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Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Politics of Anti-Communism at Columbia University: Anti-Intellectualism and the Cold War during the General's Columbia Presidency (1948-1952)

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by

Dylan S. Cannatella

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Abstract

Dwight D. Eisenhower has been criticized as an anti-intellectual by scholars such as Richard Hofstadter. Eisenhower's tenure as president of Columbia University was one segment of his career he was particularly criticized for because of his non-traditional approach to education there. This paper examines Eisenhower's time at Columbia to explain how anti-intellectualism played into his university administration. It explains how his personality and general outlook came to clash with the intellectual environment of Columbia especially in the wake of the faculty revolt against former Columbia President Nicholas Murray Butler. It argues that Eisenhower utilized the Columbia institution to promote a Cold War educational agenda, which often belittled Columbia intellectuals and their scholarly pursuits. However, this paper also counter-argues that Eisenhower, despite accusations of anti-intellectualism, was an academically interested man who never engaged in true suppression of free thought despite pressure from McCarthyite influences in American government, media and business.

Keywords: Dwight D. Eisenhower; Richard Hofstadter; Columbia University; Anti-Intellectualism; Anti-Communism; McCarthyism

Introduction

A scholar at Columbia University once told the new University President Dwight D. Eisenhower that “we have some of the most exceptional physicists, mathematicians, chemists and engineers.” In response, Eisenhower asked if they were also “exceptional Americans?” Confused, the scholar attempted to explain that they were excellent researchers but Eisenhower abruptly cut him off—“Dammit, what good are exceptional physicists...exceptional anything unless they are exceptional Americans.”¹ This statement reveals one of the General’s personal and public attitudes he expressed at times throughout his career and was especially notable during his tenure at Columbia. Eisenhower’s critical and suspicious attitude towards intellectuals is characteristic of an ideological phenomenon known as anti-intellectualism. Colleen Shogan views anti-intellectualism, in the broad sense, as some form of fundamental opposition towards the acquiring of knowledge through the intellectual mediums of reason, contemplation and critical thought. The anti-intellectual, instead, prefers to acquire understanding through instincts, intuition, innate sense of character and moral sensibilities.² Richard Hofstadter defines anti-intellectualism as a general “resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life.”³ Thus, the anti-intellectual phenomenon is often expressed, both individually and institutionally, as disdain and distrust for intellectuals and intellectual activities and a pragmatic approach to problem solving. It is reflected through various spectrums of the societal milieu including politics, education, business, religion and the military.

¹ Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect (1890-1952)* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 469.

² Colleen Shogan, “Anti-Intellectualism in the Modern Presidency: A Republican Populism,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no.2 (2007): 297-298, doi: 10.1017/S153759270707079X.

³ Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 7.

When initially offered the presidency of Columbia by University Trustee and IBM CEO Tom Watson in 1946, Eisenhower replied that he was not the man for the job. He insisted that Watson and the other Columbia trustees would prefer his brother Milton, who was much more suitable for the position as a career academic and the current president of Kansas State University.⁴ However, Watson and the other trustees wanted the General in particular because it was believed that his household name could help in fundraising.⁵ Despite Eisenhower's initial disinterest, Watson eventually persuaded him to accept the position on the grounds that he could fulfill his duty in helping to mold the upcoming generation of American youth through a leadership role at such a prestigious institution as Columbia. However, Eisenhower dictated terms that he would have no involvement in purely academic affairs, no excessive social duties and would not be burdened by tedious administrative details. Instead, Eisenhower intended to devote his energies to "providing internal leadership on broad and liberal lines and promote basic concepts of education in a democracy."⁶ These terms were deemed acceptable by Watson and the other trustees and so Eisenhower succeeded long time Columbia President Nicholas Murray Butler as thirteenth president of Columbia University.⁷

Eisenhower's Columbia administration was unconventional in that it was not focused on the intellectual aspects of the university that comprised a typical Ivy League liberal education. Instead, Eisenhower attempted to run Columbia more as a military operation with the strategic goal of preserving and perpetuating the message of Americanism. Right before coming to Columbia, Eisenhower finished his memoirs, *Crusade in Europe*, regarding his experience leading forces in World War II. Columbia would serve as his next crusade for the perpetuation of

⁴ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 470.

⁵ Travis Jacobs, *Eisenhower at Columbia* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 51.

⁶ Ambrose, 471.

⁷ *Ibid.*

American freedom and democracy; a symbolic notion made all the more appropriate considering Eisenhower assumed his Columbia Presidency exactly four years and a day after the Allied landing in Normandy.⁸ Evidence also suggests that by 1948 Eisenhower was actively interested in the U.S. presidency despite his vocal avowals against any type of nomination. His efforts cultivating his seemingly apolitical moral sensibilities and “simple man” image attests to the notion that he strategically utilized his modest origins and status as a war hero to appeal to the American populist majority in a bid for the U.S. Presidency.⁹ This purposeful de-intellectualizing of himself in order to appeal to the common man and set the bar for leadership low so he could easily exceed it later was at the core of his “hidden-hand” leadership style.¹⁰

At the university, he employed a strict chain of command separating him from his faculty and supported the establishment of pragmatic and patriotic educational programs. He also promoted measures to prevent the spread of communism both within the university and outside of it. He saw his Columbia presidency as a part of his preeminent sense of duty to his country and saw his mission there to educate youths in the superior “American form of democracy.”¹¹ He went into the Columbia presidency with no illusions that he would contribute anything academically. Instead, he desired to run the university efficiently through advancing education in citizenship and supporting projects that could “help the educational world to improve and perpetuate the American economic system.”¹² This stance brought him into conflict with his

⁸ In a letter to Eisenhower’s childhood friend E.E. “Swede” Hazlett about his decision to accept the trustee’s offer of the Columbia presidency, DDE writes, “I explained to them carefully that I have lived 36 years in one idea and for one purpose and that as a result I had absorbed several simple conceptions and observations that would remain with me until the end of my days. From my viewpoint, going to Columbia is merely to change the location of my headquarters;” Eisenhower to Swede Hazlett, 19 July 1947, Robert Griffith ed., *Ike’s Letters To A Friend* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 40; Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 89.

⁹ Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982).

¹⁰ Shogan, “Anti-Intellectualism,” 296; See also Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand*.

¹¹ Jacobs, 51.

¹² *Ibid.*, 74, 82.

faculty who generally just wanted the means to freely engage in intellectual pursuits and train new generations of scholars. This conflict was exacerbated by the fact that Eisenhower was bringing his conservative Americanist agenda to Columbia in the wake of the extended presidency of Nicholas Murray Butler, who had already marginalized many Columbia scholars throughout the years with his ardent anti-communist and anti-Semitic ideals.¹³ Furthermore, despite his commitment to Columbia, Eisenhower's priorities remained with the interests of the Army and national security.¹⁴ This priority is evident from Eisenhower's statement after stepping down as Chief of Staff to assume leadership of Columbia that "I will never truly leave the army."¹⁵

Columbia University historian Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* earned him a Pulitzer Prize and is one of the foremost works on the anti-intellectual traditions in American life. The book embodies the historian's reaction to the intense intellectual and political turmoil of the late 1940's and 1950's.¹⁶ Throughout the book, Hofstadter essentially identifies how anti-intellectualism has historically played into various aspects of American society including politics, religion and education. He wanted to explain the logic behind certain socio-political happenings and trends of the 1950's such as the rise of McCarthyism and Eisenhower's popularity as both politician and president. However, Hofstadter's work also reflects a general resentment on the part of Columbia faculty towards Eisenhower because of his presidential predecessor and his "simple man" persona rather than his true views on intellect and education.

Colleen Shogan, agreeing with Hofstadter, asserts that Eisenhower's "hidden hand" leadership as

¹³ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 15.

¹⁴ Jacobs, 54.

¹⁵ Ira Chernus, *General Eisenhower: Ideology and Discourse* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 161; Eisenhower also mentions in the same letter to Swede Hazlett: "One of these considerations [regarding his acceptance of the Columbia presidency] was their clear understanding of the point that I would never really separate myself from the uniformed services of the country," See note 8.

¹⁶ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 3.

U.S. President began a trend of populist anti-intellectualism in the modern presidency. This trend became a staple in GOP politics and contributed to the rise of such presidents as Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and now Donald Trump.¹⁷ However, Shogan's analysis does not adequately address how Eisenhower's middle-of-the-road life philosophy, moderate political sensibilities and cooperative attitude generally precluded him from engaging in ultra-conservative, reactionary politics unlike some of his presidential successors in the GOP.

This paper examines how anti-intellectualism played into Eisenhower's approach to education as president of Columbia University. This was the first civilian political position he held after leaving the military in 1947. It was also his initial foray into the Cold War as a civilian official. It was at Columbia that Eisenhower largely developed his Cold Warrior persona. This paper will also explain the origins and agencies of Cold War alarmism in order to identify the pressures placed on Eisenhower, as a public figure and future potential U.S. President, to appear favorable during a time when anti-communist influences in government, special interest groups and the media wantonly defamed scholars and intellectuals as leftists, subversives or communist sympathizers. Thus, the heightening of international Cold War political tensions and the domestic reaction to these tensions weighed heavily on Eisenhower's mind and was reflected in his anti-communist rhetoric, loyalty policies, and emphasis on Americanism in education at Columbia. It will argue that Eisenhower's humble beginnings, his military upbringing and the political arena of the early Cold War guided his actions and discourse as the intellectual overseer of Columbia. This background motivated him to utilize the university institution to push through patriotic, citizenship-oriented educational programs that emphasized the values of democracy, loyalty and American progress over traditional scholarship and academia. Therefore,

¹⁷ Shogan, "Anti-Intellectualism," 296.

Eisenhower's pre-conceived notions of what education should accomplish as well as the restrictive and demanding nature of Cold War discourse influenced Ike to foster an environment at Columbia not wholly conducive to traditional intellectual freedom and rigorous exploration of ideas. However, this paper counter-argues that despite the pressures of the Cold War, Eisenhower generally remained true to his moderate political sensibilities and actually helped prevent the spread of McCarthyite anti-intellectualism at Columbia.

Background and Historiography

As Eisenhower was assuming his Columbia presidency in 1948, tensions in the international arena were heating up dramatically between the United States and the Communist bloc. Going back to the end of World War II, conflict had been growing between the US and the USSR over territorial disputes in occupied Central Europe, the Near East and East Asia. Before the Second World War had even concluded, Eisenhower himself helped fire up these brewing conflicts by ceding the initial occupation of Berlin to the Russians without consulting the Combined Chiefs of Staff, effectively marginalizing the presence of British forces in the area under General Montgomery.¹⁸ Later, during "Operation Keelhaul," Eisenhower helped repatriate over two million wayward Russian soldiers back to the Soviet Union where many of them were imprisoned in the Gulag or executed.¹⁹ These events, along with other concessions made by Eisenhower to the Soviets during the Allied occupation of Europe, became a source of much criticism towards Ike in the American anti-communist press.²⁰ These territorial disputes culminated, in 1948, with the communist putsch in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet blockade of Berlin in opposition to the Marshall Plan, which essentially kicked the Cold War into high

¹⁸ Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2012), 426.

¹⁹ Frank Kluckhohn and Donald Ackerman, *The Real Eisenhower* (New York: Columbia Heights Press, 1969), 43.

²⁰ Kluckhohn and Ackerman, *Eisenhower*, 43; Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 98.

gear.²¹ Finally, the West's loss of China to communism in 1949 further exacerbated the already turbulent international Cold War and perpetuated the prominent domestic backlash in the United States against anything or anyone considered sympathetic at all to the red cause.²²

In the U.S., domestic policies and a reactionary public brought the Cold War home. By the late 1940s, the actions of the U.S. government helped legitimize the anti-communist unanimity that set the stage for the majority of Americans to participate in or support the political repressiveness that categorized the McCarthy era.²³ The media colluded with the government during this time, disseminating and amplifying the government's message about the threat posed by worldwide communism. Anti-communism became pervasive as every branch of the U.S. government became involved with the cause in some form or another from the State Department and Congress to the Post Office.²⁴ Beginning as early as 1947, President Truman paved the way for an ardent American anti-communist consensus with the Truman Doctrine and his Loyalty Program. The Truman Doctrine was formulated in response to Soviet encroachment in Europe. It affirmed an unlimited commitment by the United States to "support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures."²⁵ Then the Truman administration used the communist coup in Czechoslovakia as grounds for launching the Marshall Plan, which aimed to rehabilitate the economies of Western Europe in order to establish an allied bulwark against the communist bloc behind the iron curtain.²⁶

²¹ Kluckhohn and Ackerman, *Eisenhower*, 51.

²² Günter Bischof, "Before The Break: The Relationship Between Eisenhower and McCarthy" (Master's Thesis, University of New Orleans, 1980), 24.

²³ Ellen Schrecker and Phillip Deery, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Macmillan Learning, 2017), 20.

²⁴ Schrecker and Deery, *The Age of McCarthyism*, 20.

²⁵ Schrecker and Deery, 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Truman's international diplomacy proved popular on the home front and contributed greatly to his reelection in 1948 much to the dismay of the Republican Old Guard.²⁷ This unexpected triumph of the Democratic Party led the Republican Party to rethink their strategy for taking the White House. Republicans decided they could not argue with Truman's anti-communist measures in the international arena but they could focus on the issue of communism at home. This led to the construction of the Republican myth that Democrats were soft on domestic communism and precipitated public alarmism over the notion that foreign subversives had infiltrated almost every facet of American life. As the Truman administration came under attack by Republican anti-communist slander, President Truman fought back with actions aimed at bolstering internal security. He inaugurated the Loyalty Security Program to create a mechanism for testing the loyalty of federal employees.²⁸ He also initiated the employment of criminal prosecutions against individual communists and began to reorient the focus of state security organizations, such as the FBI, around anti-communist measures.²⁹ Thus, the Truman Administration, under pressure from the Republican Old Guard, helped establish the preeminence of an ideologically conservative anti-communist security agenda that would rapidly seep into almost every aspect of American life, including education.³⁰

Eisenhower's tenure at Columbia (1948-1950) proved a training ground for the cultivation of his Cold Warrior persona. While his time at Columbia has not been covered in scholarship as extensively as other periods in his career, enough has been written about it to draw conclusions about how his Cold War agenda there fell in line with American anti-intellectual traditions as understood by Hofstadter. Firstly, this assertion that Eisenhower honed his Cold

²⁷ Bischof, "Before the Break," 23.

²⁸ Schrecker and Deery, *The Age of McCarthyism*, 21.

²⁹ Schrecker and Deery, 21-22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22, 36.

Warrior persona at Columbia is backed up by Günter Bischof's analysis of Eisenhower's Columbia presidency. Bischof explains that Eisenhower's Columbia years marked his acceptance of new East-West antagonisms and his slight discarding of his middle-of-the-road personal philosophy.³¹ Travis Jacobs writes the most extensively on Eisenhower's time at Columbia and explains how Ike saw his Columbia presidency as part of his duty to his country.³² Jacob's systematic analysis of Eisenhower's Columbia years also reveals how his career at Columbia gave him a forum for developing his political and Cold Warrior persona.³³ It allowed him a chance to educate youths in the "American form of democracy" and encouraged "the practice of true cooperation among foreign nations."³⁴ He also notes that Eisenhower wondered if his beliefs would fit in well with the academic world and argues that his general outlook caused contention with many scholars at Columbia.³⁵

Stephen Ambrose asserts, in agreement with Jacobs and historian Herbert Parmet, that Eisenhower was not compatible with the super-intellectual climate of Columbia.³⁶ He describes Eisenhower's educational philosophy as oriented around pragmatic and often political goals. And using Columbia to produce better citizens was at the top of his agenda.³⁷ This agenda aggravated many of the professors who saw Eisenhower's university goals as reducing Columbia education to that of a high school civics class.³⁸ Similarly, Jean Edward Smith comments on how Eisenhower did not quite fit in at Columbia and embarrassed faculty by making speeches about

³¹ Bischof, "Before the Break," 48.

³² Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 50.

³³ Jacobs, X.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁶ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 480.

³⁷ Ambrose, 484.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 481.

the primary importance of citizenship in education over intellectual development.³⁹ Thus, historians generally agree Eisenhower's outlook on education and his political maneuvering regarding the emerging discourse of the Cold War often alienated many of his Columbia faculty. He also subordinated intellectual freedom to his pragmatic agenda by primarily only using his influence to promote programs and institutions that could help perpetuate his crusade for Americanism.

However, while scholarship reveals that anti-intellectualism played a role in Eisenhower's Columbia administration, evidence also implies that he was never a virulent anti-intellectual by any means. Scholarly consensus has shown that Eisenhower largely subscribed to a middle-of-the-road philosophy in most aspects of his life, based on the values of cooperation, moderation and reason, which Eisenhower saw as being at the foundation of American civilization.⁴⁰ His moderate beliefs based on his humble upbringing in Kansas led him to be a moderate politician and statesman throughout his career. It motivated him to conciliate rather than engage in partisan bickering and allowed him to present himself as being above politics in general.⁴¹ Though Günter Bischof remarks that Eisenhower's time at Columbia represented his slight discarding of his middle-of-the-road philosophy in exchange for the polarized discourse of the Cold War, other scholarship illuminates how his moderate outlook still kept him above the political fray unlike the McCarthyites. For instance, Ambrose and Jacobs point out that Eisenhower never disallowed freedom of thought or speech and he even declared there would be no "intellectual iron curtain" at Columbia.⁴² Jacobs and Smith also mention how Eisenhower consistently spoke out in advocacy of free speech and academic freedom such as when he

³⁹ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 490.

⁴⁰ Allan Taylor, *What Eisenhower Thinks* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1952), 40-43.

⁴¹ Chernus, *General Eisenhower*, 90-91.

⁴² Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 484.

defended a Marxist study group's right to hold a conference with leftist speakers at Pupin Hall,⁴³ or when he stood up for a member of his faculty who came under attack by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI).⁴⁴ Eisenhower's middle-of-the-road philosophy was a powerful force behind his personality and it kept him from ever entertaining any true political repression or severe anti-intellectualism during his time at Columbia or any other period in his life.

Though it is apparent that Eisenhower's outlook, personality and the ideological demands of the Cold War influenced him to adopt an educational agenda contrary to the traditional liberal education established at Columbia, other evidence suggests that Eisenhower did harbor some appreciation for the intrinsic values of intellectual enrichment. Personal correspondence between Eisenhower and his close friend Edward "Swede" Hazlett reveal that Eisenhower was fascinated with the intellectual opportunities available at such an institution as Columbia and was grateful to be able to interact with scholarly minds of every discipline.⁴⁵ Eisenhower's intellectually affirming view presented in multiple primary sources is backed up by scholarship about certain aspects of his past. Both Allan Taylor and Jean Edward Smith write fairly extensively on how Eisenhower came to be known as a "brain worker," or a skilled technocrat and academician, within the U.S. Army.⁴⁶ This inconsistency over Eisenhower's views on intellect can be partially rectified by sources from the published *Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers*.

Correspondence from the *Eisenhower Papers* reveals that some of the patriotic educational programs and reforms sponsored by Eisenhower at Columbia were part and parcel of a larger Cold War agenda that he did not mastermind. These correspondences demonstrate that

⁴³ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 96; Smith, *Eisenhower*, 474.

⁴⁴ Smith, 491.

⁴⁵ Eisenhower to E.E. Hazlett, 24 Feb. 1950, Ambrose/Dwight D. Eisenhower Collection (MSS 153), Louisiana and Special Collections, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans; Also see Griffith, *Ike's Letters*, 70-71.

⁴⁶ See Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 12-20; also see Smith, 28-91.

many highly influential people in American government and business, such as John D. Rockefeller III and George C. Marshall, took great interest in Eisenhower's Columbia presidency and pledged money and support for him to actively pursue his education in citizenship initiatives.⁴⁷ Furthermore, allegations lobbied against Columbia by the anti-communist press and anti-communist government organizations, such as the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), often frustrated Eisenhower and prompted him to react in a way that showcased his patriotism at the expense of his faculty. Eisenhower's attempts to cover all his bases regarding the new pervasive discourse of anti-communism were especially important for him to remain above reproach as a national figure and an up-and-coming politician. Through an analysis of these primary sources in conjunction with various histories of Eisenhower's life and time at Columbia, this paper will argue that Eisenhower's subordination of intellect at Columbia was influenced not only by his own preconceived notions of the role of ideas in American Cold War society but by powerful anti-communist forces in American life. It will also explain how Eisenhower's Columbia agenda was viewed harshly by faculty because of previous issues they had with President Butler. Thus, it will connect the dots between Hofstadter's seminal work on historical anti-intellectualism and Eisenhower's early rise to the top of American politics.

Anti-Intellectualism and the Construction of Americanism

This analysis of how anti-intellectualism played into Eisenhower's Columbia presidency will be facilitated throughout this paper by Hofstadter's historical theories presented in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Hofstadter's book not only explains how anti-intellectualism played into the construction of the ideology of Americanism but also directly corresponds to

⁴⁷ Eisenhower to William Fletcher Russell, 9 March 1950, in *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: Columbia University*, ed. Louis Galambos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 11: 1007.

Eisenhower's educational and political agenda as Columbia University president.⁴⁸ As a young professor at Columbia during Eisenhower's tenure there, Hofstadter witnessed first-hand how Eisenhower's priorities did not always fit well with the primary educational goals of such a prestigious institution of higher learning. Hofstadter's book is divided into three sections, focused on how the anti-intellectual phenomenon is expressed as evangelical anti-rationalism, American populism/anti-elitism, and unreflective instrumentalism, or the notion that intellect is only valuable if it can be used to accomplish clear pragmatic goals.⁴⁹ Hofstadter explains, throughout the book, how these interrelated concepts have translated into anti-intellectualism in American history in an attempt to mirror the anti-intellectual forces that influenced Eisenhower as university president.

Eisenhower's agenda as Columbia president can be categorized as largely populist and pragmatic in origin.⁵⁰ While evangelical anti-rationalism, or the disdain for the established intellectual and philosophical doctrines of the clergy in exchange for the individualistic turn to spiritual subjectivity, was a focal point in the various American evangelical revivalist movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was not a powerful motivating force in Eisenhower's life.⁵¹ Though the evangelical tradition was certainly evident in some of Eisenhower's values such as his Protestant work ethic, his Pennsylvania-Dutch Mennonite heritage, his extolling of cooperative effort and his notable faith in the Christian God, Eisenhower was not by any means an exceptionally religious man.⁵² His humble beginnings and his time in the military, however, shaped him into a populist patriot and a pragmatic doer rather

⁴⁸ See Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*.

⁴⁹ Daniel Rigney, "Three Kinds of Anti-Intellectualism: Rethinking Hofstadter," *Sociological Inquiry* 61, no. 4 (1991): 434-451.

⁵⁰ See Shogan, "Anti-Intellectualism," 296-297.

⁵¹ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 57; Also see Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 9-28.

⁵² See Ambrose.

than a philosopher of any kind. At Columbia, his populist leanings and patriotic sense of duty influenced his anti-communist actions and drove his emphasis on citizenship education.

Similarly, his pragmatism drove his desire to focus on Columbia's role as a leading national institution that could produce valuable members of the American political economy and cooperate to help solve many of the nation's socio-political and economic issues.

On the Impractical and Subversive Nature of Intellect

Eisenhower's populist political traditions were not exclusive to him but part of a larger American tradition of anti-elitism, patriotism, alarmism and xenophobia. Beginning at least as far back as the post-Revolutionary era, there was a fervent political backlash against the elite intelligentsia engaged in high politics at the time. During and right after the Revolution, American politics was mainly led by a learned patrician class. Most of the Founding Fathers themselves were intellectuals and men of broad cultivation who used their wide understanding of history, politics, law and science to solve the exigent problems of their day. Intellectual leaders such as John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin and George Wythe were considered sages of American democracy and were extolled for their insights and scholarly acumen.⁵³ However, this rule by the patrician elite was quickly supplanted by a populist democracy when internal political strife and external threats, such as the fallout from the French Revolution, caused extreme divisiveness among the original leaders of the United States.⁵⁴

Thomas Jefferson, in particular, became one of the first victims of anti-intellectual reprisal in politics. When it appeared that Jefferson might succeed George Washington as

⁵³ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 145.

⁵⁴ Hofstadter, 146.

president in 1796, Jefferson's opponents within the Federalist Party criticized him as being unfit for the presidency. His opponents asserted that Jefferson's abstract philosophical theories and doctrinaire leadership would be impractical in American politics.⁵⁵ They also implied that his affinity for the life of the mind (as well as his non-existent military contributions to the Revolution) revealed his lack of moral character and patriotism, his potential demagoguery, and his subscription to dangerous, foreign philosophical doctrines. They particularly used his interest in French Revolutionary doctrines against him in asserting that he was an orchestrator of the French Revolution and secretly desired to become a dictator like Bonaparte.⁵⁶ The criticisms leveled against Jefferson for his devotion to the life of the mind became a populist anti-intellectual staple in American politics specifically since the Jacksonian era that was still very much alive during Eisenhower's time. The notion that intellect was impractical in American life certainly weighed into Eisenhower's emphasis on citizenship, programs geared towards American progress, and practical courses of study as being of primary importance over traditional scholarly subjects at Columbia. Furthermore, the emphasis on anti-communism in education that blossomed out of the McCarthy era directly corresponds to the precedent for attributing the life of the mind and those who represent it with foreign subversion established during the post-Revolutionary period. Thus, intellectual pursuits came to represent the other in American life.

Intellectual Pragmatism and the Conceptualization of the Brain Trust

After being relegated to a superfluous role in American politics since at least the Jacksonian period, intellect came to be considered valuable again during the Progressive era of

⁵⁵ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 146-147.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

the early twentieth century. Before the age of progress, intellect was seen as a hindrance to the political process. Intellectual politicians were seen as weak, ineffective, indecisive and effeminate if not also subversive.⁵⁷ This changed with Theodore Roosevelt's rise to power in American politics. Theodore Roosevelt was a man of privileged background but he was also a pioneer and a patriot. He owned ranches in the American West and was known for his love of hunting and other masculine endeavors. His valor in the Spanish-American War leading the Rough Riders brigade further solidified his image as a capable, patriotic and masculine leader who was also intellectually inclined. He was also a pragmatist and urged Americans to commit themselves to practical causes in politics.⁵⁸ His persona not only helped dispel the myth of the ineptitude of the elite intelligentsia but also paved the way for Progressivism by demonstrating the intellectual had a useful part to play in the advancement of the nation.⁵⁹

The utility of intellect became the major theme of the Progressive era with the rise of the expert in politics. As American industry became increasingly complex and urbanized the need for expertise in order to mobilize and direct such development grew exponentially. American politics came to see the intellectual as a useful tool for the progress of the state. This new outlook on intellect led many political reformers to merge intellectual expertise with political goals in the form of a brain trust.⁶⁰ The idea of the brain trust was initially conceptualized by Governor Robert M. La Follete of Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century. La Follete believed that universities could be utilized efficiently by the state in order to solve various socio-economic and political issues that may arise. As governor of Wisconsin, he established a union between the state government and the University of Wisconsin. The university served as a politically

⁵⁷ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 191.

⁵⁸ Hofstadter, 192-195.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

impartial source for information, statistics, advice, skill and training that could be utilized by state officials for the benefit of the citizenry as a whole.⁶¹ La Follete's brain trust became the model for understanding the role of intellect and the university in state-building and would be utilized by many prominent leaders including Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower specifically attempted to forge a Columbia brain trust, with little success, with his American Assembly project.

The Americanization of Education

The convergence of anti-elitism, unreflective instrumentalism/intellectual pragmatism and education came to the fore in American life with the life adjustment movement of the early to mid-twentieth century, which was a movement led by reformers such as Charles Prosser to make education more practical.⁶² During this time, the notion that traditional liberal education was crucial to the overall development of young minds came under serious scrutiny by pioneers in the new field of psychology. Classical liberal education was seen as based on faculty psychology. The logic behind its efficacy was that the mind was composed of faculties, such as reason, imagination and memory, and by training these faculties through rigorous mental disciplines, such as Latin, Greek or mathematics, one could train the powers of the mind to better confront whatever real-world tasks faced it.⁶³ However, many experimental psychologists and educational theorists including Edward Thorndike and Charles Prosser suggested the faculty theory was flawed in that understanding gained through liberal mental disciplines did not transfer into other aspects of the mind. This meant that liberal academia effectively did nothing to strengthen the overall mental capabilities of a person but rather just filled the mind with pointless

⁶¹ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 199-200.

⁶² See Rigney, "Three Hofstadters."

⁶³ Hofstadter, 347-348.

knowledge that could not be put to practical use.⁶⁴ Thus, pragmatic science supplanted liberal rationale in the construction of modern American education.

Enveloped in this practical vision of education was the belief also that American education should reflect the values of democracy and the common man. Part of this process was distancing from the traditional liberal elite paradigm of European education to focus more on general utility and the moral cultivation of students.⁶⁵ This process began in the 1870s when educational reformers fought to universalize primary and secondary American education to break away from the class-based system of education in most of Europe. While this mission was predicated on creating an equitable educational arena for all students and not just a select elite few, it also led to the exaltation of academic mediocrity.⁶⁶ This universalization of education, because of its inspiration in democratic thought, also brought with it a tendency among academic administrators to conform curricula to American civic virtues above all else. This contrasted with traditional ideals of liberal academia that pervaded in higher education. So began the movement to disengage secondary education from its subordination to higher education. This process was facilitated by new federal institutions such as the National Education Association (NEA). It culminated, by the end of the First World War, in a reorientation of focus in public high school studies towards effective education in citizenship and training for vocations in American industry.⁶⁷

This trend of incorporating civic virtues and American democracy into education grew into a preeminent educational paradigm throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

⁶⁴ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 349.

⁶⁵ Hofstadter, 307.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 328.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 329-332.

Education came to mirror politics as the two notions became inextricably intertwined with the United States' evolution into a world power during the first half of the twentieth century. During times of political upheaval and unrest at home and abroad, the marriage between education and the American value system (Americanism) became increasingly prominent. Particularly, social revolution and the rise of communism along the fringes of Europe were viewed by policy makers and educational leaders as one of the leading threats against the American way of life.⁶⁸

This political and educational emphasis on anti-communism waxed and waned during different periods of American red hysteria but largely came to the fore around the dawn of the Cold War and the McCarthy era. Following the Second World War, the notion that high schools should function as factories for producing a strong citizenry, opposed to foreign ideological threats, became a central focus of the American educational agenda. This is evident from the NEA's statement in 1948 that schools should "indoctrinate our youth in the American way of life so that they know it, believe in it, and live it continuously."⁶⁹ Anti-communism further infiltrated the American education system through loyalty oaths imposed on teachers as well as through congressional committees, such as HUAC, which emerged on both the national and regional level in order to investigate suspected ties between educators (and other American professionals) and un-American or communist activities.⁷⁰ Thus, Americanism, or the philosophy of the American way of life, and anti-communism became one and the same and were streamlined through the education system especially during the dawn of the Cold War. Therefore, the stage was set for Eisenhower, as a prominent American figure, to fall in line with this educational agenda during his time at Columbia.

⁶⁸ Ryan Prechter, " 'The Highest Type of Disloyalty': The Struggle for Americanism in Louisiana During the Age of Communist Ascendancy, 1930s-1960s" (Master's Thesis, University of New Orleans, 2009), 1-2.

⁶⁹ Prechter, "The Highest Type of Disloyalty," 37.

⁷⁰ Prechter, 29.

Eisenhower's Early Life, Education and Career in the Military

Dwight D. Eisenhower embodied the American ideal of the self-made man.⁷¹ Hailing from the Great Plains cattle town of Abilene, Kansas, in the heartland of the USA, Eisenhower represented the last remnants of a dying frontier culture that still rang with nostalgia in the collective American consciousness. Growing up, Eisenhower's family had little means at their disposal as his parents had lost their inheritance on a failed business and were then forced to support their five children with Eisenhower's father David's meager ten dollars a week railroad salary.⁷² In the spirit of American determination, however, the Eisenhowers did not let bad financial luck break their will to provide for their own. They eventually acquired a farm and taught their children how to live off the land. It was on this farm in Abilene that Eisenhower learned the values of hard work, self-reliance, and initiative. These became his credos throughout his personal and professional adult life. However, this "simple man" philosophy, which was reinforced by Eisenhower's parents and the small town community of Abilene, also taught him to accomplish things in life there was only time for rigorous effort, dedication and single-minded focus, and little time for reflection, contemplation or introspection.⁷³

This "simple man" philosophy molded his character and provided the basis for his understanding of the deeper questions of existence, according to Allan Taylor. It instilled in him a pragmatic approach to life's major difficulties and affirmed him as a man of action who only validated ideas if they worked in a practical sense.⁷⁴ As Eisenhower grew up, his enormous capacity for accomplishment and his determination to better himself led him to feel underutilized

⁷¹ Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 1; for more on anti-intellectualism and the American concept of the self-made man see Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 253-271.

⁷² Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 17.

⁷³ Ambrose, 23.

⁷⁴ Taylor, 8.

and unfulfilled in small town America, so he set out to obtain a formal college education. Through rigorous hard work, studying with his friend Swede Hazlett, and networking, Eisenhower finally received an appointment to the prestigious West Point Military Academy where he honed his practical and academic skills and learned to be an officer and a leader.

At West Point, Eisenhower developed his sense of duty and service in addition to his academic and social development. According to Ambrose, on Eisenhower's first day at the academy he realized he was meant to be a soldier as he watched, along with 264 other freshman, the upper-classmen of the Corps of Cadets march past on the parade grounds in full dress uniform as a perfectly synchronized unit with the band playing in the background.⁷⁵ This regal sight moved young Eisenhower to embrace his chosen path whole-heartedly and so he set out to become a great officer. In the academy, he learned math, English and history, played sports such as football and baseball, and endured hazing at the hands of upperclassmen, all serving to thicken his skin and further instill in him the virtues of cooperation and determination. Eisenhower, having been a lover of military history from a young age, also immersed himself in the rich and venerated past of the West Point institution itself and was mesmerized by such sights as Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee's rooms and the field where George Armstrong Custer learned to ride.⁷⁶

More importantly, however, Eisenhower was indoctrinated into the military intellectual milieu, which viewed education as a one way street and discouraged questioning as anathema to the learning process. At West Point, custom generally dictated that there was no room for discussion or contemplation of methods of instruction. The academy taught that for military

⁷⁵ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 44.

⁷⁶ Ambrose, 45.

education to be effective students must accept what was taught to them without inquiry unlike in a traditional liberal arts college education. Conversely, Eisenhower's brother Edgar was attending Michigan State University at this time where everything was supposed to be questioned and nothing universally accepted. In contrast, West Point was centered on rote learning. The faculty emphasized English composition rather than literature and stressed factual history rather than historical inquiry. A decent essay at West Point was generally a logical presentation of fact rather than a critical or abstract analysis. Eisenhower's own course of study was narrow and technical concerned predominantly with basic civil and military engineering.⁷⁷ Rote memorization impersonated creative thought at West Point despite changing trends in higher education, which is likely a reason the institution was in decline at the time of Eisenhower's appointment there.⁷⁸

The intellectual environment at West Point shaped Eisenhower's pragmatic and patriotic values. Such mechanical clarity aided him to become a great officer and general but contributed much to both his strengths and weaknesses as a civilian official and politician. The educational philosophy of West Point not only subordinated individual intellect to collective growth and achievement but also viewed individualism as potentially dangerous. Most importantly, interwoven in Eisenhower's education were the concepts of dedication and duty to country, which guided his path throughout the military and into his civilian career. While West Point largely shaped Eisenhower as a man and a leader, it also made him susceptible to the military's prejudices, expectations and traditions.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 46-47.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 20.

⁷⁹ Ambrose, 52-54.

After graduating from West Point in 1915, Second Lieutenant Eisenhower employed his education as a staff and training officer for the Army. Eisenhower's first assignment was to the 19th Infantry regiment at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX, in September 1915.⁸⁰ At this time, the First World War had been underway in Europe for over a year and the prospect of American intervention had become an increasingly real possibility. Eisenhower recognized this potential outcome for the country and saw it as an obligation and an opportunity to rigorously apply the knowledge he gained from the Academy to his work in order to prove his merit as an officer and fulfill his duty to his nation.⁸¹ He was successful in this endeavor and was soon promoted to first lieutenant and transferred around the country as a training camp instructor.⁸² After Woodrow Wilson's request to Congress for a declaration of war against Germany in April 1917, Eisenhower was assigned various instructor duties, which eventually led him to his position as commander of the tank-training center at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, PA. Eisenhower, who was a tank enthusiast with great organizational skills, thrived in this position and helped make Camp Colt into one of the most efficient tank-training facilities in the country. For his accomplishments there, Eisenhower was recognized by the military for his talents. This eventually led to his wartime promotion up to the rank of lieutenant colonel. However, to Eisenhower's chagrin, his talents as a trainer prevented him from receiving any appointments in the field overseas and so his aspirations for valor in war were never realized during WWI.⁸³ Thus, Eisenhower's military career largely became centered on his abilities as an efficient instructor and staff officer. These abilities would later transfer to his role as head administrator at Columbia.

⁸⁰ Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 13.

⁸¹ Taylor, 13.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Between the First and Second World Wars, Eisenhower's prestige as an organizer and staff instructor continued to grow, affording him many opportunities to make his mark on the military. In 1922, after being befriended by Brigadier General Fox Connor, Eisenhower was appointed as Connor's second-in-command of an American brigade in the Panama Canal Zone. In Panama, Eisenhower proved his merit to Connor by tightening up discipline and improving the brigades overall tactical performance.⁸⁴ Furthermore, under Connor's guidance, Eisenhower became well versed in the theory and philosophy of military and political strategy. Connor exposed him to the works of such great thinkers as Plato, Tacitus, Nietzsche and Clausewitz. Eisenhower took a particular interest in Clausewitz and read *On War* three times (in stark contrast with his reputation for never reading).⁸⁵

Later, Eisenhower was accepted into the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth where he graduated in 1926 at the top of his class. Following his graduation from the General Staff College, he attended the War College in 1927. There he learned grand strategy and received superior ratings in all his subjects.⁸⁶ Then Eisenhower worked for the American Battle Monuments Commission in Washington, organizing data for a guidebook on American battlefields in France. This assignment earned him a commendation from General John J. Pershing, the commanding general of American troops in WWI. On assignment in the Philippines, he also helped establish the Army Industrial College and the Philippine Military Academy and assisted in writing the Commonwealth Defense Act during this time.⁸⁷ These accomplishments within the sphere of military planning and education earned Eisenhower the

⁸⁴ Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 16.

⁸⁵ "Dwight David Eisenhower: The Centennial" (accessed October 18, 2016), <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/ike/ike.htm>.

⁸⁶ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 80.

⁸⁷ Taylor, 17.

title of “brain worker” in the Army. They point to his intelligence, craftiness and industriousness in contrast to certain historians’ image of Ike as just a simple man from Abilene.⁸⁸

Eisenhower’s Ideology and Cold War Discourse

Eisenhower’s ideological predisposition is discussed by scholars such as Allan Taylor and Ira Chernus. Taylor credits the frontier tradition of Abilene with playing a crucial role in the molding of Eisenhower’s character and determining of Eisenhower’s responses to the greater questions of existence and purpose.⁸⁹ Taylor deduces that Eisenhower’s upbringing in Abilene made him a man of action who saw philosophic contemplation as a luxury in which he could not afford to indulge. He then explains how this disposition, along with endless dedication, a strong sense of duty and a willingness to always work hard, allowed Eisenhower to excel in the military as a sharp staff officer.⁹⁰ Ira Chernus attempts to delve even deeper into the mind of Eisenhower through an analysis of his discourse that systematically identifies and discusses the composite elements of his ideological underpinnings. Chernus sheds light on how Eisenhower’s discourse reveals a disposition towards seeing practical success and ideological commitment as closely intertwined in reality.⁹¹ Taylor and Chernus’s analyses help explain various motivations behind Eisenhower’s actions and viewpoints during his military and civilian careers regarding such subjects as communism, capitalism, democracy and education.

Chernus also devotes particular attention to Eisenhower’s Cold War discourse in order to demonstrate how the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War influenced his post-WWII career and presidential rhetoric. Chernus asserts that since the Cold War was a conflict in which

⁸⁸ Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 20.

⁸⁹ Taylor, 8.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹¹ Chernus, *General Eisenhower*, 7.

words and ideas were the main “currencies of combat,”⁹² it is reasonable to assume that the psychological effects of the Cold War on the United States’ leaders and the general populace as a whole are evident in most forms of popular discourse. Eisenhower’s discourse is no exception as he quickly and naturally assumed the role of Cold Warrior (despite the fact that he had previously advocated cooperation and compromise with the Soviets) after U.S. relations with the Soviet Union rapidly deteriorated after the end of WWII, and conciliation became less likely.⁹³ Chernus argues that popular Cold War discourse generally consisted of Manichean and apocalyptic elements dichotomized alongside a realist agenda, which served to arouse a nervous and reactionary populace and rally support for security actions.⁹⁴ Eisenhower’s particular brand of discourse, which was influenced by his experience in WWII, utilized this paradigm effectively and was often heavy-handed on the apocalyptic aspects, which earned him the nick name “Alarmist Ike” in the military.⁹⁵ Thus, Eisenhower’s Cold War discourse, which was coming to the fore in 1947 and 1948, naturally transferred over into his administration at Columbia.

Anti-Intellectualism in Eisenhower’s Columbia Presidency

As soon as Eisenhower became president of Columbia University in 1948, he set out to reorganize aspects of the establishment there for the sake of efficiency and political maneuvering. Firstly, he had the University President’s House at 60 Morningside Drive in Ossining, NY completely renovated and remodeled at great expense to Columbia. While the Columbia community assumed the newly refurbished four-story building would be utilized for university functions, Eisenhower disappointed many by using the house primarily for his own

⁹² Chernus, *General Eisenhower*, 11.

⁹³ Chernus, 69-70.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

leisure and entertaining his rich and powerful friends.⁹⁶ He also utilized the assistance of administrative aides Kevin McCann and Major Robert Schulz to help organize the office of the president. With Schulz and McCann as his lieutenants, Eisenhower created a military-style hierarchical pecking order that kept him from directly engaging his staff and took many of the day-to-day presidential duties out of his hands.

This aggravated other members of the administration such as former Acting President Frank Fackenthal who saw this disconnect between the university and the president's office as inconvenient and problematic: "It is desirable that you be familiar with what goes over the President's desk [Fackenthal to the provost]." Fackenthal saw this development as a "tactical mistake" and implied that the General's assistants did not understand how to properly aid a university president: "They were still protecting a world figure, instead of putting him into a new community."⁹⁷ Administration and faculty were also displeased at Eisenhower's over-reliance on Provost Albert C. Jacobs as a proxy when he could not or would not attend various university functions and events.⁹⁸ This detachment demonstrated, to many in the faculty, the General's lack of interest in connecting with the university and engaging in academic affairs, which led some of them to resent his administration.

Eisenhower's discourse and agenda at Columbia also tended to marginalize his faculty as it belittled their devotion to scholasticism in favor of emphasizing the Americanization of education. One of the major topics of Eisenhower's discourse at this time was progress and, in the spirit of Rooseveltian utilitarianism, he set out to remake Columbia as an institution focused

⁹⁶ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 83-84; for more on Eisenhower's wealthy group of conservative socialite friends known as the "gang" see Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 476-478.

⁹⁷ Jacobs, 86.

⁹⁸ See Jacobs.

on producing valuable experts and researchers for the American political economy.⁹⁹ Though this focal point of Eisenhower's Columbia presidency was not a position that could be considered categorically anti-intellectual, his work at the university reflected the single-minded industriousness and appreciation of cooperative effort that had directed his youthful achievements and career in the Army. It also demonstrated his tendency to look for the fruits of intellectualism through a predominantly pragmatic gaze.

At the core of his efforts was adopting an anti-communist/patriotic educational agenda at the university that emphasized loyalty and citizenship as paramount. These values guided his administrative actions and discourse throughout his Columbia tenure, often to the chagrin of faculty who, at times, felt questioned and marginalized by Eisenhower's focus on patriotism. These values were also consistent with Eisenhower's tendency towards alarmism over potential subversion as well as the preeminence he placed in duty to his country, traits he largely developed during his military education and career. They also reflected the turning tides in post-WWII global affairs that brought on a new national Cold War discourse based on paranoia and alarm and obsessed with loyalty and patriotism. Leading national figures such as Eisenhower had to subscribe to this discourse and participate in its perpetuation in order to remain relevant and unquestionable in character. This Cold Warrior stance on education was viewed negatively by most intellectuals at Columbia.

Finally, Eisenhower's induction into the Columbia community came at a time when tensions were already running high because of the faculty revolt against Nicholas Murray Butler's domineering and hardline conservative approach to governing the university. Butler was a staunch anti-communist, an anti-Semite, and a right-wing crusader for American patriotism

⁹⁹ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 482.

who had presided over Columbia for nearly half a century (1902-1945). Though he was, himself, a PhD scholar, he was more a pragmatic man of action than a man of contemplation. He devoted his time and energy to establishing professionalized organizations at Columbia, such as the Teachers College, rather than fostering ideas.¹⁰⁰ He also had very limited tolerance for intellectual criticism of the U.S. government or the American way of life on Columbia campus. During the First World War, Butler terminated multiple professors for criticizing the war effort including economics instructor Leon Fraser and psychology professor J. McKeen Cattell.¹⁰¹ Later, in 1933, he invited Nazi ambassador to the U.S., Hans Luther, to speak at Columbia despite enormous protest on campus from anti-fascist and socialist contingents in both the faculty and student body. This event turned violent when campus police proceeded to beat protesters who refused to move back from the perimeter and allow the meeting to commence.¹⁰² Events such as these demonstrated Butler's willingness to quell dissent and suppress free speech and free thought by any means necessary. His presence at Columbia agitated and alienated many scholars including PhD student Richard Hofstadter who referred to him as "vain and imperious."¹⁰³ His legacy set the stage for Eisenhower, who came to Columbia with a slightly conservative Americanist vision of what education should accomplish, to be crucified as a contiguous symbol of unchecked university authority.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Whittemore, "Nicholas Murray Butler and the Teaching Profession," *History of Education Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1961): 22-23, doi:10.2307/366924.

¹⁰¹ Stephen C. Lerner, "Butler Battled Professors During World War I," *Columbia Daily Spectator*, November 14, 1958 (accessed March 31, 2017), <http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu>.

¹⁰² Dorian Bon, "Radical Columbia," *Socialist Worker.org*, Sept. 8, 2016, <https://socialistworker.org/2016/09/08/radical-columbia>.

¹⁰³ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 15.

Eisenhower's Citizenship Education Crusade

Eisenhower's inaugural address at Columbia set the stage for his presidential agenda and demonstrated how anti-intellectualism would play into his administration. Immediately, his rhetoric is reminiscent of a rousing wartime speech on the exceptionalism of democracy. It did not address Columbia's role as an institution of free intellectual learning and exploration. Instead, Eisenhower extolled the university's supposed role as a mold of American citizens. He beseeched the university community to fulfill its duty to America by cooperating in unison for the betterment of the American nation especially in the face of hostile, opposing ideologies.¹⁰⁴ Early on in his inaugural speech, Eisenhower compared educators to soldiers and stated that the fundamental purpose of both categories was "the protection and perpetuation of basic human freedoms."¹⁰⁵ He went on to explain that these freedoms were under attack by the rising tide of "regimented statism." He argued that education's primary goal was to orient young minds to the values of American democracy: "All must be joined in a common profession—that of democratic citizenship; every institution within our national structure must contribute to the advancement of this profession." At the core of his statement was the notion that democratic citizenship's "perpetuation and proper use is the first function of our education system."¹⁰⁶ Eisenhower's focus on the supreme importance of democracy and citizenship within the American system of education demonstrated his Americanist viewpoint that the central purpose of learning was to better understand and contribute to the collective American way of life.

¹⁰⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Notes for the President's Address," *Columbia Daily Spectator*, October 12, 1948 (accessed November 16, 2016), <http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Eisenhower's extolling of the virtues of American citizenship and democracy in his inaugural address was confirmed in much of his private correspondence and played a central role in his Columbia agenda. In a letter to Senator Arthur Capper (R-KS), he explained: "In my inaugural address I took the subject of "Democratic Citizenship" because I felt I'd like to be four-square before the educational world, and the public, as a believer in the American System—*that to combat destructive "isms" was the one remaining public purpose of my life* [author's emphasis]."¹⁰⁷ Eisenhower's inaugural address and subsequent correspondence with Senator Capper revealed the ideological undertones of the post-WWII/Cold War arena and is consistent with Eisenhower's patriotic sense of duty as well as his alarmist world view that every facet of free American society was at war with the totalitarianism prevailing abroad. The notion that Eisenhower saw his final public purpose in *combating destructive "isms"* demonstrated his view that education can be utilized as a weapon against harmful ideologies, particularly communism. Eisenhower's emphasis on democratic citizenship in education as a way to preserve American freedom and combat oppositional ideologies became a major focal point of his administration.

Eisenhower was inspired to undertake this crusade for citizenship by his experience leading GIs in the Second World War. On the eve of the American invasion of North Africa in 1942, Eisenhower wrote to a friend at Fort Leavenworth:

The Allied cause is completely bound up with the rights and welfare of the common man. You must make certain that every GI realizes that the privileged life he has led is under direct threat. His right to speak his own mind, to engage in any profession of his own choosing, to belong to any religious denomination, to live in any locality where he can support himself and his family, and to be sure of fair treatment when he might be accused of any crime—all of these would disappear if the Nazis win this war.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Eisenhower to Arthur Capper, 27 Nov. 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 328.

¹⁰⁸ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 74-75.

Eisenhower's belief that the Allied cause was based on the virtues of American populist democracy emphasized the critical importance of democratic citizenship in his mind. According to Eisenhower's friend and Dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Business, Phillip Young, Ike later took the notion of championing democratic citizenship to heart while leading troops in Europe as Supreme Allied Commander. Young recalls Eisenhower told him that during pep talks with groups of GI's, he was consistently asked the question, "General, what are we fighting for, anyway?"¹⁰⁹ Eisenhower struggled with this question throughout his time in the War but he eventually embraced the belief that democratic citizenship was the only true answer. Through exposing the masses to the inclusive and fair system of democratic citizenship, the appeal of regimented statism and totalitarian rule would cease to exist. Young surmised that Eisenhower's notion of democratic citizenship as the key to battling global tyranny weighed heavily on his decision to accept the offer made to him for the Columbia presidency. Columbia presented Eisenhower with the chance to continue his duty to his country and, in the words of Young, "get across to the youths of America what it all meant."¹¹⁰

One of the major ways Eisenhower fulfilled his duty to press forward with his citizenship initiative at Columbia was through the Citizenship Education Project (CEP). This project, for which Eisenhower initially secured nearly half a million dollars from the Carnegie Foundation,¹¹¹ was created, according to Willis Griffin and Allen Felix, to "provide resources and services to assist collaborating schools to improve their programs in citizenship education."¹¹² Eisenhower, along with William Russell, the president of Columbia's Teachers

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 75.

¹¹⁰ Jacobs, 75.

¹¹¹ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 482.

¹¹² Willis Griffin and Allen Felix, "Teachers College of Columbia University Has a Citizenship Education Project," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 33, no. 4 (1951): 165, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20332176>.

College, went to great lengths to bring the CEP into reality and promote it on a national scale.¹¹³ The project was part of Eisenhower's efforts to make Columbia "a more effective and productive member of the American national team."¹¹⁴ The project set out to enhance civic pride in high school and college students and emphasized practical experience in the "exercise of citizenship in local communities."¹¹⁵ Eisenhower believed that, without such initiatives, Columbia would be just another "mere center of independent thought;" an isolated elitist institution where "professors could live and die in the most highly cultured and understanding atmosphere in the world."¹¹⁶ Eisenhower's citizenship agenda brought him into conflict with his faculty. Many in his faculty preferred the conventional elitist model, which gave them the freedom to engage in intellectual pursuits as they saw fit without having to adhere by the president of the institution's agenda. Furthermore, Eisenhower's work with the CEP and other education projects often proved to consume the majority of his fundraising efforts and the time he devoted to his presidency. He regularly frustrated the Columbia administration and faculty, who had to pick up his slack and felt cheated by his favoritism.¹¹⁷

By 1952, Eisenhower had helped to bring the CEP to national prominence by forging a link, with the help of George C. Marshall, between the project and the Armed Forces through a citizenship oriented training program. By this time, the CEP had secured up to \$1.45 million from the Carnegie Foundation to operate and was involved with over five hundred school systems in thirty-six states and over one hundred thousand students.¹¹⁸ The CEP's rise to prominence was not looked upon favorably by the many in his faculty. Columbia Provost

¹¹³ Griffin and Felix, "Teachers College of Columbia," 165.

¹¹⁴ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 482.

¹¹⁵ Eisenhower to William Fletcher Russell, 9 March 1950, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 11: 1007.

¹¹⁶ Ambrose, 482.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 482.

¹¹⁸ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 235.

Grayson Kirk commented that Eisenhower's enthusiasm for the project provoked significant "grumbling" on campus. Many faculty members, including Kirk, renowned economist Eli Ginzberg and historian Jacques Barzun viewed the CEP as promoting a limited view of what education should aspire to accomplish.¹¹⁹ They took issue with Eisenhower's promotional speeches for the CEP, which tended to assert that the primary goal of education was to create good citizens. They also did not appreciate Eisenhower's favoritism towards the Teachers College and felt that he was devoting the majority of his time and fundraising to an affiliated institution that, according to Jacques Barzun, "was not the most important school on campus."¹²⁰ Essentially, they viewed the CEP as a fool's errand that trivialized Columbia's reputation as a center of higher learning and scholastic research.¹²¹ This is evident from Eli Ginzberg's statement: "If there is anything to make the Columbia campus feel that its president is miscast, it is to get mixed up with Teachers College in some kind of a civics program."¹²² Even William Russell admitted that Teachers College suffered alienation from the rest of Columbia because of Eisenhower's strong presence there.

American Cold War Interest in Eisenhower's Citizenship Education Initiative

Other evidence suggests that Eisenhower's democratic citizenship initiative was spurred on by the political pressures of the Cold War and Columbia's need for funding and positive publicity. While Eisenhower's patriotic sense of duty and experience in WWII certainly influenced him to spearhead this initiative, there is evidence that points to the idea that powerful external interest in his university plans may have coaxed him to pursue this citizenship agenda

¹¹⁹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 235.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 235.

more wholeheartedly than had no one taken an interest in his presidency. In a letter from May 1948 to Mary Francis Naiden, the widow of Eisenhower's friend Colonel Earl Naiden, Eisenhower expresses his interest in citizenship training. However, he regrettably states that he could not sponsor a citizenship education program at that time because he had not yet officially been inducted into his presidential position at Columbia.¹²³ Apparently, the concept of creating an Education for Citizenship community program was Mrs. Naiden's idea and she had implored Eisenhower to sponsor it personally. The tone of the letter is regretful with a slight undertone of guilt as if Eisenhower had reneged on a promise. The *Eisenhower Papers* confirm this tone in the notes, where a previous statement from Naiden to Ike stated that she had decided to decline an appointment to the Army "*in view of your promise* [author's emphasis] to help me get the Education for Citizenship started."¹²⁴

In a later correspondence with William Russell in March 1950, Eisenhower discussed how John D. Rockefeller III, business tycoon and chairman of the board of trustees of Colonial Williamsburg, had taken an interest in their "Citizenship Training" program. Rockefeller, who was a financial contributor to Columbia, was also engaged in a project to restore the colonial town of Williamsburg in an effort to "sustain interest in American history and American institutions." He expressed ample interest in the Columbia citizenship initiative. It directly correlated with Rockefeller's own patriotic agenda and so he was of the belief that he and Eisenhower could collaborate with their respective projects.¹²⁵ Such correspondence presents evidence that influential members of business and government were heightening Cold War interest in the patriotic agenda, which inclined Eisenhower, as a prominent national figure, prime

¹²³ Eisenhower to Mary Francis Naiden, 4 May 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 57.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Eisenhower to William Fletcher Russell, 9 March 1950, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower*, 11: 1007.

promoter for the Columbia institution, and future potential U.S. President, to passionately pursue his Columbia citizenship education initiative with dedication and focus.

Columbia: Eisenhower's Engine of Progress

Eisenhower's inaugural address displayed a blatant disregard for education geared towards highly intellectualized thought or specialized knowledge. He stressed the importance of education's role as a preserver and protector of human freedom: "At all levels of education it is important that our schools do not become so engrossed in techniques, great varieties of fractionalized courses, highly specialized knowledge and the size of their physical plant as to forget the principle purpose of education itself—to prepare the student for an effective personal and social life in a free society."¹²⁶ Eisenhower's statement here revealed his anti-intellectual stance towards the liberal concept of education.¹²⁷ He implied that a focus on the mere study of ideas was impractical and essentially distracted students from the greater goal of education. He aimed at teaching students how to become useful, productive and socially and ideologically sound citizens. Eisenhower's definition of the principle purpose of education, "to prepare students for an effective personal and social life in a free society," is particularly revealing. His use of the word effective implied that education's primary function was to make individuals useful for the greater collective system of free American society rather than to encourage individual growth through intellectual contemplation and exploration. Eisenhower's words demonstrated his pragmatic notion that intellect is generally only useful when it can be used to achieve practical ends and that the more contemplative and abstract aspects of intellect are of far less importance.

¹²⁶ See note 104.

¹²⁷ "What is a 21st Century Liberal Education?" Association of American Colleges and Universities (accessed November 16, 2016), <https://aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education>.

Eisenhower's preference for intellectual pragmatism is evident in the programs and projects he promoted and supported at Columbia. Early on in his Columbia career, he supported the trustee's decision to expand the School of Business into a graduate school with an extensive program. He saw improving education in business at Columbia as a potentially crucial step towards fulfilling his mission of "improving and perpetuating the American economic system."¹²⁸ Similarly, he established a new Engineering Center to help Columbia produce more valuable experts to aid in the construction of American infrastructure.¹²⁹ He also established the American Assembly (AA), which was his favorite program he sponsored at Columbia, next to his cherished CEP.¹³⁰ The Assembly was an attempt to forge a Columbia University brain trust that would prove useful to the American political economy. It brought together leading businessman, financiers, professors, government officials and labor bosses to brainstorm over the basic political and social questions affecting the United States.¹³¹ Eisenhower saw this project as the "most important step" he had taken at Columbia as it would facilitate cooperation among the elite intellectual, industrial and governmental strata in order to benefit the collective American good.¹³²

As part of a Rooseveltian plan to aid national progress, the American Assembly was spurred on largely as a Cold War initiative to help support American infrastructure and democracy. The Assembly discussed major internal issues in American society such as taxes and labor legislation in an attempt to find ways to improve systems of commerce and government while preserving institutionalized democratic ideals and values. For instance, in a conversation

¹²⁸ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 82.

¹²⁹ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 484.

¹³⁰ Ambrose, 482.

¹³¹ Travis B. Jacobs, "Dwight D. Eisenhower's Presidency of Columbia," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1985): 557, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27550244>; Ambrose, 482.

¹³² Jacobs, "Eisenhower's Presidency of Columbia," 557.

with a potential donor, Eisenhower explained, “We have always known that a democracy could be destroyed by creeping paralysis from within. Bureaucratic controls, deficit spending, subsidies, and just plain hand-outs may, in certain emergencies, be required; but their cumulative effect *could* produce dictatorship.”¹³³ This statement revealed, once again, Eisenhower’s Cold War alarmism over encroaching foreign “isms” and demonstrates how the Assembly was, in part, a tool set up by Eisenhower as a defense mechanism against drastic ideological, economic and political threats. This pro-capitalist purpose of the American Assembly caused many of the professors at Columbia to view it simply as an anti-New Deal organization, which largely discredited it as an effective engine of progress in their eyes.¹³⁴ The conservative undertones of the American Assembly were made further clear to the Columbia faculty by Eisenhower’s association with financial contributors to the project from the oil industry such as the ultra-conservative and staunch anti-communist founder of Hunt Oil, H.L. Hunt.¹³⁵

American Cold War Interest in Eisenhower’s Intellectual Defense against Communism

Despite the Columbia faculty’s lack of enthusiasm for the American Assembly, Eisenhower devoted a great deal of his efforts at the university towards promoting it. The onset of the Korean War, especially, generated ample interest from financiers in Eisenhower’s brain trust bulwark against communism. Days after the initial engagement between North Korean forces and American troops, Eisenhower spoke on behalf of the Assembly to an alarmed press in Minneapolis about the Korean crisis and the university’s role in preserving democracy: “We believe that universities—and we want Columbia to take the lead—can be of more use to the

¹³³ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 482.

¹³⁴ Ambrose, 482.

¹³⁵ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 240.

world today.”¹³⁶ Later, in Denver, Eisenhower launched his “Crusade for Freedom” speech, which received nationwide coverage, to stress the nation’s “aspirations for peace” and “constant readiness to cooperate” to prevent war and oppression at home and in the global arena.¹³⁷

Eisenhower’s lobbying for the Assembly in Minnesota and Denver in the wake of the Korean War drew the interest of many corporate financiers including Hunt Oil, Standard Oil, and General Mills.¹³⁸

This corporate interest inspired Eisenhower to promote the Assembly on a national level, which perturbed many of his Columbia faculty who saw the Assembly as not being an integral part of the university. The Columbia intellectual, instead, saw the Assembly as counter-intuitive to the central purposes of the Columbia institution. As one former graduate school dean at Harvard noted regarding Columbia professor’s thoughts on the General’s emphasis on the AA: “Faculty members consider the teaching and training of new generations of graduate school students as their highest calling.”¹³⁹ The Assembly did not emphasize this notion at all. Columbia Provost Grayson Kirk viewed the Assembly as “a naïve or innocent approach to education...extremely simplistic.”¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Eisenhower’s fixation with the Assembly demonstrated, to many at Columbia, the General’s disinterest with the university itself, which widened the gap between him and the academic community. Eisenhower’s willful departure from traditional Columbia life in favor of pursuing the politically charged American Assembly project, and his open association with ultra-conservative financiers, in Eli Ginzberg’s words:

¹³⁶ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 239.

¹³⁷ Jacobs, 242.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 240.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

“added to the marginality of his administration.”¹⁴¹ It caused increasing resentment on the part of Columbia intellectuals towards Eisenhower’s association with the university.¹⁴²

Loyalty Politics and Anti-Communism at Columbia

The clearest example of how Eisenhower subscribed to anti-intellectualism at Columbia was through his emphasis on loyalty as a paramount goal of his administration. Eisenhower’s preoccupation with loyalty, which often went hand-in-hand with his focus on citizenship, is evident from much of his public and private rhetoric during his Columbia years. It also was consistent with his notion of personal duty to country as well as his inherent alarmist nature regarding foreign subversion. Eisenhower’s focus on loyalty in education was also distinctly influenced, both internally and externally, by the particular impending threat of the Cold War. Internally, the growing international Cold War tensions of this time, such as the breakdown of negotiations between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union over the Soviet blockade of Berlin, caused Eisenhower much distress. This distress becomes evident from the alarmism present in many of his private correspondences. In a letter to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal about the Berlin blockade, he noted, “They [the Soviets] seem, however, to be so sure of themselves that I am beginning to think that they may push the rest of the world beyond endurance. Frankly, the prospects look darker to me this Monday morning than they have yet and, goodness knows that we have had no really encouraging news since the fall of 1945.”¹⁴³

Eisenhower’s alarm over Soviet aggression and the spread of communism translated into his fixation with the loyalty of Columbia’s faculty and staff. Externally, the nation’s paranoia over assumed Soviet infiltration and many American’s general distrust of intellectuals also

¹⁴¹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 260.

¹⁴² Jacobs, 261.

¹⁴³ Eisenhower to James Vincent Forrestal, 27 Sept. 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 230.

placed pressure on Eisenhower to rigorously adopt this loyalty agenda. For instance, in a letter to fervent anti-communist William Burnham in November 1948, Eisenhower discussed allegations of communism leveled by HUAC against Columbia University as well as himself personally. He explained that “I don’t have to defend myself against the charge of Communism and, strange as it seems, I have frequently and publicly supported the investigative functions of Congressional Committees and sincerely believe they are a valuable feature of our government.”¹⁴⁴ So Eisenhower was not always above Cold War suspicion himself. He had to work extra vigorously to enforce his agenda of loyalty at Columbia if only to protect his own character from being defamed.

Eisenhower’s loyalty agenda is well laid out in a public memorandum about the Teachers College written to Columbia alumni and friends on February 3, 1949. This memorandum, written to appeal to alumni for contributions and support, details Eisenhower’s admiration for the Teachers College and teachers in general. After a couple paragraphs of praise, Eisenhower brings up the question of loyalty at the Teachers College. He states, “Once in a while I have heard remarks about “pinkos” [people sympathetic to red communism] at TC [Teachers College].”¹⁴⁵ He then goes on to clarify that these remarks were unfounded and that the first mission of the Teachers College was to “prepare our youths for effective citizenship in a free democracy.”¹⁴⁶ Eisenhower’s apparent purpose in this letter was to explain, to potential contributors, that Columbia’s Teachers College faculty was comprised of loyal patriots who had the greater duty of American citizenship as their main goals in education and were not susceptible to communist sympathy. Eisenhower’s comment about remarks regarding the presence of “pinkos” at TC

¹⁴⁴ Eisenhower to William H. Burnham, 4 Nov. 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 285.

¹⁴⁵ Eisenhower to Alumni and Friends, 3 Feb. 1949, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 462.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

demonstrates the evident external pressure placed on Ike to make sure his staff was completely trustworthy in the public eye. Thus, the faculty's loyalty became a central goal in Eisenhower's administration largely because of the public Cold War distrust of intellectuals and educators.

Eisenhower's Emphasis on Loyalty in Education

Eisenhower's internal fixation with the loyalty of his staff is evident from his correspondences and speeches. In his view, patriotism, rather than intellectual rigor and scholarly capability, was the ultimate mark of an effective educator. The anecdote cited earlier about the interchange between Eisenhower and the scholar over the efficacy of the faculty at Columbia and Eisenhower's response that it does not matter how great the professors were intellectually if they were not great citizens, sums up Eisenhower's prevailing attitude towards intellectuals and is a notable aspect in many of his interchanges. This attitude revealed that Eisenhower saw loyalty and patriotism as the primary duty of all educators. It also demonstrated an air of distrustful alarm towards intellectuals in that he found it necessary to judge their loyalty before even acknowledging their scholarly gifts. For instance, in one correspondence with Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, Eisenhower discussed the Russian Institute at Columbia and states that, "the head of the Institute Geroid T. Robinson, appeals to me as a patriotic, public spirited type of great maturity and judgement."¹⁴⁷ In a Western Union telegram to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA), Eisenhower wrote about controversy over the new Chair of Polish Studies at Columbia. He clarified that "this professor was picked by the board and the sole condition that I applied was that the man selected had to be loyal to America and to the former Polish government."¹⁴⁸ In both these letters, Eisenhower demonstrated his opinion that loyalty and patriotism were more

¹⁴⁷ Eisenhower to James Vincent Forrestal, 11 May 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 62.

¹⁴⁸ Eisenhower to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, telegram, Sept. 1952, Ambrose Collection, UNO.

important than intellectual capability. Especially professors affiliated with education programs relevant to the Cold War, Russian and Polish studies, needed to be reliable patriots as educators.

The prevailing currents of fervid anti-communism specifically influenced Eisenhower to enforce loyalty at Columbia. This is evident from sources such as Eisenhower correspondence with Associate Professor of Education Clyde Raymond Miller of Teacher's College. According to Miller's friend Methodist Bishop Lewis O. Hartman, Miller was terminated for apparently being, "radical in his views on social and economic questions."¹⁴⁹ Miller appealed to Eisenhower on the grounds that he was unlawfully terminated based on a violation of his academic freedom. But Eisenhower resolutely refused to help, stating he had no recourse because the trustees of Teachers College and trustees of Columbia had already ratified the decision. However, Eisenhower later defended the University's decision to terminate Miller because of his sympathetic views towards communism. He clarified his view in regards to the whole situation that "our universities must be alert against all the insidious ways in which freedom can be lost."¹⁵⁰ This statement revealed Eisenhower's predisposition to believe that leftist intellectuals could pose a threat to the preservation of American freedom, which was, in his mind, the main goal of all American education. Eisenhower's refusal to stand up for Miller and willingness to challenge faculty was not taken graciously by many of the Columbia professors who saw his actions as distinctly anti-intellectual.¹⁵¹

The Anti-Communist Vendetta against Columbia

A case similar to Miller's was that of Arthur Coleman and the controversy over the Columbia chair of Polish studies. Arthur Coleman, a professor of Polish language and literature,

¹⁴⁹ Eisenhower to Clyde Raymond Miller, 6 July 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 127.

¹⁵⁰ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 483.

¹⁵¹ Ambrose, 483.

resigned over Columbia's cooperation with the Polish communist government in the establishment of the Adam Mickiewicz Chair of Polish Studies. Eisenhower saw the Chair as a program established to facilitate "an exchange of knowledge affecting the cultures of the various nations of the world." Coleman, supported by the journalist Sigmund J. Sluska, saw it as part of a Cominform plot to infiltrate American universities and persuade impressionable youths of the benefits of a communist system.¹⁵² This controversy snowballed. It led to Eisenhower personally being implicated as soft on communism and possibly disloyal. Sluska wrote to the *New York Times* about, "Cominform infiltration into Columbia" in a brash attempt to bring to light the suspected disloyalty present at Columbia.¹⁵³ The tables were turned in this scenario as Eisenhower became the moderate voice of intellectual reason in the face of harsh allegations aimed at his loyalty and the loyalty of his faculty and staff. Interestingly enough, despite allegations that Eisenhower and the Columbia institution were possibly complicit in a Cominform plot vis a vis the Adam Mickiewicz Chair, Eisenhower divulged in the previously mentioned telegram to Senator Lodge that that the true purpose of the Chair was to open up a line of cultural penetration into the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁴ So while Eisenhower was criticized by the anti-communist press at home for his support of the Adam Mickiewicz Chair, said support had specific anti-communist aims in the international arena.

Columbia's reputation for the questionable loyalty of its faculty reverberated on Eisenhower's own reputation multiple times throughout his short university tenure. In one instance, Eisenhower was threatened with a summons from HUAC to testify to the loyalty of his staff. In the aforementioned letter to William Burnham, Eisenhower discussed the possibility of

¹⁵² Eisenhower to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, 27 July 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 162.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁵⁴ See note 148.

being questioned by a Congressional committee and insisted that he did not have to defend himself against allegations of communism. However, in the end, he revealed some uneasiness over the committee's investigation into Columbia: "Of course, there may be angles to the Committee's purpose of which I am totally unaware. Nevertheless, I am perfectly willing to answer any questions regarding myself or this institution as fully and frankly as I possibly can."¹⁵⁵ Eisenhower's squabble with HUAC began when he angered HUAC member and Congressman John Elliot Rankin (D-MS) with a statement in a Denver interview that the threat from spies in the U.S. was not great.¹⁵⁶ Perturbed by Eisenhower's apparent lack of Cold Warrior motivation, Rankin reportedly responded that Eisenhower "could render a greater service by throwing his strength behind these investigations and helping us to expose these vicious individuals."¹⁵⁷ This conflict between Eisenhower and HUAC intensified as Columbia became a primary target for anti-communist scrutiny.

Later that month, HUAC proposed to launch an investigation into ten colleges and named Columbia as one of them. This proposal cast a suspicious light on Columbia especially as evident from committee member Felix Edward Hebert's (D-LA) comment, "It is interesting to note that every time we talk about Communism we hear about Columbia University."¹⁵⁸ This negative light cast on Columbia by HUAC, which reporters from the *Columbia Spectator* saw as the Committee's unfair "hostility towards leftist individuals," drew Eisenhower into the line of fire.¹⁵⁹ Hearing of HUAC's proposal, he both defended his institution and simultaneously shielded himself from further scrutiny with a statement that he would resign immediately if he

¹⁵⁵ Eisenhower to William H. Burnham, 4 Nov. 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 285.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Denver Post*, August 12, 1948.

¹⁵⁸ House Committee on Un-American Activities, *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the U.S. Government*, 1948, 583; see also 551.

¹⁵⁹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 95.

found out he was affiliated with “an institution that is contrary to democracy.”¹⁶⁰ HUAC threatened Eisenhower with a summons and inquisition into Columbia, though it never happened. They never followed through with the summons although they did request, from Eisenhower, a list of textbooks used at the University in June 1949.¹⁶¹ While this was happening, however, Eisenhower joined the NEA’s Educational Policy Commission in officially recommending that all communists be banned from teaching in schools. This action suggests that maybe Eisenhower threw his weight behind the NEA’s anti-communist action in an attempt to get out from under the scrutiny of HUAC.

Eisenhower in Defense of the Intellectual

Despite his own prejudices and the rigorous demands of the Cold War for loyalty in education, Eisenhower also, at times, demonstrated a sincere reverence for intellect and often came to the defense of his faculty and academic freedom against anti-communist interlopers. While Eisenhower, in many speeches and private correspondences, may have expressed sentiment that could be defined as suspicious or inimical towards intellectual endeavors, or the intellectual class, he was by no means uninterested in intellectual activities. Eisenhower was actually highly motivated and nursed a passion for knowledge just as most intellectuals do. As a youth, for the most part, he did very well in school, excelling in geometry, English, and history and developing a sincere passion for military history.¹⁶² He had a logical mind and a natural gift for writing clearly and effectively. Interestingly, most of his fellow classmates in high school predicted he would go on to become a professor of history at Yale.¹⁶³ His academic talents were

¹⁶⁰ *New York Star*, August 17, 1948.

¹⁶¹ Eisenhower to Henry Steele Commager, 16 June 1949, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 638.

¹⁶² Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 33.

¹⁶³ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 15.

sharpened throughout his education at West Point military academy and in his career in the military so much so that he became known as a “brain worker” in the army.¹⁶⁴ Later on, in his civilian career at Columbia, he indulged in many of his own academic interests, despite his self-imposed separation from the academic affairs of the university, and demonstrated a sincere reverence for the intellectual atmosphere of this esteemed American institution of higher learning.

In the previously discussed letter Eisenhower wrote to E.E. Hazlett while at Columbia, he clarified that, contrary to popular opinion among his colleagues and friends, he was grateful for his presidency and was fascinated with the intellectual opportunities available at such a prestigious university as Columbia. Eisenhower’s interest in academia and intellectual endeavors is further evidenced by his statement that “on a campus like Columbia’s, the greatest opportunity is that of meeting constantly with fine minds in every kind of discipline.”¹⁶⁵ He then elaborates on this notion by expressing his love for engaging in discussions and debates on such subjects as economics, history, contemporary civilization, natural and physical science, public health and engineering. It is, thus, evident that Eisenhower displayed an admiration for intellectual endeavors, in particular, those with practical applications such as economics, public health and engineering.

When it came to anti-communist reprisals against his faculty and the preservation of academic freedom at Columbia, Eisenhower generally did not succumb to red-baiting. As a moderate and reasonable man, he did not believe in repressing free thought or bullying intellectuals despite the prevailing reactionary trends in Cold War politics. Though loyalty was at

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *Eisenhower*, 20.

¹⁶⁵ Eisenhower to E.E. Hazlett, 24 Feb. 1950, Ambrose Collection, UNO; also see Griffith, *Ike’s Letters*, 70-71.

the top of his agenda as an emerging Cold Warrior, he usually did not let anti-communism blind his better judgement. Though he did agree with the NEA that communists should not have a role in educating America's youth, he did not engage in communist witch hunts at Columbia nor did he advocate the use of invasive loyalty oaths. Also, unlike the anti-Semitic Nicholas Murray Butler, Eisenhower did not attempt to alienate Jewish leftists in his faculty. When renowned Columbia physicist I.I. Rabi, along with forty-nine other Columbia professors, protested the University of California's Board of Regents' decision to terminate twenty-seven professors for their refusal to sign loyalty oaths, Eisenhower stood behind their actions and went to great lengths to keep Rabi secure in his Columbia professorship after the physicist was offered a prominent position at Princeton.¹⁶⁶ In his installation address, he spoke out against an "intellectual iron curtain" at Columbia and declared that ignorance to the facts of communism, fascism or any other statist ideology would only inhibit the growth of the democratic system.¹⁶⁷ Eisenhower openly avowed that the facts of communism would be taught at Columbia, which demonstrated his devotion to the principles of academic freedom. It also demonstrated that Eisenhower could use his position as a celebrated American hero to combat virulent anti-communism and political mudslinging in a way that lesser men could not because of the fear of being unanimously labeled as un-American or subversive.¹⁶⁸

In 1948, he defended a group of students who hosted a Marxist conference at Columbia's Pupin Hall with prominent leftist guest lecturers.¹⁶⁹ After the conference, critics leveled allegations of disloyalty and treachery against its orchestrators almost immediately. Two of the most outspoken critics were the daughter of Michael Idvorsky Pupin, one of Columbia's major

¹⁶⁶ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 242-243.

¹⁶⁷ Jacobs, 121.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁶⁹ Eisenhower to Louis Graham Smith, 25 May 1948, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 10: 84.

benefactors, and her husband, Louis Smith.¹⁷⁰ Mrs. Smith was outraged that communist Arnold Johnson was allowed to give a speech to a Marxist study group at the building named after her father. She threatened to have her father's name removed from the building and had her husband write a strongly worded letter directly to Eisenhower in protest. Mr. Smith asked Eisenhower in his letter, "Will Columbia agree to keep traitors out of Pupin Hall?" He then went on to denounce other recent speakers at Columbia and warned about the infiltration of "Kremlin agents among our school and college teachers."¹⁷¹ Eisenhower, despite this red-baiting by a major donor, calmly replied to Smith that teaching proper democratic citizenship was his ultimate priority at Columbia but he stood by the student's rights to expose themselves to both sides of the ideological coin so they could make their own minds up regarding the superiority of the American way. He also expressed his "complete faith in the integrity and democratic purposes" of Columbia's faculty and administration.¹⁷² Eisenhower made it clear that anti-communism would not cajole him into suppressing free speech and free thought at Columbia.

Another instance where Eisenhower's reasonable sensibilities challenged anti-communist hysteria at Columbia was when he came to the defense of a member of his faculty who was under attack by the budding Senator Joseph McCarthy. On March 8, 1950, the Wisconsin Senator accused Ambassador-at-Large and Hamilton Fish professor of international law and diplomacy at Columbia, Philip C. Jessup, of harboring "an unusual affinity for Communist causes."¹⁷³ This allegation was leveled one month after McCarthy's infamous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, where he claimed to hold a list of 205 subversive communist

¹⁷⁰ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 97.

¹⁷¹ Jacobs, 97.

¹⁷² See note 169.

¹⁷³ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 490; Phillip Jessup was also a key advisor to Secretary of State Dean Acheson who Sen. McCarthy would also attempt to attack during his anti-communist vendetta against the State Dept; see Bischof, "Before the Break."

sympathizers within the U.S. government. This event marked the beginning of his rise to prominence in politics and the media. McCarthy was flying high at this time and crucifying anyone he could, including Jessup.¹⁷⁴ He summoned Jessup to testify before a Senate subcommittee but Eisenhower, without prompt, immediately wrote a letter on behalf of Jessup's character to be entered into the committee record. Eisenhower wrote:

My dear Jessup, I am writing to tell you how much your University deplors the association of your name with the current loyalty investigation in the United States Senate. Your long and distinguished record as a scholar...has won you the respect of your colleagues and of the American people as well. No one who has known you can for a moment question the depth or sincerity of your devotion to the principle of Americanism.¹⁷⁵

Eisenhower's letter on behalf of Ambassador Jessup's character handed the ambitious Senator his first setback.¹⁷⁶ The following year, Eisenhower came to Jessup's defense again while Ike was serving as NATO Commander proving his dedication to protecting the innocent from unfounded allegations of communism.¹⁷⁷ Eisenhower's tussle with McCarthy demonstrated that he would not flinch under anti-communist pressure to bully intellectuals into submission. Furthermore, it revealed an antagonism between the General and the Senator over ideological differences that would continue into Eisenhower's U.S. presidency.¹⁷⁸

Eisenhower Leaves Columbia

In late 1950, after only two years as president of Columbia, Eisenhower was called to national duty once again by President Truman. This time he was tasked with the mission of organizing NATO's forces to stand in defense against the Soviet threat in the East. Reclaiming

¹⁷⁴ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 229.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Eisenhower*, 491.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, 491.

¹⁷⁷ Jacobs, 229.

¹⁷⁸ See Bischof, "Before the Break."

his title as Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower set out, once again, on another crusade to protect the freedoms of the Western world. Though Eisenhower went off to serve his country again in the international arena, many back at Columbia were left with a bad taste in their mouths over his presidency. Officially, Eisenhower still retained presidential title but had no more direct input in the Columbia administration. Instead, Grayson Kirk was installed as Acting President and took over Eisenhower's Columbia duties.¹⁷⁹ While the Columbia trustees were not necessarily pleased with this development, as Eisenhower could no longer serve as the face of their institution anymore, they agreed to the new arrangement.

Many faculty members and outside observers, however, reflected negatively on Eisenhower's presence at Columbia. While most academics at Columbia saw Eisenhower's emphasis on general education for citizenship as anti-intellectual, many also took issue with his military style leadership, his disconnect from university life, and his frequent absences from the university in order to fulfill his obligations to President Truman and the Department of Defense.¹⁸⁰ Professors were also annoyed that Eisenhower, when he was present, was often inaccessible as they had to go through his military chain of command in the form of his assistants at Low Memorial Hall if they needed to confer with him. However, Ambrose asserts that the faculty's quarrel with Eisenhower's inaccessibility was not altogether fair as most presidents of large universities only ever confer with a small minority of professors. He argues, instead, that the professors were more upset they were not able to obtain an audience with the national hero rather than the university president.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 262.

¹⁸⁰ Jacobs, 260.

¹⁸¹ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 483.

The notion among faculty that Eisenhower was disconnected from university life was a greater bone of contention that intensified after he briefly returned to the presidential residence at 60 Morningside Heights after leaving NATO in 1952. Once again, instead of using the residence to serve university purposes, he used it to host Republican leaders, including hardline isolationist William Jenner (R-IN), to discuss strategies for his campaign in the upcoming presidential election. This personal use of university property for political gain incited sharp criticism from faculty members, including historian Richard Hofstadter, and contributed to an ardent anti-Eisenhower movement on and off campus.¹⁸² Eisenhower's behavior led many academics to believe he did not want to be at Columbia as confirmed by noted Professor of English Lionel Trilling who, "began to sense that he [Eisenhower] was nowhere in relation to the University and this gradually began to affect people."¹⁸³

In a *New Yorker* article, journalist Richard Rovere discussed Eisenhower's bid for the U.S. presidency and offered a damning critique of the General's Columbia administration. Rovere laid into Eisenhower's lack of qualifications in running a university, much less the nation, stating: "Clearly Eisenhower has no qualifications worth discussing.... He is unintellectual and probably anti-intellectual." Similarly, a *Life* cover story article entitled "Mr. President Eisenhower" suggested that Eisenhower's Columbia presidency was a publicity stunt to further his political interest in the White House.¹⁸⁴ Richard Hofstadter was swept up in this campaign against Eisenhower. Hofstadter signed a petition in protest of *The New York Times* endorsement of Eisenhower and also drafted an advertisement in favor of Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson, a petition subsequently signed by over three hundred members of the Columbia

¹⁸² David S. Brown, *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 83-84.

¹⁸³ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 260.

¹⁸⁴ Jacobs, 261.

faculty. Eisenhower's eventual victory over Stevenson in the 1952 election stung Hofstadter who saw the General's win as a national backlash against American intellectualism as a whole: "hard to resist the conclusion that Stevenson's smashing defeat was . . . a repudiation by plebiscite of American intellectuals and of intellect itself."¹⁸⁵ In an article Hofstadter later wrote in reaction to Eisenhower's win entitled "Anti-Intellectualism in Our Time," he dismissed the General as a "mental midget with a plebeian weakness for golf, football and Zane Grey novels."¹⁸⁶ Thus, the legacy of Eisenhower at Columbia, especially in Hofstadter's opinion, did not reflect the overall positive image of him as a national leader that sent him to the White House.

Anti-Intellectualism in the Context of Ike's Political Career

Eisenhower's emphasis on citizenship and the American way at Columbia can be viewed in terms of nation branding, or an attempt at subliminally broadcasting the superiority of the American political system and culture.¹⁸⁷ As a subscriber to the ideology of Americanism, Eisenhower's "simple man" outlook transferred well into the national agenda of Americanizing education that began before the turn of the twentieth century and was coming into the mainstream during the McCarthy era.¹⁸⁸ His promotion of the exceptionalism of American democracy through programs such as the CEP (that disseminated the message of Americanism to thousands of students around the country) and the Adam Mickiewicz Chair (that attempted to open up lines of American cultural penetration behind the Iron Curtain) revealed his desire to amass soft power for the benefit of the United States. This notion that Eisenhower used the

¹⁸⁵ Sam Tanenhaus, "The Education of Richard Hofstadter," review of *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography*, by David S. Brown, *The New York Times*, August 6, 2006, Sunday Book Review, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/06/books/review/06tanenhaus.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Brown, *Richard Hofstadter*, 132.

¹⁸⁷ See Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, "Nation Branding," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Frank Costigliola and Michael Hogan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 232-244.

¹⁸⁸ See Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, 299-390; also see Prechter, "The Highest Type of Disloyalty."

Columbia institution as a tool for broadcasting the exceptionalism of the American way of life falls in line with his persona as an American hero, dutiful patriot, and crusader for the common man. It also reveals a technique the general may have used to cast himself in a positive light regarding his status as a budding politician in the national Cold War arena. However, Eisenhower's Americanist vision for Columbia had the adverse effect of marginalizing his faculty and subordinating intellectual freedom to the pragmatic goal of broadcasting America's greatness. Scholars at Columbia including Provost Grayson Kirk, former Acting President Frank Fackenthal, economist Eli Ginzberg, and historians Jacque Barzun and Richard Hofstadter all saw Eisenhower's Columbia experiment as a failure that set him apart from the academic community, belittled the faculty's role as intellectuals and mentors for new generations of scholars, and reduced the prestige of the university as a preeminent center for the life of the mind.

This analysis of the General's take on education as Columbia University President sets the stage for his later actions as President of the United States. A comparison with Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* reveals how Eisenhower's agenda at Columbia, and later as president-elect and U.S. president, fell in line with a long history of anti-intellectualism that came to pervade American politics since at least the Jacksonian era.¹⁸⁹ At Columbia, Eisenhower developed and honed his Cold Warrior persona based on populism, patriotism and a pragmatic world view. His networking as Columbia President through his patriotic citizenship agenda played into his defeat of Senator Robert Taft (R-OH) for the Republican nomination in 1952.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, his association with the common man and his patriotic sensibilities as a soldier, general and crusader for American freedom granted him a publicity advantage against Adlai

¹⁸⁹ See Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*.

¹⁹⁰ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, ix.

Stevenson in the presidential election of 1952. Eisenhower's humble beginnings, modest demeanor, and outstanding military record elevated him to the status of beloved national hero. Conversely, Stevenson was marginalized by his elite education, pretentious persona, and association with prominent leftist intellectuals such as Arthur Schlesinger and Archibald MacLeish.¹⁹¹

Later on, as President of the United States, Eisenhower's domestic and international Cold War agenda mirrored some of his actions as president of Columbia. Domestically, Eisenhower's opinion that education should be utilized to create effective citizens for the betterment of the United States as a whole in order to bolster state security in the wake of Cold War threats came to fruition with his approval of the National Defense of Education Act (NDEA). The NDEA, which would provide federal funding for schools and mandated the use of loyalty oaths, established a pragmatic nationwide educational agenda based on creating more experts in the realms of math and science in order to one-up the Soviet Union in the technology and space race.¹⁹² The loyalty oath requirement of the NDEA was specifically criticized by Hofstadter in a statement he wrote to Columbia Student Council member Edward Elkind: "Such a requirement suggests that those who think and study are necessarily dangerous. It is thus an implicit endorsement of the very anti-intellectualism that all our educational efforts are meant to overcome."¹⁹³ Internationally, Eisenhower's work with the United States Information Agency (USIA) established a national line of "cultural penetration" into Europe and other areas of the world in order to amass soft power for the U.S. in a bid for ideological and cultural supremacy

¹⁹¹ Shogan, "Anti-Intellectualism," 297.

¹⁹² See Brent D. Maher, "Divided by Loyalty: The Debate Regarding Loyalty Provisions in the National Defense Education Act of 1958," *History of Education Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (May 1, 2016): 301-330; see also Jennifer L. Jolly, "The National Defense Education Act, Current STEM Initiative, and the Gifted," *Gifted Child Today* 32, no. 2 (March 1, 2009): 50-53.

¹⁹³ Richard Hofstadter, "Statement on Loyalty Oaths," 13 Jan. 1960, *Richard Hofstadter at 100* (accessed April 2, 2017), <http://richardhofstadter100.omeka.net/items/show/105>.

with the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁴ The USIA was one of many manifestations of the Eisenhower administration's obsession with psychological warfare.¹⁹⁵ It reflected Eisenhower's notion that knowledge should be utilized as a powerful weapon for the state.

Conclusion

The politics of loyalty and anti-intellectualism were influential forces in Eisenhower's career at Columbia University. Eisenhower developed this anti-intellectual habit throughout his life and it came to a head at Columbia where he was surrounded by faculty intellectuals on a regular basis. As a youth in Abilene, Eisenhower learned the values of hard work, determination and pragmatism, which led him to become a very successful, forthright man. However, his small town upbringing and "simple man" philosophy also inculcated in him a sense that intellectual contemplation and introspection were superfluous luxuries that he had little time for (as they would not help him achieve his life goals). At West Point, Eisenhower learned to become an officer and the leader he was destined to be as he developed his sense of duty and observed what incredible accomplishments could be achieved through cooperation with his fellow men. While his West Point educational development prepared Eisenhower to thrive as a military leader, it also made him susceptible to military preconceptions about free individual thought and intellectual inquiry.¹⁹⁶ Eisenhower's military career and experience as Commander of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in World War II elevated him to the status of a national hero. Inadvertently, it also caused him to develop a sense of alarmism

¹⁹⁴ See Robert Elder, *The Information Machine: The U.S. Information Agency and American Foreign Policy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968).

¹⁹⁵ Susan L. Carruthers, *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape and Brainwashing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 188.

¹⁹⁶ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 52.

regarding external threats to American freedom and democracy.¹⁹⁷ This alarmism is evident in much of Eisenhower's Post-WWII discourse and influenced his later status as a Cold Warrior. It promoted, in him, suspicion of intellectuals and the life of the mind.

As Columbia's president, Eisenhower's anti-intellectualism, as the cumulative effect of his cultivated sense of national duty, rural "simple man" belief in the values of cooperation and pragmatism, alarmism over external threats to the American way of life, and pressure to conform to the discourse of the Cold War influenced him to establish an administration that prioritized citizenship, progress and loyalty above all else. From his first days there at the university, Eisenhower's collective discourse reflected an anti-intellectual habit. It framed education simply as a tool for making more loyal and effective citizens, contributing to the progress of the American community. This discourse came to fruition in some of Eisenhower's actions at Columbia, namely establishing the Citizenship Education Project. The CEP was a nation branding project aimed at teaching young people patriotism and the paramount importance of citizenship duty within a democracy rather than fostering in students a sense of the intrinsic value of academia. Similarly, the American Assembly was a program constructed for the purpose of helping to build a stronger American economic infrastructure in order to establish a bulwark against foreign ideologies as opposed to helping train a new generation of scholars.

Eisenhower's fixation on loyalty politics and anti-communist distrust of leftist intellectuals also caused tension between him and the faculty. Though he was no McCarthyite, the notion of loyalty in education highlighted his alarmist nature especially in response to encroaching foreign "isms." It consistently influenced his discourse and administrative actions as president of Columbia. His position on loyalty at Columbia was not inimitable but rather

¹⁹⁷ Chernus, *General Eisenhower*, 25, 29.

coincided with a greater national trend of loyalty politics established already through President Truman's Loyalty Security Program. His anti-intellectual prejudice was evident in many of his interactions with his faculty and staff, which often boiled down to Eisenhower's judgement of people based on their moral character and sensibilities rather than their intellectual capabilities.

Though Eisenhower did exhibit an anti-intellectual prejudice as Columbia president, evidence suggests that he was pressured to adopt an anti-intellectual approach to education by influential parties in American Cold War society. Eisenhower might have personally harbored some distrust and disdain for the life of the mind and those who practice it. But he was also an intelligent, interested and moderate man and not necessarily inclined to attack or scorn intellectualism at Columbia, one of America's finest institutions of higher learning. He generally spoke up for academic freedom and made it clear there would be no "intellectual iron curtain at Columbia."¹⁹⁸ The idea of the Cold War imposing anti-intellectualism on Eisenhower's Columbia administration is most notable in the public pressure on the Columbia University institution to prove its loyalty to the nation. The controversy over the Adam Mickiewicz Chair of Polish Studies and HUAC's intended investigation of Columbia prompted Eisenhower to act in accordance with current anti-communist trends in education if only to keep Columbia reputable.

In the context of Eisenhower's Columbia presidency, Richard Hofstadter's assessment of the General as an anti-intellectual is slightly punitive. At Columbia, Eisenhower did harbor some form of prejudice towards the life of the mind based on his humble upbringing and life in the military. He also strategically utilized a populist, patriotic educational agenda, which often tended to marginalize or alienate his faculty, to perpetuate the philosophy of Americanism and appeal to powerful Cold War forces in American life. These ways of thinking and operating

¹⁹⁸ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 484.

translated into Eisenhower's U.S. presidency and were notable in his Cold War information and education programs such as the USIA and the NDEA. However, the context of his Columbia presidency suggest he was largely framed as an anti-intellectual by university scholars who saw him as continuing the oppressive legacy of President Butler or succumbing to the prejudice of anti-communist government organizations against the Columbia institution. This generally was not the case as Eisenhower stood up for free thought, did not advocate the requirement of loyalty oaths, never threw around slanderous accusations of disloyalty, and defended his faculty from McCarthyite reprisals.

Eisenhower did not harbor a fervent disdain for intellectuals or adhere to reactionary politics, which Hofstadter never acknowledged. The General's disposition was in contrast to many of his contemporaries who pursued the tactics of McCarthyism, which was at the core of his appeal as a politician.¹⁹⁹ Today, as in the early days of the Cold War, such moderate socio-political viewpoints are becoming scarce as the crusade against the life of the mind has returned in full force. With a new U.S. President who condemns the left as being full of subversive, un-American propagators of fake news and a Secretary of Education who openly supports anti-intellectual notions such as Creationism, the days of reasonable sensibilities prevailing in politics and education have apparently lapsed. The years to come will undoubtedly thrust the American university into the crosshairs of anti-intellectualism once again, but this time without the balancing act provided by moderate American leaders such as General Eisenhower.

¹⁹⁹ Jacobs, *Eisenhower*, 260.

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Vita

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