroshima University Education Development International Cooperation Research Center, May 2011), 70.

I therefore consider carefully the effects on teacher status that would result from teacher's acquiring true professionalism, authority, and salary. In order to understand the forces that have shaped the professional status of teachers in Germany and America, I answer the following questions:

1. What are the historical and philosophical discourses that have shaped the identity of teachers in Germany and in the United States;
2. What is the current professional standing of teachers in Germany and in the United States; and
3. What are the implications of teachers entering into the professional class?

My argument proceeds as follows. In Chapter I, I frame the study. In Chapter II, I focus on the origins of the social and professional status of the teacher in Germany from minister to sexton, school master to state builder, and finally fully empowered, well trained, and well-paid teacher. In Chapter III, I examine Germany's struggles during the modern period and how the hard-fought gains for teachers of the 1800s slowly eroded as the Nazis came to power and then saw the country split into East and West with two wildly different approaches to education. Each had ideas about the role of teachers who still jockeyed for status in those systems. I then explain how this stymied the social standing of teachers, leaving them on par in terms of social status and public perception with their American counterparts during the Reunification period. In Chapter IV, I look at the issue from the American perspective, and examine its early attempts to model teachers in the German/Prussian tradition that were scuttled by sexism, economic thrift, arguments over philosophy, and nearly a century of infighting. These factors have prevented teachers from achieving a professional status in the public consciousness. Finally, in Chapter V, I explore what could be possible today if these patriarchal and social class power structures were

set aside in the educational sphere. To understand the benefits of professional status, I will examine the educational systems where teachers have authority, training, and are well compensated. Finally, I will conclude the chapter by briefly discussing what challenges still must be confronted in this process.

While engaging in this comparative investigation, I operated under a key assumption. My background as both a lawyer and high school teacher has led me to adopt the role of advocate for teachers achieving full professional status. I have experienced the cultural capital that Bourdieu and Boltanski<sup>15</sup> describe that comes with the association of being a professional in society, and long lamented why teachers have not had such cachet. This prompted me to want to examine why that is. Fortunately, the answer can be found by looking at the history of the issue. History is the most important aspect of this problem to explore because only after the historical events are fully understood in the context of the current situation, can new pathways forward be devised that could potentially allow for the improvement in not only teacher professional standing, but also potentially greater student achievement. I began my research by looking at the general histories of Germany and the United States, and then began to narrow my focus onto the realm of education. I read a number of books on the history of education and took notes on each of them. From this point, I began to cross reference names of people and events that were discussed in each. Then I collected information on each of those, creating a web showing their relations to each other and to the greater events. To do this, I used broad sources such as encyclopedias and historical texts as well as far more specific sources including historical documents, academic papers, survey findings, biographies, a variety of media, and laws. In addition to information specifically pertaining to education in the two countries, I also researched

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<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu and Boltanski, *Occupations*, 91.

an array of sources concerning the definition of professions, professionals, and professionalism, power and positionality in society, and sexism and patriarchy as they pertain to education. To gather the information, I used bibliographical citations from the larger, more general works, and was able to tighten my focus from there. I also explored the resources available to me at a number of libraries and databases and was able to discover a significant number that were useful. Further, some materials were suggested to me by my professors and associates. In some cases, if I found documents that were in German or I questioned the German to English translation, I had the documents translated separately by two bilingual associates, a retired German language teacher and a German surgeon, and compared their work. After accumulating all of my data, I examined it for common and recurring themes and arrived at my conclusions that when teachers have training, authority, and salary reflective of those, they are seen as professionals, and when any one of these is missing, teachers do not have the same status and students do not fare as well. I then began to look at what factors have historically limited teachers from obtaining one or all of the necessary characteristics.

I am exploring this issue through a framework approach outlined by Koselleck and explained by Bouton that history is what is seen and lived by individuals or collectives and what is written in retrospect.<sup>16</sup> “Historical events are known only through the retrospective narratives that historians make, and their knowledge is often different from the experiences of the actors and witnesses... The concept of ‘history’ is not reducible to that of a “story;” it encompasses both aspects, aspects that are entangled but nevertheless distinct: the temporal life of individuals and communities, to which events occur in specific contexts (like meetings, partings, battles, and so

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<sup>16</sup> Christophe Bouton, “The Critical Theory of History: Rethinking the Philosophy of History in the Light of Koselleck’s Work,” *History and Theory* 55 (May 2016): 169.

on), and the historical *narrative*, the story that is made afterwards.”<sup>17</sup> This approach argues that “between the lived history and known history is sedimented history, the past events that are sedimented into psychic and physical traces...and conserved in the individual and collective memory and/or deposited in material objects which can be organized under the category of documents.”<sup>18</sup> The narrative is derived from these documents. Koselleck and Bouton push for a move away from the philosophy of history, which relies on these narratives exclusively, to the “theory of history” to “allow for interdisciplinary study of the past so that the study of history remains open to all researches who deal with issues related to history, each bringing of course, their own specific perspectives to bear as function of their own specific traditions and formation.”<sup>19</sup> In the following chapters, I rely on the theory of history to examine not just the historical document based narratives, but also to identify beliefs about teachers, social trends, popular culture, and individual and collective experiences to critique the societies’ and cultures’ views of teachers with the intention to begin the process of liberating teachers from factors that have for so long stifled their development through control.

In both United States and the Germany, social structures evolved that limited the entrance of teachers into the professional class. In the United States, Biklen explains that “workers often gain status by the status of the clients they serve,”<sup>20</sup> and that “children are nonproductive members of society; association with children carries historical devaluation as women’s work.”<sup>21</sup> Society compares teaching, which by design, has largely been dominated by women, to that of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>20</sup> Sari Knopp Biklen, “Schoolteaching, Professionalism, and Gender,” *Teacher Education Quarterly* 14, No 2 (Spring 1987): 19.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 19.

the work of men. Further, the structure “posits control over clients in the hands of (male) professionals,”<sup>22</sup> but denies teachers that level of control by associating women with motherhood, which requires no specialized training, and punishes teachers who “dictate” to parents as overstepping the limits of their authority.<sup>23</sup> This power structure places males and their right to advanced training, authority, and compensation, above that of women, which has led to the field of education as being seen as related to “the caring of emotional labour and...connected with discourses of nature, ethics and mothering.”<sup>24</sup> Lather explains that, “teaching has come to be formulated as an extension of women’s role in the family; to accept male leadership as “natural” and to provide service that reproduce males for jobs and careers, females for wives and mothers, and a reserve labor force.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as Biklen explains, “the preponderance of women in teaching shapes teachers’ reputation as compromising a semi-profession.”<sup>26</sup>

Unlike in the United States, males have largely dominated teaching in Germany and the German system contained traces of the patriarchal based structure. However, the German system was far more strongly shaped by the importance society placed on formal titles for determining social standing. The title of teacher has been both upheld as worthy of incorporation as a member of the professional class (as in 19<sup>th</sup> Century),<sup>27</sup> and degraded as “idiots” and “tyrants” (in the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Franziska Vogt, “A Caring Teacher: Explorations into Primary School Teachers’ Professional Identity and Ethic of Care,” *Gender Education* 14, no. 3 (2002): 251-264.

<sup>25</sup> Patti Lather, “The Absent Presence: Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Nature of Teacher Work,” *Teacher Education Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 25-38.

<sup>26</sup> Biklin, *Schoolteaching*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, *German Professions, 1800-1950* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 86.

Nazi regime).<sup>28</sup> The perception of teachers as professionals has largely been dependent upon the title and power awarded to the teacher by the government.<sup>29</sup> Prussian society, like much of Europe, was initially arranged around the concept of estates that had “four broad strata, nobility, priesthood, merchants and peasants, and serfs.”<sup>30</sup> As the Prussian state rose, this shifted to a class system which granted citizenship, legal rights, and the freedom to pursue an occupation to all. However, Porter lays out that “class differences create a very great difference in life chances, among which are the chances of individuals reaching the higher levels of political, economic, and other forms of power. The structure of power reflects the structure of class, for class determines the routes and barriers to advancement up our institutional hierarchies. Power is used to perpetuate a given structure of class.” As such, “closely related to differences in class levels are differences in the exercising of power and decision making in the society.”<sup>31</sup> For German teachers, being recognized as members of the professional class, offered them a doorway to greater social standing, power, and improved standard of living.<sup>32</sup>

Although different in focus, the histories of the United States and Germany reveal a similar trait: the social reproduction of the existing class structures. Whereas the German class system was built upon birth status, if not solely on economics and land ownership, the American system was structured around gender. In both systems the powerful maintained their status (the elites in Germany and men in the United States), by limiting the education, authority, and economic improvement of those beneath them in the social order. As I will show in the body of

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<sup>28</sup> Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, UK: Berg Press, 2010), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Cocks and Jarausch, *German Professions*, 94.

<sup>30</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (Toronto, Canada: Toronto University Press), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Cocks and Jarausch, *German Professions*, 94.

this dissertation, as the poor and women attempted to upend these systems, teaching evolved as an outlet to provide them with some degree of social mobility, but not complete equality with the elites or with men. Instead, they rose within the education hierarchy, separate and outside of the preexisting social/power hierarchies. In this way, the traditional hierarchies were not threatened either by teachers or by those who were the beneficiaries of education.

I am also aware that there are certain limitations in my research. I am not German, nor did I attend a German school. Although I am knowledgeable about German and European history, there may be nuances to both the culture and history that shade the historical events relayed herein in ways that I am unable to see. Similarly, I am not a German speaker, and I have relied on translations of German documents, though I have sought out secondary translations of documents to insure the likeliness of accuracy where possible.

Learning more about the history of teachers as professionals in Germany and the United States gives voice to the cause for the elevation of teachers in status by examining the ways in which advanced education, greater authority, and larger salaries can make for better educative experiences. The research consisted of comparing the ways that teachers have been seen and used in both countries to gain insights into the resulting impacts. The goal of this endeavor is to ignite a philosophical argument about education in society to raise awareness of the issue to fuel further research and reconsideration of the positionality of teachers within the professional structure and how that might be beneficial to student and teachers.

CHAPTER II:  
GERMAN TEACHERS BECOME PROFESSIONALS

**Introduction**

In this chapter, I trace the formation of teachers as professionals from the German Reformation of the 1500s, and how the minister/teachers were replaced by better trained schoolmasters in what came to be known as the “Reform Movement.” I will then discuss how and why the resentment those teachers felt toward the system forced them to work to fully liberate themselves from the control of the church in the “Emancipation Movement” to become licensed, paid, and empowered by state agents. I will also discuss how these changes were based on evolving philosophical underpinnings in response to the social structures of Prussian and German society. Finally, I will discuss how these factors shifted perceptions of what a teacher’s role in the classroom should be, and the new nature of German education that resulted. This gave rise to a more structured teaching philosophy; making entrance into the professional class reality.

**Luther and Education**

The Roman Empire grew to encompass most of Europe, North Africa, and much of the Middle East. In time, it converted to Christianity, and as the empire split between eastern and western halves, so did the church. The eastern church slowly evolved into orthodoxy with its own unique beliefs and traditions, and the western church evolved into the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was based out of Rome, insisted on Latin for written communications, including all Biblical text, and split power between the Pope, who oversaw matters of faith, and the Holy Roman Emperor, who was charged as the protector of the faith in the earthly realm.

By the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was being guided largely by two traditions. The first taught that it was only through the practices of the faith, the sacraments (baptism, confirmation, matrimony, the Eucharist, ordination, penance, and extreme unction) could grace and salvation be obtained. The second tradition was more personal because it focused on an inward, personal faith and belief and focus on God as the source of salvation. These traditions coexisted throughout the Middle Ages and were seen as complimentary of each other. However, by 1500, the Church was taking a stricter stand on the issue and was stressing the importance of outward, institutional rituals above that of inner, personal faith. It was also charging exorbitant fees for these rituals, and church coffers were overflowing. Numerous reformers had spoken up against these practices, but were often tortured into recanting their beliefs or swiftly put to death.

Tensions had long existed between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor over which position was actually more powerful and how to divide the vast wealth being amassed. Whereas the Pope lived in Rome and at this time, always chosen from an Italian city-state, the Emperor was more often associated with the Germanic peoples of central Europe. He was selected by a group of prince-electors, each governing a principality. They too were upset about the amount of money flowing out of their principalities and into Rome.

Martin Luther was a German monk turned professor, obsessed with his own sinfulness and desire to be worthy of God's forgiveness. He had traveled to Rome as a young man and was repulsed by the opulence, greed, debauchery, and hypocrisy he witnessed among the Church officials. In 1517, he was living in Wittenberg, when John Tetzel arrived to sell indulgences (the payment of a fee to reduce or avoid spiritual punishment for earthly behaviors). Luther was outraged by what he witnessed, and crafted his *95 Thesis*, a list of disputations with current practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church. Within months, word had spread throughout the

German principalities and as far as Rome about Luther's ideas, and a series of meetings, or Diets, were held among the prince-electors and the Holy Roman Emperor. What followed was an intensive growth in the popularity of Luther's ideas. He along with Philipp Melanchthon worked to shape the ideas into a formal set of beliefs. The beliefs were especially popular with the poor who saw the new ideas of religion as a means to end their own oppression. The Diet of Augsburg in 1530 gave permission for each of the princes to determine the religion of their principality. Not surprisingly, those principalities closer to Italian lands remained Catholic, and those further away embraced the new Protestant, Lutheran faith. Practicing the new faith was both a religious and a political act.<sup>33</sup>

By the late 1400s the German speaking regions of Central Europe were among the most literate on the continent, and the ideas spread quickly through the written word by the 1530s.<sup>34</sup> Because of the rapid growth, Luther believed literacy and education to be key pillars in supporting the enormous cultural changes taking place. He advocated that individuals should read the Bible for themselves, and that parents should take on responsibility for the religious instruction of their children. He rationalized that preachers were not trained as educators, and most of the content of their sermons was lost on children. A new type of education in literacy and mathematics, and to some degree the new Protestant ideas of self were now necessary. Parents would be charged with "good discipline," as Luther referred to Christian instruction, and to succeed at this, they must have been educated in the fundamentals of reading, and have a

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<sup>33</sup> Mortimer Chambers, Barbara Hanwalt, Theodore K. Rabb, Isser Woloch, Lisa Tiersten, *The Western Experience* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2010), 363-369.

<sup>34</sup> Donald Kagan, Steven Ozment, & Frank M. Turner, *The Western Heritage Since 1300* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 286.

working, accurate understanding of the Bible.<sup>35</sup> Parents would be far better suited for providing a child with religious instruction, he rationalized, because it could be done in the warm and loving environment of the family unit, and would therefore lead the child to associate the feelings of familiar safety and love with that of Christ. By doing this, traditional schools could therefore focus their attentions more on academic subjects, which would build in people the skills needed to function in society in order to carry out the work of God on Earth.<sup>36</sup>

By the 1520s, it was clear to Luther that his plans were not coming into fruition in the manner in which he had predicted. State governments were unwilling to spend the funds needed to develop a network of schools, and parents were proving to be unwilling religious instructors for their children because they saw it as the duty of the local religious authority, felt unqualified to do so, or were simply negligent. Additionally, radical religious sects such as the Anabaptists Melchiorites (a radical group in Münster that believed in public confessions and punishment, only reading the Bible, and a notion of community property which included spouses), were starting to interpret scripture in ways that Luther saw as dangerous to society and to people's salvation.<sup>37</sup> Luther was fearful that German society would collapse and barbary would take hold. He and other leaders of the Reformation movement began to call for more support for schools. One of those leaders was Melanchthon. Melanchthon argued that it was the responsibility of the legal and moral authority of the land to properly tend to the education of its people to prevent the

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<sup>35</sup> Iver Asheim, *Glaube und Erziehung [Faith and Education]* (Heidelberg, Germany: Quelle & Meyer, 1961, p. 28, and 43-66, quoted in Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Luther, *Auslegung Deutsch des Vaterunsers [German Interpretation of the Father's Oath]* (1519), WA, 6:12, quoted in Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>37</sup> Mortimer, Hanawalt, Rabb, Woloch, Tiersten, *The Western Experience*, 371.

collapse of society by stopping dangerous ideas from spreading. This protection would come from ministers and teachers who were carefully trained and would act as agents of the governments.<sup>38</sup> Historians of education in Germany agree that this was the start of the public education system, and that it grew out of the Protestant Reformation.

To achieve this, Luther launched a two-pronged attack. First, he began to preach that the problems in society were cyclical and could be broken through state intervention. It was not the parents' job to raise a child alone because the child belonged to God first, and to the parents, second. It was the parents' responsibility to do their due diligence to ensure God's will for each of his children be carried out. He writes, "If you have a child fit to be trained, don't imagine that you are free to raise him as you please, nor to set him on any life path that happens to suit you. Your task is to help God in his benevolent effort to advance his [spiritual and secular] realms." Schools were the only option to prevent people from reverting to wild animals, and must be widely accepted by society.<sup>39</sup>

Second, Luther rethought his position on the role of ministers in the process of educating the young. He rationalized that ministers were the leaders of the community, and therefore were uniquely qualified in both community standing and religious instruction to also be the teachers in the new schools, but they would need better instruction on how to do this. To ensure that the instruction of the young was properly carried out, he undertook to create a series of writings to

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<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Maurer, *Der Junge Melanchthlon* [*The Boy Melanchthlon*] (Göttingen, Germany: Göttingen Press, 1967), 230, quoted in Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 7.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Luther, preface to Justus Menius's *An Die Hochgeborene Fürstin, Fraw Sibilla Hertzogin zu Sachsen, Oeconomia Christina* [To the Highborn Princess, Fraw Sibilla Hertzogin of Saxony, Oeconomia Chritina] (Wittenburg, 1529) WA 30:62, quoted in Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 7.

guide the new minister-teachers in their work. He explained that education was essentially a matter of religious and moral instruction that taught people to “learn to know God and to understand his word.”<sup>40</sup> Luther’s pedagogy was one that saw the subject matter as important, but liberal arts and language alone would not achieve his ultimate goal. Mindset was crucial because it would help ensure success in reaching the young. He argued that there should be no rigid, formal school mastering, but a humane fellowship between the child and the adult, secure in the grasp of sound principles. Strauss defines Luther’s vision of teachers as entering the child’s world, to inhabit his realm of play and imitation. Luther, himself, warned teachers to “let no one think himself too clever for such childishness...Christ himself could not draw men to him until he had become a man. If we want to teach children we must first become children.... A purpose of this was to help each person find their place in society – as teacher or as student, preacher and teacher of scripture or listener and attendant.”<sup>41</sup>

Yet, Luther did not completely trust the new minister-teachers to carry out their new roles with complete autonomy and authority. During this period, it was widely believed that children, due to the nature of their youth, were mentally unformed and unstable and could be swayed easily into vice, corruption, and sin, or to goodness and salvation. Luther, therefore, favored the catechism as the most promising means for internalizing the rules of moral and social conduct. The rote memorization, repetition, exacting responsive nature of the catechism was thought to be the paradigm that children needed to give them stability in life and strength of character. Every

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<sup>40</sup> Martin Luther, *Eine Predigt, das Man Kinder Zur Schule Halten Solle* [A Sermon to Keep Children at School] (1530), 30 quoted by Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 37-38.

Lutheran state issued strict regulations for the catechism style of teaching that was to occur in schools. This served the purpose of convincing all interested parties, minister, parents, students, and the general public, of the virtues of uniformity, with the intention of building a homogenous culture. Catechism became so popular that it was not uncommon to be conducted between teachers and students, preachers and their congregations, and even as a form of superficial communication between parents and children.<sup>42</sup> However, in the rush to embrace the new style of schooling, the original purpose of catechism instruction was lost. In its earliest, purely religious context, it was meant to be an instructional tool for adults who tended to be reflective, possessing the maturity and willingness to search for meaning within the phrases, by internalizing and deconstructing the rules and phrasing. Much of this was lost on children, and many began to argue that the school children were doing little more than droning vacantly and mindlessly.<sup>43</sup> With no real training or authority, and no additional pay for the additional responsibility for direct education of the young, the minister-teachers were also not inclined to be invested in the educational process they were overseeing.

By the 1600s and well into the 1700s, it was clear that most ministers had delegated this responsibility to their *kuster* (the sexton of the church). In the Middle Ages, sextons were grave diggers, but by this period they were largely charged with looking after and maintaining church property, and ringing the church bells for services and special occasions. They were not particularly well educated, themselves, and often relied solely on the memorized catechism

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<sup>42</sup> Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 202-226.

<sup>43</sup> Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 173.

methodology to educate students whose attendance was irregular.<sup>44</sup> However, efforts to address this were not a priority because in the early 1600s, the Thirty Years War proved to be hugely expensive and horrifically detrimental to central European society. The war was the last serious religious strife in Europe, and was triggered largely in response to German principalities embracing new Protestant faiths other than Lutheranism, which many considered to be a violation of the agreement made in Augsburg. Political rivals saw this as an opportunity to enhance their own power, and escalated the situation. The war brought about famine, economic depression, declining living conditions, and tremendous loss of life.<sup>45</sup> In its aftermath, the Peace of Westphalia planted the seeds to what would give rise to the Prussian state by firming up the borders of surrounding countries, and allowing the principality of Prussia, now called a state, to become dominant. In order to unite the disparate Germanic principalities, a cohesive culture would be needed, and education was increasingly seen as a viable way to do this.<sup>46</sup>

Justification for such action was found both in the writings of Philipp Spener (1635-1705), as well as those of Martin Luther. In “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,” Luther had argued that the Medieval separation between the layman and the priests had to be erased. The division of those labeled as “secular” from those as “spiritual” had limited the development of those not in the priesthood from fully knowing the grace and forgiveness of God. Luther, instead, believed that all Christians, regardless of position in society, were spiritual in the sight of God as long as they were baptized. A century later, Spener, a Lutheran theologian, emphasized the transformative nature of spiritual rebirth and how it gives rise to individual

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<sup>44</sup> Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Chambers, Hanawalt, Rabb, Woloch, Tiersten, *The Western Experience*, 426-430.

<sup>46</sup> Kagan, Ozment, & Turner, *The Western Heritage Since 1300*, 413.

devotion. In order to understand the potential power of this rebirth, people must have the knowledge and skills needed for reading and interpreting the bible. Spener, would come to be known as the “Father of Piety,” and his followers, continued to refine his teachings by emphasizing study groups and private readings as important tenants of the faith. Paramount, though, was that the individual must intentionally come to Christ by making an informed, educated decision to do so. This, and the work needed to sustain devotion required a certain degree of education.<sup>47</sup>

Frustrated with the sexton teachers’ inability to provide this necessary education, academics began to seek out alternatives, particularly in the realm of arts and literature. In the early 1700s, poets and writers had taken a keen interest in the Medieval concept of *bildung*. Meister Eckhart (1260-1328), a German theologian and philosopher, first used the term in attempting to translate parts of the Bible for nuns who could not read Latin. He attempted to explain the concept of “sinking into Christ while thinking about oneself as made in the image of Christ” as “*bildung*,” a variation of “*bildunga*,” an Old High German word for “the creative production of objects such as pottery.”<sup>48</sup> The poets and writers of the early and mid-eighteenth century such as Kopstock and Sulzer had begun to use the term as a way of expressing how inner form is reflected as the outer beauty.<sup>49</sup> Sultzer, in particular, theorized that creativity was a “natural power, potentially accessible to everyone.”<sup>50</sup> When an individual was trained properly

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<sup>47</sup> Philipp Spener, *Pia Desideria*, translated by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964), 87-122.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Tröhler, “Bildung’ ein schulpädagogischer Begriff?” *Infos und Akzente* 5, 1:10-7/ [“Education, a School Pedagogical Term?” *Information and Accents* 5, 1:10-7] (Zurich, Switzerland, Pädagogische Hochschule, 1998), 11.

<sup>49</sup> Gottlieb Friedrich Klopstock, *Messiah* (1745), translated by Georg Heinrich Christoph Egestorff (London, UK: Hartwig & Müller, 1826), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Johan Georg Sulzer, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment. Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, edited

they could harness this ability, and this would allow him to lead a reasoned and virtuous life.<sup>51</sup>

Johann Herder (1744-1803) was one of the first to call for this view to be applied to education. He was a critic of the harsh, rote based schools of the era. Instead, he argued that God demands that man become enlightened, educated, sensitive, reasonable, virtuous, and enjoying....at the actual level of culture. This is done by introspection and self-examination. To him, *bildung* is a process that takes place inside the individual, not a series of rigid topics to be studied and placed onto the student.<sup>52</sup>

These new ideas accepted the Lutheran notion that children were unformed, but rejected the notion that the catechism approach to learning was the surest way to help children to avoid the pitfalls of the world. Instead, they began to call for individuals to be empowered to make themselves into something better by giving them the skills necessary to shape their humanity and intellectual skills to fully understand and access the world around them. Teachers would need to be formally trained, in this new, radically different mindset. Teachers would have to be professionals and be skilled at academic and moral education.<sup>53</sup>

### **From Sextons to School Masters**

By the mid-1700s, the Germanic principality of Prussia had grown in strength and dominance to pull most of the surrounding states into a loosely united country. The first

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by Nancy Baker and Thomas Christensen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 314-315.

<sup>51</sup> Johan Georg Sulzer, "Entwicklung Des Begriffs vom Genie (1757)" ["Development of the Concept of Genius (1757)"] translated by C. Winter (Hildesheim, Germany: Olms, 1923), 4.

<sup>52</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, "This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity (1774)" *Philosophical Writings*, edited and translated by Michal N. Forster (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 321-322.

<sup>53</sup> Birgit Pepin, "Culture of Didactics: Teachers' Perceptions of Their Work and Their Role as Teachers in England, France, and Germany," as part of the symposium entitled "Didaktik: An International Perspective," presented at the *European Conference on Educational Research, Edinburg, Scotland, September 20-23, 2000*.

significant challenge to Prussian independence came in the form of the Seven Years War, a conflict that had unspooled from the British colonies in North America and by the 1750s was engulfing the European continent. To fund the war effort, Frederick II had been forced to devalue the Prussian currency.<sup>54</sup> When the war was over in 1763, he redirected his attention onto domestic endeavors, and schools played an important role in his plans. He ordered that church officials revise a law that was drafted nearly thirty years prior, and when completed, he issued it as the *General-Land-Schul-Reglement*.<sup>55</sup> For the first time, an educational law would apply in almost all Prussian lands and it established a “school system” that would spread across each of the principalities. The law explains that the education had “fallen into extreme decay,” and that it must become the “solid foundation” for “the true welfare of all of the estates in our lands” by providing “reasonable as well as Christian instruction of youth to true piety and other useful things.” The law was also very detailed in the government’s expectations for these schools and those who attended them. Attendance would be mandatory between the ages of five and thirteen. A school week would consist of thirty hours of instruction spread between Monday and Saturday, even in winter months. Summer sessions were to be shortened to three hours a day, but vacations were not allowed, “even during harvests.” The instructors of the schools would be “schoolmasters” and were owed a weekly fee (reduced by 1/3 in the summer months) and would be evaluated based on their ability to instruct young children, as well as writing and math to older students.<sup>56</sup> The schools would still be overseen by the church, but were now being told what to do by the state. To make sure enforcement was carried out, state inspectors would visit

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<sup>54</sup> Kagan, Ozment, Turner, *The Western Heritage*, 412.

<sup>55</sup> Ellewood Patterson Cubberly, *The History of Education: Educational Practice and Progress Considered as a Spread of Development of Western Education* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 558.

<sup>56</sup> LaVopa, *Schoolmasters*, 12.

each school annually.<sup>57</sup>

Although specific, and seemingly enforceable, the law proved to be problematic. The proper training that teachers would need was not well defined, and funding for the schools and teachers' salaries was still dependent on local expenditures. The role of the sexton became folded into that of the schoolmaster. The new *schoolmasters* had little to no pedagogical skills or qualifications, and their new task warranted an extra fee that would quickly become a point of debate.<sup>58</sup> It is possible that this was the point at which the long held belief that teachers should take on additional duties beyond educating their students took root. The schoolmaster taught the catechism and scripture during the week, but was also responsible for taking them to church on Sundays, accompanying hymns, and making sure they were well behaved. These duties differed from each town and to each schoolmaster.

Frustrating for the schoolmasters was the fact their wages were horrifically low, especially in the most rural of areas. To get by, schoolmasters took up secondary careers. Serving as notaries, beer and brandy runners, cobblers, and herdsman were among the most common. Many parents also began to determine that their child's, particularly boys', education was sufficient before the completing of school, and it was common for them to remove their children from the school, especially during spring and summer when the most work was needed on farms. In the winter, parents refused to allow their children to walk in the snow and ice to go to the school. A schoolmaster's salary was often tied to the number of children in attendance, and this was a blow to their wallets. Additionally, the tradition remained from the sexton era for schoolmasters to visit the homes of their students' families at Christmas time, and the families

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<sup>57</sup> Cubberly, *Educational Practice*, 559.

<sup>58</sup> LaVopa, *Schoolmasters*, 14.

would each present him with a small financial *gift*. In 1763, this *gift* was codified as a tax as part of the educational law. Although families were now required to make the payment, it was dependent upon the schoolmaster to collect the money, and there were no repercussions if the family refused payment. Perhaps even more problematic, there were no obligations for support of the schoolmaster beyond these small salaries and taxes. They were given leftover farm land and occasional gifts of crops from the community, but all of this combined amounted to the schoolmaster living only slightly above the subsistence level.<sup>59</sup>

Josef Görres, a Prussian school commissioner summed up the problem as, “Since the teacher is dependent on the peasants, like any of the other hands, they exercise their rule [over the teacher], as they would over a serf and he must conform to their will in everything... The teacher cannot use discipline; if he tries the children run away, the mothers approve their behavior and the father holds back his portion of the wage.”<sup>60</sup> The schoolmaster lacked standing in the community. His relationship to the other people of the village both reflected his position and his lack of station. LaVopa explains that in the language of the eighteenth century he was ‘without property’ and hence without standing. Lacking either physical property or an established profession, he belonged outside, and below a society of estates. He was a communal servant who did not have impressive educational credentials or a local office. The effect of this was that being a schoolmaster was so poorly regarded that few people sought it out as a way to make a living. He came to be seen as a common servant, dependent upon his neighbors for his livelihood and survival. If a schoolmaster dared to challenge his standing, position, salary, or authority, he was easily dismissed as preposterous and superfluous.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> LaVopa, *Schoolmasters*, 12-17.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Alfons Schage, *Josef Görres und Die Anfänge der preussischen Volksschule*, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> LaVopa, *Schoolmasters*, 20-21.

## The Reform Movement

As the Eighteenth Century closed and the Nineteenth Century began, Prussia was rocked by events in France. The first of these was the French Revolution and the bloodshed that followed in its aftermath, the Reign of Terror. The second was the rapid ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte, and his militarization of France for the purpose of making war with its neighbors. By 1806 Napoleon had invaded and begun defeating the Prussian army, and in 1807, Prussia was forced to surrender most of its territory in the Treaty of Tilsit.<sup>62</sup> Both of these events caused cultural changes within Prussia. First, social class and the capital that came with it were examined, and efforts were made to distinguish the Prussian bourgeoisie from their murdered French counterparts. Where the French bourgeoisie were the beneficiaries of inherited wealth of nobility and urbanity who refused to accept societal change because of their superficial, vain existence, the Prussian bourgeoisie argued they were distinguished by *bildung*. They were defined through their efforts at self-examination, which had a nationalistic orientation. De Staël would later reflect on these ideas by explaining that the Prussians saw themselves at the apex of the arts and philosophy and the French as degenerates who embraced liberal philosophy and lived in an artificial reality to their own detriment.<sup>63</sup>

Around 1800, attempting to define what it meant to be Prussian became a popular exercise at all levels of society. The early development of the nation-state began to be seen by an increased awareness of a common heritage, cultural development, and above all else, a national, codified language.<sup>64</sup> Educational activists would latch onto this idea as evidence of the

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<sup>62</sup> Kagan, Ozment, Turner, *The Western Heritage*, 675-676

<sup>63</sup> Anne-Louise-Germnaime de Staël, *Germany* (New York, NY: H.W. Derby, 1813), 23.

<sup>64</sup> John Neubauer, "The Institutionalization and Nationalization of Literature in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Narrating the Nation. Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, ed. By Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, and Andrew Mycock (New York: NY, 2008), 97-116.

need for a national education program that could come to serve as an institution for the purpose of cultivating unity, and it could work with the army to construct a Prussian national identity for the first time.<sup>65</sup> Many argued that the new importance placed on teachers justified significant changes in social status, and the justification for a larger salary. No longer was begging for payment at the doors of their students' homes seen as dignified. They demanded more money to match the new expectations under which they worked. The writings of Joseph Schram, gave voice to the teachers' activism on this issue. In 1803, he wrote that, "from a moral, political, pedagogical and administrative stand point...schoolmen who fulfill their duty with integrity and dedicate their knowledge and talents to the common weal, like all other officials about which the same can be claimed, deserve a distinctive and sufficient income so that they can meet the demands of their taxing profession with dignity and satisfaction."<sup>66</sup> Schram believed that more prestige and higher salary were the keys to successful educational reform and was practical in the correlation between salary the attraction to teaching for the most qualified individuals, "Can we really expect that...men who consider themselves only modestly able to find a more respectable livelihood in another field will enthusiastically enter a station in which they see themselves constantly reduced to the class of hirelings and have to be masters of the art of economy to make it through hard times?"<sup>67</sup> However, even in the new nationalistic period in the wake of Napoleon, the state had been reluctant to fund the new teachers because it saw it largely as a responsibility of the local communities. Although the state saw the new teachers as carrying out

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<sup>65</sup> Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 30-66.

<sup>66</sup> Josef Schram, *Die Verbesserung der Schulen in moralisch-politischer-pädagogischer und polizeilicher Hinsicht/The Improvement of Schools in Moral and Pedagogical Policing*, 307, quoted in Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 32.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

the work of building idealized citizens through education, it also held on to the antiquated ideas that because teachers traced their lineage to the church, and were once paid by the locals they serviced, that this arrangement should continue for cost efficiency. Additionally, the state argued that this approach would ensure that the teacher was paid in scale to the local cost of living. When the issue of money was raised, the long held justification that had been given to schoolmasters was again often delivered to teachers: “teaching was a selfless calling in the traditional religious sense and with assurances that faithful service to God....would bring “eternal reward” as well as the inner satisfaction of a good conscience.”<sup>68</sup>

The defeat of Prussia by the French forced Prussia to try to make sense of how it had been overrun. This effort only intensified the nationalistic fervor within the country. An intensely stratified social class structure arose in Prussia as a means of emphasizing the role of *bildung* in Prussian culture. A new, educated middle class, known as the *Bildungsbürgertum*, formed distinct from the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Because admission to the college preparatory schools (*Gymnasiums*) was expensive, it was more difficult for families to change their station, and those who had considered themselves to the quintessential embodiment of the possibilities of Germanic culture and philosophy.<sup>69</sup>

To support their ideas, this new class looked to the writings of a group of academics ranging from university professors to government officials to pastors, who had collectively called themselves *Schulffreunde*, or “friends of schools.” Their aim was to spark *Voksaufklärung*

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<sup>68</sup> Johann Friedrich Prenninger, (Landschulbibliothek, vol 2, pp. 1-2, quoted in Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 33.

<sup>69</sup> Harry Liebersohn, “The American Academic Community Before the First World War. A Comparison with the German ‘Bildungssystem.’” *In bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Teil 1: Bildungssystem un Professionalisierung in internationalen Vergleichen*, edited by Werner Conze and Jürgen Kocka (Stuttgart, Germany: Klett-Cotta.), 164.

or “popular enlightenment” that would transmit new knowledge, a new sense of self, and new behavioral norms to the lower classes. The traditional view of the lower classes had long held that they were more like beasts than men. It was believed that their understanding of the world was largely defined by superstitions (both religious and secular) and lacked the self-awareness and responsibility necessary for statehood or citizenship. However, this new group of Enlightened thinkers viewed the poor, not as having an inability to pull themselves from poverty, but rather as workers who required intelligent, efficient, application of specialized knowledge of agriculture and animal husbandry. Most importantly, they argued, the peasant had the capacity for rational understanding. The *Schulfreunde* was part of a larger German school of thinkers known as the Philanthropinists who argued that the well-being of all people could be improved.<sup>70</sup> *Bildung* was essential to this process of social elevation, and was increasingly seen as inherently German.

Importance was now being placed on the education of the individual, and political authorities saw schools as a way to extend their power to the cultivation of citizens. Schools became a place of civic education, an element of nation building. In the wake of the defeat by France, Prussia saw this as the keystone to rebuilding a stronger government and Prussian character, and the codification of a national language could also be achieved by this means.<sup>71</sup> The defeat was viewed not just in a military sense, but also as a moral defeat because of a failure of national consciousness that favored individual interests over national identity. To overcome these failures, a new education model would be implemented that would center on usefulness

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<sup>70</sup> Rebekka Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 41

<sup>71</sup> Neubauer, *Institutions*, 97.

and practicality. It was believed that this new plan would “save” the nation.”<sup>72</sup> The model for it was laid out by Johann Gottlieb Fichte in his “Address to the German Nation” in 1807. He argued that the German people were in need of a strong spirit of nationalism to lift them up to overcome their defeat at the hands of Napoleon. A national education system was the key, and it was believed that it would lead to the successful building of German nation. He argued that this would be possible by relying on the methods of Swiss philosopher Johann Pestalozzi, whose work was already well known and studied by German academics at this point.<sup>73</sup>

A new idea of the role of education in people’s lives, and perhaps more importantly, what it could do for the rising Prussian state, began to grow from this conceptual seed. The work of Pestalozzi and several other Germanic philosophers would be folded together to reform the German school system, and in the process, would ultimately change the role of the teacher from that of largely religious instructor to state builder who used new *didaktik* methods to achieve their goals.

Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was a Swiss education reformer who had begun training teachers in his theories in the 1700s. The starting points of his theories were that “The best service man can render to man is to teach him to help himself,” and to do this, “...his inner nature must be improved if the external circumstances of the poor are to be bettered.”<sup>74</sup> Part of this process would be away from the traditional *didaktik* emphasis on moral character development and towards a greater importance on academics. Pestalozzi believed that the

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<sup>72</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808), ed. with an introduction and notes by Gregory Moore (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19-32.

<sup>73</sup> Karl A. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society: The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria 1750-1900* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 69.

<sup>74</sup> Johann Pestalozzi, “Views and Experience,” *Pestalozzi’s Educational Writings*, ed. J.A. Green (London, UK: Longmans, Green & Company, 1912), 69.

development of character necessitated the need for education. Given individual uniqueness, a state that focused its efforts on building virtue in its citizenry exclusively through external efforts would ultimately fail. Therefore, promoting each person's virtues had to be done through the development of what he termed the "inner powers of the child" (though this was vaguely defined, at best) and would rely on the teacher meeting the child where the child was, both in intellect and curiosity, to build the child's character.<sup>75</sup> Horlacher describes this process as the teacher taking into account the nature of the child's mind and the circumstance of the child.<sup>76</sup> An ideal character is one that is benevolent (focused on faith and love) and made effective through practical acquaintance with affairs. The teacher must avoid focusing only on intellect or curiosity exclusively, and the student must be ready for this process. To Pestalozzi, the psychological progress and development of the child is just as important as the physical progress.<sup>77</sup> He believed that the human personality evolved through three stages. Schleunes describes the stages as, "The first state, an instinctive or animal one...was succeeded in the normal course by a second stage, the social one. A third, or moral stage, was also achievable, but not inevitably so, and therefore its development required special cultivation." Pestalozzi doubted most people had the potential to reach the highest stage, and therefore, education should focus on helping the masses reach the moral stage of their development.<sup>78</sup> All men needed to be elevated with true wisdom, but he was opposed to universal education because he believed that it was not helpful or needed in the future of every man. He favored an education that would be attached to the needs of the people and that circumstance should determine the type and extent of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>76</sup> Horlacher, *Educated Subject*, 64.

<sup>77</sup> Pestalozzi, *Views and Experience*, 65-110.

<sup>78</sup> Shuleunes, *Schooling and Society*, 17.

the education a child received.<sup>79</sup>

These new notions of education's importance and its process would follow the blueprint designed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, once he took control of the newly formed Department for Schools and Poor Relief. He emphasized elementary education for all children, and relied on natural aptitude and performance. He unlinked education from vocational training, stating that he was not interested in turning "cobbler's boys into cobblers, but to turn 'children into people.' "The pupil is mature when he has learned enough from others to be in a position to learn for himself."<sup>80</sup> He oversaw the creation of state examinations, textbooks, curricula, and learning aids. However, the education given would be rudimentary so as to allow peasants to have some working knowledge of the state constitution and to understand the ideal character traits of a passive and obedient subject. Schools would gear their instruction to the social circumstance of the student body. Reading, writing, and arithmetic would be taught in addition to religion, and the ultimate goal was to make the peasant more useful, but more satisfied with their own lot in life.<sup>81</sup> Von Humboldt also outlined plans for the *gymnasiums* to provide a more advanced education, traditionally classical education for students who showed academic promise and had the financial means to graduate to university.<sup>82</sup> For these students, Humboldt designed a curriculum centered around languages, history, and mathematics in order to produce a student who could acquire knowledge on his own and be prepared for the university.<sup>83</sup>

Starting in 1807, a number of new laws were put in place in order to achieve these

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<sup>79</sup> Pestalozzi, *Views and Experience*, 65-110.

<sup>80</sup> Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 332

<sup>81</sup> LaVopa, *Schoolmasters*, 40.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 60.

<sup>83</sup> Horlacher, *Educated Subject*, 61.

changes, including the enforcement of a standardized curriculum, teaching standards, and teacher examination and licensure. As Horlacher explains, the state emphasized the role of the teacher and made the traditional schoolmaster anachronistic.<sup>84</sup> The public began to see the schoolmaster as the enemy of the “teacher,” and the part time schoolmaster gave way to the genuine professional who it considered to no longer to be a member of the community, per se, because he was an *educated man*, with a new, modern approach. The teacher did not rely on mindless parroting and did not see children as simply small, unformed adults. The teacher was expected to find ways to help students exercise mental habits and moral skills that would serve them well throughout their lives, and the philosophies were reworked into a pedagogy of learning which teachers were to understand and implement. Attention once again turned toward the efforts of the Pietists and the importance they placed on education for the public in order to achieve salvation. They pushed for the creation of teacher training schools, known as seminars where teachers would receive a new type of years long training that reflected the new classroom. The teacher learned how to address curriculum efficiently by instructing all students through the use of daily lessons which used examples and striking questions to keep attention and challenge ideas. He also was now required to build student understanding from concrete objects to abstract concepts. Beating students as a form of punishment was no longer considered advantageous to the learning process, as it was now considered an intellectual pursuit, and teaching, an intellectual profession.<sup>85</sup>

The new *lehrers*, or teachers, suddenly occupied a new place in society. They viewed their skill of teaching to have the power to improve upon nature and build the desired character

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<sup>84</sup> Horlacher, *Educated Subject*, 58-71.

<sup>85</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 29.

in the child. This was a serious and difficult task, and the art of teaching must be purposeful, intentional, and flexible. The teacher was now considered a pedagogue, but not a full academic. His work was difficult and required training which he believed afforded him a higher standing in the community. They demanded to be recognized as members of the *Bildungsüger*, the educated middle class that was seen as the embodiment of *bildung*, a move opposed by university professors who were already accepted as members of this class, and feared they would be removed if they were associated with teachers.<sup>86</sup> Teachers, however, argued that they could only educate the community in national freedom by standing above it, as an arm of the state. They were the nation builders.<sup>87</sup>

The start of the Reform Movement in Prussian education grew out of need to turn Prussia into a modern nation-state by breaking down class and cultural barriers by building a shared sense of greater purpose among all people. Doing this would require even more teachers who were better trained, and who sought a more secure livelihood. Parents saw teachers as tradesmen who worked on a form of commission. In order to change this perception and to give teachers a degree of prestige, they would need a change in status that could only come in the form of having an official recognition from the government. It was hoped that the changes would earn the recognition and admiration of the community, and to achieve this a new series of laws were implemented. Required fees would now be paid to the local government tax collector (rather than to the teacher directly) by all property holders, regardless whether they had children in the school, and teachers would be granted a secure salary year-round. Additionally, school examinations would be nationalized and inspectors and local dignitaries would be encouraged to

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>87</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 41.

visit schools to see the accomplishments of their children. Pestalozzi's ideas were the guidelines that were used in guiding these new changes starting in the autumn of 1808. Not only was he a personal friend to many of the governmental reformers overseeing these developments, but they viewed his ideas regarding the dual nature of the process of balancing the cognitive development (*bildung*) of the child's mind with the child's life circumstances as uniquely Germanic.<sup>88</sup>

However, within just a few years, many of the reforms had either stalled out or were never fully implemented properly due to passage of the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819. In the years after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, many of Europe's borders were reestablished at the Congress of Vienna. The German Confederation was born from this, and the victory had resulted in an even greater sense of national identity. Within two years, and after the murder of a writer by a politicized student, a movement to purge liberal ideas about individuality took hold, and the Decrees were passed into law. They intensified censorship, decried certain professors as dangerously liberal, outlawed student organizations, and required that all universities must be kept safely conservative.<sup>89</sup> For some time, this conservative backlash had been growing in Prussia. The upper class was deeply concerned about the ideas that might impact the social order of society. They often claimed that Pestalozzi's methods could give rise to the lower classes and become the great leveler of society, thereby diminishing their own power and authority. They also resented being taxed for the education of their farm workers. Church officials berated the changes as well, arguing that the social structure had been dictated by God and an attempt to upend that would be an offense to nature.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, the public had little tolerance for new

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<sup>88</sup> Horlacher, *Educated Subject*, 64.

<sup>89</sup> Mortimer Chambers and Baraba Hanawalt, *The Western Experience* (New York, NY:McGraw Hill, 2010), 631-632.

<sup>90</sup> Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, 88-95.

educational ideas and the taxes that came with them. They had suffered under the taxes Napoleon had imposed on Prussia during the period occupation, and subsequent taxes to rebuild the postwar economy. Advancements in the status of teachers slowed. Leaders in the early efforts for education reform, such as Humboldt (now working in the international ambassadorial corps), who decried this a step in the wrong direction, were dismissed from their government positions.<sup>91</sup>

### **A Need Realized**

In this fiercely conservative and nationalistic climate, teachers were now the “nation builders” and “jewels of the people” charged with building an “unbreakable” state structure through “German national education.”<sup>92</sup> The idea was taking hold that teachers were special and different from the communities in which they lived because of their importance to the nation. They would have to stand above and stand apart from their communities if they were to truly be seen as the givers of desired national identity and freedom. In order to ensure success, the state had to improve the quality of the people becoming teachers and guarantee that their preparation was appropriate in accordance with their new mission.

The Prussian government realized the financial incentives of teaching would have to be improved if more academically inclined, competent people were to be lured to the profession. Basically, better men would be attracted to teaching if it offered higher financial and social rewards. Although Prussia was militarily minded, the government so believed in this endeavor that for some time it allowed those who pursued a career in teaching to postpone their military

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<sup>91</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 403.

<sup>92</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 40.

service until after their teacher training was complete, and reduced their required time in the army from two years to six months.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time these incentives were being put into place, the government began to consider how the new corps of teachers would be trained. It was determined that state owned schools, called seminars, would be created throughout the country specifically for this purpose. The first seminar had opened in 1756 in Berlin, and students would complete a one year program that would certify them as teachers. In 1806, the government began the endowment of a network of seminars, and within forty years there were thirty main seminars, each with between fifty to one hundred students, and most had expanded their programs to two or three years, with several smaller schools scattered throughout the country.

In the early 1800s, the average seminar student was coming into teaching from a lower class, rural background. Most were not allowed to sit for either the “maturity examinations” given to students from the upper estates for university admission; nor were they allowed to sit for the high school (*gymnasium*) qualifying examination. From the start, seminars had lower entrance qualifications, and teaching was the only viable option for those applicants to achieve a certain status and livelihood that was better than what they had experienced growing up. In the seminars students focused their studies on Pestalozzi’s ideas on methods and content, and his notions of self-activity being preferable to rote memorization, as well as the nature of citizenship. This was done through an evolved variation of the Socratic method, that began to lay the foundation for what would later become known as the *didaktik* method. Student teachers would work independently on assignments, listen to lectures, and answer direct, thought provoking questions by the teacher to guide their learning. This was also the method they were expected to

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 54.

learn and to incorporate in their own classrooms upon graduation.

In the conservative climate of the 1820s, concerns arose, not just about what the impact this new brand of teacher could have on rural students (filling their heads with lofty ideas that would not necessarily help their lives of agricultural labor), but also about the changes it could have on the seminar students themselves. Many began to question if this new teacher ideal would be too far intellectually removed from the populations with which they would be working. They worried that these boys would leave their rural homes and return as men who were too educated to reintegrate into the communities to be effective. The response to these claims was that the seminars would have to make all possible efforts to ensure that the training they gave was limited in scope so that it would only focus on the practical skills teachers would need. It could not conflict with the educational content given at the gymnasium schools for university bound students. Moreover, those schools were not allowed to incorporate instructional teaching courses into their programs. A strict separation had to be maintained. The seminar courses had more classroom specific content than what the schoolmasters a generation before had received and delved into religion and the new Enlightenment ideas about human potential, albeit, superficially, so that they could grasp and feel the spirit of these changes, but not so much as to fully feel empowered.<sup>94</sup> This tension between the need to educate the new teachers with changing the fundamental nature of their identity was explained by Wilhelm Harnisch, the head of one of the most respected seminaries in Prussia at Breslau. He wanted his students to be truly educated, but not overeducated, because he saw their mission as being different from academics.<sup>9</sup> Theirs was to educate children who lived agrarian lives, and theoretical and scientific ideas would not serve them in the future. The seminar, he argued in 1824, was not “university for

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<sup>94</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 40-68.

*Volksschullehre*” or a university for common people.<sup>95</sup>

These limitations on content were not enough to address more serious problems that were quickly becoming apparent with seminar graduates. Teachers who entered the workforce after completion of their seminar training were soon confronted with the reality that their lack of a clear social rank was quickly leading to their professional frustration and burnout. Claiming a new position (*stand*) in society, they demanded recognition from the state and a more appropriate salary commensurate with the important service of state building they were undertaking. Teachers demanded that they be “emancipated” from the control of local church officials, local bureaucrats, parents, and even local school superintendents. They wanted to be recognized as full professionals, with the authority to make decisions on the basis of their own experience.<sup>96</sup>

### **The Emancipation Movement**

By the 1840s, teachers in Prussia were frustrated and were demanding changes. They envisioned a state run and organized corps of educators to whom they could prove merit and reap the appropriate rewards. This *Berufstand* would allow teachers to work independently of the local community, and would allow teachers the possibility of upward mobility by applying for positions, based on degree of success, much like other professional positions. They asked for their professional group to be overseen by their peers who would be elected by teachers and to whom they would be accountable, similar to lawyers and doctors today. Teachers from political associations began lobbying the government, and their demands were largely met with support in

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<sup>95</sup> Wilhelm Harnisch, “Die zweckmässigste Vorbereitung zum Eintritt in Schullehrerseminar,” *Der Volksschullehrer I/ The Most Practical Training for Entering a School Teacher Training Seminar, “The Elementary School Teacher, I”* (1824), quoted in Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 68.

<sup>96</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 81-86.

those circles.<sup>97</sup>

However, opposition to these changes was swift and ferocious. Religious leaders decried that teachers were only obsessed with money, and called for a return to the ways of the schoolmaster. Publications began to appear that showed schoolmasters as kindly and beloved, contrasting them with the cold and ruthless teacher. Ministers also complained of the increase in labor that this change had caused them. No longer could they require the local teacher to clean the church, ring the bells, or shovel snow from the front steps. They pushed the notion that teachers should give more of themselves, beyond what they were paid to do.<sup>98</sup> This one-two punch of poverty and charity, no doubt was to indirectly reference Christ, and reinforce the old notion that teaching was a “calling.” Additionally, superintendents argued against having to hire new teachers based on professional merit because this limited their ability to carry favor with the local community by hiring friends and family members. A rise in teachers’ professional standing was viewed as a drop in standing and power for others. Eduard Mück (1841) pointedly summarized the struggle in a newspaper editorial by writing, “whereas the members of every other profession can advance to the highest rank, the teacher remains what he is, even if he was an angel or could become one.”<sup>99</sup>

This dispute was further intensified throughout the spring and summer of 1848 as a wave of revolutions spread across the European continent. They were largely in response to the demands of the masses for social and political liberalization. Prussia was no exception, and King Frederick William was fearful of the growing unrest. He rolled back the conservative state censorship of society and in schools, but tempered this by attempting to bring further controls

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>98</sup> LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, 88.

<sup>99</sup> Eduard Mück, *Vossische Newspaper* (18 February, 1841) PV II: 123.

over the seminars.<sup>100</sup> They were to emphasize moral education over the development of understanding, especially in the seminars that tended to graduate teachers for rural areas. The goal was to educate teachers for their job without souring them to their social station and bring the teacher more in line with the people he would be working with. The attempt at compromise only stoked the teachers' demands for emancipation. They argued that such changes might lessen their sense of frustration, but that they would also deny them access to the *Bürgerstand* and therefore make teaching a far less desirable profession.<sup>101</sup>

In the fall of 1848, Eduard Hintze put forth the Tivoli Petition. It was not only a radical rethinking of teachers and education, but also of Germanic society. He argued that the positioning for status served no one's interest. The Prussian estates must be broken and elitism would have to become a relic of the past. The solution, then, was not to raise teachers up, but rather to lift up society.<sup>102</sup> Teachers do the work of improving the life of everyone, and therefore, he surmised, the authority, training, and salary of the teacher would naturally be improved as a result. This struck a chord with teachers, the state, and the public. One of Hintze's supporters described the movement in an agricultural and religious sense, "No God can bless conditions in which only a very small part of the nation can raise itself to human consciousness, with the great crowd is raised like cows, and lives and dies like cows."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Chambers and Hanawalt, *The Western Experience*, 671.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous Pamphlet, *Stellet den Lehrer den Gleichgebildeten gleich / Make the teacher equal to the educated* (Germany, 1844), quoted in Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 151.

<sup>102</sup> Douglas R. Skopp, "The Elementary School Teachers in "Revolt": Reform Proposals for Germany's Volksschulen in 1848 and 1849." *History of Education Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (Cambridge University, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1982): 341-61.

<sup>103</sup> Helmut König *Programme zur burgerlichen Nationalerziehung in der Revolution von 1848-49 / Programs for the bourgeois youth in the revolution of 1848-1849*. (Berlin, Germany, 1971),

Hintze believed strongly in the rapidly developing *didaktik* approach to education. The concept was moving beyond the lecture based ideas that had originated just a few decades earlier. The model was quickly evolving and would allow teachers tremendous freedom in the operation of their classrooms. It allowed them to determine what subject matter would be incorporated into their classrooms and how it would be presented to their students. The teacher could determine the degree to which the teacher or the student's own experimental inquiry would guide the learning.<sup>104</sup> [*Didaktik* theory would become much more formalized in the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s and is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter IV]. The thorough remodeling of the social and political structures in Prussia that Hintze and others imagined would be dependent on a population who understood their role and identity as Prussian citizens. They would be empowered to choose their own paths based on their hard work, ability, and intelligence. Teachers would be vital in this process. It was essential that teachers at both elementary and secondary levels must learn to work in harmony with each other. To this end, Hintze proposed closing all of the seminars in Prussia in favor of a university education for all teachers. When they were equally trained, he argued, there would be an equal level of intelligence....to the younger negation in all its branches. This would allow a citizen to "achieve a position adequate to his talents."<sup>105</sup>

What was truly unique about Hintze's plan, though, was that he theorized that the only way for instruction for all teachers to be the same, which would result in uniform student

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quoted in Dieter Dowe, Dieter Lanewiesche, and Jonathan Sperber, *Europe in 1848: Revolution and Reform* (Berghahn Books, 2000), 734-735.

<sup>104</sup> Skopp, *Teachers in Revolt*, 341-361.

<sup>105</sup> Eduard Hintz, *Von dem nothwendigen Unterschiede der Erziehung nach Zeiten und Standen /Of the necessary difference of education according to times and condition*, (Germany, 1948), quoted in Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 151.

education, would be for the state to assume the entire cost of education, including teachers' salaries. Schools would have to become an extension of the national government. He justified this by arguing that only intelligence and morality could overcome poverty and that no citizen in Prussia should be denied the possibility of achieving that. The teachers would bring equality to all citizens.

Teacher associations across Prussia began to campaign for Hintze's plan and they had support from the general public. In 1848, the Ministry of Culture relented to their demands and the reforms began. Teachers achieved their emancipation from the church and local authorities. They were now fully state agents. They held positions within the Ministry of Culture and were allowed to advise the Ministry on drafting school laws. Teachers had indeed garnered a certain degree of professional standing. They served a civic purpose and achieved a professional status that allowed them a salary that kept pace with the cost of living, a possibility of promotion, decision making power, and a significant degree of professional respect in society.<sup>106</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The discourses that have shaped the acceptance of teachers as professionals in Germany could not escape the influence of the importance that society placed on social status. Across Europe, education had long existed as a signifier of elite status and wealth, and ensured the reproduction of social status to future generations. This elite group promoted its own interests by the control it was able to exert over those who lacked an education, and efforts were

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<sup>106</sup> Anthony J. LaVopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers: Profession and Office, 1763-1848* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 151-153.

continuously made to ensure that the impossibility of emancipation of those of lower status.

Religion, in the form of the Catholic Church affirmed and reinforced such ideas, preaching that it was the natural order.

In many ways, these ideas echoed those of mercantilist economic theory which was popular in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and the eighteenth centuries. At its most simple, the idea holds that there is only a limited amount of wealth in the world and that for one nation to grow richer, another must become poorer. It was essential for the government to control all aspect of the economy in order to guide it to greater wealth through international struggles.

The ideas of power mirrored this notion. If power and authority was finite, when one person rose, another would fall. The Protestant Reformation quickly grew to become more than a call for correction within the Church, and into a full political movement because it challenged these long held beliefs. As people increasingly desired the opportunity to commune directly to God, and thereby circumvent the rigid hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Martin Luther recognized the importance of education in people's ability to do so in ways that were proficient and would prevent them from being led astray by false religious leaders.

As Luther was embraced by ever growing numbers of people and a greater emphasis was placed on learning, determining the role of the teacher was suddenly pressing. Because of the reluctance to risk a change in the social structure from those at the top, there was not a great deal of importance placed on teacher training and qualifications. The move from parent to minister to sexton to schoolmaster was natural, if slow, and very little ultimately changed in terms of training, authority, and pay. It was not until the latter half of the 1700s that Enlightenment ideas began to emphasize the importance of teachers having strong training and preparation. It was seen as necessary for teachers to guide their pupils to reach their full potential and to be self-

fulfilled in their lives. Yet, little was done on a national level to achieve this and nothing of substance changed for teachers. Although some did receive a degree of advanced teacher training, they lacked pay and real authority and the public refused to accept them as anything other than community servants.

Prussia's defeat by the French in the early 1800s triggered a drastic cultural change. The unification of the Germanic people was considered urgent and schools were a key component of the plan to do so. Still, old ideas of status remained. As more people were being educated by teachers, teachers, themselves, argued they were deserving of a change in status, particularly to be allowed into the new educated class. They believed that they could not and should not be considered to have the status of the same people they were educating. In one sense, teachers were upending the social structure by demanding that they be allowed to change their status, yet at the same time, they were not rebelling against the existence of the structures. Instead, teachers demanded to use their new positionality as a means to climb higher.

The Prussian elites feared a great leveling of society would take away the status, power, and authority they had cultivated for generations. They responded by pushing back against what they viewed as a tide of liberal change, and brought about a strong conservative influence to education. Teachers were now trained to focus on moral education and character development. They were to teach their students to be citizens, full of nationalistic spirit, and economic engines for the greater good of the nation. Above all else, they were to ensure people were content with the social status they were born into. The state was now stressing the role of the teacher's importance to nation building and simultaneously denying teachers the upward mobility they sought. Teachers were trained to help bring out and develop the inner qualities of their students, and yet they were frustrated because their training to do so did not equate in a change of status

for themselves.

Events exploded in 1848. As the liberals in society reacted against conservatives demanding democratic reform, teachers, too, argued for change. They demanded access to the professional, educated class. It is interesting to note that they were not demanding the equalization of society per se, but rather a leveling of the playing field that would equalize the opportunity for social class ascension. They wanted the perks that came with such status. For a century, they had been trained like professionals, but lacked the authority and pay they believed they were due. In the wake of the reforms, they were granted professional status by the state. They had a title, a living wage, and the authority to carry out their profession with authority. The rise in teacher status broke the old social structure.

Now, in Chapter III, I consider the issue in the modern history of Germany. I explore how the hard-fought acceptance of teachers as full professionals within society was challenged by women's entrance into the ranks, and then dismantled completely by the Nazis. After World War II, as the German state was broken into two competing halves, each developed its own concept of the role of teachers in society. In the West, teachers would return to their professional identity and rise to become one of the most respected and successful in the world. In the East, teachers would increasingly become disseminators of propaganda and gatekeepers for students' success. After the end of the Cold War, and German reunification, the struggles of rectifying the two identities of teachers proved difficult, and ultimately hurt not only teacher professional standing in society, but also student performance.

## CHAPTER III:

### GERMAN TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONALS IN THE MODERN ERA

#### **Introduction**

In the first part of this chapter, I continue to discuss German history and how education developed into its own area of study in the latter half of the 1800s. I explore how academic knowledge and new ideas reinforced the perception of teachers as members of the well paid professional class, with training, appropriate salary, and social authority. These developments were tied to new philosophical concepts that were reshaping instruction German classrooms. I will also explain how these ideas opened a pathway for German women to use the newfound status of teacher to begin to move into other professions.

Second, I will examine the impact of Nazism, the post war division of Germany, and reunification on teacher status. I will focus my attention particularly on how the professional standing of teachers was used to control the population under the regimes (1933-1945 and 1946-1989), and the reciprocal impact that had on how teachers were viewed; shifting from professionals, to incompetents, back to professionals, and finally landing somewhere in the middle.

#### **Actions and Reactions**

By 1900, education was accepted as an academic discipline in German institutes of higher education. Between 1849 and 1900, the notion had developed that education was unique from other fields and that it was deserving of an autonomy that would allow it be understood and

analyzed intellectually and systematically.<sup>107</sup> This intensive repositioning of the field of education was tied to the declaration of the modern state of German that formed in 1871. The state encouraged universities to apply the scientific method to all areas of study.<sup>108</sup> Academics responded by arguing that education must move beyond nation building and become an academic discourse. To do this, they reconsidered the works of Johan Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), who had largely been ignored during his own lifetime. He was the first to advocate for education to become its own field of study. Herbart believed that each area of scientific study had its own vocabulary, and set about to clearly define the language associated with education. This was an important step for the field of educational study and for the identity of teachers as professionals. Each field must have terms and conceptions intrinsic to itself that it shares with no other discipline area. Only when each field developed its own language, science, and methods, could a dialogue between all of them take place. Teachers would have to become knowledgeable in this unique language so that they could avoid borrowing “foreign” terms, and thus providing them with a greater air of legitimacy for their own work.<sup>109</sup>

This shift in the way education was viewed came to be known as *Erziehungswirklichkeit* or “the reality of education.” This was combined with the developing theory of *Geisteswissenschaften*, what today would be referred to as the “humanities” and hermeneutical interpretation to create *geisteswissenschaftliche pädagogik* (human science pedagogy) that allowed for education to become an academic discipline within a university setting. As

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<sup>107</sup> Rebekka Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A comparative Cultural History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 88.

<sup>108</sup> Mortimer Chambers, Barbara Hanawalt, Theodore K. Rabb, Isser Woloch, Lisa Tiersten, *The Western Experience*, Tenth Edition (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 687.

<sup>109</sup> Johann Friedrich Herbart, *The Science of Education, Its General Principles. Deduced from Its Aim and The Aesthetic Revelation of the World* (London, UK: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1897), 83.

education grew in stature, *bildung* would play an important role. It was now more a core term in the lexicon of educational scholarship, and it shifted from its previous nationalistic significance to an academic one. *Bildung* was now the salve to the irritations and perceived troubles caused by the rapidly industrializing world, including democracy and self-determination.<sup>110</sup>

Again, the work of Herbart was looked to for guidance. He had argued that skills were not innate, but rather could be learned and developed through the process of education. As Blyth explains,

He believed everyone is born with a unique potential, his individuality, but that this potential remained unfulfilled until it was analyzed and transformed by education in accordance with what he regards as the accumulated values of civilization: Western, pre-industrial civilization. The product of that transformation, the perfection of Individuality, he termed Character. Thus, the main purpose of education was the intelligent application of pedagogy to the transformation of the individuality into character.<sup>111</sup>

It is the role of the teacher to “consciously influence a pupil and choose what was good for that pupil.”<sup>112</sup> Herbart celebrated the role the teacher could have on the student; the power to help build the student into a person of character. He further explained that the development of the individual was intrinsically linked to their contributions to society so that to become a fully formed person, the individual must also become the citizen. This evolution from unmolded humanity to possessing the values of civilization and being able to wield them, essentially *bildung*, was only possible through a rigorous education that provides moral and intellectual development. He also advocated that teachers would need training in history and classical

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<sup>110</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 89.

<sup>111</sup> Alan Blyth, “From Individuality to Character: The Herbartian Sociology Applied to Education” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 29, No. 1 (Feb. 1981): 70.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

literature in order to introduce this process into their curriculum to facilitate student development.<sup>113</sup>

The new type of person that *geisteswissenschaftliche pädagogik* promised to create was one who was best equipped to cope with the realities of the modern world. As a field of study, it was not a science of empirical research, nor was it a basic teacher training. It was a “philosophical theory of personality...and a way of life, taking *bildung* as one of its core concepts.”<sup>114</sup>

The newfound legitimacy of education as an academic field did much to justify, even retroactively, the increased status of teachers in the last half of the 1800s. The number of men coming into the profession increased, and women began to desire not only to become teachers as well, but also to use the professional status of teachers as a justification to be allowed to enter other professions. In the late 1800s, teaching was still almost exclusively a male enclave. Some women, mostly nuns, taught in Catholic schools, but as a whole the profession in Germany was a male one. During late 1880s and 1890s, however, women had begun to demand admission to universities. They wanted entrance into the professional class, and saw teaching as a pathway that could open doors into other professions. Male opposition to such changes largely relied on the notion that professionalism was synonymous with objectivity, competitiveness, individualism, and predictability; all traits women were believed to lack. Popular opinion saw nurturing, expressiveness, and family styles of interaction as traditionally female traits, and therefore not relevant to the masculine world of the professions.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 69-79.

<sup>114</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 90.

<sup>115</sup> Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad Jarausch, *German Professions, 1800-1950* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), 86.

To overcome such ideas, women's advocates argued that the profession of teaching should be opened to women because the very characteristics that men were using to define them could be useful in the classroom, particularly at the primary level.<sup>116</sup> This, in turn, would allow them to prove their abilities and to then broaden into other professions. It is interesting to note that this argument has echoes of what American Catherine Beecher advanced nearly sixty years prior (discussed more fully in Chapter IV). There are subtle, but important differences. First, Beecher saw teaching as a way for women to have some level of fulfillment in their lives beyond the role of wife and mother. However, she did not see it as a true profession, but rather something a woman could do in preparation for what she believed to be the more natural role of wife and mother. Second, German women seeking professional careers were using the ideas of gender roles to work around the limits that were placed on them, so that those very limits could be eradicated. They were not preparing for motherhood in the classroom, they were opening the door to a professional existence outside of the domestic world. Because teaching was truly a profession with status, salary, and authority in Germany, women saw it as a way to achieve a higher standing in society, and flipping the accepted paradigm.

The idea of female advancement was not well received by males actively engaged in teaching. Professors at the university level and in *gymnasium* schools were viewed as professionals with a certain standing and cachet above that of the average worker and viewed primary education to exist on a lower rung in the professional world than they did. Male teachers at primary schools and secondary schools that existed below that of the *gymnasium* level feared that if women were allowed to enter into the field of teaching it would discredit their work and lower its standing in the public's opinion. However, by 1880, the number of schools needed

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 86.

in Germany was increasing rapidly and there were not enough trained teachers to meet the need. This was particularly true at the primary level, and greater numbers of women began to enroll in teacher training schools, known as “normalities.” The women who did so were vocal about their intentions to not only teach but also to be school administrators, and thereby serve as successful examples of professionals which could justify women’s access to other professions. They began to organize into *Lehrerinnenvereine* (female teachers’ associations) to campaign for their right to be recognized as professionals. Universities, however, were still reluctant to admit women, whose presence was viewed as disruptive due to the widely-held beliefs that women were both a distraction for men and lacked the intellectual capacity for such professional pursuits. It would not be until after the enormous loss of men in World War I that the banning of women would be officially done away with by the Weimar Republic. Other reforms took place that included standardization of teachers’ education through the enforcement of training at the university level, and the formal entrenchment of teachers as civil servants.<sup>117</sup> However, throughout the early 1900s, some Germans began to see primary teaching in particular, and to a lesser degree teaching at the secondary and university levels, as being pseudo-professional largely because of the arrival of women. After the reforms, women flooded into the universities. They argued that because they had proven themselves competent in the professional capacity of teaching, they should also be allowed into other professional areas such as law and medicine. This led to claims of overcrowding by male counterparts and further calls for the removal of women from the academic world at all levels, which the Weimar Republic staunchly refused.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 96.

Teachers, both male and female, were introduced to the new and ever evolving ideas of the *didaktik* tradition. What had begun as a response to the dry and unstimulating catechistic approach to education was rapidly evolving to encompass not just the teacher, the student, and information, but the relationship between the three, and its relationship to the greater world. *Didaktik* education was at the center of giving the student the necessary tools for *bildung*. It emphasized languages, mathematics, and science, and was seen as crucial for students (particularly from the middle class) who attended *gymnasium* schools, bound for universities. These ideas were inspired by the work of Humboldt. Yet, the nature of *bildung* was changing. *Volksbildung* was a notion that was taking over. This newer model was one that used the schools to empower citizenry, but it defined that identity in a very limited way. It was now used to indoctrinate people into the mindset that they were subservient to the state and its authority.<sup>119</sup> This was largely the result of growing nationalism, political unrest, and the calls for militarism that were running counter to the liberalism of the Weimar government.

One academic of the era, well regarded for a number of teacher training manuals that were popular, Professor Herman Nohl, spoke in 1926 to address the growing problems in German society and the role that education could play in their resolution. He argued that education could produce a new and improved German people through uniting them spiritually and thereby improve the entire society.<sup>120</sup> Many in the 1920s were deeply troubled by the conditions of Germany: an economy in ruins, rampant unemployment, political unrest and politically based violence, and social and sexual depravity. Nohl and many of his acolytes believed that educational research had largely not been based on empirical data or “real

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<sup>119</sup> Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2010), 7.

<sup>120</sup> Herman Nohl, *Into German Education: Germany, History, & Philosophy* (Göttenburg, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926), 5.

students,” but on “programmatic” writings and curriculum, and these failures had given rise to the current unrest in Germany.<sup>121</sup> He believed that the previous 70 years had been a period of educational degeneration caused by the failures of society to respond to industrialization and urbanization. Further, the splitting of the field of science into separate, distinct areas had destroyed their “spirit” and their interconnectedness had been lost in the learning process. Nohl believed that a new human being would emerge by orientating education back towards the “ideal of *bildung*” which he described as, “subjective mode of being of culture, the inner form and mental attitude of the soul being able to adopt all things from outside into a common life with its own forces and to design every utterance and action of the single life.” This was a shift from earlier ideas of *bildung*, that sought to reveal the inner person through education. Nohl sought to develop powers and capacities strong enough to master social circumstances without corrupting the individual’s moral identity.<sup>122</sup> This would fundamentally change the relationship between the teacher and the student, making it more personal. It would be asymmetrical and intergenerational, and the teachers’ maturity would, in turn, affect the student positively as he or she matured. This would be guided by the love for the child and the love of educational ideals. The teacher would also use what Nohl calls “pedagogical tact,” or the ability to refrain from interfering with the students developing self-activity which would be the manifestation of *bildung*.<sup>123</sup>

A contemporary to Nohl was Professor Eduard Spranger. His views were in line with Nohl in that he agreed that education was an autonomous academic discipline and should focus

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<sup>121</sup> Julius Gebhard, *The Meaning of School* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), 3.

<sup>122</sup> Herman Nohl, *The Educational Movement in Germany and Its Theory* (Frankfurt, Germany: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), 4.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 169.

on identifying and resolving problems by an internal logic that comes from the mind and *bildung*.<sup>124</sup> For Spranger, though, *bildung* was the “essential form” of the individual and developing it would allow him or her to contribute to the greater culture. This was done through the cultivation of character and morality to achieve satisfaction with self. He stressed the need for separate and new institutions, beyond the normal schools, for teacher education. He envisioned a culture academy that would “form” teachers wholly before going into the classrooms.<sup>125</sup> Spranger argued that doing this would allow teachers to both educate their students and to create people, thereby passing on to future generation the local traditions and binding them to the community and the larger Germanic culture. He emphasized the role of history and geography as a means to do this.<sup>126</sup> The differing views began to create two competing views of teacher education.

Both Nohl and Spranger were essentially arguing for the improvement for advancement and elevation of teacher training to make teachers more confident in their careers. However, they differed on the rationale for such changes. Nohl believed that developing teachers more thoroughly would provide them the ability to withstand the changes of the modern world, and instill a uniform set of character traits deemed *German*. Spranger’s objective was the passing on of German culture and heritage. One focused on crafting a new identity, and the other on holding on to tradition. It is interesting to note that although Nohl welcomed the ascendancy of Adolf Hitler to power, and saw it as an opportunity to further his ideals, he was dismissed from his position at the University of Göttingen in 1937 by the Nazi regime because of his emphasis

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<sup>124</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 97.

<sup>125</sup> Eduard Spranger, *Thoughts on Teacher Education* (Leipzig, German: Quell & Meyer, 1922), 52.

<sup>126</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 96.

on intellectualism.<sup>127</sup> Spranger objected to the Nazis and resigned his position at the University of Berlin in protest of the Nazi attempts to control the German education system in 1933.<sup>128</sup>

Hitler recognized the power of teachers and the educational process to mold young people. However, he was staunchly anti-intellectual in his views of education, and of German teachers. His disdain was evident. He frequently belittled teachers, and often referred to them as “idiots” and “tyrants.”<sup>129</sup> He argued that teachers, as a part of the civil service, should be trained in the Nazi ideology to indoctrinate the nation’s youth. Nazi officials proclaimed that the entirety of the civil service had become fixated on Marxist ideology and that implementation of National Socialist goals was simply not possible without an unsullied professional civil service.<sup>130</sup> To achieve this, the Law for Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was enacted in 1933. Its purpose was to transform Germany by “cleansing” the entire civil service, including teachers, into a politically homogenous professional group. Teachers were required to complete questionnaires about their political involvement and beliefs, family history, and membership in the Masons. Teachers were informed that they would at all times be working in the interest of the state. The law itself was intended to allow the government to purge teachers based on racial and political criteria, but it was extraordinarily vague in its guidelines, and allowed for tremendous individual discretion in discerning the worthiness of an individual teacher. It was up to the evaluators to decide who was acting on behalf of the Nazi state, and past political actions, and familial histories would be viewed in this context. Teachers feared the action because it

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>128</sup> Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, “Eduard Spranger” (New York, NY: Thomas Gale/McMillan, 2006).

<sup>129</sup> Adolf Hitler, Hitler’s Table Talk. Series of lectures given between Fall 1941 and Spring 1942 and transcribed by Nazi officers in attendance.

[https://archive.org/stream/HitlerTableTalk/Hitler%20TableTalk\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HitlerTableTalk/Hitler%20TableTalk_djvu.txt).

<sup>130</sup> Cocks and Jarausch, *German Professions*, 177-178.

meant that a dismissed teacher was denied a pension and the use of their title. However, there was also a teacher shortage at this time, and Article 5 of the Law required that just short of dismissal, teachers who were not considered politically ideal (but were not Jewish or members of the Masons), could be reassigned to the most rural schools that were thought to have the worst working conditions.<sup>131</sup>

The appeal of Nazism was most apparent with teachers ages 20 to 40, and in particular with assistant teachers who lacked permanent positions. This was the generation of teachers that had seen the profession open up to women. They were disillusioned with the changes and found enthusiasm in the Nazi propaganda that promised to give teachers a “new and more positive perception of themselves as forward-looking activists serving big national goals.” They quickly began to express their support for the party.<sup>132</sup> Teachers who were hired before 1918 were dismissed from their position for being too out of step with the changes in German society.<sup>133</sup> As the political tide began to move in Hitler’s favor, ever greater numbers of teachers began to join the NSLB (National Socialist Teachers’ League). Rival national teaching organizations were shuttered, and membership in those was suspect. Eventually 97% of teachers would join, most out of fear of losing their standing and their employment if they refused.<sup>134</sup> Those that did were branded as “unreliable” and were fired or reassigned. The purpose of the NSLB was to ideologically reconstruct what teachers did in their classrooms, and to reshape the teachers themselves.<sup>135</sup> Teachers who joined the NSLB were pressured to attend a two-week training

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<sup>131</sup> Charles Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism: German Schoolteachers Under Two Dictatorships* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 26.

<sup>132</sup> Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 14.

<sup>133</sup> Lansing, *Nazism to Communism*, 35.

<sup>134</sup> Pine, *Education in Nazi German*, 15.

<sup>135</sup> Lansing, *Nazism to Communism*, 64-66.

camp that would focus on intense athletics and social and cultural (i.e. race) training.<sup>136</sup> Support for the camps was strongest among primary teachers, with nearly 60% attending the camps, but teachers at the secondary level were less likely to do so, with only 25% going.<sup>137</sup> The intention was that teachers would return to their schools with the new curriculum goals in mind as they focused on lesson planning, and would turn their backs on the intellectual endeavors of the past. They were to be the *people's educators*. They would be helped in this by the propaganda textbooks they were given “that sought to conform teachers’ professional training and activities to the National Socialist idea in organization and programmatic form.”<sup>138</sup> Additionally, they were forced to answer to monitors who oversaw their training at the camps and would keep up with their efforts in the schools.<sup>139</sup> The role of the teacher was no longer to assist in *bildung*, but rather to spread the ideals of Nazism to their students. Gone was the emphasis on curriculum, and in its place, was an emphasis on the creation of the body and soul of Germany’s youth. Teachers were required to use Nazi produced textbooks and other propaganda, and the NSLB acted as a watchdog over the teachers to ensure they were not stepping out of line. To keep that from happening the NSLB created files on the teachers’ political and social activities, and their connections to foreigners to produce yearly political evaluations that could potentially destroy careers.<sup>140</sup> The Nazi regime was attempting to strip away the decision-making authority of the teachers.

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<sup>136</sup> Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 15.

<sup>137</sup> Lansing, *Nazism to Communism*, 82.

<sup>138</sup> Willi Feiten, *Der Nationalsozialistische Lehrerbund-Entwicklung und organization: Ein Beitrag zum Aufbau und zur Organisationsstruktur des nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem/ The Nationalist Socialists Teacher Development Association: Organizational Structure of the Nationalist Socialistic System of Governance* (Weinheim, Germany: Beltz Verlag, 1981), 41.

<sup>139</sup> Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 15.

<sup>140</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 92-100.

The efforts of the NSLB were not entirely successful. Although most teachers were members on paper, many did not support the organization in spirit or in practice. The effect was to ideologically rip faculties apart, and unleash vicious infighting between teachers with some embracing the new materials and curriculum, and others holding on to the past and a more intellectually minded approach.<sup>141</sup> This was similar to what would happen in America a generation later in the 1960s and 1970s (as discussed in Chapter IV). Teachers began to argue with each other about the best pathway forward, while standards and performance began to fall, and the greater society began to lose respect for the work teachers were doing.

Additionally, the Nazis turned their attention to the schools that were producing teachers. The *gymnasiums*, with their emphasis on intellectualism through a humanist perspective, lost their elite status, and those working there were largely discredited. Before the arrival of the Nazis to power in 1933, Germany was seeing evidence of a teacher shortage, but after, a greater number of teachers were retiring and there were fewer replacements waiting in the wings, which could prove to be ruinous to education efforts in the future. The Nazis also turned their attention to the Prussian universities that were training teachers. The discrediting of the *gymnasiums* did not help matters, as they catered largely to the middle class, who valued education the most. Calling it “modernization,” Hitler attempted to create more teachers by directing a series of teacher training institutes (*Lehrerbildunganstalt*) to be opened, which would work to churn out teachers with a focus on political socialization in order to meet the demand for elementary school teachers, where the demand was strongest. However, there was little interest from the public in being admitted to the institutes. The efforts were not successful, with some 15,000 teacher openings by 1940. The regime, instead, turned to using “helper teachers” or the equivalent to

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 94.

teacher's aides to lead classes. They were given only three months training in preparation, and the result were disastrous. Lansing points out that the

new curriculum sought to conform teachers' professional training and activities to the National Socialist ideal in organizational and programmatic form.....Rejecting the possibility that conventional education issues such as school organization, construction, and curricula ought to be addressed....in the Third Reich the first and most important duty [was] not to create or invent new school types and curricula models, [but to] take the glorious, racially high quality German body and the German soul in caring, protecting and supporting hands.<sup>142</sup>

Trained teachers were demoralized. Standards fell further, and the public came to view teaching as common, something *anyone* could do, with little to no training. In less than a decade, the professional status achieved by the Emancipation Movement of the mid-1800s and maintained for 80 years had be erased, and teachers were stripped of their professional status and hard-fought respect.<sup>143</sup>

### **Two Germanys, Two Professionals**

The collapse of the Third Reich in 1945 saw the partition of Germany into two halves.<sup>144</sup> East Germany and West Germany largely came to reflect the views that the occupying powers held of teachers. In the eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR), communist government agents took the same position as the previous Nazi regime, which saw teachers largely as tools for the state, and it attempted to yet again retrain them in new "democratic" (i.e. communist) ideology. In the western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the state attempted to initially restore teachers to the position within society prior to the war.<sup>145</sup> This even included Nohl

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<sup>142</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 66-67. Lansing paraphrases the writings of Hans Schemm, Nazi Regional Party Leader and head of the NSLB.

<sup>143</sup> Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 30-31.

<sup>144</sup> Chambers, Hanawalt, et al., *The Western Experience*, 878.

<sup>145</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 129-215.

returning to national prominence and became a popular, leading advocate for these changes.<sup>146</sup>

What followed was a period of formulating new ideas about teachers and what their position was in society, while simultaneously, a renaissance in interest in *didaktik* theory was taking hold in order to make it more useful to a rapidly changing world.<sup>147</sup>

The Soviet occupational forces began directing their attention to the German education system in the East soon after the surrender in May of 1945. The decision was made to go about eradicating the “values, practices, and institutions that in Allied minds had led to Hitler and to genocidal war.”<sup>148</sup> Their goal was the reeducation of the German people. To do this, the *Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung* [German Central Administration for National Education] (DVfV) was created to ensure that anything that was created by the Nazi regime for educational purposes was discarded: textbooks, maps, lesson plans, and initially, even teachers. It was all to be replaced by materials that promoted antifascist points of view. The initial plan was to immediately dismiss the entire civil service, including all teachers, because of its perceived loyalties to the Third Reich, and to replace them with people that were considered to be “uncompromised pedagogues.”<sup>149</sup> Strikingly similar to the Nazi course of action, teachers who wanted to keep their jobs were instructed to complete questionnaires about their political affiliations and beliefs, and yet again, the provisions for what warranted a teacher being labeled as having been “compromised” were vague and open to interpretation.

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<sup>146</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 96.

<sup>147</sup> Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann, Kurt Riquarts, *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>148</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 129.

<sup>149</sup> Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II* (London, UK: Croom Helm, 1985), 59-82.

However, few teachers were actually dismissed from their positions. Even before the war, Germany faced a teacher shortage. After the end of hostilities, the shortages were exacerbated even more. Most young male school teachers had been drafted into combat, and many died. In the East, the average age of a classroom teacher was now 47, and 63% were female, a striking change from what had existed at the turn of the century. To address this, again, much like the Nazis before, they began to expedite teacher training to recruit young people into the classrooms. Calling these young people *Neulehrer* (new teacher), they took part in Communist teacher training that would focus on antifascist ideology, pedagogic skills, and physical wellbeing. Requirements for admission into the program were low – only the completion of elementary education was necessary, but graduates were expected to function as full teachers. Few who enrolled successfully completed the course due to the physical, mental, and financial strains that it placed on participants. Both programs were failures. The former, because the enormous number of teachers who had been forced into joining the NSLB, could now in theory mean that nearly all teachers could be dismissed (which was an insurmountable obstacle to overcome), and the latter because so few of the people enlisting in the program had the educational background to stand up to the academic rigor that the Soviets demanded.

Soviet officials began to publicly explain what they were attempting to achieve with their educational reforms. They sought to employ “a new type of democratic, responsible and capable teacher” who alone would be able to transform pupils into “agents” of peaceful, “antifascist” and democratic reconstruction.”<sup>150</sup> The public was not supportive of what the occupying forces were attempting to do, and a number of public campaigns were begun to reimagine the popular image of teachers into something more palatable to the people. Typical of these was one such program

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<sup>150</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 153.

from Brandenburg beginning in 1945 entitled “We’re Accusing, We’re Cleaning Up, and We’re Rebuilding.” The program consisted of coming to terms with Nazism, cleaning up communities, and rebuilding schools. As part of these programs, teachers were “expected to perform physical labor for the benefit of the city and the area.”<sup>151</sup> Under their Soviet masters, German teachers had come full circle. They had taken on the laborer identity of their sexton ancestors. No longer was the job focused on cultivating student potential, but they were now distributors of state propaganda who also labored for the greater community.

Adding to this return of a previous identity and utter lack of professional status was the reality that teachers were left to largely fend for themselves. Teachers were paid very little, which was in line with most other working people, and were promised housing, heating, social services, food, clothing, medical care, and even summer vacations.<sup>152</sup> The reality, however, was that teachers were often ignored when it came time for the Soviets to provide such benefits, and the public had little empathy for their plight, which aligned with their low opinion of teachers. To counter this, teachers organized the *Gerwerkschaft für Lehrer und Erzieher* [Union of Teachers and Educators] (GLE) in 1946. Communist ideology explained that the disharmony between workers was a significant factor that had given rise to Hitler, and the Soviets were eager to allow the teachers to form the union as a show of solidarity. However, the GLE worked extensively to help guarantee teachers a regular salary, housing, and coal supplies by regularly threatening to publicize the lack of support now coming from the state. It also worked to defend

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>152</sup> Val D. Rust and Diane Rust, *The Unification of German Education* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 88.

teachers in the denazification process that could have caused many to lose their jobs. Teachers flocked to support the new organization as a result.<sup>153</sup>

In 1949, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was formed, and this would signal another significant shift in the standing of teachers. The formalization of the Communist government meant that it could exercise tremendous control over all aspects of society, including the unions. Much of the leadership of the GLE was forced out and replaced with leadership thought to be more in line with party ideology, and this in turn, signaled a shift in the perception of teachers as professionals. No longer would the GLE act to defend the status of teachers. Its intention was now to ensure the state's educational organizational goals and the fulfillment of state sponsored lesson plans.<sup>154</sup> It would also oversee teacher training to ensure they were "democratic" (in the Communist sense) in their professional practice. All of this was done through the use of Communist propaganda that was disseminated by the union.<sup>155</sup> It dictated all aspects of the lesson, and the expectation was that it would be followed in exacting detail.<sup>156</sup> In the GDR, Soviet educational ideology and practices that sought to carefully organize formal schooling with extracurricular educational activities were put into practice. Once again, teachers were charged with building the citizenry that the new state demanded, but their decision-making authority was gone, and because of the government's push to emphasize the working class, the pay also was below what it had once been. Furthermore, the reputation of teachers was drastically changing. In this new era, the position of teachers in the GDR was one of command

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<sup>153</sup> Lansing, *From Nazism to Communism*, 172-178.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, 191-194.

<sup>155</sup> Christoph Klessman, *Die Doppelte Staatsgründung: Deutsch Geschichte, 1945-1955 (Studien zur Geschichte und Politik/ The Double State Foundation: German History 1945-1955* (Bonn, Germany: Federal Council for Political Education, 1991), 463.

<sup>156</sup> Rust and Rust, *The Unification of German Education*, 63-68.

and authority mixed with fear. This was the result of their employment by a state that was rapidly proving itself vicious in its treatment of citizens, and because they played the role of government *watchers* within their communities. They had a certain degree of authority, as well, albeit one not normally associated with the classroom. Teachers were seen as gatekeepers who could advance a student's social standing and future opportunities by recommending them for honors, government programs, and school leadership positions. Additionally, teachers were actively involved in the greater communities outside of the school by sitting on parents' advisory councils and working with the Free Germany Youth and Young Pioneer Organizations. Their perceptions of students and their parents, both in and out of the school setting, positioned them as powerful loyalists to the authoritarian government, and they were often feared. Teachers took pride, not necessarily in their classroom efforts, but in their commitment to the ideals of socialism – even more so than that general population. They would come to be the true believers.<sup>157</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the education community in West Germany attempted to return to the ways of the Weimar Republic. The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany ratified in 1949, the German equivalent to the U.S. Constitution, guarantees teachers the respected position of a civil servant. Further, it stipulates that teachers are entitled to the traditional “freedom of teaching”<sup>158</sup> which has been interpreted as to allow them to be seen as “independent, autonomous professionals, who are responsible for their instruction and means of going about it.”<sup>159</sup> Teachers in the West were far better trained and economically rewarded than their Eastern counterparts (as well as all other teachers) because they were the highest paid teachers in the western world, and would remain so well into the 1980s. Federal law regulated

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 65-68.

<sup>158</sup> The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, Article 5, §3.

<sup>159</sup> Rust and Rust, *The Unification of German Education*, 30.

teacher pay, and after a two-year untenured trial period, a teacher would become entitled to federal retirement benefits and could not be fired. West German teachers had high regard for their chosen career path and most would likely choose teaching again if given the option, citing the pay, the respect from the community and the autonomy they were allowed within their classrooms as their reasoning. They were passionate about their subject matter, and most were not interested in leaving the classroom to become administrators.<sup>160</sup>

The high regard for teachers and the salary they received in West Germany was most likely tied to the training they received, and that training largely centered around *didaktik* philosophy. A renaissance of *didaktik* educational thought flourished throughout the century. Pedagogic theorists, philosophers, and educators attempted to define the German *didaktik* tradition for the modern age. They argued that the *didaktik* method was more than an application of delivery, but is “a crucial factor *induced* in any level of educational reasoning.”<sup>161</sup> They based their ideas on Herbart’s attempts to distinguish learning between the government, discipline, and instructional layers. If government is rules, discipline would be compliance, and instruction was the bridge between the two, which was embodied in the mediating between the teacher and the student regarding obligations and choices. All sides of this triad must interact with each other. Herbart’s followers in the twentieth century would reduce the role of the content to a fixed subject matter to make it more streamlined and easier to be implemented by the teacher and accessed by the student.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Alan Menlow and Pam Poppleton, “A Five-Country Study of the World Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers in England, the United States, Japan, Singapore, and West Germany (1986-1988)” *Comparative Education* 26, no. 2/3, 173-182.

<sup>161</sup> Klessman, *The Double State Foundation*, 5.

<sup>162</sup> Stefan Hopman and Kurt Riquarts, “Starting a Dialogue: A Beginning Conversation Between Didaktik and the Curriculum Traditions” *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The*

Although elaborated on in much greater detail in Chapter IV, it is important at this point that it is here that the divergence in the paths between the German and American concepts of what a teacher is and does becomes most clear. In the United States, as a result of the vocationalization of education, teachers were given a clear curriculum to follow that was so strict that the teacher would be limited in their autonomy. However, in West Germany, the expectation was that the teacher would develop a curriculum implementation in his or her classroom, but should not explicitly be directed as to how to do that. The curriculum is not authoritative, but rather is educational only when given life by the teacher. The teacher is allowed to use his or her reasoning as a legally recognized professional under the Basic Law to develop their own approach to the material. They are allowed to do what is best for their students at that particular point in time. “Teachers are always the invisible agents of the system, seen as “animated” and directed by the system, and not as sources of animation *for* the system.”<sup>163</sup> They were licensed by the government to teach subject matter curriculum, and this licensure ensured that they were allowed professional autonomy and authority. Their American counterparts, however, were only licensed in so much that they were allowed to enact the curriculum in approved ways; they were directed *by* the system to teach the preapproved curriculum as employees, not as professionals.

As part of their training, aspiring German teachers learned that *didaktik* practice requires teachers to first determine what the objective of the of the material is, how it relates to *bildung*, and the significance of it to the student as well as how the student should experience the

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*German Didaktik Tradition*, ed. Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann, and Kurt Riquarts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 5-6.

<sup>163</sup> Ian Westbury, “Teaching as a Reflective Practice: What Might Didaktik Teach Curriculum?” *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition*, ed. Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann, and Kurt Riquarts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 21.

material.<sup>164</sup> The given curriculum is the topic (object), and the teacher must comprehend the content as it exists in the framework of the values of the community while simultaneously be able to reflect on the self-creation inherent to *bildung* that teaching inherently fosters.<sup>165</sup> The nature of the three-sided relationship between the teacher, student, and the information, therefore constantly requires the teacher to reflect on what they are doing, why, and how; a stark difference from the American model.

*Didaktik* also informed the nature of how German teachers were taught to plan their lessons. Lesson planning was more than simply planning an approach to presenting a concept or information. Instead, *didaktik* teaching requires a far greater depth of knowledge and skill. In addition to the requirement that the teacher know the content, the student, and the community, *didaktik* sees educational psychology as an inherent part of the planning of the lesson, not a separate field of science and research.<sup>166</sup> Combining all of these together so as to have a positive learning outcome for all students, but in a way that is unique to each student, required tremendous skill and training.<sup>167</sup> The importance on lesson planning is evident in the model, and far more emphasis is placed on planning than testing and grading.<sup>168</sup> Using this model, the West

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<sup>164</sup> Rudolf Künzli, “German Didaktik: Models of Re-presentation of Intercourse, and of Experience,” translation by Gilliam Horton-Krüger, *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition*, ed. Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann, and Kurt Riquarts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 42-45.

<sup>165</sup> Heinrich Roth, “The Art of Lesson Preparation,” *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition*, ed. Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann, and Kurt Riquarts (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 127-138.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*, 127-138.

<sup>167</sup> Rust and Rust, *Unification of German Education*, 53-57.

<sup>168</sup> Birgit Pepin, Cultures of Didactics: Teachers Perceptions of Their Work and Their Role as Teachers in England, France, and Germany, Proceedings of the Symposium, *Didaktik: An International Perspective*, Presented at the *European Conference on Educational Research* (Edinburg, Scotland, September 20-23, 2010).  
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001589.htm>.

German schools were succeeding as ever greater numbers of students were enrolling in the *gymnasiums, realschules, and hauptschules*, and the number of universities was expanding.<sup>169</sup>

By the 1970s and 1980s, though, a growing interest in the American curriculum model was taking hold. *Didaktik* was increasingly thought of as outdated.<sup>170</sup> This was largely the result of a new crop of teachers, born after the war, who had begun to enter into teaching in the late 1960s. In 1968, college students began protesting the conservative nature of the West German government. They were collectively known as the “68-ers” and had new ideas about the role of the teacher in the classroom, too. The movement was largely led by teachers and college students who wanted to “democratize” education in Germany to help ensure equal opportunities for students by changing curriculum, teaching methodologies, and school structures. They attempted to unify the three separate school tracks that traditionally existed in Germany, and alter the education of teachers so that they would become “subject specialists.”<sup>171</sup> These new ideas also redefined the notion of *bildung*. Rather than revealing the inner nature of the person, the concept had been reframed by Theodor Adorno for the academic setting as a means of liberation. Through education the individual could be emancipated from their own “personal, social, cultural, or economic contingencies and, thus, as the realization of autonomy.”<sup>172</sup> The role of the educator was to provide ideology-free knowledge. Doing so would produce people who were not confined to power structures, and the social restrictions of class, race, gender, etc. This in turn would raise all of society.<sup>173</sup> The role of the teacher was to build an equitable

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<sup>169</sup> Rust and Rust, *Unification of German Education*, 40.

<sup>170</sup> Künzli, *German Didaktik*, 42.

<sup>171</sup> Pepin, *Cultures and Didactics*, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001589.htm>.

<sup>172</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 105.

<sup>173</sup> Jan Masschelein and Norbert Ricken, “Bildung and Critique,” *Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy Today. Toward a New Critical Language in Education* ed. By Ilan Gur-Ze’ev (Haifa, Israel: University Press Haifa, 2005), 210-11.

society by liberating people from traditions in order to bring about responsibility for the health of the overall environment.<sup>174</sup> This directly influenced how teachers saw themselves in their classrooms. One of these teachers, Trudy Clements, explained that having grown up surrounded by American and western European influences, they desired to introduce new liberal ideas that they viewed as *American* into schools. The truth of such claims was not as important as the ideas behind them. Many teachers insisted that their students casually call them by their first names. They removed the long adhered to strict policies of discipline, and they began to rely heavily on curriculum and standardized testing.<sup>175</sup> This began to change the way teachers in West Germany were viewed. As teachers became more casual, more relatable to the average person, a certain degree of respect also began to depart. Over the next several years this movement would only grow, and with it, a decline in test scores would further hurt teachers professional standing.

### **Unification and Decline**

In November of 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, and the two Germanys began the process of reunification.<sup>176</sup> It quickly became clear that there were striking differences between teachers from the GDR and the FRG. In the decade prior to unification, some in the East had begun to sense that their over reliance on propaganda in the classroom was limiting the development of students. Parents, students, and a handful of teachers (usually through their students) had written to the Ministry of Education to request a greater diversity of class levels, and asking that courses that dealt with world affairs be taught in ways other than the rote lectured methodology. These calls for change were ignored. The leader of the Ministry was Margot

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<sup>174</sup> Horlacher, *The Educated Subject*, 107.

<sup>175</sup> Trudy Clements, personal communication, June 20, 2018.

<sup>176</sup> Chambers, Hanawalt, Rabb, Woloch, Tierseten, *The Western Experience*, 918.

Honecker, wife of the long serving leader of the East German state, Erich Honecker. She refused all attempts at change, and demanded that central control over education should be strengthened in order to crush the talk of reform.<sup>177</sup>

When the unification began, it quickly became clear that East German teachers lacked not only the training of those in the West, but also the depth of content knowledge. They struggled to create lessons that clearly expressed content and failed to take into account the developmental needs of their students. They also tended to default to political dogma rather than intellectual endeavor. By 1990, the new government put into place a plan to attempt to bring East German teachers to the same level as those in the West. The plan had two parts and if they could not complete both, teachers would be removed from the classroom and forced to find employment elsewhere.

The first part of the plan, stipulated that all teacher candidates must qualify for higher educational studies. They would be required to study at either a university or comparable teacher training program (there were still a handful of normalities and seminars in operation), they must complete their studies and a preparatory assignment (their initial two-year teaching assignment), and each would culminate with a state examination. The second phase of the program would investigate the teachers' political proclivities. Much like the Communists and the Nazis before them, the new government required teachers from the East to report all previous political activities, including any abuses of authority, to determine if they were professionally and ideologically suited to teach in the new nation. Most administrators were immediately dismissed due to their being viewed as stooges for the Communist state. Teachers on the other hand, were

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<sup>177</sup> Rust and Rust, 103-104.

allowed to continue on as teachers assuming they met the new criteria. Many traveled to West Germany, other European nations, and North America to receive the required training.

However, these teachers were now, personally, at a loss. The system they had been so loyal to had collapsed. Many reported feeling as though they had been betrayed by the state, the secret police, and the Communist system itself. They were riddled with doubt about their positionality in a society in which they once wielded so much power, but were now seen as being just short of incompetent. In the former East Germany, they were increasingly viewed as unrightfully empowered individuals who had failed society. Many teachers either walked away voluntarily, or simply pretended the past had never happened.<sup>178</sup> Dr. Peter Hobberman, a German surgeon and student at the time of the reunification, provides an example of this. In primary school, he had been strongly encouraged to not only join but to take on an ever-greater leadership role in the Young Pioneers Organization (the communist organization for children) at his school. By the time he was in middle school, he was the leader of the school group. After the reunification, during a weekly outdoor *Fahnenappell* ceremony (a patriotic flag celebration), he began to tie his red neckerchief, when the teacher looked at him out of the corner of her eyes, and gruffly and bluntly said, “We don’t do that anymore.” Despite having a close relationship for several years, she never spoke to him again. He was devastated because as he describes it, “she *taught* me that it was what *we* did.”<sup>179</sup> The small comment was a significant blow to his sense of identity, and leveled his feelings toward teachers.

Adding to the difficulties that German teachers faced during this time were the aforementioned problems that had begun to emerge in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 159-188.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Habermann, personal communication, July 8, 2018.

Attempting to find solutions, *didaktik* ideas were rejuvenated, and once again pushed in education, but it was not enough.<sup>180</sup> German teachers, and education in general, struggled to overcome the reunification transition. Test scores were in decline as well as teacher reputation. By 2000, Germany's Programme for International Assessment (PISA) report revealed it to have the most unequal test scores of the 43 countries examined. A huge swath of their students was considered to be "at risk." The announcement set off shockwaves across Germany, and calls for drastic and sweeping change rang out. Teachers received extensive training on ways to incorporate teamwork, technology, and exciting new investigative approaches into their classrooms. Many schools integrated students from different socio-economic backgrounds, and grade level examinations were implemented nationwide. Ten years later, German students were showing signs of significant improvement, and had given rise to what the German press dubbed the "great turnaround."<sup>181</sup>

Yet, at this same time period, respect for teachers had never been lower. The 2013 Global Teacher Status Index recorded that teachers were "scarcely" respected. Roughly 40% of Germans were of the opinion that students do not respect teachers, ranking German teachers 16 out of 21 nations surveyed, and well behind teachers in the United States. Fewer than 20% of respondents said elementary teachers were respected, and only 20% of parents would encourage their children to become teachers. Additionally, Germany came in last of all European nations polled when parents were asked if they trusted their child's teacher to provide a good education. This number was only slightly higher when Germans were asked to considered their overall

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<sup>180</sup> Künzli, *German Didaktik*, 42.

<sup>181</sup> Holly Young, "What Can We Learn from the Great German School Turnaround?" *The Guardian* (UK, November 25, 2010).

education system in a positive light.<sup>182</sup> Clearly something was happening to negatively influence the public's perception of teachers. They were better trained than American teachers, and were getting better results from students, but were finding themselves in an equally (if not worse) professional standing. Again, economic considerations tipped the scales against teachers from maintaining their position as professionals. Throughout the 2000s, a growing trend in German states had been to hire teachers as salaried individuals as a cost cutting measure. Doing this removed them from their civil servant status and allowed them to be paid less; in some states, up to 800€ less per month. This process also meant that teachers were making less money over the course of their careers because they were not entitled to the annual raises of civil servants.<sup>183</sup> Although they were paid less, and would make less in retirement, salaried teachers were allowed to negotiate, strike, and could begin teaching after the age of 40, all of which are prohibited to civil servants. Civil servants, however, were privately insured and received additional monetary payments if they had children. Both types of teachers received the same training, worked in the same schools, did the same job with the same stresses, and in all other areas are indistinguishable.<sup>184</sup>

These factors gathered into a perfect storm that left a massive teacher shortage in its wake. Nearly three quarters of a million teachers retired between 2009-2019. There simply are not enough teachers coming in behind them to fill the void. By some estimates, Germany will need another 40,000 new teachers in addition to those currently in school to replace the retirees. Today in Germany, half of all teachers is over the age of 50, and government agencies are

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<sup>182</sup> Peter Dolton and Oscar Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Varkey GEMS foundation global teacher status index*, October 2013.

<sup>183</sup> Der Lehrerfreund, Teaching in Germany: Federal Rankings 2015. [www.lehrerfreund.de](http://www.lehrerfreund.de).

<sup>184</sup> Sybille Warnking, *Was Unterscheidet beamte und Angestellte?/What Distinguishes Civil Servants and Employees?* Duda.news. [www.dudda.news](http://www.dudda.news).

concerned about what this will mean for the future, particularly in the areas of math and science, where the numbers look the most ominous.<sup>185</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Now, in Chapter IV, I turn to look at how these changes in Prussia and Germany impacted the burgeoning concept of teachers in the United States. The U.S. looked toward the reforms in Prussia as a guide to what the role of teachers in society could be as it, too, undertook nation building. However, the U.S. struggled with similar issues of social class, though in an unrecognized way, but with an added strongly sexist/patriarchal vein. These factors combined with a reluctance to move beyond moral and character development in a significant way, arguments over what the purpose of education should be, and what teachers should be trained to do have not only limited the ability of teachers from being seen as true professionals, but caused the public to see the role teachers in wildly divergent ways. I will conclude the chapter with a more discussion of the events from German history discussed in Chapter III, and compare those with how the history of teachers as professionals transpired in the United States.

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<sup>185</sup> *Deutsche Welle*, “Drastic Shortage of Teachers feared in Germany,” (Germany, Deutsche Welle News, July 21, 2009). [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com).

## CHAPTER IV:

### AMERICAN TEACHERS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I will explain how the concept of teachers as professionals was a peripheral issue, at best, in the United States. Although the same concerns with training, pay, and authority were as apparent as they were in Prussia, sexism combined with economic realities, and an emphasis on moral and vocational education above that of intellectualism in the popular culture prohibited a similar teacher emancipation movement from taking hold. I argue that teachers maintain a unique position in American society. They are not white collar workers nor blue collar workers. Based on the aforementioned factors, and the reality of the lower social status of women who would come to dominate the teaching field, the denial of professional status has been systematic and intentional, and efforts to transform teachers into true members of the professional class in the United States have been met with resistance from education reformers, universities, and in some cases, teachers themselves. This has resulted in rapid teacher burn out, poor retention, low morale among teachers, infighting within the ranks, and ever decreasing standards for who should be teaching America's young people. I trace how teachers have been blocked from rising in standing from the early 1800s, and attempts to improve their plight have often been stopped by intentionally shortchanging the worth of teachers in the educational process, and denying teachers' attempts to reform the occupation into something more in line with a true profession. Unlike their Germanic counterparts, teachers in

the United States have not been as successful at gaining state support for these, and the notion of training teachers to use an autonomous guiding philosophy was never fully embraced in America as the ideas of *didaktik* and *bildung* were in Prussia.

### Origins

After the ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1789, a number of efforts were made to pull the 13 disparate states into one cohesive nation.<sup>186</sup> For many in the burgeoning nation, education was believed to be the key to success in this endeavor. The issue of the education of the public had been battered about by the American intelligentsia for nearly twenty years prior, but now it was percolating throughout society. Benjamin Franklin<sup>187</sup> had called for schools to educate the public as early as the 1740s, but the young nation now, as discussed by Benjamin Rush (1806) was looking at the need for a form of schooling that would meet the needs of a new Republic.<sup>188</sup> Similar to the events unfolding in Europe, America was looking intently at nation-building, but with subtle differences. Whereas Prussia was intent on building a unified nationalistic culture, the United States was intent on the very real challenge of establishing a new nation. The paramount question, therefore, was what kind of nation would it build and what type of education would be needed to expedite that process?<sup>189</sup>

After the collapse of the French government and resulting chaos of the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, and Napoleonic exploits, and three more contentious years

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<sup>186</sup> Gerald A. Danzer et al., *The Americans* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2005), 183.

<sup>187</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* (Philadelphia, PA: Franklin and Hall, 1749), accessed October 13, 2018, <https://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/1749proposals.html>.

<sup>188</sup> Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," *Essays, Literary, Moral, and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, PA: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806), 6-20.

<sup>189</sup> Rebekka Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 75.

battling England in the War of 1812, Americans' attentions began to focus on the developing place of Prussia in political affairs. Many Americans viewed the English bitterly, and France had fallen out of favor with the public after the American Revolution, disgusted by years of violence and unrest. At the same time, Prussia's reputation was rising, and it was becoming increasingly influential in the western world. Ever increasing numbers of academics began to travel to Prussia to be educated. For some time, calls for a need for an education system for the public were growing louder and took many forms with a large number of cultural figureheads weighing in on the issue. One of the earliest was Thomas Jefferson in 1785. He rationalized that education was essential to democracy, but believed that it was not possible (or even necessary) for every child to be educated until adulthood. Instead, he felt that a primary education should be tax supported and available to all children ages six to eight for free. In this application, schooling would have consisted largely of reading, writing, basic math, geography, and history. Most children's education would be complete after this level. Only those whose families could afford it, or those winning a scholarship (roughly 10 or fewer) would move on to the next level of schooling. This process would continue on to the university level, acting as a funnel to ensure that only the best and the brightest students received an advanced education. Students who stalled out at the second phase of this journey could become teachers to younger students, at age sixteen.<sup>190</sup> Thus the bar for teacher training and knowledge was initially set low. Rush argued in favor of a similar system, loosely modeled after that of Prussia, that would unite the masses through the use of a common language. However, the American system would not rely on

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<sup>190</sup> <sup>190</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston, MA: Celine Noel and Wanda Gunther), 268-275, accessed June 15, 2018, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson.html>.

*bildung* to develop personalities, but would attempt to “foster the virtuous republic citizen.”<sup>191</sup>

This was perhaps because of the difference in the idea of what a *citizen* was. The European notion of a citizen was the development of a person who “was oriented to the nation as a whole,” Americans believed a citizenry to be a people who lived in “social harmony.”<sup>192</sup> One would be brought in line the predetermined national identity, and the other would consist of a variety of people with different identities living together and working together.

A key advocate of this interpretation was Horace Mann (1796-1859). Mann, became the Secretary of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts in 1837 and believed “that a nation’s welfare and prosperity rose and fell with the people’s willingness to support the common schools.”<sup>193</sup> The concept of the State Board originated with James Carter (1795-1845) who saw it as a key step for the government funding of public schools and a way to direct teacher education.<sup>194</sup> Mann believed that “education allowed persons to discern the ethical demands of natural law, thereby creating a responsible and moral citizen” and oversaw the rolling out of Carter’s vision across Massachusetts.<sup>195</sup> Additionally, he subscribed to a school of thought that was popular in the early 1800s, phrenology, and its fundamental notion that once deficiencies in a person were detected, they could be educated out of the person. The possibility for change was key to his beliefs. Mann was a Unitarian and believed in the faith’s optimistic notions “in the

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<sup>191</sup> Horlacher, *Educated Subject*, 76.

<sup>192</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, “Horace Mann’s Legacy, The Republic and the School.” *Horace Mann on the Education of Free Man* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1957), 8.

<sup>193</sup> Thomas Mann, *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Education. Together with the Tenth Annual Report on the Secretary of the Board* (Boston, MA: Dutton and Wentworth, 1846), 110.

<sup>194</sup> Thomas F. Flaherty & John J. Flaherty, “James Carter: Champion of the Normal School Movement,” *Report of the U.S. Department of Health Education & Welfare, National Institute of Education* (1974).

<sup>195</sup> Susan Ritchie, *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*, accessed December 24, 2018, [www.uudb.org/horacemann.html](http://www.uudb.org/horacemann.html).

goodness and potential possibilities of humanity while their hope of unraveling the laws of nature by reason, experience and experiment led them to an eager search for scientific explanation and methods in all matters including education.<sup>196</sup> The church “taught that the environment and circumstance rather than innate character or divine intervention formed children, and promised that with the right, carefully interrelated intellectual, physical and moral education from birth, people would find the way to unbounded knowledge, happiness, love of God and perfect virtue.”<sup>197</sup>

A state funded education for all young people was the only pathway that Mann saw to better society by eliminating those deficiencies. Mann saw potential for implementing this on a national scale after reading several of critiques and assessments of the Prussian system common in America at the time. The most popular of these was Sarah Austin’s English translation of Frenchman, Victor Cousin’s *Report on the State of Education in Some Countries in Germany and Especially Prussia* (1835). This report had been celebrated by the European press, particularly in *The Edinburgh Review*, for nearly a year before its translation, and this version contained a forward by J. Orville Taylor, a highly regarded education advocate of the day, and author of *The District School*. The expectation for the book’s release was high, and Mann was among those excited by its content. In its pages, Cousin systematically, and with great detail, explains the Prussian school system. Although, it was meant as an instruction for replicating the process in France, many argued that the system could be implemented in almost any nation.

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<sup>196</sup> Ruth Watts, “Rational Dissenting Women and the Travel of Ideas,” *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 26, (1-27): 13-14.

<sup>197</sup> Ruth Watts, “Harriet Martineau and the Unitarian Tradition in Education,” *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no. 5, (October 2011): 637-651

Mann was intrigued.<sup>198</sup>

Although he was impressed with the Prussian school system's organization and continuous nature, much like earlier critics of the reliance on the catechism, he found the education being given to be one that "enslave[s] and not enfranchise[s] the human mind."<sup>199</sup> He also questioned the purpose and intent of the *Gymnasium*. To Mann, it operated with a troubling reliance on ideas and words, largely stemming from an emphasis on classical subjects and languages, and not the realities and plans that could be beneficial later in life.<sup>200</sup> He argued that a proper education must have a real-world application. Mann felt free to critique the Prussian system, and even Cousin's description. In fact, Cousin encouraged as much, explaining, "the true greatness of a people does not consist in borrowing nothing from others, but in borrowing from all whatever is good, and in perfecting whatever it appropriates."<sup>201</sup> Other issues became clear as well. The Prussian system was attempting to simultaneously develop the individual's gifts and abilities in accordance with *bildung* theory, but also instill an identity of dedicated German nationalism. Additionally, the claimed intention of training teachers in Pestalozzian pedagogy which emphasized the goal of a common general education while actually training elementary teachers and those destined for rural schools separately and distinctly from the university educated teachers who would be working in the *Gymnasia* was contradictory because it was not allowing every student the same opportunities.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Burke Aaron Hinsdale, *Horace Mann and the Common School Revival in the United States* (New York City, NY: C. Scribner's Sons), 64-67.

<sup>199</sup> Horace Mann, *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education. Together with the Seventh Annual Report on the Secretary of the Board* (Boston, MA: Dutton and Wentworth, 1844), 21.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

<sup>201</sup> Victor Cousin, *Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia* (New York, NY: Wiley & Long, 1835), 292.

<sup>202</sup> Herbst, *And Sadly Teach*, 41.

Mann, like Carter, came to believe that textbooks, structure, classification, teacher training and student discipline would be essential elements to the American education model. Citizens, he argued could not waste money or time on useless knowledge. He opposed the classical studies and foreign languages being taught in Prussian schools. Education must be practical, he argued, because unlike other emerging democracies, the American people did not elect members from select social classes into office. They, themselves, were eligible, and the education system had to “fit the great body of the people for the performance of these duties.”<sup>203</sup> He argued that Prussians were political subjects, and not citizens. They lacked the same duties and obligations as Americans, and therefore, Americans needed a different educational orientation. It was a mistake, he believed, to uncouple vocational education from general education as von Humboldt had, and textbooks should be relied upon to homogenize learning.<sup>204</sup> He also questioned the role religion played in Prussian schools. Instead, he reflected the greater Whig Party preference to celebrate the ideas of Manifest Destiny, and the perpetual forward momentum towards ever increasing American greatness. Doing so, Mann believed would address a chief concern noted by Cousin: the building of tensions between the upper-class elites and the working class. Mann saw that many of the same symptoms of social class conflict in Prussia were taking root in the United States. The elites feared that if the working class were educated beyond the work available to them it would cultivate unrealistic expectations and lead to instability and possible revolution. Further, they believed that education was a social good, but that it should reinforce their position at that top of the social hierarchy, rather than equalizing

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<sup>203</sup> Mann, *Seventh Annual Report*, 151.

<sup>204</sup> Horace Mann, *Third Annual Report of the Board of Education. Together with the Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board* (Boston, MA: Dutton and Wentworth, 1840), 87.

all people.<sup>205</sup> Focusing on the greatness of the nation, as it currently existed, and carrying those ideas forward would address this. The classes each had distinct forms of schooling at this time, and Mann argued that a common school for all students, regardless of class, would address and solve the burgeoning strife.

Mann's ideas of public schooling did have one significant similarity to Prussia. It would heavily emphasize a moral imperative, largely influenced by a liberal interpretation of knowledge based Protestant notions. Mann's school, however, would differ in that it would stress the ideas of social equality.<sup>206</sup> To implement these thoroughly, his school model would have longer school terms beyond the traditional six to twelve-week model that was common in America at the time, and operate on a planned curriculum that would be required of all students, regardless of social class. It would be carried out in tax supported schools, taught by teachers trained to carry out the predetermined curriculum.<sup>207</sup> Mann envisioned teachers as technicians rather than scholars. They should have a different type of training than academics. He argued that school teachers only needed training in the subject matter that was being taught. They would receive this training in Normal schools, established largely in rural areas, exclusively for the purpose of teacher education. To elaborate on his ideas and to try to convince the public to support a tax funded school system, he began publishing *The Common School Journal*. Here he refined and distilled his beliefs into six core areas: 1) the public should not be ignorant, 2) education should be paid for and controlled by the public, 3) diversity of student population was crucial 4) the education provided must be nonsectarian, 5) it must rely on the tenets of a free

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<sup>205</sup> Herbst, *And Sadly Teach*, 49.

<sup>206</sup> Cremin, *Horace Mann's Legacy*, 13.

<sup>207</sup> Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2014), 27.

society, and 6) education must be provided by well-trained teachers.<sup>208</sup> Mann's ideas were intended for educational reform in Massachusetts, and sparked an enormous backlash, particularly in Boston in 1844, where teachers were reluctant to give up control of their classrooms and to surrender their long standing use of corporal punishment. He argued that teachers must be trained in these new approaches to education.<sup>209</sup> However, in a rapidly growing education system, these changes were difficult and expensive to make reality.

Mann only received one million dollars (half of what he requested) to roll out his plans in Massachusetts. Undeterred, he turned to the untapped potential of women as teachers as a solution to both problems.<sup>210</sup> He not only recognized their ability to do the work (because the curriculum was predetermined and they would rely on clearly directly textbooks, removing independence of thought from the process, and their willingness to accept his approach), but that they could be paid less than a male teacher. This is not surprising given, Mann's Unitarian background. Education for women and women's involvement in the educational process was something that the faith had long argued for, both for the moral and religious life of females, but also for political economy.<sup>211</sup> As Mann described them, female teachers "with a halo of heavenly light," would allow the state funds to be stretched further than their male counterparts.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, Mann disagreed with the Prussian notion that teachers should have a higher status than that of the students they taught or the communities in which they lived. He

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<sup>208</sup> *The Great Courses: How the World Learns*, Lecture 6, "The World Learns from Horace Mann," Presented by Alexander Wiseman, PhD, 2015, The Teaching Company.

<sup>209</sup> Mintz, S. and S. McNeill, (2018), "The Struggle for Public Schools," accessed December 27, 2018, [www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu).

<sup>210</sup> Dana Goldstein, *The Teacher Wars*, 27.

<sup>211</sup> Watts, *Harriet Martineau*, 640.

<sup>212</sup> Alonzo Potter and George B. Emerson, *The School and the School Master. A Manual for the Use of Teachers, Employers, Trustees, Inspectors, etc. of the Common Schools, In Two Parts* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1842), 204.

believed that teachers should be very much influenced by the larger community, which could benefit reciprocally from his perceived notions of women's God-given tendencies to be a nurturer to "raise the souls of men."<sup>213</sup> If the goal of the American school was unity of the people, then the idea of the teacher existing within the community, as one of the people, would exemplify this.

The idea to use women as teachers in his public schools was radical, but it was not completely shocking, nor did it originate with Horace Mann. The population of teachers in Massachusetts, which reflected other states at the time, was often believed to consist of "drifters shunning hard physical labor and handicapped fellows unable to perform it [who] sought out the schoolhouse as a place to sustain themselves for a season. Consequently, whether deservedly or not, common school teachers often ranked low in the opinions of their countrymen."<sup>214</sup> The introduction of women and their perceived inherent virtues would counter this mindset. As a Unitarian, Mann was comfortable with the female student and teacher because the church had long held that when possible, education for females take place.<sup>215</sup> The church, itself, cited the ideas of Johann Pestalozzi as a guiding influence. Many of Pestalozzi's notions of feminine virtue, and the inherent abilities of motherhood are reflected Mann's ideas.

Mann was also attracted to the ideas his acquaintance, Catherine Beecher (1800-1878). Beecher was simultaneously a perplexing combination of brilliance, revolutionary vision, and yet lacking in the ability to see beyond the limitations of her own place in the gender and social hierarchies of the early 1800s.<sup>216</sup> The daughter of the famed early American minister, Lyman

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<sup>213</sup> Horace Mann, *A Few Thoughts on the Powers and Duties of Woman: Two Lectures* (Syracuse, NJ, Hall Mills and Company, 1853), 10.

<sup>214</sup> Herbst, *And Sadly Teach*, 23.

<sup>215</sup> Watts, *Harriet Martineau*, 640.

<sup>216</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 17-22.

Beecher, and sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, she desired a life of academic pursuits, and longed for a way to chart on her own path in the world.<sup>217</sup> Yet she was stymied by the professional and religious limitations placed on women. After a brief period of teaching domestic arts at a finishing school for girls in New England, she became frustrated by the areas of interests that were closed to her because of her gender. She wanted to focus on teaching classics, science, math, and philosophy. To achieve this end, she founded the Hartford Female Seminary in 1823, and pushed to have the students learn through “hands-on” experiments.<sup>218</sup>

The school was immediately controversial. Critics argued that it would “fill young Misses with vanity to the degree that they are above attending to the more useful parts of education,” which were to find a husband and to build a home for him.<sup>219</sup> To answer those critics, Beecher launched a two-pronged defense- defending both the societal need for women to be educated, and simultaneously, creating a religious based non-threatening pathway for educated women to move forward in society: as teachers.

In 1837, Beecher attempted to explain her views on gender in *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, in Reference to the Duty of American Females*. She argues for what she terms the “divine economy;” that it is “immutable law” that there are “different stations of superiority and subordination,” and that it is in “the interests of females, in all respects to conform to the duties of this relation.” She further explains that men are leaders in politics and in life, and that “it is neither appropriate nor wise, nor right, for a woman to petition for the relief of oppressed females.” She countered her critics by arguing that men are the appropriate arbitrators for the

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<sup>217</sup> Danzer, *The Americans*, 256.

<sup>218</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 18.

<sup>219</sup> Fran Huehls, “Teaching as Philanthropy: Catherine Beecher and the Harford Seminary,” *Women and Philanthropy in Education* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 39.

rights of women and it is up to men to determine what exactly those rights should be. Beecher justified her belief in the need for female education by making the argument (baffling from today's perspective), that "the more intelligent a woman becomes, the more she can appreciate the wisdom of that ordinance that appointed her subordinate station, and the more her tastes will conform to the graceful and dignified retirement and submission it involves." In the essay, Beecher moves one step forward to explain that the ideal position for women in society is that of teachers, but only of younger children. "Men will be the educators in the college, in the high school, in some of the most honourable and lucrative common schools, but the children, the little children of the nation must, to a wide extent, be taught by females, or remain untaught. The drudgery of education as it is now too generally regarded, in this country, will be given to the female hand."<sup>220</sup> Essentially, she was making the argument that by the 1830s, the foundations of education were to be considered grunt work that was below that of men's status in which to engage. Men could have the interesting, professional side of teaching, and women should be content with the lesser, menial, nonprofessional early education aspect of teaching.

If Beecher was unwilling to fully challenge the notion that well-educated women could professionally engage in education, it is perhaps surprising that she creatively defended against critics who said that work outside of the home at any level was not becoming of middle class women.<sup>221</sup> Chiefly, she incorporated religion and economics into her defense. She argued that women were ideal for entering into classrooms as teachers because of what was believed to be their natural piety, and women could potentially raise teaching from its lowly social perception. In

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<sup>220</sup> Catherine Beecher, *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, in Reference to the Duty of American Females (1837)*, accessed March 2, 2018, [www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/resources/catharine-beecher-duty-american-women](http://www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/resources/catharine-beecher-duty-american-women).

<sup>221</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 20.

*The Duty of American Women to Their Country* (1845) she explains that “energy, discretion, and self-denying benevolence” were more suited for working with children.<sup>222</sup> Male teachers, she laments, in *The Evils Suffered by American Women and American Children* (1853) reign as stern taskmasters over their classrooms, quick with the rod, should be working in factories and on farms.<sup>223</sup> By the mid-1800s, as Americans began flooding into the newly developing western states and territories, Beecher was arguing that women should be there, too, in the school houses, acting as the moral compass for the new communities. She equated their work to that of the ministry, and fully expected women to give of themselves tirelessly.<sup>224</sup> The West was the “dog-eat-dog existence on the frontier with vigilantes and lynch law, and an unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources.” The general public believed that teachers could soften these tendencies, while the elite believed teachers could gently mold them into a citizenry that looked up and followed the will of those in power.<sup>225</sup> Teachers could instill “civil order, security of property, decency, and gentility in interpersonal relationships among the members of a white, middle-class, and overwhelmingly Protestant citizenry – those were the antidotes to anarchy and dissension.”<sup>226</sup>

Mann and Beecher arrived at the conclusion that there was no need for teachers to have advanced intellectual training to achieve these lofty expectations. Their arrival at this determination began with an examination of the concept of the modern teacher created by the Prussians. Both nations were attempting to build themselves, but in different ways. Prussian

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<sup>222</sup> Catherine Beecher *The Duty of American Women to Their Country* (New York: Harper and Company, 1845), 123.

<sup>223</sup> Catherine Beecher, *The Evils Suffered by American Women and American Children: The Causes and the Remedy* (New York City, NY: Harper Brothers, 1853), 21.

<sup>224</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 27-29.

<sup>225</sup> Jergen Herbst, *And Sadly Teach*, 15.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

teachers were attempting to pull together diverse groups of people and turn them into a unified citizenry with a nationalistic identity that would include embracing the existing social hierarchy. In the United States, the goal of schools was to break down the social and cultural barriers between the people, in spite of their ancestral and social differences, and stimulate cooperation. Ironically, this rationalization was particularly used by the American elite to justify the need for public education. “The very diversity of ethnic background and religious tradition, the variety of languages and dialects spoken, and the apparent crudity or simplicity of life-styles prompted many of the older residents to demand that these newcomers and their children be converted to the ways of the established citizenry.”<sup>227</sup> Although subtle in their difference, the Americans were arguing for the assimilation into a unified culture that allowed for upward mobility rather than a culture that accepted the social hierarchy as it currently existed. However, both Beecher and Mann failed to accept the rapidly changing role for the teacher as a professional in Prussia and the implications of that, or saw no connection between the changes and their own definition of purpose of teachers and of public schools. It is also quite possible that they reflected a larger trend of the era that viewed the licensing of all professionals as negative because it was seen as creating elitism within society.<sup>228</sup> Regardless, their views of teachers as having limited training, and being beholden to the community while simultaneously serving as its moral center, put teachers in an impossible position. In Prussia, the notion of teachers as communal servants was quickly falling away, and being replaced by well trained, licensed instructors who were guaranteed a professional standing. Yet, in the United States, she was by design, situated as a servant to the community.

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>228</sup> Samuel Harber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 91-117.

This one-two punch from Beecher and Mann set up the separation of teaching from professional status. It is interesting to note that both activists studied advanced academics, languages, and philosophy, yet acted to remove that type of learning from the new school model for which they were campaigning. Mann argued that, “The teaching of A, B, C, and the multiplication tables has not quality of sacredness in it...[Common school education should lead students to] affections outward in good-will towards men, and upwards when in reverence to God.<sup>229</sup> Morality was given more weight than academic development. It was not money that they believed women were working for, or even the ability to exercise professional judgment. Instead, they systematically trained female teachers to find fulfilment in molding hardworking, morally upstanding citizens, and to allow male teachers to educate students about the nuances of higher order thinking. Women who did not marry would find life fulfilment in the classroom, and those who found a husband would take what they learned in their classrooms into their own homes when they resigned their positions to be with their husbands, stepping into their more natural perceived position as caregivers to their husbands and children.<sup>230</sup>

### **Frustration**

From the onset, the appeal of being economically self-sufficient pulled many women into the classroom, at a time when almost no other doors were open to them. Yet, many became quickly disillusioned. They found their training to have little real world practical relation to the classrooms in which they were placed. Classrooms were overly crowded. Students were unmotivated, and the illiteracy rate was appallingly high. After the initial excitement of being newly employed, the reality that they were paid roughly 40% of their male colleagues’ salaries

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<sup>229</sup> Horace Mann, “The Teaching of A, B, C,” *Lectures on Education* (Boston, MA: W.B. Fowle and N. Capen, 1855), 316

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 316.

and the unlikelihood of promotion into a leadership position in the school would soon dim their optimism.<sup>231</sup> “Principal teachers, invariably men, saw them as apprentices or daughters. They wanted them to do well in that role, but they did not care to accept them as colleagues who would one day challenge them as equals and competitors. The classroom with its children, not the principal’s office, was the woman’s sphere.”<sup>232</sup> Additionally, the daily and yearly monotony of teaching, with little opportunity to move beyond a designed curriculum began to drive women from the classroom, resulting in frequent turnover of female teachers. Susan B. Anthony was one such young teacher in 1846. After only two years of teaching she wrote, “A weariness has come over me that the short spring vacation did not in the least dispel. I have a pleasant school of 20 scholars, but I have to manufacture the interest duty compels me to exhibit. I am anxious they learn, but feel almost to shrink from the task.” The spring after writing this, she resigned her position and left teaching.<sup>233</sup>

Although no longer in the classroom, Anthony, was still eager to work in the realm of education. Her priority was the social and political improvement of women, and she saw teaching as an important rung in that ladder. She was dismayed by Beecher’s insistence on teachers being women, and the reliance on normal schools for their training. Instead, Anthony believed that co-education at colleges and universities was the only true way to elevate education and public schools in the process. If men and women had the same educational background, and did the same job, she argued, they should be paid equally. She elaborated that teachers had a tremendous potential to be social reformers and leaders within society, but were de facto blocked

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<sup>231</sup> Herbst, *And Sadly Teach*, 27.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>233</sup> Susan B. Anthony, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Vol. 1, In the School of Anti-Slavery, 1895-1906*, ed. Ann Gordon (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 66.

from fulfilling that potential because of the low wages they were paid. They had no disposable income to support causes like suffrage or educational reform. Although many women heralded her critiques of teaching, Anthony was frustrated that a large percentage of female teachers had the same martyr mentality as Catherine Beecher, and many males employed in education worked to limit females from advancing.<sup>234</sup>

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the absence of a professional identity in teaching was having serious implications. After the Civil War, the overwhelming majority of teachers in the United States were females. In fact, teaching had largely come to be viewed as women's work. Data from the era shows that in 1870, 59% of teachers in the United States were women, and by 1900, had risen to 70%.<sup>235</sup> Teaching (and education in general) was underfunded because it was largely deemed women's work and of lesser importance than that of the work of men. Many argued that the problems in the system were not because of poor training or funding, but by the presence of such sheer numbers of women in classrooms. Among them was Charles William Eliot (1834-1926), President of Harvard University, who claimed that the skills of students coming out of public schools could be increased simply by the presence of more male teachers.<sup>236</sup> Others, though, saw the issues with American schools not as being the result of the preponderance of female teachers, but instead with the poor training that the teachers received, the pittance of a salary they were paid, and anti-intellectualism that ran rampant in America. By emphasizing morality over academics, schools were limiting the role that female teachers were allowed to play in the educational system. Teaching was no longer a ministry or calling for

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 55-66.

<sup>235</sup> Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boyles, *Who's Teaching Your Children? Why the Teaching Crisis is Worse Than You Think and What Can Be Done About It* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>236</sup> Charles William Eliot, *Educational Reform* (New York: The Century Co, 1901), 162.

women, but was seen as more of a working-class job. Teachers made roughly what a weaver earned in the 1880s.<sup>237</sup> In 1888, the Supreme Court ruled in *Dent v. West Virginia* that states could regulate occupations and all states returned to licensing teachers, but the damage to the identity of teachers as professionals had been done.<sup>238</sup> This resulted in a greater emphasis than at any time prior, on limited, technical training for teachers, and normal school preparation became common. By the end of the century, the separation of true professionalism from teaching was complete. It could be controlled, regulated, undervalued, and substantive individual decision making on the part of the teacher was gone. Instead, the teacher, usually a female, could be blamed and belittled, not only for her attempts to academically challenge her students, but also to exercise her judgment in how to best do that.<sup>239</sup>

### **Rethinking Teaching**

As the Twentieth Century dawned, one arm of the Progressive movement aimed to foster greater efficiency within American society, and many turned their attention to education.<sup>240</sup> The Progressives did not necessarily question the prominence of females teaching, but rather what the role of the teacher should be in guiding the educational process and what should be the guiding philosophy of the American educational system.

Reformers turned an eye to the educational process and questioned how the teacher was trained, their place in society, responsibility to it, and their conducting of the educational process without a true guiding philosophy. One school of thought argued in favor of greater empowerment of teachers and valuing their professional opinion, while the other, inspired by

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<sup>237</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 42.

<sup>238</sup> *Dent v. West Virginia*, 129 U.S. 114 (1889).

<sup>239</sup> Goldstein, *Teacher Wars*, 44.

<sup>240</sup> Danzer, *The Americans*, 512.

Frederick Taylor's notions of scientific management, wanted teaching to be made into an efficient process so as to allow it to be universally reproducible, effectively reducing the teacher in importance to little more than a facilitator of a proven pathway of learning that was guaranteed to work with every child. David Snedden pushed for social efficiency, and argued for a "system of vocational education that prepared the "rank and file" to become efficient "producers." The preeminent American academic, philosopher, and educational advocate, John Dewey took the opposite view. He argued for greater teacher training which would allow for greater teacher autonomy in the decision-making process. Ultimately, Snedden would prove to be the victor, and his ideas of education, and therefore the role of the teacher in that process, would come to dominate the twentieth century.<sup>241</sup>

John Dewey was pragmatic in his views of education and the larger society, and took as his starting point the idea that with the right information people are capable of solving their own problems. He argued that the role of the teacher as it had come to be defined in the early 1900s, fixated on moral development and base level language and math skills, lacked an understanding of student development and the needs of society. It used curriculum that was limited in content, when it should focus on a combination of content and process. Doing so, he believed would allow for the well-being of the student and society. Essentially, Dewey argues that people are inherent problem solvers. When they are confronted by a problem, they become conscious thinkers, and move from an emotional response (worry, for example) to reflection, testing, gaining experience, and then resolution. The experience of the challenge *is* learning. People use what they learn from past challenges, apply that knowledge to current problems, and then reflect

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<sup>241</sup> David F. Larabee, "How Dewey Lost: The Victory of David Snedden and Social Efficiency in the Reform of American Education," *Pragmatism and Modernities* ed. D. Tröhler, et al. (Boston, MA: Sense Publishers), 163-188.

on them in anticipation of the next challenge.<sup>242</sup> Dewey argues that the ultimate goal of education and learning is the improvement of life.<sup>243</sup>

Dewey argues that teacher training should focus on how to make the practitioner more knowledgeable about developing the process to facilitate learning in the student whereby the teacher continuously experiments to find what works to produce the best outcomes. This is not to say that Dewey favors dismissing curricula goals. He argues that they must allow for the child's interest and own learning aims to develop a plan of learning that meets the objectives of those goals. Educational research must focus on improving the quality of instruction by empowering teachers to approach the process in this manner. Educational science is not to be found in labs or classrooms, "but in the minds of those engaged in directing educational activities."<sup>244</sup> In a sense, Dewey is advocating for the bringing out the inner person, much like *bildung*. When teachers are able to develop learning opportunities that can do this they are considering the nature of human experiences that come from the interplay of interaction and continuity. The way a student experiences a lesson depends on how it is arranged and presented by the teacher, but also past experiences with similar teachers and lessons. Because of individual differences, no experience is good or bad, inherently, and each is interpreted differently by the person; impacting their future in the ways they will contribute to society.

The gender of the teacher was irrelevant to Dewey, and he was not concerned by the number, the role of, or the nature of women as teachers. Dewey writes that, "the growing freedom of women can hardly have any other outcome than the production of more realistic and

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<sup>242</sup> John Dewey, *How We Learn* (Boston, MA: D.C. Heath & Company Publishers, 1910), 68-78.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, 14-28.

<sup>244</sup> John Dewey, *The Sources of a Science Education* (New York, NY: Horace Liveright, 1929), 16.

more humane morals.”<sup>245</sup> Modern Feminists have interpreted this as a sign of his commitment to the experiences of women as teachers.<sup>246</sup> For Dewey, the *role* the teacher plays in the process is important, not the gender. This begins with the teacher being properly trained so that he or she can operate their classroom by developing learning goals and objectives that align with the broader curriculum, and then simultaneously developing learning opportunities for students that challenge them to build upon prior knowledge in order to master new information. Ultimately, his goal of organic democracy – people learning to work together for the betterment of all- like the organs of the body- would be achieved if this model was embraced. Everyone, he believed had a place at the education table, and was deserving of developing a fulfilling life through the process. This is not contingent on gender or social status.

Melia Nebeker points out that Dewey understood the complexities of teaching, and the difficulties that teachers had within the social, cultural and professional hierarchies and worked to help others understand this as well.<sup>247</sup> In 1897, Dewey wrote in *The Child and the Curriculum*, that, “...it is the freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment,” that teachers orchestrate. The teacher is the guide to the student. “But save as the teacher known, knows wisely and thoroughly, the race experience which is embodied in that thing we call the Curriculum, the teacher knows neither what the present power, capacity, or attitude is, not yet how it is to be asserted, exercised and realized.” Nebeker explains that Dewey saw teachers as

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<sup>245</sup> John Dewey, “What I Believe,” Reprinted in *John Dewey, The Later Works, Vol. 5: 1925-1953*, ed. J. Boydston (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1930), 91.

<sup>246</sup> Gregory Fernando Pappas, “Dewey & Feminism: The Affective and Relationships in Dewey’s Ethics,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, Vol. 8, No. 2: *Feminism & Pragmatism* (Spring 1993): 79

<sup>247</sup> Melia Nebeker, “The Teacher and Society, John Dewey and the Experience of Teachers,” *Education and Culture*, Vol. XIX, No.2 (Fall 2002): 17.

“mediators of curriculum, not its delegate.” He had begun to believe that learning was personal, and that the role of the teacher was to act as a guide into and through the process of that very personal learning experience.<sup>248</sup>

By this time, Dewey was also keenly aware of the growing movement to further limit teacher authority. A different sort of position in society was being carved out for teachers, one that denied them decision making power, training, and financial reward associated with true professionalism. He further wrote, “While the training for the profession of learning is regarded as a type of culture, as a liberal education, that of a mechanic, a musician, a lawyer, a doctor, a farmer, a merchant, or a railroad manager is regarded as purely technical and profession. The result is that which we see about us everywhere – the division into ‘cultured’ people and ‘workers,’ the separation of theory and practice.”<sup>249</sup> In 1916, Dewey unleashed his criticisms on the educational system for not allowing teachers autonomy and a true participation in the educational system. In *Democracy in Education* Dewey writes:

But, until the public school system is organized in such a way that every teacher has some regular and representative way in which he or she can register judgment upon matters of educational importance, with the assurance that this judgment will somehow affect the school system, the assertion that the present system is not, from the internal standpoint, democratic seem to be justified.

The remedy is not to have one expert dictating educational methods and subject-matter to a body of passive, recipient teachers, but the adoption of intellectual initiative, discussion, and decision throughout the entire school corps.

What does democracy mean save that the individual is to have a share in determine the conditions and the aims of his own work; and that, upon the whole, through the free and mutual harmonizing of different individuals, the work of the world is better done than when planned, arranged, and directed by a few, no matter how wise of how good intent that few.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Nebeker, *The Teacher and Society*, 17.

<sup>249</sup> Dworkin, *Dewey on Education*, 64-65.

<sup>250</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 64-65.

Additionally, Dewey found fault with those who argued that teachers were not competent to participate in the making of policy and curriculum. Doing so was not only undemocratic, but it also “tends to repel from all but the higher portions of the school system those of independent force, of intellectual initiative, and of the inventive ability, or tends to hamper them their work after find their way into the school room, so long all other forms are compromised at their source and postponed indefinitely for fruition.”<sup>251</sup> Dewey echoed the same realizations and frustrations that Susan B. Anthony expressed nearly a half century earlier, and argued that by essentially stripping professional status from teachers, teaching was not seen as an attractive career path for those who could potentially bring the most to the classroom.

Dewey was not universally embraced. He rose to prominence just as the United States was heavily industrializing in the modern age, and for many, the nation was in need of workers, not thinkers. The Administrative Progressives, key among them, David Snedden, wanted an educational system that was “socially useful for the emerging social conditions . . . .including a highly differentiated industrial economy and a large urban population stratified by class and ethnicity.”<sup>252</sup> They argued that the common school system set up by Mann and Beecher should be replaced with a system that is stratified through the creation of different curriculums for students with different intelligence levels; trajectories that would prepare them for the distinct vocational needs of society. Standardized testing should be implemented and relied on, and education must shift from an academic model to a more practical one. To the Administrative Progressive, the focus of education should not be on problem solving and investigation, but be

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>252</sup> David Tyack, “Introduction: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education,” *Work, Youth, and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 1-13.

seen as a means to “maintain social order and to promote economic growth.” In Snedden’s view the type of education that Dewey proposed was expensive, time consuming, and not in the best interest of society. He explained that as ever increasing numbers of people attended high school, the schools must meet their needs, and not every student will benefit from a liberal arts education. The only viable solution was an education that was vocationally based. Snedden argued that “traditional school pursuits – such as the study of classical languages, math, science, and English literature- were no longer useful for most students.” Further, “these subjects may represent the best preparation for higher education.....[but] the demand in general is for education more nearly related to the necessities of active life.”<sup>253</sup>

Unlike Dewey, Snedden did not use his own theories of learning to support his ideas about the approach to schools, but relied on those of Edward L. Thorndike and G. Stanley Hall. Thorndike, who argued that the transference of knowledge from one subject area to another is a myth, believed that curricula should match future occupational roles in society, and that empirical data could determine the role for which a person was best suited. Hall, argued that learning and ability grew with age, and that curriculum must fit what was appropriate for each stage of development. Essentially, a student’s educational experience is not one that is unique, but rather should reflect the predetermined elements that are deemed appropriate for the student’s age, and that learning was the result of child’s level of preparedness, and the drill and repetition of material.<sup>254</sup>

In this model, the role of the teacher changes once again. It moves beyond the described limits set forth by Beecher and Mann, to one that can adhere to a *predetermined* curriculum that

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<sup>253</sup> David Snedden, “The Schools of the Rank and File” (speech, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1900)

<sup>254</sup> David Labree, *Pragmatism and Modernities*, 165.

is *predetermined* to be age appropriate for all students, while simultaneously having the ability to analyze data from standardized testing to ensure that students are developing at the rate that others have *predetermined* to be appropriate. All of this was to be designed by *experts* in the field of education, who may not necessarily have teaching experience. By the early 1900s, this was rapidly becoming the expectation for teachers in America. Dewey's model was seemingly too nebulous, too fraught with variables, and perhaps most damning of all, too hard to regulate. It was simply too much of a leap of faith from the mindset that had existed throughout the 1800s, and was not in alignment with the increasingly common view that teachers should be technicians in nature. There is no denying that this was a step towards professional capability, and that teachers were now seen as having some level of professional skill beyond those that were believed inherent to the womanly virtues of nurturing and concern for the well-being of others. They were expected to be competent at following prescribed instructions and basic data analysis.<sup>255</sup> It is on the issue of the abilities of women as teachers that Snedden parted ways with Thorndike. Weiler (1989) explains that "Scientific management was built on the ideological assumptions about men's qualities of leadership and women's supposed acquiescent and humble nature...Nonetheless, the organization of schools and the work of teachers was increasingly based upon the ideal of the factory or 'rational' business, not on the ideal of the family. This undercut the earlier ideology of separate spheres and the view that teaching was simply an extension of woman's role at home."<sup>256</sup> Additionally, normal schools began merging into universities in order to obtain a degree of academic credibility. This led to significant increases

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<sup>255</sup> Herbert Kliebard, "The Question of Dewey's Impact on Curriculum Practice," *Teachers College Record* 89, no. 1 (Fall): 139-141.

<sup>256</sup> Kathleen Weiler, "Womens' History and the History of Women Teachers," *The Journal of Education* 171, no. 3 (1989): 20.

in the number female administrators, and some historians have referred to this period as the “golden age” of women school administrators.<sup>257</sup> Yet other ideas about teachers were so engrained in the public’s imagination and attitudes, that they would in many ways remain throughout the rest of the century. Teachers were still expected to be the moral center of the community, adopt a martyr-like mentality, accept lower pay when compared to other college graduates, and only have limited professional decision making capabilities. Thorndike was predisposed to such ideas, and much like Beecher before him, justified these notions by arguing that women inherently had the “nursing instinct” and fell into a “submission to mastery” because, “women in general are thus by original nature submissive to men in general.”<sup>258</sup> Men were expected to teach *real* academics, but women (and some men) could work in the lower classrooms to promote base learning, and should be compensated less and with lower levels of respect than that of their peers at higher academic levels.<sup>259</sup> Because much of the foundational concept of teaching relied so heavily on such ideas, it is not surprising then that in America, teaching largely came to lack any advanced theoretical or philosophical model on which to operate.<sup>260</sup>

### **The Fallout**

A century later, by the early 2000s, the idea of what a teacher is and should do had become, at best, muddled in the eyes of the public, and at worst, wholly separated from the notion of being a true professional. The confusion of perception can be seen in a series of

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>258</sup> Edward Thorndike, *Educational Psychology Briefer Course* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1914), 34.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>260</sup> Pertti Kansanen, “The Deutsche Didaktik and the American Research on Teaching,” *Discussion on Some Educational Issues VI*: 97-118.

conflicting polling data. Between 2001-2015, Harris Polling routinely found that between 49-60% of respondents believed teaching was considered a job of “great prestige,” second only to doctors in the public imagination.<sup>261</sup> A similar Harris Poll in 2015 found that 54% of respondents believed that teachers were paid too little in 2015.<sup>262</sup> However, in the same time period, Harris found that only 44% of the public believed that teachers were respected by parents, and only 31% of students had respect for teachers. Furthermore, 72% felt there was a need for “highly qualified teachers” to be brought into schools to improve student achievement.<sup>263</sup> Inherent to this, is the idea that the majority of current teachers were not highly qualified. Although the public had come to believe teaching was a position of “prestige” they simultaneously believed it was not one that was particularly respected.<sup>264</sup> Americans also tended to see teaching as most comparable to being a librarian, and considerably underestimated the actual salaries teachers were paid.<sup>265</sup> Additionally, although they believed teachers should be paid more, studies found that teacher salaries actually declined in the same period. Currently in 35 states, teachers are paid a salary below the standard of living.<sup>266</sup> Sylvia Allegretto, a labor economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who points out that in one of these states, Arizona, teachers make 63 cents on the dollar when compared to other college graduates, and that “over a career, it means these workers are out tens and maybe hundreds of thousands of dollars.” In examining the situation, journalist Cory Turner frames this enormous disparity, by writing that, “Years of spending cuts have led to teacher shortages in many communities, [and]

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<sup>261</sup> Harris Polling, 2000-2015.

<sup>262</sup> Harris Polling, *Are We Paying Our Teachers Enough? Most Americans Say ‘No.’* 2015.

<sup>263</sup> Harris Polling, *Harris Poll Finds Perceived Respect for Teachers Has Declined*, 2014.

<sup>264</sup> National Public Radio, *All Things Considered* (March 16, 2018), Radio Program.

<sup>265</sup> Peter Dolton and Oscar Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Varkety GEMS Foundation Global Teacher Status Index* (London, UK: Varkey GEMS Foundation (2013).

<sup>266</sup> National Public Radio, March 16, 2018.

makes it hard to recruit and retain new teachers for whom the low pay is all too real and the pension, an abstraction. This is especially true of college graduates with expertise in math and science who can earn more money outside the classroom.” In the same story, Professor Bruce Baker of Rutgers University asks, “Who do we want to go into teaching, and how much are we going to complain about it if we don’t get the people we want?” He explains that it is becoming increasingly harder for society to say ‘We value teachers!’ when the numbers tell a different story.<sup>267</sup>

The separation of teachers from the concept of true professionals is largely the fallout of the gender and social status identity conflicts of the 1800s and early 1900s. By the 1910s, teaching began to evolve rapidly. This evolution blocked the classroom teacher from the realm of professionals. David Angus explains that this began with universities quickly launching graduate school education programs, creating a stratification of teaching between the leadership of the profession and the classroom teacher. This also separated philosophy, pedagogy, and research from what happened in the classroom. More importantly, though, it positioned those in the higher echelons as the *professionals* and leaders in education, and left teachers behind, to be thought of, in some respects, as their drones. This move also benefited the universities and academics in that it allowed them to be the “gatekeepers” to determine who might enter the teaching profession, what training they would receive, and the practices they would employ.<sup>268</sup> This mirrored the stratification that took place in Prussia 110 years prior. Thorndike’s data driven decision making was growing in popularity, and the need was recognized to ensure that teachers were certified to interpret and use such data.

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<sup>267</sup> National Public Radio, *All Things Considered* (April 11, 2018), Radio Program.

<sup>268</sup> David L. Angus, *Professionalism and the Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification* (Dayton, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2001), 12.

Angus elaborates that the push for teachers that were certified had long been argued for by the public, going back as far as the early movement for public education. Parents wanted assurances that those teaching their children were competent to do so. However, it was only in the early 1900s that this came to be.

Administrative progressives never wavered from the view that a higher quality, more professional teaching corps could only be produced by requiring more and more training in colleges of education or the collegiate normal schools; that their claim to scientific arcane knowledge should be legitimated by issuing increasingly specialized certificates based on longer and longer periods of formal training; that control of entry should rest with the profession itself; that eliminating the local certificate was key; that state certification laws should be written only in broad strokes, leaving the details to the state bureaucracy controlled by their members; and finally that neither legislatures nor state education departments should exercise close supervisory authority over the curriculum and organization of teacher education programs that institutional autonomy should be the watchword.<sup>269</sup>

The multiple components that the administrative progressives saw as necessary for teacher training began to yield quick results, though not always what they had hoped. Allowing for states to write certification law, meant that the states could alter those when they deemed necessary. When the supply of teachers was not enough to meet demand, the certification requirements could be lessened, therefore making it easier for lesser qualified teachers to enter the classrooms. Universities also began to graduate students from a dizzying number of certification programs and specializations. Normal schools, now seeking academic validation, began to roll themselves into larger universities, which had far more rigid criteria for

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<sup>269</sup> United States Commissioner of Education, "Legal Provisions of Various States Relating to Teachers' Examinations and Certifications," *Report for the Year, 1897-98* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1899). William R. Jackson, "The Present Status of the Certification of Teachers in the United States," *Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education for the Year 1903* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1905). Harlan Updegraff, *Teachers' Certificates Issued Under General State Laws and Regulations*, U.S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1911, No. 18 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911).

admission.<sup>270</sup>

A patchwork of requirements for certification began to form across the states. Some required a high school degree, some a multi-subject area exam, while others required some professional training at the college level, and still others (a minority) required college graduation and even a certification exam. By the 1930s, states, universities, and teachers favored increased formal training requirements. Some states were even incorporating liberal or cultural training into their courses, while others had begun to require teachers to major in an area of study in college, and then to teach in that area of certification.<sup>271</sup>

A number of mostly rural states still relied only on teacher examinations to certify their teachers. In these states, a typical rural high school had three teachers, each teaching a variety of subjects and grade levels. The examination these teachers had to pass could have had as many as 13 different subject area questions. The demand for teachers in these states was so great, that other qualifiers such as college classes, or even degrees were not helpful in increasing the number of people willing to take on the challenge of teaching in these environments. Regardless of the need, teachers from states with higher benchmarks for classroom teaching began to call for the practice to be stopped. They saw the exam only pathway as a “backdoor” that allowed less qualified people to become teachers. They began to pressure states to phase the examination practice out, and require teachers in all states to have some degree of professional training. This model was believed to be successful throughout the rest of the 1930s as greater numbers of

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<sup>270</sup> Angus, *Professionalism and the Public Good*, 16.

<sup>271</sup> Benjamin W. Frazier, *Development of State Programs for the Certification of Teachers, U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1938*, no. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 20,62-63.

teachers began to enter into universities.<sup>272</sup>

The 1940s and the Second World War saw the number of teachers plummet, and the need was so great that over one hundred thousand emergency teaching certificates were issued by the states. These individuals may not have had any training in education. In spite of the teacher shortage, after the war states began to move for higher teacher standards. Increasingly, a four-year degree requirement was the norm. However, perhaps because of the power of the wartime government and reliance on experts, the divide within the world of education was growing greater. Angus explains, “Throughout the previous four decades....the dominant voice of the profession had been the faculty of colleges of education. They were [now] supported and joined by school administrators, faculty of the former normal schools, state department employees, and the staff of the U.S. Office of Education, all of whom became known as members of the education trust.... Teachers continued to be included in the invocation of the idea of a profession of education, and the education school faculty often acted as they “spoke” for the classroom teacher.” Teachers had been removed from the public spotlight, and their contributions to policy and practice were no longer considered valuable. “The American teacher corps was grossly overworked, underpaid, and demoralized. From their perspective, the profession of education might have gained in power and prestige over the previous half-century, but the benefits had not trickled down to them.”<sup>273</sup>

In response to this, the National Education Association formed the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS). TEPS held a series of regional

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<sup>272</sup> Katherine M. Cook, “Certification by Examination-The Open Door to the Teaching Profession,” *American School Board Journal* (July 1920) 61: 29-30, 119. Robert C. Woellner and M. Aurilla Wood, *Requirements for Teaching Certificates* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1935).

<sup>273</sup> Angus, *Professionalism and the Public Good*, 22.

conferences that discussed the need to protect the public from teachers that were not professionally trained and to protect teachers from unfair competition from those who were untrained. They followed these conferences with work at the state level, setting up TEPS Councils in every state. They lobbied state legislatures to adopt bachelor's degrees as a requirement for qualification for teachers at the elementary level, and five years of college training to teach at the high school level. They also argued for states to hand over authority for certification requirements and procedures to state departments of education. The results of their efforts were decidedly mixed. However, they were largely successful at convincing universities to take control of teacher training through an approved program, which included specific course and hour requirements for graduation and certification. This made universities responsible for the caliber of the graduates they were putting into classrooms, but it also made reciprocity between states for teacher certification difficult.<sup>274</sup>

By the late 1950s TEPS was having some impact, especially in New England and the West, however critics were vocal in their assaults on the efforts to tighten teacher training. They argued it was an attempt to force one set of beliefs and ways of doing onto the nation's youth, and there was growing public criticism that the United States' education system was falling behind the Soviet Union's in terms of education after its launch of Sputnik.<sup>275</sup> TEPS responded by holding another conference series in 1958, with the intent to focus on teacher education. They attempted to allow the critics (now known as the "educationists") and those in education to dialogue and find a mutual ground. It did not work. Instead, all sides found fault with current

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<sup>274</sup> Earl W. Armstrong and T.M. Stinnett, *A Manual on Certification Requirements for School Personnel in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The National Educational Association, 1961).

<sup>275</sup> National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, *The Education of Teachers: New Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: The National Education Association, 1958).

teacher training. Teacher education programs, teachers themselves, and the educationists did seem to have a similar litany of complaints:

low standards of admission to and exit from teacher education programs, too many “mickey mouse” courses, overemphasis on professional education courses in relation to academic or liberal arts courses, educationist control of state departments of education and the certification function, field of education lacking a distinct disciplinary base, the weakness of the doctorate in education, and the commensurate intellectual weakness of the education faculty, and perhaps the most important of all, the absence of reliable scientific evidence that any component of the teacher education programs has a predictable relationship to effective classroom teaching.<sup>276</sup>

Not only had the public begun to turn on teachers and those in education, but now those in all levels of education had begun to turn on each other. The undervalued and underappreciated feelings of classroom teachers soon spread to the academics when in 1963, James Conant published *The Education of the American Teacher*. He was a former chemist and President of Harvard University who had overseen tremendous reform of the culture and operation of the university in an attempt to battle elitism. Now, he turned his attention to American education and claimed that academic faculties had failed teachers in developing adequate teacher education programs and that the “only portion of professional education that was necessary was a quality student teaching experience.”<sup>277</sup> This was a reinforcement of his efforts to stop the elitism from further growing in the United States, creating a strict stratification of society.<sup>278</sup> The education world was not only now arguing with itself, but also having to defend itself from outside critics. The unspooling, decades long drama, smacked of unprofessionalism to onlookers, and cast a long, unprofessional shadow on the public’s view of the world of education.

One of the key components to this resulting change arrived in 1983 with the publication

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<sup>276</sup> Angus, *Professionalism and the Public Good*, 26.

<sup>277</sup> James Conant, *The Education of American Teachers* (New York City, NY: McGraw Hill, 1963), 24-25.

<sup>278</sup> Wiseman, “How the World Learns,” Video.

of *A Nation at Risk*, the result of an eighteen-month study on the state of U.S. schools. It argued that schools were sliding toward mediocrity because of the “cafeteria-style curriculum” that allowed [students] to advance through their schooling with minimal effort,” leaving them unprepared for the workforce, and urged schools to adopt “more rigorous and measurable standards.”<sup>279</sup> Instead of addressing these numerous concerns and working toward finding a pathway to elevate teaching to true professional status to achieve this, researchers began to attempt to develop ways of turning teachers into professionals within their own separate sphere of existence, separate from the larger professional community – a movement commonly known as the *professionalization* of teaching.<sup>280</sup> This effort has also largely proven to be unsuccessful.

The most famous of these initiatives grew out of the work of the Holmes Group, part of the Holmes Partnership. The Holmes Group began a series of proposed initiatives in 1987 that it believed could achieve the goal of bringing professionalism to teaching.<sup>281</sup> Ironically, their multitude of proposals seemed to reflect many of the same concerns, complaints, and frustrations with the constant revolving door of educational theories that were argued over at the TES conference in 1958. The initial proposal in 1986 was both simultaneously vague enough to sound important and yet gave little concrete detail to actualization of the plan. Among the actions it advocated for were ensuring teaching was intellectually sound, placing subject matter in a broad context of knowledge and culture, having a coherent sequence of courses that teach teachers how to present content in clear and challenging lessons, and ensuring future teachers are

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<sup>279</sup> Edward Graham, “‘A Nation at Risk’ Turns 30: Where Did It Take Us?” *NEA Today*, April 25, 2013, accessed on February 7, 2019, [www.neatoday.org](http://www.neatoday.org).

<sup>280</sup> Darrel Drury, “The Professionalization of Teaching: What NEA Surveys Tells Us About a Common Knowledge Base.” *Education Week*, accessed on November 1, 2018, [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org).

<sup>281</sup> The Holmes Group, *The Rise and Stall of Teacher Education Reform*. East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group Publishing, 1997.

challenged in the college classroom. It also argued for allowing differences in teachers' approach, skills, and commitment, while creating relevant defensible standards into teaching, and finally, and most nebulous of all, to make schools better places for teachers to work by ensuring administrators and teachers form partnerships.<sup>282</sup> In 1990, the second Holmes Group report called for improved professional development of teachers to teach for understanding, to create a learning community, teach so that all children can learn, and to prompt continuous learning in students.<sup>283</sup> By 1995, the call was for a teacher to be a person who was equally at home in the university and the public school classroom. Teachers should be "clinical professors."<sup>284</sup> Finally, by 1997, the Holmes Group found that the realities of implementing professional reform in American education was so complicated and difficult that it had not yielded to any one reform group's efforts to improve. The only solution to the issue would be found with all of the various agents working in partnership with each other. Elevating the professional standing of teachers, it seems, is so complicated, either from within the existing confines or an entirely new paradigm, that it becomes easy for researchers, teachers, educational theorists, critics, academics, and the public to collectively shrug it off. However, the vast majority of research and advocacy in the field of teachers as a separate enclave of professionals, has largely borrowed from and expanded upon the ideas of the Holmes Group.<sup>285</sup>

Exacerbating the problem is a lack of understanding on the part of the public of what accountability measures do and do not reflect. Educational reform efforts from the 1950s to the

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<sup>282</sup> The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group Publishing, 1986).

<sup>283</sup> The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Schools* (East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group Publishing, 1990).

<sup>284</sup> The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Schools in Education* (East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group Publishing, 1995).

<sup>285</sup> The Holmes Group, *Rise and Fall*, 1997.

present have given rise to a “failing schools narrative.” As the federal government sought to address the “ravages of segregation and unequal funding,” the public has fallen into the thinking that the issue is not with the larger society, but rather the failure of the teachers to compensate and overcome those problems in the classroom.<sup>286</sup> The public does not comprehend that accountability efforts and the increasing ease of comparing standardized achievement scores between schools tends to “indicate more about students’ backgrounds than about the schools.”<sup>287</sup> Tying teacher employment and school independence with the No Child Left Behind and Every Student Succeeds Acts to such measures has only reinforced such ideas. These programs compounded and made worse the issues first reported in 1983 in the *A Nation at Risk* report due to overreliance on test taking ability rather than student learning. These programs have given rise to an entire industry (e.g., College Board and Pearson, PLC) whose aim is the reduction of teacher autonomy by focusing on teacher standardization of practice and student measurement through the enforcement of testing and testing practice, and the fulfillment of Snedden’s vision.

Diane Ravitch (2003) argues that perhaps the quest for a perception of professionalism among teachers is akin to jousting at windmills. She believes that true teacher professional standing can never be achieved in America. Graduate schools that specialize in the educational practice, as in law and medicine, have not been developed. To do this there must be state regulation of the profession “that was developed in conjunction with leaders of the

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<sup>286</sup> Jack Schneider, “Why Americans Think So Poorly of the Country’s Schools: Are Public Schools Generally Meeting Americans’ Expectations? Or Are They Teetering on the Brink of Failure?” *The Atlantic*, July 17, 2017. Retrieved from [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com). Accessed on January 1, 2019.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com).

profession.”<sup>288</sup> This did not happen because of four telling reasons. First, education lacks a specific body of knowledge that future members of the teaching profession would be required to know and master, and this body of knowledge must show that those who possess it are more effective at teaching than those who do not.<sup>289</sup> Second, education lacks “well established, research-based standards and procedures.... In education, where pedagogues have debated what to teach, how to teach, how to test, whether to test, and which research methods are acceptable.... Teachers have received a constant din of conflicting signals from the leaders in the field.”<sup>290</sup> Third, teachers have historically sought to remove external examinations and replace them with their own credentials.<sup>291</sup> Finally, advances in the fields of law and medicine have shown to have proven, positive effects, and therefore doctors feel the need to continuously train, staying up to date on a growing body of information. Teachers, in contrast, operate under no such constraints, and their willingness to do so is highly individualistic.<sup>292</sup>

This, then, gives rise to what Troen and Boles identified as “The Trilemma Dysfunction” of the early 2000s. They argue that (1) not enough academically able students are drawn into teaching as a profession because of its poor perceptions of professional status, pay, and empowerment. This lack of quality applicants means that (2) teacher programs need substantial improvement because they are modeled to take less than ideal students into the programs, do not challenge students adequately, and produce mediocre teachers. The mediocre teachers then have professional lives that are on the whole unacceptable (3) because they lack professional status,

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<sup>288</sup> Diane Ravitch, “A Brief History of Teacher Professionalism,” White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers (speech, August, 23, 2003), paragraph 14. Retrieved from [www.Ed.gov](http://www.Ed.gov).

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, paragraph 15.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, paragraph 16.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, paragraph 17.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, paragraph 19.

pay, and empowerment.<sup>293</sup> Troen and Boles point out that of the candidates who apply to graduate schools, “those headed for education schools scored at the bottom of the eight graded fields – business, engineering, health sciences, humanities, life sciences, social science, physical sciences, and education.” This lack of preparation for the career that teachers are embarking on often meets the cold realities of the job. Ingersoll points out that his research has found that the shortage of teachers in America is not from a lack of people wanting to become teachers, but rather the result of a large number of qualified teachers departing from the profession in rapid succession, before their retirement.<sup>294</sup> The two major factors for this are the economic realities of the market place and the longstanding animosity between teachers and academics. As society has increasingly emphasized the need for education, the demand for teachers has constantly risen. In order to meet that need, states have lowered requirements, and universities have been forced to follow suit. As Troen and Boles point out, an education program that is 75% empty would not remain long on a college campus. Therefore, the universities are forced to largely accept those who come through their doors. Because of the low standards, those who too often do come in are there because they want summers off, love children, or want something easy as a career path. Academic rigor, educational development, and producing highly qualified citizenry are secondary motives, if at all. The other consideration that the authors propose is that the century long animosity between teachers and academics, the practitioners and theorist, who “seemingly harbor antibodies they have built up to guard against being infected with the other’s culture.” One side sees itself as being on the frontlines, and the other as the holders of sacred knowledge attempting to save unruly parishioners. From a purely financial perspective, there is

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<sup>293</sup> Troen and Boles, *Who’s Teaching Your Children*, 1-22.

<sup>294</sup> Richard Ingersoll, “Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis,” *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 499-534.

also no need for the universities to interject into this dysfunctional dynamic, because (echoing to the complaints of Susan B. Anthony) working teachers do not have the financial capital to demand better training or to give donations to the university to entice training improvements).<sup>295</sup> Additionally, requirements for certification are becoming nearly irrelevant. While some universities are actually increasing their requirement for certification, many others are taking a wait and see approach to how to address the plummeting base line requirements in a number of states. For example, in Georgia, Arkansas, and Alaska the requirements to obtain certification are minimal. In Georgia, a college graduate with a 2.5 GPA can take a skills test and complete a teaching “orientation” course, and they will be recognized as a teacher. An ever-increasing number of states now allow Teach for America candidates to enter into their classrooms, after they complete an application, interview, and three-week training course- and no educational background is required. David Labaree describes the Teach for America candidates as young adults from elite colleges lured to teaching for a year or two which “promised to be a great career booster that will pay off handsomely in future income and prestige.” It has an “escape clause [that] allows graduates to do good without major personal sacrifice.” Although trained teachers have experience and teacher education programs have knowledge, he points out that they “are in a hopeless position in trying to compete with Teach for America for prospective students.”<sup>296</sup> This is happening with no public backlash or outcry, and it is happening because so few are making the decision to become teachers. In short, the public has grown to see teaching as something *anyone* can do. Labaree furthers that, “As a group, teachers are too visible to be

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<sup>295</sup> Troen and Boles, *Who’s Teaching Your Children*, 47-55.

<sup>296</sup> David Labaree, “Teach for America and Teacher Ed Heads They Win, Tails We Lose,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 61, no. 1-2 (January 2010): 13-14, 48-55.

inscrutable and too numerous to be elite. They don't have the distance, obscurity, and selectivity of the high-status professions... Since we don't think those children are getting the kind of schooling they need, then teachers must be a major part of the problem. As a result, these teachers, too, are seen as needing more structure, higher standards, more incentive, and more coercion in order to bring their teaching up to a socially useful level."<sup>297</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The confusion over the professional identity of teachers becomes understandable when the events of the past are examined. From its earliest days in the United States, teachers were intentionally stripped of the societal respect, salary, and decision making authority by design based on ideas of gender, and subsequently social status. They lacked a guiding philosophy or end goal. These choices muddled the identity of what teachers should do and could be. For many in the public, and for teachers themselves, a sense of martyrdom took hold as a foundation of the job, if not its bedrock. They accepted that they should be paid less and held to unrealistic standards of behavior in their personal lives. They were not trained adequately to do the job that was expected of them. Mann turned to women to be teachers for many of the same reasons that the poor were used in Germany. It benefited the greater society, allowed for some degree of improved social standing, but did not actually threaten the preexisting social order. During the Progressive Era, when efforts to change teaching into a true profession in the eyes of the public were made, a debate arose as to how to best approach the endeavor. The identity of teachers was torn between allowing them to exercise their own judgement or interpret data as they follow a predetermined and pre-prescribed curriculum. Further efforts to improve the standing of

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<sup>297</sup> David Labaree, "Teach for America and Teacher Ed: Heads They Win, Tails We Lose," *Journal of Teacher Education* 61, no. 1-2 (January 2010): 13-14, 48-55.

teachers only resulted in infighting between the various educational factions in society, and allowed those outside the classrooms to belittle the job that teachers do.

The act of teaching has become disconnected with the reputation of teachers in the public's mind. Although teaching is held up as prestigious in society, in theory, at least, the majority of society also believes that teachers are not respected, are not particularly well trained, and they demand "highly qualified" teachers in classrooms, thereby assuming that teachers are not ordinarily qualified to do their jobs – highly or otherwise.

Although often unspoken and unacknowledged today, these ideas continue to shape the professional standing of teachers in America. Yet, is remarkable to trace the very different journeys of teachers as professionals in Germany and America, only to find the striking similarities as to where they currently stand. Both struggle with being seen as members of the professional class, have seen their training requirements and expectations change greatly, and yet their financial compensations seems woefully inadequate. Perhaps German teachers have struggled the most, overcoming centuries of changing obstacles and expectations. By taking a step back, though, and looking at the bigger picture, certain common assessments can be inferred about the nature of teachers as professionals. If teachers are to be seen as professionals, in both Germany and America, they must have higher levels of training, the authority to do the job, and be compensated well to retain those in the classroom and encourage stronger candidates to enter into teaching.

Although German and American teachers were in similar positions, the foundational underpinnings of what it was that teachers actually did, could not have been more different. For Americans, the Twentieth Century had seen a crude, economic pragmatism arise in place of a guiding philosophy that Dewey proposed. This grew from the idea that education was not an

ongoing process that caused students to adapt and change to social and political realities. Education came largely to be viewed as an exterior process, and therefore was forever malleable and measurable. It was the teacher's role to develop those skills and to chart the progress of that development. As such, teachers did not need advanced training, only an ability to deliver the content contained within a predetermined curriculum and adequately measure the development of the student as he or she advanced.

The emphasis on problem solving stemmed from the American belief that the inherent value of democracy is as many people as possible must participate in problem solving, be it mundane or national, as this increases the likelihood of the approval for the solution, as well as being likely to generate the best possible outcome. However, over the course of the century, questions began to arise both from the general public and from teachers as to how education should be carried out (via Dewey or Snedden), what should be taught (subject matter or student interest), how it should be taught (student centered exploration or vocationalization), and what qualifications and training should a teacher have. Americans became increasingly confused over the very ideas and nature of teachers and teaching, and looked toward teachers themselves for answers. Unfortunately, teachers were unable to provide those answers because from the earliest inception of the American idea of what a teacher was, the concept lacked a solid core. As ever more questions arose, the role of the teacher and their need for advanced training came under greater scrutiny. Because teachers had never been allowed advanced training, salary, or authority they were not able to truly enter the professional class and they became easy targets.

In Germany, teachers became firmly entrenched as professionals both in terms of class and in the public's perception by the mid-1800s. Teachers built their professional occupation on the bedrock of *bildung*, and saw it as non-political and relatively undemocratic. The outcome of

*bildung* as education was not to be part of the societal collective, but to help develop autonomy of the individual. The purpose of education was an internal development that would transform the individual, and this in turn would transform society. Teachers were skilled developers. They were trained to perform this delicate work, and granted the authority to do so. In return, they were paid well.

However, as the century progressed, decisions made by the Weimar Republic, Nazis, Communists, and unified government began to call the status of teachers into question. Germans increasingly came to see democracy as dangerous because of the outcomes it could produce. Education was believed to work as a check on that danger, and teachers were important to creating citizens with a strong internal character to resist the social and political winds. Yet, that was not what happened. Germans blindly followed ideas that hurt the development of individual character, and in many cases, teachers led the charge, toppling the professional status of teachers in the process. In the aftermath, Germans sought out alternative pathways to prevent this from happening again and in the process rediscovered the *didaktik* tradition. They took its essence, but were willing to massage it, molding it into an approach that could work in the modern world. This new way considered the student, the content, and the greater world to develop within students a stronger sense of individuality, purpose, and being.

American and German teachers both exist at a crossroads. German teachers are looking toward the future while incorporating traditional ideas in new ways to restore a professional standing in the public's consciousness. American teachers, in contrast, are perhaps for the first time, rising up to demand entrance to the professional class. They are protesting to demand greater salaries, but have only begun to grapple with the greater need for training and authority that needed to be fully embraced as true professionals.

Now, in Chapter V, I will consider what could be possible when a nation intentionally decides to position teachers as professionals and fully empower them with training, authority, and a professional salary. I will do this by examining Finland that have embraced teachers as true professionals, as well as how *didaktik* and *bildung* could actually be beneficial in helping teachers to achieve this status in America by moving them from technicians to professionals.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I explain the failures of Germany and the United States to allow teachers' permanent entrance into the professional class. I argue that the accepted model has not kept pace with society's expectations for teachers. It has hindered their ability to become true professionals by keeping them fixed as technicians both in practice and public perception. Through the removal of *bildung* and *didaktiks*, the U.S. has largely rejected the notions of teachers as professionals with higher social standing and greater intellectual abilities/intellectualism. Further, the historical emphasis on gender has made attempts to change the current state of education or the standing of teachers, very slow. I then consider the example of Finland, and how it could serve as a model to both countries to show how teachers can become professionals and how doing so would change not just the professional standing of teachers, but also of teaching.

### **The Real Issue**

The view of teachers as professionals as laid out in this dissertation explains that they have essentially existed at the center of a conflict between "responsibility and accountability."<sup>298</sup> In order to fully understand how teachers have been long undervalued in society, with far greater emphasis placed on accountability than responsibility, it is important to examine the differences

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<sup>298</sup> Allen Pittman, "The State Asserts Its Voice or Accountability Supersedes Responsibility," *Reforming Teaching Globally*, edited by M.T. Tatto (Oxford, UK: Symposium Books, 2007), 97-118.

between technicians and professionals. The concept of technicians and the skills they possess as being separate from those of the professional arose in ancient Greece. According to Joseph Dunne, *techne*, or the skills or knowledge associated with the crafts and manual arts, were labor intensive, and not considered appropriate for the upper class.<sup>299</sup> They are “characterised as context-dependent, pragmatic craft knowledge and [are] oriented toward practical rationality governed by conscious goals.” However, such skills cannot “deliver solutions to complex contemporary problems.”<sup>300</sup> In its modern incarnation, means/ends, instrumental rationality or technical reasoning, has proven ill equipped to address the problems of modern schooling. As a result public and political opinion in both the United States and Germany has turned on teachers, and a relevance gap has emerged between the theory and the practice of education. The United States, in particular, in following the model associated with the Administrative Progressives over Dewey, reflects the national attitude that teaching is solely a technical, not a philosophical undertaking, thereby limiting teachers’ professional standing from occurring. Hibbert explains that teachers were taught to “disseminate materials” and “reproduce...received training, where information was scripted and delivered in a top-down system.” She argues that this process is removed from good practice and does not engage “practitioners as professionals and intellectuals.”<sup>301</sup> This managerial control focuses on productivity and output, both of which are obtained through extensive restraints on the methods and contents of schooling in the form of

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<sup>299</sup> Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: ‘Praxis’ and Techne in Modern Philosophy and Aristotle*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 1-10.

<sup>300</sup> Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, “Practitioner Reflection and Judgement as Phronesis: A Continuum of Reflection and Considerations for Phronetic Judgement,” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions* edited by E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman, (Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2012), 35-37.

<sup>301</sup> Kathy Hibbert, “Cultivating Capacity: Phronesis, Learning, and Diversity in Professional Education,” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and Allan Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 65.

pedagogy and curriculum.<sup>302</sup> Even the language used in regard to teachers and education, (i.e. “best practices”) implies that there are a series of steps or processes that a teacher can be trained to implement that will result in universal student success.<sup>303</sup> As accountability has been emphasized as an adequate tool for measuring teacher performance, the public, lacking a full understanding of the numerous factors that influence education, has increasingly negative views of teachers.<sup>304</sup>

In contrast to accountability is responsibility. Here the Greek term *phronesis* comes into play. It refers to what Aristotle called the “intellectual virtues,” or the “excellences of the mind.”<sup>305</sup> It is concerned with the open ended, contextual and moral problem of dealing with human subjects. Kinsella and Pitman explain that, “It involves deliberation that is based on values, concerned with practical judgment and informed by reflection.”<sup>306</sup> It is from this capacity that the concept of a profession evolved. Professionals make decisions with a degree of uncertainty. They can never guarantee what the outcome will be, but based on training, experience, knowledge, and insight, can navigate the challenges presented. This *aporia* - unresolved dilemmas and uncertainties- is fundamental to the nature of professional work.<sup>307</sup> Professionals, such as lawyers and doctors, make informed decisions to address this uncertainty,

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<sup>302</sup> Alan Pittman, “Professionalism and Professionalisation: Hostile Ground for Growing Phronesis?” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and Allan Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 137.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>305</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Boston, MA: Reidel, 1975).

<sup>306</sup> Elizabeth Anne Kinsella and Allan Pittman, “Engaging Phronesis in Professional Practice and Education,” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 2.

<sup>307</sup> Rob Macklin and Gail Whiteford, “Phronesis, Aporia, and Qualitative Research,” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 87.

but their “professional practice is characterized by the absence of certainty.”<sup>308</sup> This is the indeterminable aspect of professional teaching as described by John Dewey, which made critics like Snedden uncomfortable. Because the issues in education are so large (i.e. children, beliefs, national identity, etc.), the public wants teachers to be professionals because they recognize the importance and necessity of the work they do. Yet, they have been leery to grant them a professional degree of responsibility, fearful of the full power and influence this could bring. It becomes easier to assume that if a teacher remains a technician, and does “x” with a result “y” then the other problems that schools and society face will be just as easy to resolve. Unlike other professions, though, teachers are not given the responsibility to determine “y.” As Pitman explains, this has resulted in an inherent contradiction of increased surveillance and a reduction in a teacher’s authority, which has decreased professional status.<sup>309</sup>

Derrek Sellman points out an important confusion; the language of *phronesis* increasingly being applied to *techne*, especially that of competence and rationality. He argues that the technical, scientific approach to problem solving does not adequately address or solve social problems. Competency has come to be interpreted as knowing the steps to solve problems. He argues that it should be applied once again to the professionals who solve problems through exploratory practices. It is an exercise reconciling the adage of not knowing what one does not know. The process of education is the discovery of what is not known, but also the finding of ways to fill in those gaps in knowledge while simultaneously creating new avenues for

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<sup>308</sup> Joy Higgs, “Realising Practical Wisdom from the Pursuit of the Wise Practice,” Alan Pittman, “Professionalism and Professionalisation: Hostile Ground for Growing Phronesis?” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 73.

<sup>309</sup> Pitman, *Professionalism and Professionalisation: Hostile Ground for Growing Phronesis?*, 143.

greater, more meaningful learning. Dewey's ideas about learning through the use of experience and new challenges reflects this process. It is the teacher's role in the process to design activities that do this. As argued in Chapter IV, the diverse abilities, interests, and needs of the child, together with the demands of the situation and the multifarious goals of education render simple causal descriptions for teaching – “Best Practices” – both ineffective and inappropriate. In a very real sense, what Dewey is advocating for is the implementation of *bildung* and *didaktiks* into American education. When teachers are constrained from practicing fully as professionals, learning is limited, and society suffers.<sup>310</sup> This is what is playing out today in Germany and the United States. Teachers are saddled with the responsibility of carrying out the objectives designed for them by those in power. They are seen as lacking the professional capacity to guide the educative process.

The German and the American perceptions of teachers have largely resulted in teachers having a similar status despite evolving very differently. Both nations have struggled with what the role of what teacher is to be. In Germany, this idea was constantly shifting from instillers of national identity, to developers of the inner, true self, to state monitors and trainers in ideology in response to social class unrest and upheaval. In the United States, similar expectations have influenced the identity of teachers in ways to systematically deny professional status. Sexism combined with economic prioritization, though, have also revealed the absence of an educational philosophy that could have empowered teachers to act in the manner of true professionals. In both nations, the social reproductions that both systems have guaranteed, have blocked teachers from admission to the professional class and further hurt them by limiting their optimization as

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<sup>310</sup> Derek Sellman, “Reclaiming Competence for Phronesis,” *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions*, edited by E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman (Rotterdam, Netherlands, Sense Publishers, 2012), 115-130.

educators and as individuals, which has further led them to become the victim of attacks from those outside of education, and even caused them to turn against each other. Confused by insufficient student performance, the public blames teachers because it sees them as easy, obvious targets, while failing to grasp the larger societal, cultural, and philosophical issues at play.

In order to overcome these roadblocks to teacher professional status, teachers must embrace ideas from the past as illustrated when teachers in Germany did achieve and were recognized for their professional standing. The solution can be found by returning to the German ideas of *bildung* and *didaktik* education. *Bildung* is considered to be the process of the development of the inner being into a physical embodiment of a satisfied and fulfilled individual. *Didaktik* is the pedagogic art by which this process is carried out. This cannot be the technical means-end practice of Snedden's concept of the teacher. It demands the open-ended problem solving ability proposed by Dewey. What is best is drawn by the concept of phronesis. It also concerns the development of society. Taking the ideas of education from the micro (individual) to the macro (societal) levels, and conversely using knowledge of society to help develop the individual. *Bildung* is not only about the development of individual, but also of the society. The development of the person contributes to the development of the society. In essence, *my* development contributes to *your* development. Democratic society requires everyone to be fully formed and able to contribute. Dewey explains that, "The foundation of democracy is the faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience." Further, it is, "the best means so far found, for realizing ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and development of human personality." Its purpose is to allow for the necessity of "participation of every mature human being in formation of values

that regulate the living of men together; which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and full development of human beings.”<sup>311</sup> When the individual is developed fully, they aide society, and this allows for the greater development of others. This is the interplay of *bildung* and *didaktik* to bring out the inner person for the social good. The only way this is possible is through a reorientation of perspective, from the technician to the professional, for the optimization of the educative process and of teachers. This change demands insight and training that is only possible when teachers are fully recognized as professionals. Intriguingly, there are nations where this transition has taken place, chief among them Finland, and the change started by examining the issue of “competency.”

The term “competency” encapsulates the problem. In the last fifty years, it has increasingly been used as a term of art for the ideas of Snedden and their emphasis on standardization of education.<sup>312</sup> Klieme (1954) argues that each subject area must develop its own areas of competency to measure unique skills that are learned, and are measurable, ranging from basic to advanced.<sup>313</sup> Its emphasis is on skills in every area of the curriculum (history, math, science), but does not include ethics or ethical decision making. It does not allow for learning or application outside of a restrictive and predesigned context, and prevents broad application of diverse knowledge to solve problems. Even character education has been reduced to mechanical behavior, rewardable with tokens for good behavior. If the goal of education is to allow the recipient to have a well lived and rewarding life, regardless of background, then he or

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<sup>311</sup> John Dewey, “Democracy and Educational Administration,” *School and Society* 45, (April 3, 1937): 457-467.

<sup>312</sup> Rebekka Horlacher, *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: A Comparative Cultural History* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 124.

<sup>313</sup> Andreas Grushka “Education Standards or the Promise to Pick Educational Theory in Empiric Research,” *Company Bildung*, ed. Ursula Frost (Paderborn, Germany: Schöningh, 2006), 140-158.

she must be able to successfully navigate challenges that are presented through the use of applied wisdom, not rote based, specific skills. *Bildung* counters this and provides a broad base of knowledge to students.<sup>314</sup> Dewey's ideas about the nature of learning and the role of the teacher in that process folds *bildung* and *didaktik* ideas together in a way that creates a structure to allow students to learn skills but also to be prepared to apply them when necessary regardless of situation. Teacher training is currently what exists now, but teacher education is what is needed.

It is within this framework that the experience of understanding people and beliefs is paramount. In Finland, for example, the professional teacher is one that is trained to not only recognize these, but also to adjust learning to create the experiences and to design them in ways that are meaningful and educational. This interaction breeds a pluralism and forms community. It is not an absolute process, but rather filled with trial and error that accepts the existence of the *aporia* and works within it, both as a process and a place of comfort for the professional teacher. McPeck and Sanders (1974) argue that is done by allowing teachers to govern themselves as a group, and to allow individual members to exercise autonomy of judgment.<sup>315</sup> Teachers can then use this decision-making power to make increasingly complex decisions to navigate toward solutions via *didaktik* methods to achieve *bildung*.

When the teacher is not allowed to fully be a professional the teacher is trained to be a technician so that he or she can reproduce students with this mold, but are limited in their ability and authority to venture beyond it. Additionally, they are underpaid to limit their ability to agitate for change on behalf of their students or for themselves. To compensate for these

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<sup>314</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education, and Other Essays* (New York, NY, Macmillan, 1929), 30.

<sup>315</sup> J.E. McPeck and J.T. Sanders, "Some Reflections on Education as a Profession," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 8, no. 2, (1974): 55-754.

absences, education systems have turned to prohibiting the professional status of teachers by enforcing a predetermined curriculum and classroom materials that limit teachers' flexibility to such a degree that it often becomes rote. Historically, teachers have been used by those in power in both Germany and the United States to carry out those reproductions. However, as expectations for change in education have arisen, the technician defined model of educator has proven ill equipped to address those demands. As a result, the societies of both nations have turned on teachers, and teachers at all levels have lost a sense of social purpose. Dewey addresses this point, as well. He argues that inherent to democracy is empowerment, and that "the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, comes by use and practice...It is also true that incapacity to assume the responsibilities involved in having a voice in shaping policies is bred and increased by conditions in which that responsibility is denied."<sup>316</sup> When teachers are denied access to true professional standing, they are denied not only their own personal fulfillment, but also limit the development of their students.

The current professional standing of teachers in Germany has largely been shaped by two phenomena: the continuing problems that became clear after the division and reunification of the nation, and the current efforts to remove teachers from the civil service. With levels of respectability and scores on international exams falling, those in education have begun to look toward the past and to reembrace *didaktik* ideas. Attempts in the 1990s, to some degree, followed the models that were becoming popular in the United States. Approaches to teaching were being "organized universally" through standardized testing.<sup>317</sup> Yet in the *didaktik* mindset

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<sup>316</sup> Dewey, *School and Society*, 466.

<sup>317</sup> Holly Young, "What Can We Learn from the Great German School Turnaround?" *The Guardian*, November 25, 2015.

“every teacher is supposed to think and decide for himself or herself how to cope with [educating students]. That means also that every teacher has a *didaktik* of his/her own and their own individual ideas on pedagogical thinking.”<sup>318</sup> Inherent to this is the key components that teachers are trained and empowered. As Germany increasingly embraced its *didaktik* tradition, it saw test scores increase, but respect for teachers has declined.<sup>319</sup> The missing element in this professional equation is professional salary. It is not there, and schools have increasingly sought to lessen the salaries of teachers at the same time by hiring them on a contractual basis. When the state does not recognize the economic worth of the teachers, the opinion of the public follows suit.

The United States has chartered a different route. Teachers have never truly had advanced training through a guiding philosophy or theory, and they lacked an equitable salary for the work they did, nor did they have real authority within their classrooms. They never held a professional position within society. Teachers have attempted to achieve that through a movement that has come to be known as the *professionalization of teaching*. To be clear, I am not advocating an embrace of this, nor is it *bildung*, or Dewey’s ideas on education. It is an entirely separate field of research in its own right, and its qualities and merits can be discussed elsewhere. This is not phronesis. It does not allow the teacher to be a problem solver. The basis of the movement is an exploration into the discovery of best practices for teachers to incorporate into their repertoire to improve student learning through extensive professional development.<sup>320</sup> It is somewhat of middle ground position, that attempts to mediate between accountability and

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<sup>318</sup> Pertti Kansanen, “Teaching as Teaching-Studying-Learning Integration,” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 43, no. 1 (1999): 81-89.

<sup>319</sup> Peter Dolton and Oscar Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Varkey GEMS Foundation Global Teacher Status Index*, October 2013.

<sup>320</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad* (Stanford, CA: National Staff Development Council at Stanford University, 2009).

responsibility. However, this endeavor has not improved the standing of teachers as professionals. The vast majority of the public (80%) believe that teachers' salaries should be performance related.<sup>321</sup> Accountability is what people look for. Even if a historically broader view is taken and the larger goals of education for society are considered, it is not evident that that teacher can be held accountable. They are not empowered to question ideas and adequately lead children to the development of critical skills necessary for democratic participation in society. They are charged with teaching facts and acceptable behavior. Cochran-Smith argues that current measures, "virtually do nothing to address democratic values and goals."<sup>322</sup> Accountability is difficult to determine, measure, or even interpret. Society insists on accountability because it does not know what goes on inside of classrooms, and lacks an understanding of factors that are far more influential on student learning such as economic status. In the public's mind, there is no difference between student economic inequality and teacher ineptitude.<sup>323</sup>

Current methods of accountability do not *fix* teacher education. They do not guarantee improved teaching methods or student outcomes. They do not raise the perception of teachers in the public's mind. In fact, they "actively exacerbate the deprofessionalization of teaching, perpetuate social and education inequities, and undermine the democratic project" of education.<sup>324</sup> These accountability programs often consider value added measures that examine a teacher's ability to boost students' test scores. They typically link scores to teacher performance

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<sup>321</sup> Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Global Teacher Status*, 35, 49.

<sup>322</sup> Marilyn Cochran-Smith, *Reclaiming Accountability in Teacher Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2018), 3.

<sup>323</sup> Jack Schneider, "Why Americans Think So Poorly of the Country's Schools: Are Public Schools Generally Meeting Americans' Expectations? Or Are They Teetering on the Brink of Failure?" *The Atlantic*, July 17, 2017, accessed January 1, 2019, [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com).

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

and link teacher performance to teacher preparation programs. The other end of the spectrum of these measures examines a teacher's performance in extraordinarily vague ways, such as their ability to teach with "high standards" or teach in a calculable, standardized way. In the first they have to hit predetermined benchmarks that are often more reflective of the student's life and ability than of their efforts, and in the latter, their performance is determined by someone else's observation and interpretation of their abilities. Either way, both systems are inherently based on a mistrust of teachers who can be kept in line through external controls. These assessments ensure that the teachers will carry out the core values and standards that institutions of learning and states have developed for them.<sup>325</sup> There is no way for teachers to achieve any degree of professional standing when they are disempowered. This is the opposite of the *didaktik* ideas of teacher empowerment.

Teacher training, pay, and authority do not change the professional status of teachers by themselves, though each has been shown to have positive impacts for the teacher and the students. An increase in pay entices better candidates to enter into teaching. More advanced training yields more competent teachers with deeper understanding of the mechanics of learning and the educational process. Greater authority allows teachers to apply their training in ways that best impacts student learning, but also makes teachers happier and more fulfilled. Yet, the evidence indicates that a missing element is needed for teachers to truly ascend into the professional class: governmental support for the ascension to take place. Embracing these principles, Germany elevated teachers into the professional class roughly 150 years ago. However, since then, teachers have begun to fall out of that status to mirror something more akin to their standing in the United States. It remains to be seen if current efforts will return teachers

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 59-62.

to the standing they had prior to when the problems began.

### **Teachers as Professionals**

In a modern context, the issue can be evaluated by looking at the nation of Finland. There, the science of teaching *didaktiks* is a separate discipline, unlike in the U.S. where it has often been bound to educational psychology and its commitment to empiricism. In Finland, *didaktiks* largely holds a monopoly over both subject and contextual teaching. The arrangement is strongly intertwined with official state curriculum, and holds above all else, the relationship between teacher and the student. The teacher is autonomous in their work, unlike in the U.S. (where they are the moral center of the community, as discussed in Chapter IV), or in Germany (as state agents, as discussed in Chapters II and III).<sup>326</sup> Finland recognizes their abilities as phronesis and allows teachers to do their work with a high degree of aporia. In many ways, Finland has implemented the goal of *bildung*, through *didaktik* methodology.

In the 1980s, while the U.S. worried that its schools were sliding into mediocrity, Finland's students scored well on literacy portions of international exams, but in other areas scores actually were mediocre, at best. Throughout the 1990s a series of reforms were put into place by government agencies that not only radically improved the students' results, but also the position of teachers in the society. The new thinking about education heavily mirrored that of Germany in the late 1800s and West Germany in the latter half of the 1900s. It began by establishing a starting point that education is "a moral obligation because each person's well-being and ultimately happiness arises from knowledge, skills and worldviews that good

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<sup>326</sup> Hannu Simola, Osmo Kivinen, and Risto Rinne, "Didactic Closure: Professionalization and Pedagogic Knowledge in Finnish Teacher Education," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 13, no. 8 (1997): 877-891.

education provides.”<sup>327</sup> This is essentially a variation on *bildung*. The happiness on which the Finns are focused is to be defined by the individual, much like the German goal which is to provide the student the knowledge he or she needs to build or create the person they aspire to be.

The Finns also relied heavily on both general and subject specific *didaktik* approaches to the educational process. They gave their teachers tremendous autonomy in their schools and classroom by allowing the schools, and not the state, to determine the specifics of the curriculum. Teachers plan, diagnose, evaluate students, and are given time to carry out their work. No standardized testing takes place until students near the completion of secondary schooling, and a large number of services are available to help students who struggle. In fact, the majority of students in the Finnish school system receive some sort of special educational services (this includes tutoring and remedial educational services) at some point in their education.

This amount of autonomy is given to teachers because of the training they received in preparation for their careers. All teachers must attend a university and achieve undergraduate and graduate degrees, and must follow an extensive research-based course of study that culminates with a master’s level thesis. This program of study reasons that the teacher must have a deep knowledge of recent advancements in educational theory and practice, and must engage in their practice with a research oriented mindset.<sup>328</sup> They are trained to see their classrooms as laboratories where learning experiments are regularly carried out and progress is measured. Teaching is viewed as academic in nature and scientific knowledge of the cognitive

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<sup>327</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, *Finish Lessons 2.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2015), 1.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid*, 98-128.

nature of the abilities of students is paramount.<sup>329</sup> As Shalberg describes it, “the Finnish teacher education program represents a spiral sequence of theoretical knowledge, practical training, and research-oriented inquiry into teaching.”<sup>330</sup> This is largely reflective of the traditional training teachers received in Germany, and the antithesis of the subject specific, rigid curriculum guided, standardized testing focused programs in America.

Most teacher training in Finland emphasizes philosophy and theory. Universities are able to do this because of the quality of the candidate applicants. Teaching is a highly sought after degree, and universities carefully admit candidates based on a two-pronged testing process that involves written and standardized portions on both subject specific material and broader pedagogical theory.

Universities are able to be more selective because of the large number of applicants who desire to become teachers. In Finland, teaching is considered “an independent high profession that enjoys public respect and praise.”<sup>331</sup> The advanced training teachers must complete at university is viewed as a positive in Finnish society because it sustains this positionality and that in turn, attracts high school students into the university programs. Additionally, the salary teachers receive for their work, is also a contributing factor. Although it is not significantly higher than other professions in Finland, and is only slightly above what teachers make in the United States, there are a variety of ways in which teachers can increase their salaries. Teachers’ salaries increase as their experience grows, if they work in a highly academic type of school,

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<sup>329</sup> Ritva Jakku-Sihvonen and Hannele Niemi, *Researched Based Teacher Education in Finland: Reflections by Finnish Teacher Educators* (Turku, Finland: Finnish Education Research Association, 2006), 261.

<sup>330</sup> Shalberg, *Finnish Lessons*, 118.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid*, 101.

have unique skills, and they receive performance bonuses for work accomplished together.<sup>332</sup> This differs from many countries, particularly the United States, where teachers can only truly advance their salaries by *leaving* the classroom and moving into administration, which is more akin to personnel management. Teaching, in America, is not viewed as a career that can be advanced through improved practice, but rather something one can aspire to move *from*, thus further lowering the status of teachers. In Germany, administrators typically continue to teach one class per day in addition to their administrative duties.

Tremendous gains were made in the view of teachers as professionals by the early 2000s. Teaching was a heavily sought after career, and one study found that it was one of the most admired professions in the country, ahead of medical doctors, architects, and lawyers.<sup>333</sup> In fact, Finns report more trust in their teachers than any other nation. Yet, studies also show that Finnish teachers hold a status in society that is remarkably similar to their American counterparts, and higher than those in Germany.<sup>334</sup> The status of teachers has risen dramatically, equaling or exceeding that of other professions.<sup>335</sup> The professional equality is strikingly different from the position of teachers in America.

The professional standing of teachers in society becomes an even more complicated knot to untangle when the economics of the country are taken into account. Pritchard argues that “in traditional farming communities, where the general level of literacy is low, the teacher has a high standing. He draws prestige from his learning and sometimes serves as an amanuensis to people

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 98-128.

<sup>333</sup> M. Litton, “Ykkössuosikki: opettajan ammatti/ Top Favorite: Teaching Profession” *Helsingin Sanomat*, accessed on July 18, 2018, [www.hs.fi/artikkeli/Ykk%C3%B6ssuosikki+opettajan+ammatti/1076151893860](http://www.hs.fi/artikkeli/Ykk%C3%B6ssuosikki+opettajan+ammatti/1076151893860).

<sup>334</sup> Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, *Global Teacher Status*, 35, 49.

<sup>335</sup> Pertti Mattila, “Social Class Still Reflected in Cultural Tastes,” *Helsinki Times*, October 14, 2011, accessed on September 15, 2018, [www.helsinkitimes.fi](http://www.helsinkitimes.fi)

who may be more used to wielding a spade than a pen.”<sup>336</sup> She goes on to explain that a teacher’s ability to confer that knowledge guarantees their status until the majority of people possess the same knowledge. When that happens, the prestige afforded to the teacher begins to go into decline, and in some cases a “mythology” may arise regarding a prior time when their prestige was even greater than it actually was. For most western countries, this does seem to be the case, including for both Germany and the United States, but there are certain discrepancies.<sup>337</sup> While it is true that Finland underwent a drastic economic turnaround in the 1990s because of the arrival of wireless technologies, it has a long history of high levels of literacy.<sup>338</sup> However, in the vast majority of countries, as economies have grown and the population has become more educated, even at a basic level, the social position of teachers begins to decline. As increasing numbers of people perceive themselves to have what teachers offer, their respect for teachers as skilled professionals diminishes.<sup>339</sup> This seems to be the case in the United States. Because it has relied so heavily on vocationalized, skills based education, and not on the development of individuals, it has allowed its citizens to come to the conclusion that a basic education equates to mastery instead of mastery being defined as continuous learning and self-development.

When people have learned to read, write, and understand basic mathematical principles, it becomes easy to be dismissive of teachers because, for the most part, they are seen as no longer having any specialized knowledge. This then returns the focus to the United States and Germany, one nation without a guiding educational philosophy or clear end goal for teachers to

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<sup>336</sup> Rosalind M. O. Pritchard, “The Status of Teachers in Germany and Ireland” *Comparative Education Review* 27, no. 3 (October 1983): 341.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 341-350.

<sup>338</sup> Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons*, 18.

<sup>339</sup> Pritchard, *The Status of Teachers*, 341-350.

rely on, and another that struggles to redefine long held educational traditions in the modern era. One of the central problems in the United States is that its decision to focus primarily on the vocationalization of education has limited its citizenry's ability to understand and to test the logic of arguments. It fails to cultivate the ability to think (what Bestor calls "liberal education") and to think in painstaking ways.<sup>340</sup> The American education system trains people to work by focusing on lists, rote memorization, and subject specific content. It is an aggregation of facts as opposed to a clear way of thinking. It does not connect the student to the world. Today, teachers repeat the cycle because this is what they have known, have been trained to replicate, and what they are instructed to do by education systems. When students are sufficiently able to replicate these basic skills, it is easy for the student to see herself or himself as now being a peer of the teacher, and when someone is seen as their equal, it is difficult to justify their having a higher professional status or even a higher salary. As a result, when the student goes to university, they perceive themselves as now having surpassed the primary or secondary teacher because of receiving true intellectual training. Therefore, I contend that teachers in some regards, become someone who martyrs themselves for the greater good, and therefore, someone who is to be respected, but also to be pitied, and to a degree, taken advantage of through unfair wages, inadequate support, and saddled with unrealistic expectations.

It becomes harder to see teachers in the mold of technician when they are able to fully actualize their practice in the form of planning and implementing intellectual experiential exercises for their students that are not limited to imposed subject matter, but allow for the incorporation of a variety of disciplinary engagements. When the teacher acts as a

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<sup>340</sup> Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 1953/2016), 21.

knowledgeable guide and is seen to be the holder of expert knowledge, when they are defined by phronesis and allowed aporia, the student can be pushed into building on their prior learning in order to expand their body of knowledge for the purpose of self-actualization. What the Germans call *didaktik*, Dewey explained as pragmatic ideas about the role of the teacher, or even what Bestor refers to as liberal education, all reinforce this notion.

Linda Darling-Hamilton points out that when the five highest performing education systems from around the world are compared (Finland, Canada, Singapore, Australia, and Shanghai), certain important and familiar similarities can be seen, all of them revolving to varying degrees, around these core ideas. Teachers in these countries are “highly educated and empowered to make decisions about teaching for the best interests of their students, based on knowledge accumulated from their training and from what they learn about the wisdom of practice.”<sup>341</sup> They not only have content area knowledge, but also an understanding about the education process and student development, and they are allowed to observe, diagnose, and use their expertise to make judgements to address the needs of their students. This includes considering external factors from the community, as exemplified in West Germany, discussed in Chapter III. Furthermore, teachers are trained as researchers and leaders, and work communally. They are encouraged to share their findings with others, and are financially rewarded.<sup>342</sup> Although each of the five countries considered has a slightly different approach, they view teachers as well trained professionals who are skilled in the advanced study of *didaktiks*, even when it is not part of their professional vocabulary. When teachers are allowed to carry out their work as true professionals, unbridled by standardized testing and harsh oversight, students and

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<sup>341</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, *Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World* (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 2017), 31.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid*, 13-20.

teachers thrive. In these countries education is not about test scores, which are good, but focuses on human development and civic engagement. The latter does not seem to be much prized in American schooling.

### **Summary, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research**

The key difference in the perception of teachers as professionals in Germany and the United States is what each culture perceives to be the end result of the educative process. In Germany, teachers have historically evolved in their training to help students discover who they are through a process of self-discovery that the teacher guides with intensive planning of intellectual exercises: *bildung*. The historical record shows that there were challenges to this model, but when it was embraced, the German people had high respect for teachers and saw them as highly skilled, highly trained professionals, and their ability to do this through *didaktik* methods was evidence of that advanced knowledge. Whenever the state moved away from this, the status of teachers fell. In my research, I met two limitations that relate to this point. First, I am not a German speaker, nor am I an expert in German education. I would have been able to dig deeper in to the historical record and this would have been helpful, particularly with Chapter II. I was dependent on translations in secondary texts for this information. In a handful of situations, I sought out translations from native German speakers. Also, the German school system is very complex. In addition to the more traditional primary, academic and vocational schools, there are dozens of others that have been granted permission by the various German states to operate as experiments. Each has its own guiding philosophies. It would be interesting, and potentially useful to explore those to see the specifics of *didaktik* practices in play in different communities.

In the United States, education has never had a clearly defined philosophy. It has never

had one consistent goal in its educational efforts. Education is viewed as important for a functioning democracy, but that education must be more focused on development of the individual than tradition has dictated. Americans have focused on using education to prepare students for work that was largely skills based, and those skills could be measured not by interest or ability, but by standardized testing. Intellectualism was a notion that many associated with university studies, and not something the average person would need. Today, as more people have completed higher education, and the nature of work has changed, the traditional ideas of education have proven to be ill fitted, but the resistance to teachers evolving to meet that need remained. Allowing them to guide the student to learning through the framework of their environment was too nebulous of a concept for the American education paradigm. Without this authority, the standing of American teachers has remained severely limited. A clear pathway forward for teachers to truly embrace professional status is to train them with a goal (*bildung*), and a methodology (*didaktiks*). The historical evidence of Germany and United States shows that governments must ensure teachers receive advanced, research driven training in these areas, have the authority to implement that training as they see fit, and be paid in accordance to their efforts (and not outcomes) if teachers are to truly ascend into the professional class and to optimize the development of students as individuals and as citizens.

This is a significant shift in philosophy of schools and of what teachers do. In the 1960s and 1970s, schools moved to work toward solving social problems, and in the 1980s, economic problems. In order to save education, schools and teachers must reorient themselves again, to the reality that teachers must become part of the professional class. This process can only be made possible through state support, financially, but also in terms of regulations. States must do a better job of detailing the training that teachers receive. Currently, they see all training as being

equal and serving as resulting in certification. However, universities can vary widely in teacher preparation quality, and in the case of Teach for America or emergency certification, that training is nonexistent. Yet, each teacher will be certified equally by the state. Teachers must be trained in the concepts of *bildung* and *didaktiks*, and they must rise up to demand greater authority over their own profession. This can be done through increased self-regulation by working with the state to control the caliber of teachers that enter in the profession, oversee their peers, and have governing bodies to whom they are accountable, similar to the medical and legal fields. This, then, leads to my recommendations for further study. Not only should the mechanics of changing the American education system be shifted to emphasize the role of *bildung* and *didaktik* methodologies in teacher training and practice, but also to examine how perceptions of teachers could be changed in the public mindset and what impact that might make on the teacher professional positionality. They must demand to be recognized as having phronesis and operating in the aporia. Further, society must be taught to have a better concept of the nature of schools. It must move from seeing them as places that train people for work, to developing individuals who add to society. These changes are significant, but so is the size of the problem.

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