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**Abstract**

This article explores how the Robbins Report's recommendations for a massive expansion in higher education alongside a comprehensive system of student financial support, both financed by the public purse, came about and were translated into policy. It argues that these policies, including the Robbins principle, the desire for expanding educational opportunities plus the Reports' emphasis upon the public and social benefits of higher education, can only be understood within the context of the Welfare State and the values and ideas enshrined in its post-war development. In addition, the article examines some of the Robbins Reports' projections about the number of student places demanded and compares these with the actual number of students enrolled, highlighting the changes in the composition of the student body overtime. It concludes by exploring issues concerning student funding and highlights the shifts in thinking about the role of higher education, who benefits and so who pays; changes associated with the end of the post-war consensus about the Welfare State. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)