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British Education and the Defamation of the Sixties

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British Education and the Defamation of the Sixties

This paper discusses the educational changes which were introduced in Britain during the 1960s and early 1970s and were to be held responsible for the decline of the old regime, the corruption of the English character and even economic decline. It concentrates on the development of educational policies mainly for secondary schools during the 1960s, one of the centrepieces of Harold Wilson's social policy, which aspired to challenge the rigid stratification of British society. The secondary-level has been chosen because it has been and remains one of the thorniest political issues of postwar education. It follows these changes up to the present and through them outlines the transformation of values in social politics in Britain. In so doing it detects the spirit of the 1960s as the motivation for radical change not in the streets but in bureaucracies and ministerial decisions.

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Education is taken as the most essential mechanism not only of social reproduction but also of breeding a cultural consciousness. Therefore it cannot be considered as an isolated bureaucracy irrelevant to 'real' history but as a workshop of ideas, values and social expectations which determine both individual identities and national politics. State education in particular is held accountable for encoding and promoting perceptions of the context of citizenship. Who should be educated, by whom and what is there to learn, and what to expect out of education are issues which are essential to all educational systems and actually determine social evolution. This paper examines the developments in education in 1960s Britain – often considered by contemporaries as

'revolutionary' – within its social, ideological and political context. It also examines these issues within the cultural and political context of the consequent decades to demonstrate to what extent these changes which were initiated during this period – despite the contempt by which they were later treated – have really transformed perceptions of the scope of education in Britain.

Before embarking in such endeavour one has to ask how revolutionary Britain was in the 1960s and in which context these educational changes occurred.

1968 and Britain

Was 1968 an *annus mirabilis* for Britain in the fashion it was for other parts of the world? The year saw marches of more than 30,000 people against the war in Vietnam and a few attempts to storm the American embassy stopped through the intervention of mounted police. There was unrest in universities, evident in heated debates in amphitheatres and two brief occupations of the London School of Economics in March and October.¹ But one could hardly speak of general unrest in the country. It was also the year that saw the launch of provocative newspaper publications such as *The Black Dwarf* and television programs of devastating political satire. This was the 'satire boom' as the explosion of comedy in the late 1950s/early 1960s came to be known, and it was interpreted by some historians as the disparity between expectations of the immediate postwar generations and the reality they had to live in exposing the "pomposity of Britain's ruling elite".² However, it was also the year of the infamous "rivers of blood" speech, a warning from the Conservative Member of Parliament Enoch Powell on the dangers of the flow of immigrants from the Commonwealth which he felt threatened the otherwise placid land of Britain.³

In 1968, its fourth year of rule, Wilson's Labour government was to realise the British way to socialism, which for many meant turning to the centre-right of Labour's spectrum. Wilson re-nationalised the steel industry (but only the steel industry) and avoided military involvement in Vietnam; yet without renouncing aggressive American foreign policy.⁴ He also announced the withdrawal of Britain's military forces from major bases in the Middle East, effectively bringing an end to the British empire, and reluctantly marking a shift in the country's allegiances away from the empire and closer to Europe, by lodging a much-debated second application of Britain to join the European Economic Community, which was vetoed by Charles de Gaulle.⁵

Since the beginning of the decade Britain was undergoing a cultural and social transformation. An agenda of social reform, which was not necessarily enthusiastically supported by all political parties in parliament, exhibited an openness which was expressed in the vote for the abolition of capital punishment, the decriminalisation of male homosexual acts between consenting adults in private, the liberalisation of the abortion law, divorce reform, the abolition of theatre censorship, the lowering of the age of majority to 18, the Race Relations Reform bill which contributed to a fairer treatment of the immigrant population living in Britain, although this was to be followed by more restrictions on immigration into the country. Roy Jenkins, the home secretary, was the key personality in the Labour Party in enacting the new legislation and put these reforms into practice.⁶ Women's rights were also pushed ahead with the Equal Pay Acts which were to

ensure equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value as well as the right to employment protection for women while on maternity leave. Barbara Castle's role in passing these laws before Labour lost office in 1970 was crucial and the legislation was practically enacted during the second Wilson administration.⁷ It was these changes that effectively made law reflect social realities which were already evident in Britain in late 1960s. Maybe these were the changes which led to Britain to be coined as the "permissive society".⁸

But it was more than this which made Britain, its capital especially, a symbol of the libertine attitude of the 1960s – a symbol which was exported to the rest of the world. The "swinging city", the phrase *Time* magazine used to describe London in 1966, was drawn into "a happy mysticism" with the mingling of pop culture with radical politics, as Tariq Ali describes in his *Autobiography of the Sixties*.⁹ Music, the actual and the alleged sexual permissiveness, youth fashion supported by the material prosperity of the young, the creation of a new ministry for the arts: all these factors contributed to the emergence of a libertarianism which was meant to scrub the rust which had formed during the austerity spirit of the immediate postwar years.¹⁰ But also many saw 'permissiveness' as the lowering of moral standards. An emblematic figure of the moral crusade against permissiveness, Mary Whitehouse, founded the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association to fight together with her "political sympathiser" Margaret Thatcher against "the gospel of permissiveness and self-indulgence" which they thought was promoted especially in the media.¹¹

Yet the vitality of British youth culture, fashion and the arts, despite the fact that they confronted the establishment on ideological terms, was a source for national pride (even for the establishment) because of its huge commercial success.¹² It is very telling that the Queen awarded the Beatles an MBE (Member of the British Empire) in 1965 and Mary Quant an OBE (Officer of the British Empire) in 1966 for their contribution to the music and fashion industry respectively. "Britain", argued the *Time* journalist, is undergoing "a bloodless revolution, where the Tory–Liberal establishment of the empire officers, the still-powerful City financiers, the Church and the Oxbridge dons were to give way to a new and surprising leadership community – economists, professors, actors, photographers, singers, admen, TV executives and writers – a *swinging* meritocracy."¹³

So how was education entangled in this picture of progress and permissiveness and why was it found to be the culprit for many social and economic ills in the following decades?

Who should be educated?

Up until the mid-60s education was not a major issue on the political agenda. Despite the existence of bold political movements aiming at educational transformation since the beginning of the century, education in the 60s was still considered a private matter where the state had only a limited role to play. This was because social class rather than an egalitarian national consciousness cultivated in schools was to determine one's collective character and aspirations as a citizen. Education as an intermediary between social and cultural policy was only hitherto partially fulfilled in Britain by providing some type of education for all but definitely not an equal education for the majority of the nation's youth.

The liberal edifice of English education, built on the abilities of the individual who mistrusted the state, had a long history rooted in the founders of English liberalism. Echoing ideas such as John Stuart Mill's that education and culture should be aimed at the "highly gifted and instructed few", or even Matthew Arnold's that "high culture" should be aimed at the new industrial middle classes and not the masses, the educational system in Britain – which only by the end of the nineteenth century had become under partial state provision – reflected the need that the liberty of the individual would remain protected from the dangers of an ignorant and uneducated majority and also exclude that majority from becoming educated.¹⁴ Despite of the fact that other nineteenth-century intellectuals and reformers challenged these ideas, British education remained an institution which assured that leadership would not interfere with the masses. Ideas such as those put forward by the political theorist T. H. Green, who argued that liberalism should not be interpreted as freedom from state intervention but as the freedom which gives individuals the opportunity to develop their human powers to the full, were marginalised and never put into practice in educational planning in Britain. From the outset the British state educational system was built on the principle of keeping the social order intact. The schools designated for the poor were to operate at a minimal cost for the economy and instil into working-class pupils "a modicum of useful knowledge to enable them to respect authority and accept their future social and economic roles", by and large leaving secondary education outside the system throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁵

During periods when other factors were contributing to the expansion of democracy – such as the expansion of the electoral franchise – state educational organisation was reconsidered, but did not lose its elitist character, at least for the greatest part of the twentieth century. The creation of the Board of Education with a minister responsible to parliament, the massive expansion of secondary education which followed, the educational reforms (which saw the establishment of a 'free places system' under which grants to secondary schools were made conditional on 25 per cent of places being reserved for working-class children coming from public elementary schools, the selection taking place on the basis of mental testing)¹⁶ pursued by the Liberal Party in the first decades of twentieth century did not change the social order which was protected by selection and the exclusion of the masses. Even the war cry 'Secondary Education for All', based on R. H. Tawney's 1926 publication calling for a reorganisation of the educational system, was dispelled with the subsequent Hadow Report which outlined the route on which social separatism would continue.¹⁷ In 1938 the Spens Committee consolidated the three types of schools – grammar, technical and modern – which were to become the cornerstone of the supposed egalitarian educational act designed during the Second World War: the famous Butler's Act, the jewel in the crown of the newly founded welfare state.

Expectations of and disillusionment with Butler's Act

During the late 1950s and the 1960s, twenty years after the implementation of Butler's Act, sociologists, educationists and politicians were attacking once again the inherent class nature of British education in maintaining social inequality through constant exclusion and selection. They made proposals to transform education from an elitist, exclusive privilege of the few to a non-negotiable prerogative of the British people.¹⁸

The promise of equal opportunity in the tripartite system was found wanting as it left the majority of pupils with poor education and very limited access to higher education. The 11-plus examination, which allowed entrance to secondary education, was based on eugenic-type theories of education which categorised three different kinds of human mind, claiming that intelligence was an intellectual ability “inherited, or at least innate, not due to teaching or training, which remains uninfluenced by industry or zeal”.¹⁹ Cyril Burt, the psychologist behind this concept, saw with enthusiasm that from the moment his theory was established “mental qualities could at last be measured with accuracy and ease”. In his essay “How the mind works”, he tried to establish the newly applied psychological experiments as the ‘scientific’ answer to the prejudice of the past. The psychologist, he claimed, had standardised the method and also the results. By this way he could establish what is normal, subnormal and supernormal for each age group. His views were considered in the Spens Report of 1938. Therefore from that time onwards there was a scientific ‘alibi’ not to invest in educating what were considered ‘backward minds’. Grammar schools created for the academically minded, technical schools created for children with a technical aptitude, and secondary modern schools for those who did not achieve scores in the top 25 percent of the exam, reflected mostly the social stratification of prewar British society rather than an intellectual classification of children.²⁰ The main beneficiaries of this act, as most educationists concluded, were middle-class children, along with a small number of selected working-class children,²¹ who attended the academic grammar schools. The secondary modern schools provided a practical education and only exceptionally, with the occasional special effort of some teachers, could they lead to higher education. As for the technical schools, these were never widely implemented as they never became popular. The three types of schools were supposed to have ‘parity of esteem’, but this could not have been further from either truth or logic. Parity of esteem was never realised and, very quickly, grammar and secondary modern schools prevailed (the technical schools never became popular). Eventually these schools were classified in popular opinion as schools for competent pupils and schools for incompetent ones respectively.

Despite the drawbacks of Butler’s Act, what it did achieve was the widening of educational expectations, the prospect of all children to be included in the educational process but especially in ‘grammar school-type of education’ which would lead to the achievement of life goals.²² It was to these prospects that politicians, educationists and other professionals of education responded in suggesting new policies to organising education. Reforms aiming at expansion and inclusion were seen not only as part of the general social reformation of the 1960s but also as an urgent economic need, on the grounds that British society could not afford to waste the talent of the young.²³

The comprehensives and the expansion of education

After a decade of experimentation from 1954, another type of secondary school – the comprehensive – emerged out of the devotion of many educationists to the cause of equal opportunity through education. Although the idea of comprehensive schools was rooted in the interwar movement of ‘*secondary education for all*’, it had been frustrated because of the other economic and social hazards of this period. Comprehensive schools were to admit children of all abilities and aptitudes from the age of 11 to at least 16, to be taught together in the same school, rather

than giving equality of opportunity to few very able pupils from the working class.²⁴ The need for that type of schooling became obvious when many realised that increased opportunity as hoped for by Butler's Act neither equalised chances nor satisfied those who had now increased expectations from education. According to economists this kind of educational opportunity did not enhance social mobility.²⁵ In 1965, Anthony Crosland, the Labour secretary of state for education and a fervent supporter of comprehensive education, 'requested' local education authorities (through circular 10/65) to reorganise their schools on comprehensive principles. Only those who were to turn into comprehensives were to get grants from the Department of Education. Educationists have pointed out that the mistake made by the government was to 'request' and not to 'require' this to happen, which allowed some authorities to procrastinate until as late as the late 1970s. Indeed, fifteen authorities have retained selective schooling up to the 2000s.²⁶

The schools created embraced the ideal of all local children being taught in a single school, using the same physical facilities and enjoying equal access to high-quality teachers.²⁷ Most educationists hoped that mixing children from different social backgrounds in the same school would lead to the reduction in class antagonism and class differences. This, however, challenged right from the beginning "the dominant principle on which the British system of schooling has been historically based – selection of children for unequal provision".²⁸ As Carr and Harnett have shown, 'social mixing' had always been the greatest fear of liberals since the foundation of secondary state education in Britain. The Bryce Commission of 1894, for example, clearly stated that a parent would not send his children to a school if he had "reason to think that they would run a risk of acquiring habits of speech or behaviour which might be disadvantageous to them", implying contact with children of the lower classes.²⁹

Parallel to the creation of comprehensive schools, some of Wilson's other educational achievements included the unprecedented expansion of new universities planned after the Robbins Report, which came to be known as the plate-glass universities as distinct from the Victorian red-brick universities, which had dominated academic life. The new universities were not only different in terms of architecture, but they were to host new ideas and disciplines which were reluctantly accepted in established ones.³⁰ As a result, the student population rose dramatically, yet it still remained one of the lowest in Europe.³¹ These universities would cater for the greater clientele coming from the expanded secondary school system, which enabled greater access to higher education. Yet the most famous and celebrated educational achievement in the direction of equal opportunity, and thus the widening of democracy, was the creation in 1969 of the Open University, which would offer, through part-time and distance learning, a second chance of obtaining a higher education to all those who had missed out on it. Many historians see the Open University, the 'brainchild of Wilson', as the greatest contribution of his government.³²

Controversy

Although the expansion of higher education did not provoke serious controversy, the expansion of comprehensive education did.³³ That was because the grammar schools represented for many an old regime of selection and exclusion of the weak, in which talent and genius could

thrive through traditional academic teaching methods. For many Tories “Britain’s grammar schools and public schools were the envy of the world”,³⁴ while comprehensives were “backward jungles staffed by lefty teachers” – a prevalent perception in the national media at the time.³⁵ In the words of the 1950s Conservative minister Sir David Eccles,³⁶ the choice between grammar and comprehensive schools was a “choice between equality and justice”, and of course the Conservatives would prefer the kind of justice which benefited those who were already privileged. But even Wilson himself was a firm supporter of grammar schools as they had given a rare opportunity to a few intelligent, working-class children. As a matter of fact Wilson was characteristically unwilling to bring an end to grammar schools, which were now competing to survive alongside the comprehensives. After all, both he and Margaret Thatcher were two of the most famous products of such schools. For Anthony Crosland, Wilson’s support of grammar schools was an indication of his weak interest in equality.³⁷

At the proceedings of an educational symposium, published in 1968, right after the dynamic setting up of comprehensives seemed an irreversible process, educationists of different creeds expressed their concerns.³⁸ Lord James of Rusholme, the high master of Manchester Grammar School, speaking in defence of the grammar schools, argued that they would have to survive for Britain’s economic and social interest. In his view selection was mandatory because the ablest section of the population deserved special education just as any other section such as those who suffered from physical or mental handicap. On this very able ten percent of the population, as he reckoned the ablest might be, depended the economic and hence every other kind of advancement of the country. He also argued that it was necessary to instil the grammar school ethos into the comprehensives. In his view, grammar schools modelled on the public schools were the carriers of nation’s inherent values. The teacher in a good grammar school had the “pastoral obligation” to initiate his (mainly ‘his’) pupils into games, sports and extra-curricular activities which would train their leadership skills. Although he accepted the criticism that the middle classes were mainly represented in the grammar schools, he thought that it was only a matter of time as “the process of social advance goes on into the seventies”, that the working classes would become richer, which would eventually allow them to send their children to grammar schools.³⁹

Very reassuringly, Sir John Newsom⁴⁰ at the same conference declared that ‘selection’ was going to continue within the comprehensive schools but in a different form; that is at the age of 16 and not at 11, as had been the case. He argued: “We are not equal in capacity, however much we may be equal on the eyes of God. Each person in his own capacity is going to make a different contribution to the economy of the country.”⁴¹ In his view “fraternity” (the third leg of liberty and equality), also expressed as “charity”, could become the solvent to achieve broad equity within the education system – in which there is opportunity for every child and where differences between schools would no longer apply. Very careful not to disturb the liberal model of education which many of the audience had in mind, Newsom predicted the agenda that comprehensives would partially succeed in following decades. From that time on the question for secondary education graduates would not be “where did you go to school?” but “what qualifications have you got?”⁴²

Other conference participants who spoke in favour of comprehensives could see not only the social revolutionary potentialities of the comprehensives but also the great contribution they would

have in the development of the economy. David Donnison said: "If we are to maintain standards of our educated elite in a competitive world we must enable far more children from a wider range of social backgrounds to complete their schooling and go on to higher education . . . We cannot sustain the rate of growth we want unless many more young people are allowed to take their education further."⁴³ He argued against early specialisation and exclusion, providing evidence which proved that early specialisation does not produce higher standards in the long run, while economists stressed the cost of ignorance among too many young people and urged schools and universities to produce not specialists but adaptable people capable of doing a variety of jobs and of learning new things quickly.⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that all these three participants, supporting different opinions, were deeply concerned with the fact that the changes in education were about to bring a social revolution which was going to influence Britain's economy. By 1968 clouds were gathering over Labour's second term in government as "devaluation, deflation and industrial conflict" became intense political and economic problems.⁴⁵

Streaming, innovation and teacher training revisited

Right from the start, after so much pressure from educationists, the spirit of selection was finally introduced into comprehensives on the grounds that this was a method to assure high standards. After three years at secondary level, pupils were divided into 'academic' and 'non-academic' streams of competence, reproducing thus the spirit of distinction within these all-inclusive schools. Yet, the new schools pointed the way towards more equitable education for all and they were also prone to experimentation with new subjects and methods of teaching. Since the education curriculum was not fixed or controlled by the Department of Education and Science (DES, created in 1964) new subjects were introduced such as sociology and anthropology which became increasingly popular in academia. It is worth noting that changes in teaching methods had been widely introduced in primary schools. Freed from the 11-plus examination, under the child-centred education encouraged by the Plowden Report changes took pace in primary schools, where emphasis was now given to the individualisation of learning by discovery. *Children and their Primary Schools*, better known as the Plowden Report, was presented by the central advisory council for education under the chairmanship of Bridget Plowden in 1966. It was a report "to consider primary education in all its aspects and the transition to secondary education". The context in which a very wide-ranging committee worked was characterised by an increasingly liberal view of education and society. In the words of Maurice Kogan, it was "a product of the optimism and belief in social engineering of its time" abolishing streaming at the age of 11 and encouraging the creativity of pupils and the innovation of teachers. This kind of primary education influenced by Piaget's theory of development concentrating on children's ability and individuality was suited for the new schools which were already questioning 'authority'.⁴⁶ These children taught by new methods were the clientele of comprehensives which gave rise to great controversy among educationists because more than anything the methods of teaching at the comprehensives were held responsible for breaking the authority of the teacher in the classroom and all the symbolism of authority in general.

Teacher training, which was not standardised, also came under examination in the mid-60s. The Robbins' report recommended the establishment of a Bachelor of Education degree, which would transform teaching into an all-graduate profession. It was only since 1965 that universities were offering Bachelor of Education degrees and, by 1982, 39 per cent of the teaching force were graduates – the rest came from a variety of training colleges, which since the mid sixties offered a three-year course programme.⁴⁷ Of course, whether teachers had a degree or not, or whether they had completed a teachers training course, was again an acute social issue, as it was clear that academic schools were staffed with better-educated teachers. The elite schools and those modelled on them were staffed with teachers who were Oxford and Cambridge graduates and it was naturally assumed that they had little need for any formal teacher training. As Harnett and Carr put it, their notion of "education" simply reflected the political cultural and economic aspirations of those who attended them. On the other hand, for 'teachers of the people' – in the remainder of schools – education had always been a highly contested issue which aimed at solving problems of how, in a modern society, an increasing proportion of children could become educated.⁴⁸ The culture, values and attitudes of those teachers, the knowledge of the dominant established culture, and the debate about the role of education in a democratic society was thus renegotiated in the 1960s mainly within the environs of 'teachers for the people' who were also willing to question authority.

The curriculum: discreet suggestions

What to teach in those new schools was another matter which troubled education in Britain and especially those who believed that the curriculum was an area where the state should not intervene. The reluctance to shape a cohesive national culture through unified national curricula in the same fashion as most European nations – and in particular, as post-revolutionary France had done since the end of eighteenth century, brings us back again to that successful moment of Britain's dominance in the world. For most Europeans a cohesive national culture after the image of its ruling class, promoted through unified education, was expected to promote political loyalty too. However, the British state was confident it could accomplish national goals without having to promote a collective national consciousness for the masses. On the contrary, this seemed more like a Pandora's box rather than a panacea. As Linda Colley has shown, this was because nationalism and patriotism would give access to active citizenship to much more than the British state was willing at the time to emancipate, and would open the door to meritocracy. For the same reason it did not foster national heroes, refusing to make national symbols which could be appropriated by many.⁴⁹ Of course, Matthew Arnold's opinion in *Culture and Anarchy* was that a national culture could also be addressed to an educated minority of the new ruling classes which "would be able to decide for society as a whole what is good and what is bad". This attempt to respond to democracy and promote high culture to the new bourgeoisie and nationalise culture was resented most infamously by the poet T. S. Eliot, who, as late as in 1948, said that: "in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards . . . destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans".⁵⁰

Thus, along with exclusion and selection, the rejection of a uniform national identity through education remained the inherent characteristics of English and Welsh education throughout the twentieth century, even when state education experienced the greatest expansion after the Second World War and after the massive expansion of secondary education in the mid-1960s with the introduction of the comprehensives.

The majority of teachers in the 1960s believed that the freedom to teach what they wanted the way they wanted was a matter of safeguarding democracy itself.⁵¹ Most educationists in Britain experienced the lack of a national curriculum as a part of their authority and not as a sign of being cut off from an elitist or worse a state-authorised national culture. Of course this was because of the separate educational functions the different schools hitherto applied which allocated a different curriculum for each school: an academic one mirroring the elites and a practical one of general practical knowledge for the rest. However, as comprehensives gained pace and “grammar school-type of knowledge” became the target for secondary education even within comprehensives, the content of education came under scrutiny. During the 1960s both parties felt that it was time to open “the secret garden of the curriculum”⁵² and attempted to introduce some uniformity within the curricula, hoping that this would improve standards. During the Conservative administration, in 1962 the Curriculum Study Group was set up, consisting of officials from the Ministry of Education, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (an independent body with a special reputation within the educational world as having disinterested judgement and integrity) and other experts but excluding teachers representatives. This educational body was supported by Lord Nuffield, the Conservative advocate of science education who intended to introduce contemporary technology and modern languages to schools. He wanted to create an elite of schools within the existing elite and recruit students who would become the future technocrats of Britain.

When a Labour government came to power in 1964, the Curriculum Study Group was replaced by the Schools Council, a new body staffed in a more democratic and representative way and which included people from the whole educational spectrum. The idea of having a body intervening in the work of the teacher in the classroom was a blow to “the purely twentieth-century English dogma that the curriculum is a thing to be planned by teachers and other educational professionals alone and that the state’s first duty in this matter is to maximise teacher autonomy and freedom”.⁵³

This is the reason why the Labour Party was very careful to build a body which would be as democratic as possible, representing the majority of the educational world. Moreover it is very important to note that it would lead to suggestions on, but not impose, a national curriculum.

More than half of its members came from the National Union of Teachers, the Association of School Masters and Mistresses, head teachers and representatives of local educational authorities, but also the National Association of Inspectors, voluntary educational councils, GCE examining boards, the Confederation of Parent–Teacher Associations, and even representatives from the Trades Union Congress, the Confederation of British Industry as well as representatives from the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Its purpose was to undertake research and development work on curricula, elaborate on new teaching methods and examinations in schools

in order to make them a catalyst for raising standards for all. It was a body set up to establish the official intervention of central state in the curricula, while this was to be safeguarded by the professionals themselves. With its wide range of representation, this new body aimed to become a "forum or parliament where the various relevant educational bodies were to settle their differences amicably and creatively".⁵⁴

It was precisely because this body was put together by so many different agents that it became slow in decision-making and completing projects. Some of its famous works were completed in the mid-70s, leading its later critics to talk of inefficiency and a waste of resources. Most of its critics claimed that the body did not change the life of the teacher in the classroom since it never made any radical proposals for the curriculum, continuing a policy of non-interference in it. On the contrary, the area in which it was most active was that of examinations since it mostly proposed examination and not teaching syllabuses.⁵⁵ The Examination Boards, which functioned independently from the universities and schools as self-sufficient organisations and were to set up examinations and issue certificates of secondary education, were actually influenced by the new suggestions. By the mid-1960s a few of the eight Examination Boards which operated at the time (there are now five) had been transformed into massive organisations catering for unprecedented number of candidates. They were the ones which accepted first the new subjects proposed by the Schools Council and developed their syllabuses according to new suggestions. So those schools which had a higher academic level and aspired to prepare their pupils for examinations were shaping their own teaching curricula to the corresponding examination syllabuses. This meant that in the end the curriculum was by and large influenced by the examinations of the different examination boards, the syllabuses of which teachers could choose as most appropriate for their pupils.⁵⁶

However, it was because of the suggestions of the Schools Council that syllabuses showed interest in the social problems of racism, ethnicity, gender, popular culture and about the contemporary world in general that these subjects in effect infiltrated the classroom. Examination Boards offered history and sociology syllabuses such as: 'Women and society in Britain since 1850', 'The decline of European imperialism', 'Race and minority problems in the twentieth century', 'The growth of popular culture and its effects on twentieth-century Britain', 'The twentieth century' and 'The world since 1945'. These had become increasingly popular among teachers by the early 1970s. In effect this influenced what was finally taught.⁵⁷

One of the major achievements of the Schools Council was its project for teaching what was known as 'New History' in the third, fourth, and fifth years of secondary education. In this project, the pupil would act as an autonomous moral agent trying to understand the process of change and continuity in human affairs. History would become an activity of enquiry into the past. It introduced pupils to the relativity of notions such as truth; it even advocated empathic reconstruction of the past. This project became the main target of the New Right in the 1980s as it attacked notions of history which Conservatives felt were undermining the construction of the nation's values.⁵⁸ Enquiring, research even within the classroom limits, trial and error became the educating methods for many other subjects as the target was to teach children how to learn and how to become well-informed citizens.⁵⁹ Margaret Thatcher, who described the Schools Council as "a lousy organisation" in the 1970s, abolished it in the early 1980s when she became prime

minister, and for many educationists this marked “the end of an important experiment in co-operation and pluralism”.⁶⁰

Moreover, as immigrants settled in Britain and tensions increased, it became obvious that there was a need to care for black children in schools who very often were underachievers. Multicultural education emerged with ill-coordinated programmes often taught only in areas where immigrant populations had settled. Some schools initiated anti-racist policies in the curriculum and attempted to prevent bullying and racist behaviour among pupils.⁶¹

The emergence of the ‘educational world’ and the chalkface

All these changes in education in the 1960s showed the dynamism of what was now called ‘the educational world’ and attracted the wider interest of the voters in education. Educational policies became obviously political as more people aspired to social change through education. The dynamism of educationists had grown in postwar years, evidenced by “university departments conducting research on educational matters at the same time that more educational institutions [were] involved in teacher training, and [there was] an expansion of education advisers and architects within local authorities”.⁶² The media took over educational debates generated by teachers and educational bureaucrats and these issues now involved parents “more affluent and leisured than ever before”,⁶³ who perceived education as a social and political issue. On the one hand, the major changes were towards the great expansion of the education system at all levels – but especially in secondary education – which some felt would lead to the demise of the class system. On the other hand, this was an education which deviated from traditional English values to include the contemporary post-imperial, consumer-oriented, anti-establishment and ultimately ‘permissive’ Britain. With the expansion of the schools system, habits of learning and discipline were breaking down. ‘Cultural conservatives’ were uneasy with this apparent breakdown of authority in society, and teachers were the first to be blamed for encouraging an atmosphere of permissiveness in schools.⁶⁴ For them, the ‘educational world’ or the ‘educational establishment’ became condescending terms.

What in reality happened in the classroom, what the teachers (or ‘chalkface’ as the colloquial term had it) had to deal with, was a compromise between suggestions coming from the educationists of the Schools Council and the everyday reality of school practice. Those comprehensives which succeeded were the ones which could provide a grammar-school type of education together with new ideas and not those which were just ‘permissive’. Teachers’ choices were determined by their collaboration with the head master of the school who had the power to permit or restrict changes, and of course they were restricted by the funds available. In many cases head teachers were willing to experiment with new textbooks and curriculum projects, especially as new publications were becoming more attractive. They even suggested new ways of teaching, but in most of the cases these openings to new ideas were initiated alongside traditional teaching. The fact that Britain is one of the few countries which does not have and never had any institutional body to recommend, let alone approve, school textbooks, made the choice of headteacher less dependent on ministerial decisions. Increasingly, since the 1960s the aim of

teachers was examination success, since many more pupils took examinations. Not all curricula became multicultural, and in those cases where they existed they were taught parallel to conventional ones. One could finally say that the expectations of the educational world by the end of the decade were for further expansion of education, higher level of expenditure and innovations towards a more 'humanistic perspective' of education.⁶⁵

No way back?

The victory of the Conservatives in 1970 attempted to delay, and in some cases to deny, the 're-organisation of secondary education through comprehensives' in the fashion Labour politicians had envisaged, as the new Secretary of State for Education, Margaret Thatcher, boosted hopes for support of grammar schools. During their time in opposition, the Conservatives incubated a unified educational policy, known as the 'preservationist' policy, which "urged for a conservative restoration of those traditional high standards of English education that seemed to be in danger of being overthrown by 'new' and 'progressive' theories", with a series of publications of *Black Papers*, which lasted from 1969 to 1977.⁶⁶ One of their best-known ideas was to return to education "the pursuit of choice", that is the ability of local education authorities (LEAs) to choose how to organise their schools, of parents to choose the school they felt appropriate for their children, and of pupils to choose subjects and areas of study within schools. It is little wonder thus that one of Thatcher's first measures in this direction was circular 10/70, which restored the 'pursuit of choice' by allowing the LEAs to choose, according to local needs, which schools were to become grammar and which comprehensive. Again the jargon of liberalism of the free individual who makes free choices was employed to denote the ideology of conservatism which was taken to be national English ideology.

Yet despite Thatcher's personal preferences, DES officials were determined to allow experimentation in education to continue. This meant that new ideas on the content, method and structure of education in the new schools were not stopped, so that educationists could still concentrate on finding new approaches to teaching a new curriculum. But even though the preservationist movement did not become the official policy of the DES during the Heath years, it gradually became the official Conservative Party education policy for the future. The overall effect of Conservative educational policy was, the left has claimed, "the defence of elitism against egalitarianism",⁶⁷ while the right claimed it was "the reflection of the public climate of disquiet over state education".⁶⁸ By the end of Thatcher's tenure as education secretary, the number of comprehensives had doubled and over 60 percent of children of secondary-school age had attended them. What is noteworthy historically is that after this movement both political parties came out with specific educational policies, as education had become a major issue for voters.

Discontent and self-mutilation. The first attacks

The global economic crisis of the 1970s, and the effect of the rise in oil prices in particular, affected Britain gravely. The Labour Wilson–Callaghan government of 1974–1979 governed through one of

the most troubled periods of postwar British history. Economic troubles such as mounting inflation and rising unemployment, political ones such as bitter industrial conflicts and the Troubles in Northern Ireland, served to break the postwar welfare capitalist consensus, or alleged consensus for some.⁶⁹ Yet despite economic problems, in 1976 education spending represented some 6.2 percent of GNP, the highest point it was ever to reach in the twentieth century. Education was also included in both the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Third Race Relations Act (1976), so that education would not be denied on the grounds of gender or race. However, after a lecture at Ruskin College in 1976 where he attacked what he called the “educational establishment”, Prime Minister Callaghan launched what he thought would be a ‘Great Debate’ on education. The education establishment was held responsible for inadequately preparing children for the world of work by not acknowledging that higher standards of education were needed in a complex world.⁷⁰ The speech expressed an apparent lack of confidence in the ability of the comprehensives to prevent the decline of educational standards.⁷¹ For the first time the 1960s spirit in education was to be attacked by a Labour government itself. This idea was taken up by the media, and employers and business-people argued that comprehensive schools did not serve the needs of British industry. The media especially contributed in cultivating the idea of a ‘crisis’ in education where an urgent ‘solution’ ought to be found.⁷² From this point onwards, educational practices were to become more closely linked to industrial regeneration, and the media were to play a vital role in influencing public opinion on educational matters.⁷³ Education was now considered to be one of the culprits for the weak economy, at times the scapegoat for decline. Some claimed that this new discourse about education ended the educational consensus and the relative autonomy of education from the state.⁷⁴

Most historians agree that what undermined these charges against education was the fact that the new schools and the new curricula were encouraging those hitherto destined for lower status jobs and lower levels of education to claim equal treatment, undermining in this way authority of the state and social order and demanding citizenship rights and opportunity. This period, which experienced changes in traditional family and gender relationships as well as the presence of immigrant minorities which became bolder, signified for the political right that education had to take back its traditional role and not enhance change. Against this background, as Tomlinson has noted, “education was to return to its role as an allocator of occupations, a defender of traditional academic values, teaching respect for authority, discipline, morality and ‘Englishness’ and preparing a workforce for the new conditions of flexible, insecure labour markets.”⁷⁵

Although the great debate never took off as a major political subject owing to the emergence of other major political problems, these ideas particularly delighted the opposition and, of course, the former secretary of state for education, Thatcher, who was now leader of the Conservative Party. The authors of the notorious Black Papers were justified after Callaghan’s ‘Great Debate’ lecture and found an unexpected ally in promoting their ideas for the need to return to the liberal, now neoliberal, ideas of the state and education. According to Carr and Hartnett, the return to educational tradition they aspired to was the turn to “the phantasmagoria of Britain’s Golden Age when the country was economically pre-eminent in the world; *laissez-faire* values and practices were dominant; state power was minimal and individual choice was greatest; schooling extolled basic skills and capabilities; the religious and moral values inculcated a respect for order, authority, stability and excellence.”⁷⁶

Marketisation of education the ideal of individualism restored

After becoming prime minister, Thatcher's educational agenda was to convert the nation's schools system from a public service into a market. Market principles were advanced while central authority was strengthened. It proved a difficult goal and was not without resistance from those who had benefited from comprehensive education and from those who believed that local education authorities were more aware of the special needs of their constituencies. From now on competition between schools would prevail and local authority influence was to be reduced. After a long period of trial and error, a new educational act was passed in 1988 in order to enact these principles.

The act removed most of the power from the LEAs, entrusting this to schools which were now supposed to compete in order to attract customers, i.e. pupils and parents. The head teacher of each school, who before the act was an educationist, responsible only for a part of the school's budget relating to books and teaching materials and the formation of the school curriculum, now became an institutional manager. Head teachers were now responsible for teachers' recruitment, building maintenance and most importantly, since school budgets were to be based on pupil numbers, for advertising the school for customers. In this way schools could be directly blamed for poor performance and closed down. Pupils were also to be assessed with tests on ten 'levels' of the national curriculum subjects; the results were published in a schools' league table, so that potential customers/parents could avoid sending their children to low-scoring schools.

In 1992, inspection duties were handed over to private contractors, whose staff was not supposed to work in education, reducing further the role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The results were published (by the Office for Standards in Education), in effect naming and shaming schools.⁷⁷ Schools were encouraged to opt out of LEAs and receive their funding directly from central government. They were also encouraged to adopt selection tests for pupils. Selection returned through the back door in the form of specialisation where a new variety of schools was supposed to meet the different needs of pupils.

To achieve all these changes, the Conservative Party had to establish consensus both within and without the party. A discourse of the New Right, which did not represent the whole spectrum of the Conservative Party, was employed, especially in the media, in order to persuade that these policies were the solution of a continuous crisis brought about by the libertarian changes in education in the 1960s and 1970s. A new 'educational vocabulary' was advanced where positive notions such as excellence, quality, core subjects, tradition, discipline, standards, examinations, parents' freedom, market, choice, etc., were to be contrasted with negative ones such as equality, experts, educationalists, militant teachers, loony left councils, indiscipline, curriculum clutter, anti-racism, anti-sexism. These and many more terms were used in a repetitive and politically effective way in order to underrate the educational achievement of the previous decade, namely the expansion of schools and inclusion in them.⁷⁸ This 'imaginative use of language' was chiefly addressed parents and not educational experts, and no serious debates were launched within the academic world as a result of it. On the contrary, a populist form of discourse based on pamphlets and 'think tank' findings was promoted in the newspapers and television.⁷⁹

As regards educational content, here the state showed an unprecedented propensity for direct intervention in the curriculum. In 1992 it presented a new national curriculum, an unmanageable document overloaded with detail. The educational professionals who were asked to construct this curriculum took it as an opportunity to produce “intricate and complex” structures of their subjects.⁸⁰ They tried to include all the state-of-the-art knowledge of the 1990s in each field, but finally came up with such a load of material that would prove unrealistic if ever taught, especially because it also introduced new special teaching methods for each subject. Moreover, mistrusting professional expertise, Thatcher attempted to impose her own views on what education was all about and how it should be organised. What she wanted was simple measurable knowledge that could be easily assessed in examinations, so that parents would be informed on the quality of schools and the quality of teachers’ work.⁸¹

In Thatcher’s words, the curriculum she initially received in history, for example, – a very characteristic case – “appalled” her because, instead of giving an account of “what happened in the past” as she thought history was about and instead of giving “heroic icons of British history in a chronological order”, the curriculum proposed what she viewed as a plethora of “complicated and irrelevant” subjects. In the same manner mathematicians were criticised for their “preference for the understanding of concepts over mental arithmetic and the rote-learning of formulae and multiplication table”. English-language and -literature teachers were criticised for not giving priority to the literary canon of great works and in particular to Shakespeare, even for 14-year-olds.⁸² Even the music curriculum was criticised for not including enough classical music and instead devoting too much time to popular rock and folk music.⁸³ This curriculum was partly implemented and was revised several times by removing the thorniest signs of conservatism and reducing the insurmountable number of subjects to be taught. Carr and Hartnett claimed that overall the purpose of the national curriculum was to create “producers, consumers and workers” instead of informed “citizens”. A depoliticised, individualist perception of citizenship, reduced to a “cross curricular theme” which in a mechanistic way described rights and responsibilities of persons acting in a private rather than in a public capacity, replaced the “education for citizenship” that a participatory democracy required.⁸⁴

Despite the intention to transform education according to neoliberal principles, the complexities of the reality of British education defined the limits of change. In reality, a few more academic schools were created which relied on selection and left the rest to the tide of the market. All these measures were advertised to accomplish the purpose of bringing forward the neoliberal principle of the ‘pursuit of choice’. Parents were allegedly ‘free’ to choose the school they thought most appropriate for their children, but in reality the schools selected the pupils, for the simple reason that all good schools were oversubscribed.⁸⁵ This was most obvious in areas with poor children, where the performance of schools was also poor, leading to what was later called “selection by mortgage” as house prices became higher in the catchment area of popular and heavily oversubscribed secondary schools.⁸⁶ An exception to this was the creation of city technology schools – only 15 in total – for inner-city children, which focused on technology education to fight youth unemployment in these areas.⁸⁷

By the end of Conservative rule, in 1997, investment in education had declined massively, leading to a vast increase in inequality. Higher education was very characteristic of this trend, with a decline in academic salaries, difficulties in funding scientific research (leading to the Save British Science campaign), polytechnics given the status of university while managers were employed to put students through degree courses at much lower costs. This programme did not continue after 1993 as it became obvious that the quality of higher education was deteriorating.⁸⁸

New Labour, old tricks

The educational world delighted in the 1997 Labour victory as the rallying cry of New Labour's political campaign had been "Education, Education, Education". Yet early enough one could detect in Blair's speeches the jargon of Conservative educational policies. A month before the landslide victory in 1997, Blair declared in his election manifesto:

We will make education our number-one priority. Our task is to raise the standards of every school. We must modernise comprehensive schools. Children are not all of the same ability nor do they learn at the same speed. That means 'setting' children in classes to maximise progress, for the benefit of high fliers, and slower learners alike. Labour will never force the abolition of good schools whether in the private or state sector. Any changes in the admissions policies of grammar schools will be decided by local parents.⁸⁹

'Modernising', 'setting', 'high fliers', 'slow learners', 'decisions on local parents', etc., were just a few new words to continue the same old agenda.

What educationists and parents were to find out was that 'selection', or 'selection by specialisation' as the Conservatives had it, was replaced by a word which became synonymous with selection, 'diversity'. *Diversity and Excellence* and *Excellence for Everyone*, the first two policy documents published by Blair's first education secretary, David Blunkett, would be the new slogan for the new era.⁹⁰ By and large, most of the Thatcherite educational bureaucracy remained intact, such as the private inspectors (Ofsted), league tables of exam results, diminishing the power of LEAs, inviting private companies to tender for the few services remaining with local authorities (these were now presented as failures), and of course financial delegation. These issues were heavily contested even before the election within the Labour Party, as Old Labour was against academic selection and the organisation of education in terms of a market economy. In order to achieve that and sidestep conflict within the party, New Labour employed the "mantra of 'standards not structures'".⁹¹ The argument was that, no matter how schools were structured, raising standards was important.

Specialisation and competition among schools for public funding was further encouraged. By 2003, 992 secondary schools were specialist schools: 443 specialising in technology, 173 in arts, 162 in sport, 157 in languages, 18 in business and enterprise, 24 in sciences, 12 in mathematics and computing, 4 in engineering. The target was that half of all secondary schools would acquire some specialisation by 2006.⁹² Often parents could not see the practical benefit of all

these specialisations especially as they were called to choose whether their eleven-year-old children would pursue subjects such as music, art, business and enterprise, etc.⁹³ Moreover, selection was often disguised as the aptitude of children and the proper channelling of talent. Special schools would be allowed to choose in terms of aptitude and not ability in what was, in effect, social streaming. Thus, a specialised school in languages, for example, would choose a child of ten because he or she had an aptitude in speaking a foreign language, which most likely was the result of parents having been able to pay for the child's foreign language lessons.⁹⁴ So through competition, choice and diversity, the neoliberal spirit remained at the heart of New Labour's educational policies, which were now rebranded as necessary for the modernisation of education.

New types of schools were introduced such as the 'academies' and 'trust schools', which are state-maintained independent schools set up with the help of outside sponsors, aiming to drive up standards especially in struggling rural areas and inner cities.⁹⁵ Some aspects of Blair's agenda were aimed particularly at creating an "inclusive and fair society within a competitive economy".⁹⁶ The programme *Every Child Matters* set out five goals: "every child was to be provided with support to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing." In order to achieve these aims many different sectors had to work together such as schools, hospitals, the police and other voluntary groups, to provide all-day childcare when necessary or to help those with special needs. Even the School Food Trust was set up, which saw into law recommendations on healthy eating after Jamie Oliver's cookery television programmes.⁹⁷

Allan Smithers, in appraising Blair's policies in education, concludes that very few of his targets were met. If examinations were to be the only criterion of a school's performance, then examination scores rose, a greater variety of schools than comprehensives was created, more teachers were recruited and extra money was found for education. But, at the same time, more parents preferred to send their children to independent schools, more pupils were playing truant and more teachers were leaving the profession. The diversity of schools did not lead to any kind of equity since not all of them had the same quality or even the same appeal to the market. One of New Labour's achievements has been the rising standards of literacy and numeracy in primary schools, especially because this was an issue which had hit rock bottom during the previous decade. But the belief that tests and exams scores are 'a product' has turned schools into exam factories and inflicted collateral damage such as truancy and behavioural problems among teenagers. Examination pressure could not be sustained even by head teachers, who were now increasingly difficult to attract to state schools because they felt vulnerable to targets and continuous testing.⁹⁸

Since the end of the 1970s, the 60s spirit has been continuously demonised and blamed for economic ills and for socially failing of the young by not teaching them to respect tradition and order, leading thus to British economic decline. Yet, those who really studied what happened in schools during this period established that, at most, there was a combination of modest innovation and older teaching methods. Most changes were welcomed as they were taken to point the way towards a more equitable education for all. With the advance of the Thatcherite policies

in education, individualism was confronted with social targets which the educationists of the 1960s, among others, had put into practice. Sixties educationists were culprits of many sins: at times engaging in the misapplication of educational theories, participating in overloaded committees that produced tedious documents which partially failed to communicate with teachers at schools, and demonstrating a lack of political determination to project dynamically their ideas into society. Yet they were the initiators of ideas that were opening not only to new content but also new methods of their disciplines, being careful to respond creatively to the greatest spectrum of the society they lived in. Mostly what comes from their work is that many of them strove to create an educational system that would not only ensure how those already privileged would be protected but how citizenship could be progressively extended and enlarged through education.

NOTES

- 1 The war in Vietnam was, according to Tariq Ali, the catalyst needed to inspire campus radicalism. It spread to Britain from the United States, and was the cornerstone of protest in universities as well as the marches against the American embassy. See Tariq Ali, *Street Fighting Years. An Autobiography of the Sixties*, London: Collins, 1987, pp. 116–22.
- 2 See, among others, Stuart Ward, “No Nation Could Be Broker, the Satire Boom and the Demise of Britain’s World Role”, in Stuart Ward, *British Culture and the End of the Empire*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001, pp. 91–110; Stephen Wagg, “Comedy Politics and Permissiveness: the ‘Satire Boom’ and its Inheritance”, *Contemporary Politics* 8:4 (2002): 319–34; Keith Suter, “The British Satirical Revolution”, *Contemporary Review* 285:1664 (2004): 161–66.
- 3 See Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics*, London: Pearson, 2005, pp. 168f.; Simon Heffer, *Like the Roman: The Life of Enoch Powell*, London, 1998.
- 4 Ali, *Street Fighting Years*, p. 45.
- 5 Literature on Britain’s relationship with Europe is vast. Most famously Linda Colley’s *Britons, Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, New Haven: Yale UP, 1992, discusses the origins of Britain’s differentiation from Europe since the eighteenth century, claiming that the whole edifice of English national identity was based on such differentiation. See also Ann Deighton, “The Past in the Present: British Imperial Past and the European Question”, in Jan-Werner Mueller, *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002, pp. 100–20. Among the most important publications on the specificities of the second application to join the European Economic Community, see Virginia Preston, Roger Broad (eds), *Moored to the Continent? Britain and European Integration*, London: Institute of Historical Research, 2001; Oliver J. Daddow, *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain’s Second Application to Join the EEC*, London: Cass, 2003; Helen Parr, *Britain’s Policy Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain’s World Role, 1964–1967*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.
- 6 See Martin Pugh, *State and Society, A Social and Political History of Britain 1870–1997*, London: Arnold, 1999, pp. 297–302.
- 7 Michael Foot on Harold Wilson, “Fighter, wriggler, never a pipe dreamer”, *The Observer*, 28 May 1995; Caroline Gatrell, *Hard Labour: The Sociology of Parenthood*, Maidenhead: Open UP, 2005, pp. 23f.
- 8 Whether the permissive society was the work of a few enlightened minorities or the result of a popular movement is still an issue of debate. See Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*; Marcus Collins (ed.), *The Permissive Society and its Enemies: Sixties British Culture*, London: Rivers Oram Press, 2007, pp. 1–40.
- 9 Ali, *Street Fighting Years*, p. 127.
- 10 Pugh, *State and Society*, pp. 297f.
- 11 Mary Whitehouse, *Whatever Happened to Sex?*, Hove: Wayland, 1977, p. 188; editorial in the *Daily Mail*, 14 June 2002, quoted in Collins, *The Permissive Society*, p. 29. See also Jean Seaton, “The Penis Problem”, 1968: Liberty or its Illusion?”, *Symposium Prospect*, May 2008, pp. 28f.
- 12 Pugh, *State and Society*, p. 297.
- 13 “You Can Walk Across It On The Grass”, *Time*, 15 April 1966. See also Dominique Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, London: Abacus, 2006, pp. 251–76.
- 14 For an analysis of liberalism and democratic education in Britain, see Wilfred Carr and Anthony Har-

- nett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy: The Politics of Educational Ideas*, Buckingham: Open UP, 1996, pp. 42–91. See also Clyde Chitty, "The Changing Role of the State in Education Provision", *History of Education* 21:1 (1992): 1–13; Andy Green, *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, London: Macmillan, 1990.
- 15 Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, pp. 80–89.
- 16 Ibid., p. 97.
- 17 Peter Gordon, Richard Aldrich and Dennis Dean, *Education and Policy in England in the Twentieth Century*, London: Woburn Press, 1991, pp. 284f.
- 18 Ibid., pp. 77–90.
- 19 Cyril Burt (ed.), *How the Mind Works*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934, pp. 17–34.
- 20 Michael Sanderson, *Educational Opportunity and Social Change in England*, London: Faber and Faber, 1987, pp. 37f.
- 21 Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, Buckingham: Open UP, 2005, p. 3.
- 22 Geoffrey Walford, "Affirming and Contesting the Comprehensive Ideal, From Common School to Selection?" in Robert Phillips and John Furlong (eds), *Education Reform and the State. Twenty-Five Years of Politics, Policy and Practice*, London/New York: Routledge/Falmer, 2001, p. 47.
- 23 Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, *Education and Policy in England*, pp. 76–82.
- 24 Maurice Kogan, *The Politics of Educational Change*, Glasgow: Fontana, 1978, pp. 42–48.
- 25 See David Rubinstein and Brian Simon, *The Evolution of Comprehensive School, 1926–1972*, London: Routledge, 1973, p.15, quoted in Walford, "Affirming and Contesting the Comprehensive Ideal", p. 45.
- 26 Caroline Benn and Clyde Chitty, *Thirty Years On: Is Comprehensive Education Alive and Well or Struggling to Survive?*, London: David Fulton, 1996, p. 29.
- 27 Walford, "Affirming and Contesting the Comprehensive Ideal", p. 47.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, p. 93.
- 30 The new universities were Stirling, Strathclyde, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Sussex, York and Warwick, the Colleges of Advanced Technology were given the status of university after a period of adaptation and even the existing universities were further extended. Derek Gillard, "The Rise and Fall of the Public Service", in Derek Gillard, *Education in England: A Brief History*, (www.dg.dial.pipex.com/history/text04.shtml, accessed 2 August 2009).
- 31 Sanderson, *Educational Opportunity*, pp. 129–135.
- 32 Wilson himself declared that the achievement he would most like to be remembered for by posterity was the creation of the Open University. Alan Sked and Chris Cook, *Post-War Britain*, London: Penguin, 1984, p. 309; Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, p. 21; Peter Clark, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900–1990*, London: Allen Lane, p. 290.
- 33 Kogan, *The Politics of Educational Change*, p. 45.
- 34 Benn and Chitty, *Thirty Years On*.
- 35 Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, p. 21.

- 36 Sir David Eccles, "The School Master", 7 January 1955 quoted in Gillard, *Education in England*.
- 37 Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, *Education and Policy in England*, p. 81.
- 38 Peter Bander (ed.), *Looking Forward to the Seventies: A Blueprint for Education in the Next Decade*, Gerard's Cross: Smythe, 1968.
- 39 Lord James of Rusholme, "The Grammar Schools", in Bander, *Looking Forward to the Seventies*, p. 88.
- 40 Lord Newsom was the author of the *Half Our Future* report, which was published in 1963 and made suggestions for a curriculum for the less-able child, from 13 to 16, who was still in secondary school. From then on many referred to the Newsom child, meaning children who could not follow a purely academic curriculum.
- 41 Sir John Newsom, "Equality & Fraternity", in Bander, *Looking Forward to the Seventies*, p. 102
- 42 Ibid, pp. 100f.
- 43 David Donnison, "Revolution in Secondary Education", in Bander, *Looking Forward to the Seventies*, pp. 114f.
- 44 Ibid, pp. 116f.
- 45 Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, *Education and Policy in England*, p. 86.
- 46 "The Plowden Report", *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*, www.infed.org/schooling/plowden_report.htm (accessed 2 August 2009). See also Gillard *Education in England*.
- 47 Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, *Education and Policy in England*, pp. 258–262.
- 48 Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, pp. 118f.
- 49 See Linda Colley, 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750–1830', *Past and Present* 113:1 (1986): 96–117; Green, *Education and State Formation*, p. 80; Chitty, "The Changing Role", p. 5; Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, p. 77.
- 50 Quoted in Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, p. 71.
- 51 Gillard, *Education in England*.
- 52 The reference to *The Secret Garden* comes from the title of the children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett published in 1911. The phrase was used in a plethora of publications about curriculum control in the 1960s as there was an adaptation of the novel on television series.
- 53 Robert E. Bell and William Prescott (eds), *The Schools Council: A Second Look*, London: Ward Lock, 1975, p. 2.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 7f.
- 55 Tony Becher and Stuart Maclure, *The Politics of Curriculum Change*, London: Hutchinson, 1978, pp. 40–43.
- 56 This has been one of the most important educational problems of secondary education of late twentieth century not only for Britain but many more countries. Most educationists argue that secondary schools should provide education independent from matriculation examinations and education should follow the curriculum not determine it, but the tendency is that more and more systems cannot escape the trap of school life being determined by examinations.
- 57 Athena Syriatou, *Educational Policy and Educational Content: The Teaching of European History in England and Wales, 1945–1975*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1997, pp. 139–141.

- 58 Ibid. See also I. Lewis, "Conflicting Values on the Debate Over School History", unpublished MA thesis, University of London, 1990, pp. 35–88. On the history curriculum, see also Athena Syriatou, «Καθήκον και ένστικτο: Η ιστορία στα σχολεία στη μεταπολεμική Βρετανία, 1945–1995» (Duty and Instinct: history in schools in post-war Britain, 1945–1995), *Mnemon* 21 (1999): 133–162.
- 59 See Lawrence Stenhouse, *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann, 1975.
- 60 Maurice Plaskow (ed.), *The Life and Death of the Schools Council*, London: Falmer, 1985. Quoted in Carr and Harnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, p. 163.
- 61 Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, *Education and Policy in England*, p. 88.
- 62 Ibid., p. 87.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid., pp. 89f.
- 65 Brian Simon, *Education and Social Order, 1940–1990*, London: Lawrence and Wishard, 1991, p. 405, quoted in Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, p. 23.
- 66 Christopher Knight, *The Making of the Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain, 1950–1986*, London/New York: Falmer, 1990, p. 52.
- 67 Simon, *Education and Social Order*, p. 401.
- 68 Knight, *The Making of the Tory Education Policy*, p. 89.
- 69 The idea that there was a social and political consensus during and after the Second World War bred by the solidarity of British people across social classes and realised by the building of the welfare state immediately after the war has been a matter of controversy among historians. Among the many works on this subject, see Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945, British Politics and the Second World War*, London: Vintage, 1982; Peter Hennessy, *Never Again*, London: Cape, 1992; Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones (eds), *What Difference did the War Make?* Leicester UP: London and New York, 1993; Harriet Jones and Michael Kandiah, *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History, 1945–1964*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939–1945*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- 70 Simon, *Education and Social Order*, pp. 446–451, quoted in Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, p. 25.
- 71 Robert Phillips, "Education, the State and the Politics of Reform: The Historical Context, 1976–2001", in Phillips and Furlong (eds), *Education, Reform and the State*, p. 12.
- 72 Carr and Hartnett, *Education and the Struggle for Democracy*, p. 130.
- 73 Phillips, "Education, the State and the Politics of Reform", p. 12.
- 74 Ibid., p. 13.
- 75 Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society*, pp. 26–27.
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- 80 Eric J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 72f.
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- 86 See the case study by Dennis Leech and Erick Campos, "Is Comprehensive Education Really Free? A Case Study of the Effects of Secondary School Admissions Policies on House Prices in one Local Area", *Warwick Economic Research Papers* 581 (2001).
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- 90 Smithers, "Schools", p. 363.
- 91 Ibid., p. 362.
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- 96 Smithers, "Schools", pp. 372f.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Ibid., pp. 381–383.