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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Marguerite Marks for the Master of Science in Teaching
(Candidate's name)

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Title: The Nationalization of Education in England

Fabian Influences on the Education Bill of 1902

Abstract approved: [REDACTED]
(Thesis Adviser)

The purpose of this paper was to prove that the Fabians were a political pressure group and that Fabian methods were responsible for the enactment of the 1902 Education Act that nationalized education in England. Also, that Sidney Webb played a far greater and more significant part in the formulation of the actual Bill than did Robert Morant, who is usually credited as the person responsible for the Bill.

It seemed to me that it was necessary to trace the evolving educational system in England; therefore, I made the arbitrary decision of beginning with the "Sunday school" which I view as the beginning of "education for all." It was necessary to select the elements of the social and political affairs that I felt pertained to the subject as I dealt with it. There are situations that have been omitted, and there were times when it was difficult not to digress into areas of lesser significance. Therefore, the paper is divided into two sections: the first section traces the historical pattern of the emergence of education for the common people; the second section is devoted to the active involvement of the Fabians and covers a much shorter span historically.

The first part of the paper traces the dual system of education that consisted of the "board" schools, which date from 1870, and the "voluntary" schools. Although the "voluntary" schools are as old as the Christian Church in England, the development of the "voluntary" system, for the purpose of this paper, begins at the time

of the Wesleyan rift with the Church of England. It was from that time that the voluntary schools developed into "denominational" schools and, as a consequence, reflect the power struggle that developed between the landed gentry and the entrepreneurs as a result of industrialization.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the ever extending franchise brought with it an increasing demand for changes in the educational system in England. The second part of this paper deals with the manner in which the Fabians, as a pressure group, influenced the enactment of the 1902 Education Act. It is my thesis that the basic structure of the act was outlined originally by Sidney Webb and that Fabian Tract No. 106 was the primary model used by the Conservative government in formulating the Bill. Inasmuch as the educational system of England is still in the process of fulfilling the suggestions contained in the Act of 1902, perhaps from an historian's standpoint, it is too early to be definitive concerning the role of the Fabians. Nevertheless, enough material about the Fabians is available to prove their influence in securing the enactment of the Bill. Much more work needs to be done on the Fabians. They were a remarkable group of men and women whose impact, in my judgment, is far greater than we are able, at present, to measure.

Party politics are of recent origin and the Fabians belong to what some political scientists have termed the "third house" in the legislative process. The Fabians are a pressure group and the activity they carried on in regard to the Education Act, in my

view, was a form of lobbying. It is from this viewpoint that I have dealt with the Fabians in this paper.

APPROVED:

Thesis Adviser

Administrative Officer, Department, Division or School

For the Graduate Council

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THE NATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN ENGLAND
Fabian Influences on the Education Bill of 1902

by
Marguerite Marks

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of History
and the Graduate Council of Portland State College
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Teaching

June 1965

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How far the acquiescence of the public in the enormous extension of State activity and control has been facilitated by the insidious preaching and permeation of the Fabians is a question which it is easy to ask, but which no wise man will venture to answer.

Sir Alexander Gray

PART ONE: The Beginnings of 'Education for All'

Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, concerned Englishmen recognized that the policy of "muddling through" no longer was tenable in regard to meeting the educational needs for the citizenry of England if their country was to maintain her position of leadership among the industrializing nations. Characteristics of England on the threshold of the twentieth century were

Nine hundred years of freedom from invasion, individual liberty, a conservative established church, the economic doctrine of laissez faire, and relatively rigid social classes. The upper classes were powerful and influential. A strong middle class of businessmen, prosperous farmers, shopkeepers, and professional men was often referred to as "the backbone of the country."

The educational system in the nineteenth century followed this general organization of society. The "Great Public Schools," which were really wealthy and exclusive church and private schools, catered for the sons of the upper and middle classes. Their products had a virtual monopoly of

places at Oxford and Cambridge universities and subsequently of positions in the civil service and the professions.¹

Thus it was observed that England had a policy toward education in which there was no semblance of efficient planning and England, the country that had given birth to industrialization, was falling behind America, Germany, and France in utilizing the machinery of the state for the purpose of creating a national system of education.

America, for example, had used the power of the federal government to assist the establishment of the means of providing education for her westward moving population with the enactment of the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787. On the continent, the General Code of 1794 had definitely made Prussian schools state institutions; and in France, the French Revolution had been followed by the centralized autocracy of Napoleon whose administrative efficiency strengthened the influence of the state itself. Thus, as early as 1831, following a report made by Victor Cousin, the Minister of Education, Guizot secured legislation that firmly established the elementary system of education in France as the responsibility of the State. Actually, on the continent, revolution tended to destroy the old educational foundations controlled by the Church and to replace them by a state system of schools. In England, however, there remained a deep-seated mistrust of state interference; a suspicion that stemmed from as far back as the Civil War period when the propertied classes, having won their struggle with the

¹ John Francis Cramer and George Stephenson Browne, Contemporary Education (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), p. 57.

monarchy, remained adamant in their determination not to risk submitting rights to an arbitrary government.

But with the growth of industry, a new phase of human existence was beginning, a phase without precedent in history. Always, previously, there had been an educated few; never an educated mass. Indeed, never before the age of industrialization was it necessary that education be provided on such a wide scale and for all segments of society. As the machine made it possible to produce more goods and provide services, it became increasingly apparent that education was a necessity rather than a luxury for the few. The machine age increasingly demanded trained technicians, engineers, chemists, foreman, clerks, accountants, and these positions required an elementary education at least in such areas as reading, writing and arithmetic.

No doubt in the thoughts of those who contributed to the gradual evolution of the national system of education in England, motivations were varied and mixed. Closely intertwined, throughout the entire period of formation was a religious motive based on a moral and ethical foundation of sincere efforts to raise the general level of conduct; a political motive designed to cope with the situation of providing an education for those to whom the extension of the franchise was granting increased political power; and a national motive to strengthen patriotism as a method of providing the mainstay for military and industrial might.

A scrutiny of the landmarks in the nationalization of education in England during the nineteenth century leads one to conclude, however, that practical utility was a more potent factor than idealism.

Certainly, as it became more and more evident that at least an elementary education would be useful, indeed, essential, for the commoner in the everyday task of earning a living, so it became increasingly clear that the state would have to be the provider for an effective system. This is reflected in the opening statement made by J. E. Forster in Parliament as he introduced the Elementary Education Act of 1870:

We must make up the smallness of our numbers by increasing the intellectual force of the individual. . . . We must not delay. Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity. It is of no use trying to give technical teaching to our artisans without elementary education; uneducated labourers are utterly uneducated--are for the most part, unskilled labourers, and if we have our work-folk any longer unskilled, notwithstanding their strong sinews and determined energy, they will become over-matched in the competition of the world.¹

With the passage of the Forster Act in 1870, England established for the first time in its history, a national system of elementary schools. The passage of the bill through Parliament evoked bitter opposition that centered on the role of the Church in providing education.

Indeed, the basic issue was whether education was the province of the church or of the state. Compounding the issue, moreover, was the fact that two competing systems of education, based on religious foundations, had developed during the nineteenth century--one provided by the Church of England and the other a product of the Nonconformists. The schools were known as "voluntary" schools and were an outgrowth of the "Sunday School" movement that had spread rapidly during the last quarter

¹Hansard, vol. 199, col. 465, February 17, 1870.

of the eighteenth century.

With the rise of industry, there had been a gravitation of people from the land to the towns where children answered the needs of the factories for a cheap labor supply. The children were kept off the street by the factories during six days of the week, but on Sundays, their widespread wantonness led to the reactivating of Sunday schools; a custom that had fallen into disuse although it remained a canon of the Church of England. The Sunday school revival, however, was started outside the Church of England and found widespread support from the evangelistic sects that had been reawakened by the rift between the Church of England and the Wesleyan movement.¹

The Sunday schools, established late in the eighteenth century, were the first indication that "education for all" was a possibility. Before the Sunday school, with its volunteer teachers who taught the laboring classes how to read the Bible, educational agencies had been selective institutions for those who could afford to pay or who had the intelligence enough to benefit from the assistance of endowments or charities. The Sunday schools served a worthy purpose in factory towns, but where there were no factories, and consequently no need for child labor, schools developed to meet the problem of keeping the children off the streets and out of mischief.² It was for this reason that the system of "voluntary" schools developed in England early in the nineteenth century. One of the first such schools was established by John Lancaster

¹Frank Smith, A History of English Elementary Education, 1760-1902 (London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1931), pp. 47-49.

²Ibid., pp. 60 and 70.

in a room in his father's house. It was so successful in terms of the number of students that the school outgrew its original quarters.

Lancaster was a Nonconformist and his following came from this group. The Church of England became concerned with Lancaster's success and set up a rival system of schools under the direction of Andrew Bell. In an outbreak of hostility over the origination of the monitorial system in which older students acted as instructors for beginners as a means of coping with increased enrollments and the dearth of qualified teachers, political overtones ensued when Dissenters, longstanding foes of the Church of England, sided with Lancaster.

The monitorial system appealed to the ruling class as an economic method for providing education for the commoners. Although the system received financial support as a result, ever increasing enrollment brought about an increasing need for school buildings. Government assistance was sought in 1807 when a Bill was introduced in Parliament proposing the setting up of a national system of Elementary education supported from public funds. The Bill passed the House of Commons, but it failed in the House of Lords, largely as a result of unyielding opposition by representatives of the Church of England.

Meanwhile, both the Church of England and organized Nonconformity were in the process of becoming committed to the swelling voluntary schools with the aim of providing the nation with a universal system of Elementary education. In 1811, the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales was formed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining schools for the common people. The following year the British

and Foreign School Society, a Nonconformist organization, took over the work of the Royal Lancasterian Society, a non-denominational group that had been carrying on the work of Lancaster.

Within twenty years these societies had provided, entirely out of voluntary contributions, numerous schools all over the country. It was a remarkable achievement; nevertheless, even within this period of exceptional activity it became obvious to the discerning few that, despite the readiness with which the rich were subscribing to this charity--as they were also to others--and despite the devotion with which innumerable persons, both priests and laymen, were giving themselves to the work of establishing and maintaining schools, voluntary effort could never itself cope with the gigantic task of schooling all the nation's children. And so the demand was pressed again and again for aid from public funds.¹

The extension of the franchise in 1832 brought an increase in the solicitude for the instruction of the masses since for the first time the growing industrial towns, such as Birmingham and Manchester were granted representation in Parliament. Consequently, the above named societies found increased support in Parliament for Government aid.

The same year reports of a Parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of Michael Sadler contained first hand accounts of the cruelties suffered by children working in the factories: how the fear of being late prompted them to arrive long before the warning bell; how they were kept at their jobs long hours through the day and into the night, threatened with bodily harm by an overseer; and how they often fell asleep at their work and by the time they arrived home, they were too tired to eat. The report contained evidence of the lack of concern

¹H. C. Dent. The Educational System of England and Wales (London: University of London Press, 1961), pp. 18-19.

for safety equipment on the part of the factory owners.¹ As a result, in 1833 the Factory Act put a halt to some of the "worst evils of the employment of children."² The Act put a limitation of eight hours work for children under thirteen years of age and children up to eighteen were limited to twelve hours. In addition, children under thirteen were required to present, each Monday morning, a certificate to show that they had been in school for at least two hours a day for the previous week.³

In July of the same year J. A. Roebuck moved from the floor of the House of Commons that some means be devised "for the universal and national education of the whole people." Roebuck assailed the prevailing opinion that education "consists [*sic*] of reading and writing, with the occasional inclusion, by a stretch of liberality, of arithmetic." He argued that "the training of the intellectual and moral qualities of the individual, and the preparation for a useful and virtuous membership of society, was only the right conception" and he pointed out that "a national system" of education planned on these lines, would produce a people "industrious, honest, tolerant and happy." Roebuck drew attention to the examples of France, Prussia, and America in policies regarding the provision of a national system of education and he urged that the Government had not only the negative duty to "prevent evil," it had the positive duty to promote good. For this reason, it was Roebuck's con-

¹For detailed excerpts from the Committee hearings, see: George H. Knoles and Rixford K. Snyder. Readings In Western Civilization (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), pp. 565-582.

²G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate. The British Common People, 1746-1946 (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), p. 259.

³Frank Smith, p. 143.

tention that education ought to be regarded as one of the chief concerns of the nation. He stated:

In general terms, I would say that I would oblige by law, every child in Great Britain and Ireland, from, perhaps six years of age to twelve years of age, to be a regular attendant at school. If the parents be able to give and actually do give their children elsewhere sufficient education, then they should not be compelled to send them to the national school. If, however, they should be unwilling to give them such instruction, then the State should step in and supply this want by compelling the parent to send the child to the school of the State.¹

Although Roebuck was forced to withdraw his motion, a few days later in the House of Commons, Lord Althorpe proposed:

That a Sum, not exceeding 20,000 pounds, be granted to His Majesty, to be issued in aid of Private Subscriptions for the Erection of School Houses, for the Education of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Great Britain, to the 31st day of March 1834; and that the said sum be issued and paid without any fee or other deduction whatsoever.²

The appropriation was passed and the conditions for distribution were issued in a Treasury Minute of August 30, 1833. The funds were to be used to build schools, on a matched basis, inasmuch as local subscriptions of at least half the estimated cost were required before a government grant would be given. Applications from large cities and towns were to receive preference and either the National Society or the British and Foreign School Society were required to support any application, and guarantee that the school would be maintained permanently.³

¹Hansard, 3rd Series, XX, July 30, 1833.

²Ibid. XXIX, August 5, 1833.

³Frank Smith, p. 140.

By 1839, the grant was increased to 30,000 pounds. At that time, Lord John Russell felt it necessary to advise the Queen to use the Royal Prerogative in creating a special department of the Privy Council to administer the Government grants for school buildings since the passage of the grant had been heavily contested. Thus, by order in Council, a Committee of the Privy Council for Education was established. The present Ministry of Education evolved from this committee.¹

One of the first acts of the newly formed committee was to stipulate that building grants, in the future, automatically carried the right of State inspection. Thus the Minutes of the Committee of Council for September 24, 1839, state:

The right of inspection will be required by the Committee in all cases; the inspectors, authorised [sic] by Her Majesty in Council, will be appointed from time to time to visit schools to be henceforth aided by public money: the inspectors will not interfere with the religious instruction, or discipline, or management of the school, it being their object to collect facts and information, and to report the result of their inspections to the Committee of Council.²

Immediately, through the National Society, the Church of England voiced opposition to this directive, maintaining that it was the right of the Church to inspect its own schools. Further, within the competing denominational bodies there formed a bitter antagonism against any form of State intervention in education that was a troublesome area of friction.

Not less difficult to contend with were the hostility of many industrialists to any extension of elementary education (which diminished their supply of cheap labour), and the governmental

¹Cramer, p. 62.

²S. J. Curtis and M. E. A. Boulton. An Introductory History of Education Since 1800 (London: University Tutorial Press, Ltd. 1960, Second Edition 1962), pp. 60-61, as quoted in this source.

parsimony which demanded that any such education should be provided at the cheapest possible rate. The confused struggle between these warring factions persisted for many years, seriously retarding and stunting the growth and development of elementary education. Industry, aided and abetted by parents snatched children of a tender age from the schools--if indeed they were allowed to enter them; governmental economy scored a dreadful triumph . . . when by the Revised Code of 1862 it cut down the curriculum of the Elementary schools to the bare '3 Rs'; denominational pride and prejudices frustrated any hope of a united voluntary effort; and all these forces hindering progress towards the national system of education which the country desperately needed were powerfully supported by the prevalent political and economic doctrine of laissez faire; . . .¹

Mid-point in the century, however, there was a mounting concern about the increasing competition the British industries were experiencing from abroad; the success of which was as a result of the efficiency of state supported vocational education especially in Prussia, France, and Switzerland. The result was that between 1861 and 1864 the Parliamentary appointed Clarendon Commission inquired into the curriculum, instruction, and management of nine public schools: Eton, Winchester, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors' Harrow, Westminster, Rugby, and Shrewsbury.

With this action state intervention had extended into the affairs of the endowed schools and resulted in criticism of the inadequacy of the classical curriculum for the sons of the factory owners in the industrial areas who had been given political power by the Reform Act, 1830. The clue "to the English attitude to class and social distinction is to be found in the school system" . . . and with the Act of 1830, there arose a "snob-appeal" that only the above named schools could "give an education fitting a boy for command in business, in politics, in the army, the civil service, even in the arts."² Actually, the schools served the purpose of

¹Dent, p. 19.

²D. W. Brogan, The English People: Impressions and Observations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), pp. 20-21.

refining the children--their habits, dress, and speech, for example in order that they may rise above their level in society. Indeed, it is this element of pomposity that George Bernard Shaw ridicules in Pygmalion. Consequently these areas exerted pressure in Parliament for technical subject matter in the public schools. James Bryce observed:

Latin is taught to every boy . . . arithmetic and even mathematics are looked upon as subjects of quite inferior importance; modern languages are little attended to; chemistry--physics--are scarcely heard of.¹

Still there were voices against change, such as that expressed in an unsigned article in The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine of June, 1864. Openly challenging the "commissioners for inquiring into the state of public schools" the author indicated his preference for things as they were as he urged his readers to:

Choose a school primarily and essentially classical for schools pretending to combine studies modern with ancient nineteen times out of twenty succeed [sic] in neither. . . . It is on the formation of character, a higher aim than mere classical and scientific acquirements, that our Universities and public schools take their stand.²

Nevertheless, the myopic views expressed in this article, representative of the rural viewpoint, were challenged by worldwide events such as the fact that Lincoln signed into law a bill aimed at education for the industrial workers in America. Shortly thereafter, the industrialized North defeated the agrarian South and on the continent, Prussia, with a highly developed technical educational system, triumphed over Austria. Thus, perceptive Englishmen ascertained a correlation between a nation's power and its

¹H. A. G. Fisher. James Bryce (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 106.

²The English Woman's Domestic Magazine, vol. 9, no. 50, June, 1864. "A Classical School and College Education," p. 77-81.

educational system.

Throughout the urban areas there was widespread clamor for elementary education paid for by local taxes and under local control. Indeed, an Education Aid Society was formed in Manchester and an Education League appeared in Birmingham; the supporters of these groups favored free, compulsory, unsectarian education. Opposing groups that favored the existing system of denominational schools quickly made their viewpoint known. Consequently, this constituency pressure forced Parliament to appoint a committee to investigate the status of elementary education in the industrial areas of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham. The direct result of this investigation together with a concern for the recently enfranchised town workers as a result of the Reform Act of 1867, was a concerted effort in Parliament by the Liberals for government control of elementary education.

In a speech before Commons in support of his Education Bill, Forster stated that "not more than two-fifths of the working classes between the ages of six and ten [were on the] registers of Government schools, and only one third of these between the ages of six and ten." He pointed out that in Liverpool,

estimations indicated, with 80,000 children between the ages of five and thirteen, there were 20,000 children who attended no school and 20,000 more in schools not worth the name. In Manchester, 16,000 children out of 65,000 were destitute of school accommodations. I believe we approach the subject [of primary education] with a due regard for its importance. We do it to the hope of doing great good by removing that ignorance which we are all aware is pregnant with crime and misery and misfortunes to individuals and danger to the community. The question of popular education affects not only the intellectual but the moral training of a vast proportion of the population and therefore we must not forget that in

trying to do great good it is possible to do harm.¹

Moreover, Forster called attention to the two factions by pointing out that there were "those engaged in the educational effort" who preferred that their endeavors should not be unduly "interfered with"; and there were those who "say there ought to be a great improvement" and this group "advocates systems more or less new." Forster maintained that there would be no compromise by the Government since what was needed was a "Bill to meet not only today's needs, but tomorrow's as well."

Forster continued:

We have helped 700,000 but left unhelped one million. Not leaving out unsided school--the schools which do not receive Government assistance are generally speaking, the worst schools and those least fitted to give a good education to the children of the working classes. . . . Good schools become bad schools for the children who attend them for only two or three days in the week or for only a few weeks of the year. And though we have done well in assisting the benevolent gentlemen who have established schools, yet the result of the state leaving the initiative to voluntary is that where the state help has been most wanted, State help has been least given and that where it was desirable State power be felt it was not felt at all. In helping those only who help themselves, or who can get others to help them, we have left unhelped those who most need the help. Notwithstanding the large sum of money we have voted, we find a vast number of children badly taught or utterly untaught and too many bad schools. . . . Hence comes a demand from all parts of the country for a complete system of national education.²

Forster offered a two-fold plan: to cover the country with good schools and then to get the parents to send their children to the schools. He cautioned that care should be taken in building up so that the old might be preserved rather than destroyed. "Our object," explained Forster, "is to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps . . . with the least possible expenditure of public money."³

¹Hansard, p. 443.

²Ibid., 443-444.

³Hansard, p. 444.

With the staunch aid of Prime Minister Gladstone, the Forster Bill was successfully maneuvered through Parliament. It was a political battle all the way; and the religious controversy was paramount during the thirty nights the Bill was debated. Party lines were obliterated, for example, a member of Forster's own party vowed to see that Forster would be ousted from the Liberal Party for betrayal of the party's basic objectives which had long been "to wrest the education of the young out of the hands of the priests, to whatever denomination they might belong."¹

Further, contrary to Forster's earlier statements, the Bill of 1870 was a compromise, born of political expediency. The Forster Bill contained three elements: a dual system, a conscience clause, and a fixed time-table for the teaching of religion. Under the dual system the voluntary schools belonging to the various denominations were given recognition--however, in order to "fill the gaps" supplementary "board" schools were to be set up by local authorities, elected for this purpose and given the authority to levy as a contribution to the cost, a rate not to exceed threepence in the pound. Conscience was safeguarded in a clause that prevented a child's attendance at a place of worship or a Sunday school or a religious observance if his parents or guardians objected. This clause applied to any grant-aided school (the denominational schools) as well as a board school. Moreover, it was agreed that religious instruction was to be offered at a prescribed time, either at the beginning or at the close of the school day in order not to interfere with a student's attendance at other lessons. An important feature of

¹Hansard, March 3, 1870, Joseph Chamberlain.

this compromise was contained in an amendment known as the Cowper-Temple clause--so called after the member who moved it.¹ The Cowper-Temple clause stipulated: "No religious catechism or religious formulary, which is distinctive of any particular denomination, shall be taught in the school."²

Angry exchanges were made between Prime Minister Gladstone and the Liberal malcontents who maintained that the Bill was being "forced upon the country against the declared wishes and earnest remonstrances of the entire Nonconformist body," a body, it was pointed out "which formed one-half of the nation and more than one-half of the Liberal Party."³

After considerable modification, the Forster Bill became law as the Elementary Act, 1870. With its passage, "the first foundations for a universal system of education were laid . . . education was no longer a charity but a right."⁴

Although the intent of the Bill as Forster had indicated was that board schools were not to supplant the voluntary schools, many regarded the board schools as the hope of the future.

The school boards had authority to borrow money on the security of local taxes / sic / in order to purchase building sites and erect schools. Moreover, the boards had the power to levy taxes to meet such part of current school expenses that were not covered by the Government grant. Although the voluntary schools were to receive funds from the Government grant on the same basis as the board schools, the voluntary schools were denied any share of local

¹W. O. Lester Smith, Education In Great Britain, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 73-74.

²Hansard, March, 1870.

³Frank Smith, p. 289.

⁴Brian Simon, Studies In The History Of Education: 1780-1870 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960), p. 365.

taxes. This left the voluntary schools to meet their excessive expenses by means of endowments and subscriptions, since both board schools and voluntary schools charged fees.¹

Churchmen gave monetary support to the voluntary schools and by 1880, the Church of England had added a million places. The board schools, however, because of more stable finances, made phenomenal gains. Further, the disparity between the two systems was emphasized in their locations: the board schools were mainly city schools and the voluntary schools were more numerous in the rural areas. The dual system was extravagant and the factionalism was further antagonized by the clergy's resentment of the extension of civil control into a province that had been for so long exclusively its own.

Indeed, the board schools soon were making incursions into the realm of secondary education because of popular demands. In general, secondary education was only available to the students whose parents could afford to pay the fees at public (by American definition--private), endowed, or private schools run for profit. These latter schools were frequently of inferior quality with very poor educational standards.

A Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Taunton was set up to report on all schools in England and Wales. Of concern were the adequacy of provisions for secondary education and the education of girls, the comparative value of private and public schools, the ideal size of schools, the use and abuse of educational endowments, curricula, teaching efficiency, material equipment, the training of teachers, the fee-paying as opposed to the free system, and the geographical distribution of schools, whether endowed, proprietary, or private.

¹Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior: 1902. Report of the Commissioner of Education the year 1902, Vol. I. Washington Government Printing Office, 1903, p. 1014.

The private schools were generally pronounced to be deplorable.

The Committee reported that

Arithmetic, penmanship, possibly also French are assiduously cultivated: Latin is languid: even mathematics is pushed on one side. Not in more than three or four private schools in the whole country did I find that the main object of teaching was to invigorate the mind by these robust studies.¹

A member of the Taunton Commission, James Bryce urged that any scheme of educational reform must be comprehensive, that it must regard boys' schools and girls' schools, elementary, secondary, night and day schools, technical schools and universities--all as a single plan. Bryce contended:

Instruction in England is at the present wholly unorganized. Endowed schools, proprietary schools, State-paid primary schools (national and British) lie scattered here and there where chance has placed them each managed without reference to those of a different class and grade. Some neighbourhoods are overstocked with schools: others equally or more prosperous have no schools at all or none of the grade needed. The whole thing is a chaos and the first step to educational reform is to recognize the necessity of having all places of instruction organised upon some general and definite principles so as to form parts of an ordered and comprehensive whole.²

Inevitably, the dual system brought about considerations of superiority and the priority of right, thus in the last decade of the century, the Cross Commission was appointed to evaluate the progress of elementary education. Because there was such divided difference among the commission members, a majority and minority report resulted. While the majority favored the voluntary system, the minority was critical and impatient to complete a unified national system.

¹H. A. L. Fisher, James Bryce (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 111.

The majority claimed for voluntary effort a right to supply efficiencies equal to that of the School Boards, and asserted that the voluntary schools were better managed than the board schools. . . . The minority claimed the prior rights of the School Boards to supply deficiencies and also the superiority of the board schools--the buildings . . . were better, the staffing was more liberal, the examination results were superior, and the curriculum was more extensive. They /the Commission minority/ complained that in the small areas where only one school existed it was usually a voluntary school, and thought that undenominational schools ought to be within the reach of the whole population. To the claim that a conscience clause protected parents in a single school area they replied that a conscience clause, though rarely violated, was "wholly ineffective," and its protection was "illusory." . . . every parent should have the power to send his child to an undenominational school.¹

The Commission recommended that the school-leaving age be raised to fourteen and that evening schools should no longer be regarded as elementary schools, but should give instruction in science, art, and technology and offer opportunities for recreation and social life. Perhaps the most important recommendation by the Cross report was the need for teacher-training facilities and the approval of the "creation of day training colleges in connection with the universities. . . ." ²

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, resistance to state intervention remained formidable. This force compounded with the English characteristic of preferring to meet each new problem as it occurs rather than attempt to make future projections as a means for carefully planned systems resulted in a situation that found educational administration in a state of "administrative muddle."³ In 1894 the

¹Frank Smith, p. 325.

²Ibid.

³J. W. Adamson, English Education: 1789-1902 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 156.

Bryce Commission was established to investigate secondary education.

The Bryce report was articulate and to the point:

There is one feature in this growing concern of the state with education which must not be overlooked. The growth has not been either continuous or coherent, i.e. it does not represent a series of logical or even connected sequences. Each one of the agencies . . . was called into being, not merely independently of the others, but with little or no regard to their existence. Each has remained in its working isolated and unconnected with the rest. The problems which secondary education presents have been approached from different sides, at different times, and with different views and aims. . . . It is not merely in the interests of material prosperity and intellectual activity of the nation, but no less in that of its happiness and moral strength that the extension and reorganization of Secondary Education seem entitled to a place among the first subjects with which sound legislation ought to deal.¹

At the time, there were five central authorities concerned in one way or another with the schools. The Bryce Commission found that no accurate definition of elementary, secondary, or technical education existed. Indeed, a witness called to testify before the Commission admitted that he was unable to draw the line where elementary education ended and secondary education began. Further, technical education was viewed as something quite different from secondary education.²

In 1896, Lord Salisbury's Government attempted to alter the administrative structure of the educational system in a Bill prepared by Sir John Gorst. The Bill advanced a step farther than the proposals advocated by the Bryce Commission inasmuch as the function of the school boards was to be absorbed within the authoritative structure of the county

¹Fisher, p. 299.

²Ibid.

boroughs with all types schools brought within this framework of local control; included was financial assistance for the voluntary schools. Naturally the Bill was strongly opposed by school board representatives and the Nonconformists who took issue with the extension of rate aid to voluntary schools. The Bill was dropped and the Salisbury Government turned to the work of creating a central authority for education. With the passage of the Board of Education Act in 1899, this was accomplished. The Act created a central authority to "superintend matters relating to education in England and Wales" and authorized the new Board to inspect secondary schools.

Behind these two Bills was the driving force of Joseph Chamberlain, a former member of the Liberal party, who as mayor of Birmingham had successfully reorganized that city's local agencies into an efficient administrative structure of municipal services. Chamberlain was imbued with the desire to accomplish for England what he had effected in Birmingham. He was a member of the Fabian Society and is representative of that amazing group of middle class bourgeois intellectuals whose impact is discernible on the impasse of the power struggle between the church and state over the educational system of England, complicated, according to the historian George Macaulay Trevelyan

[by] the revival and strengthening of the old two-party system. The peculiarly English tradition of the two perennial parties had been to some extent replaced by a group system of politics during the unchallenged Tory predominance with which the /Nineteenth/ Century opened. But at the time of the Reform Bill of 1830-32, the Whigs furbished up their old traditions with new war-cries and programmes, and both parties thenceforth moved forward, forming as they went a kaleidoscopic succession of new social alliances in the rapidly changing world.

The underlying principle connecting the Liberals and the Conservatives of Victoria's reign in an actually traceable succession with the Whigs and Tories of Charles II, was the continuous antagonism of Church and Dissent. That lasting dualism of English religious life was bound to reflect itself in a political dualism, so long as certain monopolies of the Church were maintained. For two hundred years it gave a reality to the otherwise artificial permanence of the tradition of the two parties from one changing period to another. The working-class movement at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century was in part connected with Dissent and was at times almost altogether outside the influence of the established Church. The denominational aspects of politics therefore served to connect the . . . working class to some extent with the Whig-Liberal Party . . . ¹

From the beginning, the Fabian Society exerted pressure on the status of education in England.

¹G. M. Trevelyan, History of England, Vol. 3 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956), pp. 152-3.

PART TWO: Fabianism and Nationalization

PART II

The Fabian Society was founded in London in 1883 and was composed of a group of men and women who set out to "spread practical views on immediate and pressing social problems and to indicate the way for their embodiment in legislative or administrative measures."¹ "Permeation" was the term adopted by the Fabians for their program of pressure politicking.

The leadership of the Fabians, whose total membership never numbered more than a few thousand, consisted of some of the "wisest, most learned and wittiest men and women of that era."² George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Sydney Olivier, Annie Besant, Edward Pease, Sidney Webb, and Beatrice Potter were examples of the intellectuals who joined the

¹Max Beer, A History of British Socialism (New York: The Humanities Press, 1919), p. 277.

²A. M. Mc Briar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1962), p. 349.

Fabians.

The creative talents of Shaw and Wells, unknowns when they started working with the Fabians, were utilized, as were the gifts of Beatrice Potter and Sidney Webb. Beatrice, for example, was an expert social researcher whose real passion lay in "the collection and discovery of facts about history, the nature of society, and social organizations and their gradual assemblages into a satisfying pattern."¹ Sidney Webb, was "sharp as a London sparrow, and mentally, as omnivorous,"² and he read rapidly and had a prodigious, photographic memory with the ability to grasp in an instant the central idea in any document he read. Further, Webb had an uncanny ability for drafting accurate resolutions, amendments, or reports, very quickly. As a Fabian, Webb proved to be a sagacious propagandist in converting statistics for popular consumption. In 1892 Sidney and Beatrice were married. From the beginning, their marriage, according to Shaw, was "a perfect collaboration."

The Fabians made it a policy not to take any action without a thorough study of the facts. The general propaganda of the Fabians, addressed to the public at large, was in the form of tracts, inexpensive, informative and easily understood factual information in booklets seldom more than twenty pages long, lectures, debates, and discussions. During the "Fabian heyday . . . they were able to wirepull both sides of the House of Commons."³ Working through the back door of Parliament, the

¹Margaret Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism (London: Mercury Books, 1961), p. 81.

²A. G. Gardiner, Portrait and Portents (New York: Harper Brothers, 1926), p. 255.

³Anne Fremantle, This Little Band of Prophets: The British Fabians (New York: The New American Library, 1960), p. 53.

Fabian leaders cheerfully accepted the role of unofficial public servant that was thrust on them by the overburdened and hurried Parliamentarians who had neither the time nor the know-how for research of the new social problems that were demanding changes. Behind the scenes of government, the Fabians worked to educate the Ministers and permeate the lawmaking process.

One of the most important literary efforts of the Fabians was the publication, in 1889, of a series of their lectures, edited by Shaw, entitled Fabian Essays. The book sold for six shillings and the first thousand copies went in less than a month. One of the essays, written by Sidney Webb, contained the following statement:

Free elementary and public technical education is now practically accepted on both sides of the House, provided that the so-called 'voluntary school,' themselves half-maintained from public funds, are not distinguished.¹

Following this "essay" was an outline of Fabian "demands for further legislation" with the notation that the outline had appeared in the newspaper, Star, August 8, 1888. The subject, "Educational Reform," was outlined as follows:

Object:

To enable all, even the poorest, children to obtain not merely some, but the best education they are capable of.

Means:

1. The immediate abolition of fees in public elementary schools, Board or voluntary, with a corresponding increase in Government grant.
2. Creation of a Minister for Education, with control over the whole educational system, from the elementary to the university, and over all educational endowments.

¹George Bernard Shaw et al., Fabian Essays (6th Ed., 1962; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1889), p. 85.

3. Provisions of public technical and secondary schools wherever needed, and the creation of abundant public secondary education at evening schools.
4. Registration and inspection of all private educational establishments.¹

Certainly, the reform of the educational system was a paramount concern of the Fabian society, in fact this concern for education "provides . . . the most classical example of 'Fabian,' 'permeative' tactics in successful operation."² According to a Fabian historian, "The educational scheme of the Society was not, however, the joint production of its experts. It was entirely the work of Sidney Webb."³

Webb came from a working-class family, from which "he early escaped through scholarships."⁴ The principal source of his family's income had been a hairdressing shop operated by his mother.

It was she who, after consulting with a friendly customer, sent /Sidney/ at a considerable sacrifice of income first to a Swiss school to learn French and then /to live with a German family in Wismar/ to learn German--an accomplishment which indirectly led to Sidney getting into the first division of the Civil Service.⁵

Sidney Webb, after ten years in the Colonial Office, where he returned as Minister, later, was elected in 1892 to the London County Council.⁶ Here he served for eighteen years during which time the L. C. C. developed

¹Ibid., p. 87.

²Margaret Cole, The Story of the Fabian Socialism, p. 102.

³Edward R. Pease, The History of the Fabian Society (1st ed. 1918; New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1963), p. 142.

⁴Fremantle, p. 43.

⁵Barbara Drake and Margaret Cole eds., Our Partnership By Beatrice Webb (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1948), p. 3.

⁶R. H. Tawney, The Webbs and Their Work (London: Fabian Publications Limited, n.d. from a lecture delivered May 11, 1945), p. 7.

into one of the "greatest educational authorities in the world. . . ."

A series of accidents started the L. C. C. on its career as the education authority. The Conservative government had introduced, in 1889, a bill to provide for technical education, giving the power of levying the rate and of providing the technical education to the County Councils. The London School Board had protested, maintaining that it should have the rating power; however, G. J. Goschen, who took Germany for his model, forced the bill through Parliament, and it became the Technical Instruction Act. The following year, a conflict arose between the Government and the Temperance movement over the question of "whiskey money"; A. H. C. Acland, an "enthusiast for public education" fought for three days to obtain this allotment for technical education. To this the Government agreed, thus the power and the funds for technical education had been given to the L. C. C. Nothing was done with the "Whiskey funds" until shortly after Webb's election to the Council.¹ Webb's first motion called for the appointment of a committee to examine the needs of technical education and the way in which the Council might best make use of its powers.

This resulted in the creation of the Technical Education Committee and Sidney Webb was named chairman. Immediately, Webb hired H. Llewellyn Smith to make a full survey of existing facilities, and of London's needs for education above the primary level. Next, with the aid of Acland, Webb obtained the broadest possible interpretation of "technical education"

¹Drake, pp. 76-77.

until, in his own words, it included "the teaching of every conceivable subject, other than ancient Greek and theology."¹ Early in 1893, the Committee was converted to the Technical Education Board, with Webb continuing as chairman:

When Llewellyn Smith reported in 1892, there was an elementary roll of 680,000 pupils, yet the total number of scholarships available for them was only about 1,000, and many of these had onerous qualifications and obligations attached to them. Webb, in 1893, got a resolution passed by the L. C. C. allowing the Technical Education Board to provide scholarships. . . . These scholarships entitled pupils at elementary schools to further education at secondary or higher grade schools, and in addition provided maintenance grants of ten pounds a year, "to compensate parents to some extent for the loss of their children's earnings."²

Moreover, according to Beatrice Webb:

The scholarships brought a steady stream of clever boys and girls to the languishing endowed secondary schools, to the expending technical institutes and to the unfilled classes at the university colleges. Payments from these county scholars was made the basis of a system of annual grants to institutions under all sorts of independent administrations, justifying expert inspection of their work, and a carefully devised code of regulations to ensure their continued efficiency. What had previously been a chaos of isolated institutions, largely unaware of one another's existence, became gradually welded--without suppression of local administration by separate bodies of governor's--into a graded educational system covering every part of London.³

It was this success in reorganising the educational system of London that enabled Sidney Webb to formulate plans for the entire educational system of England.

¹Margaret Cole, The Webbs and Their Work (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1949), pp. 87-88.

²Ibid.

³Drake, p. 79.

In the same year the Technical Education Board was instituted, Fabian Tract Twenty-five, "Questions for School Board Candidates," was issued. Tract Twenty-five was actually a list of questions, set out in column form over four pages, with blank spaces provided for recipient's written replies. The questions prepared by Webb were searching and covered a range of issues from the "quality of teachers," to "school accommodations," and called for the candidates to take a stand on such issues as "the liberal provisions of well-built and conveniently situated school buildings, gymnasiums, and swimming baths," as well as an opinion on the "reform of laws in order to bring all the schools under public control." The Questionnaire tracts were ammunition provided by the Fabians through one of their least expensive forms of propaganda devices--the lecture. Fabian lecturers charged no fees, depending instead on the body responsible for the meeting to provide the speaker's expenses, and many Fabians spoke without any cost. The speakers brought a supply of Questionnaires for distribution after the speaker had prepared the audience as to how to make the best use of the material. Although the Questionnaires were designed "to harry candidates with questions and demands for pledges on policy," they served a practical purpose as well, since Fabian intent was educational rather than political.¹ This Fabian policy is reflected

¹Margaret Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism, p. 40.

in a statement made by Edward R. Pease, ". . . great social changes can only come by consent."¹

In June, 1894, the Fabians issued Tract No. 52, "State Education At Home and Abroad," by J. W. Martin, a member of the Fabian Executive. The earlier tracts had been issued unsigned, however, the Fabians had decided that the tracts should go into print as the responsibility of the author, having only general Society approval as informational. The Society, insisted only on clarity of the presentation, indeed, the literary level of the tracts was the result of the constant scrutiny of Shaw who served as editor, assisted by Webb.

Martin, in the opening paragraphs of Tract No. 52 wrote:

A democratic system of education gives every child free access to the secondary and technical schools, and these in turn to the Universities; to a talented boy or girl it offers an open course from kindergarten to College. England possesses no such ordered scheme. Even her primary schools, the sole class to which she has given tardy and grumbling attention, are not adapted to form the base of a national system.²

Thus, another voice was giving support to the "scholarship ladder" concepts implemented by Webb the previous year. The Tract continued:

Before 1870, the efforts of statesmen to establish rate-supported schools under public control were perversely foiled by the Established Church. Lord Melbourne's Government was well-nigh overthrown by a proposal to found a State Training College; and Sir Robert Peel was compelled to withdraw an innocent proposal to give rate-aid to day schools. The ecclesiastics claimed the right to

¹Edward R. Pease, The History of the Fabian Society (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1918, 3rd ed., 1963), p. 236.

²J. W. Martin, "State Education at Home and Abroad," Fabian Tract No. 52, (London: The Fabian Society, June, 1894), p. 1.

license all teachers under some musty old canon, and the Dissenters practically declared they would rather die than allow the Church any extension of power.¹

Martin summarized the educational legislation that had established the School Boards, pointedly ridiculing the absurdity to the dual system by stating that no country abroad would entrust its "State schools to private management." Martin further blasted the condition of the school buildings in comparison with those on the Continent and termed secondary education--"the chaos which prevails above the primary schools." Martin concluded:

Germany, France, Switzerland and America set us a good example long ago. They possess complete graduated series of schools, co-ordinated, efficient, State-endowed; they insist that every teacher shall be a competent workman; they liberally encourage the highest branches of study; they help the poor and talented scholar climb to the University. Not until England copies and improves on their example may reformers cease complaining, or Fabians be at rest.²

Certainly, the propagandistic device of the Fabians is evident in the overstatements made by Martin concerning other educational systems. Indeed, it would be an exaggeration to say that the Fabians formulated a new viewpoint in education, but their propaganda and their activity was an implement that speeded up the movement toward broader and better educational opportunities for all.

In the same year Tract No. 52 was issued, A. H. C. Acland successfully obtained Treasury sanction for the appointment of an

¹Ibid., p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 8.

official whose duty it would be to keep the Government informed about educational developments abroad. Consequently, in 1895, the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports was established, with Michael E. Sadler appointed Director. Robert Morant, recently returned from Siam where he had served as a tutor for the royal family since 1886, during which time he had also assisted in the reorganization of the Siamese school system, answered an advertisement for a position under Sadler and was hired. Morant's research for Sadler of the French and Swiss educational systems was a factor that enabled Morant to grasp the significance of the chaotic administrative situation in England's educational system.

Thus, in 1896, when the Salisbury Government attempted to alter the administrative structure of the educational system, there is no doubt that Morant was assisting behind the scenes in a research capacity. At the same time, Sir John Gorst, Michael Sadler, and Llewellyn Smith were in contact with Sidney Webb. As noted in Beatrice Webb's diary:

Whitsun, 1896.--Sidney much enjoyed colloquy with Sir John Gorst (acting Minister for Education), Michael Sadler, Llewellyn Smith and others about Education Bill: that is, replacing ad hoc bodies by one set of representatives chosen to manage all the business of the locality (but doubtful whether the Bill, as it stands, will effect this); also, not against helping voluntary or denominational schools in return for a measure of control, which is bound to grow. Other clauses, enabling public authorities to subsidise private venture schools, he looks upon as radically. He, however, recognises that it is no good for him to oppose the Bill--far better to appreciate the good in it and, by appreciating it, get some influence in amending it in our direction. And he is fortunately placed for this purpose . . . as a friendly acquaintance of Gorst's--as a friend of Llewellyn Smith and Sadler, and acquainted with all the educationalists in London, he is able

to be constantly suggesting amendments which are favourably considered by those in authority.¹

Although this Education Bill was withdrawn, the diary notation suggests the type of Fabian "permeation" carried on by the Webbs while they entertained some of the leading politicians in their home.

At a Fabian meeting in May, 1899, a proposed tract, "The Education Muddle and the Way Out" was the subject of discussion. Sidney Webb introduced the sixteen resolutions; six on "General Principles," advocating the transfer of education to the local government authority and the abolition of School Boards, were adopted.² Several amendments were defeated and the group became divided in their views, especially when it was revealed that Webb and Morant had devised a scheme in which state-aid to church schools was to be used as "the bait to persuade the Conservative government to pass a suitable Act."³ The meeting was adjourned until November and at that time a Revision Committee was appointed to work out the differences. Thirteen months later the tract was resubmitted and in January, 1901, Fabian Tract No. 106, "The Education Muddle and the Way Out," was published.

Tract No. 106 was "a constructive criticism of English educational machinery" and opened with the statement, "Our educational machinery in England has got into a notable mess." There were two sections: The Local Authorities and The Central Authority. Under

¹ Drake, pp. 132-3.

² Pease, p. 143.

³ McBriar, p. 213.

"The Local Authorities," "The Present Muddle" was described. The School Boards were to be abolished in all but the largest towns. The Tract concluded that;

The democratic ideal in education is not merely that a ladder should be provided, whereby a few students may climb unimpeded from elementary school to the university; though even this ideal has little chance of realization so long as some rungs of the ladder are under no one's care, and competing guardians squabble for the right to look after others. What the national well-being demands and what we must insist upon is that every child, dull or clever, rich or poor, should receive all the education requisite for the full development of its faculties. For every child, in every part of the country, at least a national minimum of education must be compulsorily provided. Above and beyond that minimum we must see that ample provision is made for varying faculties and divergent tastes. Our plan is to extend popular control and popular assistance to every branch of education; to combine all the scattered and overlapping authorities; and to link together the municipal life of our local authorities with the intellectual life of the schools by the concentration of all local services under one local body. This plan, it is true, requires the surrender of some cherished illusions, and involves some delicate adjustments to suit transitory forms of organization, but if these difficulties are faced and met on the lines sketched out in this Tract, we shall bring the schools into intimate connection with the everyday life of the country and secure so far as official machinery is concerned a sound and efficient educational system.

The still more important and more difficult problems of what to teach and how to educate, remain for separate consideration.¹

Thus the Fabians indicated their emphasis was to be on the unification of the educational system in England, at this time, but the door was left open to deal with the problem of teacher training and qualifications and subject-matter.

¹ Fabian Tract No. 106, "The Education Muddle and the Way Out," (London: The Fabian Society, January, 1901), p. 18.

The Cockerton appeal judgment in May, 1901, made it imperative that a solution be found for the School Board problem. Friction was increasing between the London School Board and the London Technical Education Committee, of which Sidney Webb was chairman. As a result of Government action, secondary education was being developed by the County Councils and County Boroughs under the Technical Instruction Act and at the same time by the School Boards under the Elementary Education Acts. Morant, in his research for Sadler, discovered that the actions of the School Boards was illegal according to the laws as written; this Morant brought to the attention of Dr. Garnett. Sidney Webb was often employed to redraft reports for Garnett who was defending the County Councils.¹ Upon receiving Morant's report, Garnett immediately challenged the legality of the London School Board's action in the extension of education within the secondary educational framework. Action was taken by the Government Auditor, T. B. Cockerton, who levied a surcharge on the School Boards, with the result that the dispute was brought to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court and then to the Court of Appeals; Cockerton was upheld in both instances. As a result, Parliament passed a stop-gap act that legalized the action of the School Boards until a more appropriate measure could be enacted.²

The Cockerton decision, thus forced the issue concerning the dual

¹ Drake, p. 244.

²R. C. K. Ensor, England: 1870-1914 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1936, 1949), pp. 355-356.

educational system and Sir John Gorst, Vice President of the Education Department, had Morant transferred to his staff with the assigned task of drafting an Education Bill.

In her diary Beatrice Webb commented,

Who would trust the building of a bridge to a man who started with such an infinitesimal knowledge of engineering as Balfour or Gorst have of national education and its machinery? There seems to be a settled conviction that any clever man, trained to any profession whatsoever, will succeed in politics whether or no he knows anything about the details of public administration. . . . That impression we must try to destroy.¹

Certainly, Sidney Webb viewed legislation "as much a distinct craft as shoemaking."² Further, Sidney Webb had supplied Gorst with advanced proofs of Tract No. 106 late in 1900, whereupon Gorst had requested and was supplied "fifty copies of the galleys to be pondered over by his permanent officials." Moreover, although "The Education Muddle and the Way Out" was an anonymous Tract, Sidney Webb was its author.³ According to E. R. Pease,

How far the draughtsman of the Bill were influenced by the Fabian schema cannot . . . be estimated, but the authorities at Whitehall were . . . anxious to see it . . . and the tract when published was greedily devoured by perplexed M. P.'s.⁴

¹Drake, pp. 133-134.

²McBriar, p. 76.

³Margaret Cole, Beatrice Webb (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), p. 81.

⁴Pease, p. 144.

In Parliament on March 24, 1902, A. J. Balfour moved to bring in a Bill to make further provisions for education in England and Wales. Briefly sketching in the historical background of education, Balfour proceeded to set the stage for the Bill by drawing attention to the rivalries between the various groups responsible for education and promptly proposed as a solution the establishment of a single authority.¹ Balfour's presentation followed the general outline as contained in Fabian Tract No. 106.

Under Item I, Sidney Webb had written:

There are, in England today, two distinct sets of local educational authorities, acting in the same areas, and sharing the provision of schools between them. These are (1) the School Boards, (2) the County, Borough and Urban District Councils.

The School Boards . . . have unlimited powers of rating, but are, in other respects, narrowly restricted in their scope. They can maintain only "elementary" schools, as defined by the Acts and by the Day and Evening "Codes" annually issued by the Education Department. But they do not maintain or control even all the elementary schools. More than half the children in elementary day schools . . . are in the so-called "voluntary" or denominational schools. . . .

These two distinct sets of local authorities come everywhere into more or less acute rivalry and conflict.²

Balfour in his presentation observed:

that we had dealing with education, secondary and primary, two elected authorities, the County and Borough Councils on the one side, and in certain cases the School Boards on the other. Between these authorities there was

¹The Annual Register: 1902 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), pp. 99-100. (Noted hereafter as The A. R.).

²Fabian Tract No. 106, pp. 3-5.

necessarily rivalry; and beside them were the independent endowed schools and the voluntary schools which were not organised or brought into connection with primary or secondary educational authorities.¹

In Tract No. 106, Webb next had proposed as a solution,

There ought to be, in each district of convenient size, one public educational authority, and one only; responsible for controlling all the education maintained in the district out of public funds. . . . It is . . . clear that large towns must be kept as distinct educational units. Birmingham, and Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, can neither be broken up nor merged. . . . Leaving out of account London and the County Boroughs, we propose that, in the 50 Administrative Counties which make up the rest of England, the County Council should be made responsible for the provision and maintenance of every grade of education within its area.²

Webb suggested that the Board of Education be granted by Parliament as the over-all authoritative agency of control.³

Balfour's Parliamentary presentation continued:

The authority under the Bill would be the County Councils in the counties and the Borough Councils in county boroughs. . . . It was not proposed to deprive any borough with a population over 10,000, or any urban district with a population of over 20,000, of that jurisdiction. . . . They would work through committees . . . which would have to be approved by the Education Department.⁴

¹The A. R., p. 99-100.

²Fabian Tract No. 106, p. 11.

³The Board of Education Act of 1899 had substituted the Board of Education for the Education Department, the Department of Science and Art, the Charity Commissioners and the Board of Agriculture but had not made any arrangements for the organization of this new Department.

⁴The A. R., p. 100.

As for the voluntary schools, according to Tract No. 106,

It is politically impossible to abolish these voluntary schools; and whatever we may think of the theological reasons for their establishment, their separate and practically individual management does incidentally afford what ought to be, in any public system of education, most jealously safeguarded, namely, variety, and the opportunity of experiment. What we have to do with the voluntary schools is to put them under the control of the local educational authority . . . ¹

Balfour's suggestion was:

Whether the schools in a district were voluntary or rate-erected . . . the local educational authorities /to be/ created by the Bill would in the future have absolute control over all secular education.²

Promptly, H. Campbell-Bannerman, of the Opposition, rose to point out that if the Bill were found to be a means only for securing special considerations for the Church schools, its chances of passing would not be very great. Campbell-Bannerman stated, however, that until the Bill was printed he would reserve his judgement.³

Probably no other piece of legislation in the twentieth century aroused greater controversy. The Bill took fifty-nine nights of vigorous debate in Parliament, and eight months of political maneuvering in and outside Whitehall culminating in the application of closure for its passage in December, 1902.

In her diary, Beatrice Webb reveals the type of "permeation" practiced by the Fabians as they "wirepulled" both sides of the House of Commons and molded public opinion as well. During the period of the

¹Op. cit., p. 14.

²Ibid. cit.

³The A. R., p. 101.

passage of the Bill through Parliament, Beatrice's diary contains her personal observations about the Education Bill and the Government Officials whom the Webbs entertained in their home at the time. For example, Beatrice discloses how she

took Prime Minister (Arthur Balfour)¹ into dinner . . . Balfour has the charm of genuine modesty and that evening he seemed in earnest about education. . . . I set myself to amuse and interest him, but seized every opportunity to insinuate sound doctrine and information as to the position of London education.²

Also, Asquith when stumping the country, voiced the Opposition's opinion of the Bill as revealed in the following excerpt of a speech Asquith made at Alexandra Palace during August, 1902, in company with H. Campbell-Bannerman. Asquith said:

I don't know the secret history of this [Education] Bill--what was its pedigree, who are its real parents, where it first saw the light, who held it up to the font--I do not know any of these arcana of the Legislative Chamber. But this I do know, and this I venture to say to you, and to all fair-minded men whom my voice can reach, that if the object of the framers of this Bill had been to answer this question, 'At how low a price, by how small a surrender of clerical and sectarian domination can the Church of England secure for all time to come for her schools a blank cheque upon the rates of England and Wales?' this Bill is the simplest and fullest answer to that inquiry.³

At the very time of this speech, Beatrice notes the pace of "permeation" the Webbs were pursuing: "Three dinners and two evening parties at one's house in eight days is severe." Further, a guest at one of

¹On July 11, Lord Salisbury had formally resigned as Prime Minister, having waited until the peace settlement in South Africa to do what he had long desired. As a consequence, Balfour, who was Salisbury's nephew, was made Prime Minister on July 12, 1902.

²Drake, p. 248.

³J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1932), Vol. I, p. 166 (as quoted therein).

these dinners was Asquith, for Beatrice noted that "Asquith . . . has worked himself into an unreal opposition to the Education Bill.

[At dinner, Asquith] was simply dull. . . . He is not really convinced of the iniquity or unwisdom of the Bill he is denouncing."¹

A few nights later, Beatrice discloses that "Morant dined here . . . alone [and] wearied with the . . . campaign."²

Early in the summer, the Fabian Society took active support for the Bill. This consisted of the printing of the resolutions made by the Society in regard to the Bill, and distributing these "documents by the thousands" to members of Parliament and members of education authorities "up and down the country." At the same time the Fabians

incessantly lectured and debated at Liberal Associations and Clubs, and indefatigably worked the London and Provincial presses; none of the resources of skilful propagandists was neglected which might shake the opposition to the Bills, or convince some of the Liberal and Labour opponents that for once at any rate a good thing might come from the Conservative Party.³

Indeed, the Fabian support of the Government Bill substantiates their non-partisan philosophy, which contrasted with the stand of Bryce whose work and earlier findings had contributed to what was being formulated. During the second reading of the Bill, Bryce, in an uncompromising speech, moved for the Bill's rejection.

¹Drake, p. 249.

²The A. R., p. 137.

³Ibid., p. 216.

It was he said, most reactionary, and could not be accepted as even an instalment of reform. The creation of a single education authority would be paid for too dearly by the extinction of the School Boards, which had done such admirable work; and in any case County Councils were not the best authorities for dealing with elementary education. Moreover, . . . the Bill failed to establish unity of administration. . . . The local managers of Voluntary Schools would be virtually independent of the Education Committee . . . For secondary education the Bill would do little, if anything . . . In fact, he preferred to call it, not an Education Bill, but a Voluntary Schools Relief Bill.¹

In the early fall, agitation against the Bill reached a fevered pitch under the inspiration of militant Nonconformity, led by the Reverend John Clifford, pastor of the Westbourne Park Baptist Chapel and Dr. Robertson Nicol, editor of the British Weekly. In an attempt to rally support, Clifford and Nicol were careful not to treat their attack as of concern to Nonconformists, only, but attempted to draw a comparison with the attempt made by Charles I, supported by Archbishop Laud, to obtain ship money without the authority of Parliament. Also, Clifford made an attempt to have the County Councils refuse to administer the Bill, and urged rate-payers to refuse to make payments.²

Sidney Webb, at this time, "conducted a skilful and successful campaign to defeat a policy of passive resistance" on the London County Council.³ In October, an article by Webb, strongly supporting the Bill, appeared in The Nineteenth Century and After, and for a week Sidney Webb wrote editorials supporting the Bill for the Daily Mail.

¹The A. R., p. 137.

²Ibid., p. 216.

³Pease, p. 147.

The Fabians drafted thirteen amendments for the Bill's third reading; eleven of these amendments were adopted by the House of Commons and the Bill received the Royal assent on December 18.¹

Part I of the Education Act bore the label, Local education authorities, since known as the L. E. A. s, bringing into law the suggestion submitted under Part I, Fabian Tract No. 106--the abolishment of the School Boards, and making instead, the elected, general purpose County and County Borough Councils the local authorities for education, as suggested in the tract.

The Act followed the tract suggestion by making available to the voluntary schools, money from the local rates as well as the national taxes. It was this, perhaps, that caused the greatest controversy.

"I thought," Sidney wrote in latter years,

the imposition of 'undenominational Christianity' as unfair to the Jews, Unitarians, and Secularists, as the imposition of the Anglican Church Caticism on Roman Catholics and Nonconformists, or of the Roman Catholic formularies on Protestants. Moreover, I knew that the result would be not the closing of the Roman Catholic schools, but (as in the United States) their continuance at private cost at a still lower level of efficiency, which would be calamitous for the very large and perhaps growing number of children would resort to them. Above all, I wanted to preserve variety in education, rather than officially prescribed uniformity--variety in methods of teaching, variety in the subjects taught, and variety in 'atmosphere.' I wanted to leave the door open to new and unthought-of experiments in the schools.²

Perhaps Sidney's greatest triumph was that the Act brought into being a national system of education in England

¹Ibid.

²Margaret Cole, Beatrice Webb, p. 83.

[which] is known as the 'educational ladder.' It was now possible for the clever child to pass from the elementary school to the secondary school with a scholarship or free place--otherwise moderate fees were charged--and then to the university.¹

Thus, what Sidney Webb had effected for London in 1893, was accomplished for England with the passage of the 1902 Education Act.

Fabian views of the Act were summarized in the opening paragraph of Tract No. 114, "The Education Act, 1902: How To Make The Best Of It," issued March, 1903. It read:

Now, for the first time, education may be dealt with as a whole, without limitation or restriction. The law is, even now, far from satisfactory; . . . But the local authorities elected by the people can not provide as much education as they choose, up to whatever age they choose, of whatever kind they choose, at such fees as they choose, with as many and as valuable scholarships as they choose, without distinction of sex or rank or wealth. On the other hand they may, if they choose, provide no better schools than the former school boards and bodies of denominational managers did, no more scholarships than the former technical education committees did; they may altogether neglect secondary and university education: in short, either in order to save rates, or out of dislike of some of the features of the law, either from grudging the common people any advanced education, or merely through ignorance of the enormous powers and beneficent opportunities newly placed in their hands, the country councils and county borough councils may not only fail to provide a complete educational system, but actually use their powers to prevent it. Popular control can never be real unless it is given for better, for worse. . . . It is for the electors to see that their representatives make the fullest possible use of the new powers, for the benefit of the whole people.²

Thus, the Fabians, having performed their task of pressure politicking

¹Jarman, p. 275.

²Fabian Tract No. 114, "The Education Act of 1902: How to Make the Best of It" (London: The Fabian Society, 1903), p. 2.

as they saw it, cautioned the people that good laws are dependent on the electorate, indeed, enfranchisement requires responsibility.

Generally, educational historians credit the Bill to Morant, but the above evidence indicates that there was a considerable amount of Fabian preparation before Morant returned to England, especially the work done by Sidney Webb. Moreover, the "permeation" tactics indicate the political pressure that was exerted and applied in the right time and place to thwart the opposition. This was Fabianism. Indeed, the name of the Society was taken from that of the Roman general, Fabius Maximus, who attained immortality with his delaying tactics and methods of harrassment which thwarted the numerically superior troops of Hannibal.

No doubt, Fabian influence amounted to very little among the reasons which caused the Conservatives to bring forward their Education Bill; but the evidence is formidable that the Fabians cast a shadow over the events once the Conservatives decided to take action.

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