

## **George Bernard Shaw, the Fabian Society, and Reconstructionist Education Policy: the London School of Economics and Political Science**

**Jim McKernan**

*East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, USA*

“He who can does, He who cannot teaches” (G.B. Shaw)

### **Introduction**

When four members of the Executive Committee of the newly founded Fabian Society<sup>1</sup> met at Sidney Webb’s summer house at Borough Farm, near Godalming, Surrey, on the morning of 4 August, 1894 there was exciting news. The four left-wing intellectual radicals present were: Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Graham Wallas, (of the London School Board) and George Bernard Shaw. Sidney told the breakfast group of a letter he had received the previous day from Henry Hunt Hutchinson, a Derby solicitor who left his estate, a sum of ten thousand pounds sterling, to be used by the Fabian Society for its purposes. It appears that Sidney Webb probably initiated the idea of a London Economics Research School, but had the sound practical support and advice of Shaw and later, the financial support of Shaw’s wife, Charlotte Frances Payne-Townshend, an Irishwoman from Derry, County Cork.

This paper explores the social reconstructionist educational and social policies employed by both the Webbs and George Bernard Shaw in establishing the London School of Economics and Political Science as a force to research and solve fundamental social problems like poverty in the United Kingdom in the late Nineteenth Century. That schools might function as agencies for dealing with the reformation of socio-economic problems has been a prime tenet of reconstructionist educational theory.<sup>2</sup> Social reconstructionist thought as an educational policy emerged in the USA from the time of the Great Depression of the 1930’s until the Civil Rights period of the 1960’s and many see it as a pre-cursor to critical theory in education. The policy of reconstructionism was to urge educators and educational institutions to make critical analyses of culture and exhume social problems, like

starvation, poverty, crime, prostitution, child labor, etc and construct plans for the resolution of these controversial issues as a means of cultural renewal.

In the United Kingdom, Fabian Socialism, and the activist work of a whole host of reconstructionist thinkers included: George Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, H.G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Graham Wallas and the other Fabians of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These social reformers could arguably be grouped, ideologically, as social reconstructionists. George Bernard Shaw has not been credited properly for his activities involving education in pursuit of the betterment of society. Henderson,<sup>3</sup> stated that there were several aspects of Shaw's character worthy of comment:

The three greatest influences, formative and determinative, whose importance in their bearing upon Shaw's career can scarcely be overestimated, are: first minute and exhaustive researches into the economic bases of society; second, his persevering efforts as a public man toward the practical reformation of social evils; and third, his strenuous activity persisted in for many years, as a public speaker and Socialist propagandist<sup>4</sup>

It is instructive to think that these experiments in social planning and critical culture renewal were happening almost one hundred years before this sort of theorizing became popular as issues discussed by Critical Theory. It was the Fabian Socialists' strategy of socialist *permeation* rather than outright conflict, rhetoric and violence, led to a dialogue that ushered in the modern "Welfare State" in the United Kingdom.

Second, the Fabians, in particular Shaw and the Webbs, co-founded the London School of Economics and Political Sciences to directly address the social evils of British life and culture. With a trust fund of ten thousand pounds sterling perhaps equal to one million in today's currency, left them by Henry Hutchinson, a Derby solicitor. The London School of Economics and Political Science is a Research School of the University of London, since 1900, specializing in 19 social science departments. The School of Sociology and Social Economics, the first in Britain, came about in 1903, led by Edward J Urwick, largely due to the bequest of Martin White who established The Sociological Society and the Society moved to the LSE for its first formal session in May of 1904. Scottish influence is very large with Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and John Millar Scottish Enlightenment sociologists who are now acknowledged to have invented the disciplinary mode.<sup>5</sup> Thirteen Nobel

Laureates have been associated with the School, <sup>6</sup> including Shaw, himself, who accepted the prize in 1925 but refused the money.

The LSE opened in 1895 and endowed the first department of Sociology in Britain in 1903. It was also the first institution to offer Social Work qualifications. Bertrand Russell, refused teaching opportunities elsewhere in Britain, lectured there at times and bequeathed his estate to the LSE in his will.

Third, The Fabians created *the New Statesman*, these collective tangible institutions are more of a concrete legacy than that left by Karl Marx when all is said and done. In a number of ways Shaw influenced not only the decision to establish the LSE but influenced its credibility in later years through his work in local London politics.. For example, as Vestryman for St. Pancras he had motions passed which made workers in the London County Council (LCC) receive greater salary increments if they held such credentials-say in statistics from the LSE.

Shaw collaborated with Keir Hardie in drawing up the plan for the Independent Labour Party. The rest is history-free education, medical services and the modern welfare state under Labour in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Fabians mounted a Five E's Campaign from the inception of the LSE in 1895. (1) *Education*. The idea that higher education could turn itself to practical social problems (2) *Economics* the development of Economics alongside industrialism; there was a (3) *Efficiency* quest in the post Gladstonian period and (4) *Equality* or what in those days was referred to as "collectivism" all of which were living under the banner of (5) *Empire* in the Victorian halcyon days. One of their famous slogans was "Educate, Agitate and Organise".

Shaw's wife, Charlotte Payne-Townshend contributed a thousand pounds sterling towards the LSE maintenance in the early days and acted as a gracious social patroness of the LSE.<sup>7</sup> The Shaws were bound physically to the LSE. The Shaw's home became the site of the LSE at its inception at 10 Adelphi Terrace. The Shaws lived there for a time. In her Diary Beatrice Webb wrote, "We believe in a school of administrative, political and economic science in a way of increasing national

efficiency, but we have kept the LSE honestly non-partisan in its theories”<sup>8</sup> Many of the first faculty were conservatives, including the first Director W.A.S. Hewins

Professor Ralf Dahrendorf<sup>9</sup>, himself a one-time Director of the LSE, suggests that Shaw’ and the Webbs’ coalition with Lord Roseberry, Chancellor of the University of London was educationally correct leading as it did with a merger for the LSE with the university in 1900.

It was Shaw who encouraged Sidney Webb to ‘come clean” about the Will of Hutchinson and Sidney’s intent to establish a research institution when Webb wished to keep the matter “hush hush” for fear of Fabian members rejecting the idea of research as the target of expenditure.

Archibald Henderson<sup>10</sup> writes of the five years Shaw lived with the Webbs at 10 Adelphi Terrace, which came to be the first home of the London School of Economics Thus social reconstructionism through education and social science research pre-dates the current cries of postmodern writers and other critical theorists such as Theodore Brameld, George Counts, Jurgen Habermas, Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Hans Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur or Paulo Friere to name a few who have advanced these ideas, with their critical passion and temperament for social change. Yet it was the Socialist Fabians who most successfully addressed the problems of poverty and their relief through research and higher education in modern Britain. Perhaps their most tangible product was the London School of Economics, perhaps the finest social science research institution in the world. Given the present rate of cultural change in Ireland, Britain and the USA issues of equality, poverty and access to higher education remain a priority. This work established the Fabian Society as the think tank research group underpinning the British Labour Party, a position which continues to the present though the Labour Party under Blair is a shadow of its former self . Second, the presentation will explore the ideological platform of Shaw and the Webbs in terms of higher education equality interventions. It is of some comfort to this observer that the universities in Ireland have afforded social science research, in recent times, a premium position in the allocation of research funds.

## Historical Perspective

The social reconstructionist theory of education treats schools and teachers as major entities that are instrumental in directing social and cultural change.

Reconstructionists believe that schools should lead in the renewal of culture and the resolution of social problems. Reconstructionist theory has always had a more successful relationship with leftist thinkers e.g. socialists, communists, and even some liberal postmodern contemporary philosophers. Social Reconstructionists advocate policies that have harmony with current partnership concerns for teacher education, teacher reflective practice, and broad social reform through culture analysis, policy critique and curriculum change. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Western Europe, and the 1930's in America, there have been repeated calls for schools to act as agencies of social and cultural reconstruction and reform. I would argue that American theorists like Bode, Childs, Dewey and others were largely influenced by developments occurring first in Europe, particularly Britain, most notably the socialism and scientific sociology that was a hallmark of the Fabian Socialist Tract tradition.

In 1932, about the time the Fabians had reached a peak in Britain, George Counts wrote *Dare the School Build a New Social Order* published in the USA. Yet such radical socialist thoughts have never been popular in America and have not held a central forum or been seen to be an acceptable dialogue as it has embraced socialism. Radical left wing thinkers in the main, including Theodore, Brameld (himself a Communist) could not promote socialism in America effectively. Yet reconstructionism, which has evolved to embrace other positions, including critical theory, liberation ideology, includes a wide spectrum of feminist, ecological, and alternative pedagogical reformists like Freire, and philosophers. The philosophy of education has made inputs into teacher education but it is doubtful if these theories have embraced teachers in schools or community action groups with any impact.

Professor Malcolm Skilbeck<sup>11</sup> has written a comprehensive critical history of reconstructionist thought and gives the Webbs a prominent place in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British educational thought relating to culture and cultural reconstruction. Yet, whilst naming Shaw alongside the Webbs and Wells as “utilitarian socialists”, Skilbeck has left the importance and impact and the educational activities of Shaw un-mined.

Fabian Socialism took on economic and social issues and proposed reforms that were implemented into law in 20th Century Britain -this was an avowedly an anti-capitalist move. Among other issues Ricardian rent theory was challenged. Indeed the Fabian Tracts are full of such stories, some even best sellers. The movement wished to do away with violence, and producer control in industry. Fabian Socialism, as expounded by Beatrice and Sidney Webb became a distinctive force in social reform regarding the disadvantaged, to wit The Poor Law Reform Act of 1902. The Fabian Society made its first great “splash” with the publication of *Fabian Essays in Socialism* in 1899 edited by GBS. It was a best seller and Shaw was both a contributor and editor. The first edition of 30,000 copies sold out at the handsome price of six shillings.

### **Sidney and Beatrice Webb**

Beatrice and Sidney Webb made empirical enquiries into the living conditions of folk through pain-staking analysis, by hand, of public records, documents and policies in England in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the tradition begun by Booth’s famous surveys of poverty in London. This was the French Positivist tradition of sociology-the gathering of facts to inform theory after Auguste Comte. They were a team that looked at poverty, trade union reform, rent schemes for the poor, local government and the use of co-operatives. Along with literary figures like George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright, these were key contributors to the Fabian Society. They had reform zeal and a passion to collect facts as an empirical basis for policy-making. From 1884 to 1930 the Society examined many social issues including poverty under capitalism, workers compensation, wages, conditions of employment, rural de-population, public health, school nurseries and city pawnshops.

The Webbs’ method was empirical sociology to be distinguished from much of the then abstract theoretical economic analysis going on in England in the Victorian period. The Webbs with Shaw were directly responsible for the establishment of two remarkable institutions: the London School of Economics and the New Statesman. In this respect Webb was more successful than Karl Marx his forbear in the socialist tradition of setting up *institutions of reform*. The LSE was modeled on the *Ecole libre de Sciences Politiques* in Paris and established in 1895. It was founded with the purpose of faculty and students doing research to reconstruct the social problems of society. The task was twofold: documenting the horrid social conditions of life and

assemble experts who could attack these problems. Indeed the LSE was a school within the larger University of London, which was a huge success. These conditions had been exposed by Booth's survey of London's poor and by numerous inquiries launched by the Fabian Society itself.

Indeed Sidney attained Cabinet rank in the first Labour Government. It was under the subsequent Labour Party initiatives that all students were entitled to free education through university and a free National Health scheme which has been subsequently eroded in recent years by the Conservatives. What is extraordinary was that by the 1930's their ideas had become institutions and law.

Neither Sidney nor Beatrice Webb was sociologically trained and they learnt their empirical method of research from crude surveys in the tradition of Booth, whose surveys of London poor were revolutionary in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Their philosophy however was in the tradition of Locke, J.S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham. Bentham, a founder of University College, London, devoted himself to the education of the poor, was an eccentric who demanded that upon his death he be stuffed and seated at each meeting of the Faculty. To this day he is marked as "present" on the minutes at the meetings of faculty.

According to Skilbeck<sup>12</sup> both Sidney and Beatrice Webb were for the common worker and did not share Matthew Arnold's revivalist admiration for classical humanist theory in Britain. For one, there is a denunciation of the bookishness of classical philosophy and education and its reliance upon ancient knowledge, much of it he regarded as inaccurate. It is of interest that Webb advocated a "core curriculum design" where studies would extend into adult life in order to create a "world consciousness" reminiscent of the critical theorists calls for global economic responsibility and consciousness. Webb doubted whether teachers alone could achieve such aims. In his book *The Teacher and Politics* Webb criticized teachers for their past failures to formulate reformist policy. The Webbs proposed replacing the classical, private education structures with a vocationally directed system based upon science, technology, social sciences and European studies. A realist program of studies for London University he proposed research and professional studies as a way to bring social reform. Even the Faculty of Arts would have to become professional too through teaching some fifty languages and world literature. Thus a "practical

education" was sought. On the whole his ideas have come to be fully realized in 20th Century European universities. Fabians regarded certain elements in education as obstacles-notably the conservatism of the independent (private) public schools and the old universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In order to achieve the objectives of a reconstructed society then new institutions had to be planned. The private institutions represented powerful social elites and their interests. These reproduced this selective elitist interest and power in British society.

### **George Bernard Shaw**

"I am pure Dublin... We are a family of Pooh Bahs- snobs to the backbone. Drink and lunacy are minor specialties" (G.B. Shaw) 1912<sup>13</sup>

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin at 3 Upper Synge Street July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1856 "fifty years too soon" Shaw calculated. He attended Dublin's Wesleyan Connexional School, at 79 St. Stephen's Green at age 10. He was unfavourable in his opinion of schooling. In brief he hated it. "A more futile boy prison could not be imagined. I was a Day-boy: what a boarder's life was like I shudder to conjecture"<sup>14</sup> afterwards he attended a private school at 23-24 Sandycove Road, Glasthule, near Dalkey during periods of absence from Wesley and then Dublin's Central Model School in Marlborough Street where he remained only seven months in 1869 an experimental non-sectarian school for all religious groups. In 1869 he transferred to the Dublin English Scientific and Commercial Day School which had a business vocational mission at Aungier and Whitefriars Steets sponsored by the Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, GBS became joint Head Boy and stayed two years. His loathing of formal schooling was massive. In an interview given in his eighties he quipped that he valued nothing he experienced in any of these schools and the teachers were "turnkeys hired to keep the little devils locked up where they cannot drive their mothers mad"<sup>15</sup> Shaw, the aesthetic learner and not the pedagogical, said " my university has three colleges: Dalkey Hill, The National Gallery and Lee's Amateur Muscial Society.

Shaw read the first Fabian Tract *Why are the Many Poor?* And immediately proceeded to attend his first Fabian Society meeting on 16 May 1884. On 5 October 1884 he became a member and wrote Tract No. 2 *A Manifesto* all of which contained



two pages laying out 17 theses in support of Socialism. Shaw wrote “The most striking result of nineteenth century capitalism in Britain had been to divide society into hostile classes, with large appetites and no dinners at one extreme, and large dinners and no appetites at the other”.<sup>16</sup>

His father an unsuccessful corn merchant and alcoholic, reared Shaw in “genteel Protestant poverty” and so contemptuous did his family become of him that they left him, not even attending his funeral when he passed. Shaw’s mother and her lover, Lee, packing up for London, where George followed in 1876. He completed all of his formal education at the Dublin English Scientific and Commercial Day School. At 15 he went to work in a land agent’s office and in 1876 emigrated to London where he vowed never to do another honest day of work. Shaw was not to return to Ireland for the next thirty years and only then at his Irish wife, Charlotte’s insistence.

He was a remarkable man, self-educated at the British Museum, a committed Socialist and vegetarian who did not use alcohol or tobacco and was a staunch fighter for women’s rights and the conditions of London’s poor and workers. Of great interest to this writer was his connection with the educational proposals of the Fabian Society- most notably his co-founder status of the London School of Economics and Political Science, in 1895, a new professional research institution incorporated as the first social science research unit in Britain. In fact, the LSE opened the first Sociology Department in 1903 and what’s more continuing with the applied research nature of the institution offered the first courses in social work in England. Based on the L’Ecole des Sciences Politiques in Paris, (Webb was much influenced also by M.I.T in Massachusetts) 9 John St and 10 Adelphi Terrace-later Clare Market and Houghton Street it was established to promote the advancement of the social sciences and their application to the betterment of society in 1895.

In 1884 Shaw also helped co-found the Fabian Society and served on its Executive Committee from 1885-1911. It was the partnership of Shaw with Sidney Webb which made the Fabian Society work. In Webb they had their “numbers man” and in Shaw their witty propagandist, rhetorician and political temperament which was an ideas factory for the Labour movement. Shaw also was an astute politician serving as Vestryman (Councillor) for St. Pancras with the London County Council from 1887-1906. It should be noted that Shaw regarded Parliament as a place he might only be

admired for a flash of his brilliant wit-however in LCC he could get things done. He ran on the School Board Election in St. Pancras and was soundly defeated in 1894 . Earlier in 1894 he had refused putting himself up as a Parliamentary candidate from Chelsea. By 1897 he let his name go forward in the St. Pancras Vestry elections to LCC and ran as a "Progressive" candidate winning.<sup>17</sup> In the latter post he was extremely instrumental in carving educational policies and collaborated with Keir Hardie in writing the proposal for the new independent Labour Party in 1893. In his work as a Councillor he found it hard to trust the statistics put forward by medical doctors and he proposed to the Vestry that the figures collected in the Royal Commission's Report of 1896 be submitted to a blue ribbon panel of experts from the LSE and doctors be omitted from this panel<sup>18</sup>. It was Shaw who first pressed for a socialized medical system to take the "money motive" out of medicine in letters and articles to *The British Medical Journal*, *The Times*, and *Saturday Review*.<sup>19</sup>

The most tangible result of his work as a Vestryman was his book *Municipal Trading* that Henderson<sup>20</sup> declares that Shaw told him that this was one of the best and most useful things he had ever done. At the expiration of his term as Vestryman Shaw stood for a Council seat on Borough of St. Pancras. On that occasion Shaw was defeated over an educational issue. "I was beaten" Shaw remarked "because I alienated the Nonconformists element by favouring the improvement of the Church schools. I was convinced that such improvements would lead to the betterment of the education of the children"<sup>21</sup> Shaw saw that he could not over-ride the prejudice against the Church. It is noteworthy that as far back as 1889 GB Shaw was asked to stand as an MP.

Rather than join the radical Social Democratic Federation and Hyndman, Shaw embraced the Fabian Society. In 1886 Webb wrote "The Society took the colour of Shaw's mordantly critical temperament and bore the stamp of his personality. In 1885 it had 40 members but by 1900 it had over 800."<sup>22</sup>

Churchill once remarked of G.B. Shaw's dramatic characters as "ideas walking" and H.G. Wells, in his critical observation of Beatrice and Sidney Webb in the *New Machiavelli*, commented that Beatrice saw men as "samples moving". The Webb's were a team that looked at poverty, trade union reform, land nationalization, rent policy and local government and the use of co-operatives. Along with literary figures

like George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright, these were the key contributors to the Fabian Society. They had reform zeal and a passion to collect facts as an empirical basis for policy-making. From 1884 to 1930 the Society examined many social issues including poverty under capitalism, workers compensation, wages, conditions of employment, rural de-population, public health, school nurseries and city pawnshops.

The LSE was modeled on the *Ecole libre de Sciences Politiques* in Paris. The LSE was established in 1895. It was founded with the purpose of faculty and students doing research to reconstruct the social problems of society. Its ideology was socialism though it allowed for all political persuasions-its first Director W.A.S. Hewins, was a Conservative. The task was twofold: documenting the horrid social conditions of life and assemble experts who could attack these problems. Indeed the LSE was to become a School within the larger University of London.

It is well bearing in mind that the Fabians believed that knowledge was power and in the hands of key policy-makers guaranteed social reforms. It is also key to know that Sidney Webb became a leading policy spokesperson for the Labour Party in Britain which fought for Socialism and worker's rights so successfully. Indeed Sidney attained Cabinet rank in the first Labour Government. It was under the subsequent Labour Party initiatives that all students were entitled to free education through university and a free National Health scheme which has been subsequently eroded in recent years by the Conservatives. What is extraordinary was that by the 1930's their ideas had become institutions and law. They were bringing influential people into their thinking. There would be conflicts too. Herbert Spencer, the educational theorist, wrote in an ill temper to Sidney Webb opposing Webb's idea for a Library of Political Science at the LSE because he did not like the idea of free libraries any more than free bakeries. "Food for the mind should be no more given gratis than food for the body. All of this is socialistic and I am adverse to socialism in every form"<sup>23</sup>

Shaw believed that equality would be the key issue rather than minimum wages, health issues, and such. Thus he was for the "collectivism" idea (today the concept of *equality* has replaced "collectivism") and not individualism. In this history may show him to be correct. Indeed, such was the Fabian currency that Russian government wished Shaw to join them in their policies of education and social reform. In fact

Shaw visited Stalin and admired his “efficiency” lionizing him in his play *Man and Superman*.

That Shaw continued to be concerned about the LSE is documented in his own correspondence. Writing on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1898 in a letter to Beatrice Webb, Shaw attached a priceless postscript in which he mentioned the circumstances of his meeting (a hurt foot) and care for by Charlotte Frances Payne Townshend, his “Irish Millionairess” and their eventual marriage days before on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1898. Shaw wrote:

Tell Webb (referring to Sidney) ...that the London School is much the worse, evidently, for his absence. The City and Parochial has refused to fork out; and Hewins, almost in tears, declares that the attitude of the Technical Education Board can mean nothing else than a charge of malversation against him. None of them have the art of getting money or even keeping it. In despair they are falling back on the Foxwell Library project (which seems to me a monstrous waste of money) as a possible bait for subsidies. Charlotte is of course cut off from all business now except for my fractured limbs. However, it will have to be retrieved by your next book which will probably prove that the London School is the palladium of superiority to America.<sup>24</sup>

Charlotte Shaw not only maintained the LSE with her fortune but she cared for every aspect of Shaw’s life: his food, business arrangements, travel etc. Charlotte was born at Derry, County Cork in 1857 and her great love was Ireland and all her married life she regretted she could not convince GBS to spend more time there. They did visit Lady Gregory and Sir Horace Plunkett and a brief memoir<sup>25</sup> by Mary Stewart Cholmondelay with whom Shaw became good friends while staying in County Cork is evidenced by GBS dedicating his longest book *An Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* to her. Shaw deeply loved Charlotte and she him. It is reported<sup>26</sup> that as she lay dying of a painful disease he moved his piano to the foot of the stairs and sang and played, night after night, her favourite tunes to help ease her pain.

### **Concluding Comments**

Life was quite grim in London and the United Kingdom of that time but the Fabians did make an institutional effort to establish research as a mode of helping the poor and of adopting critical social and educational policy of higher education as a form of social engineering and social reform. It is clear that Shaw was the luminary writer and

speaker on behalf of Fabian Socialism. In terms of sociological expertise, classification was perhaps the chief talent of the Webbs and they used the word "efficiency" much in their writing. Yet neither Sidney nor Beatrice had any true understanding of science or indeed sociological method but this did not deter Beatrice from speaking grandiloquently of her work as a contribution to the science of society<sup>27</sup> A brief reading of her work *My Apprenticeship* bares the limited concept of science and sociology that she indeed possessed.

The Fabian philosophy however was in the tradition of Locke, J.S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham. Bentham, a founder of University College, London, devoted himself to the education of the poor, was an eccentric who demanded that upon his death he be stuffed and seated at each meeting of the Faculty. To this day his stuffed skin is wheeled into Committee and he is marked as "present" on the minutes at the meetings of faculty.

As a group Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb were for the common worker and did not share Matthew Arnold's revivalist admiration for classical humanist theory in Britain. For one, there is a denunciation of the bookishness of classical philosophy and education and its reliance upon ancient knowledge, much of it he regarded as inaccurate. It is of interest that Webb advocated a "core curriculum design" where studies would extend into adult life in order to create a "world consciousness" reminiscent of the critical theorists calls for global economic responsibility and consciousness. Webb and Freeman also doubted whether teachers alone could achieve such aims. In their book *The Teacher and Politics*, Webb criticized teachers for their past failures to formulate reformist policy. The Webbs proposed replacing the classical, private education structures with a vocationally directed system based upon science, technology, social sciences and European studies. A realist program of studies For London University he proposed research and professional studies as a way to bring social reform. Even the Faculty of Arts would have to become professional too through teaching some fifty languages and world literature. Thus a professional School with a "practical education" was sought. On the whole Fabian Socialist ideas have come to be fully realized in 20th century European universities.

Fabians regarded certain elements in school education as obstacles-notably the conservatism of the independent (private) public schools and the old universities of

Oxford and Cambridge. In order to achieve the objectives of a reconstructed society then new institutions had to be planned. The private institutions represented powerful social elites and their interests. These reproduced this selective elitist interest and power in British society.

It is my contention that students in teacher education program at need to be educated into an awareness of the history of social/critical reconstructionist educational theory as well as the extent of poverty in their own region, and of its dire consequences for children's education. The Fabians made a real difference. From their ideas a new social order emerged, an order, which ironically, made their very existence redundant.

## Notes

1. The word Fabian was derived from the name of the Roman General Fabius, who preferred to take strategic strikes against Hannibal instead of waging an all-out battle. Thus the strategy of the Fabian Society was not to initiate revolt but to convince the citizens of the merits of Socialism through a gradual process of piecemeal “permeation”.
2. Important sources for social reconstructionism as an educational theory include George S. Counts *Dare the School Build a New Social Order* (New York: John Day, 1932); Theodore Brameld, *Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1956);
3. Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works: A Critical Biography* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918)
4. Henderson, *Ibid.*, 134.
5. Ralf Dahrendorf *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1995 p. 95.
6. The thirteen Nobel Prize winners include: 1925: George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize in Literature (Shaw refused the money); 1950: Bertrand Russell, Nobel Prize in Literature; 1950: Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize; 1959: Lord Phillip Noel Baker, Nobel Peace Prize; 1972: Sir John Hicks, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (jointly);

1974: Friedrich von Hayek, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (jointly); 1977: James Meade, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (jointly); 1979: Sir Arthur Lewis, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (jointly); 1990: Merton Miller, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences; 1991: Ronald Coase, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences; 1998: Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences; 1999: Robert Mundell, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences; 2001: George Akerlof, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (jointly).

7. Archibald Henderson *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts), 1956 p. 335.

8. Webb Diary ii 239.

9. Ralf Dahrendorf, *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1885-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1995 p.3 who argues that the proposal to establish the LSE was first hatched at a breakfast meeting on 4 August 1894 attended by G.B.Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and Graham Wallas

10. Archibald Henderson, Shaw's biographer, actually stayed with him awhile taking leave from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and wrote "Shaw actually lived with the Webbs a great deal between 1893 and '1898" *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts)1956 p. 335,

11. Malcolm Skilbeck *Education and the Reconstruction of Culture: A Critical Study of Twentieth Century English and American Theories* .Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of London. Institute of Education, n.d.

12. *Ibid* Chapter IV, pp 102-147

13. See Michael Holroyd *Bernard Shaw: Volume I 1856-1898 The Search for Love* (New York: Random House) 1988, p. 5

14. Quoted in Michael Holroyd. *Op. Cit* . p. 33

15. *Ibid*, p.36

16. *Ibid*. p. 136

17. *Ibid.* . p 412

18. *Ibid.* p. 421

19. *Ibid.* p. 421

20. See. *George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works: A Critical Biography* (New York: Boni and Liveright) 1918 Cf page183

21. *Ibid.* p. 183

22. *Ibid.* p. 174

23. Herbert Spencer letter to W.A.S. Hewins, Director of the LSE 24 March, 1897, Hewins Papers, 44/146-7.

24. Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century, Op cit.* p. 420-421.

25. Cf. Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*, Appendix IV, pp 951-953.

26. *Ibid* p. 953.

27. Henderson, *Op cit* p. 350

## **Bibliography**

Counts, George *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (New York: John Day Co.) 1932.

Dahrendorf, Ralf *LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science 1895-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Henderson, Archibald *George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works: A Critical Biography* (New York: Boni and Liveright) 1918



Henderson, Archibald *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts) 1956.

Holroyd, Michael *Bernard Shaw Volume I 1856-1898: The Search for Love* (New York: Random House)

Shaw, G.B. (Ed.) *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (London: the Fabian Society) 1889

Shaw, G.B. *Socialism for Millionaires*. (London: The Fabian Society) Tract 107, 1901.

Shaw, G.B. *Man and Superman* (London: Constable) 1931 Revised Ed.

Shaw, G.B. *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (London: Constable) 1928.

Skillbeck, Malcolm *Education and the Reconstruction of Culture: A Critical Study of Twentieth Century English and American Theories*. (London: Institute of Education, London University) Unpublished PhD Thesis.

Webb, Beatrice *My Apprenticeship* (London: Longmans, Green and Co.) 1926.

Webb, Beatrice *Diaries 1912-1924* Edited by Margaret Cole (London: Longmans, Green and Co.) 1952.

Webb, Sidney *The Education Muddle and the Way Out* (London: the Fabian Society) Tract 106, 1901.

Webb, Sidney. *The Teacher In Politics*. (London: the Fabian Society) Tract 187, 1919.

Wells, H, G. *The New Machiavelli* (London: T. Fisher Unwin) 1925