

THE LANCASHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION,  
LATER THE NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION,  
IN ITS ROLE AS A PRESSURE GROUP, WITH AN  
ACCOUNT OF THE MANCHESTER MODEL SECULAR SCHOOL,  
LATER THE MANCHESTER FREE SCHOOL

A dissertation presented for the  
degree of Master of Arts in the  
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by

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## SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

The Lancashire Public School Association, later the National Public School Association, in its role as a Pressure Group, with an account of the Manchester Model Secular School, later the Manchester Free School

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The Lancashire Public School Association was founded in 1847 by a group of locally eminent Manchester men who, hoping to overcome the religious obstacles in the way of national education, drew up a plan of secular education which they hoped would satisfy all parties.

Using the American Common School system, as practised in Massachusetts, as a basis, they attempted to get a bill into Parliament to establish a system of free, rate-supported, locally-controlled secular education. The movement spread rapidly outside Lancashire, and in 1850 the Association was re-named the National Public School Association.

As a pressure-group, the Association used machinery very similar to that of its predecessor, the Anti-Corn Law League, many of whose members joined the educational movement. Extensive use was made of placards, pamphlets, public lectures and public meetings to bring its activities to the attention of the public, while T. Milner Gibson, W.J.Fox and Richard Cobden represented it in Parliament.

Opposition arose in Manchester and Salford when the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education produced a rival education scheme and introduced a bill into Parliament in 1852. Its progress was stopped when T. Milner Gibson, acting on behalf of the N.P.S.A.,

obtained the appointment of a Select Committee of Inquiry of the House of Commons to investigate the state of education in Manchester and Salford.

Neither of the two pressure groups succeeded in obtaining legislation on its scheme, and in 1857 members of both groups came together in a compromise which foreshadowed the Elementary Education Act of 1870.

Although the N.P.S.A. was dissolved in 1862 the Manchester Model Secular School, later re-named the Manchester Free School, which the Association founded in 1854, continued to do excellent work among the poor children of Manchester until its pupils were absorbed into the Manchester School Board system during the 1870s.



Thesis:

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THREE PLACARDS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE  
WORKING-CLASSES1. TO THE INHABITANTS OF ASHTON:

A placard illustrating the bitterness that existed in Ashton-under-Lyne between supporters of the L.P.S.A., on the one hand, and the admixture of Chartists and the Established Church, represented by the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, on the other.

2. SECULAR EDUCATION:

A placard showing the attempt by the L.P.S.A. to "pack" public meetings with their supporters. Activities of this nature brought complaints from the Rev. Hugh Stowell. (See p.182)

3. SECULAR EDUCATION OR NO EDUCATION:

A notice, critical of Canon Stowell, in forming N.P.S.A. supporters of the Town Hall Meeting on Easter Monday, 1850.

## C H A P T E R     I

### THE FORMATION OF THE LANCASHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION - BACKGROUND TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY .

(i)

A Model Pressure Group: The Anti-Corn Law League

It is fitting that the Lancashire Public School Association, later the National Public School Association, which did so much to bring the necessity of a state system of education to the attention of the government, should have originated in Manchester. No district in the British Isles grew more rapidly as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The very speed of growth of this conurbation, uncontrolled by any effective system of local government, sanitary scheme or public health regulations, directly fostered the conditions which philanthropic reformers found impossible to ignore.<sup>1</sup> However, according to one authority it was not the intensity of the evils that made Manchester the

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1. "Between 1821 and 1831 the population of the town had increased by no less than 45% - a rate of growth probably never before, and certainly never since, equalled." T.S. Ashton, Economic and Social Investigations in Manchester (London, 1934), p.1.

concern of Parliament but "the enlightened and devoted labour of her public spirited citizens who tried to abolish, or at least mitigate, the evils of which they themselves were the involuntary authors."<sup>1</sup> Outstanding examples of these are Dr. Thomas Percival who was instrumental in setting up the Manchester Board of Health, and Dr. James Phillips Kay, better known as Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, the first secretary of education, who, as a physician in Manchester during the cholera epidemic of 1832, published a pamphlet entitled The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester, the outcome of which was the formation of the Manchester Statistical Society. Largely as a result of these conditions Manchester became an important area of Chartist activity and the centre of government for the Free Trade movement. The Chartists, a violent pressure group, could easily serve as an example of how to fail to gain one's political objective. In contrast, the Anti-Corn Law League was an almost perfect machine, most efficiently organized, and so effective that it has been used as a model by many pressure groups. After the nineteenth-century legislation which resulted in widening the franchise, political parties found its methods most suitable for organizing public support on a large scale. During the eight

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1. S.E.Maltby, Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education, 1800-1870 (Manchester 1918), p.vi.

years of its existence the League mastered all the techniques of raising popular support and manipulating high-powered propaganda machinery that were available to a pressure group in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

The Founders of the Lancashire Public School  
Association

When, in July 1847, the Lancashire Public School Association was founded for the purpose of establishing a system of national education, its members profited tremendously from the experience gained by the Anti-Corn Law League in the organization of a pressure group. In fact, it could be described as the younger brother of the League, for both movements were conceived in the same nest. Of the seven gentlemen who first met to form the League, six were members of the congregation of the Reverend Dr. William McKerrow of the Lloyd Street Presbyterian Chapel.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Lancashire Public School Association<sup>3</sup> originated in the Lloyd Street vestry:

- 
1. N. McCord, The Anti-Corn Law League (London, 1958), p. 137.
  2. Manchester Weekly Times, 8th June 1878.
  3. Hereinafter referred to as L.P.S.A. or "the Association".

"An accidental conversation having been held by a few gentlemen interested in the education of the people, they resolved to meet again for further consideration of the subject. Six persons assembled for this purpose in the vestry of Lloyd St. Chapel. These were Messrs. Jacob Bright, Samuel Lucas, W.B.Hodgson, Alexander Ireland, Thomas Ballantyne and the Reverend William McKerrow. Mr. Lucas, being called to the Chair, produced an outline of the plan of local education which ultimately appeared under the title of the Lancashire Public School Association, and introduced it to the meeting for discussion." <sup>1</sup>

These personalities are of great interest and deserve further attention. Samuel Lucas was the most important for he was the architect of the L.P.S.A. in the years 1847 to 1850. As with so many other people who played a leading role in movements in Manchester in the mid-nineteenth century, he was not a Mancunian by birth, having been born in Wandsworth. He was a member of the Society of Friends and a partner in a cotton mill. What was more important, he was the brother-in-law of John and Jacob Bright by virtue of having married their sister, Margaret. Needless to say he had been involved in the Anti-Corn Law struggle, and, therefore, was quite conversant with the League machinery. Whether Lucas was the actual founder of the L.P.S.A. is not quite clear. In reply to a letter from the librarian of the Manchester Free Library inquiring into this matter Alfred Stienthal, who was not an original member but joined in 1848, wrote on 12th July 1892:

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1. J.M.McKerrow, Life of William McKerrow (London, 1881), p.289.

"I think that it was too much to say that he (Lucas) was the founder of the Lancashire P.S.A. Drs. Vaughan, McKerrow, Beard, Jacob Bright, H.J.Leppoc and the Rev. Tucker, had, I believe, a share in its organization, but who was the absolute suggester of the association I cannot possibly say. I always remember that I was told, when I joined the Society, that it had been started in Dr. McKerrow's vestry."<sup>1</sup>

However, at a dinner given in his honour on 30th October, 1850, Lucas referred to three other men who had been present at the first meeting of the L.P.S.A., and to one of these, William McCall, he gave the chief credit for its foundation. The other two men were John Heugh and Neil Bannatyne, both of whom were of Scottish origin. J.M.McKerrow in writing his father's biography does not mention William McCall, and S.E.Maltby describes him as "never prominent" in the movement,<sup>2</sup> but this is doing him an injustice, for a perusal of the L.P.S.A. minutes shows that he was Treasurer for a considerable period of time and active in suggesting policy during committee meetings.

Nevertheless, although the suggestion to form an educational association might have come from McCall, Samuel Lucas was undeniably the most important member, and at the National Education Conference on 30th October, 1850, the outcome of which was the

- 
1. Letter preserved in biographical cuttings in Manchester Central Reference Library.
  2. Maltby, op.cit., note 8, p.68.

conversion of the L.P.S.A. into the National Public School Association,<sup>1</sup> Absalom Watkin, the father of Sir Edward Watkin, gave him the credit for originating the movement, and it is clear that he was generally regarded as the founder.<sup>2</sup>

He seems to have been a particularly delightful person and endowed with great organizing ability, as Alfred Stienthal testifies in his letter of 12th July, 1892:

"Mr. Lucas was its (the L.P.S.A.'s) first Chairman of Committee, and was so successful in that capacity that I almost think it would be right to add to your very just remarks as to his sweet temper, the fact that the conciliatory powers he had combined with rare tact and judgment in making himself a most successful Chairman of Committee. I remember how he guided us most skilfully through some very difficult crises in our Educational work, when our varied religious opinions caused us at times to come very near the rocks."

In 1850 the L.P.S.A. was deprived of his guidance when he went to live in London. He kept in contact with the Executive Committee and carried on his educational work in the London area, but as the movement was controlled from Manchester, his influence could never be as great as it would have been had he remained in the North-West. In 1856 he became editor of the Morning Star, the new organ of the "Manchester School" of Radicals, a post which he held until his death in 1865.

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1. Hereinafter referred to as N.P.S.A.

2. Manchester Examiner and Times, 2nd November, 1850.

Another extremely interesting founder-member of the L.P.S.A. was Alexander Ireland. Born in Edinburgh in 1810, he met Ralph Waldo Emerson when, in 1833, the American visited Britain and preached at the Unitarian chapel in Edinburgh where Ireland attended. They became friends, and when Emerson came over again in 1847, Ireland, who had been living in Manchester since 1843, arranged his lecture tour for him, and met him off the boat at Liverpool. This was only one of the many strong connections between the L.P.S.A. (and later the N.P.S.A.) and the United States, which became such a prominent feature of the movement. Always extremely interested in literary affairs, Ireland joined the management of the Manchester Examiner which had been founded by John Bright, Dr. McKerrow, Thomas Ballantyne and Edward (later Sir Edward) Watkin in 1845. When Watkin's railway activities caused him to leave Manchester temporarily, Ireland was able to take his share in the business and became literary editor, becoming business manager in 1848 when the Examiner and the Manchester Times amalgamated to form the Manchester Examiner and Times. He also appears to have been a very pleasant individual. Isabella Mills, wife of John Mills of Ashton-under-Lyne, who knew him well, wrote, "He seemed born to lighten the lives of others."<sup>1</sup> When the Longsight Free Library was opened in 1892 he, at the age of eighty-

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1. I. Mills, From Tinder-Box to The Larger Light - John Mills of Ashton-under-Lyne (Manchester, 1899), p.138.



two, pointed out that he was the last surviving member of the original committee which, in 1851, organized the Manchester Free Library. He died in 1894 after a lifetime of public service. His obituary in the Manchester Guardian of 8th December 1894 stated: "To know him was to love him, as all those who have known him intimately can testify." He was a successful writer, one of his most popular publications being Recollections of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

W.B.Hodgson was destined to become a most influential figure in educational circles, but when he helped to found the L.P.S.A. he had only just arrived in Manchester as headmaster of Chorlton High School. Born in Edinburgh in 1815, he had been a lecturer in literature, phrenology and education in Fifeshire before becoming secretary of the Liverpool Mechanics Institute in 1839. At Liverpool he infected everybody with his tremendous enthusiasm, and gave the institute a reputation for good teaching. A life-long enthusiast for the education of women and girls, he established a "Class for Female Teachers" and wrote among other things Education of Girls and The Employment of Women.<sup>1</sup> This may have attracted him toward the teachings of W.J.Fox at this time, for Fox was a great champion of the emancipation of women. Certainly Hodgson, on his fairly frequent visits to London, used to go along to listen to his sermons at South Place Chapel, eventually becoming a great admirer of the Radical Unitarian Minister.<sup>2</sup>

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1. J.M.D.Meiklejohn (ed.), Life and Letters of W.B.Hodgson (Edinburgh, 1883), p.27.

2. Ibid., p.38.

Hodgson believed in purely secular education and wanted the Bible to be excluded from the schools. This caused him to become disillusioned with the N.P.S.A. in 1851, but the following extract from a letter written on 28th September 1841 to Jane Cox, whom he married later that year, provides an explanation for his general distrust of organized religion. He is complaining of the bigotry of the Liverpool sects which had caused the abandoning of the scheme whereby, between 1836 and 1841, Protestant and Catholic children had been taught together in the Liverpool Corporation schools<sup>1</sup> under a system based on that of the Irish Board of Education:

"Toryism and Churchism are in the ascendant and reign with undisputed sway. The Liberal party are disheartened, and have virtually (not virtuously) abandoned the contest. Bigotry encouraged by the want of opposition, speaks out more and more boldly. 'Every Jew, dying as a Jew, is irretrievably lost,' said the Reverend Hugh M'Neile the other day; 'it is god-like to love to tell them of their miserable condition: godless liberalism to conceal it from them.' The tyranny of the priesthood is said to be great in Scotland, but really I think it is much worse here. More complete spiritual subjection I never saw; the Liberal party want courage, unity, and above all they want leaders."<sup>2</sup>

He went to Manchester in 1847 having received the degree of LL.D., Glasgow, in the previous year, and remained principal of Chorlton High School until 1851. A great friend of Alexander Ireland, he was offered a share in the Manchester Examiner, but declined, preferring to teach. In 1846

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1. For an appraisal of the significance of this scheme see J. Murphy, The Religious Problem in English Education (Liverpool University Press, 1959).

2. Meiklejohn, op.cit., p.36.

he published Horace Mann's Report on an Educational Tour in Germany, France, Holland and parts of Great Britain and Ireland.

Hodgson was a man of great integrity and firmly held to his principles of non-sectarian education throughout his distinguished career, and for this reason he was delighted when he was elected to the Council of University College, London, because it was avowedly based on unsectarianism. However, in 1866, the Rev. James Martineau, a professor in the Manchester New College, was refused the chair of Mental Philosophy and Logic on the grounds of his Unitarianism. Completely disillusioned by this departure from principle, Hodgson resigned from the Council and sent to its members the following letter dated 19th January 1867, which gives some insight into the strength of the man's character:

"By religious neutrality I had understood the impartial inclusion of all forms of religion, not the exclusion, partial of any, or impartial of all. If, however, when a man such as Mr. Martineau honours the College by applying for one of its professorships, his high claims can be set aside (I must not say "rejected") on any or all the pleas that I have heard alleged, then I must say that I regard with greater sympathy the humblest and most sectarian educational institution in the country, if only its exclusiveness is well defined, consistent and avowed - not as in Gower St, undefined, unavowed, or disavowed, at variance with the practice of forty years, and dependent for its extent, and even its direction, on the accidental fluctuations of a small majority, or it may be, on a chairman's casting vote."

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1. Ibid., p.155.

The last phrase refers to the fact that Martineau, who was obviously the best candidate, was finally rejected by the casting vote of the chairman.

Hodgson, previous to his London appointment, had served as an Assistant Commissioner of Enquiry into Primary Education in 1858, and eventually was appointed to the Chair of Political Economy at Edinburgh in July 1871. He died at an educational congress in Brussels in 1880.

Dr. William McKerrow,<sup>1</sup> born at Kilmarnock in 1803, had been minister of Lloyd Street Presbyterian Chapel, Manchester, since 1827. Movements for reform seemed to converge upon him, and the fact that his vestry saw the foundation of the Anti-Corn Law League and the L.P.S.A. is abundant proof of his reforming zeal and depth of sympathy. He played a great part in all the educational movements leading up to the Act of 1870, and had the satisfaction not only of becoming a member of the first Manchester School Board, but also of giving his name to a scholarship for Manchester pupils. As has already been mentioned, he was a founder of the Manchester Examiner which became virtually the organ of the L.P.S.A. and N.P.S.A. guaranteeing them favourable press reports and abundant publicity.

Thomas Ballantyne,<sup>2</sup> another Scot, was born at Paisley in 1806

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1. McKerrow, op.cit.

2. F. Boase, Modern English Biography, 1851-1900, (Truro 1892-1921).

but, as was the fashion with so many of his countrymen, moved south and became editor of the Bolton Free Press and later worked for the Manchester Guardian. He set himself up as a printer and publisher and was one of the four original proprietors of the Manchester Examiner. Afterwards he left the North-West, having been editor of newspapers in Liverpool, and moved to London where he edited the Leader and started the Statesman. He was the author of Passages selected from the writings of Thomas Carlyle (1855)

Of the others, Neil Bannatyne, also a Scot, was an ardent reformer in Manchester, and Jacob Bright worked extremely hard in the interests of the locality, but was somewhat overshadowed by his more famous brother. Nevertheless, ten years after John Bright's defeat at Manchester and subsequent re-election as Member for Birmingham, Jacob himself became M.P. for Manchester. John Heugh, another exiled Scot, was the son of Dr. Heugh, a prominent Presbyterian divine of Glasgow.

(iii)

#### The Importance of Scottish Influence

The fact that out of the nine original members mentioned, seven were Scots is very significant, and testifies to the fact that Scottish thinking on educational lines was far in advance of *English educational thought*. Since the seventeenth century

there had been laws in force which imposed upon all property owners in every parish the duty of providing a school. The Established Presbyterian Church had the right to enforce a rate for this purpose. These schools were open to children of all denominations, and in 1829 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland directed that teachers should not force religious instruction on to Roman Catholic pupils. Scotland, therefore, had a network of schools comparable with the Puritan communities of New England before they were incorporated into the various state systems. By 1847 many Scotsmen were prepared to allow the property owners in parishes (heritors) to assume the responsibilities of the Church for maintaining schools.<sup>1</sup> It was to this relatively advanced state of affairs that George Combe was referring in his letter to Cobden of 25th May 1848:

"I should say that the public mind is much further advanced on national education in Scotland than England. We have a considerable number of men of religious character who would support a scheme like that of Massachusetts!"<sup>2</sup>

It was quite natural, therefore, that Scotsmen should show a great interest in educational reform when the opportunity

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1. M.Mackintosh, Education in Scotland Yesterday and Today (Glasgow, 1862), pp. 26-29.
  2. B.M.Add. M.S. 43660, quoted by P.N.Farrar, Massachusetts and the Movement for National Elementary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century (M.A. thesis, Liverpool University, 1964) p.75.

occurred. However, of the seven Scots who are mentioned, Dr. McKerrow alone remained when, in 1857, the activities of the N.P.S.A. virtually came to an end.

(iv)

The Educational Situation down to the  
Government Grant of 1833

In order to appreciate the aims of the L.P.S.A. it is first necessary to examine some of the efforts to provide education for the poorer classes before its foundation in 1847.

In 1815 Britain was clearly in need of a national education system. London and the mushroom towns of the industrial North and Midlands were attracting vast numbers of people but had few facilities with which to cater for the immigrants. Typical of these was Manchester which was both the wonder and the horror of the period. Asa Briggs has described it as the "shock city of the age."<sup>1</sup> It fascinated Disraeli, and in his novel, Coningsby (1844), the young man's social education only starts when he leaves the forest and devotes several days to "the comprehension of Manchester." "Certainly Manchester is the most powerful city of modern times," wrote Disraeli. "It is the philosopher alone who can conceive the grandeur of Manchester and the immensity of the future."<sup>2</sup> For Thomas Carlyle, Manchester was "every whit as

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1. A. Briggs, Victorian Cities (London, 1963), p.82.

2. Ibid.

wonderful, as fearful, as unimaginable, as the oldest Salem or prophetic city," but he also found ground for alarm for "sooty Manchester was also built upon the infinite abysses",<sup>1</sup> and Disraeli deplored the "two nations" division of England into classes which he noted there. Richard Cobden feared this development and hoped to combat it by educating the masses, but not by the existing system. Instead he hoped to substitute the American Common School system, his faith in which is clearly expressed in the following letter, written to Henry Barnard of Connecticut, after the American had returned home from a visit to the International Educational Exhibition in London, in June 1854:

"What a singularly pure democratic state of society you must have, when it is possible that the son of a President, and the son of the man who saws the teacher's wood, sit side by side in the same school, and the latter stands higher in the scale of merit than the former. Our elementary schools are hopelessly degraded in their very name and inception as charity schools - schools for the poor as a class."<sup>2</sup>

But it was not only the growth of a divided society that philanthropists hoped to combat with better education. The new towns were hives of ignorance, crime and squalor, and have been described in detail in such reports as the Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population, (1842) and the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts (1844). These reports revealed conditions involving overcrowding, lack of drainage and epidemics which are almost too horrifying to imagine.

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1. Ibid.

2. Barnard MSS. New York University, General University Library, quoted by Farrar op.cit., p.151.



With depressing regularity they also bore witness to the educational destitution that existed in the industrial towns. Reformers began to publish the fact that crime and lack of education went hand in hand, and gradually they succeeded in building up a body of opinion strong in the belief that education was the great instrument of social regeneration, which would not only relieve the burden on the Poor Rate, but also reduce the prison population, and generally help to create an orderly and industrious population.<sup>1</sup> By 1840 the evidence for the necessity of state assisted national education was overwhelming, but in the years before that period the task of educating public opinion and, perhaps more important, Parliamentary opinion, to this end was left to such people as Samuel Whitbread, Lord Brougham and J.A.Roebuck, each of whom made notable efforts to provide education for the poorer classes of the community. In 1807 Samuel Whitbread unsuccessfully introduced into Parliament his Parochial Schools Bill, the effect of which, it was hoped, would be to reduce the number of paupers, for he believed that education was "a panacea for the ills to which our state was naturally subjected."<sup>2</sup> The bill was

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1. In his speech on the introduction of his education bill on 30th July 1833, Roebuck repeatedly assigned the increase in crime to the lack of education (Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.20, pp.139-167.

2. Quoted by F. Smith, A History of English Elementary Education 1760-1902 (London, 1931), p.109.

unceremoniously rejected by the Lords, when the Archbishop of Canterbury revealed the religious prejudice which was to hinder nearly all future attempts to set up systems of national education. In his opinion, the bill violated what he called the first principles of education in England, namely, that schools should be "under the control and auspices of the establishment."<sup>1</sup> A further attempt at legislation was made in 1820 by Brougham. But his Parish Schools Bill was defeated by the combined opposition of Dissenters and Roman Catholics who feared that it would give the Established Church too much power.

In preparation for his bill he had, in 1816, succeeded in getting a Committee to Inquire into the Education of the Lower Orders of the Metropolis, and the Report of that year provided statistics which showed that although England and Wales were far behind Scotland, Holland and Switzerland in the provision of education, the situation was improving. This seemed to prove that the voluntary societies, in whose hands lay the means of educating the poor, were making progress. The two most important voluntary organizations during the nineteenth century were the National Society for the Education of the Poor, which had strong

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1. Ibid.

connections with the Established Church, and the British and Foreign Schools Society, which was non-denominational but strongly supported by Nonconformists.

In the reforming Whig government which came to power in the 1830s the question of national education as a problem of government hardly appeared. Factory legislation, the abolition of slavery and Poor Law reforms all found their supporters, but education on a national basis threatened a vast expenditure of money, and was not supported by any great popular demand. It was the Benthamite J.A. Roebuck who eventually drew some expression of interest in the subject from the government.

On 30th July 1833 he moved "that the House would with the smallest delay possible consider the means of establishing a system of National Education."<sup>1</sup> He urged the government that it had an obligation to provide a national system of education as had already been done in France, Prussia and America.

His scheme provided for the establishment of at least one infant school in every parish, and one school of industry which children between the ages of six and twelve should be compelled to attend, and for evening and Sunday schools for youths over fourteen. Education was not to be free, but the state was to pay the fees of the children of poor parents. A minister of public instruction was to have the responsibility of apportioning

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1. Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.20.p.139.

money to each district, suggesting the curriculum, promoting better methods of teaching, and securing a supply of school books. In each district there was to be a school committee of five members elected by heads of families, or failing that, by those who paid fees. Roebuck himself saw the emerging class division, and he hoped that the children of all classes would attend the schools. Ever conscious of the dull mechanical teaching which took place in existing establishments, he said that within the curriculum of the schools of industry provision should be made for the teaching of art, singing and music, natural history, the laws of health, and those aspects of political economy which would be most relevant to the lives of the pupils.

This was far too ambitious a programme for Parliament, and, opposed by both Whigs and Tories, Roebuck was obliged to withdraw it. But he did succeed in eliciting something from the government, and a few days later the paltry sum of £20,000 was voted "for the erection of school houses for the poorer classes in Great Britain."<sup>1</sup> This was suggested by Brougham (now in the House of Lords),<sup>2</sup> and the fact that it was carried by fifty votes to twenty-six is a measure of the indifference with which most M.P.s regarded education. The grant of £1,000,000 in payment of arrears of Irish tithes, and £20,000,000 for the liberation of slaves in the same year, only

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1. Quoted by Smith, op.cit., p.139.

2. Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.29, p.73.

serves to emphasize this. It is significant of the educational disadvantage of England and Wales in comparison with continental countries that the Prussian education grant for 1833 was the equivalent of £600,000,<sup>1</sup> in spite of which Parliament had shown its approval of a subsidized voluntary system remarkable only for the inadequacy with which it performed its task.

(v)

Attempts to achieve National Education  
between 1833 and the Foundation of the  
Anti-Corn Law League

Although the government had at last shown a mild interest in education, its responsibilities in that sphere were not increased, and it was committed to no specific policy. The money was for building schools, and before a grant could be given, at least half the cost must be raised by local subscription. The voluntary organization requesting the grant had the responsibility of persuading the Treasury that the school would be permanently maintained. Preference was to be given to applications from urban areas.

The scheme was obviously intended to encourage the principle of self help, but two weak points were soon revealed; the wealthier

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1. F. Adams, History of the Elementary School Contest in England  
(London, 1882), p. 84.

districts found it easier to get grants than the poorer ones, because there was more local initiative in wealthier districts, and, as a result of the vast organization and funds of the National Society, the Church got grants easier than the Nonconformists. In the first year, the distribution was approximately equally divided, but by 1839, the greater resources of the Church enabled it to obtain about four-fifths of the grant.

This led to two problems: the first, that of educational destitution in the poorer districts, which was cited by promoters of national education as proof of the inadequacy of the voluntary system; and the second, the opposition of the Nonconformist bodies to any plan of national education for fear that it would be dominated by the Church of England. The state grant, therefore, created a vicious circle because it soon became clear that only a national system would provide instruction for those whom the voluntary system failed to reach. Yet, as a result of the religious rivalry engendered, no such system could be devised until, after tremendous efforts by organizations such as the L.P.S.A. (later N.P.S.A.), the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education, the Education Aid Society, the National Education League, and the National Education Union, a compromise was reached in the Elementary Education Act of 1870.

It was not long before the subsidized voluntary organizations were given scientific proof of their inadequacy. In 1833 the government published returns (the Kerry Report) which claimed that 1,276,947 children went to school, or one in **11.27**.

These showed an improvement on Brougham's returns of 1818 when it was claimed that one in **17.25** of the five went to school,<sup>1</sup> which all seemed to prove that the voluntary system was a success. However, in that year the Manchester Statistical Society was founded, with the object of collecting statistics on a wide variety of social problems. Its members produced figures where hitherto there had been unverified statements of supposed fact, and from the time of the society's foundation the statistical method became an important method of reformers. A committee of the society was formed with the specific purpose of investigating the provision of education in Manchester,<sup>2</sup> Liverpool and the surrounding towns. Their findings revealed the unreliability of those of Lord Kerry, and, moreover, showed that one third of the children in Manchester between the ages of five and fifteen were receiving no instruction at all. The situation was much the same in Liverpool,<sup>3</sup> Salford,<sup>4</sup> and Bury,<sup>5</sup> and the report concluded that only one in ten children received an education which could be considered at all satisfactory.

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1. Adams, op.cit., p.94.

2. On the State of Education in Manchester in 1834 (Manchester, 1835).

3. On the State of Education in Liverpool in 1835/36 (Manchester, 1836)

4. On the State of Education in Salford in 1835 (Manchester, 1836).

5. On the State of Education in Bury in 1835 (Manchester, 1835).

Educational reformers now had proof of the need for national education, but if a system were to be devised, two aspects had to be considered; its administrative structure, and the arrangements for the teaching of religion.

In their search for a suitable administrative structure, the reformers tended to look to the centralized systems of the Continent for inspiration; to Prussia, Holland and France, Later, the American Common School system became the most popular, particularly through the propaganda of the L.P.S.A., but only after 1837 when ~~Honore~~ Mann, secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education, began the work that was to make the American system the envy of English educationalists. Consequently in the 1830s we find Thomas Wyse, M.P. for Waterford, in his book Education Reform (1836), writing favourably of the Prussian education system, and W.E.Hickson, editor of the Westminster Review, writing on German and Dutch schools in the issue for June, 1840.

Naturally, the followers of Bentham emphasized the need for efficient central control.<sup>1</sup> Brougham, Wyse and James Simpson of Edinburgh all provided in their various schemes for a board of education to establish a national education system. Similarly, Roebuck had made provision for a minister of public instruction. In his book The Philosophy of Education with its Practical Application as a National Object (1834), Simpson suggested that a Board of

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1. C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education in England and Wales (London, 1930), p.28.



Public Instruction should issue a Code of Instruction for the guidance of teachers, and determine where and what kind of schools were needed, while Wyse, speaking in Manchester in 1836, said:

"Let there be a board of national education, let that board give the first impulse to the operation of the system, by taking land, building schools, filling them up, educating teachers, appointing inspectors, seeing that they do their duty, furnishing reports for the guidance of local boards, and finally receiving money from the government and applying it to the promotion of the national object."<sup>1</sup>

The second aspect, that of religious teaching, was destined to cause the most trouble. Logically thinking reformers reasoned that if everybody was to contribute to a national education system, there should be no religious obstacles to prevent any child from taking full advantage of it. To many of them, the best system seemed to be that of the Irish Board of Education, which had been established in 1831. By this system the children of both Protestant and Catholic parents attended the same schools. The instruction given was secular and moral, but specific times were set aside for denominational religious instruction, in addition to which selected passages from the Bible, specially chosen for the purpose by the Board of Commissioners, could be used in ordinary school lessons.

In 1831, Thomas Wyse, at that time M.P. for Tipperary,

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1. J. Simpson, Philosophy of Education (2nd ed. Edinburgh, 1836) appendix 8.

introduced a bill that would have given the Irish System the permanence of legality, but it failed,<sup>1</sup> and shortly afterwards he lost his seat. Re-elected for Waterford in 1835 he grew more and more convinced that the only way to make national education acceptable in Britain was to separate secular from religious education, much as had been done in Ireland. Consequently when in 1836 he founded, with the aid of W.E.Hickson and B.T.Duppa, the Central Society for Education, the importance of secular instruction was given great emphasis. With Lord Denman as President, Wyse as Chairman, Duppa as Secretary, and eighteen M.P.s on the committee and the support of Lord John Russell, the Society was certainly influential, but that did not protect it from a collision with the Church.

In the first annual publication of the Society in 1837, Wyse, after criticizing both the National and British schools, indicated the way in which England and Wales lagged behind other countries in the organization of education:

"There is not as in all Continental countries, a Minister and Council of Instruction; nor as in Scotland, a General Assembly; nor as in Ireland, a Board of Education. It forms the one great exception to the entire civilized world....The voluntary system of public instruction, with no central power to guide, and or control, has not only not worked well, but worked nearly as ill as any system well could."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Murphy, op.cit., p.25.

2. Quoted by Smith, op.cit., p.161.

For this and other criticisms of the voluntary system and for their insistence that the only solution to the educational problem was a secular one, the Central Society came under the fire of the Church, and, in the Lords, the Bishop of London charged them with attempting to impose upon the nation a compulsory secular system of education.

Manchester joined in the struggle in 1837 with the formation of the Society for Promoting National Education, as a branch of the Central Society. Its membership betrays the overriding importance of the Manchester Statistical Society as an instrument of reform, for, of the members of the newly formed educational movement, its five founders, William Langton, Edward Herford, R.H.Greg, Benjamin Heywood, and most important of all, Richard Cobden, were all Statistical Society members.<sup>1</sup> It was also destined to provide the following committee - members of the L.P.S.A: W.R.Callendar, S.D.Darbyshire, H.R.Forrest, E.R.Langworthy, Samuel Robinson, S.A.Steinthal and Dr. John Watts.<sup>2</sup>

Cobden threw himself into the work of national education with his customary drive and enthusiasm, and before ever he achieved fame for his work in the incorporation of Manchester, or in the struggle for Free Trade, he had set about persuading people of the need for public instruction. As his biographer tells us:

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1. A. Redford, History of Local Government in Manchester (London, 1940), Vol.2, p.237.
  2. Ashton, op.cit., p.64.

"His earliest speeches were made at Clitheroe on behalf of the education of the young, and one of his earliest letters on what may be fairly called a public question is a note making the arrangements for the exhibition at Sabden of twenty children from an infant school at Manchester by way of an example and incentive to more backward regions."<sup>1</sup>

Despite his concern for the work of spreading the gospel of education, Cobden soon became acutely conscious of the difficulties involved. At the first annual meeting of the National Public School Association on 22nd January 1851, in referring to the religious difficulties which beset any plan of a national system of education in England, he said:

"I remember so long ago as 1836, when Mr. Wyse (M.P. for Waterford) himself a Roman Catholic and Mr. Simpson of Edinburgh, and others came down here to enlighten us on the subject of education - I remember having in my counting-house in Mosley Street the ministers of religion of every denomination, and trying to bring them to some sort of agreement on the system of education we were then anxious to advocate. I believe the insuperable difficulties that then existed have even increased now."<sup>2</sup>

Although this meeting ended in disagreement, a further meeting was held in Salford Town Hall on 23rd September 1837<sup>3</sup> at which seven resolutions were adopted, demanding that the government should undertake the provision of "mental improvement and moral training" for the whole population. Wyse of Waterford and Simpson of

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1. J. Morley, Life of Richard Cobden (London, 1881), Vol. 1, p. 23.
  2. Manchester Examiner and Times, 25th January 1851.
  3. Manchester Guardian, 27th September 1837.

Edinburgh addressed the meeting, and Cobden was the main local speaker. From this meeting, what was apparently the first local petition was adopted and sent to both Houses of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

In S.E.Maltby's opinion, the year 1837 left its mark upon the educational history of the country, for it:

"brought to light in Manchester for the first time clearly and unmistakably the wide difference of opinion which, existing in all parts of the country, made any national system impossible for another generation. The divergence was nothing new: it was only more obvious and more important as the necessity for the interference of the State became more certain. So long as the National Society remained purely voluntary, and were merely friendly and stimulating rivals, their deep-seated divergence of principles was striking rather than dangerous. But when able and energetic men determined to establish a national system of education under Parliamentary control, then it became the first importance to know what form that system should take, and what were the ideals before its promoters, and the principles underlying it."<sup>2</sup>

Even in this early period the religious question, which eventually defeated the L.P.S.A. in its effort to establish a national system of education, was the main source of disagreement. Nobody saw this difficulty more clearly than Richard Cobden, who summed up the situation most adequately in a letter to a certain Mr. Hunter, written in 1846, immediately after the repeal of the Corn Laws. In this he refers to a reply he made to a Mr. Stone of Glasgow, who had exhorted him to carry a system of national education through Parliament:

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1. Ibid.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.48.

"I replied that I had tried my hand on a small scale to unite the sects of Lancashire in 1836, but that I took to the repeal of the Corn Laws as light amusement compared with the difficult task of inducing the priests of all denominations to agree to suffer the people to be educated."<sup>1</sup>

(vi)

The Effect of the Religious Revival  
on Educational Reform

The Secularists of the Central Society were unfortunate in that their campaign for national secular education coincided with the religious revival at Oxford. By the time their society was founded, the attitude of the Church to State participation was already one of suspicious hostility:

"The secular doctrines of the age, the publication of cheap literature by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the founding of the London University, the formation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the admission of Nonconformists to civil rights in 1828 and of Roman Catholics to Parliament in 1829, all pointed to a new danger which the Church must meet with new weapons. The alteration of the Constitution in the Reform Bill gathered up the various factors of the contest, for an Established Church which might contain a majority of opponents; indeed, the opposition of the Bishops to the measure caused an outbreak of popular hostility to the Church."<sup>2</sup>

Although such events were not the cause of the religious revival, they certainly fed it by causing people to take sides on all questions involving religion. The result was that the educational

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1. Morley, op.cit., p.373. Morley mistook 'Stow' for 'Stone' when reading original MS. - P.N. Fara.
  2. Smith, op.cit., p.160.

reformers found themselves faced with far stiffer opposition than they might otherwise have expected.

(vii)

### A Pause in the Struggle

The various sects which contended with each other after 1846 to form a system of education were very much in evidence in 1837 when, on 16th November, Cobden and his associates formed The Manchester Society for Promoting National Education. A leading supporter was the Reverend Dr. William McKerrow, who thereby took his stand on the side of secular education. The opposition was led by the Reverend Hugh Stowell, Vicar of Christ Church, Salford, the very embodiment of the spirit of the religious revival. It was his belief that education without religion was worse than no education at all. His attitude is made clear by the following passage which fully expresses his views on the subjects:-

"Man is not only an immortal, but man is a corrupt, depraved and fallen being. Therefore merely to cultivate man as he is, is to cultivate man into more luxurious iniquity.... I should be disposed almost to adopt the sentiment that some have done (though perhaps like other antithetical sayings it has more of a point than it has absolutely of entire truth), 'Either christianize education or crush it'. I believe it were better almost for man that it were crushed, than that it were given unless it was christianized."

The Manchester Society for Promoting National Education continued for some time, but the report of 3rd November 1841 admits a scarcity of funds, and it is probable that the branch became

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1. Maltby., op.cit., p.67.

defunct in 1842,<sup>1</sup> but not before it had presented a petition to Parliament in support of the government's action in forming the Committee of Privy Council on Education in 1839.

By this time many of the Society's members had turned their attention to political movements, with the result that the leaders of the education movement became the leaders of the Free Trade movement. The question of repealing the Corn Laws absorbed their attention from 1839 until 1846, for "the need for bread appeared to be more pressing than the need for education."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.50.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.57.



## C H A P T E R    I I

### EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS    1838-46

#### (i)

#### The Establishment of the Committee of Council

While the Manchester reformers were absorbed in the battle against the Corn Laws, several important developments, both in and out of Parliament, brought further complications to the problem of education.

The situation in 1838 revealed three parties that must be satisfied before any national system could be established. The Church, stimulated by the Anglican Revival, was vigorously pressing its claims to dominate popular education. The Dissenters, equally vigorously, were disputing this claim. In addition, distrusted by both parties, were the Secularists, who, represented by the Central Society for Education, demanded the separation of secular and religious education under the control of a centrally elected body.

In that year Thomas Wyse's motion in Parliament for the establishment of a Board of Commissioners to set up a system of national education, only just failed to pass.

However, despite the fact that Lord Melbourne, Lord Lansdowne and Lord John Russell all belonged to the Secularist party,<sup>1</sup> the divided Whigs were in no position to set up a purely state system as in Prussia or the United States, because it would run counter to history and existing conditions. On the other hand, the Church's claims were quite untenable and so the government resorted to the inevitable compromise. In <sup>1839</sup> The Queen, advised by her ministers, appointed by Order in Council a Special Committee of the Privy Council "for the consideration of all matters affecting the education of the people," and to determine "in what manner the grants of money made from time to time by Parliament should be distributed."<sup>2</sup> Although this step was not as comprehensive as the government would have liked, it was certainly an important one, for it asserted the claim of the civil authority to a dominant position in national education. For persuading the government to take this step Francis Adams gives the credit entirely to Thomas Wyse and the Central Society.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Birchenough, op.cit., p.63.

2. Quoted by Birchenough, Ibid., p.64.

3. Adams, op.cit., p. 105.

Lord Lansdowne became the Committee's first president and Kay-Shuttleworth, (later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth), its first secretary. The Committee's first Minute immediately aroused a storm of protest. It proposed to establish a State Training College with Model Schools attached; to appoint two inspectors for the inspection of aided schools; and to grant aid to teachers and schools not necessarily confined to the two voluntary societies. The College and Model Schools were to be opened to students of all sects, and non-sectarian religious instruction was to be provided for all. Opportunities were to be made for doctrinal religious instruction at stated times during the week by specially appointed ministers.

The Minute was greeted by a storm of protest from the Church, the Wesleyans, and the National Society, directed against the plan for a State Training College. The government's policy of according equal rights to all denominations aroused the gravest distrust, and was seen by many as a step towards a compulsory state scheme of religious conformity which would relegate religion to the level of a mere subject to be taught in school.

In face of the opposition as evidenced by the numerous petitions from all over the country, the government abandoned the training college scheme and gave the money, a sum of £10,000, to the National and the British and Foreign School Societies. The

plan to establish Model Schools also had to be abandoned.

Lord John Russell had seriously misjudged the climate of public opinion on this question. Orthodox Churchmen were convinced that any system of education not based on the teachings of the Established Church was unthinkable. Similar sentiments were held by the Wesleyans, the Roman Catholics and the Jews, and the government's attempts to compromise between them had merely resulted in the adoption of more rigid attitudes by the various bodies.

(ii)

#### Sir James Graham's Bill, 1843

In 1841 the divided Whigs were obliged to go into opposition. Sir James Graham, the Conservative Home Secretary, was fully aware of the importance of education as a means of checking the national tendency to acts of violence such as rioting and insurrection. He believed in a religious type of education but realized that to impose a national **rate**-supported system based on the established religion would only arouse the opposition of the Dissenters. By this time the Liverpool Corporation experiment had been abandoned, and this persuaded him that "an agreement on the fundamental articles of the Christian faith as the basis of a mixed scheme of general instruction"<sup>1</sup> would not be a suitable solution in England. Advised by Sir Robert Peel,<sup>2</sup> he decided on an extension of the

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1. Quoted by Birchenough, op.cit., p.69.

2. Ibid.

existing system. However, if the Whigs merely misjudged public opinion, the Tories rashly antagonized it.

Graham's Factory Bill of 1843 provided for the compulsory education of children in workhouses and those employed in woollen, flax, silk and cotton factories, for at least three hours per day, at the same time limiting the working day of children between eight and thirteen years of age to six and a half hours. Government loans were to be offered for the erection of schools which were to be maintained by the local poor rate. Of the seven trustees of each school, three were to be the clergyman and two churchwardens. The schoolmaster was to be a member of the Church of England, and his appointment subject to the Bishop's approval. The right of inspection was reserved to the clerical trustees and to the Committee of Council. Attendance at Church on Sunday was compulsory, and religious instruction during the week was to conform to the doctrines of the Established Church. As a slight concession to the Dissenters, a conscience clause provided that no child should be required to attend Church on Sunday if his parents objected; that licensed ministers should be allowed to attend the schools to give religious instruction to those whose parents applied for it; that there should be two separate classes for religious instruction, and that Roman Catholic children should be exempted from all religious teaching.

The advantages to the Church were too obvious to be ignored, for the provisions would have placed a public school rate almost entirely at her disposal. The result was that the Nonconformists organized an attack so vigorous that they even surprised themselves. Led by Edward Baines, editor of the Leeds Mercury, their unrelenting opposition induced Sir James Graham to offer separate denominational teaching and make any Bible reading compulsory. But it was unavailing, and the bill had to be withdrawn.

(iii)

#### The Foundation of the Voluntaryist Party

The failure of 1843 postponed a system of national education for a generation, mainly by its instrumentability in creating a new party under Edward Baines, composed mainly of Congregationalists and some Baptists. By repudiating all state aid and state control in education, on the grounds that it was wrong for a secular body to interfere in religious matters, they became known as "Voluntaryists." At a meeting of the Congregational Union held in Leeds in 1843 their principles were first formulated, and were briefly as follows: all education must have a religious basis; the state cannot educate, and state interference is necessarily pernicious; the spread of education depends upon self-help and free competition. With the aid of Edward Miall, Edward Baines set up the "Congregational Board of Education to promote the advancement of Popular Education, upon strictly religious

principles, free from all magisterial authority,"<sup>1</sup> and the Baptist Voluntary Education Society was founded at the same time. By 1859 £180,000 had been raised for school building. In 1846 Homerton Training College was opened and by 1851 three hundred and sixty four schools had been erected and were supported entirely by subscriptions and school pence.<sup>2</sup> Their principles were expounded in the Crosby Hall Lectures, a volume of papers written by several leaders, in their quarterly journal The Educator, and particularly in Edward Baines's Letters to Lord John Russell on State Education (1847). All this amounted to a "monument of misapplied energy, enthusiasm and party ability,"<sup>3</sup> for in 1867 Baines admitted that his policy was mistaken.<sup>4</sup> Freedom and competition had been proved not to be beneficial to education.

Unfortunately, by that time the L.P.S.A. and N.P.S.A. had been founded and disbanded, one of the main causes of their failure having been the existence of the Voluntaryist party. It had the effect of cutting across the normal party alignment of movements

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1. Quoted by Birchenough, op.cit., p.73.

2. Ibid., (Note).

3. Smith, op.cit., p.196.

4. Ibid.

for reform. Whereas Cobden had been able to rely on the solid backing of the Radicals in the struggle against the Corn Laws, and thereby establish the Liberal-Radical alliance to bring down the Conservatives in 1846, no similar strong support could be made effective in the struggle for education as a result of the complex situation caused by the religious question.<sup>1</sup> The Radicals and Liberals were divided amongst themselves. Consequently as will be seen, the L.P.S.A. and N.P.S.A. spent a great deal of effort in trying to persuade the government of the inadequacy of the voluntary system and the necessity of bringing in national secular education, hoping at the same time that they would persuade the Voluntarists of the folly of their ways. Cobden in particular constantly worked for conciliation with Edward Baines in the hope of gaining the support of the Voluntarists and thereby reuniting the Radicals on education.

(iv)

#### Three Proposed Systems of Education

With the application of public funds to education, various solutions to the problem of educating children in schools belonging to sects other than their own were proposed. Three main solutions were suggested: the "denominational system" whereby the schools were

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1. Cobden wrote in 1850, "The Liberal party, the soul of Dissent, are torn to pieces by the question." (Quoted by Smith, op.cit., p.215).



to be controlled by particular sects with no provision for anything but doctrinal religious instruction; the "comprehensive system" in which schools were connected with the particular religious bodies, gave doctrinal religious instruction, but respected the rights of conscience; and the "combined system" in which secular instruction was given by the teacher, and distinctive religious instruction left to ministers of the denominations.

The first was supported by the Church and many Dissenters as late as 1842,<sup>1</sup> when Edward Baines in the Leeds Mercury was advocating two schools in every district, one for the Church and one for Dissent, each supported equally by the government. Most government schemes centred round the comprehensive system, although when faced by the fierce opposition of 1843, Sir James Graham had, by amendments, vainly made his bill fit the combined pattern. The combined system was the one which the Secularists favoured, and was, in fact, the system instituted in Ireland in 1831. All the attempts to compromise with the religious sects and satisfy the dire need for secular instruction were based on one or another of these schemes.

(v)

#### Kay-Shuttleworth's Proposals of 1846

In 1846 the Conservatives gave place to the Liberals. Kay-Shuttleworth was anxious to extend state assistance to education,

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1. Birchenough, op.cit., p.72.

faced as he was with the depressing reports of the school inspectors.<sup>1</sup> Reinforcing these was Horace Mann's pamphlet of 1846, Report of an Educational Tour being part of the seventh annual report of Horace Mann, 1844,<sup>2</sup> in which the American confirmed the view that England was behind all civilized countries in the provision of education. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Minutes of the Committee of Council of 1846 should be far-reaching. In the words of one writer, "It is not too much to describe the Minutes of 1846 as the beginning of a period of renaissance in English education."<sup>3</sup> Stipends were to be offered to selected boys and girls indentured as pupil-teachers for five-years' apprenticeship, from the age of thirteen to eighteen. Grants were to be made to the teachers who trained them and the pupil teachers were to be examined annually by H.M. Inspectors. At the end of the apprenticeship, pupil-teachers could compete for Queen's Scholarships to be held at a training college; while

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1. Minutes of the Committee of Council, 1846, Vol.I, pp.1-2 (reference in Smith, op.cit., p.203).
  2. Published in London in 1846.
  3. W.F.Connell, The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold, (London, 1950), p.6.

unsuccessful candidates were to be given a preferential claim to minor appointments in the Civil Service. Training colleges were to receive an annual grant in respect of each student in training. College-trained teachers were to receive proficiency grants from the government, in addition to a salary paid by the school managers. Finally, there was to be a pension scheme for teachers retiring after at least fifteen years service.

These changes were revolutionary and formed the groundwork of subsequent policy, and, despite extremist objections, secured a large measure of support. They marked the point at which the state abandoned its policy of merely giving assistance in the erection of schools for one whereby, through its inspectorate, it took a hand in supervising what went on inside them.

Kay-Shuttleworth had taken the only course he could with any hope of success. In his pamphlet The School, in its Relations to the State, the Church and the Congregation,<sup>1</sup> he argues that the comprehensive system is the only practicable one in England, for despite the fact that the combined system might appear to be more efficient and harmonious, the opposition of the religious organizations in England had made its adoption impossible. The state had, therefore, been forced to offer help through the separate

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1. J.P.Kay-Shuttleworth, Four Periods of Public Education as reviewed in 1832-1839 - 1846-1862 in Papers by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart. (London, 1862), pp.433-551.

denominations. The plan had been drawn up in accordance with their claims, and "on terms conducive to the interests of civil and religious liberty."

Public opinion was certainly growing in favour of state aid at this time. Even in the Church its necessity had been noted, and in 1846 Dr. Hook, Vicar of Leeds, an eminent High Churchman, published an important letter, On the means of rendering more Efficient the Education of the People, in which he admitted that little or nothing had been done to provide for the educational needs of the country. He suggested that the state should take over the responsibility for secular instruction, giving facilities to the religious denominations to enter the schools on two afternoons a week. He was, in fact, proposing the adoption of a combined system. Needless to say, he encountered a great deal of opposition from Churchmen and Voluntaryists, but he is a good example of the way in which the combined system appealed to men of all creeds, as was later to be shown in the variety of sects represented in the membership of the L.P.S.A. and N.F.S.A.

(vi)

#### The New Secularist Pressure Group

In 1846 the government had committed itself to a policy on education, which, although slow, was effective. To the Voluntaryists, however, the speed was far too fast. On the other hand, the Secularists grew very impatient at the rate of progress

and with the repealing of the Corn Laws in 1846, were able to organize themselves into a powerful pressure group, the result being the foundation of the L.P.S.A. in Manchester in 1847. According to Francis Adams who, in his capacity as secretary to the National Education League, was somewhat biased in favour of the Secularists: "It was not until the Lancashire Public School Association was formed in 1847, that men of this character<sup>1</sup> were able to make their voice heard, or that an active educational propoganda was again undertaken in the country."<sup>2</sup>

Secularism in education owes its origins to such people as William Lovett and Thomas Cooper who were both Chartists, Thomas Wyse, William Ellis, founder of the Birkbeck Schools, W. J. Fox, Richard Cobden, and George Combe of Edinburgh. Curiously enough, none of these people could actually be described as a Mancunian. Lovett, Cooper and Ellis were based in London, Fox and Cobden, although Members of Parliament for northern constituencies, spent most of their time in London, and Combe lived in Scotland. Despite this, the movement had its headquarters in Manchester.

The reason for this is that by 1846 Manchester had established itself as a place commanding attention and respect by virtue of its

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1. Adams is here referring to men of liberal opinions distinguished as educational reformers who, he claimed, had been deliberately excluded from the Committee of Council.
  2. Adams, op.cit., p.114.

being the home of the "Manchester School" of economists who had caused Peel to repeal the Corn Laws. More important than this, however, was the existence of the machinery of the Anti-Corn Law League, for although the Corn Laws had gone, the mechanism which helped to remove them still remained. It was the adoption of this machinery which enabled the L.P.S.A. to act as a catalyst in the reforming process of education, drawing in the ideas of educationalists such as Horace Mann, George Combe and William Ellis and enabling them to react upon each other.

The founders of the L.P.S.A. were not national figures, nor were they the stars of the educational theatre, rather were they the producers who guaranteed a stage, and, more important, a nation-wide audience for the principals such as Cobden, Fox and Combe.

### C H A P T E R    I I I

#### THE ADOPTION OF THE LEAGUE MACHINERY

(i)

##### The League's Momentum Transferred to the Association

The Corn Laws had no sooner been repealed than the momentum generated during the victorious struggle for Free Trade was diverted from fiscal reform to the equally pressing question of educational reform.

A great deal had been learnt about the organization of pressure groups by the League's members, and others who had watched its progress:

"The Anti-Corn Law League was the most advanced political machine this country had yet seen; this machine was at once a wonder to contemporaries and one of the League's most important bequests to the future. Many of the Leaguers remained active in political life for many years after 1846, and carried into their later employment all the knowledge and techniques learnt during the agitation against the Corn Laws."<sup>1</sup>

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1. McCord, op.cit., p.163.

Springing educationally from the Manchester Society for Promoting National Education, the L.P.S.A. grew organizationally out of the League, and was one of those bodies which benefitted directly from the knowledge and technique that it had so laboriously acquired during the previous eight years. As George Combe of Edinburgh wrote to his brother, Andrew, on 14th June 1847: "They have the benefit of the whole experience of the late League."<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

#### Appointment of the Administration

The Association having held its first meeting in July 1847,<sup>2</sup> it was on the 21st of the same month that the Manchester Guardian referred to the plan of local education described by Samuel Lucas on that occasion. However, it was not until 25th August, at the Cooper Street Mechanics' Institute, that the plan was fully explained and the L.P.S.A. officially inaugurated for "promoting the establishment of a general system of education in the County of Lancaster."<sup>3</sup> Seventeen men in all were present, including Mr. George Elliot in the chair, the Reverend Dr. McKerrow, Samuel

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1. G. Gibbon, Life of George Combe, (London, 1878), Vol. 2, p. 238.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p. 68.

3. Lancashire Public School Association. Plan for promoting the establishment of a general system of secular education in the County of Lancaster (Manchester-London, 1847).



Lucas, Alexander Ireland, Thomas Ballantyne, and William McCall. John Mills, a banker, and Hugh Mason, a mill-owner, were both from Ashton-under-Lyne. Peter Rylands, a Warrington iron-master, who became Mayor of that town in 1853-1854, M.P. for Burnley in 1876, and was to show great interest in the new movement, was also present.

It was moved by Samuel Lucas and seconded by Peter Rylands that the meeting should constitute itself "an Association for promoting the establishment of a general system of secular education in the County of Lancaster."<sup>1</sup> A provisional committee of fifty-one was then appointed to conduct the affairs of the Association, until a committee of management could be elected at a general meeting of the members. It was resolved that the principles announced in the pamphlet should be adopted as those of the Association, "with a view to its introduction into the House of Commons in the shape of a Bill; and that the efforts of the Association be directed to procure an expression of public opinion in this County in its favour.

Three meetings in all were held on 25th August. The second one appointed those present as the Executive Committee with power to add to their number, and resolved that the Provisional Committee should be called together by circular "as soon as occasion may require." At the third meeting it was agreed that a circular

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1. Minutes of the Lancashire Public School Association, [MS in Manchester Central Reference Library: hereinafter referred to as Mins L.P.S.A., [later Mins N.P.S.A.]], Vol.3, 25th August 1847.
  2. Ibid.

should be sent out, enclosing copies of the "Plan" and requesting names for the provisional committee. A sub-committee was set up to advise on the appointment of a secretary.

(iii)

### The Organization Takes Shape

Little time was lost in organizing support and bringing the Association before the public eye, for on 31st August William McCall was able to report that more than one thousand circulars with pamphlets had been issued to the following towns: Warrington, forty-three; Ashton-under-Lyne, three; Rochdale, thirteen; Blackburn, eleven; Preston, twenty-five; Manchester and Salford, and the Corporations of both boroughs, eight hundred and sixty-eight; and twenty-six for the M.P.s of the county.<sup>1</sup> The meeting resolved to print a further seven thousand pamphlets for circulation, containing an invitation to all interested persons to contact the Chairman of the Association.

By the time of the next meeting, on 7th September, the effects of the circular were becoming apparent. There were among the many letters two from Joseph Brotherton, M.P., and W.J.Fox, M.P. Fox, an ex-Unitarian minister, had recently become member for Oldham. He had already established his reputation as a public figure by his

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1. Ibid.

sermons and lectures delivered at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, and by his extremely useful propaganda work on behalf of the Anti-Corn Law League. He was to have the distinction of introducing the first measure for free popularly controlled rate-supported secular education into Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the numerous offers of support, it was possible to add a further forty-eight names to the Provisional Committee, including those of Fox and Brotherton.

One can only admire the ease with which the L.P.S.A. moved into gear after such a short period of existence. Every step was taken with assurance, showing that the leaders of the Association were men well versed in the arts of campaigning on a large scale. With members such as McKerrow, Lucas, Ireland and Jacob Bright, all of whom were ex-Leaguers, the L.P.S.A. inevitably adopted Anti-Corn Law League methods of organization. The advent of penny-postage in 1840 had made the pamphlet one of the League's principal instruments of propaganda,<sup>2</sup> and the Association were quick to adopt this method of disseminating information.

It was further resolved, on 7th September, that "gentlemen in other parts of the country who have joined the Association be requested to form local committees to co-operate with this committee."<sup>3</sup> The response was not long in forthcoming. Dr.

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1. R. Garnett, The Life of W.J. Fox, Public Teacher and Social Reformer, 1786-1864 (London, 1910), p.302.

2. McCord, op.cit., p.150; p.161.

3. Mins L.P.S.A. Vol.3, 7th September 1847.

Hodgson undertook to form a local committee in Liverpool; Dr. Magraf, one in Blackburn; John Mills, one in Ashton-under-Lyne; and Jacob Bright, one in Rochdale.

At the next meeting, a week later, the Executive Committee were able to add the name of Dr. John Bowring, M.P. to the Provisional Committee, and John Mills and Jacob Bright reported that Local committees had already been formed in Ashton and Rochdale. In order to accommodate local committee members it was decided to make them ipso facto members of the Provisional Committee.

By this time, 14th September, the Executive Committee were able to congratulate themselves on having received some favourable articles in the press. The Manchester Guardian, the Manchester Times, the Manchester Examiner, the Liverpool Mercury and the Aberdeen Herald all gave their support, for which they earned the Committee's thanks.<sup>1</sup>

New premises were now taken at 3, Cross Street, the Cooper Street Mechanics' Institute no longer serving the needs of a growing organization. Increasing business pressure demanded that there should be regular hours of meeting, and the Executive Committee resolved to meet daily at ten'o'clock in the morning, and

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1. Mins L.P.S.A., Vol.3, 14th September 1847.

on each Monday evening at six-thirty. Three members were to form a quorum, and all accounts were to be audited by a similar number of members before being paid.

The Committee members were deservedly well pleased with their progress and with the rapidly increasing membership. When, on 27th September, the problem of how best to promote the canvass of the Association was discussed, it was reported that since the last meeting:

"Twelve members have taken lists of names and have obtained the adhesion of a number of gentlemen to the Association and are proceeding actively with the canvass; and that this committee are of the opinion that no better plan can be adopted for the present."<sup>1</sup>

Preparations were made for establishing a local committee in Preston, and a letter was sent to the Dean of Bolton, requesting his help.

(iv)

Dr. John Watts

The meeting of 28th September was made auspicious by the addition of a further thirty-six names to the membership of the Provisional Committee, including that of Dr. John Watts who had come to Manchester in 1840. As he became the most important member of the Executive Committee of the L.P.S.A. and N.P.S.A., it is worth examining the man's career in some detail.

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1. Ibid., 27th September 1847.

Born in Coventry in 1818 and having suffered partial paralysis through illness as a child, he got a job at the Coventry Mechanic's Institute. There he embraced Owenite communist ideals and became involved in the "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists" which was founded in 1839.<sup>1</sup> The country was divided up into six dioceses; London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, and it was as a "social missionary" that he went to Manchester and Glasgow in 1840, and back to Manchester in 1841. From then until 1844 he conducted a school in the Hall of Science, Campfield, Manchester. His duties were not light for at night he held public discussions, and gave lectures on Sundays. In 1844 the Rational Religionists movement was openly attacked for its secular beliefs. Its leaders replied they they merely assembled for "religious worship" and were, in fact, Protestants, and urged their members to make public confessions of their christianity. Some took this advice but the true Secularists, such as Watts and G.J. Holyoake, rebelled. Watts wrote to the Central Board in Birmingham that they seemed to be developing the souls of "stock-jobbers." He was referring to the fact that the Board, in their desperation to raise money to support a communal experiment in Hampshire, seemed ready to betray their own principles.<sup>1</sup> He left the movement in the same year, and,

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1. J. McCabe, Life and Letters of G.J.Holyoake, (London, 1908) Vol.1, p.54.

2. McCabe, op.cit., p.54.

when the proprietors of the Hall of Science could no longer meet their engagements, persuaded Sir Elkanah Armitage, and John Potter (later Sir John Potter), the Mayor, to purchase the building for about £1200 and establish the Manchester Free Lending Library. Watts became a secretary of the library. Not content with this, in 1845, as the honorary secretary of the workmen's committee, he joined with Malcolm Ross and Edward Watkin in providing Manchester with three public parks. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Giessen in 1844.

Between 1848 and 1851, the battle against "taxes on knowledge" was fought and won, but although Chambers, Milner Gibson and Cobden were involved, it ~~was~~ Watts who brought the movement to light and gathered evidence with which to fight their case in Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

His work for the L.P.S.A. and N.P.S.A. was invaluable. In his capacity as a member of the Manchester Statistical Society, of which he was later a president, he was able to provide the Association with invaluable service in the field of statistical surveys. Moreover his energy appears to have been inexhaustible, and, having become the Association's paid agent, held over one hundred large and successful meetings from Newcastle to Brighton. He also gave evidence before the Select Committee on Education in 1852/53. In 1867 the Manchester **Education** Bill Committee entrusted him with the preparation of their draft **Bill** which greatly

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1. Dictionary of National Biography.

influenced the pattern of the Act of 1870. Finally, Watts was elected to the first Manchester School Board in 1870.

In addition to his educational activities he found time to follow his livelihood in insurance, going to London in 1853 to assist with the People's (later European) Provident Association, and returning in 1857 as the manager of the Manchester branch. When later it failed he became very ill, in 1866/67, as a result of the shock, but the man's resilience and ingenuity are shown by the fact that the experience was not lost on him, for it induced him to produce the first draft of the "Life Assurance Act" which, with the help of the Rt. Hon. Stephen Cave and John Bright, became law.

Watts was a zealous promoter of the co-operative movement and wrote many pamphlets in its support. He was also very much involved with working men and their trade-union activities. In 1848 he denounced the Chartist violence, and in 1861 read a paper before the British Association on strikes, which he always maintained were against the interests of the working man.

With regard to his political beliefs, Watts is often said to have been a Communist, but according to the account of his granddaughter, Miss Florence E. Watts, his creed appears to have been a peculiar brand of his own: "He called himself a Communist but always based his Communism on the teaching of the New Testament and would have neither part nor lot in schemes for constitutional rights."<sup>1</sup> He was certainly no Marxist and any hopes that

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1. Manchester City News, 6th November 1920.



Friedrich Engels might have entertained of him as a potential revolutionary were ruined by his activities on behalf of the L.P.S.A., as can be seen in the sarcastic mood of the following letter from Engels to Marx, dated 5th February 1851:

"You know the new Cobden plan: a National Free School Association which will get a bill through Parliament for the purpose of empowering the townships to levy rates for the purpose of erecting schools. They are pushing the project enormously....The brave, intelligent, useful Watts..... is now on the best of terms with the Bishop of Manchester."<sup>1</sup>

A full account of his life amounts to what is virtually a catalogue of services to a community and one can well believe John Bright when, at a dinner held to celebrate the presentation of a bust of Watts to the Manchester Reform Club in 1885, he said, "I know no man in our district who has given more generous and disinterested labour for the public good."<sup>2</sup>

(v)

#### Hints of Future Policy

During this early period in the L.P.S.A.'s history several ideas were suggested at the meetings of the Executive Committee, which, although not immediately adopted, later became accepted policy. For example, a sub-committee was set up in order to

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1. Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, (Berlin, 1929), Part 3, pp.142-3.
  2. Manchester City News, 6th November 1920.

examine methods of building up working-class support.<sup>1</sup> Its suggestions made little progress at the time because the Executive Committee, considering them to be somewhat premature, resolved:

"That this committee highly approving of the suggestion of the sub-committee with regard to circulating an "Abstract of the Plan" among the working classes, deem it advisable to postpone taking such a step till a more favourable time as regards obtaining the attention of large numbers of these classes as well as the means of defraying expenses."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, this avenue was explored more effectively later when the Association was more firmly established.

It is interesting to notice that the members fully appreciated the advantages of such support. This is not surprising in the light of the experience of the Anti-Corn Law League, which had shown that working men not only gave a wider social basis to an organization, but also provided a useful line of defence, particularly at public meetings, against the militant activities of the Chartists.<sup>3</sup>

Another interesting development is the way in which Manchester quickly became the accepted centre of this new educational

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1. Mins L.P.S.A., 19th October 1847.

2. Ibid., 25th October 1847.

3. McCord, op.cit., p.97.

movement, not only within Lancashire, but also beyond its borders. For example, James Hole of Leeds wrote requesting names of people in his area who would be willing to assist him in establishing an association to promote the plan in Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> Soon afterwards its provisions received an enthusiastic reception at an educational soiree in Sheffield.<sup>2</sup> Doubtlessly, having followed Manchester's lead for some eighteen years on economic questions, it was no difficult matter for other towns to accept its guidance in the sphere of educational reform.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, very early in its existence, the Association adopted the use of the petition. This became one of its main instruments of pressure. Accordingly, at a special meeting on 30th November, at which twenty-seven members were present (the average attendance at meetings was only eight), the following resolution was passed:

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1. Mins L.P.S.A., Vol.3, 5th October 1847.
  2. Ibid., 23rd November 1847.
  3. George Combe was very conscious of Manchester's historic rôle in the nineteenth century. He wrote to the Executive Committee that if they succeeded in getting their bill through Parliament, "Manchester will add another wreath to her civic crown," the first wreath having been earned by, "the emancipation of industry from the fetters of ignorance and selfishness by the repeal of the Corn Laws." (Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the N.P.S.A., 17th January, 1855.)

"That with a view to the introduction of a Bill into Parliament as soon as it is expedient, it is desirable that petitions should be presented in favour of a general system of Secular Education; and the Executive Committee is hereby requested to prepare a form of petition, embracing the leading principles on which the plan proposed by this Association is based, and submit the same to a future meeting of this Committee for its approval."<sup>1</sup>

Messrs. Lucas, Hodgson, Rylands, McCall and Duffield were constituted a sub-committee for this purpose, and these gentlemen having completed their task, it was resolved on 21st December:

"That the following form of petition be agreed to and recommended for adoption to our friends throughout the country; and that accordingly they be requested to prepare petitions to both Houses and forward them as soon as possible after reassembling of Parliament, either to this office or to the Members of Parliament, by whom they desire to have them presented."

Although the L.P.S.A. organization was not quite so elaborate as that of the Anti-Corn Law League, there were nevertheless some similarities in its methods. George Wilson, the chairman of the League Council, had divided the country up into twelve areas, each with its own permanent 'lecturer', who was to act as secretary and organiser of the region.<sup>2</sup> In the same way the L.P. .A. established correspondents all over Lancashire and in other counties. The following resolution illustrates how these people could be employed in campaigning for the adoption of the plan:

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1. Ibid., 30th November 1847.

2. McCord, op.cit., p.155.

"That five hundred copies of the petition be printed for the House Commons and five hundred copies for the House of Lords, and that a copy of each be forwarded with a letter to each correspondent with this committee in each town in the country, requesting them to prepare petitions and procure signatures."<sup>1</sup>

(vi)

### An Optimistic Ending to the Year

At the end of the year the Provisional Committee had every reason to feel content with the progress of the Association. Expressions of confidence were not lacking. Peter Rylands stated that much progress had been made towards persuading the public of the need to separate secular from religious education. Jacob Bright thought that with greater publicity of the Association's views many objections to its scheme were disappearing. Finally on this wave of optimism it was resolved:

"That the Executive Committee be requested to consider the best means of placing the management of this Association on a permanent footing and to report on the subject to a future meeting of this Committee."<sup>2</sup>

Samuel Lucas in his capacity as chairman, and the other members of the Executive Committee, received a vote of thanks "for their able management of the affairs of the Association."

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1. Mins L.P.S.A., Vol.3, 21st December 1847.

2. Ibid.

## C H A P T E R   I V

### THE PLAN OF SECULAR EDUCATION AND ITS AMERICAN BACKGROUND

(i)

#### The Association's First Public Meeting

For the L.P.S.A. 1848 began with urgent preparations for a public meeting to be held in Cooper Street Mechanics' Institute, on January 12th. Alexander Henry, M.P. for South Lancashire, consented to take the chair. Notices were put in all the local newspapers, in addition to which two thousand free tickets were distributed. Two thousand hand-bills and twenty large placards were printed for posting and circulation.

Meanwhile the work of preparing petitions gathered momentum. Mr. John Moffatt of Rochdale was authorized to spend £4 "in the preparation and management of seven petitions in that town and the neighbourhood",<sup>1</sup> and the Secretary was requested to forward a petition to Jonathan Burns of Lancaster, "and request his assistance in procuring signatures in that city".<sup>2</sup>

The meeting of the 12th January is important, because it

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. 5, 7th January 1848.

2. Ibid.

was the first public meeting to be held by the L.P.S.A. It gave its members and friends an opportunity to describe their scheme of education to a large audience, and its main purpose was to secure agreement on the form of petition to be sent to the House of Commons. The proposed version, read aloud by the chairman, contained certain principles which the Association held throughout its existence.

(ii)

#### The Petition to Parliament

The first principle is a declaration of the belief that a large extension of education among the people was necessary, "in order to diminish intemperance, misery, and crime, and to promote morality and the best interests of all classes".<sup>1</sup> By 1847 faith in the regenerative effects of education upon society had become very strong among supporters of popular education. When W.J.Fox was introducing his Education Bill to the House of Commons on 26th February 1850, he confidently affirmed that:

"It is no longer necessary to prove that education is good for the individual and for the community; that it leads to the abatement of crime and to improvement in manners and morals."<sup>2</sup>

Even when the facts appeared to disprove the existence of such regenerative effects, the faith of the reformers was seldom

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th January 1848.

2. Hansard, 3rd series, Vol.105, p.27.

shaken. The blame was placed upon the defective nature of the existing system of education. We find an illustration of this in the same speech where Fox quotes the chaplain of Pentonville prison:

"I am compelled again to confess that the proportion of convicts who have been educated in some sort, as compared with those totally uneducated, is fully as high as that which exists between those classes in the general population - a fact which should lead to the inquiry wherein the popular education is defective."

The power of education is not doubted; only its quality.<sup>1</sup>

The second point in the petition was a declaration that the principles on which state aid to education was based were

"manifestly erroneous", for they caused aid to be given: "in an inverse ratio to the necessities of the people...solely through the medium of the various religious denominations, that it must fail to reach a large, and that the most degraded portion of the community, while it tends to perpetuate and embitter the spirit of sectarianism,"<sup>2</sup>

This argument became the Association's main weapon against the Voluntaryists and was often repeated by Dr. McKerrow who saw at first hand, in the neighbourhood of his Lloyd Street chapel, how numerous were the children who remained untouched by the existing facilities for education. The L.P.S.A. and W.P.S.A. were always deeply concerned about the fact that no matter how well organized the schools belonging to the voluntary organizations

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1. See also Ashton, op.cit., p.59, for papers by Manchester Statistical Society members in advocacy of education as a means of solving the problem of crime.

2. Manchester Guardian, 15th January 1848.



might be, a large proportion of the population, not connected with any religious sect and living in impoverished areas where there was no voluntary initiative, would be left outside the system. This was the very section of the community most in need of moral improvement.

Thirdly the petition emphasized that any system of public schools at all acceptable to the people must be supported by local rates, and managed by local authorities elected by rate-payers especially for that purpose. The right of free admission must be denied to no child on religious grounds, and rights of conscience should be secured by the fundamental rule that nothing should be taught which would favour "the peculiar tenets of any religious sect or denomination".

(iii)

A "Secular" Association but  
not a "Godless" one

Any association proposing a scheme of secular education in the nineteenth century was in danger of incurring the criticism of being a "godless" organization.<sup>1</sup> Both the L.P.S.A. and the N.P.S.A. constantly had to fight against this stigma, and

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1. Sir Robert Inglis, M.P. for Oxford, a die-hard opponent of secular education, was responsible for this charge (Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.96, pp.1289-92). It was believed that he exerted undue influence over the Department of Education, (Adams, op.cit., p.114).

Richard Cobden was so anxious to avoid it that, when in 1850 the Association was re-named the "National Public School Association", he insisted that it should not be named the "National Secular School Association", lest the word "secular" should lay the movement open to further criticism.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the petition contains the reassurance:

"That this system, instead of injuriously affecting the interests of religion, would materially aid the efforts of the teacher of religion, and would do much to soften the asperities and remove the prejudices of sects and parties".<sup>2</sup>

(iv)

#### The Failure of the Voluntary Organizations

After having read the petition, Alexander Henry addressed the meeting. He considered that education was "the only means of improving the moral condition of the people; of making them wiser, happier and better members of the community, and of establishing the best safe-guard for the preservation of order, life and property".<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite financial help from the government and the efforts of the voluntary societies, progress was not great enough. Many people, he said, believed that this

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.78.

2. Manchester Guardian, 15th January 1848.

3. Ibid.

was caused by the diversity of religious sects; a situation making it impossible for everybody to join in any system of secular education, combined with religious teaching, without doing violence to their consciences. For this reason, the L.P.S.A. had devised a system of purely secular education leaving spiritual instruction to ministers of religion. He referred to the disappointment felt by many people when the Committee of Council on Education, in 1846, failed to establish a national system and merely extended aid to schools already in existence. The Association, he affirmed, was not in opposition to the government in any way, but merely wished to bring forward its own plan, which, he hoped, would be judged on its own merits.

(v)

#### The Background to the "Plan"

Samuel Lucas's speech, which followed, is important because it gives an insight into the reasons for the peculiar form of the Association's plan which was put forward in 1847.<sup>1</sup> He explained how he and his associates had consulted educational systems in Prussia, Holland, France and several states in Germany, and had found that, in general, education in those countries was of a better standard

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1. L.P.S.A. Plan of Secular Education (1847).

than in Britain. Unfortunately, none of these was entirely suitable, because of their centralized nature. The required system was one which would provide a compromise between local and centralized control. He desired "that the government should put into the hands of the people the machinery by which they might educate themselves".<sup>1</sup>

In their search for a suitable model, Lucas explained, the Association "found that when America was colonized, one of the first things done was to establish educational institutions, and it had ever since been held that education was one of the greatest safeguards for the civil and religious liberty of the country. The most perfect system in operation in America was that of Massachusetts".<sup>2</sup>

(vi)

Evidence of the Superiority of  
American Education

Before describing the scheme in detail Lucas explained how, with a population half that of Lancashire, Massachusetts was

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th January 1848.
  2. Ibid.

divided into towns, each one having its annually elected education committee. The duties of these bodies were to mark out school districts, provide school houses, and generally manage educational affairs, with the aid of rates levied for that purpose.

In order to vindicate this choice to the meeting, he referred to the opinion of travellers who had come back from the United States convinced that its people were the most intelligent in the world. He quoted two men called Reid and Matthews who, in 1834, having visited the country, had stated that the literacy rate there was one in four, compared with one in ten in Scotland, one in twelve in England, and one in twenty in Wales. Lucas also quoted other witnesses such as J. Stuart and J.H.Tuke who had made similar claims that Europe could not rival the United States in the field of education.

Having described the basic model on which the Association had constructed their scheme, he went on to explain it in some detail, ~~emphasizing~~ that it had something both of the United States and Continental systems, and that, although its organization was essentially local in nature, there was provision for some centralized control "to secure efficiency".

(vii)

The Plan of Secular Education

The "Plan" was published in the form of a pamphlet which

could easily be handled and carried, and was therefore eminently suitable for propaganda purposes. It begins with a preamble stating that:

"Universal diffusion of education is the best safeguard for civil and religious liberty, security for property rights and rights of labour, and the moral and religious well-being of the people".<sup>1</sup>

It emphasized that the government must not be allowed complete control of any system, otherwise the people's minds would be "pressed into bondage". On the other hand if the voluntary societies were left in control children not connected with any religious organization would receive no education. Some point in-between the two extremes must be found, and very diplomatically the preamble states that the Association did not wish to ignore the services rendered by the voluntary organizations, even though they considered them to be inadequate:

"The national gratitude is due to those who have so nobly struggled for the emancipation of their fellow men from the bonds of ignorance".<sup>2</sup>

Although universal education would not wholly prevent crime, the pamphlet affirms that it would certainly diminish it. This shows that the L.P.S.A. were not overcome with the eloquence of

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1. L.P.S.A. Plan of Secular Education, p.3.

2. Ibid.

their own idealism but saw the problem realistically. Education was not a panacea that would cure everything, but at least it would improve the situation by a considerable degree.

As in the petition, the government's policy of giving aid in proportion to the amount of money raised voluntarily is criticized on the grounds that poor localities remained destitute. The scheme would be supported by local rates and the children of all who paid would be admitted.

In deference to tender consciences, "all catechisms and creeds should, as a measure of simple justice to all, be strictly excluded".<sup>1</sup> As for religious instruction, its value was stated to be undeniable, but only when it was without sectarian bias. These ideas are summarised in a quotation from Horace Mann, who, in his capacity as secretary to the Board of Education in Massachusetts, said:

"Our aim, obviously, is to secure as much of religious instruction as is compatible with religious freedom".<sup>2</sup>

For the purpose of collecting and diffusing information, a central board was to be set up "deriving its authority from the people and responsible to them for the exercise of it".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Ibid.

3. L.P.S.A., Plan of Secular Education, p.4.

Nor was education to be solely for the poorer classes. It would cater, also, for the middle-classes, whose education was often limited and unsatisfactory,<sup>1</sup> for this was to be a system for the whole people.

Finally, the experiment was to be confined to Lancashire, because the Association believed that they would meet with "warmer support from some, and less decided opposition from others", than if it had been proposed for the whole country. Moreover the architects of the scheme believed that in Lancashire they would find men qualified to carry out such an experiment.<sup>2</sup>

#### The School Committees

The plan provided for the annual appointment, in each parish or township with a population of over two thousand and upwards, of a school committee, which, by levying rates, was to provide common day schools, evening schools, infant schools, and industrial schools. Its responsibilities were to include the appointment and dismissal of staff, and all matters relating to the management of

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1. In 1859 Miss Angela G. Burdett Coutts failed in her attempts to attract middle-class young women into the teaching profession because of their poor standard of education (A. Trapp, The School Teachers (London, 1959), pp.23-24).
  2. L.P.S.A. Plan of Secular Education, p.5.



the schools. There was to be no sectarian teaching at all, and rate-payers were to be allowed to complain to the school committee about the conduct of teachers in respect of religion. An elaborate system of appeals was provided from the school committee to the hundred committee, from the hundred committee to the county board, and thence to the courts of law and equity. No minister of religion of any sect could hold a salaried office connected with the schools.

All teachers, unless authorised, were to have a certificate of proficiency by county board examiners. All books were to be sanctioned by the school committee, but the courses pursued by schools were to be recommended by the county board.

All the committees were to submit annual reports and balance sheets to the committees of hundred and county boards. They had the power to admit to their schools children who had been convicted of crime, and to expel children for bad behaviour. They could also appoint a salaried clerk. As it was "of the first necessity to create in the minds of the people a desire for education", it was the duty of the local committees to do this by communicating personally with parents of children receiving education.

#### The Committees of Hundred

Superior to the local committees were provided the committees of hundred, of which there were to be six, with the responsibility of uniting towns and parishes of less than two thousand inhabitants

into school unions. They were also to have the power to intervene in towns, parishes and unions which neglected to provide schools, and for this purpose were to have the power to levy rates and appoint school committees for such areas.

It was to be their duty to dismiss, or admonish, teachers reported to them by school committees. If they wished, they could levy rates to provide schools for the blind, deaf and dumb, and were to act as corporations to look after school property. As with the local committees, they too were to submit annual reports, and could appoint a salaried clerk.

#### The County Board

The most important unit of educational government envisaged was the county board, which was to comprise twelve people, elected from the hundreds, of whom no more than three were to be of the same religious denomination. It was to appoint a secretary and two inspectors, and sanction all books used in schools. If three of its members objected to a book on religious grounds it was not to be used. All the members, the secretary and inspectors, were to have the authority to enter the schools whenever they wished for purposes of inspection, and the power to discipline teachers by admonishment or dismissal, should they be guilty of favouring any particular religious sect.

If both the hundred and school committees failed to provide

Schools in their areas of control, the county board was to rectify the deficiency. It was to draw up a plan of instruction for use in all the public schools, and present annually to the two Houses of Parliament a detailed report of the state of education in Lancashire. The board would also be responsible for carrying out research into educational methods, collecting as much information as possible from the continent and the United States, and making it available to the school committees.

The authors of the "Plan" were not oblivious of the need for incentives to better work, and a system of scholarships was devised for which £2,000 per year was to be provided. The county board was to form a corporation to look after the property of the normal schools, which were to be set up for the training of teachers. Any other property bequeathed to it was to be used to support these establishments, libraries and any other educational amenities needed in the county.

#### Examination of Teachers

A scheme was to be designed for the examination of teachers. The board was to lay down a uniform examination, and three examiners, vested with the power of granting or refusing certificates, were to be appointed. The dates of the examinations were to be announced one month in advance in the county papers. An

examination fee would be charged and in the event of the candidate being dissatisfied with the examination result, he or she was to have a right of appeal to the board.

The Idealism of the Curricula and Provision  
for Religious Instruction

The ideals upon which the curricula of the various schools were to be based give an insight into the minds of the founders of the Association. In the common day schools, catering for the wide age-group of from five to fifteen years, the range of subjects was to include reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography "and such other useful secular information as may be deemed advisable".<sup>1</sup> But there was also to be fostered "sacred regard to truth; justice, kindness and forbearance; temperance, frugality and industry and all other virtues conducive to the right ordering of practical conduct in the affairs of life".<sup>2</sup> Provision was made for non-denominational reading of the scriptures in the schools: with the safe-guard that "Nothing shall be taught...that favours the peculiar tenets of any religious sect".<sup>3</sup> Selected passages were to be chosen by a

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1. L.P.S.A., Plan of Secular Education, p.6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

commission, appointed by the county board, consisting of nine people, of whom no two were to be of the same denomination. Before a passage could be chosen unanimous agreement had to be attained.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Industrial Schools

Evening schools were to be provided for children aged from ten to fifteen years, and infant schools for those below six years. Of much greater interest, however, is the concept of the role of the industrial schools. They were to be designed "for the purpose of affording shelter to that section of the population which has no means of subsistence", and to rescue them from destitution by teaching them a trade, thereby affording them an "opportunity of becoming honest and respectable members of the community".

#### The Shortage of Good Teachers

The pamphlet reveals that the Association were very much concerned about the poor quality of teachers in schools,<sup>2</sup> and with the fact that American teachers appeared to be far better educated than those in Great Britain. It is clearly stated in the pamphlet

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1. This was the system of religious instruction in the National School system of Ireland.
  2. For a description of the poor quality of person entering the profession during the period 1800-1846, see Trapp, op.cit., p.10.

that, in setting up their own standard examination, the L.P.S.A. fervently hoped that they were providing a model which, when extended, would become a national standard examination for teachers.<sup>1</sup>

#### Education and Democracy

The idea of popular control of such a system was meant to harmonize with the idea of a free people, and although the majority of the population at that time were not enfranchized, the pamphlet does not fail to explain to the working classes that an extension of political privilege could only be obtained by an enlightened population.<sup>2</sup> Nor does it fail to offer something to the propertied classes whose anxieties were great in an age of Chartist riots. The hope is expressed that those who doubted the wisdom of extending education might realize that "there can be no protection to property, no security for the maintenance of public order, like an educated people".<sup>3</sup>

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1. L.P.S.A., Plan of Secular Education, p.20.
  2. Cf. J.A.Roebuck's view of education in the light of approaching democracy, "I wish the people to be enlightened, that they may use the power well which they will inevitably obtain". (Quoted by H.C.Barnard, A History of English Education (London, 1961), p.68)
  3. L.P.S.A., Plan of Secular Education, p.20.

## The Need for Middle-Class Support

Herein lies a clever appeal to all sections of the community. Samuel Lucas realized that if the L.P.S.A. was going to be a successful pressure group and achieve its objective of a national system of education, not only would it need to gain working-class support, but also that of the propertied classes, many of whom were afraid of any extension of privilege and opportunity to the lower orders of society. To those who wondered where the money to pay for the scheme was to be obtained, the following information was volunteered:

"The population of Lancashire in 1841 was 1,666,054, but may at present be considered as 2,000,000, 1847. The net ~~rental~~ assessed for the poor rates in the county of Lancaster for the year ending Lady-day 1847, was £5,266,606 - at present it may be taken as £6,000,000. The erection of a school house in every township (464 in number) at an expense of £250 each, would cost altogether £116,000. A rate of 4½d in the pound would raise a sum of £118,750".<sup>1</sup>

The scheme had been planned in enough detail to combat most criticisms of its practicability, and the availability of the necessary funds had been demonstrated. Yet it was the religious problem, emphasized so much in the pamphlet by the elaborate provisions for its solution, that was to be the main stumbling block

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1. Ibid., p.11.

of any projected national education system, and it is little wonder that the leaders of the Association were obsessed with it.

(viii)

#### The Need to Create Administrative Bodies

A further principle, worthy of comment, was the idea adopted from the American system, that a local area should be given power to tax itself for educational purposes, and control its own expenditure. Hitherto the proposed schemes had been either to supplement the government grants with voluntary contributions, or to control money raised by rates through the central power, but in proposing to adopt the American method, the members of the L.P.S.A. were innovators, in that they were exploring new ways of exploiting the powers granted to municipalities by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, and of adapting them for educational purposes.

It is easy to underestimate the importance of a scheme such as this if one fails to appreciate the difficulties caused by the lack of adequate Local Government organization. As S.E.Maltby wrote:

"The inadequacy of the machinery of Local Government before the Local Government Acts of 1888 (which established County Councils) and of 1894 (which created Parish Councils and Rural District Councils) was a constant hindrance to social reformers; the difficulty was usually met by the creation of ad hoc bodies as in the case of School Boards 1870-1902".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.69.



In using the old divisions of parish, township, hundred and county, the L.P.S.A. were employing traditional divisions of local government which could easily be extended to the rest of the country, if the plan were adopted nationally.

If the meeting held on 12th January did not convince everybody of the need for a national system of secular education, it certainly gave people plenty to think about. Quoting from Wade's History of the Working Classes, Dr. McKerrow stated that, despite the efforts of the voluntary organizations, crime had quadrupled since 1805. For this he blamed the existing system of educational provision whereby schools were built for the benefit of specific religious sects in competition with one another, rather than with the object of relieving the educational destitution of particular districts. He described the educational anarchy caused by such activities:

"The present system degrades and pauperises the feelings of the people; no sooner is the school of one denomination proposed than out sally a number of ladies of another denomination to canvass for scholars for their own school whom they endeavour to procure by gifts, and assigning sundry cogent reasons to their parents".

To those who criticized the plan on the grounds of impracticability, his reply was that nothing was impracticable "to the earnest active-minded men of Lancashire", and those whose hearts quailed at

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th January 1848

the immensity of the task were reminded that the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws began in much less auspicious circumstances than the present agitation. He expressed confidence in the ultimate success of the campaign.

(ix)

### Horace Mann and the American Common School System

The references in the "Plan" to Horace Mann and the Massachusetts educational system warrant an appreciation of the work which enabled him to claim a place among the great pioneers of education, for the L.P.S.A. based their scheme almost entirely on his principles.

Having entered public life as a lawyer, Mann became a member of the Massachusetts legislature in 1827, where he fought for religious freedom, humane treatment of the insane and prison reform. In 1837 he threw up his lucrative practice in order to accept the low-paid post as Secretary of the newly created State Board of education "and with 'eccentric dis-interestedness' devoted himself to the despised work of education".<sup>1</sup> In his own words he betook himself "to the higher sphere of mind and morals".<sup>2</sup>

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1. W. Jolly, Education: Its Principles and Practices, by George Combe, (London, 1879), p. 611.
  2. A. E. Meyer, An Educational History of the American People, (New York, 1957), p. 160.

He made it his mission to fight for educational reform, and by the time he resigned in 1848 Massachusetts had one of the finest systems of publicly provided schools in the world for administration and the quality of teaching. Mann's success lies in his conviction that education is the certain means to prosperity, security, happiness and salvation. His position as secretary to the Massachusetts Board was no mere job, it was a vocation which he followed with the zeal of a missionary.<sup>1</sup>

Massachusetts was founded by Puritan immigrants in 1629. In 1642<sup>2</sup> and 1647<sup>3</sup> laws were passed, which became the foundation of the Massachusetts school laws, enforcing the provision of instruction in reading and writing and the creation of elementary secondary schools. In 1789, by a general law of the State of Massachusetts, smaller towns were required to support a primary school and larger ones a grammar school. In the same year a law was passed providing for the division of townships into districts for school provision.<sup>4</sup> The tax-supported school had been in existence in New England since the seventeenth century, but the Massachusetts law of 1789 and those of New Hampshire appearing at the same time were the first general school laws to be framed in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

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1. H.G. Good. A History of American Education. (New York, 1956), p.161.

2. Ibid. p. 29.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p. 41.

5. Meyer. op.cit. p. 106.

By 1800 Massachusetts had been divided into townships, some of which had been sub-divided into school districts, the inhabitants of which were vested with the power to elect a school committee and authorise rates to be levied for the maintenance of a school open to all children and free of all cost. However, as there was no department of the state government concerned with the supervision of the Common Schools, the standard of educational provision, especially in rural districts, was often deplorable.

In 1827 a law was passed making the maintenance of schools in all townships compulsory and forbidding the teaching of religious instruction with a sectarian bias.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this law the state of public education was still unsatisfactory, because no central authority was created.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as the first state law to decree the public maintenance and support of high schools, it became the model for similar ventures elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

In his Twelfth Annual Report (pp.113-121) Mann stated that when he assumed office as secretary in 1837, some schools used books of an exclusively doctrinal character, while in others all religious

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1. Good, op.cit., p.161.
  2. Jolly, op.cit., p.611.
  3. Meyer, op.cit., p.192.

books, including the Bible, had been excluded by vote of the committee.<sup>1</sup> The standard of teaching was poor partly because there was no means of raising the level of teaching in the absence of a state system of teacher-training. Absenteeism was also a great problem:

"it was a rare school which kept its doors open more than twenty weeks each year, and many children attended classes less than half this time. The situation presented a classic example of local autonomy carried to absurd lengths".<sup>2</sup>

The disorganized state of education in Massachusetts was revealed by the Rev. S. Wood who had visited the United States in 1836-1837. In the Third Publication of the Central Society (1839) he challenged Massachusetts to make her system more efficient following the example of Europe, but forecast that with the formation of the Board of Education in 1837 a great improvement would follow.

(x)

The Powers of the Board and Mann's  
method of using them

The duties of the Board of Education which was established

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1. Farrar, op.cit.,p.37.

2. Jonathan C. Messerli: "Horace Mann and Teacher Education," The Year Book of Education,1963 p.71, (quoted by Farrar, op.cit.,p.35).

in April<sup>1</sup> 1837 were as follows: to lay before the legislature an abstract of returns received from the school committee; the Secretary was to collect information as to the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools and diffuse information; he was also to make an annual report to the legislature of the activities of the board, with suggestions for improvements in the schools. The Board was accorded no compulsory powers, which meant that the Secretary's strongest weapons were reason and persuasion.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of the Board depended on the Secretary and in Horace Mann's hands it became a powerful propaganda machine. He held frequent educational conventions and edited the fortnightly Common School Journal.<sup>3</sup> His twelve annual reports, which were distributed to every school district, were notable for their clarity and readability and when published in England, made a great impact on educationalists. The Seventh Report, published in this country in 1846, was interesting mainly for its account of Mann's visit to Europe in 1843, and for the comparison of the

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1. Jolly, op.cit., p.609.
  2. Ibid., p.610, note.
  3. Ibid.

educational systems of Prussia and the German States, England, Scotland, Belgium and France.<sup>1</sup> It was ~~his~~ criticism of the Boston schoolmasters in this report that involved him in controversy in Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> The Tenth Report (1846) was useful because it gave a full description of the Massachusetts system, and was written for the purpose of answering the many enquiries he received from the United States, Europe and Canada.<sup>3</sup> His plan for the establishment of Normal Schools, outlined in the Second Annual Report published in January 1839, was used by the Church of England party to fight the Whig government's plan to set up a state Normal School in England.<sup>4</sup>

Mann's schemes did not go unopposed in Massachusetts. Some feared that the unsectarian education he enforced under the law of 1827, which was re-enacted in 1835, would undermine orthodox christianity. The controversy came to a head in 1844 when Mann replied to his critics in a pamphlet The Common School Controversy (1844) and the ensuing newspaper correspondence came out generally

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1. Farrar, op.cit., p.37.

2. Meyer, op.cit., p.162.

3. Farrar, op.cit., p.38.

4. Ibid., p.40.

in Mann's support.<sup>1</sup>

In the Eighth Annual Report (for 1844), Mann described the existing position with regard to religious teaching in the Common Schools, proving that unsectarian teaching had not driven the Bible from the schools. In 258 out of 300 towns in the state it was prescribed as one of the reading books in school, and in a further thirty-eight towns it was used, but whether devotionally or merely as a reading book is not clear. The school committees of nine towns did not reply to his enquiry. In only three of the towns which replied was the Bible not generally used. Commenting on this Mann wrote:

"I believe all attempts will prove unavailing to disparage the religious character of Massachusetts, as compared with the rest of Christendom, or to show that its institutions and its people are not as deeply imbued with the spirit of divine christianity as those of any other community upon the face of the earth".<sup>2</sup>

It was Mann's success in overcoming opposition to his reforms which encouraged George Combe (1788-1858), the Scottish phrenologist and educationalist, to urge the introduction of a similar system in Great Britain.

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1. Meyer, op.cit., p.163. See also Jolly, op.cit., p.616.

2. Quoted by Farrar, op.cit., p.42.



George Combe and the American Common  
School System

George Combe of Edinburgh was the most powerful advocate of the American system in Britain about this time. His work on phrenology, The Constitution of Man (1828), which was an educational study, influenced many people including Horace Mann, who frequently acknowledged his indebtedness to Combe's writings.<sup>1</sup>

In 1838-1840 Combe visited the United States on a lecture tour where he met Mann, and the two became friends. At the same time he was greatly impressed with the Massachusetts system as reformed by Mann, and became the enthusiastic advocate of a similar system in Britain. In the Edinburgh Review for July 1841 he wrote an article entitled Education in America,<sup>2</sup> describing the Common Schools and their organization in detail. In later years he often referred people to this article and it was used by Samuel Lucas as a guide for the plan of the L.P.S.A. In it he corrected the illusion, held by many people, that there was no system of public instruction in operation in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jolly, op.cit., note p.lxxiii.

2. Ibid., pp.607-615.

3. Ibid., p.lxvii.

In his pamphlet Notes on National Education and the Common Schools of Massachusetts (1845), he demonstrated the relevance of the Massachusetts system to the situation in Britain, and quoted from Mann's pamphlet The Common School Controversy (1844) in support of his argument.<sup>1</sup> Combe exerted his influence not only through his pamphlets and lectures,<sup>2</sup> but also through his friends, notable among whom were W.B.Hodgson and Alexander Ireland. As a result of his energy and zeal to his cause he became the moving spirit in the movement for national unsectarian secular education.

(xii)

The General Discontent with the Minutes of Council a cause of discussion of the American system

Samuel Lucas's exposition of the plan shows clearly that the founders of the L.P.S.A. were strongly influenced by the American Common School System, and particularly in the way that it operated in Massachusetts. They were not alone in this. The Minutes of Council of 1846 caused a great deal of discussion among educationalists. To Edward Baines they smacked of authoritarianism and he attacked them immediately in his pamphlet An Alarm to the Nation on the Unjust Unconstitutional and Dangerous Measure of State Education Proposed by the Government (February 1847). On the other hand, as Lucas

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1. Ibid., note, p.622.

2. In 1851 he addressed meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley and Manchester on the subject of secular education (Ibid.).

pointed out at the I.P.S.A. meeting on 12th January, there were others who were disappointed with the continuation of the policy of subsidizing the voluntary societies. Pamphlets suggesting alternative schemes of education appeared, usually citing the systems of Ireland and New England as suitable examples. Both systems were praised by George Combe in 1846 in his pamphlet Remarks on National Education<sup>1</sup> in which he accused the government of "endowing discord" by extending financial assistance to the religious sects. He upheld the Massachusetts system as a model for a national system in Britain.

The Liverpool Mercury attacked the government plan on 12th February 1847 and advocated the Irish National system. The Daily News of 8th March 1847 spoke of the inevitability of the policy of subsidizing the voluntary societies, when they had been in existence before the state began to assist education in 1833. It stated its own preference for a system similar to that of Ireland or the United States "but...statesmen must deal with that which actually exists, not with that which is very remotely possible".<sup>2</sup> However, the American system was sometimes invoked in support of the government's policy. On 3rd April 1847, Edward Edwards, a

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1. Jolly, op.cit., p.xxiv.

2. Quoted by Farrar, op.cit., p.68.

librarian in the British Museum and friend of William Ewart M.P., criticized the resolutions attacking the government plan which had been passed at a meeting presided over by the Rev. T. Binney, Pastor of Weigh House Congregation, London. In his pamphlet A Letter to the Rev. T. Binney on the Present Position of the Education Question and on the Recent Proceedings of some of the Protestant Dissenters, he quoted Horace Mann's Seventh Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education in support of the Minutes of Council of 1846:

"If Prussia can pervert the benign influences of education to the support of arbitrary power, we surely can employ them for the support and perpetuation of free institutions. A national spirit of liberty can be cultivated more easily than a national spirit of bondage; and if it may be one of the great prerogatives of education to perform the unnatural and unholy work of making slaves, then surely it must be one of the noblest instrumentalities for rearing a nation of free men".<sup>1</sup>

The Manchester Examiner, the publicity agent and mouth-piece of the L.P.S.A., on 3rd April 1847, advocated the American system in opposition to the government plan:

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1. H. Mann, Seventh Report, p. 23. quoted by Farrar, on.cit., p.73.

"Now had Ministers come forward and boldly with a wise and well-digested scheme of education, founded on as liberal a basis as that of the United States, they would have rallied round them such an amount of enlightened public opinion in its favour as must have proved triumphant in the end, notwithstanding all the opposition which might have been offered by the Church, or by those Dissenters who believe that religious doctrinal instruction ought to be inculcated in primary schools".

The government plan was also opposed by John Bright when he was chairman of a meeting of dissenters at Exeter Hall in London on 15th April 1847. In his speech he countered a reference made by the Bishop of Norwich at a public meeting on education in the United States in support of the government plan. He emphasized that the schools in New England were controlled by local bodies, not by the government. He followed this up with a vigorous attack upon the Minutes of Council, denying Macauley's argument, in his speech on 18th April, that what had been done for Massachusetts constituted a precedent for the government's plan. The difference was that in Massachusetts there was no established church. If this were removed he was certain that agreement would be reached on a system of national education.<sup>1</sup>

After making this statement Bright remained aloof from the education question until 1854.

(xiii)

The "Plan" and the Massachusetts System

Lucas, being a Quaker, was not a member of Dr. McKerrow's

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1. Farrar, op.cit., p.73.

congregation so that the events which led up to the meetings and discussions in the Lloyd Street vestry are not clear. However, both he and Jacob Bright knew Dr. McKerrow, Alexander Ireland and Thomas Ballantyne through common membership of the Anti-Corn Law League. It is possible that the meetings were started after Lucas had published a long letter in the Manchester Examiner of 24th April 1847, explaining his opposition to the government plan and sketching the outlines of an alternative plan, which would neither discourage voluntary effort, nor enable any religious sect to be dominant. In his letter Lucas referred to Combe's pamphlet, Remarks on National Education, which gave the impression that the United States schools, like those in Ireland, were under the control of the government. On this account he was not at first in favour of the United States system. He rejected centralization in Britain because of the restricted franchise, and advocated that the ratepayers should establish rate-supported secular schools from which the Bible was to be excluded, and from which the ministers of all denominations were to be excluded. A plan of education would be drawn up by a central board but without the power to enforce its adoption by the school committees.

On 27th April 1847, W.B.Hodgson wrote to Combe, drawing his attention to Lucas's letter.<sup>1</sup> Combe wrote back correcting Lucas's

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1. Ibid., p.77.

mistaken impression of the American system. The latter wrote to Combe on 29th April expressing his gratification that the United States system was not controlled in an absolute manner by the government, and stating how pleased he was that he and Combe were in agreement on the question of centralization.

Combe sent him a copy of his pamphlet On the Relation between Religion and Science, and on 5th May, 1847, Lucas wrote: "What pleases me is your condemnation of the sectarianism which obtrudes itself into efforts for the education of the people".<sup>1</sup>

He referred to Combe's article Education in America, published in the Edinburgh Review for July 1841, in which Combe described the Massachusetts system in detail advocating its adoption in Britain. Lucas, having read the article, was convinced that the powers he proposed for a central board were like those possessed by the Massachusetts Board, and, referring to the fact that the American public schools were in a very inefficient state previous to the establishment of the boards, wrote, "I presume that a board with similar powers would have as beneficial an effect on any public schools established in this country".<sup>2</sup>

It seems certain, therefore, that Combe's article in the Edinburgh Review of 1841 was the basis of the I.P.S.A.'s plan.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.79.

His biographer, Charles Gibbon, supports this, stating that Lucas "took as his guide Combe's exposition of Horace Mann's System (in America), in the Edinburgh Review for July 1841".<sup>1</sup> Combe, therefore, was the guiding hand behind the founders of the L.P.S.A.

On 2nd June Alexander Ireland wrote to Combe telling him of the meeting in Dr. McKerrow's vestry and of the plan for rate-supported, popularly controlled, unsectarian education. He explained that the matter was still under discussion and had not at that time been made public. This letter is most interesting because it explains that the original plan was to be in the nature of a pilot scheme by which it could be judged whether it might be extended to the whole country. It also shows that the adoption of the Anti-Corn Law League machinery by the L.P.S.A. was no accident; the founders of the Association having taken that obvious advantage into account before embarking on the campaign:

"If the Government would grant us a bill it might form a sort of national experiment and candid men would then say whether it ought to be universally adopted..... We could have the benefit of the League machinery and experience, its lists of liberal men etc.... It is a way of securing general education without offending those who have fear of government influence, and too much centralization".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Gibbon, *op.cit.* Vol.2. p.238.
  2. Quoted by Farrar, *op.cit.*, p.79.



The Problem of Defining the word "Secular"

Both Lucas and Ireland wrote to Combe asking for his views on the meaning of the word "secular". Lucas admitted that they had found a definition "most difficult"<sup>1</sup> and suggested that it might be better to guarantee the secularity of instruction rather than attempt to define the meaning of the word. This, he thought, could be done by appointing a commission similar to the Irish Board who would agree to the selections of scriptures to be used in schools. In order to guarantee secular teaching he suggested that the committees of hundreds and the county board should act as courts of appeal against teachers, with the power of dismissal.<sup>2</sup> In his replies of 6th and 7th June, Combe referred them to Horace Mann's definitions which he (Combe) had given on pages 40 and 41 of Religion and Science. For himself he defined secular instruction as including "all truths in nature, and especially all true histories of human events, and all principles of morality and religion necessary for right ordering of practical conduct in the affairs of this life".<sup>3</sup>

In his draft plan which Lucas sent to Combe for his suggestions, he had stated that any book "which inculcates any form of religion

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1. Ibid., p.81.

2. Ibid., p.82.

3. Ibid.

whatever" would be excluded from the schools. Combe strongly advised against this definition: "The enemy will call these last words infidel, which they could not do with the other, unless they considered that infidelity was the constituent substance of Christianity, or that part of it on which all Christian sects agreed is infidelity". The phraseology which he describes as "the other" was an extract from the Massachusetts law which he advised Lucas to adopt as being less offensive. This stated that books "calculated to favour the tenets of any particular sect of Christians" would be excluded. Combe advised Lucas to use the American phraseology, which had been well sifted and well-tried, as closely as possible. Consequently, in National Education (1850) Lucas published a copy of the "Plan" with "Explanatory Remarks" appended. A section entitled "Securities against Sectarian Teaching" contains a passage quoted from Combe's pamphlet Notes on National Education and Common Schools of Massachusetts (1845).<sup>1</sup>

In the wording of the plan itself the L.P.S.A. solved the difficulty by explicitly limiting the teachers' power to comment on any passage in the Bible instead of restricting the type of book used as under Massachusetts law, hence the provision: "Nothing shall be taught in any of the schools that favours the peculiar tenets of any religious sect".<sup>2</sup>

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1. S. Lucas (ed) National Education not Necessarily Governmental, Sectarian or Irreligious (London, 1850), pp.192-3.

2. L.P.S.A. Plan of Secular Education p.6.

The cautious wording reflected the religious bitterness engendered over education, but the intention was to permit the unsectarian instruction given in the common schools in Massachusetts, hence Lucas's quotation from Horace Mann's Seventh Report in his preface to the "Plan"; "Our aim obviously is to secure so much of religious instruction as is compatible with religious freedom".<sup>1</sup>

(xv)

Differences between the "Plan" and the  
Massachusetts System

In June 1847 Combe wrote to his brother Andrew:

"We are in great spirits about education. A committee of seven persons, of whom five are Scotchmen, have met in Manchester and drawn up a programme of a system for the county of Lancaster exactly resembling the Massachusetts system. They have the benefit of the whole experience and machinery of the late League and have reason to believe that they will find support in the country to carry a bill through Parliament embodying their programme".<sup>2</sup>

However, the published "Plan", although very similar to the Massachusetts system, did not exactly resemble it as Combe had stated. The provisions for reading the scriptures, for example, whereby selections from the Bible were to be made by a commission appointed by the county board were similar to those of the Irish system. In his "Explanatory Remarks" appended to the "Plan", Lucas wrote:

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1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Gibbon, op.cit., p.238.

"That the whole of it (the Bible) cannot be admitted without causing strife is deeply to be regretted and it is surely preferable to allow the introduction of such portions as can be introduced without offence to any, than to exclude the whole".<sup>1</sup>

By making this provision the L.P.S.A. were hoping to remove any obstacle that might have prevented the children of any sect from attending the schools, particularly children of the Irish Catholic immigrants where numbers were variously estimated as between 35,000 and 60,000.<sup>2</sup> The adoption of scripture extracts was a compromise among the friends of the Association. W.B.Hodgson disapproved of their inclusion in the plan, as he explained to Combe in a letter of 5th November 1850.<sup>3</sup>

The constitution of the county board differed from the Massachusetts Board in that its powers were much wider. This was no accident for Combe advised Lucas in a letter of 7th June 1847, to give the board of education a "solid constitution" and "specific principles" to act on, including power over the choice of school books and lesson content. He explained that if the local committees were originally given the right to choose books, teachers and courses of study, the system would quickly run into trouble. This had happened in Massachusetts where the local committees, having

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1. National Education, p.127.

2. McCord, op.cit., p.99.

3. Farrar, op.cit., p.86.

existed long before the Board, held on to these rights, resulting in the weakening of the Board's effectiveness. Combe advised "the more executive power you give it, the better will your machinery work".<sup>1</sup>

Lucas took the advice and gave the county board the right to sanction books and rectify any deficiency in areas where the local and hundred committees had failed to provide schools by levying rates, drawing up a plan of education for the area, and enforcing its adoption. The power of dismissal and admonishment of staff was vested in the school committees as in Massachusetts. However, certain powers of dismissal and admonishment were vested in the committees of hundred.

Combe further advised Lucas to make sure that his secretaries and inspectors would be paid officials, and he emphasized the word "paid", for "Horace Mann finds the want of a staff a great evil. The members of the Board cannot be depended on to work".<sup>1</sup> For this reason the plan provided for two salaried inspectors. The committee of hundred had no counterpart in the Massachusetts system and disappeared when the plan was revised in 1850. Its purpose was to form a property holding corporation, which function was fulfilled in Massachusetts by the districts.

The school committees were also an improvement on their

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1. Ibid., p. 87.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

Massachusetts counterparts, providing that each committee should supervise education in each parish or township. Horace Mann in his Tenth Report (p.130) had complained of the disastrous influence of the division of towns into districts, authorized by the law of 1789 whereby small communities were able to neglect their duty.<sup>1</sup> In his Fourth Report (p.23) he advised that the town system produced the best schools, and he recommended this system to the new states in the United States which "having no usages to change, can begin with the best".<sup>2</sup>

The result, through Combe's advice, was a plan of education, adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the British Isles, which was firmly based on the Massachusetts education system, but which, by taking into account its disadvantages, was designed to avoid the weaknesses of the American System. The result, if it had been adopted, would have been an organization with strong executive powers, yet still based initially on the authority of democratically elected committees. As the leading article in the Manchester Examiner of 20th July 1847 stated, it was:

"a plan which we can unreservedly support, as at once useful in itself and well filled to counteract and defeat the injurious tendencies of the state system. The machinery of school committees, committees of hundreds and a county board is simple; and its efficiency has been tested and proved in the practice of Massachusetts and other of the United States. To

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1. Ibid., p.89.

2. Ibid., p.90.

such machinery we do not see how voluntaryism can be opposed, unless voluntaryism means, as some interpret it, hostility to all organization and to all and every delegated power."

(xvi)

#### A Publicity Drive

The Association now set about giving the maximum publicity to the Plan. Six thousand copies of the petition were ordered for distribution and seventy-three copies of the Manchester Examiner of the 15th January containing the report of the meeting of 12th January were posted to various parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> By such methods the L.P.S.A. guaranteed for itself wide publicity, ensuring that information of its activities was not confined only to those who could attend its public meetings.

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A. Vol.3, 17th January 1848.

## C H A P T E R   V

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION ON A PERMANENT BASIS

#### (1)

#### The Association's New Rules

Having held its first public meeting and met with pleasing success, the L.P.S.A. set about placing its organization on a permanent basis. Accordingly, a list of rules was drawn up and accepted by a General Committee meeting held on 22nd February 1848. Every contributor to the funds of the Association was to be a member for one year from the date of payment. In return he was to receive a ticket entitling him to admission to all general meetings. The affairs of the Association were henceforth managed by a General Committee, consisting of members who had previously composed the Provisional Committee. At its first meeting this committee appointed the Executive Committee, which was to meet at least once a week. A provision was made that "any member of the Executive Committee resident in Manchester or Salford neglecting to attend the meetings for three months consecutively should cease to be a member of the said Committee",<sup>1</sup> but it was

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. 3, 22nd February 1848.



relaxed for members who were not resident in those towns.

All chairmen, deputy chairmen, honorary secretaries and treasurers of branch associations were automatically to be ex-officio members of the General and Executive Committees. Alexander Henry M.P. was elected President, and among the vice-presidents were Richard Cobden, Joseph Hume, W.J. Fox and George Wilson, the ex-President of the Anti-Corn Law League. In all, thirty names were unanimously approved as vice-presidents.

The rules provided that at the end of each year an annual general meeting should be held. It was to be convened by advertisements in at least one newspaper in Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster and Preston. At these meetings the Treasurer's accounts were to be produced and read, having previously been audited by three members of the General Committee.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Lucas, who was elected Chairman, stated very fittingly that "so long as he held the office he would work with heart and soul in it, and, circumstances permitting, would never stop 'till they achieved the object for which they were associated".<sup>2</sup>

(ii)

Two contacts with the United States:  
Alexander Henry and Joseph Cheesborough Dyer

In view of the Association's strong connections with the United States, it is interesting to note that the newly elected

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1. Mins.L.P.S.A., Vol.3, 21st January 1848.

2. Ibid., 22nd February 1848.

President, Alexander Henry, had spent his early life in America at the house of his uncle, a Philadelphia merchant, who, in addition to his commercial interests, was an eminent philanthropist and a great promoter of Christian missions to India. He also took a great deal of interest in education, which he must have transferred to his nephew. Despite his uncle's rigid Presbyterianism, Alexander Henry was not deterred from becoming a Unitarian. When he was twenty-one he returned to England and set up in partnership in Manchester with his younger brother Samuel, under the name of "A. & S. Henry". Some indication of the strength of his ties with the United States are revealed by his claim to have made over twenty-five voyages to America. From December 1847 until July 1862 he represented South Lancashire in Parliament. He died in 1862 at the age of eighty-four.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with the other members of the L.P.S.A. with American connections who were European by birth, Joseph Cheesborough Dyer, engineer and reformer, was an American and an example of the reverse process of the nineteenth century flight of talent from England to America.<sup>2</sup> Originally coming to England in order to market American inventions, he settled in 1816, at the age of

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1. Biographical cuttings in Manchester Central Reference Library.

2. W.H.G. Armytage, "American Enterprise in Britain's Industrial Revolution", The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, January 1955, pp. 193-198.

thirty, in Manchester, as a manufacturer of the machinery which he had patented. There he helped to found the Manchester Guardian, and publicly attacked the Corn Laws as early as 1827. He built Mauldeth Hall in 1839, but was forced to sell it in order to make good his liabilities after the failure of the Bank of Manchester, of which he was a director, in 1842, and the failure of a machine works at Gamaches, Somme, France, six years later. In the same year, 1848, he became vice-president of the L.P.S.A. and a member of the General Committee. In keeping with his views on other subjects, his educational ideas were quite radical. His paper, Remarks on Education, published in 1850, reveals an American attitude to the rights of the individual, and stands out in contrast with the papers, reprinted in National Education, by L.P.S.A. members of British origin, not so much for its content as for the degree of emphasis placed on specific points. "All children", he wrote should be taught "to read, write, and cipher, and to spell and use words correctly",<sup>1</sup> for these were the means of beginning to acquire useful knowledge which "must be insured to the children of all classes, at the cost and under the direction of the rate-payers in each local jurisdiction. Without this, society does not discharge one of its most important functions to itself".<sup>2</sup> ~~It was~~ a sin to neglect "the upgrowing mass of children whose parents,

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1. J.C. Dyer, Remarks on Education (London-Manchester, 1850), p.4.

2. Ibid.

by reason of their poverty or their vices, cannot protect them from the impending fate of hopeless pauperism or a life of crime and misery".<sup>1</sup> His main contention was that society had no alternative but to care for such unfortunate individuals:

"In the actual condition of those poor, outcast children they have the clear and most holy right, to protection from the public, of which they are so large and increasing a numerical portion".<sup>2</sup>

Having established this point he went on to castigate those who refused to face the problem of increasing juvenile crime, and the Church and the Dissenters for their opposition to secular education. He praised the L.P.S.A. for its advocacy of a system designed to supply the real wants of society free from "all kinds of sectarian influence and meddlings", and urged the adoption of "public schools for all", supported by a general rate.

Other speakers at ~~L.P.S.A.~~<sup>3</sup> soirées had attacked the class basis of English education, but never quite so successfully as Dyer. In essence he was saying that the raison d'être of education was not that it was a vehicle for reducing the incidence of juvenile crime, nor that it was a means of making the country economically more competitive, but simply that it was the right of everybody to be educated. His violent denunciation of Ragged Schools is illustrative of the tone of the whole paper:

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid.

3. See p. 114.

"I look upon "ragged schools" as beneath contempt.  
Why insult the help less poor by calling them "ragged?"  
Whether the children are ragged or not it is our duty,  
and for the interest and safety of society, to take care  
that they are all educated, not as a charity to the poor,  
but as a sacred obligation, the fulfilment whereof the  
poor man has a right to claim from the community".<sup>1</sup>

Dyer does not appear to have played a dominant rôle in the  
work of the L.P.S.A. but his paper is remarkable for the freshness  
of its ideas on human rights, and as such, is a useful example  
into the American attitude to education in the mid-nineteenth  
century.

(iii)

#### The Petition Takes Shape

With the Association now firmly established on a permanent  
basis the organizers in the surrounding districts were soon hard  
at work collecting signatures for the petition. S.A. Stienthal,  
the organizer in Bury, was authorised to engage "a man a fortnight  
in obtaining signatures in the town of Bury", and Thomas Satterthwaite  
was "empowered to expend twelve shillings in obtaining signatures  
to the Salford Petition". It was also decided to prepare petitions  
for females only, in Manchester, Salford and Burnley. The lot of  
collecting signatures in Manchester fell mainly to Edwin Waugh, the  
Assistant Secretary, whose journal, in which he describes some of

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1. Ibid., p.16.

his amusing experiences while thus engaged, is among the L.P.S.A. papers.<sup>1</sup> Later Thomas Satterthwaite was allowed to employ a man on a full-time basis at the rate of fifteen shillings a week, for the purpose of collecting signatures in Salford. The final result of these efforts was that "in both Houses of Parliament, twenty-nine of these petitions, the signatures of which amount to upwards of 11,000, have been presented from fourteen towns and other places within the county of Lancaster".<sup>2</sup>

In an appendix the Annual Report for January 1849 shows that petitions were sent from Ashton-under-Lyne, Clitheroe, Fleetwood, Heywood, Lancaster, Littleborough, Manchester, Milnrow, Rochdale, Salford (males and females), Smallbridge, Stalybridge, Todmorden, and Whitworth. All the towns, except Fleetwood, sent petitions both to the Commons and the Lords. There is an impressive list of members of both Houses of Parliament who presented the petitions, which includes the names of Thomas Milner Gibson, W.J.Fox, Richard Gardner, Dr. John Bowring, Alexander Henry, Earl Grey, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Bishop of Manchester, Lord Brougham and Earl Ducie. In all fifteen petitions, containing 1,392 signatures, went to the Commons, and fourteen others, containing 8,498 signatures,<sup>3</sup> to the Lords. They appear to have been warmly received by those who

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.3.

2. 'Report of the First Annual Meeting of the L.P.S.A., 17th January 1849, Manchester Examiner and Times, 20th January 1849.

3. The discrepancy in the total is not explained nor is the absence of any mention of the Burnley petition.

presented them. For example, Earl Ducie wrote acknowledging his receipt of the petition, and expressing his "entire concurrence in a scheme of secular education supported by local rates and managed by local authorities".<sup>1</sup>

(iv)

### The Influence of the Manchester Statistical Society

The Association realized that if their arguments in support of a vast extension of education were to be at all convincing, they would have to collect a great deal of statistical evidence. Accordingly, at the Executive Committee meeting of 4th April 1848 it was moved by William McCall "that it is desirable to obtain statistics of population, ignorance, pauperism, and crime throughout the county of Lancaster, and that Dr. John Watts be requested to draw up a series of questions for this purpose".

Dr. Watts by virtue of his connections with the Manchester Statistical Society and his ability in the field of social investigations enabled the L.P.S.A. virtually to become an educational branch of the Society.

The main sources of such information were the statistics of the various police forces in the county. Within a short time, in answer to enquiries, replies had been received from the police

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1. Mins L.P.S.A., Vol.1., 11th July 1848.

superintendents of Audenshaw, Blackburn, St. Helens, Leigh, Ulverston, Rochdale, Bury, Chorley, Warrington, Hyde, Manchester and Ormskirk.<sup>1</sup> Gradually a large body of statistical evidence was compiled by the Association in support of its claim that the existing provision of education was deficient.<sup>2</sup>

This episode merely serves to emphasize the degree to which the Association was indebted to members of the Statistical Society for the more effective running of its campaign. The Society's methods of collecting statistical evidence were invaluable to a pressure group such as the L.P.S.A.

(v)

#### Lobbying the Town Council

Efforts were also made to bring the plan to the attention of the Manchester Town Council. Members were lobbied in a manner whereby certain individuals were assigned to particular members of the Association. On this occasion, Alderman Bancroft was attended by Messrs. Lucas and McCall, Alderman Hopkins by Jeremiah Garnett of The Manchester Guardian, Councillor John Boardman by John Armstrong, and Councillor George Thompson by Edwin Waugh.

Great efforts were made to contact prominent people, especially those in the literary sphere, with a view to persuading them to

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.1, April-July 1848.

2. Birchenough (op.cit., p.26), stated that the application of statistical methods to social problems in the early nineteenth century was one of the main indications of the new spirit of reform that was at work.



lend their support. According to the Annual Report for 1848:

"Communication was speedily entered into with the directors of the various literary and scientific institutions of Lancashire, and with those of its temperance societies; and at several of the meetings of both of these, the plan of the Association **formed** the subject of intelligent discussion, which has done much to promote a knowledge of its principles, and to gain adherents for it among the working classes of Lancashire".

(vi)

### The Bishop's Changed Sentiments

Among those of prominence who offered their help were Thomas Carlyle who wrote approving of the scheme in the July, and Douglas Jerrold who became a vice-president in August 1848. ~~The~~ attempt to gain the full, unqualified support of the Bishop of Manchester, James Prince Lee, did not succeed. He received a deputation, led by Dr. McKerrow, and agreed to all the proposals put to him, except the exclusion of religious doctrines. ~~This~~ occasioned a reply by Samuel Lucas at the Association's Annual Meeting, in which he referred to an opinion expressed by the Bishop when he was headmaster of Birmingham Grammar School.

Lucas, who had been a member of the deputation, accused the Bishop of having changed his mind on the use of the Bible in schools since the time when, as a headmaster, his opinions had been reported as follows:

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.1, 28th November 1848.

"At present he was aware that no school was to be assisted where the authorised version of the scriptures was not read. In that the government was more to be pitied than blamed. He knew that he should differ from some of those who heard him, when he said that he wished it was otherwise, for so romantically confident was he in the purity of that religion of which he was but an humble professor; that he was sure no other safeguard was required save that of an educated people; and he for one was ready to submit their holy religion to a trial like that which Elijah did in the plain, when he called for the finger of God to attest the truth of which he was the minister; and told the people to watch the result, saying, 'If God be God follow him, but if Baal be God follow him'".<sup>1</sup>

It appeared that the elevation of James Prince Lee to a bishopric, and thus to the peerage, had altered his views; a fact which the L.P.S.A. were not afraid of publicising. However, he did present the Manchester petition to the House of Lords.

(vii)

An Attempt to Enlist the Support of the  
Temperance Societies

The Association's address to Temperance Societies in the county demonstrates its persuasive technique in approaching other organizations. A form of letter to be circulated was agreed upon, worded as follows:

"The patriot and philanthropist cannot look on the triumphant results of the Temperance Movement, without feeling that the men who have effected such brilliant changes in the social aspect of the country, are well fitted to carry out still more permanent reforms in social and moral progression - it has been admitted on all hands

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 20th January 1849.

that Education is worth little without Temperance and we think it will be as readily admitted that Temperance will be much more valued and valuable, if accompanied by sound education".

By thus identifying themselves with the temperance movement, the Association hoped to gain allies. However, the Executive Committee were mindful of the fact that not all pressure groups would have their skill in gaining the maximum advantage from a situation. Consequently the following advice was offered and appended to the bottom of each circular:

"An excellent plan for obtaining signatures is to allow the Petition to be signed at the close of the public meetings, and also for it to lie at the Temperance Hotels".<sup>1</sup>

Not only were petitions forwarded for signature, but included also were the necessary instructions for obtaining the best results.

(viii)

#### The Inauguration of Monthly Soirées

Always seeking to find some method of extending the basis of support for their movement, the Executive Committee decided, on 5th September, to organize monthly soirées, at which a paper would be read on some educational subject, followed by a discussion. This had a double advantage, because it enabled them to invite people who were not members of the L.P.S.A. to join in an educational discussion, and it also provided the Association with a steady supply of propaganda material, off-prints of which could

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.3, 21st February 1848.

be posted all over the country, continually bringing the secularist point of view before the public.

The sources continued for more than two years, and in 1850 Samuel Lucas was able to publish a selection of the papers in a volume entitled National Education not necessarily Governmental, Sectarian or Irreligious, shown in a Series of Papers read at the Meetings of the Lancashire Public School Association. The topics embrace all the problems that faced the Association and reveal a determined effort to establish good public relations by means of a clear explanation of their proposed solutions to them. The most notable feature is the emphasis on the virtues of the American Common School system and the remarkable similarity between conditions in New England and those in Great Britain, which would make its adoption in this country a relatively simple matter. Other points emphasized are the familiar ones such as the need to make good the educational deficiency of the poor urban and rural areas which had been left untouched by the voluntary organizations, the need to promote social integration through education, the need to establish the extent to which the Bible could be used in schools, the need for education in order to make Britain economically more competitive with other countries, the need to reduce crime by means of education and, finally, the need for a better environment in Lancashire in particular, and the country in general.

The volume performed its task admirably because it is difficult for the reader to avoid the conclusion that the best solution to all

the problems would be to adopt the English adaptation of the American system, namely the plan of the I.P.S.A.

(ix)

Richard Gardner's Paper

Richard Gardner, M.P. read the first paper, on 26th October 1848, entitled On the Present Insufficiency of Educational means in England.<sup>1</sup> Having described the success of an experiment in a certain village in England, in which the local clergyman, by perseverance and refusal to be deterred by opposition, had established a school where the children of both the farmers and the farm labourers were educated together, he explained that this principle had been widely adopted in America, and that the Americans regarded the classlessness of their system as desirable, not merely politically, but also socially and morally. He was convinced of the need to establish common schools in England, in order to put an end to the dangerous system whereby wealthy people provided an education designed to teach the poorer classes to remain content with their place in society and support the existing social order. The poor, he warned, were unconscious of their need for instruction, yet they were dissatisfied with their lot, and their claim for a greater share of social and political influence would have to be conceded:

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1. National Education, pp.1-18.

"The rising generation of labour is born into the world with new aspirations which you cannot check, which have an organized utterance, which exist for good or for evil; for good if we understand our epoch - for evil, if we do not".<sup>1</sup>

The voluntary effort was completely inadequate to provide the necessary education:

"In spite of all the statistics in the world, I must rely upon the evidence of my senses; and from my own observation and comparison, with what I have seen in countries where public schools flourish, I am prepared to say that our primary schools, as a whole, are disgraceful to the rank and civilization of the country".<sup>2</sup>

He admitted that it was a visit to the United States which had made him conscious of English inadequacy in education:

"Before that time I had never thought of a primary school except as a scene of noise and dirt and confusion, never to be entered except as a matter of form, and for as brief a time as possible".<sup>3</sup>

In New England, however, where there was neither "the caprice of private charity" nor the "paralysing influence of a central authority", he had learned what an excellent school was really like. An examination of the English counterparts of such schools, on his return home, appears to have been a traumatic experience: "What was my mortification", he asked, "when I came to visit the schools of Old England"?<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid., p.11.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid.

In his opinion Horace Mann's references to the low standard of English schools, in the report of his educational tour in Europe, were an indictment of the voluntary system.

It is an ironical fact that despite the repeated warnings, by *men* such as Richard Gardner, that the political advancement of the labouring classes was inevitable, and that in consequence a system of national education was a dire necessity, the contending forces in Parliament could only reach agreement on an educational measure three years after the extension of the franchise had actually been granted.

(x)

#### John Mill's Paper

John Mill's paper, Principles and Aspects of the Education Question,<sup>1</sup> based on a similar theme to Richard Gardner's, was read to a meeting at Liverpool. He demanded a system which gave:

- "1st. The widest possible distribution of the burden and advantage of an educational system, by means of a system of local rating.
- "2nd. The completest possible culture, in kind and quantity, consistent with religious freedom, or the law of conscience.
- "3rd. The right of the school-rate-payers to control the executive power by means of representation".<sup>2</sup>

All these, he pointed out, were cardinal features of the Association's plan.

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1. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

2. Ibid., p. 35.

Of more interest is his reference to Leonard Horner's edition of Victor Cousin's work on the Dutch system of education,<sup>1</sup> from which he quoted, in order to show the good effect of thirty years of non-sectarian education on the Dutch nation. They were "an honest and pious people; and Christianity is rooted in the manners and creeds of the people". Inevitably, in support of his theme that secular knowledge promotes religion, he referred to the American system and quoted Sir Charles Lyell's description of its good influence:

"The clergy are becoming more and more convinced that, where the education of the million has been carried farthest, the people are most regular in their attendance on public worship, most zealous in their defence of theological opinions, and most liberal in contributing funds for the

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1. L. Horner (ed.), On the State of Education in Holland by V. Cousin (1858).



support of their pastors, and the building of churches".<sup>1</sup>

John Mills was a great friend of both W.B.Hodgson and Alexander Ireland and, although a banker by profession, wrote usical criticisms for the Manchester Examiner. The friendship of these three was so close that they were known by their friends as the "Triumvirate". However, shortly after the L.P.S.A. became the N.P.S.A. in 1850, Mills's banking interests caused him to move from Ashton-under-Lyne to Macclesfield, where he could no longer devote as much time to education as he had done previously.<sup>2</sup>

(xi)

#### Walter Ferguson's Paper

The next paper, On the Public School Systems of the United States of America,<sup>3</sup> was read by Walter Ferguson on 29th November 1847. Ferguson was a Liverpool businessman who visited the United States in 1848 and collected a great deal of information about the state of popular education there. He met Horace Mann in Washington and procured several books from him, including Mann's Lectures and a complete set of the Common School Journal. His lecture is based on this information.<sup>4</sup> Ferguson later became secretary of the

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1. National Education, p.38.

2. Mills, op.cit., pp.137-156.

3. National Education, pp.41-57.

4. Letter from Ferguson to Mann, 18th October 1850 (Mann MSS) (Farrar, op.cit., p.103).

Liverpool branch of the L.P.S.A. In his paper he describes how, when travelling in the United States, he was struck by the higher level of intelligence of the population compared with its English equivalent: "There is no class corresponding to our masses of unskilled labourers in town and country, whose wants and enjoyments are, for the most part, those of the lower animals".<sup>1</sup> He testified to the prosperity of New England, to the people's respect for law and order, to the un-fanatical approach to religion, and to the relative lack of pauperism, intemperance and crime: "It is the centre of all good influences which radiate from it over the rest of the country".<sup>2</sup> This particularly fortunate state of affairs, he concluded, must have been the result of the system of education, the development of which he described in detail. He emphasized the un-sectarian nature of the teaching: "although the authorized version of the Scriptures is daily read in the schools, the inculcation of differential points of theology is **forbid**, as an infringement of the rights of conscience".<sup>3</sup> He also praised the work of Horace Mann and described the working of the system under his reforms, making a similar reference to the work of Henry Bernard of

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1. National Education, p.41.

2. Ibid., p.42.

3. Ibid., p.44.

Connecticut. With Richard Gardner he was shocked by the unfavourable comparison of English schools with their American equivalents. Describing experiments with examinations which he witnessed in Boston, he said:

"The nature of the questions asked, and the general character of the replies, made me think with some humiliation of the wretched diluted stuff which, under the name of education, is doled out by monitors, at a cheap rate, in some of our schools, which are yet quoted to us as educating so many hundreds of children...."<sup>1</sup>

He was favourably impressed with the American schools as a force for social integration:

"The sons of Irish immigrants, whose fathers were paupers in their own country, when subjected to the thorough training of the American schools, generally turn out intelligent and useful citizens".<sup>2</sup>

However, he was not so completely taken with the idea, as was Richard Cobden, who went into raptures in his letter to Henry Barnard over the possibility of the son of the wood-cutter sitting next to the son of the President in school, and, moreover, beating him in scholastic attainment.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.52.

2. Ibid., p.53.

3. See above, p.15.

Referring to the account by a traveller in Albany that, in one instance, the first prize at a school went to the son of an Irish labourer and the second prize to the son of the mayor of the city, Ferguson, while admitting the possibility of this, stated that it was unlikely to occur often, because the schools in better class areas were attended by better class pupils and vice versa. It is worth noting that this argument has been used recently in Britain by opponents of Comprehensive Education to refute its supporters' claim that the system promotes social integration. Ferguson, nevertheless, affirmed that the Americans deplored the attitude that the purpose of education was to fit a man for his station: "The Americans wish no poor man to be contented with his station".

Finally he made a plea for toleration on the grounds that the Bible can be variously interpreted. Refuting the criticism that unsectarian education is "godless" education, he affirmed that it actually favours religion, for the promoters of the American schools were religious men, as also were the teachers:

"A high moral character is strictly insisted upon as the first and most indispensable qualification for a teacher....;but no creed test is used, and teachers are forbid to inculcate their peculiar religious views on children".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, although there was religious liberty in the United States, the people were far from indifferent to religious truth. This, no doubt, arose partly from the quality of the sects and

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1. National Education, 9-53.

their regard for liberty, but "it is much more from the children of all denominations being educated in common". Education, he said, endows spiritual benefits if only by promoting the ability to read the Bible, but its social and political advantages are even greater. He ended his paper with a particularly accurate forecast of the future greatness of the United States, the foundation of which would be its educational system.

Ferguson's excellent paper was not purely a detailed description of the Massachusetts educational system. The overall impression is one of misgiving; a feeling that although Britain might be temporarily in advance of the rest of the world, in an economic sense, her resources were being squandered and no foundations were being laid for the future. In contrast with this was the policy of the United States, whose future greatness was clearly foreseen by Ferguson and many others, notable among whom was Richard Cobden. His journey to America in 1835 inspired him with the country's inherent greatness and convinced him of the need for Britain to adopt the Massachusetts educational system.<sup>1</sup> This feeling of anxiety for the future of Britain also appears in the papers of Richard Gardner, Dr. Watts, John Rylands and John Store-Smith, but in none is it emphasized quite so much as in that of

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1. E.H. Cawley, The American Diaries of Richard Cobden, (Princeton University Press, 1952), pp.26 etseq.

Walter Ferguson, who, seeing the problem clearly through the eyes of a Liverpool businessman, was convinced that Old England could learn a tremendous amount by noting the example of New England.

(xii)

### Three Papers on Education and Religion

In his paper On Day Schools Connected with Places of Worship,<sup>1</sup> Dr. McKerrow blamed the Nonconformists for encouraging the government and the Church of England "to cling to the injustice of maintaining doctrinal opinions at the public expense", by their readiness to contribute large sums of money for schools, after the defeat of Sir James Graham's bill in 1843. The Congregational schools, he said were a waste of money and effort: "They have sprung from impulsive feeling and not from sound judgment". He lamented the multiplicity of schools for the children of the better class citizens, shopkeepers and mechanics, and the dearth of them for children of the lower orders of society, who lived in the neighbourhood of St. Peters Square, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Rochdale Road and Ancoats, "those from whom the criminal classes spring". He also offered some explanation of what would happen to existing schools under the plan. They were to be embraced into the system where possible, but if it were not possible and they were good schools "it is not likely that

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1. National Education, pp. 58-73.

the rate-payers would waste property by building schools in opposition to them; and that in other instances as in other things, private interests must yield to public good".<sup>1</sup> This was extremely vague, and later the Association found it necessary to elaborate its policy toward s existing schools with much greater precision.

Dr. Davidson of the Lancashire Independent College, in a paper On the Advantage of separating Religious from Secular Instruction in the Public Schools,<sup>2</sup> attempted to counter the arguments against secular instruction. He pleaded for a division of labour in education, for only in this way would both religious and secular knowledge be well taught.

The benefits to be gained by the Sunday Schools from the plan were described by the Rev. Francis Tucker in his paper On Sabbath or Sunday Schools, and the probable influence upon them of schools established on the plan of the Lancashire Public School Association.<sup>3</sup> He assured his audience that the Sunday Schools would be able to do their job better if their scholars could read, consequently they could only gain from the adoption of the plan.

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1. Ibid., p.72.

2. Ibid., pp.74-85.

3. Ibid., pp.86-91.

## Dr. John Watts's Paper

After three papers dealing with the religious aspect of education, Dr. John Watts's paper On National Education considered as a question of Political and Financial Economy,<sup>1</sup> provides a sharp contrast. As might be expected from a convinced Secularist, he showed concern only with secular things such as "the duties of man to man". His plea was for an educational system to replenish the pool of ingenuity which alone was the "dynamic of technological progress" in the nineteenth century. Only by such means would there be an adequate supply of men such as James Watt, Robert Fulton, Richard Arkwright and Samuel Crompton. Secular knowledge, however, was not only a producer of wealth, but also a preventer of crime for "the want of the necessities of life very seldom occurs in well educated persons; and education is, therefore, the remedy". Education was, for this reason, not only a social necessity, but also an economic one, and drawing on his vast knowledge of statistics he quoted figures to prove that an efficient system of education would save the Manchester rate-payers some 3435,486-12-8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d from the cost of crime and pauperism. This might appear somewhat naïve but it was an attempt to reply to those who objected to the expense of a national system of education.

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1. Ibid., pp.91-112.



This was followed by What reading and writing have become,<sup>1</sup> in which Francis Espinasse urged the advantage of building schools, if only for the fact that they would help to produce the few geniuses of the calibre of Shakespeare and James Brindley.

(xiv)

Peter Rylands and Dr. Beard on the  
Religious Aspect of Education

In a paper entitled On the Facilities for the Religious Education of the People which might be afforded in connexion with the plan of the Lancashire Public School Association,<sup>2</sup> Peter Rylands was at pains to demonstrate that the plan would greatly benefit Christianity, for it would provide an intelligent community which would absorb religious principles far more readily than an ignorant one. He described how the provisions in the plan for the reading of selected passages of the Bible would function, and suggested that denominational instruction "in perfect consistency with the unsectarian principles of our plan might be furnished by the granting of one or more half holidays each week, on which occasions the children might receive, in some place other than the public school house, religious instruction from the minister, or other teacher, to whose charge the parents might entrust them".<sup>3</sup> Rylands was here going farther than the stipulation of the plan, which

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1. Ibid., pp.113-118.

2. Ibid., pp.119-135.

3. Ibid., p.124.

merely stated that selected passages of scripture would be chosen by a board for use in the schools. He is here suggesting that the machinery similar to that/<sup>of</sup>the Irish system should be completely adopted, whereby the schools were closed at certain times for the express purpose of denominational teaching. There is, however, evidence that it was not necessarily the Irish system that he was thinking of, for his quotation of the following passage from Victor Cousin's book on the Dutch system describes how the provisions for denominational instruction worked: "The master gives in the school the education common to all; and out of school the ministers of the different persuasions take charge of the religious instruction".<sup>1</sup> Quoting Mr. Van Ende, the Inspector-general of primary instruction in Haarlem, he said "a school for the people ought to be for the whole of the people", it was not to be solely either for Catholics or Protestants. Praising the American attitude to secular education he referred, for illustration, passages in Alexander Mackay's book, The Western World (1849). Their virtue was that "they have not fallen into the ridiculous error of supposing that education is 'godless' when it does not embrace theology".<sup>2</sup>

Rylands also quoted George Combe, Horace Mann and Sir Charles Lyell in support of his conclusion that, for its effect on popular

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1. Ibid., p.127.

2. Ibid., p.130.

morals and the general well-being of the population, a system similar to that of the United States was the best solution for Britain's educational problem.

Following on with the theme of religious instruction in schools, the Rev. J.R. Beard's paper discussed The Plan of Secular Education Proposed by the Lancashire Public School Association in relation to the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Using Horace Mann's oft-quoted declaration, "Our aim obviously is to secure as much of religious instruction as is compatible with religious freedom", which he stated was also the aim of the L.P.S.<sup>4</sup>, he claimed that this was abundant evidence of the religious nature of the plan. Those people who attacked it on the grounds of irreligion, simply because selections from the scriptures were to be used, rather than the whole of the Bible, were, he said, basing their argument on insecure ground, because, historically speaking, the whole Bible was a recent phenomenon. If an incomplete version of the Bible had served Christianity adequately for centuries, it followed that it could not be very wrong to use the carefully selected extracts in schools.

(xv)

A Plea for a Better Environment

In complete contrast with the content of the other papers, John Stores Smith, who served for a time as a member of the

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1. National Education, pp.154-172.

Executive Committee but had since left Manchester, dealt with the topic Education: Its Future Connection with Lancashire.<sup>1</sup> The era of war, he said, was past and a commercial epoch was dawning. As Lancashire was more dependent on commerce than any other county, so it was, to the same degree, dependent on education. He painted a grim picture of the lot of the labouring classes: industrial squalor, debauchery, ill-health and a death-rate that rose in proportion to the increase in the size of the towns. In contrast, he described the splendour of the lives led by the wealthy classes, and deplored the division that had grown between employer and employee. Yet, he warned, it was impossible to go back, and the problems of how to multiply the factory system without multiplying its demoralizing effects, how to continue and multiply the large town system without multiplying their unwholesome tendencies, how to keep alive the healthy spirit of competition without driving some to degradation, and how to raise the social standard of the operative and take him above the subsistence level were in need of an immediate solution. The answer to all these problems was education:

"For education not only is the heart-source of the pulses of the future Lancashire; it is the very key-stone of that future world-arch of intellectual spirit upon which shall be erected the triumphant column of refined and reformed humanity".<sup>2</sup>

This paper is interesting because it not only reveals the

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1. Ibid., pp.136-153.

2. Ibid., p.153.

author's faith in the power of education but also his deep consciousness of the terrible effect of uncontrolled industrial and urban expansion on the physical environment of the county. He feared its brutalizing effect on successive generations and believed that unless national education were quickly established there would be no means of producing individuals who would know how to improve that environment. Over a century after John Stores-Smith read his paper the tremendous task of improving the physical environment of Lancashire has barely started.

(xvi)

The Dominant Influence of the  
American System

The selection of papers reprinted in National Education is by no means exhaustive, for many others were read at later meetings, but it succeeds in presenting the L.P.S.A.'s attitude to the educational problems which beset the country at the time of the Association's foundation. Moreover, as these problems only changed in detail, rather than fundamentally, between 1847 and 1870, the volume is relevant to the whole course of the struggle for national education. The shadow of the United States, and of Massachusetts in particular, dominates the volume, either by its ability to instill the fear of industrial competition, or to evoke admiration for its educational system. Later the Association re-designed its plan even more closely on the model of the Massachusetts system and so strongly did its members, led by Richard Cobden, advocate it, that

one has no difficulty in understanding the complaint of C.B. Adderley, who, on introducing the Manchester and Salford Education Bill into Parliament, said:

"These gentlemen measured everything by the American model; if it fitted that model, any proposition was good".<sup>1</sup>

(xvii)

### The Republication of the "Plan"

In September, Alexander Ireland recommended that the "Plan" should be republished in all the newspapers which would do it "gratuitously, or would do so on an economical terms".<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* Garnett of The Manchester Guardian, agreed to reprint it, and Edwin Waugh wrote to J.B. Preston and J.B. Langley of Stockport, requesting them to have it inserted in the local papers. A circular was issued by the Honorary Secretary, H.R. Forrest, to the county papers "for the purpose of inducing them to republish the 'Plan' at full length, on or about the same time as it appears in the Manchester Papers".<sup>3</sup>

This new drive to bring the public's attention to the plan had considerable success, and not only in Lancashire, for on 31st October Forrest was able to report that it had appeared in the

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1. Hansard, Vol.130, pp.1049-50.

2. *Mms L.P.S.A*  
Ibid., Vol.1, 28th September 1848.

3. Ibid., 10th October 1848.

Gateshead Observer, in the Eastern Counties Herald, the Oxford Chronicle, the Liverpool Mercury and in the Illustrated London News of 11th November.

Some impression of the widespread nature of the Association's press support can be gained from Samuel Lucas's speech at the First Annual Meeting of the L.P.S.A. on 17th January 1849, in which he made the following resolution:

"That, for their advocacy of the principles of the association the thanks of this meeting are due, and are hereby given, to the editors of the following newspapers and periodicals; viz:- The Manchester Guardian, and Manchester Examiner; the London Daily News, Spectator, Weekly Dispatch, Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, Illustrated News, Inquirer, People's Journal and Christian Reformer; the Edinburgh Scotsman and Chamber's Journal, the Liverpool Mercury and Liverpool Chronicle; the Preston Guardian and Preston Chronicle; the Wigan Herald; the Leeds Times and Leeds Intelligencer; the Bradford Observer; the Eastern Counties Herald; the Gateshead Observer; the Coventry Herald; the Cheltenham Free Press; the Oxford Chronicle; the Aberdeen Herald; and the Cause of the Poor."<sup>1</sup>

A press coverage as wide as this is ample evidence of the hard work done by the Executive Committee in matters of publicity. The fact that the Association had only been in existence for eighteen months merely serves to emphasize this point.

(xviii)

#### Harriet Martineau's Favourable Comment

This meeting was notable for some fine speeches by Peter Rylands, Dr. W.B. Hodgson, Samuel Lucas, and the Reverend Dr. McKerrow.

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1. Manchester Examiner and Times, 20th January 1849.

Peter Rylands quoted statistics relating the incidence of crime to the lack of education. His speech was as enlightened, and his opinions as progressive, as those of any member of the Howard League for Penal Reform in the present century:

"Our experience has fully proved that it is quite impossible to prevent crime by extreme punishment. Society is fast finding out that it cannot regenerate its members, and make all men righteous by the hangman and the gallows".

He looked forward "to the ultimate triumph of a cause so good and true" with perfect confidence, especially when it had been espoused by such eminent people as Lord M~~orley~~ and Richard Cobden. Needless to say the reference to Cobden evoked great cheering.

Dr. Hodgson concentrated on attacking the voluntary system, producing statistics to show that Voluntaryism was failing to raise the necessary funds, not only in the sphere of education, but also in that of hospitals. The voluntary subscriptions to the Manchester Royal Infirmary were £200 less in 1848 than in 1811.

Samuel Lucas praised the press and quoted from a letter received "from a friend in Yorkshire, containing the opinion of one great political authority in this country, Miss Harriet Martineau",<sup>1</sup> who wrote:

"You want to know what I think of this Lancashire education movement. I simply think that the day which originated it is the brightest of our century. From that day will be dated hereafter, I fully believe, the extrication of the state from its deepest crime and its effectual undertaking of its highest duty. You will see from this that I anticipate success for this movement".

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1. Ibid.



Her letter is extremely interesting for its vindication of the American Common School System. Having visited New England, she could quote from personal experience of its working. To the criticism that the American system of compulsory education necessitated a submission to "social tyranny", her reply was that nobody would object "to laws to prevent parents from starving their children's minds and maiming their human capacities". In an attempt to show that under the Lancashire plan, the interference of the state in national education was no violation of the free trade principle, she wrote:

"It appears to me that the Lancashire plan unites with singular felicity the power of a state institution with the freedom of local management".<sup>1</sup>

Dr. McKerrow praised the Scottish system of education in comparison with that of England, saying that although it was by no means faultless, it was better than no system at all, as was the case in England. He commented upon the educational destitution which he had seen in Manchester, and upon the deplorable lack of teachers, saying, "We must therefore have a system which will reach these classes (the poorest) of the community, and which will develop the best modes of teaching the poor people especially". He believed that this could only be accomplished by the adoption of the L.P.S.A. plan.

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1. By 1848, Harriet Martineau's reputation as a literary "lion" was well established. She wrote prolifically on all social problems, and was a great friend of W.J. Fox. Her favourable comment on the L.P.S.A. would be most valuable. /See Dictionary of National Biography.

## The Appointment of Francis Espinasse as Secretary

This meeting rounded off the work of the year 1848. It had been one in which great progress had been made, resulting in a considerable widening of the Association's activities. Consequently there was a need for re-organization, and the Committee decided "with a view to the probable great expansion of its operations, that the duties of Secretary should be discharged solely by one individual under the control of the Executive Committee".

As the present Secretary could not be expected to cope with the increased volume of work, it was decided to secure the services of an experienced paid secretary, and to retain Edwin Waugh, the Assistant Secretary, as an agent.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of this decision, on 21st December, the Executive Committee, from a short-list of four applicants, selected Mr. Francis Espinasse for the new post, at a salary of £80 per annum.

This completed the establishment of the Association on a permanent basis, with the result that it was all the better equipped to face a year of ever increasing activity and more rapid expansion.

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1. *Miss. L.P.S.A.* Vol, 1., 28th November 1848.

## C H A P T E R VI

### THE ASSOCIATION'S BID FOR POPULAR SUPPORT

#### (i)

#### Pressure Groups and Public Figures

A reliable indication of the Association's increasing stature in the estimation of the public is the gradual growth of support from distinguished people. Present day organizations welcome public figures to be vice-presidents, if only for their publicity value, but in the mid-nineteenth century it was imperative for pressure groups to have the support of well respected individuals, in order to guarantee middle-class financial aid. This would not be forthcoming to an organization connected with Chartism, for it would immediately be considered revolutionary. Aiming mainly to benefit the working-classes, the L.P.S.A. could easily have incurred such a stigma had it not been for the support of "respectable" people.<sup>1</sup> In view of this,

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1. The importance of "respectability" is illustrated by the efforts of the Anti-Corn Law League to avoid any connection with Chartism, and to present a suitable image to the public. (McCord, op.cit., p.28).

one can imagine with what pleasure the Executive Committee were able to announce, at the annual meeting on 17th January 1849, the addition to the list of vice-presidents of the names of Lord Goderich, Richard Cobden, Douglas Jerrold, Salis Schwabe and Martin Schunck. The importance of the first two names is obvious, but the other three require some explanation.

Douglas Jerrold,<sup>1</sup> contributor to Punch, producer and play-wright, and chief proprietor of Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper was a very useful person to have as a supporter. He probably became connected with the Association through his acquaintance with W.B. Hodgson.<sup>2</sup> Salis Schwabe and Martin Schunck illustrate both the non-sectarian nature of the Association and the influence of Germans on the commercial life of nineteenth century Manchester, for they were both Jews of German origin. Their high-standing in Manchester society made their support an invaluable asset to the L.P.S.A.

Schwabe,<sup>3</sup> a calico printer from Oldenburg, had come to Manchester

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1. Dictionary of National Biography.
  2. Meiklejohn, op.cit., p.27.
  3. N.J.Laski, "The History of Manchester Jewry", Manchester Review, 1956.

via Glasgow. Almost alone he collected \$25,000 to build an asylum, and to this and the infirmary he left \$3,000. He gave liberally to the funds of the Anti-Corn Law League, and, as a vice-president of the L.P.S.A., his generosity continued in the cause of education. He was a great friend of Cobden, and his home became a centre of culture visited by Chopin, Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Carlyle. His wife, a staunch supporter of Mazzini and Garibaldi, founded the Froebel Institute in Manchester.

Martin Schunck<sup>1</sup> was the son of Carl Schunck, a major in the army of the Elector of Hesse, who, curiously enough, was hired as a mercenary by the British government in the War of American Independence, although the war ended before he was able to go into action. Martin Schunck started business in Manchester in 1810 as a merchant and forwarding agent. In 1815 he went into partnership with Carl Mylius of the Mylius family of Frankfort, to which he had become connected through his sister's marriage. The firm was extremely prosperous, and, although it changed its style on several occasions, the Manchester branch was known as Schunck, Souchay and Co. Manchester. Martin Schunck was a very generous donor to the L.P.S.A. and particularly to the Model Secular School after its foundation in 1854.

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1. Biographical cuttings in Manchester Central Reference Library.

(ii)

### The Need for Working-Class Support

Having acquired some guarantee of status, the Association now set about fostering interest in public education among the working classes. A letter from a Mr. Robert Davis, who described himself as "a working man", in which he complained of the "exclusiveness" of the monthly soirees, provided the impetus for this new venture.<sup>1</sup> Soon afterwards, Edwin Waugh reported on four working-men's meetings on the subject of education, and produced a list of names of one hundred and six men who were willing to subscribe to the movement.<sup>2</sup>

Later Samuel Lucas was able to enlist the co-operation of the secretary of the Short-Time Committee in Manchester, who promised to bring the objects of the Association to the notice of the working classes. As a result of this, the Secretary was instructed to draw up for the purposes of circulation, an Address to the Working Classes of Lancashire outlining the objects of the Association. Accordingly, on 16th May, there was held a "Preliminary Meeting for the establishment of an organization among the Working Classes of Manchester to carry out the objects of the Lancashire Public School Association". The objects, stated by Lucas who took the chair, were:

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.I, 23rd January 1849.

2. Ibid., 30th January 1849.

"The procural of Signatures to the Petition to Parliament put forth by the Association. The enrolment of such numbers and Friends of the Association as might destroy any doubt as to the issue of any public meeting which the Association might call for in the Free Trade Hall or elsewhere. Finally the addition to the funds of the Association of a number of subscriptions which though individually small, might collectively promote its activity; as well as to spread a knowledge of its principles by the distribution of papers, or it might be by district meetings; and altogether act as an auxiliary to the Executive Committee, to which any organization would, of course, be subordinated".<sup>1</sup>

Lucas then asked the Secretary to read a letter from one William Rigby, who recommended "the formation of Local Boards in each district consisting of a Chairman, Secretary, and an unlimited number of members to carry out the objects already defined.....".<sup>2</sup>

The Executive Committee agreed with these suggestions and, for the purposes of organization, divided Manchester into the following districts: Chorlton, Miles Platting, Oldham Road, London Road, Ardwick, Ancoats, Hulme, Deansgate, and "Centre of the Town". Representatives from all these districts, except Ancoats and "Centre of the Town", were present at the meeting:

"It was agreed that the gentlemen present....should proceed to form Committees in their several districts; and should, if possible, report proceedings to the next committee meeting for the organization of District Boards, which Committee shall consist of the Standing Executives of the Association, and of representatives of the Local Boards".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., 18th May 1849.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

All subscriptions received by the local boards were to be paid into the Central Office "from which all necessary expenses incurred by the former should be defrayed".

The committee formed by the Executive Committee members and local representatives is referred to in the minutes as the "Organization Committee", and it now set to work with a great deal of vigour to build up working-class support.

(iii)

#### Lucas's Initiative

The Association attached great importance to acquiring the aid of this section of the community and were anxious to utilize it to the utmost. Samuel Lucas had become convinced of its value quite early in the history of the movement. As early as February 1848 he wrote to John Mills of Ashton-under-Lyne asking:

"Is there any popular tradesman in Ashton who would promote the plan amongst the working-classes? We must leave no means untried to disarm opposition as well as to gain adherents".<sup>1</sup>

In the same letter he gave an interesting insight into the working of the Ashton branch of the Association, showing that John Mills had set up his own newspaper to prepare public opinion for meetings which were to follow:

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1. Mills, op.cit., p.155.



"I am glad to see you have established a periodical. With friends at our command we might do a great deal by the issue of cheap publications on the subject of education among the people. The public must be prepared by lectures and through the press before we can venture to hold public meetings. I shall be glad to hear any suggestions you may have to make".<sup>1</sup>

The Anti-Corn Law League had set the example, now followed by the L.P.S.A., of organizing working-class support. Without such help it was virtually impossible in the mid-nineteenth century to hold public meetings with any success, a fact that the League members had discovered to their cost. For in the early months of the campaign several of their meetings had been broken up by Chartists. However, Richard Cobden found the solution to the problem, when, with Edward Watkin, he organized the Operative Anti-Corn Law Association, which was, in reality, the working-class branch of the League.

With the aid of these men and the Manchester Irish population it was possible to hold comparatively untroubled meetings.<sup>2</sup>

(iv)

#### The Association and the Chartists

There is little evidence to show that the L.P.S.A. was afflicted with such difficulties as those which befell the early Leaguers, at least, not in the centre of the town. However, in

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1. Ibid.

2. McCord., op.cit., p.99.

the outlying towns it appears that there was some difficulty, particularly in Ashton-under-Lyne, where John Mills and Hugh Mason had to contend with the militant Chartist minister, the Reverend Joseph Rayner Stephens. Some idea of the difficulties which they had to overcome can be gained from the following letter, written by Mills to his wife Isabella, dated 1st February 1848:

"The education meeting last night was earnest even to storminess. We had that subtle J.R. Stephens to oppose us, and he chaffed the people into a mad foamy ocean which you would have no notion of from the mitigated notice I am just preparing for the Guardian. However, we had the best of it in the end. Deadly battle will have to be waged for our scheme in this town, as some of our wise men of Gotham have got a notion that it is somehow analogous to the Poor Law. Stephens had more than his match in Mr. John Watts, who supped and slept with me".<sup>1</sup>

According to Isabella Mills, the meeting was quite riotous. Mills in a vigorous speech carried the meeting with him, and Stephens, realizing that his amendment would be defeated, became angry. The incident is reported as follows by an eye-witness:

"One incident I very distinctly recollect. Stephens was in one of his splenetic (public) moods. Mr. Mills concluded with 'I am on orator as Brutus is', whereupon Stephens, with a bitter contemptuous manner, pointing to the stripling vociferated, 'Orator! That thing!' Once more confusion reigned, and the chairman declared the meeting closed. The stripling and his friends slipped quietly out at the back, leaving the mob carrying on the argument by dint of fists, sticks and shoutings, until dispersed by the constables".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Mills, op.cit., p.155.

2. Ibid., p.156.

Mills's reference to "the mitigated notice" that he was sending to the Manchester Guardian gives a possible reason why few reports reveal any hint of disturbances. Such events were given the minimum publicity in order to give the impression of public support on a large scale. It is possible, therefore, that the disturbances which occurred at the Ashton-under-Lyne meeting were not confined to that town. On the other hand the L.P.S.A. claimed that of all the towns in Lancashire where they held public meetings, Ashton-under-Lyne was the only place where their motion was not carried. However, at a second meeting, probably the one described by Mrs. Mills, they were more successful.

In view of such experiences one can understand the Association's enthusiasm to build up working-class support. On Samuel Lucas's own admission one of the main objects of these efforts was to "destroy any doubts as to the issue of any public meeting which the Association might call for in the Free Trade Hall or elsewhere".<sup>1</sup>

(v)

#### The Town's Meeting of 29th March 1849

This statement was particularly relevant to the Association's experience in March 1849, when their demand for a town's meeting was granted by the Mayor in response to a petition signed by two hundred influential citizens. It was a most extraordinary meeting,

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.1, 18th May 1849.

"and possibly the most remarkable educational gathering anywhere on record".<sup>1</sup> Beginning on Thursday, 29th March 1849, at 11 a.m., it went on until 4 p.m., at which time the vote was at last taken. Although the Executive Committee had made an attempt to pack the meeting by sending out a circular to all members "informing them of the expected opposition of the Reverend Mr. Stowell", the events of the evening did not go entirely in their favour, for they encountered the kind of opposition that was to obstruct their scheme until the Association's dissolution in 1862. It was mainly the religious question that prevented the plan from being adopted; a fact giving great significance to this particular meeting. The main opponent, consistent with the warning in the circular, was the Reverend Hugh Stowell, Vicar of Christchurch, Salford.

(vi)

#### Hugh Stowell's Opposition to the Secularists

This man was "probably the finest local public speaker of his time",<sup>2</sup> and, moreover, was only rivalled by the bigoted Rev. Hugh Mc'Neile of Liverpool in his advocacy of the right of the Church to dominate education. Gifted with great eloquence, completely fearless, a staunch Evangelical Anglican hating Roman Catholicism

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.71.

2. ibid.

and little more tolerant of Nonconformity, he commanded the love and respect of his parishioners, because of the great work he did in his large parish.<sup>1</sup> In 1837 he had attacked the attempts of the National Education Society to set up a national system of education, on the grounds of their being irreligious. In his second Letter to the Inhabitants of Manchester, of 11th November 1837, he clearly stated his own position, which was, in short, that irreligious education was worse than none, for the National Education Society would be "only elevating man from the brute to approximate him to the fiend, only putting power into the hands of evil". Moreover, he was nearer the truth than his hearers realized, when he declared that any such scheme "for the diurnal education of all must prove Utopian except it were accompanied by a system of coercion", and for this reason he warned his readers to beware "lest their vaunted friends should inflict upon them a compulsory code, outraging their tenderest relationships, and violating the sanctuary of home".<sup>2</sup>

This was no mean opponent with which to contend, and, at the town's meeting of 29th March 1849, he and the Reverend George Osborn, a Wesleyan Minister, moved an amendment to the Association's petition, praying Parliament "not to sanction any system of general education of which the Christian religion is not the basis".

Almost the whole of the controversy turned on the religious

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

question, but it is noticeable that George Osborn differed from Hugh Stowell on one important point. Whereas the latter was conscious of the inadequacy of the voluntary system, the former expressed his belief that he could give as good an education in the school connected with his congregation for two pence or four pence a week, as could be given in any school supported by local rates.<sup>1</sup> Osborn failed to see why private charity could not be extended indefinitely to the people. In S.E. Maltby's opinion, "he was a voluntary and far behind Canon Stowell in his appreciation of educational need".<sup>2</sup> Canon Stowell was soon to demonstrate his conviction of the need for a state system of education when he became a leading member of the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education.

(vii)

The Secularist Position on Religion and  
Education

Dr. McKerrow's response on behalf of the Association was remarkable for its clear exposition of the objections of the Association to the inclusion of religion in any rate supported system of education. In describing these he summarised the Secularists' philosophy of education and religion when he said: "As a conscientious Dissenter, I cannot take the public money to support my particular opinions....". Every man had the right to

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

decide for himself what Christianity was, therefore religion had no place in a national system of education. To Canon Stowell and the Rev. George Osborn he said:

"I think you disparage the zeal and energy of Christians who say that if it were not introduced into the schools Christianity must fade from the land, Is there to be no time for communicating religious instruction except for the two or three hours in the public school? Are all Christian parents to become indifferent to the religious training of their own children? People do not send their children to school to receive religious teaching".<sup>1</sup>

He reasserted the Secularist position as follows:

"Our consciences are aggrieved because injustice is done to us, and principles are forced upon us at the public expense; but I cannot understand why the consciences of other gentlemen should be aggrieved because we will not permit them, if we can help it, to treat us in this manner".

Furthermore, secular education rather than brutalizing the people was absolutely essential to their well being, ranking equally with public health and other material needs:

"It has been intimated that without religion as a part of education society may be made brutes and fiends. Why is it to be supposed that secular education degrades and demoralizes a man? Is he likely to be a worse man for being taught to read? Will any man be a better member of society because he is kept in ignorance....? Education opens up new sources of enjoyment, moral and intellectual, and prepares men for the reception of religious truth. I consider that voluntarism in religion is proper, every man ought to support his own religion, but with respect to education, no right of conscience interferes and no dogmatical principle of theology needs to be introduced. I would, therefore, place secular education on exactly the same footing as I would any scheme of sanitary improvement or anything connected with the temporal well-being of our fellow-creatures".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.72.

2. Ibid.

A Defeat for the Association

When eventually the vote was taken, the Mayor asked that he should be relieved of the difficult task of deciding which of the two evenly numbered sides held the majority. He had to ask them to go to opposite ends of the room in order to make it easier to count them. Even then the numbers appeared to be so even that he had great difficulty in coming to a decision. Finally, after much hesitation, he judged in favour of Hugh Stowell's amendment. It appeared that the L.P.S.A. had been defeated, despite their attempts to pack the meeting.<sup>1</sup> The defeat, however, proved to be merely nominal, as the Executive Committee's report, presented to the Second Annual General Meeting on 16th January 1850, shows:

"The Committee have to congratulate the Association on the great accessions to its ranks which date from the day of the March meeting. From that day commences the adhesion of many influential members of the Wesleyan body, and the closer attachment to the Association of many members of the established church, who disapproved of the matter and the manner of that opposition".<sup>2</sup>

The Significance Of Hugh Stowell's Opposition

Nevertheless, the opposition had been demonstrated and was not to be overcome. It is ironic that the result of the vote at the

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., 27th March 1849.

2. Report of the Executive Committee of the L.P.S.A., presented to the Second Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, 16th January 1850,



March meeting proved symbolic of the course of the whole struggle. Here were two evenly matched sides divided over the question of religion, neither being strong enough to implement its own scheme, making the compromise measure of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 virtually a foregone conclusion.

Yet in 1849 the L.P.S.A. were optimistic of success. They took strength from the Rev. Hugh Stowell's withdrawal from the advocacy of the government plan, when on the 17th May, in a public lecture on national education delivered at the Free Trade Hall, he declared his approval of the establishment of free schools, supported by local rates, and managed by local authorities. He expressed a preference for local machinery as against national; he agreed with the inadequacy of the voluntary system for a country the size of the United Kingdom; he agreed that there was an immense amount of deplorable ignorance, and that it was every Briton's birth-right to be educated. So far he was approaching the L.P.S.A. But he claimed that two thirds of the urban and rural population belonged to the Church of England and that the remaining third had some religion:

"Then was a national scheme of education to be concocted for the few who would have nothing to do with religion, or for the mighty many who would have nothing to do with education without religion".<sup>1</sup>

He also asked whether a secular system was to become the national system, and was a Christian education "such as they

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.73.

possessed and such as they ought to possess, and by the help of God would retain, to be set aside for such teaching? Were they to have a plan of education where the entire Bible was to stand out as the one standard of faith and wisdom, or were they to have that blessed book excluded by law from the nation at schools of this Christian land"?<sup>1</sup> Moreover he was convinced that if the L.P.S.A. could convert the whole community to its scheme, the government would have to withdraw support from existing voluntary schools. In any case he doubted their ultimate success.<sup>2</sup>

In this lecture Canon Stowell showed, above all else, that he was deeply inspired by the Church of England and the Bible, for he objected to the L.P.S.A.'s plan to use selections from the scriptures in schools, believing that if the various dogma were omitted, the truth would also be omitted.

S.E.Maltby saw a great deal of significance in Canon Stowell's solution to the educational problem; that everybody should return to the Church of England:

"The peroration evoked continued cheers. But in it lies the whole secret of the tragedy of English education for the past two hundred and fifty years. There is something pathetic in the faith of Canon Stowell that, despite the acknowledged failure of the past, somehow the Church could still perform its bounden duty of educating the whole population; and something more than pathetic in his reiterated statement that no school education at all was preferable to that from which the whole Bible was excluded and only extracts permitted. But he was not alone, and in due course his party made such a splendid losing fight that they postponed and profoundly modified their opponents' victory".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The Educational Register No. 1. June 1849

After the town meeting the Association continued to make steady headway in furthering its expansion and in broadening the basis of its support. In reply to the various criticisms and attacks which it was now receiving at the hands of Canon Stowell and his associates, Thomas Satterthwaite, an Executive Committee member, suggested that "a lecture in defence of the Principles of the Association be delivered on each of the Thursday evenings in May".<sup>1</sup>

A Lecture Committee was appointed and the Mechanic's Institute was engaged for the 19th May when an open discussion was held, ten minutes being allotted for each speaker. A great effort was made to improve the availability of the Association's publications, and the Secretary was instructed to make arrangements for their sale "in as many shops as possible, and that the following names of book-sellers be inserted in the advertisements and bills, as suppliers therewith; viz: Messrs. Simms & Dinham, Fletcher and Tubbs, J.T. Parkes (late Forrest), Joseph Johnson, and Abel Heywood". The price of each publication was to be fixed at one penny. In order

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. I, 24th April 1849.

that the lectures could be read by friends of the Association in different parts of the country, a dozen copies of "the newspaper containing the best report of each of the lectures now being delivered" was forwarded to "friends at a distance".<sup>1</sup>

On 29th May the Executive Committee decided to commence publication of the Association's own journal, the Educational Register. Edited by Samuel Lucas, its specific purpose, it was revealed in the first issue in June 1849, was to defend the L.P.S.A. plan and the American Common School system from the recent attacks made by the Rev. Hugh Stowell at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Dr. Halley, on behalf of the Congregational Board of Education at Crosby Hall, London, and John Burnett and Algernon Wells, for the Voluntaryists, at the Corn Exchange, Manchester.

The opposition are criticized for the lack of opportunity to ask questions at their meetings, a feature which compared unfavourably with those held by the Association. For at the lectures given at the Mechanic's Institute by Lucas, Rylands, Dr. Watts and Dr. Beard: "while we have courted discussion our opponents have shrunk from it".<sup>2</sup> In contrast, at the meetings of the L.P.S.A.'s opponents, "leave has invariably been refused to

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1. ibid., 8th May 1849.

2. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. 7.

working men even to ask a question of the lecturer".<sup>1</sup> It was hoped that this would persuade the public of the justice of the Association's cause.

The Rev. Hugh Stowell is attacked for ignoring the abundance of crime, destitution and ignorance in "this happy little isle; as he called it, and in reply to his accusation that the Association was receiving the support of socialists and Chartists, it is frankly admitted that "we shall not refuse the aid of any in the prosecution of our good work". The voluntaryists are accused of failing to distinguish between popular control and government interference, for the Association were merely putting the control of education into the rate-payers hands.

Under the heading "Misrepresentations of the principles and objects of the Association", the accusation that the L.P.S.A. were trying to expel the Bible from the National Society's Schools is denied, for, it is claimed, they merely wished to establish a free school in every locality, where selections from the scriptures, rather than the whole Bible, would be used for the teaching of non-denominational religious knowledge: "The Association does not propose to interfere in any way with the National Schools or with any other schools now in existence".

The need for free schools is cleverly reinforced by a reference

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1. Ibid.

to the Rev. Hugh Stowell's own admission that the main cause of ignorance was poverty, since many parents simply could not afford to send their children to school. Statistics demonstrating the appalling failure of the educational system of England and Wales are given to show how ridiculous was Edward Baines's attempt to prove that one in eight and a half of the population were receiving education, when the figure for Prussia was 1.6, Pennsylvania, 1.5, Massachusetts 1.4 and New York 1.3. Even if the ratio  $1.8\frac{1}{2}$  were true, the uneven distribution of educational provision, the writer maintains, made its significance negligible when it was well known that the figure for Vauxhall and Liverpool was  $1.11\frac{1}{2}$ , Manchester  $1.14\frac{1}{2}$ , and Middlesex  $1.19\frac{1}{2}$ .

The journal also contains an extract from Dr. Watts's paper, later published in National Education, on the relationship between crime and the provision of education, an article by the Rev. Richard Davies, Vicar of King's Sambourne, Hants, in support of the Irish National Schools, and one by the Rev. John Dufton, Rector of Wareham, Kent, on the subject of the separation of religious from secular education.

Under the caption "A word to working-classes" there is an announcement stating that under the L.P.S.A. scheme, free evening schools would be opened for the express purpose of closing the gap caused by ignorance between the social classes.

Finally, in an article entitled "The Common School System in Massachusetts", statistics are quoted from the Eleventh Report of the Massachusetts Board disproving the rumours, spread by its critics, that the Common School system was declining, and demonstrating that on the contrary, it was rapidly expanding and in an extremely healthy condition. The similarity of conditions in New England and those in the manufacturing districts of England is emphasized in order to demonstrate suitability of the American system for adoption in this country. The fact that illiteracy in Britain was thirty times greater than in New England was quoted as abundant evidence of the need for such a measure.

Reference is also made to the constitution, on Friday 25th May, of the Liverpool Auxiliary Public School Association with J.A.Picton, an architect by profession, as Chairman, and Walter Ferguson as Honorary Secretary. There is also a report reprinted from the Leicestershire Mercury of 26th May, announcing the proposal by the Mayor, William Biggs, to form a Leicestershire Public School Association.

(xi)

Educational Register No. 2. July 1849

Further reference is made to the American system in the second issue of the journal, in connection with the provision in the plan whereby local committees would have the power to set aside certain times in the week for ministers, and other teachers of religion, to give religious instruction, in "places apart from the schools" and

connected with different denominations.

This system, the leading article explains, had been successfully adopted in the United States, where it was "found to work well and harmoniously and to be attended with the best results". There is also an extract from a letter dated 14th March 1849, on the Common School system, contradicting the rumour that it was causing dissatisfaction, and another from Alexander Mackay's Western World on the same theme.

Interesting from the point of view of local events is the reference to the opening of the new Free Library in Salford and the statement that all except one of the most generous contributors were members of the Association.

(xii)

Educational Register No. 3. August 1849

The whole of the third issue is devoted to defending the American system against rumours that its popularity in the United States was declining. Statistics are quoted to show its rapid expansion, and the argument put forward that, as it was based on democracy, the American people could easily rid themselves of the system if they became discontented with it. The reason for such a powerful defence was a lecture by Dr. Halley in Crosby Hall, London, in which he had quoted from the latest reports of the Massachusetts Board of Education. These had been critical of the system, and Dr.



Halley had used them in his argument against the American Common Schools. Samuel Lucas, in his leading article, admitted that the system had been criticized, but that the compilers of the reports did not wish to abandon it, but to extend and perfect it. Reference is made to the opinions of Richard Gardner and Sir Charles Lyell testifying to the terrific achievement in New England, and a quotation from Lyell in praise of Horace Mann and his invaluable contribution to American education is included:

"The more sanguine spirits, among whom Mr. Horace Mann, secretary of the public board of education, stands pre-eminent, continue to set before the eyes of the public an ideal standard, so much more elevated, as to make all that has hitherto been accomplished, appear as nothing".

There is also a quotation from Mann's Seventh Report describing the abysmal inadequacy of English education.

(xiii)

Educational Register No. 5. October 1849

The fourth issue of the Educational Register, like the third, is devoted to extolling the virtues of the American system, mainly by extracts from Lyell's Second visit to the United States. Similarly, the fifth issue also quotes this work, but of far greater interest is a letter to Lucas from Horace Mann, who, by this time, had retired from his secretaryship, testifying to the success of popular education and the high literacy rate in the United States. He also emphasized its voluntary nature:

"Our system is entirely a voluntary system so far as the attendance at school is concerned. The school is provided; the parent sends his children to it or not, as he pleases".

Even those paying the most in taxes, he wrote, knew that education was cheaper at public schools than in any other sort. The system also provided a path to the University:

"In this way the children of the poorest men, if they have genius, can obtain the highest education and rise to the most important places in society".

In further evidence of the continued popularity of the Massachusetts system is a letter from C. Peirce, the late principal of the Massachusetts State Normal School, who wrote:

"There never was a time when it was so efficient and popular as at the present".

In evidence of this he wrote:

"A former Mayor of Boston took his children out of a good private school, and put them into a public school, to give them, as he said, a better chance".

Both correspondents emphasized the point that, although they might criticize the system's imperfections, nothing could be farther from the realms of possibility than that they would ever contemplate its abolition.

(xiv)

Educational Register Nos. 6, 7 and 8

This was re-echoed in the sixth issue, for November 1849, by Henry Barnard, superintendent of Common Schools in Connecticut, in his letter to Samuel Lucas. In it he admitted criticizing the existing defects of the system:

"....but I never dreamed of representing either as failing. Under our system.....the people have enjoyed a universality of elementary education, so far as I know, never surpassed by any state or country".

Enclosed with his letter was a book on school architecture which he had published himself.

The last two issues for December 1849 and January 1850, contain no direct reference to American education, but are devoted to the papers read by John Rylands and John Stores-Smith at the monthly soirees, and later reprinted in National Education. Presumably, the Executive Committee felt that its forthright defence of the Common School system, over a period of eight months, had been a success, and that there was no further need to publish the Educational Register. Alternatively, Samuel Lucas's impending removal to London may have been the reason.

The main interest lies in the first six issues, for they demonstrate how the L.P.S.A., acting as a pressure group, could swiftly organize itself in defence of its principles and produce its own publication directed to performing a specific task. They also show how closely the Association, in just over two years of existence, had become identified with the American Common School system as it was organized in Massachusetts.

(xv)

#### The Local Committees

Meanwhile the local committees were gathering support and organizing their own meetings. For example, the Salford Committee decided to hold "a few public meetings...in order to excite additional interest in the educational question". They "looked to the office" for a speaker at each of their meetings.<sup>1</sup> in

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1. ibid.<sup>Vol 1</sup> 7th June 1849.

addition to providing them with speakers, the Manchester office saw that the local committees were well supplied with publications, books and copies of the Educational Register. Canvassing for support went on rapidly, and at the Organization Committee meeting on Tuesday, 7th June, there were representatives from Ancoats (eight of them), Salford, Centre of the Town, Crumpsall, London Road, Miles Platting, Chorlton and Deansgate. Mr. Cairns of Ancoats reported that a committee of nine had been formed which he hoped would soon be doubled. In Miles Platting "four pairs of distributors and collectors were on the point of commencing operations", while in Hulme "Mr. Waugh reported that a street had been marked out for an immediate canvass". In order to make the collectors look more official, "The Secretary was instructed to affix printed labels to the collecting-books as an official authorization".<sup>1</sup>

At the next meeting on June 14th, a man by the name of Grimshaw, on behalf of the Chorlton Committee, reported "almost all its members zealous in the work". This rapid expansion continued, and at the Organization Committee meeting of June 29th it was reported that the Ancoats Committee had sixty members; the Hulme Committee had thirty subscribers, had held three committee meetings and was to hold a public meeting on 10th July, and that the Salford Committee had held two meetings which were very

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1. Ibid.

successful, resulting in the enrollment of many new members. By 12th September more than one thousand families in the Deansgate *area* had received copies of the Association's publications.

(xvi)

#### An Approach to the Trade Unions

A new venture was discussed on September 26th, when the Organization Committee considered the possibility of introducing the principles of the plan into trade union meetings, and of inviting their officials to committee meetings. Several members undertook to bring the names of their respective trade union leaders so that invitations could be sent to them. The Executive Committee followed this up rapidly, and at the meeting held on 2nd October, it was resolved:

"That the Secretary put himself in communication with the secretaries of the various Trades' Unions of Manchester, with a view to inducing them to bring the plan of the Association before the notice of their Societies, and to attend at Organization Committee meetings".

Similar events were reported to be taking place in London, where a working man's association had been formed for the advocacy of a general system of education, entitled, 'The Working Men's Secular Education Society'.<sup>1</sup>

Addresses of trades' union leaders soon came in, the first three being William Fair, secretary to the Spinners' Union, Thomas Maudsley, provision dealer to the Spinners, and John Becks, secretary

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1. Ibid., 25th September 1849.

to the Coach Makers. On 27th November it was announced that the Painters' Club had consented to have the Association's papers admitted into their rooms.

In order to bring together all the working men connected with the Association, a suggestion was made at the Organization Committee meeting of 24th December, of holding a private soiree, or public tea party, of the district committees of working men "during the next week or as soon as possible". In fact the meeting took place in the new year, but it gives some idea of the rapid development of the working mens' organization. It was also decided to print placards announcing the existence of committees in various districts, supplying the names of the officers, and their addresses, of each district committee, "to be used in every way likely to increase a knowledge of the existence of the Committees in the several districts".<sup>1</sup>

(xvii)

#### Advantages of Working-Class Support

Whether the adhesion of working-class people brought financial rewards of any consideration to the L.P.S.A. funds is difficult to determine, because of the lack of such evidence in the annual accounts, but the Association most certainly gained a great deal of useful publicity, and in the Annual Report of 16th January 1850, the Executive Committee boasts of twenty-three District Meetings which

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1. Ibid., 24th December 1849.

were held in Manchester and Salford in 1849. As for determining the results of meetings, it appears that great successes were recorded, for in March 1850 Canon Stowell accused the L.P.S.A. of preparing "to pack the meeting or unfairly preoccupy the room", at a meeting to be held in Manchester Town Hall, on 1st April, which despite his complaint, resulted in a resounding victory for the Association.<sup>1</sup>

(xviii)

The Free Trade Hall Meeting, 12th December 1849

The year ended in a flurry of activity:

"The last three months of 1849 were months of considerable activity, the monthly meetings, fortnightly meetings, (open to discussion, were held in the Mechanic's Institution and Athenaeum; and public district meetings once a week, sometimes oftener. So great was the interest evidently taken in the question by all classes of the inhabitants, that the Committee decided on affording them an opportunity of displaying in a public and authoritative manner, the extent and quality of that interest. With that view, they decided upon calling a Free Trade Hall meeting on the evening of the 12th December. And as the education question appears to be a national one, and must sooner or later receive a national settlement, they determined on inviting the friends of national secular education to a conference in Manchester on the day of the Free Trade Hall meeting. The important resolution then agreed to by gentlemen of influence from all parts of the country, recommending the formation of district organizations throughout Great Britain is full of happy augury for the future of the education question".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.76.

2. Report of Executive Committee, 16th January 1850.

the prophecy expressed in the last sentence was no idle one, for by the time the next annual report was compiled the L.P.S.A. had become the National Public School Association.

William Johnson Fox, M.P. for Oldham, and Thomas Milner-Gibson, M.P. for Manchester, were the main speakers at the evening meeting. It appears that it was something new compared with the usual run of L.P.S.A. meetings:

"The meeting in the evening - to pass over the genius, the influence, and the wealth represented in it, as things of minor importance - was remarkable for being the first occasion on which the principles of this educational movement have been propounded to a large number of those men whose children it is designed to benefit. It was no uninteresting sight to note thousands of faces, in which imprisoned intelligence struggled for expression, turned up to manifest their interest in the proposal; and hands blistered by daily toil exerted to applaud it. We wish for the most strenuous foe of the Association no harder fate, than that he had been present to hear the judgment of an uncertain majority in March reversed by the unanimous acclamations of ten times as large an audience in December".<sup>1</sup>

This might have been a moving sight for the correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, but to the members of the Executive Committee it could only mean that their policy of fostering working-class support had been a resounding success.

(xix)

#### Qualified Support by Jeremiah Garnett

Despite the fact that Jeremiah Garnett, the editor of the Manchester Guardian, subscribed two guineas to the L.P.S.A. in 1849,<sup>2</sup> his newspaper did not give completely unqualified support to

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th December, 1849.

2. Report of the Executive Committee, 16th January 1850.



the Association. Obviously the manner of the assertion of their claims by some of its leaders did not please all those who were sympathetic to the movement. The article in the Manchester Guardian of Saturday, 15th December, begins as follows:

"In taking occasion from the important meeting held in the Free Trade Hall on Wednesday, to renew our expressions of sympathy with the Lancashire Public School Association, we must beg leave to disclaim any participation in the spirit in which its claims have been advocated, since we last recurred to the subject. However unbecoming and reckless may have been the language recently employed in support of the plan this cannot affect the excellence of its principles, though it may well retard the period of their general acceptance. The intemperance of the advocate is the misfortune of a good cause, not its essence, and we may, as we do, condemn one while we approve the other".<sup>1</sup>

The remainder of the report was highly sympathetic toward the Association. With regard to the 'plan':

"Its opponents find no fault with it but that it wants those characteristics which have proved the visible ruin of its predecessors; and exerting themselves to thwart it, they propose nothing as a substitute".<sup>2</sup>

Wonder is expressed at the prejudice against it, for the struggle going on over it would make a foreigner think that it was contrary to the country's traditions, but this was not so:

"It is national for it is to derive its authority from an act of the national legislature and to be capable of national application. It is local, for each county will have its own independent action, without subservience to any central authority; popular for its managers are to owe

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th December 1850.

2. Ibid.

their creation to a general election; and yet safe and stable for its executive duties which it involves are to be entrusted to a selected few".<sup>1</sup>

Alarm is expressed at the ignorance which was "gradually growing over the intelligence of England"; and the prominent part played by the Rev. W.F.Walker, a minister of the Church of England, at the morning conference, held on the day of the meeting is quoted as being in itself a sufficient refutation of the "sweeping charges of indifference or hostility (to religion) which have been indiscriminately levelled at a whole class".<sup>2</sup>

Gibson and Fox, as expected, were most impressive and illustrative of the importance, for a pressure group, of having eloquent public figures on its list of vice-presidents:

"If the concise array of Mr. Gibson's statements, and the glowing eloquence of Mr. Fox does not enchain the attention of the reader to the subject, we shall begin to doubt our own accuracy, or the quality of the reader's taste".<sup>3</sup>

The plan was no new-fangled idea:

"It is simply the negation of those errors which have defeated the objects of other schemes...It is the only chance of educating the people of England".

(xx)

#### The Speeches of Gibson and Fox

In his speech Milner Gibson emphasized the wisdom of separating the secular from religious education, saying that at Cambridge

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

University nobody went to divinity lectures except people who were studying theology, and he raised a laugh when he added that "even some of them managed to do it by proxy".

Fox recalled the Anti Corn-Law struggle when he had on several occasions spoken in Manchester:

"We gathered then to claim food for perishing bodies, we gather now to claim as free a supply of food for perishing and starving minds".<sup>1</sup>

His speech is most interesting on account of his plea to raise the standard of the teaching profession:

"We should look upon them as the healers of diseases and therefore entitled to rank with physicians; as the preparers of the mind for a religious and moral state and therefore entitled to stand side by side with the clergymen".

Finally he said something which, despite their improved conditions of service and qualifications, many teachers today would agree with:

"There are no prizes in his (the school teacher's) profession ...we leave his virtue to be its own reward for certainly we bestow none".<sup>2</sup>

Fox here showed himself to have a true grasp of the essential problem of education. Previously in his series of lectures delivered at South Place Chapel, he had declared his conviction that the sphere of government activity. This would mean appointing a minister of education and "a board or commission connected with him ...from which the practice of licensing teachers might emanate,

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

which I believe to be one of the most essential steps".<sup>1</sup> As the last sentence suggests, Fox believed that the crux of the problem lay in the amateurism of the teachers themselves. Before education could be taken seriously a teaching profession would have to be organized in order that "in instruction, as well as in law or medicine, there should not be the right of practice without evidence of competency; but that whatever a man aspires to be a teacher of, he should show that he is qualified to teach".<sup>2</sup> In addition to Normal Schools which would be the main machinery for achieving this objective, Fox, showing remarkable foresight of the future development of education, had suggested that there might well be added in Universities and colleges "professorships of that which unhappily amongst all arts and sciences, has been the last to be complimented with the honour of having professors of its theory and practice namely, education".<sup>3</sup> The five lectures clearly demonstrate the visionary nature of Fox's educational philosophy. One can only regret that he had passed his sixtieth year when he entered Parliament as Member for Oldham in 1847, for if he had been a younger man he must surely have accomplished more.

The meeting was a great success. Representatives and sympathisers from various parts of the country either wrote expressing

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1. W.J.Fox, Lecture No. 2., "National Education", Collected Works, (London, 1865), vol. 8, pp. 142-143.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

their support, such as Harriet Martineau and Lord Goderich, or attended in person. Extremely important for the future of education was the presence of one individual who was showing his interest in educational matters at that early date. This was W.E. Forster who had come from Rawden, near Leeds.<sup>1</sup>

(xxi)

### A Rapidly Expanding Organization

Well might the Executive Committee congratulate itself on "the active support which such men as Messrs. Fox and Gibson inaugurated on the evening of the 12th, and which the letters of the many distinguished persons unable to be personally present on that day, have promised to the cause",<sup>2</sup> for in the short period of two and a half years the Association had grown from a small, locally organized, pressure group into one which was on the threshold of becoming a national movement, with branches all over the country, and its centre in Manchester. The Executive Committee did not exaggerate when it recommended to its members, "energy, vigilance, and confidence" affirming that:

"The attention of the public is being every day more strongly directed to the education question, and the problem must before long be solved, in a spirit different from any yet evinced by sect or government".<sup>3</sup>

With this objective before it the Association prepared itself for a year of great expansion.

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1. Manchester Guardian, 15th December 1849.

2. Report of the Executive Committee, 16th January 1850.

3. Ibid.

## C H A P T E R VII

### THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION BECOMES A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

(i)

#### The Appointment of R.W.Smiles as Secretary

One of the Executive Committee's first tasks in 1850 was to find a new secretary. In November 1849 Dr. Watts, supported by S.P.Robinson, another committee member, had found it necessary to ask Francis Espinasse to fix a time when he could be relied upon to be in the office in the morning. It was observed that "the Secretary's hours had been fixed from ten in the morning to six in the evening on his entering on the duties of his office; and that Mr. Espinasse would, no doubt, conform to the spirit of Dr. Watts's hint".<sup>(1)</sup> It appears that Espinasse took little heed of his admonition, and was consequently dismissed, with a month's salary, in January 1850. He was replaced by Robert Wilson Smiles at a salary of £100.

Smiles remained with the Association until 1857, giving excellent service. He eventually became librarian of the Manchester Free Library, a position which he held from 1858 until 1864. The brother of Dr. Samuel Smiles, author of Self Help, it is small wonder

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. I, 26th November 1849.

that he embraced the cause of education, and, having become librarian, devoted much time and labour to the development of an educational department in the Reference Library. <sup>(1)</sup>

At the General Committee Meeting held on 30th January, which was attended by representatives from Manchester, Liverpool, Rochdale, Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, Bury, Warrington, Preston, Heywood, Prescott, Bacup, Burnley, Bolton, Lancaster, Leigh, and Barton-on-Irwell, the main concern was to give the Association as much publicity as possible. It was decided to petition the Mayor to call a town's meeting on Easter Monday, 1st April, for the purpose of inaugurating a petition to Parliament, and, in answer to the question "how the Association may most effectually agitate and enlist sympathy and influence throughout the county", <sup>(2)</sup> the meeting resolved to hold public meetings "in as many towns throughout Lancashire as possible, and as early as practicable, for the adoption of petitions to Parliament in favour of the Association's plan". Various members having been made responsible for organizing these functions, plans were made to hold them in nine Lancashire towns.

(ii)

#### W.J.Fox's Education Bill

By far the most important event in the first half of the year was the introduction of W.J.Fox's education bill into Parliament.

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1. W.R.Credland, Manchester Public Free Libraries, (Manchester, 1899), p.48.
  2. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.I, 30th January 1850.

Its object was the establishment of a system of national education; "the first important effort ever made in Parliament for a really national system".<sup>(1)</sup> According to his biographer it was defeated by a combination of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Wesleyans, Presbyterians and Independents, "because in his bill, while admitting ways for all denominations to train the children of their faith, the government grants were to be given only in respect of the secular education".<sup>(2)</sup> Although defeated by 287 votes to 58, the bill's three extended discussions gave secular education some valuable publicity.

Fox's plan was for inspectors to take stock of the secular education supplied in all the schools in the country and report on the deficiencies. When this had been done the localities were to be invited to make good any deficiency, for which purpose the inhabitants were to elect education committees with the power of levying an educational rate. The existing schools were not to be wasted, for Fox proposed a grant of ten shillings a head for each pupil efficiently taught in secular instruction. They were to be allowed to teach religious doctrine, but were to receive no state grant for that purpose. New schools, which would be free, were then to be provided for children between the ages of seven and thirteen.

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1. Garnett, op.cit., p.303.

2. Ibid.



Religion was not to be taught by the teachers of secular subjects, but convenient times were to be arranged when the parents might have their children instructed, at their own expense, in such doctrines as they wished. (1)

(iii)

#### The Association's Reaction to the Bill

In his capacity as one of the original vice-presidents of the L.P.S.A., one would have expected Fox to have communicated with the Executive Committee in good time to organize a campaign in support of his bill. It might even have been reasonable to assume that he would have taken their views into consideration before finally drafting it. However, this did not happen. He introduced his measure as a private member's bill "without any communication whatever with the Committee, then or subsequently, on the subject". (2)

The first reference to the bill in the L.P.S.A. minutes is a notice, on 4th September 1849, to the effect that Fox would introduce a motion on National Education in the next session of Parliament. The next reference, on 20th February, is a request for the Association to demonstrate in favour of Fox's motion before the 26th of the month. The Committee wrote back requesting him to postpone the motion for two months, during which time "effective demonstrations...could be made from Manchester and other towns in

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1. Ibid.

2. Report of the Executive Committee, 22nd January 1851. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. 1.

Lancashire and from various towns and districts throughout the country".<sup>(1)</sup> Samuel Lucas, who at that time was preparing for the publication of National Education, wrote to George Combe on 6th March:

"If the volume could be brought out and placed in the hands of M.P.s before the second reading of Mr. Fox's bill, it would do something, I think, to make converts".

Unfortunately it was not published before the second reading which took place on 17th April, for the preface is dated 22nd April 1850. At a meeting held on the same date as Lucas's letter, the Rev. J.J. Taylor, a member of the Executive Committee, reported on Fox's measure, warmly approving it, and expressing anxiety for the Association to give it their support. However, his colleagues were not to be persuaded:

"The Executive were unanimous in the opinion that they could only preserve their integrity and maintain their power by standing upon their own plan, and, while they might, individually, be glad to see Mr. Fox's measure adopted, they could not as an Association, agitate or petition for less than the adoption of the Plan of the Association".<sup>(2)</sup>

Despite this decision a General Committee meeting was called for 13th March, at which twenty-two members were present. The bill was examined clause by clause, and adverse comment was made on the difficulty of ascertaining educational deficiency, and on the powers of the central authority, which, it was feared, would give too

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. 1, 20th February 1850.

2. Ibid., 5th March 1850.

much power to the Privy Council. Fox's measures to enable local organizations to supply existing educational deficiencies generally found favour, although it was admitted that in certain agricultural districts the local population would be incapable of exercising such functions. The grant of ten shillings per head, per annum, for each child gratuitously taught in existing schools was treated with great suspicion on the grounds that it was impossible for the inspector to measure and record accurately the progress of the children he would have to examine, and that such payments would be subsidizing the teaching of religious doctrines. It was also deemed a serious omission that the bill did not provide for the establishment of one free secular school in every parish.

It appears that Fox had written, in reply to several members of the Association, that various changes would be made during the committee stage, and this seems to have satisfied several people, for the bill was not without its supporters at the meeting.

The Rev. J.R. Beard described it as "a statesman's effort to satisfy all reasonable demands", in that Fox had been mindful of the existing agencies of education, which he did not wish to disturb and make hostile. Nevertheless, although he was prepared to help Fox as far as possible, he thought it unwise for the L.P.S.A. to drop its own measure or agitate or petition for anything else. The Rev. J.J. Taylor urged strong support, describing the measure as "positive" and "practical", something "actually before the country"

which was attainable, if Fox were powerfully supported. He asked his colleagues as "practical men.....whether it was wise to contend for a theory, not yet before the country in a substantive form, and to allow attainable advantage to elude their grasp. The people were spiritually starving while men were contending about theories"<sup>(1)</sup>. In his opinion the Association ought to have taken advantage of the support already in evidence for Fox's measure, and augmented it.

One can sympathise with this point of view. Here was a measure already before Parliament, and the L.P.S.A. had the organizational means to demonstrate the public's support for state education, but rather than do this they preferred to let the opportunity pass in the hope of replacing it with their own plan which was not greatly different. It is worth reflecting on whether the members of the Association would have acted differently if they could have foreseen the frustrating years that lay ahead of them in their efforts to introduce a bill into Parliament.

In the event, the wisest heads counselled that Fox's measure should not receive their unanimous support. Dr. Watts, who by this time had become the moving spirit of the Executive Committee, did not feel inclined to oppose a measure that gave him half of all he wanted. Fox's bill included part of the Association's plan

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol. I, 13th March 1850.

and was "in shape before the country", but he suggested that they had to consider whether, in asking for the first part, they might "greatly postpone the acquisition of the second". He felt that Fox's measure would be more likely to be granted if more were asked for. The meeting came to the conclusion that individual members of the Association could support meetings and petitions in favour of the bill, "but as an association they could not deem it wise, expedient, or consistent to make any demonstration in favour of, or to endorse officially, that measure".<sup>(1)</sup>

(iv)

#### The Initiative of the Liverpool Committee

Despite its failure, Fox's bill was wasted neither on the country nor on the Association. This is demonstrated by the proceedings of the Liverpool branch of the L.P.S.A., which had gained a certain amount of independence from the Manchester body in 1849.<sup>(2)</sup> At its first annual general meeting, held on 20th November, 1850, comment was made on the fact that the manner in which Fox's bill was received, "both by the House of Commons and the country at large, gave great encouragement to the promotion of this movement by showing that the public mind was at length beginning to acknowledge the insufficiency of the present provisions for education, and the necessity of some general system founded on a comprehensive basis".<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., Vol.2, 31st December, 1849.

3. First Annual Report of the Liverpool Branch of the N.P.S.A., 20th November 1850. (Liverpool, 1850).

Taking advantage of the interest aroused, the committee held a public meeting at which resolutions on education were carried unanimously and a petition to Parliament was adopted. Later, district meetings were organized in order to spread information among the working-classes, exactly as had been done in Manchester.

The Liverpool committee stated that it was Fox's bill which prompted the L.P.S.A. to become a national movement in the form of the National Public School Association. According to the First Annual Report, its unexpectedly favourable reception "coupled with the signal success of the advocates of a secular system of education at public meetings in several of the chief towns of Yorkshire, suggested the opinion that the present opportunity was a desirable one for abandoning the exclusively local nature of the plan of this Association and making it national".<sup>(1)</sup>

There is no mention of this beneficial effect of the bill in the N.P.S.A. report for Wednesday, 22nd January 1851; only reports in the minutes, in the period after the Second Reading of Fox's bill, of favourable articles in the press on behalf of national education.<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless by the end of the year the Association had transformed itself from a limited organization serving a single county into a large complex association embracing the whole country. In view of the fulsome praise of the Liverpool Committee for Fox's bill it is

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 11th June 1850.

difficult not to feel that the parent committee were somewhat ungenerous in their treatment of the measure.

(v)

#### Evidence of "Packing" a Meeting

The public meeting which was held in the Town Hall on Easter Monday, 1st April, in accordance with the General Committee's decision was a great success. A deputation to the Mayor, which included Absalom Watkin, Justice of the Peace, father of Edward Watkin, an important Manchester business man, and George Wilson, ex-president of the Anti-Corn Law League, failed to persuade him to grant an evening meeting, despite the demands of five-hundred petitioners. Consequently it had to be held during the day.

Although, in face of the Rev. Hugh Stowell's accusation of attempts to pack the meeting, the Association denied on public placards any intention of doing so, it is significant that on 27th March the Organization Committee resolved "that the gentlemen now present, pledge themselves to use every exertion in their power, to induce a numerous attendance of friends of the Association at the Public Meeting at the Town hall, not later than eight o'clock on Monday morning, 1st April 1850".<sup>(1)</sup>

(vi)

#### The Petition to Parliament

The petition which had been drawn up for presentation to

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1. ibid., 27th March 1850, and Maltby, op.cit., p.76.

Parliament stated that vice and crime in England and Wales were caused by ignorance due to "insufficient and defective provision for proper education", and demanded, in view of the fact that her Majesty's subjects had long had a share in the government, that parents should have a direct influence on the direction of public schools. As there was a great variety of ideas on religion, the petition maintained, the system ought to be free from sectarianism. Consequently, Parliament was requested

"to establish by law a system of education which, excluding all theological doctrines and sectarian influences supported by local rates, assessed on the basis of the Poor Rate, and managed by local authorities specially elected for the purpose by the rate-payers, may afford to all, especially the untaught and neglected, opportunities free of charge, for a thorough training in useful knowledge, good principles and virtuous habits".

The opposition manifested itself in an amendment, proposed by the Rev. Hugh Stowell, to the effect that if education was to be of value, it must be Christian education,

"and that we (the petitioners) regard with strong disapproval the Bill now before Parliament for providing secular education for the people without at the same time saying that it should be Christian in character. Your petitioners therefore pray your Hon. House to reject the Bill, and to sanction no measure for furtherance of National Education which does not make provision for the moral and religious as well as the intellectual culture of the children of the poorer classes".

It appears that the Association's policy of organizing popular support and 'packing' the meeting was a great success, for, in contrast with the previous town's meeting at which the Association had suffered a nominal defeat, Canon Stowell's speech was continually interrupted by hecklers, while Dr. McKerrow's was cheered. The



measure of enthusiasm engendered by the meeting can be gauged by the size of the crowd which attended. It was so great that many people failed to gain admission. Nothing daunted, they voted on the petition, and Dr. Watts was able to report to the more fortunate people inside the hall that they had adopted it by the proportion of ten to one.

The Association were equally successful at the official meeting, and when a vote was taken the Mayor declared "without hesitation that the amendment was lost". The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m., some of the people having been there since 8 a.m., which gives a further indication of the tremendous enthusiasm for public education that the L.P.S.A. had contrived to arouse since its humble beginnings in 1847.<sup>1</sup> The petition was then signed by the Mayor, and sent to Thomas Milner Gibson, M.P. for presentation to Parliament.

(vii)

#### An Address to the People of England and Wales

As a result of the overwhelming support for the petition, and the increased publicity which accrued from the attempts to steer W.J.Fox's bill through Parliament, the movement for national education gathered momentum. In May the Rev. Dr. Beard composed an Address of the Lancashire Public School Association to the People of England and Wales.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.77.

2. J.R.Beard, Address of the Lancashire Public School Association to the People of England and Wales, (Manchester, 1850).

in which he reminded his readers that nearly one half of the nation was illiterate, that prisons were full and that "our cities, our towns, and our villages contain, in a large proportion of their inhabitants, persons who are vicious, criminal, or destitute, because they are untaught". The blame for this was laid squarely on the shoulders of the Established Church and the Dissenters, whose joint efforts had proved insufficient, leaving the nation "with a small modicum of intelligence, (and) a preponderating mass of ignorance, crime, pauperism, and wretchedness". According to the pamphlet "something else" was needed, namely:

"An Impartial System of National Instruction which should be:

- I. Unsectarian and Comprehensive.
- II. Independent of the Government.
- III. Supported by Local Rates.
- IV. Managed by Local Authorities.
- V. Based on the National Will".

Readers were recommended to study the plan:

"If a better can be devised we are willing to withdraw. If the plan gives a fair promise of removing from our common country the foul blot of ignorance, crime and pauperism, lend it your best support; form a local Association for its furtherance. At all events, be not content with the present condition of popular education, for very great are its actual evils, and it is pregnant with incalculable mischief".

Two thousand copies of this "Address" were ordered and circulated. Meanwhile there were reports of growing activity from all over the country: Lord Melgund introduced a Bill into Parliament to popularise the Parochial School System of Scotland; a town's meeting was held in Sheffield, at which the principles of the L.P.S.A. were adopted; a letter was received from a Mr. Beveridge of

London, informing the Association that a Secular Education Association had been formed there; and, finally, after the division on Fox's bill, able articles appeared in the Daily News, the Morning Advertiser, the Athenaeum, the Manchester Guardian, the Birmingham Mercury, the Leeds Times, and the Weekly Dispatch demanding a national system of education.<sup>1</sup>

For his able support of Fox's Bill, the Executive Committee resolved "that the best thanks of the Committee be given to the Right Honourable Thomas Milner Gibson M.P., for his speech in the resumed debate on the second reading of Mr. Fox's Bill, and for his valuable and perservering efforts on behalf of National Secular Education".<sup>2</sup>

(viii)

#### Samuel Lucas's Work in London

There is every indication at this time of a quickening of the pace of events, and an intensification of pressure exerted on the government for a national system of education, initiated originally by Fox's Bill. Samuel Lucas, who, unfortunately for the Association, had gone to live in London towards the end of 1849, was busy organizing educational movements in that area. He corresponded regularly with the Manchester office, informing the Executive Committee of events in the capital.

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.2, 14th May and 11th June 1850.

2. Ibid., 11th June 1850.

In April he organized a petition which was sent to the House of Commons, praying for the appointment of a commission to ascertain and report on the number of children attending day schools, and on the quality of instruction given in every township of Lancashire. He sent a copy to Manchester, where Dr. Watts used it as a basis for a similar petition,<sup>1</sup> and, later, wrote to the Executive Committee urging them to consider the introduction of an education bill, based on the principles of the Association, in the next session of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> This was reinforced by a letter in which the Liverpool Committee inquired whether another "Conference of Friends of National Secular Education" was to be summoned. It was, therefore, decided to hold one followed by a public meeting in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, in October.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly the Secretary was instructed to write to as many "friends" as possible, requesting them to arrange local public meetings for the election of delegates to a conference, the precise object of which was "to decide whether the Educational Movement which has originated in the county, and which has hitherto been prosecuted for a nominally local purpose, should not now be made national in its character; and if approved of, to consider and adopt the principles and provisions of an Education Bill and arrange for its introduction into the House of Commons in the next Parliamentary Session".

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1. Ibid., 14th May 1850.

2. Ibid., 18th June 1850.

3. Ibid., 9th July 1850.

Samuel Lucas agreed to prepare the draft of the bill for discussion and adoption at the conference.

Meanwhile, great efforts were being made to give the maximum publicity to the work and principles of the Association. R.W. Smiles, wrote to Colonel Thompson, M.P., a former member of the Anti-Corn Law League and veteran free trader,<sup>1</sup> soliciting his favour and influence in obtaining good literary notices for National Education, and Dr. Watts proposed that all publications of the Association should contain the following footnote:

"Persons favourable to the principles of the Lancashire Public Schools Association, residing in places where there is at present no organization for its extension, are requested to canvass their friends and to form local committees which should hold regular meetings, prepare Essays on the state of education in their respective localities, invite influential persons by circular or otherwise to the reading of such Essays, and when the committee is sufficiently large for the purpose, an appeal should be made to the public for co-operation and support. As soon as a committee is formed in any place, a communication should be opened with the present Association and supplies of pamphlets, plans, etc. will be forwarded".<sup>2</sup>

In this way the Association was not only giving itself publicity, but also instructing members of the public in the methods of forming associate pressure groups.

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1. McCord, op.cit., p.34.

2. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.2, 27th August 1850.

The Formation of the National Public School Association

On 3rd September, a General Committee meeting was held at which twenty-nine members were present, with Dr. Mckerrow in the chair.

The following proposal by Dr. Beard was carried unanimously:

"That in the opinion of this meeting it is expedient to make the Lancashire Public Schools Association a National Association, and to prepare an Educational Bill for Parliament based on the principles of the Association".<sup>1</sup>

It was further proposed by Dr. Watts and adopted:

"That this meeting approves the scheme of the proposed conference, and recommends the preparation of a permissive bill to be introduced into Parliament, in accordance with the principles of the Association, and hereby pledges its hearty support, pecuniary and otherwise, in furtherance of the views of the Association, so as to induce the general adoption of its principles at as early a period as possible".<sup>2</sup>

As if to confirm the enthusiasm of the members, which was already in evidence, a number of them agreed to double their annual subscriptions. This was followed by a drive on subscriptions which produced a sum of £150. 2. Od., between 10th September and 1st October, a considerable proportion of this having been obtained by the allotment of names of various gentlemen to certain members of the committee for canvassing. A further expedient was the publication of subscriptions received down to 3rd September in the Manchester Guardian, the Manchester Examiner and the Spectator.

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1. Ibid., 3rd September 1850.

2. Ibid.

(x)

The National Conference, 1850

The approaching National Conference to be held on 30th October, was advertized very widely in The Times, the Daily News, the Liverpool Times, the Eastern Counties Herald, and in each of the Association's approved list of provincial papers. It was certainly the most important event of the year and one of the milestones in the history of the Association. To give the occasion even greater significance a dinner was held at the Town Hall in honour of Samuel Lucas, to which many friends and members of the Association were invited.

The resolutions drawn up for discussion describe how it was proposed to expand the L.P.S.A. into a national movement, and show that there was very little difference between the constitution of the L.P.S.A. and that of the N.P.S.A, the latter organization merely being one which recognized the development of educational associations in towns outside Lancashire and enabled them to become incorporated into a national movement. They read as follows:

"THAT the Lancashire Public School Association be resolved into a society called 'The National Secular School Association', for the establishment by law, in England and Wales, of a general system of secular instruction, to be maintained by local rates, and under the management of local authorities, specially elected by the ratepayers.

THAT the branches of the Lancashire Public School Association, the London Working Men's Association for National Secular Education, and the Associations and Committees which have been formed to promote the same object in Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Halifax, Coventry and other places, be invited to resolve themselves into branches of the National Secular School Association.

THAT the following gentlemen, together with the Executive Committee of the Lancashire Public School Association, be a General Committee for taking the measures rendered necessary by this change, and that the Executive Committee of the Lancashire Public School Association be requested to combine their functions as the Executive Committee of the National Secular School Association".

The list included such eminent men as Richard Cobden, William Johnson Fox, Alexander Henry, and Thomas Milner Gibson.

The final resolution was:

"THAT the different delegates and visitors present undertake the formation of Branch Associations in their localities for diffusing a knowledge of the principles of, and securing adequate supplies to the national Association".<sup>1</sup>

The proposal to call the national organization a "secular" association was to lead to some heated discussion at the conference.

(xi)

#### The emergence of Richard Cobden as the Champion of National Education

The outstanding personality at the October conference was, without doubt, Richard Cobden, who had become a member of the Association in 1848. He was the answer to George Combe's search for a leader to initiate a national education campaign. Combe at first had turned to Lucas as a potential leader, but the latter had felt unable, for personal reasons, to lead such a campaign, entailing setting aside all other business, as Cobden had done for the seven years of the Anti-Corn Law campaign. Lucas also had hopes of Cobden

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1. Ibid., 22nd October 1850.



and wrote to Combe on 11th February 1848:

"I am continually on the look out for a leader. I am not without hopes that Cobden may be induced to place himself at the head of the movement".<sup>1</sup>

Throughout 1848 pressure was brought to bear on the somewhat reluctant Cobden to become the champion of national education, but he obviously had no wish to rush headlong into the difficulties which beset it. In a letter to Combe of 25th November he described education as "a tangled skein which I suspect can only be unravelled by some such plan as that of the Lancashire School Society, which sets aside altogether the pretensions of the sects as such, to deal with the public money as though they subscribed it".<sup>2</sup> In the same letter he mentions that he was going to the L.P.S.A. soirée to hear Walter Ferguson's paper On the public school systems of the United States. Cobden did not join the Association until December 1848, but his decision to do so caused Lucas a great deal of pleasure, as is shown by his letter to George Combe on 16th December. The letter itself demonstrates superbly the value of an important public figure to a pressure group, not for his ability as a public speaker, but for the beneficial effect his support would have on public opinion. Lucas wrote:

"Mr. Cobden has joined our Association. This gratifies me more because the accession of so cautious and clear sighted a man is a proof of the progress we have made, and are likely to make in public opinion, than because of the value of his advocacy of our principles, though the latter can scarcely be over-estimated".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Farrar, op.cit., p.97.
  2. Cobden M.S.43660 quoted by Farrar, op.cit., p.102.
  3. Ibid., p.103.

Nevertheless, Cobden was not yet fully committed, because he was not convinced that the L.P.S.A. had the slightest hope of achieving their objective. As he wrote to Combe in a letter dated 5th January 1849,<sup>1</sup> the time was not ripe for national education to become the leading political subject, because of the tremendous obstacle of a Liberal party divided on that question by the action of Edward Baines and the Voluntaryists. This, he lamented to Combe, had not been the case in the Anti-Corn Law campaign, when the Dissenters had united in support of the League. Cobden knew that the Voluntaryists had put the achievement of national education in jeopardy, and his efforts, once he had committed himself to the struggle, were directed to conciliating them by every means possible. His assessment of the true nature of the obstacles in the way of the L.P.S.A, as expressed in his letter to Combe, is the clue to his whole course of action throughout the time he was connected with the movement. As late as 9th November 1850, although involved in the campaign by that time, he wrote pessimistically to Combe<sup>2</sup> about the possibilities of meeting the voluntaryists' objections to rate aided education. However, by this time, he had decided that the only method of allaying their fears was to secure the maximum opportunity for religious teaching in public schools, consistent with its being unsectarian in content. He wrote to Combe about this, and Combe in reply wrote:

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.108.

"One word more: you say that you "would not prefer mixing secular and religious teaching, but would not set out with prohibiting such a union where it was desired by others." Neither should I, if I saw any possibility in a National of avoiding injustice and oppression of the minority in such cases. Whenever a school district is absolutely unanimous in its desire to mix them, as in your parish, by all means let this be done; only let the legislature provide that, even in this case, the Government Inspectors shall have the right to see that the Secular instruction is not a sham, and also that, if there be dissenters, they shall not be taxed to support a religion of which they disapprove".<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this, Cobden went to the conference at the Mechanics' Institute, on 30th October, with the object of persuading the N.P.S.A. to adopt the Massachusetts principle of empowering the school committees to authorise the reading of the Bible without note or comment.

(xii)

#### Cobden and the American System

Cobden was tremendously impressed with America<sup>2</sup> when he went there in 1835. He saw it, as did so many of his contemporaries such as Richard Gardner, Walter Ferguson, Harriet Martineau and Sir Charles Lyell, to mention only a few, as the "utopia of the under-privileged".<sup>3</sup> It was from this land of opportunity that the threat to British economic supremacy would come, not from "the barbarous policy and impoverishing armaments of Russia".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Jolly, op.cit., p.594.

2. Cawley, op.cit., p.26.

3. W.H.G. Armytage, "Some Aspects of American Influence on British Education", Advancement of Science, 1957, Vol.13, p.301.

4. Quoted by Armytage, ibid., p.302.

He was impressed above everything else by the American system of education which, he was convinced, was the foundation and cause of American prosperity. To William Tait, two years after his visit to the United States, he wrote:

"If you travel in that country, every man of whatever shade of politics will avow that his hopes of the permanency of sound democratic self-government, free from anarchy on the one hand and tyranny on the other, are based entirely upon the great and increasing knowledge of the masses:- education - education - education is the motto of every enlightened democrat in America".<sup>1</sup>

The American schools inspired him with such enthusiasm that he determined to transplant them in England, where he hoped they would become instruments for the regeneration of society:

"Oh happy sight, pregnant with hopes of the of the character of future generations, I hereby dedicate myself to promoting the cause of the infant school in England where they may become an instrument for ameliorating the fate of children working in the factories whose case, I fear, is beyond the reach of all other remedies".<sup>2</sup>

Having returned to England in 1836, he threw himself into the work of education in close co-operation with Thomas Wyse, but was interrupted by the Anti-Corn Law campaign. Nevertheless when he finally emerged from the struggle in 1846, with broken health and faltering business interests, he wrote to James Simpson of Edinburgh on 4th July 1846:

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1. Cawley, op.cit., p.26.

2. Arnytage, op.cit., p.302.

"Education is the only public matter upon which I should be disposed to put on my armour for another "seven years war".<sup>1</sup>

It was at the National Conference on 30th October that Cobden removed all doubts of his readiness to resume battle once more.

(xiii)

### The Religious Question

The deliberations at the conference reveal the differences of opinion which existed on the question of the nature of the N.P.S.A. The main point at issue was whether or not the Bible should be used in the schools.

The Executive Committee had hoped to solve this problem before the conference ever met. A sub-committee, meeting on 15th October, had agreed to the adoption of Scripture Extracts of the Irish Schools as a general school book, thinking that this would dispose of the question and enable any special reference to the scriptures to be omitted from the plan.<sup>2</sup> On the evening before the conference a further alteration was announced by Dr. McKerrow, to the effect that the plan would provide for schools to be closed at special times to allow for the teaching of doctrinal religion.<sup>3</sup> This is a

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1. Cawley, op.cit., p.26.

2. Mins. L.P.S.A., Vol.2, 15th October 1850.

3. Maltby, op.cit., p.77.

considerable advance from the Address to the people of England and Wales of May 1850, in which it is stated that:

"The religious sects...must be left to such exertions (for religious instruction) as their benevolence may prompt and their resources support. But in excluding the direct agency of the religious in our system, we are very far from intending to disown the importance of religion in education. A thorough education we know involves a careful religious training. Such a training is, however, the work of the parent. Would that the fostering influence of a Christian home could be had for every child".

The L.P.S.A. were, therefore, proposing to adopt the system of religious instruction in practice in the Irish National schools. Yet, in spite of these careful preparations they could not escape the inevitable controversy over the problem.

The importance of the conference can be assessed by the number of eminent people who attended. Alexander Henry acted as chairman and there were representatives and M.P.s from all over the country, including Cobden, J.B. Smith, Joseph Brotherton, John Jenkins of the Swansea Herald, and W.E. Forster, whose presence was full of significance for the future. By far the most distinguished visitor, emphasizing irrevocably the connection between the Lancashire educationalists and those in New England was the Association's guest, the Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon of New Haven, Connecticut. There were many letters from people such as Fox and Bright, but one of the most welcome must have been that from R.N. Phillips's brother, Mark, who wrote: "If you want funds to organize your movement, I will give you

£100". Thomas Carlyle, who, if he did not send money, certainly sent encouragement, wrote:

"From the origin of your Association I have on every possible opportunity expressed my hearty good will to it: and I rejoice very much to witness the success it now seems rapidly attaining".<sup>1</sup>

The controversial nature of the conference became apparent with the reading of the first resolution by Absalom Watkin, when Cobden objected to the use of the word "secular". To him, he said, it meant "not religious", whereas the intention of the Association was to convey the meaning of "non-sectarian".

(xiv)

#### Cobden's Diplomacy and Forster's Amendment

Although the chairman accepted this, Dr. Hodgson and Dr. Watts objected to it. Cobden spoke again, showing far more diplomacy and far greater vision than anybody else in referring to the fact that Edward Baines, the leader of the Voluntaryists, had at his disposal "a very powerful and formidable party". The import of his advice was that as little as possible should be done to provoke the opposition of such groups and that every effort should be made to remove anything that prevented them from becoming members of the Association. The retention of the word "secular" would defeat this purpose. At this point W.E.Forster indicated where his own sympathies lay when he moved the substitution of the word "non-sectarian" for "secular". It is interesting to note that both

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., vol.2, 30th October 1850.

Cobden and Forster were members of the Established Church, and neither wished to exclude the Bible from the schools entirely.

Dr. McKerrow then went on to explain the scheme, already mentioned, of setting the afternoon of one day a week apart, in order that those ministers "who feel interested in the religious instruction of the children may have an opportunity of teaching them, though, of course, we shall not make the attendance of children compulsory". This, however, did not solve the problem of the Association's name.

Cobden, still dissatisfied, spoke a third time, objecting on the grounds that "the retention of the word 'secular' anywhere in the resolution is an opening to the enemy, a chink in our armour which we shall someday have to rivet up with more difficulty and discussion". Later, in a letter to George Combe, he wrote in explanation:

"You would be puzzled at my objecting to the word 'secular'. If I had seen before I spoke upon the subject that the word occurred again in the body of the resolution, I should not have taken the objection. For, after all, in the words of Shakespeare 'What's in a name' applies very much to the case. We all mean the same thing, to teach people something for their well-being which the ministers of religion do not teach them".<sup>1</sup>

Forster withdrew his amendment but added that he would not, therefore, be able to serve on the committee of the N.P.S.A. Ultimately the word "public" was used instead of either "secular" or "non-sectarian" and with this alteration the resolution forming

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1. Extract from a letter to George Combe, 9th November 1850, quoted in Morley: Life of Cobden, p.548.



the new Association was carried unanimously, Forster being satisfied with this final version. His motives for objecting to the word "secular" were the result of his conception of education, which according to his biographer, developed as a result of his going to live in Yorkshire. When in 1849 the Leeds Educational Society was formed, he became a member. Originally he believed that the religious problem could be solved by providing only secular education for the children in national schools:

"But, by and by, as at meeting after meeting of this undistinguished little association - which though undistinguished was destined to have no small influence over the final settlement of the education question - the various sides of the religious question were dealt with, Forster began to waver. It is said that he was finally brought round to a conviction that in Bible reading the true solution was to be found, by a remark made by Canon Jackson, that 'it appeared that the one book in the English Language which was to be excluded by Act of Parliament from the schools was the Bible'. Be that as it may, from 1849 onwards, Mr. Forster never wavered in his belief that the teaching of religion, as set forth in the Bible, must form a part of any national system of education".<sup>1</sup>

Finally when in 1870 Lord Shaftesbury, on behalf of the Ragged School Union, went to ask Forster if Bible-teaching was in fact to be excluded from the new schools, he replied: "Lord Shaftesbury, I would rather have my right hand cut off than be the means of excluding the Bible from our day schools".<sup>2</sup>

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1. T. Wemys Reid, Life of William Edward Forster, (London, 1888), Vol.1, p.435.
  2. Ibid., pp.438-439.

Dr. Bacon's Speech

Both Cobden and Dr. Bacon spoke at length both at the conference and at the public meeting in the Corn Exchange on the next day, when W.E.Hickson<sup>1</sup> a former member of the Central Society for Education, and editor of the Westminster Review officiated as chairman.

Dr. Bacon's function was obviously to attempt to remove the objections which the Dissenters held against the American system. This is made obvious by Cobden's letter of 2nd November to Joseph Sturge, the Quaker philanthropist, in which he wrote:

"Read Dr. Bacon's speeches.....I hope what he said will be calculated to remove the scruples of our evangelical dissenters".<sup>2</sup>

The minister spoke of the momentous nature of the Association's work. The "great reform" which it was about to bring into effect was "another stage in the advancement of the British people". His emphasis on the close relationship between "old England" and New England brought applause when he said:

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1. Hickson wrote, in support of the N.P.S.A., a Historical Sketch of the Educational Movements preceding the formation of the N.P.S.A., and published it in the Westminster Review of January, 1851. The Association then re-published it as a pamphlet.
  2. Quoted by Farrar, op.cit. p. 112.

"The identical common school system of New England is that which your committee and yourselves have elaborated, and are attempting now to introduce into that which is my fatherland as well as yours; and in particular, your system is the same with ours in relation to this question of ecclesiastical influence in public schools".<sup>1</sup>

He went on to describe the development of the Common School system and, continuing with his theme of its close similarity with the N.P.S.A. plan, said:

"The word 'public' which you have introduced into your title is the identical translation of the old English word 'common'".<sup>2</sup>

As one would expect, in the light of Cobden's letter to Joseph Sturge, the greater part of the speech was devoted to the virtues of separating religious from secular instruction and the advantages which accrued to religion as a result of this arrangement. It guaranteed that religion was well taught, which was certainly not the case when the same teacher was obliged to give instruction in both secular and religious knowledge. "I would not", he said, "trust my child to be taught religion, with the children of the parish by the teacher of the common school".<sup>3</sup> In America, he explained, Sunday Schools were used for teaching religion.

In support of Cobden's objection to the word "secular", he commented that he thought "unsectarian" described the system more

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

accurately. The speech, punctuated as it was with wit and humour, was received with great applause, particularly when he said in criticism of the Established Church:

"In these three hundred years....since Henry VIII seized upon the endowments which had been consecrated to a different faith... the Church of England has not, if I am rightly informed, initiated the people of England into the mystery of the alphabet".<sup>1</sup>

In his speech next day at the public meeting, Dr. Bacon repeated several points, for example the identical nature of the Common School system with the N.P.S.A. plan, and the advantages of the separation of religious and secular instruction; and added others such as the religious nature of the New England people, the possibilities of self advancement through the system and the fact that the Common Schools were not schools for the poor, but "for the whole people".

His final comment, which was obviously designed to support Cobden's sentiments, was directed at the Voluntaryists:

"I ask every religious man, and especially my brethren of the Independent ministry, what do you propose to do, in the nature of religion and the world's Redeemer, with the children of those multitudes, whom neither you nor the Church of England can reach with your schools"?

There is no doubt that the N.P.S.A. put great value on what Dr. Bacon had to say, for both speeches were printed in a pamphlet entitled Education in England and in the United States of North America, ten thousand copies of which were circulated.

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1. Ibid.

Richard Cobden's Speeches

Cobden, not surprisingly, spoke in support of Dr. Bacon and strongly advocated the American system. The Americans, he admitted, might pay more for their education through taxation, but they paid less for their goals. "And if they have school houses in every town, they have no barracks in every town - they pay less for their soldiers".<sup>1</sup> What people feared in England was not an external enemy "but the dense mass of ignorance that is around us....It only wants what Americans have done, that we shall have some Horace Manns in this country to devote themselves to the cause of education".<sup>2</sup>

With that he declared himself dedicated to the cause of education.

At the meeting in the Corn Exchange he was even more eloquent in his advocacy of the New England schools. He was particularly anxious to make his views understood on the use of the Bible. Cobden was determined that the choice of whether or not to admit the Bible under the plan should be left to the school committees:

"I will not be a party to the exclusion of the whole Bible from any school where the local body can unite in introducing the Bible. For instance, one half of our parishes in this united Kingdom, and a great deal more, are simply rural parishes, containing a few hundred inhabitants. In many cases there is but a parish church; and there is not a Dissenter. Now, I don't understand

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1. Mme. Salis Schwabe, Reminiscences of Richard Cobden, (London, 1895), p.129.

2. Ibid.

this to be a plan which should prevent a community like that where all are agreed, from having the whole Bible, if they please, introduced into their schools".<sup>1</sup>

He insisted that if a community wished to have the Bible in schools they should have the right to do so but "we will not compel the reading of the Bible when that shall have the effect probably of deterring Roman Catholics or others from sending their children to the schools".<sup>2</sup> He defended the plan against the cry of irreligion by emphasizing that the children would not be prevented from going to Sunday School, nor from receiving religious instruction:

"We do not propose to take a farthing from the stipends of religious teachers, but we tell them that, if it be their duty to educate the people, they have grossly neglected their duty".<sup>3</sup>

He continued with a eulogy on the United States system, praising Dr. Bacon's speech, and demanding the adoption of the Massachusetts system in Britain:

"I have often thought that the best way of reasoning this matter would be to identify ourselves with the New England System of education, and say that is what we want. We want that for Old England which has been for centuries applied to New England".<sup>4</sup>

He made an interesting reflection on the movement of population into Manchester in the nineteenth century when, in

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1. Ibid., p.136.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.137.

4. Ibid., p.139.

exhorting his listeners to fight for national education, he said:

"Why I'll venture to say that not one half of the population of Manchester were born in Manchester. They are immigrants; and where have they immigrated from? Why from those fountains, the overflowings of which furnish these great towns with population - the rural fields and rural agricultural districts of the country".<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, he said, it was vital to change the L.P.S.A. into the N.P.S.A. so that the beneficial effect of education would be extended to the whole country. He believed that education would regenerate the working classes precisely as it had brought culture into the lives of the nineteenth century middle-classes. Given the opportunity, the working classes, he hoped, would find "gratification in this, rather than in the gin shop, the dog-fights, or pitch and toss in the public house".<sup>2</sup> Voluntaryism, however, could not possibly provide education for the rural areas which supplied the cities with people, for the necessary enterprise in such places was completely lacking, therefore there were no schools. Yet education was a dire necessity, because it was the stimulus which would raise people up from a state of vice indolence and ignorance. Repeating the essence of his message to the conference, he told his audience that the only solution was to adopt the American system:

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1. Ibid., p.145.

2. Ibid., p.148.

"You must secure a law which, as in the case of the New England States, as in the State of Massachusetts, for instance, compels every locality or parish to furnish not merely a building such as our orders in council are now aiming at - furnishing bricks and mortar, of which we have more already than are useful - more than are used - but to furnish a master under proper control, and the means of giving instruction to the great body of people in all parts of the country".<sup>1</sup>

(xvi)

#### Reactions to Cobden's Speeches

Nobody could have expected any movement, in which Cobden decided to involve himself to remain unaffected by his presence. The N.P.S.A. was no exception to this, for his two speeches, reinforced by those of Dr. Bacon, were no less than a demand for the American system to be adopted by the Association. The correspondence of Samuel Lucas with George Combe shows that, in fact, the L.P.S.A. plan closely resembled the American system in every respect, except for the provision of religious instruction in the schools. In the United States the local committees decided how, if at all, the Bible should be used, and Cobden was determined that the decision should be made by an equivalent body under the N.P.S.A. plan, not by act of Parliament.

It is not surprising that he ran into opposition on this delicate matter. Dr. Hodgson in particular wanted to include both the Bible and the books of extracts, referred to in the plan, from the schools.

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1. Ibid.



On 7th November 1850, he wrote to George Combe:

"It is obvious to all that the plan of extracts has failed during three years to conciliate the religious opponents of the scheme. Nay, I am not sure that the very inculcation of the Scriptures is not more damaging than that of exclusion".<sup>1</sup>

Dr. McKerrow was prepared to exclude the Bible and the extracts from the curriculum provided that time was set aside during the week for religious instruction by ministers of various denominations. Dr. Beard was in favour of adopting the extracts used in the Irish National schools and was a member of a sub-committee which reported to that effect on 12th October.<sup>2</sup> He emphasized the success of this system in his lecture, The Plan of Secular Education proposed by the L.P.S.A. A compromise was reached by accepting Dr. McKerrow's solution, which he announced at the conference. Hodgson, however, was still dissatisfied. He was a convinced Secularist and wanted an educational system completely devoted to secular instruction. On the controversy over the word "secular", as it appeared in the resolutions, he explained to Combe in his letter of 5th November 1850:

"Its retention is to a great extent a barrier in the way of those who would either introduce the whole Bible or so enlarge the extracts from it as to make them virtually equivalent to the whole Bible".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Combe, M.S.7308, quoted by Farrar, op.cit., p. 109
  2. Mins. L.P.S.A. Vol.2, 15th October 1850.
  3. Farrar, op.cit., p.110.

On 18th November Cobden wrote to Combe, expressing his opinion that it would be absurd to prohibit the Bible from the public schools and "highly intolerant and inconsistent with the fundamental principle of local control which we all advocate".<sup>1</sup>

Hodgson was most indignant about Cobden's speech in the Corn Exchange on 31st October, which, he thought, was in complete contradiction to the resolution of the conference on the previous day to establish "a general system of secular instruction". Cobden's ideas on education were incompatible with his, and one can see in his letter to George Combe on 15th December that he was already beginning to take up the position which resulted in his leaving the movement. He wrote:

"You no doubt read Mr. Cobden's most unfortunate declaration about the Bible at the public meeting following upon the conference. From that moment I felt that the Association would have to choose between Cobden and its principles.... But now I say 'no Cobden or no principle' was our probable alternative, and as I know the anxiety of every member to retain his support, I was very anxious about the issue".<sup>2</sup>

Combe, however, although sympathetic to Hodgson and agreeing that, theoretically, a scheme which excluded religious instruction was best, wrote advising him to moderate his strict secularist approach, and added:

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1. Ibid., p.113.

2. Quoted by Farrar, op.cit., p.113.

"All classes of the community regard the Bible as the only authoritative foundation of morality as well as of religion, and one cannot expect that they should give it up while thus regarding it".<sup>1</sup>

Hodgson was obviously fighting a losing battle and was in no position to demand that the N.P.S.A. should choose between Cobden and himself, as he admitted in his letter to Combe on 15th December. There was no doubt where Combe's sympathies lay. His delight over the fact that Cobden had at last assumed the leadership of the education campaign was boundless, as can be seen in his letter of 4th November:

"Allow me in the joy of my soul to congratulate you on your taking the position which so truly becomes you, and which you are so admirably calculated to fill with great benefit to your country, at the head of the National Public School Association. I have read the speeches with great interest and yours reminds one of the Anti-Corn Law days, when your logic was like a two-edged sword dividing the marrow bones of protection, leaving them withered and powerless to be scattered to the winds. This, in my judgment, is the most important movement that has taken place this century. It is the supplement to parliamentary reform and Free Trade, and to all other social improvements, and some without which their fairest fruits were constantly in danger of being blighted".<sup>2</sup>

(xvii)

#### A Compromise by Cobden

Final agreement on the teaching of religion in schools was reached at a special meeting on 21st November, attended by the Rev. Drs. Beard and McKerrow, Salis Schwabe, Dr. Watts, William McCall,

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1. Ibid.

2. Schwabe, op.cit. p. 149.

Dr. Hodgson, John Mills, the Rev. J.A.Baynes of Nottingham and others. By far the most important person present was Cobden. The meeting was called in order to discuss a report of a sub-committee, which met on 18th November, and agreed unanimously on a basis for the Association which they "regarded as excluding the Bible as a school book".<sup>1</sup>

Cobden opposed the exclusion of the Bible, but only Salis Schwabe supported him, and after three and a half hours discussion, Cobden agreed with the Rev. J.A. Baynes's proposal that the schools should be closed at certain times in the week for the purpose of the teaching of religious instruction, which was the proposal made by Dr. McKerrow at the National Conference on 30th October. The meeting was continued on the next day with Cobden again present, when the following resolution, which was discussed by the Executive Committee on 26th November and approved by the General Committee of the N.P.S.A. on 4th December 1850, was agreed upon:

"The National Public School Association has for its aim the establishment by law, in such parts of England and Wales as may need them, of Free-Schools; which supported by local committees, specially elected for that purpose by the rate-payers, shall impart secular instruction only, leaving to Parents and Guardians and Religious Teachers, the inculcation of Doctrinal Religion to afford opportunities for which purpose the schools shall be closed at stated times each week".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A. Vol.2, 21st November 1850.

2. Mins. N.P.S.A. vol.2, 4th December 1850.

Cobden, therefore, had the last word. According to the "basis", the Bible was not specifically excluded from the schools and the only teaching expressly forbidden was "Doctrinal Religion". It meant that there was a loop-hole through which a local committee could introduce the teaching of non-sectarian religion and use the Bible "without note or comment", as under the Massachusetts system, which was precisely what Hodgson wanted to prevent.

This explains what Cobden meant when he said, "I am for the Bible neither as a school book, nor for its exclusion as a school book. I am for the American system precisely as it stands".<sup>1</sup>

(xviii)

#### Financial Assistance

One notable feature of the National Conference was the amount of money presented to the Association by generous donors. Alexander Henry and Richard Gardner donated £100 and £50 respectively, and during the course of the meeting in the Corn Exchange on the next day W.E.Hickson, the chairman, announced the receipt of a donation of £500. Later at an Executive Committee meeting on 1st November, at which both Cobden and Alexander Henry were in attendance, it was revealed that the gift had been made by a gentleman named Edward Lombe, of Great Melton Hall, Norfolk, who was then residing at Leghorn, Florence.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.81.

2. Mins. N.P.S.A., vol.2, 10th November, 1850.

It appears that Lambe was a wealthy landowner with estates in Norfolk. He was also something of a public benefactor, who, in addition to allowing his tenant farmers to shoot game on his estate established "a college for education of the people at Sheffield which flourishes".<sup>1</sup> He had less success with a similar enterprise in Norwich which was a failure. Lambe wanted to dedicate a portion of his wealth to the benefit of the working-classes by means of secular education "suited to promote the temporal well-being of industrious persons, leaving to the parents and pastors of each child the duty and responsibility of teaching it denominational theology".<sup>2</sup> The N.P.S.A. apparently provided an answer to this, but had George Combe to thank for the donation, for, although he never met Lambe, he acted as his agent and must have suggested that the Association was a worthy object of generosity. It was unfortunate for the Association that Lambe died in Florence in 1852 for, had he lived, it is fairly certain that he would have been a regular source of income.

(xix)

#### Encouraging the Working Classes

During this period the Executive Committee did not lose sight of the need to maintain the support of the working classes and an

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1. Quoted from a speech by George Combe in Gibbon, op,cit.,p.293,note. It appears, however, that there is no record of any connection between Lambe and the Peoples' College in Sheffield.
  2. Ibid.

essay competition was devised in order to foster more interest. Two prizes were offered; one of £30 and the other of £20, for the best two essays on one of the following topics:

"The existing provision for the Education of the people considered in its quantity and quality.

A Secular Education suitable to the wants, and conducive to the highest good of the people.

The advantages of a system of local rating and local management in support of Public Schools".<sup>1</sup>

(xx)

#### Re-organization of the Administration

It was to be expected that, with the broadening of the basis of the Association, the work of the Central Executive was going to increase, and therefore a certain amount of re-organization was deemed to be necessary. New rules were drawn up which provided for the increasing activity of a national organization. Every contributor to the fund of the Association became a member for one year, and his name was entered in a book showing the date and the amount paid. For this he received a membership card entitling him to admission to all general meetings of the Association or to those held by any of the branches.

The affairs of the Association were henceforth managed by a General Council which met twice a year, until it became obvious that the chances of success were remote, after which these meetings became somewhat irregular. The Council was composed of members from every locality where branches were established, and it had the responsibility

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1. Ibid., 5th November 1850

of appointing the president, vice-president, treasurer, three auditors, and the Central Executive Committee which was to meet once a week, although later the meetings were held fortnightly. The district affairs of the Association were to be managed by local committees elected by residents in each district. The officers of these and any other members, not exceeding four, appointed by the local committees, were to be members of the Council and of the Executive Committee, although they were not obliged to attend its weekly meetings. Money collected by branch committees was to be reported weekly, and remitted at least every three months, to the Executive Committee "after retaining, where necessary, not more than two-thirds of the amount for local expenses". Finally, as the committee had been considering the advisability of engaging lecturers, conditions governing their contracts were laid down. All their travelling expenses were to be paid by the branch which applied for them, but the Central Executive was the only body with authority to engage and pay them.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the rules regularized and confirmed practices which were already in existence. However, some division of labour was introduced into the organization of the Executive Committee, the members of which were shared out among five standing sub-committees: those for finance, correspondence, publishing and printing, lecture and public meetings, and canvassing.

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1. Ibid., 22nd November 1850.



The lecture and public meeting sub-committee immediately got to work, and on 11th December was able to announce that the Rev. J.A. Baynes of Nottingham had been engaged as a public lecturer at a fee of one guinea per lecture, plus travelling expenses. Similarly, it was recommended that a "round of engagements" should be assigned to a Mr. B. Glover of Bury. The correspondence committee were not to be outdone, for they commenced the formidable task of corresponding with all the mayors of boroughs in England and Wales, supplying them with the basis and rules of the Association, and urging them to exercise their influence on its behalf.

(xxi)

#### The Report for the Year 1850

The year 1850 was one of tremendous expansion for the Association. Subscriptions amounted to nearly three times the 1849 amount, being £1,496. 5. 7d., compared with £518. 0. 6½d. However, it is necessary to point out that a large proportion of the increase arose "from the spontaneous subscriptions of numerous gentlemen in various quarters whose first communication with the Committee has been a remittance".<sup>1</sup> In fact £880 of this money was donated by six individuals namely: Alexander Henry, £120; Thomas Milner Gibson, £25; Richard Gardner, £60; Edward Lombe, £550; Mark Phillips, £105; and one Thomas Thomasson, £20. It could hardly be expected that such generosity would be repeated annually.

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1. Report of the Executive Committee of the M.P.S.A., Wednesday, 22nd January 1851.

The annual report was able to show that since the Corn Exchange meeting of 31st October, meetings had been held at Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, Bradford, Huddersfield, Sheffield, Nottingham and Derby, "and at each of those places, affiliated branches of the Association have been organized, in addition to those previously existing in Lancashire".<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, a committee formed in London, meeting weekly, "enjoys the valuable services of the late chairman of your Committee, Mr. Samuel Lucas. The influential branch Committee, formed at Birmingham, also meets weekly".<sup>2</sup>

Other meetings held under the auspices of the Association were three held in Leeds with great success, town's meetings at Hull, Halifax and Sheffield, and public meetings in Derby and Bradford. The Association also took some credit for the fact that:

"The subject of national education was also brought under discussion in the common council of London, and in the town councils of Birmingham and Sheffield".<sup>3</sup>

In all the meetings held, some of which were incident to Fox's bill, except in the case of Ashton-under-Lyne where the Association suffered a temporary reversal, resolutions were adopted "approving the principles of the Association, or forms of petition emanating from it, or embodying its essential principles, of - a system of

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1. Ibid.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

free schools, to be maintained by local rates, subject to responsible local management and free from sectarian influence". Even in Leeds, the stronghold of Edward Baines, champion of the voluntaryists, the successful meetings there showed "encouraging evidence that a powerful public opinion in favour of our principles may grow up and exist in quarters where the prominent and obstinate antagonism of influential persons might lead us to doubt the possibility of its existence".<sup>1</sup>

Not only in the realm of finance was there unprecedented activity, but also in that of the circulation of documents, which, together with the issue of plans, speeches and reports, exclusive of newspaper announcements, amounted to 100,000. Papers were supplied to all who requested them for no matter what purpose, whether for opposition against W.J.Fox's bill, or for use in giving lectures against the Association, because it was realized that even adverse publicity would be valuable. Moreover, National Education was published in 1850 and must have been an invaluable volume for use by branch committees and lecturers. As a result of the wide correspondence with "numerous eminent persons", the Executive Committee was able to report "the declaration of writers, that the Association has presented the best solution yet offered to the country of the 'great educational problem'".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., speech of Alexander Henry.

2. Ibid.

Signs of a Protracted Struggle

However, there were signs already of the long drawn-out contest that was to take place between the N.P.S.A. and the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education which had recently been formed in opposition. Yet it is interesting to note how the existence of the rival group is cleverly turned to good effect in the report. Having pointed out that many Voluntaryists, who had originally opposed them, were now coming round to their way of thinking, and recognising in the Association's plan "an educational scheme compatible with the rights of conscience and liberty", the authors of the report refer to the opposing scheme in a manner reflecting credit on the work of the Association:

"Another influential section of the community, which has in the past opposed us on all points, has been constrained to do homage to our principles in the preparation of a local education scheme, to be subject to "local rates", ostensibly subject to "local management", and which professedly respects the "rights of conscience", and recognises the expediency of separating the inculcation of religious doctrine from secular instruction".<sup>1</sup>

This was a most optimistic assessment of the situation. If the compilers of the report really believed what they wrote, they were certainly guilty of underestimating the tenacity of the opposing party, against whom they were destined to struggle inconclusively for the next five years.

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1. Ibid.

## C H A P T E R VIII

### THE OPPOSITION DEVELOPS

(i)

#### Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth and Secular Education

Some indication of the strength of opposition to the N.P.S.A. plan can be seen in the reply of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth to the Association's invitation to attend the National Conference of 30th October 1850. Published in the Manchester Guardian of 6th November 1850, it clearly expressed the opinion of many people who, although conscious of the need for a sound educational system, were also anxious to maintain the system of doctrinal teaching in schools:

"I regard the Lancashire Public School Association as the representative of a great political party which seeks to promote the education of the people for wise and just political ends. In this respect I sympathise with the labours of the Association, and I think it will be useful in bringing into strong relief, not only the political objects which are dependent on a system of National Education, but also those principles of civil liberty which provide that every man shall have the opportunity of so training his child that he shall be fitted by his exertions to raise himself to the exercise of the political franchise with advantage to the State.

But though I sympathise with these political objects, and think that the Lancashire Public School Association will do good by bringing them prominently before the public, I cannot conscientiously concur with them in seeking to establish a system of daily school separate from the superintendance of the great religious bodies of this country

and in which the religious influence shall not pervade the whole discipline and instruction. Moreover, I hope that, as the Association proceeds, this object will become subordinate to the great social and political rights involved in the establishment of a system of national education".

Kay-Shuttleworth could see the value of the Association as a pressure group whose function was to focus the attention of the public onto the education problem, but he was unwilling to forego the connection between religion and education. As if to bring public witness to prove that his views were quite widely held, the recently formed Manchester and Salford Committee on Education adopted a system which he was able to support whole-heartedly.

(ii)

#### The Manchester and Salford Education Bill

In the Manchester Guardian of 4th January 1851, the Rev. Charles Richson M.A., circulated "Suggestions for a Bill to enable the inhabitants of the boroughs of Manchester and Salford, by means of local rates, to construct an effective scheme of local education" after "an influential meeting of Churchmen and some leading Dissenters, at which the proposal met with general approval".<sup>1</sup>

The people present at the first meeting were the Revs. Hugh Stowell and Canon Richson of the Established Church, the Revs. George Osborne and T. Percival Bunting of the Wesleyan Church, and E.R. Le Mare, J. Mayson and William Entwistle, laymen of the Established Church. A few days after this meeting of 6th January,

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.82.

Kay-Shuttleworth wrote to the Manchester Guardian expounding and approving the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

The bill contained proposals to levy a rate of sixpence on all property in Manchester and Salford which would support an entirely free system of education. All schools then receiving support from Parliamentary grants, and all other schools similarly qualified, were to be eligible for support. Schools which were not subject to inspection by Government Inspectors were to remain so. There was to be no interference with the ownership, discipline, or management of existing schools under the powers of the bill which was "expressly designed to stimulate and extend the system produced by voluntary effort, to a degree commensurate with the work of the community".<sup>2</sup>

The provisions for religious training are interesting from the point of view that due regard was shown to the various creeds. All religions were to be admitted on equal terms, attendance at lessons on religion were not to be compulsory, and parents were, on this account, to be allowed to choose the most suitable school for their children. Lessons in doctrine were, therefore, to be part of the curriculum, but it was obvious that the committee envisaged the provision of schools to cater for all religions. However, it was to this particular provision that Cobden and the other members

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1. ibid.

2. ibid., p.83.

of the N.P.S.A. strongly objected, as he said:

"It is in fact a proposal by which everybody shall be called upon to pay for the religious teaching of everybody else. That is precisely what has been objected to by a great portion of the community, and what has prevented the present system, administered through the minutes of council, from being successful".

He prophesied that the Manchester and Salford Committee would find the task hopeless.<sup>1</sup>

Another difference between the two plans was that the Manchester and Salford Committee expressly stated that no part of the rate could be used for the establishment of schools, but that the whole was to be used for direct payments for instruction. However, it was provided that where accommodation was insufficient, money from the rates could be used to make good the deficiency. In agreement with the Association's scheme was the emphasis on the principle of local self government, the central authority being referred to only for the protection of ratepayers, parents or children.<sup>2</sup>

Although the two schemes had much in common, the religious difference proved to be crucial and prevented the organizations from co-operating in a manner beneficial to both of them. In addition to Cobden's objection to paying for the religious teaching

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1. First Annual Meeting of the N.P.S.A. 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1851.  
Manchester Examiner & Times, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1851.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.83.



of everybody else, the N.P.S.A. also objected to the perpetuation and extension of a system which would result in the supremacy of the Established Church. They were also disappointed at the limited range of the scheme, because the Manchester and Salford plan dealt only with elementary day schools and in a very limited area, instead of the whole country. Finally Alexander Henry objected to the fact that it made "a legal provision by means of a local rate, for the teaching of a religious opinion, while it did not give sufficient security to the rate payers that the schools thus maintained at the public expense would be efficiently conducted, or of any value for the instruction of children in useful secular knowledge".<sup>1</sup>

The announcement of the rival scheme spurred on the N.P.S.A. to greater efforts. The Liverpool Committee quickly adopted a resolution "urgently recommending without delay the preparation of a Draft Education Bill",<sup>2</sup> and on 24th January, the Executive Committee held a conference with Thomas Milner Gibson, at which they discussed the best means of consolidating Parliamentary influence on behalf of the Association. It was decided that the best method was "by resolutions embodying its (the Association's) principles and before introducing such resolutions to have a London Conference of representatives of the Association and its Parliamentary friends".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol. 2, 7th January 1851.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 24th January 1851. The proposed London conference was never held.

Meanwhile discussions took place on the question of the revision of the plan. The original revision was carried out by the London committee and submitted to a sub-committee of the Executive Committee in Manchester, known as the New Plan Committee. This committee "determined certain proposed excisions, alterations, and additions",<sup>1</sup> and printed the plan with the passages to be omitted in italics, and those to be added in brackets. Copies were sent to each Executive Committee member and to Samuel Lucas in London and Walter Ferguson in Liverpool. At the next Executive Committee meeting Ferguson presented the views of the Liverpool Committee in person, and requested that a final decision on the plan should be delayed for a week. A letter was also read, in protest against certain clauses, from the London committee. However, the Executive Committee were not in the mood for compromise:

"The committee were unanimous in regretting the marked difference of opinion which had arisen between them and the London Committee, but were also agreed that they were not at liberty to adopt suggestions which they believed at variance with the Basis of the Association adopted at the meeting of the General Council, held on December 4th".<sup>2</sup>

Despite this seeming intransigence, a special meeting of the New Plan Committee was called for Saturday 1st March to which the Liverpool and London branches were invited to send delegates. As the committee meeting, at which this decision was made, was held on 24th February, it was hardly likely that a deputation would travel

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1. Mins. L.P.S.A., 18th February 1851.

2. Ibid., 24th February 1851.

from London at such short notice. The London committee's views were therefore expressed in a letter from their Secretary, J.S. Smith, and Walter Ferguson attended on behalf of the Liverpool committee. Further revisions were made at a meeting on the 4th March, after which the plan was handed over to the Printing Committee. It was decided to submit the new plan to a meeting of the General Council on 17th March, before finally adopting it. This was attended by a large number of influential N.P.S.A. members. For example Dr. Davidson of the Lancashire Independent College, Dr. Beard, Dr. McKerrow, the Rev. W.F. Walker, Thomas Baxley, Salis Schwabe, Dr. Hodgson, Thomas Satterthwaite and R.M. Shipman represented the Manchester body. J.S. Smith came from London, Messrs. Ferguson and Cochran from Liverpool, W. Harris and J. Jeffrey from Birmingham, James Hole from Leeds, the Rev. McDonald from Sheffield, and the Rev. A. Blythe and John Mills from Chesterfield and Ashton-under-Lyne respectively. After some discussion a resolution was carried to the effect that "the Plan subject to alterations now made, be approved and adopted as the Plan of the Association".<sup>1</sup>

Later a further resolution was adopted to the effect that the Executive Committee should be requested to prepare a National Education bill for presentation to Parliament. Some idea of the importance of the meeting can be gained from the fact that it lasted from 6.30 in the evening until 11'o'clock. There it might be expected that the matter of the new plan would end, but it did not,

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1. Mins.L.P.S.A., Vol.2, 17th March 1851.

for the Correspondence Committee, on 20th March, were obliged to deal with a letter from W.E.Hickson in which he made some suggestions which, it was admitted, would be useful for a bill, but which had already been anticipated by the General Council so far as the plan was concerned. However, of greater importance was his objection to the wording of clause XI section 6, which described the powers of the school committees and gave the impression that the powers of the county board were somewhat autocratic. The Correspondence Committee's reaction was as follows:

"The force of Mr. Hickson's objections to the control of the County Board in the books to be used in the schools appeared to be in a misconception of the intention of clause XI section 6 in the powers and duties of the school committees, as understood by this Committee, and although the wording of that clause may be a little ambiguous, it is clear that the selection of the Books in the first instance may be made by the Teachers and School Committees, but the sanction of the County Board is required as a safeguard against sectarian teaching".<sup>1</sup>

However, although R.W.Smiles was requested to reply to Hickson in this vain, the Correspondence Committee were forced to draw the conclusion that some of the wording in the plan was still in need of alteration. by a letter from the Birmingham committee, objecting to the same clause.

The committee then resolved to recommend to the New Plan Committee "to consider whether the verbal alterations of clause XI section 6, could be altered so as to make its meaning more apparent".<sup>2</sup> They

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., 25th March 1851.

2. Ibid.

also recommended that the term "parish" should be replaced by "district" wherever possible. The New Plan Committee consisting of Dr. Beard, Neil Bannatyne and Francis Taylor met on the next day, 21st March, and considered the Correspondence Committee's recommendations, resolving to adopt them. They also agreed to soften some of the wording in relation to the powers of the Crown Commissioners, whose duty would be to establish the system. Consequently the Commissioners were to "secure the establishment of the system" whereas previously their duty had been to "enforce" it. In another section the phrase "carry out" was substituted for "enforce", which seems to have been a particularly obnoxious word to many readers of the plan.

The final version of clause XI section 6, with the powers of the county board made to look far less autocratic than in the original version, read as follows:

"No book, which has not been approved by the School Committee and sanctioned by the County Board, shall be used in any of the schools".

This appears to have satisfied most of the M.P.S.A. members.

### (iii)

#### The Dominance of the Central Executive

This episode is interesting for the way in which it shows how the various sub-committees in Manchester carried out their specific tasks and passed the appropriate business from one to the other. More interesting, however, is the obvious dominance of the Central Executive Committee which maintained a firm grip on the

organization at all times, and made it abundantly clear that none of the branch committees, not even the London body, had the power to act independently. At the end of March the London committee informed the Executive Committee that they had passed a resolution requesting that a local bill, embodying the principles of the M.P.S.A., should be introduced into the House of Commons. Their aim obviously was to take some positive action against the Manchester and Salford measure and, possibly, take the initiative over the matter. However, the Executive Committee were quite as intransigent as they had been on 24th February, and informed their London colleagues that an agreement had been reached with W.J.Fox that Parliamentary action by the Association. would be by resolution, and that, in any case, the Manchester and Salford Committee's bill could not be prosecuted further in the current session.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the Executive Committee's impatience with suggestions from the branches, the negotiations over the final form of the revised plan show that pressure could be brought to bear upon it quite successfully if enough determination were shown. Moreover, if amendments were proposed by an important personality, such as W.E.Hickson, upon whom the N.P.S.A. depended for publicity, there was a possibility of their being considered, despite the fact that the original proposals had been ratified previously by the General Council.

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1. Ibid, 1st April 1851. In January Dr. Beard had requested Fox to take charge of a resolution in Parliament on behalf of the M.P.S.A. (Mins.M.P.S.A, Vol.2, 28th January 1851).

Coming to Terms with the Rival Faction

One of the main problems at this particular time was that of coming to terms with the rival committee.

When speaking from the chair at the first annual meeting of the N.P.S.A., Alexander Henry had declined to describe the Manchester and Salford Committee as a "rival" or "opposition" party, but as "another party in Manchester". Its promoters, he said, like the promoters of the Association appeared "to have felt the great religious difficulty", but were meeting it in a manner "very different from that proposed by the plan of the Association".<sup>1</sup> He went so far as to describe the formation of <sup>the</sup> new organization as "a local circumstance indicative of progress". In fact, this was a correct interpretation because it meant that another influential group of people had seen the inadequacies of the existing system and were ready to press for the implementation of their own solution. The tragedy was that the two groups found themselves unable to co-operate in achieving a common objective.

For the N.P.S.A. it was imperative that the two schemes should either be combined, or that their own scheme should be shown to be the superior one. On 21st March a Special Executive Committee meeting was held at which it was decided to invite the Manchester and Salford Committee to hold a joint meeting "at which the merits of the respective Plans may be discussed in a friendly spirit, and

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1. Manchester Examiner & Times, 25th January 1851.

a judgment thereon may be fairly pronounced".<sup>1</sup> However, if the Executive Committee thought that they were going to have the opportunity of exposing their rivals at a public meeting which, as previous experience had shown, they would be only too able to pack, they were to be disappointed. In reply the Manchester and Salford Committee stated that "the relative merits of the two plans could not be conveniently discussed before a public meeting". However, they did offer "to meet a limited number of the members of the Association in private conference".<sup>2</sup> The Association's next move was to suggest that twelve of its members should meet twelve of the other party, in order to discuss the relative merits of the National and Local schemes "provided that reporters be present and that their reports be published".<sup>3</sup> Once more the reply was in the negative.

Despite this rebuff the Executive Committee displayed its customary tenacity in the following resolution:

"That this Committee, being pledged to the principles embodied in the Basis of the Association, could not entertain any proposition which would compromise those principles, nevertheless it is willing to accept the proposal of the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education in the hope that mutual explanations may tend to remove some of the difficulties which have hitherto beset the question of popular Education, and thus promote the object which both Associations have in view".

The Correspondence Committee was instructed to arrange for such a conference at the earliest practicable period. Finally the

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1. Mins.N.P.S.A., 21st March 1851.

2. Ibid., 1st April 1851.

3. Ibid., 8th April 1851.



Manchester and Salford body consented to meet representatives of the Association on 4th June, at the York Hotel, Manchester, provided that no reporters were present.<sup>1</sup>

The attempts to come to terms with the opposite party did not please everybody, as can be seen in the following letter from Dr. Hodgson to John Mills on 30th May, written shortly before he left the country:

"With you I think that compromise is impossible, that one or other party must give way. I shall attend the conference next Wednesday, but I have not joined those who called for it any more than I have ever looked for any beneficial result in the way of possible amalgamation. Each Association must hold on its separate way and God defend the right. I am retiring from even my very trifling share in the agitation and perhaps before I return to this country (if I ever do return) the strife may be nearer settlement".<sup>2</sup>

Hodgson was obviously most disillusioned at the trend of events, but it was the willingness to compromise that eventually enabled the Elementary Education Act of 1870 to be secured. It did not please everybody, but at least it guaranteed that the children would be taught. If all the people who were trying to secure national education at this time had been as inflexible as Hodgson, it is quite probable that legislation would not have been secured until much later.

(v)

#### Accommodation of Already Existing Schools

The conference resulted in the addition of an "appendix" to the plan.<sup>3</sup> For, having found that the two schemes were

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1. Ibid., 3rd June 1851.

2. Mills, op.cit., p.204.

3. Maltby, op.cit., p.84.

incompatible and that it was better to go on with their own proposals, the Executive Committee held a special meeting on 29th July for the consideration of the best course to take in the next session of Parliament. It was pointed out that one of the main obstacles to progress was the fear that the establishment of free schools would draw away scholars from existing schools, resulting in injury to congregations with which they were connected. As the supporters and managers of these schools felt a lively personal interest in their success and desired to retain control over their management, it was hoped to allay these fears by the provisions of the following appendix:

"That schools already in existence may become free schools under the direction of their president or future managers and receive - per week for each scholar educated in them.

Provided:

1. That on inspection they are found in a satisfactory condition.
2. That the inculcation of doctrinal religion 'shall not take place in them between the hours of - and - in the morning and - and - in the afternoon.
3. That the attendance of the scholars on 'the inculcation of doctrinal religion' shall not be compulsory.
4. That 'the inculcation of doctrinal religion' shall not be part of the duty of the teachers under this system.
5. That no part of the school payments derived from the rate shall be directly or indirectly applied to 'the inculcation of doctrinal religion'."1

This was now incorporated in the bill which the Association was hoping to introduce into Parliament.

The question of existing schools had become imminent in May, when, on the 22nd of that month, W.J.Fox, acting, as arranged on

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 12th August 1851.

behalf of the N.P.S.A., moved a resolution in Parliament:<sup>1</sup>

"That it is expedient to promote the Education of the people, in England and Wales, by the establishment of Free Schools for secular instruction, to be supported by local rates, and managed by Committees, elected specially for that purpose by the rate-payers".<sup>2</sup>

In his supporting comments Fox referred to a report written by Henry Barnard, commissioner of schools in Rhode Island, testifying to the satisfaction of the rate-payers with their system of education, and Joseph Hume and Milner Gibson both pointed to the success of rate-supported secular education in Massachusetts, in support of the motion. Cobden seized the opportunity to make a speech urging the suitability of the Massachusetts system for adoption in Britain:

"What I want is to have the same system of education in England that they have in Massachusetts, in the United States of America".<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the most important speech, as far as the N.P.S.A. was concerned, was that of Sir George Grey<sup>4</sup> who showed some anxiety for the schools already in existence, which, he felt, would be jeopardized by a system like the one proposed by Fox. Giving a brief description of the Manchester and Salford scheme, he said that it promised to establish a system which would include the existing schools and enable children of all religions to be

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1. Several petitions were raised to coincide with Fox's motion. (Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 8th April 1851.

2. Hansard, Vol.116, p.1255.

3. Ibid., p.1285.

4. Ibid., p.1283.

educated without separating religious from secular instruction. He asked the House to wait for this bill before committing themselves to a decision on national education. Fox's resolution was defeated by 139 votes to 49. Although Cobden explained that the Manchester and Salford committee were in serious difficulties as a result of the resignation of the Roman Catholic representatives, it appears, from their subsequent action, that the N.P.S.A. had taken careful note of Sir George Grey's message.

(vi)

#### Reactions to the Appendix

The 'appendix' was officially adopted by the Association at a meeting of the General Council and Aggregate Meeting of the Association in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, on 1st December 1851. Cobden remarked that the clause was unobjectionable to him and referred to the fact that it coincided with the views of the Bishop of Manchester, which were as follows:

"Thus while I would never consent to give up the use of the Catechism, the Prayer Book and the distinctive teaching of the Church of England in our Church Schools, I would restrict their use to particular periods of the week, at which I would permit the child of the Dissenter, at his own and his parents peril to absent himself".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Manchester Courier, 15th. Nov. 1851, (quoted by Maltby op.cit. p.184).

However, what was tolerable to the Bishop did not gain the approval of William Entwistle, secretary of the Manchester and Salford Committee, who wrote:

"Now this supplementary clause is nothing more or less than a total revolution; for it is evident at once that the proposed new scheme shrinks at once from its colossal proportions and itself becomes a mere supplement to the existing system.

Their proposition is not to create a system but to supply a defect: not to raise a structure from its foundations complete in every part but to fill up a gap in the old one: a much more humble office in which it exactly resembles the proposed local measure".<sup>1</sup>

(vii)

#### Edward Baines's Attack on the Plan

On 4th November 1851, Edward Baines delivered a powerful attack on both education schemes in a lecture given in Manchester on behalf of the Congregational Board of Education, entitled The Two Manchester Plans of Education Examined, in which he criticized the powers of the county board.

It was intolerable to him that under the N.P.S.A. plan a majority out of a total of twelve men had the power to tax "at their own pleasure and without appeal, in the county of Lancaster or Middlesex, two millions of persons, provided each district should not have taxed itself so as to satisfy the judgment of the County Board".<sup>2</sup> Nor did the board's powers to prescribe courses and

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1. Correspondence in Manchester Guardian, August-September 1851.

~~1. Mins. N.P.S.A., vol. 12, 21st November 1851.~~

2. E. Baines, The Two Manchester Plans of Education Examined, (London, 1851), p. 14.

sanction books meet with any greater approval:

"Can a more complete, a more monstrous, a more frightful system of educational despotism be conceived? that all the mighty interests of the education of millions should be put into the hands of a dozen individuals or a quorum of five, or of a majority of that quorum, namely, three sitting in private council, and deciding without appeal. It involves a power and responsibility such as ought never to be committed to mortal men - no less than the power of moulding the minds and characters of generations, of deciding what shall be taught to them and what shall not be taught - what shall be read to them and what shall not be read".<sup>1</sup>

The plan, he continued, "in plain words would turn religion out of the day school" by substituting everywhere schools where religion would not be taught for schools where it was taught,<sup>2</sup> whereas under an acceptable system religion was "blended with all the exercises of the mind and all the duties of life".<sup>3</sup> Moreover the plan violated civil liberty by limiting the choice of education for "it is self-evident that the free schools will destroy the pay-schools".<sup>4</sup> Baines was equally unimpressed by the Association's attempts to accommodate the existing schools into their system, which he criticized in a postscript to the printed version of his lecture, because, apparently, he had not been aware of the "appendix" to the

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Ibid., p.8.

4. Ibid., p.13.

plan when he originally delivered it. "These changes", he said, betray a consciousness of its (the plan's) weak point, but they do not remove the weakness "for the principle of excluding religion from the schools remained unchanged in that there was to be no religious teaching within the ordinary school hours. Other weaknesses remained such as the "despotic powers" of the county board and the extreme difficulty of securing adequate religious instruction under the system. Eventually, he feared, the existing schools would soon merge into the general system of the Association, for their committees of management would cease to feel an interest in schools over which they had no authority. For these reasons the N.P.S.A. was a failure.

The Executive Committee obviously had to make some attempt to reply to this attack, and Baines was challenged to meet a representative of the Association in a "free public discussion"<sup>1</sup> on the capabilities of the voluntary principle. He was, however, too wise to accept, no doubt realizing that any public meeting organized by the Association would always contain a majority of their supporters. Baines was far too clever than to allow himself to be placed before a hostile audience to be demolished in public. In consequence the N.P.S.A. were never able to hold a public disputation on the subject.

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1. Mins. M.P.S.A, Vol.2, 18th November 1851.

Baines's lecture is an alarming example of the immense gap that existed between the educational ideas of the Secularists who supported state education, and the Voluntaryists, and illustrate most clearly why it was so difficult to create a unified party on the question of national education.

(viii)

#### An Approach to the Quakers

One avenue explored in the hope of gaining further support at this time, was the Society of Friends. A deputation from the Association met a group of Quakers on 31st October. The Revs. Davidson and Tucker gave an exposition of the Association's plan, urging its claims, while Dr. Watts demonstrated how the Manchester and Salford Committee's local bill would grossly violate religious liberty and the rights of conscience. Many questions and answers were exchanged and "a general feeling of approval of the plan of the Association and disapproval of the local scheme of education were expressed". However, no resounding success was recorded and "the meeting separated without adopting any substantial resolution".<sup>1</sup>

(ix)

#### Measures for Supporting a Heavy Financial Burden

The most important matters arising in 1851 were the Association's financial position, and the education bill. The two were closely connected, because the Executive Committee realized that its friends

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1. Ibid., 4th November 1851.



would have to be very generous if they were to be able to withstand the costly business of introducing legislation into Parliament. Accordingly in March a drive on subscriptions was inaugurated and the Canvassing Committee was requested to make immediate arrangements for an active canvass for their collection.<sup>1</sup> Of considerable help was the arrival of the letter from Edward Lombe of Leghorn, Florence, ordering the payment of the promised £500 by his bankers, Messrs. Gurney & Co., of Norwich. He also promised to make this an annual contribution if the management of the Association, in his estimation, proved satisfactory.<sup>2</sup>

Such generous gifts were necessary to the Association at this time for its financial commitments were increased by the appointment of Dr. John Watts in January as an agent of the Association "at a salary of not less than £200 per annum". Under the agreement he promised "to visit any part of England or Wales, and .....consider himself bound to use his utmost endeavours to promote the objects of the Association, by public lectures, by influencing conductors of the newspaper press to write or insert articles, which he would himself supply; by forming local branches of the Association, inducing contributions to the funds and other means".

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1. Ibid., 25th March 1851.

2. Ibid.

This was a formidable list of activities, but Watts was as good as his word, travelling widely in the industrial areas, addressing numerous meetings and writing articles. In April Edwin Waugh, the Assistant Secretary, was given an increase in salary because he claimed that his narrow means caused him to turn to "literary pursuits" in order to supplement his income. He was given the increase "on the express condition that he gave all his energies to the business of the Association".<sup>1</sup>

This coincided with a general tightening up of the office arrangements which, it appears, left much to be desired. An Office Committee, comprising Dr. Beard and Messrs. Winterbottom, Shipman and Taylor, laid down rules stipulating that the office was to be opened at 8.30 a.m., and that the secretaries, R.W.Smiles and Edwin Waugh were to be present before 9 a.m. Smiles was responsible for the efficiency of the office and all office duties, and Waugh was to perform duties such as copying minutes and collecting subscriptions. Each sub-committee was to have its own minute book, and a register of letters received and sent out was to be kept. All letters sent out were to be copied. Every Tuesday evening a financial statement showing subscriptions collected during the week was to be presented to the Executive Committee, and

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1. Ibid., 8th April 1851.

no account was to be paid henceforth without the signatures of the Secretary and the Chairman, or those of two members of the Finance Committee.<sup>1</sup>

(x)

Five Members of the N.P.S.A.

Four names referred to in connection with the Office Committee at this time are of particular interest. Edwin Waugh, the Assistant Secretary, was a native of Rochdale who had started his career as an apprentice to Thomas Holden, a bookseller and printer. Between 1833 and 1840 he worked as a journeyman printer, but began at this time to establish his reputation as a writer. He was employed by the Association from 1847 until 1852, when he was granted a civil list pension. This enabled him to devote himself to writing and in 1855 he published his well-known work Sketches of Lancashire life and localities.<sup>2</sup> He obviously found his "literary pursuits" difficult to reconcile with the work he was expected to do for the Association, but as one might expect he is far more famous for his writing than his work with the N.P.S.A.

Archibald Winterbottom is an example of the drift of population from the countryside to the town, and of the way fortunes could be made by intelligent and industrious individuals in a growing city. Born of a Unitarian family in Saddleworth, he walked

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1. Ibid.

2. Dictionary of National Biography.

to Manchester at the age of fifteen to begin his commercial life at Messrs. Henry Bannerman and Sons, where at nineteen he became a departmental manager and was given a partnership at thirty. In 1853 he opened his own warehouse, but after initial success he was obliged, in 1869, to arrange with his creditors. However, he recovered, purchased a mill at Weaste and, two years before his death in 1884, was able to discharge his liabilities, which amounted to £20,000. He was a most diligent worker for the Association and it was largely through his efforts that prize-money amounting to £50 was raised for the working-men's essay competition.<sup>1</sup>

R.M.Shōpman was another immigrant who came from Hinckley in Leicestershire, where he was born in 1817. He moved to Manchester in 1845 and took up a post as clerk to Messrs. Atkinson and Saunders, from where he obtained a partnership with Messrs. Sale and Worthington, the Association's solicitors. In addition to his post as Honorary Secretary to the Model Secular School, founded by the Association in 1854, he was also a director of the Athenaeum and chairman of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board. He died in 1875.<sup>2</sup>

Francis Taylor, born in 1818 in Beverly, Yorkshire, was another immigrant. He entered the warehouse of Messrs. Potter and **NORRIS** and became a partner. He was instrumental in assembling the educational conference of 1867, and was consulted by Forster on

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1. W.E.A. Axon, Annals of Manchester (Manchester 1886) p.400.

2. Ibid., p.347.

the 1870 Act.<sup>1</sup> He was a long serving member of both the Association and the Model Secular School, and became chairman of the Education Bill Committee formed in Manchester in 1866. He died in 1872.

By contrast with these four men, who were all self-made men and English by birth, is H.J.Leppoc, a pillar of strength to the Association and Model Secular School, and to nearly every other philanthropic institution in Manchester. Unlike the other four people he was already established as a business man when, in 1834, he came to Manchester from Leipsic as the manager of the Manchester branch of the Jewish firm of Michaelis and Samson. Under his directorship, which lasted until 1870, it changed its name to Samson and Leppoc. His name is particularly interesting being an anagram of his original name which was Coppel. In addition to his work for the Association and Model Secular School, the Eye Hospital and the Deaf and Dumb Institution benefitted from his generosity. It is fascinating to note that long before the days of free further education and "day-release", his firm made a regular practice of sending employees, free of charge, to the Manchester Mechanics' Institute, of which Leppoc was a vice-president.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1883 aged seventy-five.

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1. Ibid., p.335.

2. Monius 9th November 1880. (See Manchester biographical cuttings in Central Reference Library), and Axon, op.cit., p.398.

The membership of the Association reflects very clearly the trend of events in Manchester at this time. A few people who held prominent positions in the town were natives of the North-West such as John Bright, but many others were immigrants to the area, either from other parts of the country as in the case of Samuel Lucas and Richard Cobden, or from abroad, America in the case of Joseph Chessborough Dyer, and Germany in the case of Salis Schwabe, Martin Schunck and H.J.Leppoc.

Manchester was a place where fortunes could be made by poor men, if they had intelligence and industry, but they had to compete with people who came to manage the branches of the large established firms, many of which were German in origin.

(xi)

#### R.N.Phillips Appointed Treasurer

In view of the increased commitments that the Association was now facing, it was decided to engage the services of a collector of subscriptions who would receive a commission of 10% on all new subscriptions. The chairman of the Canvassing Committee, George Elliot, suggested that a great deal of good would be done by deputations of members to "a number of the leading men connected with the Association, to obtain from them increased subscriptions, and the material for a well-headed subscription list".<sup>1</sup> Later the Executive Committee agreed upon a target of £10,000 to be raised. The Treasurer, William McCall, one of the original founders of the

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1. Ibid., 9th April 1851.

Association, and, according to Samuel Lucas, its instigator, had to resign because he could no longer devote enough time to the ever increasing activities of the organization. However, in September, Richard Cobden and Robert Needham Phillips, brother of Mark Phillips, (one of Manchester's first M.P.s), became members of the Executive Committee. They became respectively Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer, and both served the Association loyally for several years. It was Robert and his brother Mark Phillips, who presented £50. and £100 respectively to the Association in the previous August.

On October 1st a motion was carried at a special meeting of the Finance Committee "that in order to enable the Executive to make exertions requisite to assert the principles of the Association, a subscription be now entered into".<sup>1</sup>

The sums subscribed at this meeting, including the donations of Mark and Robert Phillips, realized £611, Alexander Henry himself contributing £250.<sup>2</sup> Another suggestion was that of getting the "most influential friends" of the Association to canvass personally "those gentlemen from whom considerable subscriptions might reasonably be expected". It was also decided to deposit £500 in the bank as a reserve fund to meet extraordinary Parliamentary expenses, and to pay the usual current expenses out of the ordinary weekly receipts of the Association.

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1. Ibid., 1st October 1851.

2. Ibid.

## Visit of George Combe and James Simpson

Edward Lombe maintained a lively interest in the Association's work. Through George Combe of Edinburgh, who acted as his agent, he intimated that "the Church (Manchester and Salford Committee) scheme should be met by a monster meeting in Manchester as early as practicable and a monster petition to Parliament signed by a hundred thousand working men", and undertook to pay all the expenses of such proceedings "if energetically executed". The Executive Committee accepted the offer and prepared to undertake the work of raising the petition.<sup>1</sup> However, the money was not acquired without some form of inspection, and Combe and James Simpson came to Manchester to examine the Association's work. They looked into its proceedings and prospects and made enquiries into the views of the paid lecturers employed by the Executive Committee. Finally Combe expressed his confidence "in the strongest terms" and stated that he would be able, most confidently, to recommend the Association to Edward Lombe.<sup>2</sup>

They both spoke at the General Council and Aggregate Meeting of the Association, held in the Corn Exchange on 1st December in response to Edward Lombe's request for a "monster meeting".<sup>3</sup> For Simpson and Combe this was the last of a series of meetings, the

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1. Ibid., 30th September 1851.
  2. Ibid., 2nd December 1851.
  3. Ibid., 25th November 1851.



others having been held in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Paisley, the expenses for which had been paid by Edward Lombe. It was also Combe's last public speech in the cause of secular education. There was not enough time for him to deliver his full speech, so he contented himself with seconding the Rev. W.F. Walker's motion that the "appendix" enabling existing schools to join the Association should be officially adopted. The speech that he had wished to make was printed as a pamphlet and published by the Association under the title What does secular education embrace? Combe was very pleased with the enthusiasm demonstrated at the meeting and thought success was near. He wrote a long description of it to Edward Lombe.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of such ceaseless efforts to raise money, the N.P.S.A. had £873. 4. 2d. in the bank by the last week of December 1851. Yet despite this, one cannot avoid reflecting on the paucity of the amount of money available to this particular pressure group, in comparison with the affluence of its predecessor, the Anti Corn-Law League. When one considers that by 1844 the total annual subscriptions of the League amounted to between £80,000 and £90,000 and that at a meeting in Manchester in 1845 more than £60,000 was subscribed in two hours, the achievements and scale of activity of the N.P.S.A. seem minute in comparison.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, its efforts were extremely worthy and of significance. What is more, its task was all the harder for its inability to appear directly to the self-interest of the manufacturing classes, as the leaders of the League were able to do.

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1. Gibbon, op.cit., p.296.

2. P.Gregg, A Social and Economic History of Britain, (London, 1950) p.150.

For although it was no easy task for the latter to make its supporters agree to regard the Corn Laws as the main obstacle to their prosperity, it was a simple one compared with the difficulties faced by the N.P.S.A. in attempting to persuade the nation at large to forego its religious prejudices and accept a state system of secular education. Cobden was not jesting when he wrote that he "took to the repeal of the Corn Laws as light amusement compared with the difficult task of inducing the priests of all denominations to agree to suffer the people to be educated".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Morley, Life of Cobden, p.373.

## C H A P T E R IX

### THE RIVAL EDUCATION BILLS

### THE MANCHESTER AND SALFORD LOCAL EDUCATION BILL

### VERSUS

### THE NATIONAL EDUCATION BILL

#### (i)

#### A Change of Parliamentary Tactics

During 1851, the Correspondence Committee spent a great deal of its time in preparing the draft of the Association's bill. In August, having incorporated the "appendix" accommodating schools already in existence into the plan, they requested W.J.Fox to give notice before Parliament rose that he would move for leave to bring in the bill in the next session.<sup>1</sup> It was duly sent to the Parliamentary agent for final drafting, not without some exhortations and gestures of discontent at the slow rate of progress by the London and Liverpool committees.

Towards the end of the year the Executive Committee changed its plans and decided to request Thomas Milner Gibson to take charge

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 12th August 1851.

of the bill. In December 1851 a letter was sent to Fox explaining to him that the recent course of events relating to the educational controversy had assumed a strictly local character, as a result of the "origination and proceedings of the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education". The letter continues:

"These proceedings it is thought, will place the Bill of the Association in a different position in the House of Commons in the approaching session...from the last session. The same great question will again, of course, be involved in the discussion upon what principles must a rate supported and efficient system of free public instruction for the people of this country be based? But in the next session following, special questions will be superadded to the general question and will press for settlement namely:- Is the experiment for a system of public instruction to be tried in Manchester and Salford?

Is the Manchester and Salford Education Bill to furnish the Basis for that experiment? and to give separately an important limit of the last question. Do the inhabitants of Manchester and Salford desire that the local scheme of instruction may receive legislative sanction - do they prefer it to the scheme of the National Public School Association?

In consequence of this altered phase of the question the Executive Committee have been long and hard pressed by numerous influential friends to bring in a Local Bill,<sup>1</sup> drawn on the distinctive principle of the Association as their Parliamentary Amendment on the Local Scheme. It has been urged upon them that this would constitute the most direct and powerful opposing force they could present to the Local Bill, and that it would furnish the only fit vehicle for conveying to the House the preference of the people of Manchester for the system we proposed. Under the advice, however, which they have received from yourself and others, the Committee have acted as the Executive of a National Association and have prepared a National Bill applicable either to particular and separate localities or to the Country at large. Whilst this is so they are convinced...that the Education battle in the next session will be really a Local not a National contest. It is certain that a portion of the population and influence of Manchester will settle this great question for the present, on the principles of one or other of the two schemes which Manchester has promulgated. Under these circumstances the Executive

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1. Ibid., 25th November 1851. This is no doubt a reference to the demand of the London committee for a local bill in opposition to that of the M/cr. & Salford Committee's bill.

Committee are constantly urged....to bring to bear on the question in the next Session the utmost possible amount of local influence. With this view many persons of great weight are urging the Committee that it will be of the last importance to our cause....that a Member for Manchester should introduce our Bill and support as the choice of his Constituents".<sup>1</sup>

Milner Gibson was not approached until Fox's reply was received.

Fox promised to support Milner Gibson "to the extent of my ability in his introduction of the Association Bill, of course reserving my right of independent action in any manner, which I may deem conducive to our common objects."<sup>2</sup>

The Association's immediate task was to prevent the progress of the Manchester and Salford bill, and the Executive Committee's letter to Fox is therefore interesting because it describes precisely how the situation appeared in 1852. The passing into law of an education bill seemed imminent, and, as there were only two main contestants in the field, the chosen plan would be either that of the Manchester and Salford Committee or that of the Association.<sup>3</sup> Immediately, a sub-committee was set up to raise a petition against the rival bill and to prepare a memorial to Parliament on the same subject.

Milner Gibson, it appears, did not hurry to accept his new responsibility. His first letter in reply was certainly not one

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1. Ibid., 7th January 1852. Letter dated 23rd December 1851.

2. Ibid., Letter in minutes dated 3rd January 1852.

3. Cobden had warned the N.P.S.A. of this at the meeting on 1st December 1851 (Salis-Schwabe, op.cit., p.162).

of acceptance, although its actual contents are not disclosed.<sup>1</sup> However, it is possible that he might have suggested that Fox was the man for the job, judging from the fact that, at a special emergency meeting on 7th February, Dr. Beard found it necessary to propose that Fox should definitely not introduce the Association's bill into Parliament. Finally, William Sale, Solicitor to the Association, Thomas Bazley, R.N. Phillips and R.W. Smiles were sent to London as a deputation to "take measures for getting the bill of this Association immediately introduced, and for opposing the Local Bill on specific grounds as well as for promoting, generally, the objects of the Association".<sup>2</sup>

(ii)

Presentation of the N.P.S.A. Bill to  
Lord John Russell

The bill of the Association differed slightly from the revised plan in that the county boards disappeared and were replaced by school districts, which were to be created by a Central Board of Education. The wording on the principles of religion followed that of the plan.

On 6th January a large deputation of twenty-one N.P.S.A. members presented the draft bill to Lord John Russell. It included Milner Gibson, W.J. Fox, Thomas Bazley, President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, W. Rayner Wood, Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, R.N.

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1. Ibid., 7th February 1852.

2. Ibid., 12th February 1852.

Phillips, the Revs. Dr. Davidson, Dr. Beard, Dr. McKerrow and W.F.Walker, Absalom Watkin, J.P., Archibald Winterbottom, Salis Schwabe and R.W.Smiles, all of whom were of Manchester, J.A.Picton of Liverpool, and Edward Swaine, A.S.Aspland and J.R.Reid, of London.

Thomas Bazley spoke on the importance of the bill from the point of view of an employer emphasizing the great need for secular education. Dr. McKerrow was at pains to demonstrate that despite its secular nature, the bill was not hostile to religion, and that on the contrary, he and his friends believed that it was well fitted to promote the interests of religion. The Association, he explained, had contemplated these difficulties and had endeavoured to consider the principles and feelings of two classes of person; on the one hand, those who had long been engaged in teaching in existing schools and wanted them to remain under the same management, and on the other, the Nonconformists, Quakers, Jews and a large number of persons belonging to the Established Church "who have a conscientious objection to the endowment of any particular description of religious opinions, and who have still stronger objections to the endowment of all classes of religious opinions as propagating, in their view, a large number of errors at the expense of one principle of truth which they believe themselves to hold".<sup>1</sup>

He went on to describe the provisions in the bill for religious

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1. McKerrow, op.cit., p.175.

instruction and assured Lord John Russell that religion would not be neglected, for ministers of the gospel "will surely make arrangements to supply a kind of education which they consider to be necessary". He thought that a system similar to the Irish national system whereby "the ministers of various denominations instructed the children in the peculiarities of their respective creeds"<sup>1</sup> could well be adopted in this country.

In reply, Lord John Russell referred to past attempts as illustration of the difficulties in the way of national education, yet he felt that the question was at least approaching a solution. He found grounds for criticizing the N.P.S.A. plan, for he was not happy about a scheme based on secular instruction, but the deputation could at least be content with the fact that they managed to elicit from him the admission that he did not "share the opinions of those who thought that there was any hostility between secular and religious instruction". He was convinced that:

"By giving (the people) secular instruction, however you may seek to convey it, you cannot fail to lead the mind towards the love and veneration of the Deity, whose wisdom and beneficence are seen in the works of creation, - not to name the love of their neighbour and of those great moral doctrines which, although not themselves the Christian religion, cannot but prepare the mind for the reception of its principles. Therefore, in making objections (if I do make objections) to this plan, I only say I do not share in the apprehension that there is anything inimical to religion in secular instruction".<sup>2</sup>

This might have been gratifying from the point of view that

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1. Ibid., p.176.

2. Ibid., p.177.



Lord John Russell did not consider the bill to be "godless" simply because it was a secular measure. On the other hand he certainly was not giving his unqualified support, and was never of any great help to the Secularists. George Combe in particular had a poor opinion of him as, in fact, he had of most other Members of Parliament. In 1851 Combe co-operated with Lord Melgund in promoting his education bill for Scotland, for which he raised petitions of the working classes in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and was in the House of Commons when on the 4th June the motion, defeated on its Second Reading by 137 votes to 124, was brought forward. On this occasion he wrote:

"The impression which the debate made on my mind was that the House consists of common-place men with common-place information, excepting a few superior spirits whose influence is extinguished by the inert mass with which they are associated".<sup>1</sup>

In his Journal, dated 7th June 1851, Combe records how he met Lord John Russell who seemed annoyed at Melgund's bill having been lost. Russell asked him to explain about the Massachusetts system and how religious instruction was given there, for he was under the impression that its teaching was enforced by law. Combe explained the working of the system to him. Russell said that he was hoping to find a solution which would admit religion into the schools, whereupon Combe told him of Cobden's experiences in Manchester when, in the 1830s, he had failed to reach agreement on religious teaching with the ministers of the various denominations

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1. Gibbon, op.cit., p.292.

connected with the Central Society for Education. Combe concluded after his meeting with Russell:

"My impression is that Lord John has never fairly turned his mind to it, and is, in fact, much at sea in regard to the question".<sup>1</sup>

This was probably quite unfair. Russell had been a member of the Central Society for Education and therefore in sympathy with secular education, but had received a rude shock when he attempted to establish a state Normal School which would cater for students of all creeds. Having seen the difficulties of introducing secular education, he realized that the only possibility was to provide a system combining religious with secular instruction, as he was to show in his "Borough Bill" of 1853.

(iii)

#### The President's Displeasure

During this period of heated negotiation, the President, Alexander Henry, had not been adequately informed of the Association's policy, and he did not delay in showing his displeasure when R.W. Smiles and the other members of the deputation met him in London. He complained of his lack of information and about the legal expenses involved in fighting the Manchester and Salford Committee's bill.<sup>2</sup> The Executive Committee expressed their regret:

"that the course they found themselves reluctantly compelled to take in preparing to oppose the Local Bill in Parliament on specific grounds has not met his views and they earnestly hope that the debate on Wednesday next may result in the Local Bill being treated as a Public Bill and thus obviate Mr. Henry's objections.

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1. Ibid., p.293.

2. Ibid.

They also regret from inadvertence and press of business Mr. Henry has not been kept fully informed of the proceedings of the Committee in regard to the petition which they were preparing....

The Committee hope that the interests of the great question which Mr. Henry and themselves have equally at heart will prevent his withdrawing from the position he has so long occupied, and that the cause may still retain the valuable services of Mr. Henry".<sup>1</sup>

As a gesture of reconciliation Alexander Henry was requested to present the 'monster petition', reported to contain 61,747 signatures, to the House of Commons.

In the meantime Milner Gibson had acted decisively. On 11th February, 1852, when the Second Reading of the Manchester and Salford bill came up, he successfully moved that it should be delayed for a fortnight on the grounds that Manchester Corporation had not had the opportunity to discuss it.<sup>2</sup> The date was consequently moved to 25th February. Immediately he informed the Executive Committee who went into action with all speed. Eleven more members were warned to be ready to join the deputation in London on Monday 23rd February, and the Liverpool Branch was asked to provide delegates also. The increase in the size of the deputation was requested by Alexander Henry, who, thereby, showed that he was willing to forget the recent differences which had arisen between himself and the Executive Committee.

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1. Ibid.

2. Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.119, p.381.

Pressure on Milner Gibson

The N.P.S.A. in this matter were acting in a manner typical of nineteenth century pressure groups, and especially of the Anti-Corn Law League, who were always ready to support their representatives in the House of Commons by deputations outside. The minutes of the Executive Committee reveal the constant pressure that could be brought to bear on the Members of Parliament connected with its cause. For example, during the period when Milner Gibson was displaying a certain lack of speed in accepting the task of introducing the bill, repeated resolutions were made in committee to the effect that:

"In the opinion of this committee it is very desirable that the National Education Bill be forthwith brought before Parliament and that Mr. Milner Gibson be respectfully requested to give notice of motion for leave to bring in the Bill on an early day".<sup>1</sup>

One can sympathise with him in such circumstances, for in spite of the fact that the N.P.S.A. represented a fairly large proportion of his constituents, the very existence of the Manchester and Salford Committee was evidence that a considerable proportion of them were opposed to secular education and desired the use of the Bible in schools. If he embraced the cause of the one he was blatantly abandoning the other, which put him in a difficult position. This might explain his delay in accepting the views of the N.P.S.A. It would have been much less controversial for him to support W.J.Fox

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1. Mins.N.P.S.A.,Vol.2, 12th February 1852.

in Parliament, as he had done previously,<sup>1</sup> and speak as a supporter of the principle of national secular education, than to identify himself with a measure which divided his constituency into two camps. Whether these were considerations which motivated Milner Gibson in any way is not clear, but the situation was real enough. In the event he did what the Executive Committee asked.

(v)

Milner Gibson Secures the Appointment  
of a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry

When the Manchester and Salford Committee's bill came up for its delayed Second Reading on 25th February, Milner Gibson moved an amendment "that a Committee be appointed to inquire into the state of education in the municipal boroughs of Manchester and Salford and certain adjacent townships".<sup>2</sup> His motion was successful and the requisite committee was appointed. At the Executive Committee meeting of 2nd March, he explained the Parliamentary proceedings in connection with the Association's bill and promised to 'do his best' to introduce it as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup>

At the same meeting the results of the essay competition launched in November 1850 were judged by Milner Gibson. The first prize of £30 was won by a Bradford dyer whose name is omitted from the minutes, and the second by one Samuel Perry, a house-painter of

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1. In 1850 when Fox introduced his own bill.

2. Hansard, Third Series, Vol.119,p.1198.

3. Mins.M.P.S.A.,Vol.2, 2nd March 1852.

Garoagh, Londonderry. It appears that several other essays were of a good standard and the Committee regretted that there was not enough money to give a prize of £5 for each of them. Typical of the Association's constant search for good propaganda material is its request to the winners to revise their essays for publication, under the supervision of the Secretary. It is also noteworthy that the opportunity of consolidating a good position was not missed, for the winner of the second prize was quickly made an agent.

The reaction of the Executive Committee to Milner Gibson's amendment demonstrates the tenacity of its members on the question of introducing their National Education Bill, for in the weeks following he was left in no doubt that they would not rest content with the mere stoppage of the Manchester and Salford bill. The following resolution, carried on 16th March, amply illustrates this:

"That this Committee are of opinion that under all circumstances, the Bill of this Association ought to be introduced into Parliament this session and though they are willing that it be referred to a Committee together with the Local Bill they wish the Committee to which it is referred to be a Committee to inquire into the state of education generally".<sup>1</sup>

(vi)

#### Preparations for the Select Committee of Inquiry

For the purpose of dealing with business arising from the Select Committee of Inquiry, the Executive Committee increased the size of its own Parliamentary Committee by adding the names of Dr. Beard and Dr. McKerrow. Dr. Watts was appointed to represent the Association in London during the investigation "with the view

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1. Ibid., 16th March 1852.

especially of assisting the Parliamentary Committee of this Association in getting up evidence and eliciting information from witnesses".<sup>1</sup> A list of witnesses to be invited to give evidence was drawn up, and Dr. Watts classified the points for examination into groups. Evidence was collected from numerous schools and witnesses, and gradually a comprehensive report was evolved.

The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, presided over by Milner Gibson, originally decided to examine only two witnesses each of the Manchester and Salford Committee, the N.P.S.A, and the Voluntaryists. In the event, however, they deviated from this. Thomas Bazley and Dr. McKerrow were chosen to represent the Association, the latter having visited a large number of schools with R.W.Smiles, in anticipation. Most of the work in London was done by Dr. Watts, aided by Smiles and, occasionally, other members, for example the Rev. J.A.Baynes of Nottingham who went especially to help with the cross examination of Edward Baines.

The proceedings of the Committee in 1852 were terminated before Thomas Bazley, Dr. McKerrow and Dr. Watts could give their evidence. It was, therefore, of supreme importance that no publication of the incomplete evidence should be made, because this would be prejudicial to the supporters of secular education. The Executive Committee passed a resolution to this effect and sent it to both Milner Gibson and John Bright who had also been a member of the Parliamentary Committee. Although Bright, in reply, stated

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1. Ibid., 23rd March 1852.

that he did not think the Committee would postpone publication, an agreement was eventually reached whereby the evidence was reported to the House of Commons, but was specifically stated to be incomplete. A strong recommendation was made that the Committee should resume its examination in the next Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

(vii)

#### The Conference of November 1852

Characteristically there was no relaxation in the efforts of the Executive Committee now that the deliberations of the Parliamentary Committee had been adjourned. Its members immediately began to consider "the course to be pursued on the re-appointment of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on Education, and, generally, the best means of promoting the objects of the Association."<sup>2</sup> They resolved to obtain the opinion of the various branches about holding a conference of friends of the Association soon after the re-opening of Parliament. Meanwhile information on the Dutch and Swiss systems of education was collected with a view to using it as evidence before the Committee of Inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

On 3rd November the proposed conference of M.P.s and friends of the Association met to discuss "the condition and prospects of the education question in relation to Parliamentary action". Cobden

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1. Ibid., 22nd June 1852.
  2. Ibid., 24th August 1852.
  3. Ibid., 5th October 1852.



and Milner Gibson were present, together with George Wilson, the ex-president of the Anti-Corn Law League. Questions were asked in relation to the re-appointment of the Parliamentary Committee, to which Milner Gibson replied that he did not know whether it would be recalled during the short session of 1852, but strongly recommended the Executive Committee to have its witnesses ready, as one of them would be called on the first day's sitting. Cobden assured his audience that the Manchester and Salford scheme would find no more favour with Lord Aberdeen's new coalition ministry than it had done under Lord John Russell's Whig administration.

Both he and Gibson expressed the opinion that, "provided a good and influential attendance" could be secured, the time were well chosen, and that the state of public opinion in relation to other public questions would permit the requisite degree of attention being paid to it, a London conference of friends of the Association would be an excellent proposition. It is interesting to note the advantages that Cobden, Milner Gibson and other M.P.s expected the Association to gain from this:

"Such a conference would in their opinion promote the object of the Association and by awakening and renewing an interest in its proceedings more than reimburse the committee for the expense attending it by extending the subscription list and adding to the members and friends of the Association".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., 3rd November 1852. Despite Cobden's enthusiasm for this, it appears that the N.P.S.A. never succeeded in holding either an aggregate meeting or a conference in London.

The Association's Assessment of its own Effectiveness

The conference of 5<sup>th</sup> November is interesting on account of the Executive Committee's assessment of the contribution, as a pressure group, to the education question. The report presented to Milner Gibson and Cobden indicated that the members of the Association were gratified:

"that their labours....have in so short a time and with such a small expenditure raised the question of National Education from a dreamy slumber of many years into active life, until it now ranks with the most important topics in the political arena, and demands a definite settlement as one of our Municipal Institutions".<sup>1</sup>

They were also very optimistic of the final outcome of the issue:

"Such success proves at once that the public mind is ripe upon this subject, and that in some shape National Schools must ere long be established".<sup>2</sup>

The report goes on to draw the distinction between the Association's scheme and that of the Manchester and Salford Committee, in that the latter proposed to support all existing schools and that its "lowest requirement" was "the daily reading of the scriptures in the Authorized Version".<sup>3</sup> It also notes which sects gravitated to the Manchester and Salford scheme:

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1. Ibid., 9th November 1852.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

"This liberality on the part of the Church has attracted a few Dissenting Ministers and the Association is zealously supported by most of the Wesleyan ministers; but most of the evangelical and consistent non-conforming dissenters hold aloof from, and many of them energetically oppose, this attempt to subsidize and endow the various religious sects".<sup>1</sup>

(ix)

### Criticism of the Local Bill

In the report the Executive Committee did at least admit that the supporters of the Manchester and Salford bill had fully established the fact of educational destitution. It proved "that if all Sunday School rooms were available and all fit for the purpose, there would be no lack of school room". However, the report continues, under the Manchester and Salford scheme this would not be possible, which was why the Association could not support the measure:

"....for a system proposing to teach the doctrines of the sect owning the School to all Scholars present, restricting only the use of a regular Catechism where the parent expresses an objection in writing, the School room is only sufficient by the infliction of gross injustice upon the poorer sects, and a considerable proportion of the school room is owned by Nonconformists and would not be available for the purposes of such a system".<sup>2</sup>

In the opinion of the Executive Committee, therefore:

"The Bill would amount to an endowment of various and contradictory forms of religion, whilst it would altogether shut out the approvers of purely secular instruction, and would totally neglect the lowest class of all, those who need Industrial Schools".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

### Criticism of the Evidence of the Voluntaryists

Having expressed its opinion of the Local Bill, the Executive Committee went on in its report to discuss the evidence presented by the Voluntaryists before the Parliamentary Committee. This is described as "unfortunate, inasmuch as its expressed grounds of reliance for improvement are the parental sense of duty, the mother's convenience, the growing appreciation of education, patriotism and philanthropy, the self interest of teachers, authors etc., with all which elements at work, the proportion of day scholars in Manchester has seriously decreased within the last seventeen years".<sup>1</sup>

Doubts were also expressed about the reliability of their statistics which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, presented a much more optimistic view of day school attendance than was thought to be the case.

### The Suggested Course of Action for 1853

Having stated its case in the report, the Executive Committee suggested that the best course of action seemed to be to give notice on the first day of the new session, in January 1853, of a National Bill, and on the first reading of the Local Bill to move the

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1. Ibid.

reconstitution of the Parliamentary Committee of the previous session, in order to complete the evidence. Characteristically, always with an eye for lecture material, the members expressed the hope that the completion of the evidence would result in their receiving "a Blue Book as a subject for Lectures and Pamphlets".

It is interesting to see how, having made their desires perfectly clear, the compilers of the report studiously avoided any hint of dictating to the M.P.s who were present, pointing out that the "Executive would rather listen to advice,...and the suggestions of valued friends upon any point which may seem worthy of remark will be listened to with great respect, and, so far as the means at the disposal of the Association allow, carried out with energy".<sup>1</sup>

Despite the plea for advice it is obvious from the report what the Association really wanted. Milner Gibson could have had no doubt in his mind that its members would not rest until their bill was introduced into Parliament. They were certainly not going to be content merely with an opportunity to state their views to the Parliamentary Committee. So determined were they on this course of action that, despite the numerous obstacles that impeded them, they did not surrender to them until 1862, some seven years after the Manchester and Salford Committee had become defunct.

(xii)

#### More Anxiety over Finance

The year 1852 was one of tremendously hard work and financial

strain for the Association. The expenses incurred in opposing the Local Bill both in Parliament and outside it, of which Alexander Henry complained, proved to be a great drain on the Association's resources. R.N.Phillips. constantly found it necessary to insist on the strictest economy in the administration of the Association's funds.<sup>1</sup> Whereas in January the balance was £867. 17. 10d., by March the figure had been reduced to £655. 1. 2d., and on 18th May it stood at a mere £498. 5. 9d. The situation was complicated by the death of Edward Lombe on 1st March. R.W.Smiles had been instructed on 2nd March, obviously before the Executive Committee knew of the matter, to write to Edward Lombe "for payment of balance of expenses incurred in carrying out that gentleman's wishes in reference to a monster petition in favour of the principles of this Association, and also to solicit the payment of the promised subscription of £500".<sup>2</sup> It was now necessary to arrange with George Combe, Lombe's agent, and be content with covering the outstanding items.

Of the sum of £300 which Lombe had made available for "carrying out his wishes", only £199. 17. 2d. had been sent to the Executive Committee by George Combe.<sup>3</sup> The process of obtaining the balance of the £300 proved to be a tedious one because Combe,

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1. Ibid., 2nd March 1852.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 23rd December 1851.

quite understandably, insisted on receiving an indemnity, signed by one or more members of the Association, so that there would not make further claims upon him for money. This involved the drafting of a legal document nullifying his liability. The matter was only concluded in November, by which time, even with the addition of the outstanding sum of £100. 15. 4d., the funds only amounted to £367. 8. 0d.<sup>1</sup>

It was very unfortunate that at a time of high financial pressure such a source of aid should become no longer available. The certain knowledge that an annual subscription of £500 would always be forthcoming over the next few years would have been of incalculable help to the Association at this time.

(xiii)

#### More Administrative Difficulties

In addition to the financial anxiety, further difficulties occurred over the management of the office. Edwin Waugh's increase in salary of April 1851 failed to prevent him from devoting more time than the Committee were willing to allow to "literary pursuits",<sup>2</sup> and his services were terminated in November of that year.

R.W.Smiles, meanwhile, was proving to be a most efficient Secretary, and in January 1852 he received the sum of £20 from the Executive Committee "as an acknowledgment of the zeal and energy

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1. Ibid., 30th November, 1852.

2. Ibid., 15th April, 1851.

with which he has served the association under the severe pressure of his recent duties".<sup>1</sup> However, in June 1852, with the Committee's permission and a reduction of £40 per annum in his salary, he took on an engagement for four hours each day with a firm called the Irish Land Company. This arrangement lasted only a short time, for in September he wrote to the Executive Committee requesting to be released from his legal obligations to serve the Association "on the ground that the Irish Land Company, which gives promise of permanent employment, has claims upon me, occasionally, which are incompatible with the duties I owe to the National Public School Association existing agreement". Smiles emphasized that he did not wish to break with the Association, but only that "our mutual legal obligations should cease".<sup>2</sup> His letter is amusing for the circumspect manner in which he asserts his readiness to continue to serve "without hope or promise of reward". He continues:

"If, however, my offer of services be accepted, and they should, at some future time, be thought to possess a money value, I shall be glad to leave its amount to the determination of the Committee, with whose decision I have no doubt I shall be well contented".

Smiles obviously did not wish to be taken too literally when he offered his services free of charge. At the request of the Committee, a much more direct letter was written into the minutes and an arrangement agreed upon, whereby he was "to continue the duties of his office giving such time and attention thereto as his

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1. Ibid., 19th January 1852.

2. Ibid., 14th September 1852.



convenience will permit and that his salary for the same be fixed at £50 per annum".<sup>1</sup> This must have been most acceptable, for he remained with the Association until 1857.

Although the year had been difficult and strenuous, the Executive Committee could console themselves, at least, that they had widely publicised their objections to the rival scheme. Furthermore they had prevented the Local Bill from having its Second Reading before the whole complex question of education had been thoroughly examined by a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, which, inevitably, gave the problems involved an unprecedented amount of publicity.

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1. Ibid., 19th October 1852.

## C H A P T E R X

### A YEAR OF FRUSTRATION ENDING WITH ACHIEVEMENT

(i)

#### The Statistical Survey of St. John's and St. Michael's Wards

In order to have detailed evidence at hand for presentation to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, the N.P.S.A. decided, in November, 1852, to conduct a house to house survey in St. Michael's and St. John's wards in Manchester. It was decided to ascertain the number of children in such districts from the ages of three to thirteen; the period which each child had attended day school; the number not having attended any day school, and the number which had attended a Sunday School.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Watts prepared the tables, which were submitted by him on 16th November and he was empowered to procure "such maps of Manchester as might be necessary for effective collection of statistics". The final report was ready

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol. 2, 9th March 1852.

for the meeting of 11th January 1853,<sup>1</sup> although it was only signed by Watts on 25th January.<sup>2</sup> It revealed some interesting facts about the educational destitution of a large proportion of the children. For example Dr. Watts asked:

"Of what value is it to know that the pupils average nearly 5 years, or that there is nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years of instruction each for all the children of that age, when we have positive evidence that nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of them are wholly destitute, and that more than another  $\frac{1}{3}$  vary from the least possible amount of instruction up to the average?"<sup>3</sup>

With regard to private schools the report was extremely critical of the instruction received:

"The greater proportion of the attendants at private schools in this district would be as correctly described with regard to their instruction if added to those who have never gone to school".<sup>4</sup>

(ii)

#### School Fees a Deterrent to Public Education

The fees that children had to pay in order to attend school were found to be a deterrent to education:

"There are 1,221 families, or more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the whole 3,520 families having children at the school age, where none of the children have been to a day school; but 303 of these families have availed themselves of the free instruction of the Sunday Schools, a proof to

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1. Ibid., 11th January 1853.
  2. Maltby, op.cit., Appendix X (c) p.148.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.

me that if Day Schools were free the attendance would be much increased, for the 303 cases in all probability comprise nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the day school absentees who are above seven years of age".<sup>1</sup>

The report contains a further reflection on poverty and educational destitution:

"305 out of 460 have been to Church or Chapel Schools where teaching is honorary and inefficient. Reasons for non-attendance "are nearly all resolvable into poverty. With but few exceptions I find poverty and neglect of instruction go hand in hand".<sup>2</sup>

(iii)

#### The Fallacy of Statistics of Average Attendance

The quotations above are in reference to St. Michael's Ward. The facts concerning St. John's Ward drew similar conclusions. Watts was at pains to debunk statistics often used by defenders of the existing system, which quoted an average period of instruction per head of population. He showed that this gave an extremely false impression:

"The system of averages would give to all children at the school age in this Ward about 4 years of instruction each, and this by the advocates of voluntary effort would be reckoned a tolerably satisfactory state of affairs; but it would completely overlook the fact that 1,012 children at every age within the school-going period have as yet received no instruction i.e. nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the whole number, which proportion is only reduced to about a quarter at the termination of the school age".

For both wards, out of 1,361 children the report claimed that 128 had never been to any school and that 383 had never been to

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

a day school. "Is it wonderful", asks Dr. Watts in the report, "that our population is drunken and debased?".<sup>1</sup>

The main points of the report dealing with school fees and the large proportion of the population which received little or no instruction at all were not forgotten when, in 1854, the Manchester Model Secular School was established by the Association. As Dr. Watts indicated, school fees and lack of instruction were closely connected, and the reports of the Model Secular School demonstrate the firm belief of its managers that the abolition of school fees would remove one of the greatest obstacles to public education.

(iv)

The Re-appointment of the Parliamentary Committee  
of Inquiry

The Executive Committee lost no time in conferring with Milner Gibson, in the early months of 1853, over the re-appointment of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, and he undertook to raise a motion to this end in the near future.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Bazley, Dr. McKerrow and Dr. Watts were chosen to represent the Association. In addition to these gentlemen, Samuel Lucas gave evidence and Richard Cobden submitted a letter describing the Common School system of the U.S.A.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 8th February 1853.

3. Maltby, op.cit., p.86.

but although a large mass of information was laboriously compiled by the Parliamentary Committee of the Association, no report on the respective merits of the plans was published. According to Milner Gibson, had the Committee of Inquiry been allowed to do this:

"I think it possible that....the opinion might have been favourable to the adoption of the scheme of the National Public School Association - the secular plan".<sup>1</sup>

In the event, as far as the campaign for secular education was concerned, the Parliamentary Committee was of little immediate advantage to the Association.

(v)

#### The Importance of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry

The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry examined four members of the Manchester and Salford Committee, two members of the Voluntaryists, and four members of the M.P.S.A., as well as sundry other people, such as Leonard Horner, who had translated Victor Cousin's works. Although it was of no immediate advantage to the N.P.S.A. it is very interesting for the amount of evidence it produced both in favour of and in opposition to the American Common School system.

During the first session, Edward Baines<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the Voluntaryists and William Entwistle, secretary of the Manchester and Salford Committee, opposed it in attacking the N.P.S.A. Entwistle based his evidence on a work by H.S. *Tremenheere*, entitled Notes on Public subjects made during a Tour of the United States and Canada

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1. Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Manchester and Salford Education, 1852, pp.1924-1950.

(1852), in which the author, severely criticized the Common Schools.<sup>1</sup> Milner Gibson submitted a letter, which had been sent to him, as chairman of the Committee, by Edward Twissleton, a member of the Irish Poor Law Board, in which he strongly advocated the Common School system, having been struck on his visit to America in 1849-50 "by the mental superiority and higher standard of intelligence which prevailed among the inhabitants of New England."<sup>2</sup> His evidence was published in 1854 in a pamphlet entitled Evidence as to the Religious Working of the Common Schools in Massachusetts.

The second session in March and April 1853 saw Dr. McKerrow, Thomas Bazley, Dr. Watts and Samuel Lucas giving evidence before the committee on behalf of the N.P.S.A. McKerrow was the leading witness, his evidence taking three days to complete. He gave evidence in support of the common school system, and quoted in support a controversial book by a Swedish Educationalist, P.A. Siljeström, Educational Institutions in the United States which expressed admiration for the American schools and refuted the adverse testimony of such people as Dr. Edson of Lowell, Massachusetts, on which Tremmenheere had based his evidence.<sup>3</sup> Both Bazley and Watts made references to education in the United States in the course of their evidence.

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1. Ibid., pp.1147-1153.

2. Ibid., Appendix No.6, p.486.

3. Ibid., Vol.2, p.287.

One of the opponents of both the Manchester and Salford Committee and the M.P.S.A. who gave evidence, was the Rev. J.H. Hinton, a Baptist minister and secretary of a committee formed to oppose the two bills. He later published his impressions of the evidence given by the two Manchester pressure groups in a pamphlet entitled The Case of the Manchester Educationists (1852+53). He contributed a lengthy appendix to the evidence one section of which was entitled Remarks on the Common Schools of the United States in which he attacked the American system as unsuitable for Britain, because nobody wished to educate the working classes in republicanism as happened in the United States. Their educational system was a political settlement and most unsuitable for Britain, for he could not envisage all classes going to the same school:

"Nobody dreams of calling upon the higher and lower classes to educate their children at the same schools".<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Adshead, a Manchester Town Councillor and a Voluntaryist, submitted a letter dated 23rd May 1853, in which he also attacked the American system, quoting from the Eleventh Report of the Massachusetts Board for 1848, in which Horace Mann admitted that thirty-three percent of the pupils were absent in summer and twenty-nine percent in winter. Adshead used these confessions by Mann as proof of the poor regard for free education in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

From the Association's point of view, however, the most useful piece of evidence was the document<sup>3</sup> submitted by Cobden, which he had

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1. Ibid., Vol.2, Appendix No.4, p.255.

2. Ibid., Appendix No.5, p.261.

3. Ibid., pp.88-98.



received from the Rev. Joshua E. Thompson, a Congregationalist minister from New York, who had been a delegate to the Autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, meeting in Bradford in October 1852. It appears, from the Report of the Executive Committee of the N.P.S.A. of 17th January 1854, that he was disturbed by what he heard:

"He was much astonished at some erroneous statements made at the meeting, touching the prevalent feeling with which Christians in the United States regarded this common school system. The document referred to, is a long and most able letter to Mr. Cobden, containing a large mass of valuable information respecting the American public school system, and the estimation in which it is held by the Congregationalists, and other religious denominations in America".<sup>1</sup>

The report goes on to explain how the committee, always ready to take advantage of an opportunity of this nature and warmly sympathising "with Mr. Thompson's object to disabuse the minds of his brethren who laboured under the misconception with regard to the American system", had the letter reprinted and delivered by post to every delegate of the Congregational Union which assembled in Manchester in October 1853. The Executive Committee expressed the hope that those congregationalists who had put the Rev. J.E.Thompson in a position where he felt the need to defend "his country's most highly cherished institution" would take note of it.

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1. Report of the Executive Committee of the N.P.S.A., 17th January 1854, p. 7.

Lord John Russell's "Borough Bill"

In April, while the Committee of Inquiry was still sitting, Lord John Russell introduced his "Borough Bill". The government had concluded that they ought to strengthen and improve the Voluntary System rather than replace it, for according to some returns of the National Society in 1847, the school pence in the Church schools amounted to £413,004 per annum. Although these figures were contradicted by those<sup>of</sup> the Registrar General in 1851, who quoted a figure of £259,134, Lord John Russell took the higher figure and concluded that the poor contributed half a million pounds towards education.<sup>1</sup> Francis Adams attacked this as a retrograde step:

"The principle of free education was supported, at this time, by the most enlightened politicians of the day, and was becoming increasingly popular. It was a prominent feature of the Bill of the Manchester and Salford Committee, which was prepared at the Education Department. But the Government dared not face the sacrifice of even a quarter of a million per year".<sup>2</sup>

According to Adams, the result was "another instalment of the patchwork system", instead of a great measure of education. It was proposed in the bill that in incorporated towns the Town Council

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1. Adams, op.cit., p.166.

2. Ibid.

might, with the assent of two-thirds of their body, levy a rate, not to establish independent schools, but only in aid of those already in existence, and of further voluntary efforts. The rate was to be applied to pay two pence a week for each scholar, in respect of whom fourpence or fivepence was contributed from other sources. There was no provision for the erection of new schools. The Council was to have authority to appoint a Committee, partly of its own members and partly of residents, to administer the money raised by rates.

The "Borough Bill" was regarded by friends of education as a half measure. It was coldly received in Parliament so the government made no effort to pass it into law, and it collapsed.

(vii)

#### Reaction of the Two Pressure Groups to the Bill

However, the two pressure groups in the North-West showed a great deal of interest. The Manchester and Salford Committee appointed a sub-committee to consider it, and in its report pointed out four serious defects: there was no provision for the supply of school places in destitute districts; school pence and voluntary contributions were still required, and the committee felt that a rate supported system should be completely free; while the rate was to be levied on all, the bill did not confer any right on children living in the immediate vicinity of a school to claim admission to it; interference in the management of a school

was possible by allegation of a conscientious objection on religious grounds by any parent.<sup>1</sup>

The L.P.S.A. were not content with a mere sub-committee. Copies of the bill were obtained and a sub-committee of Doctors McKerrow and Watts, and Messrs. Shipman, Taylor and Ferguson was formed in order to analyse and report on it, but, as time was short, it was decided to forego the analysis and report and to ask Milner Gibson to oppose the bill on its Second Reading. This was later altered to an amendment to the effect that:

"the second reading be postponed until the Select Committee on Education in Manchester and Salford etc. has presented its report to Parliament".<sup>2</sup>

(viii)

#### The Deputation to Lord John Russell

A deputation was chosen to meet Lord John Russell in order to present the views of the Association to him. In all fifty private persons were invited to form the deputation and thirty-four M.P.s were requested to accompany them.<sup>3</sup> The meeting was fixed for Friday 3rd June, and careful plans were made for presenting

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.86.

2. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 15th April 1853.

3. Ibid., 13th May 1853.

evidence. Milner Gibson was to introduce the deputation, and Cobden was to speak on the general question of education. Thomas Bazley was invited to defend the Association from the charge of irreligion and correct any misrepresentations on that point. Thomas Dillon of London was asked to follow on the same theme and Absalom Watkins was to describe the current objections to a centralized system of public education. Dr. Samuel Smiles of Leeds, the brother of R.W.Smiles, was asked to speak on the fallacies of educational statistics and on popular opinion in Leeds on the education question. Dr. McKerrow was to deal with the necessity of industrial schools, and, at his own suggestion, the Rev. J.A.Baynes of Nottingham was invited to deal with Nonconformist opinion in various parts of the country in relation to public instruction. The Rev. W.F.Walker was asked to speak on the inexpediency of imposing the burden of communicating special religious teaching upon the day school master, and the Rev. Francis Tucker with showing that a secular system of tax-supported instruction was the only one acceptable to Nonconformists. Finally Edward Swaine was asked to enlarge on the inexpediency of taking the Minutes in Council system as a basis of an extended educational system. Any points which were not covered by the above were to be supplied by Dr. Beard and Dr. Watts.

It is interesting to note that everyone was briefed, prior to this interview with Lord John Russell, at a meeting at 9.30 on 3rd June at Morley's Hotel in Trafalgar Square. At 11 a.m. the

deputation, which finally numbered thirty-one including eight M.P.s, awaited him at Chesham Place. Evidence was finally given by Absalom Watkin, who replaced Thomas Bazley, Edward Swaine, the Rev. Dr. McKerrow, the Rev. J.A.Baynes, the Rev. Francis Tucker, Dr. Smiles of Leeds, the Rev. W.F.Walker of Oldham, Dr. Watts and Samuel Lucas.<sup>1</sup>

(ix)

## The Question of Local Rating

On introducing the deputation, Milner Gibson described its members as men interested in the subject of public instruction, adding that "the special purpose of the association which they represent is to promote it". Referring to the local rate mentioned in Russell's bill, he pointed out that the propriety of establishing a system of schools supported by Local rates was first recommended by their Association, "and they succeeded in a great degree in making popular, and apparently acceptable, this idea of extending education by means of local rates". But it was only acceptable, he added, under certain circumstances, which were described in the evidence of the deputation.<sup>2</sup>

(x)

Absalom Watkin's Fear of American  
Competition and his Distrust of  
Centralized Authority

Absalom Watkin emphasized that the members of the N.P.S.A. were

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol. 2, 6th June 1853.

2. Ibid.

not in opposition to religious instruction, but secular instruction had to be given greater importance, for it was "not only beneficial, but in the peculiar circumstances of our County as a Manufacturing and Commercial State, I might say a matter of imperative necessity". He emphasized the need to educate the population because already American competition was growing, particularly in the sphere of ship-building, for the cause of the advances was a superior system of education.

It is interesting to note how competition between countries in industrial and technological advancement caused observers to demand better facilities in education during the nineteenth century, just as it is doing in the twentieth. It reveals a growing consciousness of the impact of industry on education which had previously been emphasized notably by Richard Cobden and Walter Ferguson. Watkin's other point reflects the tremendous jealousy with which the municipalities guarded their newly won independence:

"We object to all centralization as dangerous to civil liberty and at variance with constitutional principles. We think that we ought to have the management of our own money and be allowed to apply it for the purpose of education as a majority of the rate-payers may decide".<sup>1</sup>

(xi)

Edward Swaine's Fear of the Minutes of Council

This tenacity for local independence is reflected in Edward

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1. "The efforts for the separation of schools from the control of the religious communions, were partly owing no doubt to the growth of the municipal sentiment". (Adams, op.cit., p.157).

Swaine's criticism of the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, which, he said, always appeared to him as characteristic of injustice and inefficiency. Francis Adams seems to have regarded them in the same light, but he went so far as to claim that the Minutes of 1853 were a virtual threat to democracy:-

"...the manner in which the minutes of 1853 became law is worthy of notice, as showing the almost irresponsible power, and the absolute independence of authority which the Committee of Council possessed. In introducing the Borough Bill Lord John Russell briefly referred to a new minute applicable to the country. He said, this minute, when its provisions have been fully matured, will be laid upon the table; and the House before coming to any vote upon it will have ample opportunity for duly considering it. As a matter of history it was never considered in Parliament. The Municipal Bill was never discussed. The grant for education was hurried through among a crowd of miscellaneous estimates, when it was not expected to come on...."<sup>1</sup>

In face of such instances, it is small wonder that there was a constant demand for local control of education, free from the tyranny of the Minutes of Council.

Edward Swaine went on to attack the provisions of the "Borough Bill" in particular, because he could never support "the State Endowment of all religions", which is what the bill purported to do. Therein, he said, lay the injustice which characterized the Minutes of Council. Their inefficiency lay in the fact that there was no provision against apathy in the case where a needy school remained untouched by the bill, because no one would take the trouble

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1. Adams, op.cit., p.168.



to apply for aid in the locality. This had always been one of the Association's main concerns. The original plan of the L.P.S.A. had sought to overcome the results of local apathy by making the county board responsible for establishing schools where local committees had failed to do this.

(xii)

Dr. McKerrow's Anxiety for those on the  
Fringe of the Pauper Class

Dr. McKerrow was at pains to emphasize that the term "secular" when applied to the N.P.S.A., did not imply any opposition to religion, but that it was adopted "merely to intimate that the course of common school instruction, which it contemplates, does not embrace the doctrinal teachings which are usually given by distinctive sects".<sup>1</sup> He went so far as to describe the system as a religious one, for otherwise it would not be supported by members of the Established Church as well as Nonconformists. "It comprehends as much of religion as different sects can agree to receive together", he said. McKerrow also criticized the bill on the grounds that it gave aid where it was not needed. He quoted from reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools which showed that the annual average payment from each child belonging to Church of England schools was 21/-d, and from each scholar in all other schools under inspection, 17/6d. From this he concluded that parents who could

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 6th June 1853.

afford to pay such amounts were not in need of assistance, and he did not see the propriety of employing public taxation to cheapen school instruction for those able to pay for it themselves. He showed that he was mainly concerned with the class of children who were unable to pay such fees, yet who were still outside the pauper class. For, he admitted, there was provision for paupers in the scope of the bill, "but it grants no aid to the large class above them who are struggling with hardship and whose self respect keeps them from the Board of Guardians". It was for this class in particular: "for the children of the honest poor, and for the children from whom our paupers and criminals commonly spring", that the Association was chiefly concerned to provide education.<sup>1</sup> Class distinction made Church and Chapel schools virtually unavailable to poor children:

"The Church and Chapel Schools are too respectable - are attended by a class of children whose parents would not allow the lower classes to be under the same roof or in the same playground with them. The denominational schools are not extending education to those who would not otherwise obtain it, but are merely destroying private schools and cheapening it to those who can well afford to pay for it".<sup>2</sup>

He quoted an example of such a school, where some benevolent gentleman had agreed to pay fees of poor children in excess of one penny. On his second visit he found that many such children had been found to take advantage of his generosity but had been allowed to drift away, because better class parents had threatened to remove their children from the school. The conclusion he drew from

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

these facts was that "the Voluntarism of which we hear so much neither receives the lower orders into its denominational schools nor provides for them by establishing the separate schools which they need".<sup>1</sup> He expressed the hope that Lord John Russell would not ignore the children whose cause he pleaded.

(xiii)

#### An Example of Violation of the Rights of Conscience

As for clause 20 of the bill, the purpose of which was to safeguard rights of conscience by giving parents the right to withdraw their children from any religious lesson of which they did not approve, Dr. McKerrow quoted a letter from a Warrington J.P. which showed how little was the actual security provided by such a clause. The letter stated that children of Methodist and Baptist parents had been expelled from the only school in the township, a National School, because they had refused to learn the catechism and go to Sunday School and church. Some parents had refused to comply "and their children are wandering about without day school instruction - others have yielded and bigotry enjoys the triumph of forcing its hated dogmas on their children, and separating between them and their parents on Sunday. Might I suggest that your Lordship should refuse all grants of money to schools in which this intolerance is displayed. The clause as it stands, I repeat, offers no security to conscience".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

It is interesting to read McKerrow's evidence in full, because the views which he expressed with regard to school fees and religious teaching were embodied in the constitution of the Manchester Model Secular School, when it was eventually founded. The difficulty of fee-paying was eliminated by making the instruction free, and that of religion by forbidding Bible reading in the school.

(xiv)

#### The Need to Separate Religious from Secular Teaching

The Rev. J.A. Baynes of Nottingham, a Baptist Minister, urged the expediency of separating religious from secular teaching, stating that at meetings which he had visited all over the country, this principle had been approved: "In many places it was unanimous and in others nine to one".<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Francis Tucker of Manchester, having described himself as "a minister of religion holding the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England", but also a Dissenter and a Voluntaryist, supported this and suggested that the government should provide secular teaching and leave religious teaching to "men of religion". In support of this he quoted the existence of such a separation in the "majority of the middle-class Schools in England and in all the common schools in the United States".<sup>2</sup> The Rev. W.F. Walker of St. James's Church, Oldham, demanded separation on the grounds that religious instruction under the existing arrangements was so poor. In evidence he quoted an instance where

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

the master of one school had abandoned the Irish Board of Education Books and adopted the Bible because it was easier to examine the latter than it was to explain the moral and religious content of the former.

(xv)

#### Dr. Watts demands Industrial Feeding Schools

Dr. John Watts quoted statistics from the Association's survey in Manchester to prove the existence of the large section of the population, who, being neither paupers nor able to afford school fees, escaped the provisions of the bill. He pointed out that the proportion of pauper children of school age was small, yet this was the only category of poor children that the bill provided for. Its effect, therefore, was to set a premium on pauperism, requiring attendance at the Poor Relief Board before children could get to school. He said that there were many thousands of people in Manchester just above the pauper line to whom free schools would be a boon. These could not obtain education unless taxed for the instruction of which they could not partake. Another piece of information illustrates the dire poverty of these people:

"There are also 2,000 to 3,000 children in Manchester to whom free instruction without food would be useless. They need Industrial Feeding Schools. The Bill does not provide them".<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of religion he said that a religious man's conscience required definite religious teaching for his children, but such teaching could not be demanded from a nation divided on the

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1. Ibid.

subject. Nor could this be demanded of national school teachers who would be called upon to teach doctrines in which they did not believe. People, he said, must seek this at the hands of the sect to which they belonged. The bill was unjust because it was designed to subsidize the teachings of the various religious sects, which would always be objected to by members of other sects. Yet under the Minutes of Council "the only schools which give wholly unobjectionable teaching are excluded".

(xvi)

#### Education the Regenerator of Society

Samuel Lucas charged Lord John Russell with lack of information about the nature of the problem. What might seem a good solution to the educational problem for one part of the country was no answer to that of another part. He divided society into three categories: that class connected with a religious denomination; that class connected with no religious denomination "which is much larger than is generally supposed by those who have not mixed much with the industrial part of the population";<sup>1</sup> and "that class which lies at the bottom of the whole and from which our workhouses, our jails and our ragged schools are mainly recruited".

The first class, he said, could look after itself, but

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1. Ibid.

provision for the second class, as a result of the fatal error of presuming that any extension of education must take place within the religious framework, was most difficult, for:

"Existing organizations can never reach that great mass of population which lies without the pale and beyond the influence of the religious denominations. These can only be reached by schools open to all sects and in which therefore no special creed must be taught. This is our definition of the word 'Secular'. We use it as distinct from 'Theology', not as opposed to religion".

The third class, however, was easiest to provide for in Lucas's opinion. Here education was to be used as an instrument of social regeneration, which in the eyes of most members of the N.P.S.A. was its main purpose:

"So general and so earnest is the desire to raise individuals composing it from their present state of misery, degradation and crime, and to protect society from the evil consequences of these, and I am convinced all sects would cordially unite in support of schools calculated to effect the object in view and in the adoption of any plan for providing religious in addition to secular instruction, and to industrial training".

As evidence of their effectiveness he quoted examples of the good work done by Industrial Schools in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh in diminishing juvenile delinquency and crime "to a degree that is truly astonishing". His conviction was that if the government passed a permissive bill to set up such schools it "would do more to create a feeling in favour of the extension, and improvement in the quality of popular education than by any other means that can be adopted. It would immediately create an agitation on the subject through the length and breadth of the land and thus the people would be aroused from that apathy which has been

and is, the most fatal enemy which the friends of popular instruction have had to encounter".<sup>1</sup>

(xvii)

Dr. Smiles States the Raison d'Etire of a Pressure Group

Dr. Samuel Smiles of Leeds began his evidence with a plea on behalf of the day schools which had been established by Mechanics' Institutes. These would be excluded from benefitting from the bill because they were secular schools, a disadvantage suffered later by the Manchester Model Secular School.

Of greater and more general significance is his accusation that the "legislative classes" were guilty of remoteness from the real issues at stake. They wasted valuable time arguing about rights of conscience, while thousands went without education, often as a result of a clause, similar to that in the bill, which would deprive secular schools of state aid. He claimed that the opinion of people in many towns had been sought and had revealed that they wanted secular education to be taught in the schools for which they paid rates, and religious knowledge to be taught by teachers and parents. Smiles demanded that the feelings of those who were going to pay the rates should be given full consideration.

This is interesting because, some years later, the managers of the Model Secular School are found stating that the evidence

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1. Ibid.



provided by the attendance record of the school, and the long waiting list for admission, proved that people were far more intent in obtaining an education for their children than they were on worrying about whether or not religious doctrines were to be taught in school.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Smiles is here insisting to Lord John Russell that the views of interest groups must be given close attention by ministers. He is demanding that they should be recognised as sounding-boards of public opinion and be accorded the right of consultation, otherwise legislation could only be unsatisfactory. Samuel Lucas was hinting at the same thing when he referred to "those who have not mixed much with the industrial part of the population".

In modern times there is an elaborate system of consultation between interest groups of all kinds and ministerial departments. Normally the general public are only conscious of such negotiations when agreement cannot be reached and a dispute receives publicity. During the nineteenth century this system was by no means so elaborate. Policies and the party machinery itself were less rigid, and legislation was affected far more by what went on within debating chamber than it is today.<sup>2</sup> However, the fact that the N.P.S.A. were able to send a deputation to meet Lord John Russell shows that certain avenues of consultation were open and could be

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1. Fourteenth Report of the Manchester Free School, September 1869, p.4.

2. Finer, S.E. Anonymous Empire, (London, 1958) p.22.

employed by pressure groups, but Samuel Smiles's evidence can be taken as proof of their inadequacy.

(xviii)

### The Advocate of National Instruction

The report of the deputation to Lord John Russell was fully reported in the first issue of a new publication of the N.P.S.A., entitled The Advocate of National Instruction,<sup>1</sup> which appeared in August 1853. Its price was sixpence for the first issue, but the other three, which appeared quarterly, were reduced to threepence. In addition to the report of the deputation, there was also, in the first issue, a description of the common schools in Upper Canada in an article which the reader was invited to examine "for the admirable arguments in favour of unsectarian instruction in the common schools". This publication was much larger than the Educational Register, and the only indication that it was connected with the N.P.S.A. was the list of subscribers, which included the names of Alexander Henry, **Ivie** Mackie, Richard Gardner, William Biggs (M.P. for Leicester), Richard Solly (of Sheffield), R.N. Phillips, John Heugh, Walter Ferguson, Edward Swaine, Samuel Lucas, Archibald Winterbottom, Hugh Mason and Neil Bannatyne, all of whom were members of the Association. The periodical was published in London and probably edited by Samuel Lucas who, three years later, became editor of the Morning Star, the London organ of the "Manchester School".

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1. The first two issues are in Manchester Central Reference Library. The last two are in the British Museum.

The second issue of 3rd November 1853 contained a report of the document by the Rev. Joshua E. Thompson which had been submitted by Cobden to the Select Committee on education. Among the other features were articles on public schools in Rhode Ireland, statistical information from Philadelphia, debunking the argument that the common school system was losing popularity, and a list of objections to Lord John Russell's "Borough Bill". The third<sup>1</sup> issue, for February 1854, which bore the sub-title "For promoting a general system of secular instruction, supported by rates and under local management", contained a full report of the educational conference and aggregate meeting of the Association of 17th January 1854, when John Bright announced his adhesion to the N.P.S.A. Finally the fourth<sup>2</sup> issue for 4th May 1854, admits that the purpose of the publication was to refute the allegations that the Massachusetts Common School system was losing popularity. There were no further issues and one can only assume that the publication was considered to have fulfilled its purpose, or alternatively that the expense became too great.

( XIX )

The Conception of the Model Secular School

Despite the enthusiasm and conviction shown by the members of the National Public School Association who formed the deputation to Lord John Russell, the government was not moved to establish a

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1. Farrar, op.cit., p.128.

2. Ibid.

secular system of education in accordance with their principles, and soon the outbreak of the Crimean War was to have a stifling effect on all matters not considered to be connected with the national emergency. However, some small consolation could be gained from the fact that Lord John Russell did at least abandon his bill, and, of far greater importance, the deputation bore quite an unexpected result.

The chief criticism made by Lord John Russell was that the Association had not "sufficiently practicalized its scheme" to justify the government in legislating in its favour.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly at a special meeting of the Executive Committee, a motion was passed to the effect that it was desirable to confer with the chief friends of the Association on the subject of "establishing a model school on the principles of the Association".<sup>2</sup>

(xx)

#### A Tribute to Dr. Watts

It is noteworthy also that this meeting witnessed a gesture of the Association's appreciation of the invaluable work of Dr. John Watts, who, on his removal to London at this time, was requested to accept a sum of twenty pounds "as a slight acknowledgment of his services."<sup>3</sup> The wording of the quotation was in no way facetiously

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., Vol.2, 1st August 1853.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

polite, for without the services of Dr. Watts the N.P.S.A. would certainly have been a far less effective pressure group. Admittedly he was its agent and was paid a salary for his services but so diverse were his talents that he combined all the necessary function and abilities for conducting the business of the organization within his own range of accomplishments. He addressed numerous meetings, compiled statistical evidence, composed addresses for printing, and was constantly ready to give direction and wise leadership to the Executive Committee. The Association were extremely fortunate in having such an able and conscientious servant in their employment. Moreover it is not certain whether this token of appreciation was accepted, for R.M.Shipman later reported to the Executive Committee that Dr. Watts did not wish to receive it because his services had been given under a sense of duty without "desire or expectation of pecuniary remuneration".<sup>1</sup> Tribute was paid to him in the Annual Report of January 1864 in which the members of the Executive Committee stated that they could not overrate "the value of that gentleman's disinterested services. His readiness to serve the Association, at all times, has only been surpassed by his ability in the advocacy of its principles".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., 12th September 1853.

2. N.P.S.A., Report of the Sixth Annual General Meeting, 17th January 1854 (Manchester, 1854).

Support and Opposition for the New Venture

The business of setting up a Model Secular School was rapidly pursued. Letters were received in favour from such people as Councillor Ivie Mackie, Martin Schunck, H.J. Leppoc, C.J. Darbishire, Alexander Henry, Dr. Watts and Samuel Lucas, who became its best supporters. Those who opposed the new venture did so on the grounds that it would be difficult to find persons to inspect the school regularly and exercise the necessary control over it, and that there would be further difficulty in devising and carrying out a course of religious instruction in the school.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore other objections were expressed at a meeting on 29th August by Messrs. John King and Joseph Ashworth. They stated that the success of such a scheme would prove nothing as to the feasibility of the principles of the Association beyond what had already been shown in the working of the Birkbeck schools in London.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, failure would certainly be used against them. A further objection was that the Association had been promoted in order to establish a system of national education sufficiently elastic to adopt itself to the circumstances of different localities and existing institutions, rather than to establish schools. Finally the objectors were concerned that such a school would be taken as the type of school which would be

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1. Mins.N.P.S.A., 15th August 1853.

2. William Ellis of the Birkbeck schools in London had offered £500 towards establishing a secular school in Manchester. (Ibid).

established under the plan, whereas the Association was not pledged to any details of school management beyond the provision that no payment was to be made out of the public rates for doctrinal instruction.<sup>1</sup>

However, the objections were unavailing for letters were received from James Simpson and Richard Cobden, both of whom offered £100 in aid of a secular school. On the initiative of Cobden himself, a meeting was held and the Model Secular School, after some negotiations, came into existence in Jackson's Row, Manchester, in August 1854.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., 29th August 1853.

2. Ibid., 10th October, 1853. For further information on the school see the relevant chapters.

C H A P T E R    X I

THE CONFERENCE AND AGGREGATE MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION, 17th JANUARY 1854

(i)

Optimism in Face of Disappointment

For the Association 1853 had been a year of tremendous effort with little in achievement to show for it, and the Sixth Annual Report of 17th January 1854 reflects the disappointment:

"Your Executive Committee feel themselves in a somewhat disadvantageous position, as compared with that which has been occupied at the close of former years, inasmuch as they are not in possession of material for such an imposing and circumstantial record of the year's proceedings".

The Association's operations are described as "not so palpable as those of former years".<sup>1</sup> However, the compilers of the report were quick to take credit for what little progress had been made, for, while acknowledging that there were other organizations working for the promotion of national education, they were at pains to explain that "these, it would perhaps be found on examination, have been evoked and excited, in no inconsiderable degree, by the labours of this Association".

At any rate "any demand made upon Parliament for the

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1. Report of the Sixth Annual General Meeting, 17th January 1854.



establishment of a system of Public Schools, for the chief towns of Lancashire, must be indebted for its vitality and power to the labours of the Association".<sup>1</sup> With reference to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry the Executive Committee were of the opinion "that the evidence must inevitably exercise an important influence on the mind of the House of Commons, whenever it may attempt the legislative solution of the Educational problem".<sup>2</sup>

(ii)

The Effects of Events Leading up to the Crimean War

The report shows a certain amount of optimism as to the outcome of the deputations to Lord John Russell, which, unfortunately, proved to be in vain: "Your Committee hope that the statement of their views...may manifest its influence in the improved character of his Lordship's bill, should he again introduce it in the approaching session". But it closes on an ominous note, illustrating how external affairs were impeding the progress of social reform at home. In explaining the difficulty of getting the Association's Free Schools Bill introduced into Parliament reference is made to the unfortunate effect of the deteriorating situation in foreign affairs:

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

"The recent aspect of public affairs and the important questions which have for a considerable time past occupied the public mind, may have prevented the great question of National Education from receiving the degree of attention to which its intrinsic importance so well entitles it".<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties of maintaining progress had obviously cost the Association some support during the year, for the compilers of the report felt it necessary to remind their readers that their cause could only fail if they abandoned it, and that "we have only to renew our zeal and persevere unto the end. to secure, by faith and patience, the reward of victory".<sup>2</sup> Events, however, proved to be unfavourable. At the conference on 17th January, a letter from J.B. Smith, M.P., which was read aloud, re-emphasized the unfortunate effect that the deteriorating political situation was having on the campaign for education, He wrote:

"I wish the prevailing war spirit may not absorb that public attention which requires to be devoted to education".<sup>3</sup>

(iii)

George Combe's Interpretation of Manchester's  
Historic Mission

Conversely George Combe of Edinburgh wrote optimistically of the Association's prospects:

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

"It has never met such encouraging circumstances. It has apparently nearly fulfilled its objects...it has shed a flood of light on the deficiencies of the existing school instruction...and the late movement of some of its members towards establishing a free model secular school in Manchester, to show what secular education really is, and what it can accomplish is, in my opinion, a highly judicious and useful measure...Everything tends to show that the consummation of your great design is approaching".<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to read the interpretation of events in Manchester as expressed by somebody who saw them in perspective. Obviously Combe regarded the establishment of Model Secular School as a very important step forward in the struggle to persuade the legislature of the benefits of secular education. Of further interest is his interpretation of Manchester's role in mid-nineteenth century Britain:

"Should these hopes be realized, Manchester will add another wreath to her civic crown...The emancipation of industry from the fetters of ignorance and selfishness by the repeal of the corn laws was not complete, while the minds of the people, by whom that industry was put forth, were left in a condition of darkness and imbecility... A sound secular education, therefore, is the natural supplement of Manchester's other great achievement; and when she shall have accomplished this object, she will have laid sure foundations for a lasting national prosperity; real practical, rational liberty - and I venture also to add, for true humanizing, God-obeying, and man-loving religion".<sup>2</sup>

When described in such a manner by someone who was not a Mancunian, Manchester's importance during the nineteenth century is more easily understood. The letter also helps to illustrate why, after the struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws, Manchester became the natural centre of a movement designed to bring about further reforms.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

John Bright Embraces the Cause of National Education

The Conference and Aggregate Meeting of the Association on 17th January 1854 were conspicuous in the history of the Association, because they witnessed the adhesion of John Bright to the cause of secular education. More interesting, perhaps, is the way in which Cobden engineered the proceedings into a publicity campaign for the Massachusetts educational system.

Shortly before 17th January he wrote to Bright:

"You must take sides on the Education question - you can't take a neutral part - or a lukewarm attitude - Is not the time come to declare for the New England System"?<sup>1</sup>

Bright did not disappoint his friend and spoke with all his customary eloquence at the evening meeting in the Mechanics' Institute.<sup>2</sup> He referred to the fact that the question of education originally seemed to have many features which made it attractive to Liberals and Dissenters, but the fear that a national system of education would only be the supplement to the national church had turned many people away from the idea, especially when the trouble aroused over Sir James Graham's bill had caused the Dissenters to refuse to give national education a fair consideration. He himself had, therefore, originally concluded that national

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1. Cawley, op.cit., p.28.

2. Report of the Proceedings at a Conference and Aggregate Meeting of the Association, 17th January 1854.

education could never be achieved. His second reason had been his inability, through pressure of work, to go and see the American education system in action. He now saw that the moderates were gradually outnumbering the Voluntaryists so that there was a much better chance of devising "a scheme upon which the great majority of the population may agree".<sup>1</sup> He spoke generously of Edward Baines and Edward Miall in a way that Cobden must have approved:

"When we have persons of such character to deal with it behoves us to discuss the subject with all possible calmness and with the greatest deference to their opinions".<sup>2</sup>

He agreed with their desire to have a voluntary system for religion, but not for education. As a Quaker he was the last man who would throw away religious freedom; there must be voluntaryism in religion - "but because it is suitable for one subject there is no criterion that it should be suitable for another".<sup>3</sup>

He extolled the virtues of the American educational system where, he explained, "voluntaryism is strong but is repudiated as far as education is concerned".<sup>4</sup> Yet the United States was no less free because a system of public education existed there.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Voluntaryism had done a splendid job; it had made men appreciate education with the result "that they are not satisfied with the incompleteness of the voluntary or accidental system, but are anxious to have something more complete and better organized which shall give to every person in the country that vast blessing which voluntary effort has hitherto only given to a portion of the people".<sup>1</sup>

He quoted statistics of the town of Providence, Rhode Island, showing how, for a very small rate, children of all denominations were able to be educated. He compared the town with Rochdale and described how its inhabitants could have had the same quality of education for a far smaller cost than that paid by the people of Providence. The Americans, he said, had overcome a religious problem identical to that existing in Britain, so that there was no reason why it should not be overcome. The main requirement was that education must be locally controlled. He advocated the introduction of a local bill into Parliament for both Manchester and Salford "as one great city", thereby achieving two objects:

"You will not be called upon to defray the expenses of fighting the measure through Parliament as a private bill and secondly, it will not have to be discussed at the time of private business in the House of Commons, but in a full house, like any other bill".<sup>2</sup>

He called for "a sound bill, an honest bill, a bill that has no subterfuge, a bill which everyone can perfectly understand, so that

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

they (the friends of the N.P.S.A.) may be able to fight it against the other and support and justify it by their arguments".<sup>1</sup>

Bringing his speech to a great climax he affirmed his faith that Manchester would bring in such a bill, just as in the past she had brought in other important measures, and establish a system of education which would "pervade all corners of the kingdom".

(v)

#### Daniel C. Gilman's Speech

As if it were not enough to produce John Bright on the side of national education, Cobden now had another powerful speaker in store for his audience. This was Daniel C. Gilman, the attaché to the American Embassy at St. Petersburg. Cobden's letter to Gilman, of 13th January 1854, shows precisely how he made sure that Gilman's speech would fit the evening's programme and the needs of the Association. Cobden wrote:

"Our difficulty is the religious question. Show the meeting how you reconcile the rights of conscience on religious matters and the demands of society for secular instruction. Give us some statistics of what you are doing in the States, and shame us out of our intolerance and supineness. Tell the meeting strongly that you consider in America that all you possess that is most precious in social development and political freedom you owe solely under providence to your system of education".<sup>2</sup>

Gilman proceeded to do precisely what Cobden asked, just as his friend, the Rev. Leonard Bacon, had done several years before at a similar meeting. He first emphasized the close ties that existed

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1. Ibid.

2. Cawley, op, cit., p.28.

between Britain and the United States:

"Pardon me if I say that every year and every month, the relations which exist between England and America are growing more and more close".<sup>1</sup>

(Cries of hear! hear!)

He continued:

"As every successive steamer shortens the distance between these two countries it brings nearer together the men who are engaged in promoting the advance of humanity and the progress of civilization....We take pride in having been in our early history, the same as you, we claim one country, one language, one liberty, one Christianity. Let us have one system of education, free and general and we shall be wholly one".<sup>2</sup> (Loud applause)

Gilman went on to describe the origins of the Common School system in Newhaven, Connecticut. Three years after Newhaven was founded as a colony "you find the people in common Town Meeting assembled, voting that a public school shall be established and supported by the people, general and open to all classes".<sup>3</sup> All this, he said, was owed to England because the founders of the system were English men. Striking at the crux of the educational matter, he explained that the founders had decided that religious instruction should not be given by school masters but by the heads of households. Moreover it was a completely classless education. The rule that the state should give free intellectual education, he

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1. Report of the Aggregate Meeting, 17th January 1854.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.



affirmed, had prevailed from the very beginning of the system to the present day.

He left no doubt in the minds of his audience of the Christian nature of the people:

"The Bible, and the Christianity of the Bible, are recognized by all branches of our government, the executive, the legislature and the judicial..... We are decidedly a church-going people, and that not merely for form's sake, but from a love of attending to the privileges of public worship".<sup>1</sup>

He had also a message for the Voluntaryists, and described how voluntary associations in America availed themselves of the Sabbath for such acts of benevolence as visiting the poor and the sick. Similar societies, he explained, from all the churches organized themselves as "self-appointed missionaries" and provided religious instruction for the poor. The main point that he wished to communicate was that the task of teachers of religion was made all the easier for their pupils being educated. All sects in America, he emphasized, were now agreed that the best method of education was to be found in the separation of religious and secular teaching:

"And now although our education is so distant from our religious instruction; although one is provided for by the government, and the other entirely provided for by voluntary effort, not endowed at all by the government, yet we find the utmost harmony prevailing; indeed I must express my surprise at the obstacle it seems to present here in England, and that so many in this land are so hard to convince that the two may go hand in hand together, and the highest interests of both be preserved".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid,

He ended his extremely well received speech with the hope that Manchester would succeed in her attempt to provide the country with free unsectarian education.

(vi)

#### Cobden's Approach to the Voluntaryists

Cobden spoke both during the conference in the Mayor's Parlour and at the general meeting in the Mechanics' Institute in the evening, displaying on each occasion an abundance of wise statesmanlike ideas, in common with all his speeches on behalf of the N.P.S.A. His main message to the conference was that over the past twenty years the government had paid out at least one million pounds towards school building, consequently the buildings for which the voluntary organizations were claiming credit were, in fact, buildings belonging to the state.

At this point a lesser man might have proceeded to pour ridicule upon the Voluntaryists, but Cobden was far too great a man for such triviality. Instead, he put forward a constructive invitation to them to join in with the N.P.S.A. scheme:

"If you are ready to separate your secular from your religious instruction, if you will only be so reasonable, so rational as to say, that at certain hours you will give reading, writing and arithmetic lessons, and at certain hours you will give your religious education, we will then unite to meet you".<sup>1</sup>

He continued:

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1. Ibid.

"Are we to be met by being told that it is not possible to separate secular from religious instruction? Why, I say that the most religious people in the world, the people of the New England States, have been doing it for half a century or more".

(vii)

Educational Destitution and its Effect on other  
Institutions

He made some interesting observations on educational destitution, illustrating the failure of the voluntary system to educate the people. As an example, he referred to the Ancoat's Lyceum, in the poorest district of the town, of which he was a member. Its objective had been to afford to the poorer classes the advantages of the Mechanics' Institute. However, the directors had found that it was futile to give instruction of a literary and scientific nature to an illiterate population. Consequently the Lyceum's functions had dwindled to the teaching of an elementary school:<sup>1</sup>

"To those who possess not even the merest rudiments of knowledge, the lecture room can have no possible attraction. Even the library, to such persons, can possess but few sources of enjoyment, and classes for instruction in the higher branches are equally useless".

Quoting Justice Coleridge, he reaffirmed the theory, held by many nineteenth century philanthropists, of the close connection between ignorance and crime:

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1. Tylecote, Mabel, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851 (Manchester 1957), pp.87-95. The author provides evidence which proves that the fate of the Ancoat's Lyceum was not an isolated instance.

"What are these people to do? They cannot read sufficiently well to be able to read for amusement. They are not taught to read so that they cannot have the resource of books and newspapers that other people have to solace their leisure hours; and the consequence is that they seek dissipation; they go to the public house, and resort to habits of intemperance, and sensual excitements, as we should all do if we had not some intellectual and moral resources to sweeten life".

Cobden demanded that education should be made available to the working classes:

"None of the efforts that have been made in the way of education, have reached them at all - I mean that your cheap publications and Mechanics' Institutions have not reached the lower classes of unskilled labourers at all".

(viii)

#### A Tribute to Edward Baines

Despite this criticism, he paid tribute to Edward Baines's zeal and energy, saying:

"If we had a million of Mr. Baines in the country, I believe we should have a tolerably well educated people".

In support of a more imaginative curriculum in all schools, he quoted Sir James Clark, Queen Victoria's physician, who believed that "it would greatly tend to prevent sickness and promote health were the elements of physiology, in their effect on general health, made part of public education, and we are convinced that such instruction may be rendered advantageous to the young, and may be communicated with the greatest propriety in ordinary schools by a properly instructed school-master". The effect of these ideas was later shown in the curriculum of the Model Secular School in which hygiene and physiology were important subjects.

Cobden's Analysis of the Peculiar Difficulties  
of the Association

Perhaps the most interesting feature of Cobden's two speeches was his analysis of the difficulties peculiar to educational reform as distinct from other fields of reform:

"In former times, if you have had a movement for reform, you have had one political party, at all events, pretty generally unanimous with you. Take for instance the agitation for reform in Parliament or the agitation for the free-trade measures, - we had one party with us. There was not a dissenting minister who on principle would have objected to come to Manchester to that great meeting which was held here, and contributed so much to our success, seven or eight years ago. The dissenters as a body and the reformers as a body were on the side of free-trade principles; but what have we to encounter in this educational movement? We have had cross-fires from every side against us. On one side the church; on the other side a portion of dissenters ably led by Mr. Baines; yet in spite of these cross-fires, having no political organization as it were, which wholly and entirely identifies itself with us, yet you see what progress we have made, and what a highly influential body we have about us".<sup>1</sup>

Here was the educational reformer's difficulty concisely expressed. Questions of religion and the rights of conscience severed party lines to such an extent that no government could safely make secular education part of its programme. Opinion was so divided that it was impossible to gain enough support to carry a measure through Parliament, and the issue was further complicated by the succession of weak governments which took office between 1846 and 1868. It is little wonder that Cobden, having attempted to tackle the education problem as early as 1836, "took to the

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1. Report of the Aggregate Meeting, 17th January 1854.

repeal of the Corn Laws as light amusement" compared with the difficulties of finding some general agreement on the question of how the nation should be instructed.<sup>1</sup>

(x)

### Education Essential in a Democracy

Milner Gibson anticipated Robert Lowe's reaction to the Reform Act of 1867 when, in expressing pleasure that the N.P.S.A. were continuing the struggle for educational reform, he said:

"For what do we hear? That we are about to extend increased political power to the people: and I say that commonsense at once tells us that in extending political power, there ought to be extended knowledge, and that free institutions are never safe unless they rest upon the bases of an educated people".<sup>2</sup>

This indeed was a warning that it was necessary for the nation's rulers to educate their masters.

However, in spite of the interesting ideas expressed by other speakers, both the conference and meeting were dominated by Cobden. He expressed his belief that education based on the common school system of the U.S.A. would eventually result in a more fully integrated society:

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1. Morley, Life of Cobden, Vol,I, p.373.
  2. Robert Lowe's comment bears comparison: "You have placed the government in the hands of the masses and you must therefore give them education". Quoted by Trapp, op.cit.,p.103.

"...notwithstanding the great gulf that separates the middle from the working classes, and the middle from the higher classes in this country, nothing would tend so much to break down that barrier as to erect common schools of so superior a quality that people should find nowhere in their vicinity an opportunity - whatever the class might be - of giving the children a better education than by availing themselves of the facilities afforded by the common schools".<sup>1</sup>

These sentiments expressed a century ago, which are essentially the arguments used today by many of the people who wish to establish Comprehensive Education in England, show how much wider Cobden's vision of education was compared with those of many of his contemporaries in Parliament.

To those who feared that secular education would result in a godless society, he said that the country was in a bad way from the religious point of view already, "for not one in one hundred attends any place of worship, but the usual practice is for the men to be in bed on Sunday morning while the women cook the dinner - and for an adjournment to take place in the evening to a public house." By contrast in America, where religion was divorced from the schools, the number of church goers had increased. Nor were the supporters of the N.P.S.A. irreligious. Proof of this was the membership of John Bright, a Quaker, and therefore a Voluntaryist, who had been converted to the ideals of the N.P.S.A. and whose example Cobden hoped, other Voluntaryists would follow. Referring to Edward Baines. and his associate. Edward Miall, he said, "I feel most

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1. Report of the Aggregate Meeting, 17th January 1854.

anxious and concerned at finding myself in any movement separated from these gentlemen with whom I have sympathized; and although expressing the Association's determination to defeat those who believe that too much education was a bad thing, he was most emphatic that the Voluntaryists should not be alienated:

"I don't want to beat our friend of the voluntary principle. I want to bring them where Mr. Bright has been tonight, for they are all old friends and of value to every movement for the aid of the good cause; and if the result of the meeting tonight should be to bring over Mr. Baines and Mr. Miall, and all who hold the views of those gentlemen, it will be one of the best days we have ever had, and I shall look back with pleasure to the part I have taken in it".<sup>1</sup>

The tragedy of education lies in the fact that the people with Cobden's liberal outlook on education were not more numerous. If they had been it is reasonable to say that national education would have been achieved long before 1870. The fact that Cobden supported secular education does not prove that he was any less religious than Edward Baines, for he was a staunch member of the Church of England. The difference between them was one of priorities; whereas Cobden could see that the important thing was to instruct the nation how to earn a living first and to provide it with spiritual food later, Baines demanded a blending of religion with everything that was to be taught in school.<sup>2</sup> The problem has not been fully resolved even at the present time, for Roman Catholic schools, in which religion plays

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1. Ibid.

2. The Two Manchester Plans of Education Examined, p.8.



an extremely dominant role in the curriculum, still exist within the state system.<sup>1</sup>

Whoever might be responsible for this situation, it was certainly not Richard Cobden. For his speeches on behalf of the Association, throughout the period of his connection with it, show that he was always conscious of the need to conciliate the Voluntaryists, and that he was firmly convinced that the only hope for national education lay in the unity of endeavour, in a spirit of compromise, of all interested parties.

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1. The situation still causes annoyance to those who object to public money being spent on the teaching of religious doctrines. For two recent articles on the subject, see those by John Grigg and Cardinal Heenan in The Observer, of 28th June and 5th July 1964.

## C H A P T E R   X I I

### A GRADUAL DRAWING TOGETHER OF RIVAL FORCES

(i)

#### The Suspended Crusade

If the members of the N.P.S.A. had hoped that the holding of their third conference would revive the nation's enthusiasm for education to an extent great enough to overcome the absorbing matter of the national emergency, they were to be disappointed. In fact the year 1854 turned out to be one of "comparative but constrained inactivity".<sup>1</sup> The reason for this was the Crimean War, which diverted all attention from other matters:

"Your Committee have had to succumb to the national circumstances which have so completely absorbed the public mind".<sup>2</sup>

Education had been over-shadowed by "the great contest in which the country is engaged", for it was "a question less clamorous

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1. N.P.S.A., Report of the Seventh Annual General Meeting, 25rd January 1855. (Manchester, 1855).

2. Ibid.

and exciting....than the war, though really one of the first importance to the national power and weal".<sup>1</sup>

Interest in the subject, the Executive Committee believed, was not dead but "dormant", and that "under the auspices of the Association, the crusade against popular ignorance will be returned to with renewed vigour as soon as fitting opportunities and circumstances present themselves".<sup>2</sup>

(ii)

Milner Gibson urged to introduce the bill  
of the N.P.S.A.

Despite this disappointing assessment of the year's progress the inactivity was not due to any lack of endeavour on the part of the Association. At a Special Executive Committee meeting on 20th January 1854, at which Milner Gibson was present, unanimous agreement was "expressed on the point that it was desirable to have it (the bill of the N.P.S.A.) brought in as early as possible".<sup>3</sup> Milner Gibson advised the Committee that the best mode of proceeding in Parliament would be by a permissive measure, similar to the one proposed previously by the Association. He was "respectfully urged" to get the bill introduced as quickly as possible.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Mins. N.P.S.A., 20th January 1854.

4. Ibid., 24th January 1854.

In February a letter was received from John Bright urging the importance of preparing a local bill to be offered in the House of Commons as an amendment to the Manchester and Salford Education Bill which was to have its Second Reading on 22nd February.<sup>1</sup> Cobden wrote approving this scheme, but Milner Gibson and Dr. Watts advised that it would be impracticable. Instead, Milner Gibson moved an amendment to the Second Reading of the Manchester and Salford Bill:

"That education to be supported by public rates, should not at present be dealt with by any private bill".

On this matter he was acting not only for the N.P.S.A. but also for his constituents, for a petition had been adopted unanimously by the Manchester Town Council "praying the House not to sanction any attempt to deal with the subject of education otherwise than by a general and national measure proposed by the legislature by and on the responsibility of the Government".<sup>2</sup> As a result of this action, the Manchester and Salford bill was very narrowly, but finally, defeated.

(iii)

#### The Part Played by the Manchester Borough Council

The Manchester and Salford bill had been consistently opposed throughout this period by the Manchester Borough Council, "which thereby gave unequivocal proof of its hostility to any sectarian solution of

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1. Ibid., 27th February 1854.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.87.

local educational problems".<sup>1</sup> When the scheme was first brought before Parliament in 1852 the council protested that the bill was quite unnecessary and that "the powers sought by such a bill, would usurp the most important function of the Council, operate oppressively on the rate-payers, invade the rights of conscience, and interfere with the sacred duties of parents."<sup>2</sup> During the council's proceedings on 18th February 1852, the main objection raised, as a matter of practical policy, was against "any Bill, dealing with so important a subject, and containing provisions of so novel and unusual a character being introduced into the House as a private bill".<sup>3</sup>

The Manchester and Salford Bill was revived early in 1853, but was overshadowed by Lord John Russell's "Borough Bill". According to Professor Redford "the City Council did not come to any definite decision for or against this government Bill; but from later references it seems clear that most members of the Council were favourably disposed towards the plan, and were sorry that it was not carried into effect".<sup>4</sup>

In 1854 when the Manchester and Salford Bill was re-introduced

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1. Redford, op.cit., p.237.

2. Ibid., p.238.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.239.

into Parliament the Borough Council renewed its protests, and its petitions, mentioned above, in support of Milner Gibson's amendment, helped to bring about the bill's defeat.

In support of the Borough Council's policy Francis Adams wrote:

"The municipality naturally refused to accept the charge of a system when they had no control over its regulations, and the feeling of the people of Manchester at this time was strongly in favour of the disassociation of religious and secular teaching".

Professor Redford, however, was more critical, and while he did not doubt the justification of scotching the Manchester and Salford scheme, he felt that its members could have shown a much more constructive attitude to the question:

"The educational record of the City Council would have made a better start if the resistance to sectarian proposals had been accompanied by a definite pronouncement in favour of free and compulsory elementary education to be paid for out of the local rates and controlled by the local authorities".

Between 1852 and 1854 the Council were repeatedly asked by Abel Heywood to recognize the principle of "local rating under local management" as a suitable basis for the provision of non-sectarian elementary education, but they would not declare themselves. They were not ready to recommend such a revolutionary educational policy, but would have approved if it could have been embodied in general and national legislation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.239.

2. Ibid., p.240.

It appears, therefore, that the Borough Council could have been of much greater help to the Secularists than, in fact, they were. It is doubtful whether their positive support would have resulted in legislation in favour of non-sectarian education, but it would have been of great help to the N.P.S.A. in its capacity as a pressure group.

(iv)

#### No Respite for Milner Gibson

In March Milner Gibson was again urged to introduce the Association's permissive measure, the final form of which had been adopted on 17th February.<sup>1</sup> However, he replied that he had been in touch with Lord John Russell on the subject of its introduction and had come to the conclusion that to introduce the bill at that time would only do injury to the Association's cause.<sup>2</sup>

At this particular time the Executive Committee met only at monthly intervals. Their frustration must have been very great for, although the bill was ready for introduction, the Committee could do nothing to expedite its introduction into Parliament other than to urge Milner Gibson to make further efforts. The infrequent meetings caused a certain amount of difficulty with the constitution, for Rule 3 required Executive Committee members who had not attended a meeting for three months to seek re-election. The holding of monthly meetings

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., 17th February 1854. It became known as the "Free Schools Bill".

2. Ibid., 2nd May 1854.

had caused the membership of eleven members to lapse, so that it was necessary to re-elect them en bloc on 11th July.

In the Autumn a special meeting was held "to consider whether, and in what manner, a sustained attempt should be made during the approaching winter, to re-awaken and extend public interest in the education question". The advice of Milner Gibson, Cobden and Bright was sought on this question, but their replies discouraged all action during "the present excited state of public affairs".<sup>1</sup>

(v)

#### Introduction and Withdrawal of the Free Schools Bill

The lack of activity in 1854 was not repeated in the following year, for no fewer than five bills on education were introduced into Parliament in 1855.<sup>2</sup> On 23rd January, Lord John Russell announced his intention of bringing in an education bill similar to the "Borough Bill" of 1853. This became known as the Education (No.1) Bill.<sup>3</sup> The Executive Committee reacted immediately by resolving:

"That in consequence of the introduction into Parliament of the Education Bill of Lord John Russell, it is desirable that the Bill of the National Public School Association be also introduced and that the Right Hon. T. Milner Gibson be requested to take steps for that purpose".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.
  2. Two of these were Scottish bills.
  3. Maltby, op.cit., p.89.
  4. Mins. N.P.S.A., 20th February 1855.



As a result of this the "Free Schools Bill", Education (No.3) Bill, was introduced on behalf of the Association on 29th March.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime Sir John Pakington had introduced his Education Bill, Education (No. 2) Bill, on 16th March, one provision of which Cobden and the N.P.S.A. found particularly distasteful; this was the one whereby in parishes containing a majority of non-dissenters, the schools supported out of public funds would be under the management of the church authorities, and the Bible in the Authorized Version, the Common Prayer Book and the Church Catechism would be part of the standard teaching in the schools.<sup>2</sup>

This renewed activity was all in vain, for on 2nd July all five bills were withdrawn.

(vi)

#### The Rivals Attempt to Join Forces

The year was remarkable for attempts by various members of the N.P.S.A. to come to some agreement with the Manchester and Salford body "inasmuch as they conceded the propriety of giving the special religious teaching at separate stated times allowing attendance to be optional".<sup>3</sup> As a result of this a meeting was arranged between Dr. McKerrow and Canon Richson. On 6th February the former was able to

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.89.

2. Mins. N.P.S.A., 20th January 1855.

3. Ibid.

report that they "had been much gratified to discover that the points of difference between Mr. Richson and the friends of the N.P.S.A. were, in his (Dr. McKerrow's) opinion, few and unimportant. He had understood Mr. Richson to say that he would not object in any way to the provisos that special religious instruction be given in public schools at separate times, and that the attendance on such instruction should be optional. Mr. Richson was also willing that aid out of rates and taxes should be given to purely secular schools".<sup>1</sup>

(vii)

Dissolution of the Manchester and  
Salford Committee

In April the Association approached the Manchester and Salford body to see whether or not the two organizations could co-operate in promoting public petitions from Manchester to Parliament, and in calling a town's meeting. They suggested that a suitable agenda would be "free schools, local rating, local control, and protection of the rights of conscience". A copy of this resolution was sent to the Manchester and Salford Committee on 4th April. No reply had been received by the 17th, but on the 24th the Secretary read a letter which he had received from C.H.Minchin, the Manchester and Salford Committee's secretary, enclosing the following letter signed by the Chairman, William Entwistle:

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1. Ibid., 6th February 1855.

"I am instructed by the Executive Committee of the Manchester and Salford Educational Association to inform you that they consider that the rejection of their Bill by Parliament last year was expressed in terms which preclude them from again introducing their own Bill - that the principles and details of that Bill proved in effect the bond of union of this Association and that by persevering in any further assertion of their own exclusive views they would in all probability effect no useful purpose and only embarrass the settlement of the question by a public measure. As there are already two Bills for that purpose before the House of Commons and a third is promised, this Association are in hopes that the legislature will without further loss of time settle the principles on which Education shall be offered to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects. They have therefore determined to dissolve the Association and have desired me to communicate to you that the Association is accordingly dissolved from this day".<sup>1</sup>

It is sad that just at the time when the two organizations might have united public opinion in favour of a national system of education, one of them should decide to go into liquidation. However the attempt to sow the seeds of union was not in vain for they bore fruit two years later, in 1857, when members of both organizations joined together to form the General Committee on Education.

(viii)

An Unsuccessful Attempt to Raise a  
Petition

Meanwhile the Association had been very active through its agents in raising petitions in favour of its principles embodied in

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1. Ibid., 24th April 1855.

the Free Schools Bill. About one hundred and thirty were sent out to various parts of the country and their wide distribution can be pictured from the letters which were received notifying the Committee of their adoption. These were received from Carmarthen, Cheltenham, Shrewsbury, Warrington, Stepney, Birmingham, Oldham, Padiham (near Burnley), Leeds, Macclesfield, Gauldhurst, Plymouth, Marsden (near Huddersfield), Wigan, St. David's (Wales), Sheffield, Brighton, Wellingborough, Swaffham and Liverpool.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of any further word from Canon Richson, the Executive Committee decided to carry on alone with the proposed joint venture of a petition from Manchester and Salford, originally to be raised by the N.P.S.A. and the Manchester and Salford Education Committee. It is interesting to note the organizations supporting the petition, among which are enough religious bodies to refute all the allegations of "godlessness" incurred by the N.P.S.A. over the previous eight years. They include the inhabitants of Longsight, Manchester; the Sunday School Teachers of Lloyd Street Chapel, Manchester (Dr. McKerrow's chapel); the Wesleyan Sunday School, Rusholme, Manchester; the Union Baptist Chapel, Manchester; the United Presbyterians of Greenheys, Manchester; the Lower Mosley Street Unitarians; Chorlton-on-Medlock Discussion Society, Manchester; the members of Lloyd Street Mutual Improvement Society, Manchester; the members of Greenheys Mutual Improvement Society, Manchester; Manchester Athenaeum Parliamentary

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1. Mins. N.P.S.A., 5th May 1855.

Society; Pendleton Mechanic's Institute, Salford, and the members of Rusholme Public Library, Manchester.<sup>1</sup>

A glance at the N.P.S.A. papers for May 1855 reveals to what extent the Association had become representative of the whole country, for letters of support and offers of aid came from places which were evenly distributed all over the kingdom. Nevertheless, in spite of the widespread nature of the support, the numbers of petitions raised was only twenty-five, and the number of signatures somewhat in excess of 20,000, of which the Manchester and Salford petition raised 8,764 signatures. This was by no means sufficient to force a bill through Parliament, and it is significant of the difficulty of raising interest in education that on the day that R.W.Smiles announced these figures he was obliged to read Milner Gibson's letter to the Executive Committee, stating that he had had to withdraw the Free Schools Bill, owing to the state of Parliamentary business.<sup>2</sup>

(ix)

#### More Pressure on Milner Gibson

Such disappointments must have adversely affected the morale of the Committee members, which might explain the sporadic nature of their meetings for the rest of the year, for none was held in either September or November, and only one in each of August, October and December.

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1. Ibid., 6th May 1855.

2. Ibid., 17th July 1855. The other education bills were also withdrawn.

Neither Cobden nor Milner Gibson was present at the Annual General Meeting held on 29th January 1856, but this did not deter the Executive Committee from bringing pressure to bear on their M.P. A deputation was appointed to wait on him and attempt to persuade him to carry out the spirit of a resolution which had been adopted at the meeting:

"That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that steps should be taken immediately to secure the introduction of the "Free Schools Bill" into the next session of Parliament and that the Right Honourable T. M. Gibson with the assistance of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Headlam be requested to take charge of such a Bill".<sup>1</sup>

The deputation, consisting of Dr. McKerrow, Messrs. Winterbottom and Leppoc, and the Secretary, duly met Milner Gibson and indicated that they were "extremely desirous" for the "Free Schools Bill" to be introduced into the House of Commons at the first opportunity. In reply he expressed his readiness to carry out their wishes, but feared "that the temper and tendency of the House of Commons precluded the hope that a favourable opportunity would present itself".<sup>2</sup> Not content with this the Executive Committee adopted a resolution:

"That application be again made to Milner Gibson urging him to take the earliest and most favourable opportunity for introducing the 'Free Schools Bill'.

The Executive Committee were nothing if not tenacious of their objective at this time and obstinately refused to admit that the temper of the House was unfavourable to the bill, despite Milner

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1. Ibid., 29th January 1856.

2. Ibid., 11th March 1856.

Gibson's repeated warnings that this was the position. At no time was there any hint of acceptance on their part. that the state of national emergency might be a good reason for relaxing the intensity of the campaign. The pressure on Milner Gibson was unrelenting, and he was never allowed to forget that the Association's objective was the implementation of a system of national education by act of Parliament.

(x)

#### Reaction to Lord John Russell's Bill

In March further proposals by Lord John Russell met with the disapproval of the N.P.S.A, on the grounds that his scheme was denominational and partial and would give most to those who needed least. His proposals to appoint denominational inspectors was opposed, but the item which aroused the strongest objection was his Tenth Resolution which provided for religious instruction at the public cost. It evoked five resolutions by the Committee, as follows:

"This committee strongly disapproves of the 10th of Lord John Russell's resolutions on Education on the grounds:

- 1st. That it provides for various and conflicting kinds of special religious instruction at the public cost.
- 2nd. That it excludes secular schools from aid although in these the instruction is confined to such matters as are universally approved.
- 3rd. That it provokes the hostility of Nonconformists who object in principal to the teaching of religion at the public cost and by means raised by legal authority.
- 4th. That it imposes the duties of the clergyman, minster, or priest, upon the day school master whose proper duties are quite sufficient for the absorption of his time and energy.

5th. That the provision in the resolution must inevitably create dissension instead of promoting peace in the local organizations proposed to be called into existence".<sup>1</sup>

These resolutions were sent to Milner Gibson in order that he might make Lord John Russell aware of the views of the N.P.S.A.

(xi)

### Marginal Notes for an Education Bill

In the same month further progress was made in bringing the two rival groups together at a private conference between friends of the N.P.S.A. and the Rev. Canon Richson and members of the late Manchester and Salford Committee on Education, which resulted in the publication in the local press of "Marginal Notes for an Education Bill".<sup>2</sup> However, the proposals did not gain the unqualified approval of the Executive Committee, and a majority of its members decided that they did not "recommend to the National Public Schools Association to adopt such a Bill. But they consider that the individual members of the Association may support such a Bill after the introduction of Provisions for admitting secular schools and protecting the rights of conscience".<sup>3</sup>

The "Marginal Notes" provided for a permissive measure to establish a system of education run by local committees elected by and

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1. Ibid., 11th March 1856.
  2. Ibid., 7th May 1856.
  3. Ibid.



out of the rate-payers, which should have the power of nominating the children of needy inhabitants to free school places, to be provided on a basis of two for every hundred of the population. The right of the committees to interfere with the running of the schools was to be limited to prescribed instances which were provided for in the "Notes". Furthermore:

"All expenses to be paid out of the school rate, charged and collected as a Borough Rate, are not to exceed 32 on every hundred of the population. This plan can be carried out at a total cost in Manchester of 36,566, substantially less than a 2d rate and in Salford for 31,896, substantially less than a 2½d rate".<sup>1</sup>

Several members of the N.P.S.A. objected to the provision whereby some children would pay fees and others would not as a "pauperizing tendency". Nevertheless it set a precedent and created the germ of an idea which later developed into a new organization. In the words of S.E.Maltby:

"The chief concern of this Bill is strikingly "aid", that it recalls the fact of a private society preceding the Education Aid Society,<sup>2</sup> and also McKerrow's remark in deputation to Russell, 3rd June 1853:

'I recently visited a school, of which I had occasion to remark that it was of no use, from its rates of fees and from other circumstances, to the working and poorer classes. A few benevolent gentlemen, however, encouraged a number of poor families to send their children to this school, by agreeing to pay the whole sum required beyond sixpence a week;..they were soon allowed to disappear;....the parents of the better class had threatened to remove their children if the lower were permitted to attend'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.90.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Quoted by Maltby (Ibid).

The Members of the N.P.S.A. obviously felt that their own scheme would leave no loop-holes through which class distinction might creep into the educational system, and, for that reason, were convinced of its superiority over any system of aiding poorer children. If all pupils were educated free of charge no possible distinction could be drawn between one pupil and another, as happened in the case used as an illustration by Dr. McKerrow. However, if the whole could not be achieved there were those from the N.P.S.A. and from the late Manchester and Salford Committee who were ready to make the most of what was available. Accordingly, when it was founded in 1864, the policy of the Education Aid Society,<sup>1</sup> was designed to subsidize the school fees of children of poor parents to enable them to attend existing schools. Their experience was almost identical to that described by Dr. McKerrow. Absenteeism was such a great problem that the members of the society began to advocate compulsory attendance at school; something which the N.P.S.A. had never envisaged, although the promoters of the Model Secular School later became convinced of its necessity.

(xii)

#### A United Front at Last

Despite the fact that the Executive Committee did

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1. See Maltby, op.cit., Chapter VIII.

not unreservedly accept the "Marginal Notes", the great efforts which had been made since the foundation of the Manchester and Salford Committee in 1850 in an attempt to form a united educational front. were at last crowned with success at the end of 1856. Cobden, optimistically, "despite twenty years of disheartening experiences"<sup>1</sup> once more set to work to bring the conflicting parties together. He wrote to Sir John P~~ok~~ington in November 1856 to see if some agreement could be reached. His letter is most illustrative of the educational situation as he saw it at that particular time:

"My object in writing is to beg you and Mr. Canon Richson to meet the committee of the so-called Secular School Society, and see if it be not possible to come to Parliament as a united party for a bill, - a local bill for Manchester. You will find such men as Dr. McKerrow, Dr. Beard and Mr. Tucker, who belong to our Society, quite as solicitous to have religion taught to children as any number of the National School Society; but they hold it both just and practicable that the secular tuition should be separated in time and place from the doctrinal religious instruction. They want, in fact, the principle applied to England which was laid down by Lord Stanley for Ireland; - separate religious and combined secular teaching; they wish to see the principle tried for Old England which has worked so well for New England. Can it be doubted that we must come to it, or abandon any hope of ever having a system deserving of the name of national? Where is the difficulty? It is not a question of principle that separates you from us, but merely one between nine'o'clock and some other hour of the day. It seems to me that the likeliest solution of the case would be to first come to an understanding out of doors as between the two parties in Manchester, and then present a joint petition to Parliament for powers to levy a rate in Manchester. From what I heard from Mr. Richson it did not seem impossible that such a reason could be come to. Pray see all parties, and make yourself acquainted with their views".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.90.

2. McKerrow, op.cit., p.181.

It is interesting to note that Cobden was here proposing that a local bill should be adopted, which is precisely what Bright had advised at the Aggregate Meeting in the Mechanic's Institute on 17th January 1854.

Parkington, who had been closely associated with the Manchester and Salford Committee and had modelled his bill of 1855 on their measure, contacted Dr. McKerrow, and a working basis was quickly established between the two parties.

(xiii)

#### A Basis for a New Bill

Accordingly, on 15th December, a meeting, presided over by Thomas Bazley, was held, at which the following resolutions were adopted as the basis for an education bill to be introduced in the ensuing session of Parliament:

1. That a Rate for Education is desirable.
2. That all schools deriving aid from the Rate shall be subject to Inspection, but such inspection as is paid for out of the rate, shall not extend to the Religious Instruction.
3. That all schools shall be entitled to aid out of the Rate provided the Instruction other than Religion shall come up to a required standard and that no child shall be excluded on religious grounds.
4. That distinctive religious formularies, where taught, shall be taught at some hour to be specified by the Managers of the School, in each case, in order to facilitate the withdrawal of these children, whose Parents or Guardians may object to their instruction in such distinctive Religious Formularies.
5. That there be no interference from the management on instruction of schools, other than may be needed to carry out the principles of the foregoing resolutions.
6. That the Education Rate be administered by Local Authorities to be specially elected by and out of the rate-payers for the purpose".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Maltby, op.cit., p.91.

Sir John Pakington wrote to Dr. McKerrow expressing his optimism at this new venture stating that the united parties "must have great weight with the House of Commons".<sup>1</sup> Milner Gibson expressed his pleasure and promised aid if he found himself "able to assent to the principle and main provisions of the bill".<sup>2</sup>

On 6th February 1857, at a meeting in the Free Trade Hall, both sides met as allies. Speeches were made by William Entwistle, Canon Richson, Kay-Shuttleworth (who praised Cobden and Pakington), and Sir John Pakington. Kay-Shuttleworth said "the time was coming when the efforts of Manchester would be very valuable, but he was not very sanguine:....that even this harmonious combination would lead at once to a complete and happy result". In view of the discontent aroused by the 1870 Act, Kay-Shuttleworth was no mean prophet.

Dr. McKerrow was to have taken charge of a resolution at the meeting, but, as the early speakers had taken up too much time, he realized that Sir John Pakington would not be able to speak to advantage unless he were allowed to do so before his turn. For this reason Dr. McKerrow courteously declined to speak and contented

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1. McKerrow, op.cit., p.182.

2. Ibid., p.183.

himself with publishing two letters in the Examiner and Times,<sup>1</sup> in which he explained how, as a result of the pressing need for public education, the two parties had managed to compromise. The concessions are described in the following extract:

"What then is the concession which has been made on the one side? It is that religious teaching shall not be enacted and enforced by law; it is that secular schools may be supported by public rate; it is that religious schools may be converted into secular schools if the managers should have any scruples about the apparent connection between religious instruction and the rate. And what is the concession which has been made on the other side? It is that the management, instruction and discipline of the denominational schools shall not be interfered with; it is that the reading of the Scriptures shall not be interdicted, and that religious instruction shall not be hindered, except to the extent specified in relation to distinctive formularies".<sup>2</sup>

The principle agreed upon which satisfied the Secularists was described as follows by Dr. McKerrow:

"The rate is to be given, not because religious instruction is to be supplied, but solely because secular instruction is furnished. The latter must be given; the former may or may not be given. We have no wish to conceal our belief that in the majority of cases doctrinal religion will be taught; but we affirm that the teacher will be paid only for the communication of the things about which the entire community is agreed".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.183.

2. Ibid., p.189.

3. Ibid., p.192.

The agreement, therefore, resulted in a scheme very much like the American system in that the local committees would have the right to decide whether the Bible should, or should not, be used, which was all that Cobden had wanted from the start.

The outcome of the meeting was the formation of the General Committee on Education which dealt a great blow to the N.P.S.A. when R.W.Smiles accepted the post of secretary to the newly formed body. In fact, although the Association continued in existence until 1862, its life as an active pressure group came to an end in 1857 when, on January 20th, the Executive Committee received the resignations of the President, Alexander Henry and R.W.Smiles.

(xiv)

#### The Resignation of R.W. Smiles

In R.W.Smiles's opinion, expressed in his letter of resignation, the Association was pushing against an immovable obstacle in attempting to obtain legislation on the Free Schools Bill. He saw the futility of pressing Milner Gibson and Cobden to re-introduce the measure, when it was obviously impossible to gain enough support in Parliament to guarantee the least hope of success. A compromise measure was obviously needed, and when one appeared in the form of the General Committee on Education he seized the opportunity to identify himself with it.<sup>1</sup> He wrote as follows:

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1. McKerrow, op.cit., p.198.

"Permit me to state my unaltered conviction as to the political justice (and consequent moral rectitude) of the scheme of public instruction offered by this association for public acceptance. It may be of very little consequence to anyone to know what have been the motives or inducements on which such an humble individual as myself has joined the educational movement recently originated in this locality. You will perhaps believe me when I say that it is not because of the abstract principles on which it is based, but solely in the hope of earlier practical results and in the hope also that the attainment of the scheme in question may bring into existence circumstances and agencies which may prove instrumental to the ultimate attainment of the scheme of the association in its entirety.

One consideration that has influenced me in joining the new movement has been the hopeless parliamentary aspect of the cause of the National Public Schools Association, as you are aware even a promise by a member of the House of Commons to attempt the introduction of a Bill based on the principles of the Association in the approaching session has been found unattainable. It is also well known that if a member could be obtained willing to do his best in promotion of such a measure he would not lead into the lobby with him more than the odd fifty or sixty members in support of the second reading. I have ventured on these facts to conclude that the National Public School Association under existing circumstances is powerless for initiatory action in the House of Commons and that an indefinite term of years may pass without its making any progress towards the attainment of its object.

Permit me with reference to the new movement to notice a few considerations which should prove satisfactory to the friends of the National Public School Association as evidence of a result from their past labours. The Scheme recognises the necessity of a "rate" for education and provides for its administration by a "local committee" - it also admits the necessity of "free" education in a certain degree although the conditions for participating in the rate are different in a very important sense from those provided in the scheme of the National Public School Association and the provision for the instruction of the destitute is neither as systematic, nor likely to be, in the outset, as complete as is provided by the plan of this association: it is to be borne in mind that in the appointment of an administrative Committee "by and out of the ratepayers" a power will be created from which important service may reasonably be expected in the future rectification and extension of the system.



"Permit me in taking leave of you to express my sense of the many shortcomings and imperfections with which I have been chargeable in my official capacity and to tender my sincere thanks for the kindness and forbearance which I have uniformly met with at your hands and during the period of my connection with the association.

I can only assure you that while I have felt my unworthiness of your indulgence I have not been altogether incapable to appreciate it".<sup>1</sup>

Smiles, was prepared to aim for what appeared to be attainable in the hope that the ideal would, in time, be achieved. His letter, however, illustrates to what extent the principles of the N.P.S.A. were to be incorporated in the new bill, notably rate support, local control, and free education.

This compromise by the rival forces prevented a great deal of effort from going to waste, because it enabled the N.P.S.A. through the General Committee of Education to have an important influence on the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Of the members of this new body, R.W.Smiles, Thomas Bazley and Dr. McKerrow were from the N.P.S.A., and William Entwistle and Canon Richson from the Manchester and Salford Committee. They introduced an education bill, backed by Sir John Pakington, Cobden, Lord Stanley and Headlam, into the House of Commons on 18th February 1857, which, although twice put off through lack of time, delayed as a result of the Government defeat over Cobden's resolution on war on China,<sup>2</sup> and never re-introduced, appears to have directly influenced W.E.Forster who admitted as much

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1. Mins.N.P.S.A., 20th January 1857.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.92.

in his speech during the Committee stage of the Elementary Education Bill in 1870, when he said:

"(Cobden) put his name to the Bill of the right honourable member for Droitwich (Sir John Pakington), a Bill which was the parent of the measure introduced by myself and the Home Secretary".<sup>1</sup>

(xv)

#### The Dissolution of the N.P.S.A.

Not only did the Association lose its President and Secretary in 1857 but also its Treasurer; R.N.Phillips's resignation being received by the Executive Committee on 17th February 1857, the night of the Annual General Meeting, when it was decided to make a donation of £150 to the Model Secular School. The cordial thanks of the Committee were extended to Alexander Henry for his continued and valuable service, and to R.W.Smiles.

This brought to an end the practical work of the N.P.S.A. as a pressure group. In November 1862, its affairs were wound up. A circular, issued on 20th November for a meeting advertized in the Manchester Guardian and the Manchester Examiner and Times of 21st November, was posted to the following gentlemen: Thomas Bazley, now an M.P., Joseph Ashworth, H.J.Leppoc, R.N.Shipman, Archibald Winterbottom, Richard Aspden and John King Jnr., recently elected to the Borough Council, the Rev. Drs. McKerrow and Beard, Francis Taylor and Dr. Watts.

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1. Ibid.

It is pleasant to reflect on the fact that there appears to have been no bitterness towards those who had resigned in 1857, in fact, as an acknowledgment of his services to the movement. R.W. Smiles was given £60 of the remaining funds of the Association.

The N.P.S.A. had worked extremely diligently, and not without a considerable amount of success, in order to bring the education question in general, and its own views in particular, before the attention of the public, but in serving the community its greatest achievement was the establishment of the Manchester Model Secular School in Jackson's Row. It was, therefore, most fitting that the balance of the N.P.S.A. funds should be given as a donation of £200 to the school which did so much for those children who, being neither paupers nor wealthy enough to pay school fees, escaped the existing provisions for education.

## C H A P T E R XIII

### SECULAR SCHOOLS FOUNDED PRIOR TO THE MANCHESTER MODEL SECULAR SCHOOL

#### (i)

The history of education in the nineteenth century is remarkable for the number of schemes of secular education put into practice in industrial schools. As a number of these were in Scotland, it is no surprise to find George Combe intimately connected with them. However, several schemes were set on foot in England and it is interesting to note Combe's influence in most of these. All the schemes were notable for the progressive nature of the curriculum; science in the form of physiology and anatomy, and economics, known as "social economy", playing a prominent part.

#### (ii)

##### William Lovett's National Hall School

One of the early pioneers of secular education was William Lovett, the Chartist who, finding himself opposed by the physical force party of <sup>a</sup>Fergus O'Connor, turned to education in an attempt to find some method of making moral force a practical possibility. In 1837 he issued an eloquent Address to the Working Classes on the subject, advocating the appointment by Parliament of a Committee

of Public Instruction, and the establishment, all over the country, of normal, infant, preparatory, high, and finishing schools, with evening schools for later education. On his release from Warwick Gaol in 1840 he issued a similar Address on Education in which he recommended the formation of "Public Halls or Schools for the People", to be used for schools, lectures, discussions and entertainments, attached to which would be play and pleasure grounds, baths, museums, laboratories and workshops, as well as agricultural and industrial schools. If every man contributed one shilling a quarter, these could be easily supported, he maintained. The Chartist leaders were not impressed, however. Describing the situation in a letter to George Combe in 1848, Lovett wrote:

"Education was ridiculed, knowledge was sneered at, facts perverted, truth suppressed, and the lowest passions and prejudices of the multitude were appealed to, to obtain a clamorous verdict against us".<sup>1</sup>

The result was that he took a large chapel in Holborn on a twenty-one years lease, and with the aid of subscriptions from some generous friends, opened it, in July 1842, under the title of the National Hall. It was used for concerts and lectures originally, for, owing to a debt of £300, Lovett was unable to open a day school until 28th February 1848,<sup>2</sup> although he had been able to open a Sunday School at the commencement of the venture.

The day school was opened at first for boys and later for girls.

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1. Jolly, op.cit., p.225.

2. Ibid., note.p.207.

The subjects taught were physiology, social science, "facts of trades and manufactures", natural history "and other sciences", and drawing and singing. Lovett himself taught physiology, "being the first to teach this subject in any common school in Britain".<sup>1</sup>

Social science was taught by William Ellis, who was a pioneer in this field.<sup>1</sup> George Combe visited the school and was much impressed by a physiology lesson given by Lovett. Combe described the National Hall school in a letter to the Scotsman of 17th November 1849 in which he wrote:

"This is the true method of promoting the extension of the political franchise to the working classes. If a generation taught and trained in schools like these were fairly come to maturity, they might be safely trusted with political power".<sup>3</sup>

Later at the suggestion of William Ellis, Lovett introduced the teaching of anatomy and physiology at the Birkbeck schools "where they have formed a special feature ever since".<sup>4</sup> He opened a class for teachers of anatomy at the National Hall School and published the first school text book on the subject, entitled Elementary Anatomy and Physiology for Schools and Private Instruction, which was honoured with a favourable criticism in the Lancet. In

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1. Ibid., p.227.

2. Ibid.

3, Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.229. The statement was made in 1878.

1857 the school had to be closed when the premises were taken from him, but he continued to teach at the Birkbeck and other London schools, and succeeded in writing text-books on Social and Political Morality, which was published, and on Astronomy, Zoology, and Geology, which did not succeed in finding a publisher. He also published in The Beehive, edited by George Potter, The ABC of Social Science in twenty lessons, addressed to the Working Classes, by a Working Man. He died in 1877 at the age of seventy-six.

(iii)

#### The Birkbeck Schools

The first of the Birkbeck Schools, founded by William Ellis, a manager of the Indemnity Marine Assurance Company, was opened for boys at the London Mechanics Institution in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, Holborn on 17th July 1848. The curriculum was very similar to that of Lovett' school, but in addition to mathematics, mechanics and physics, "the children were to be made acquainted with the laws of their own organization, in order that they might understand how much their health, general energy, physical happiness, and length of life are dependent on their own conduct; also with the laws of Social Economy, that they might properly understand their own position in society and their duties towards it. ...The moral training is based on the principle that the moral feelings like the physical and intellectual powers, can only be strengthened by actual exercise; that the mere teaching of moral precepts is not sufficient, since they are but intellectual truths for the guidance of the

feelings, and their acquisition an intellectual operation - they must be carried into practice".<sup>1</sup>

The school which was purely secular was described by George Combe in an article to the Scotsman of 17th November 1849. It was carried on for twenty-five years and was only given up in 1873. For most of its existence it served as a training school for the teachers of the other Birkbeck Schools which Ellis established in the Tottenham Court Road, City Road, and Islington. In 1878 four were still in existence in Bethnal Green, Peckham, Kingsland and Kentish Town, and all of them were co-educational.<sup>2</sup>

Ellis's motives for teaching "Social and Political Science" are particularly interesting. It appears that being a merchant himself, and a manager, at the age of twenty-eight, of an insurance company, he was particularly interested in the "subjects of wages, panics, strikes, currency, banking, and similar problems of commercial and social life". He determined to investigate these matters and in so doing became associated with Thomas Tooke and James Mill. He believed that by teaching the working-classes about the principles of "commercial and social phenomena", their attendant evils might be alleviated. In view of the slump and financial dislocation that befell the world in 1929 Ellis's hopes seem somewhat naive, but, nevertheless, he was a pioneer of the teaching of the discipline now

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1. Ibid., p.232.

2. Ibid., p.233.



known as "economics" in schools, and wrote a text book on the subject entitled Progressive Lessons in Social Science. He and George Combe were life-long friends.

(iv)

#### The William's Secular School, Edinburgh

George Combe and George Simpson were the promoters of the William's School, so named from its headmaster, who had previously been Hon. Secretary of the committee of the Birkbeck School. It was opened for boys on 4th December 1848 "for the purpose of affording to the children of the working classes of Edinburgh a useful secular education. ...The object of the school...included the training of all the faculties - animal, moral, religious and intellectual; but, in order to avoid the difficulties arising from differences of opinion among the various sects on points of religious doctrine, ...the teaching was confined to matters purely Secular, or relating to this world and its duties only".<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum was similar to that of the National Hall and Birkbeck Schools with the curious addition of George Combe's favourite subject, phrenology, of which he wrote:

"The introduction of Phrenology, because of the prejudices cherished against it, was considered by many as an experiment of questionable prudence, but experience proved its wisdom and great utility. Without instructing children in their own bodily and mental constitutions,

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1. Ibid, p.213.

it is impossible to convey to them clear, useful, and practical notions of their own relations to the objects and beings of creation; and the children took a deep interest in this instruction".<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this there was great emphasis on moral training and "moral delinquencies were tried by a jury of the children, the teacher acting as judge". As if this were not enough "the teachers endeavoured to give a moral tone to the whole proceedings of the school, by explaining to them the moral grounds upon which the school discipline was founded and freely permitting their own conduct to be questioned".

In September 1849 the school was opened to boys as well as girls in a more spacious building. There was much opposition, particularly to the use of the word "secular", and Combe found it necessary to defend the school in a letter to the Scotsman.<sup>2</sup>

The school, which was supported entirely by subscriptions and pupils fees, had to be given up in 1854. An application to the Privy Council for a grant was dismissed on the grounds that "religious" instruction was not taught, a fate which later befell the Manchester Model Secular School. The causes of the closing of the school were James Simpson's death, the infirm health of George Combe, and the removal of Mr. Williams to Birmingham where he took the post

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1. Ibid., p.215.

2. Ibid., p.216.

of Lecturer in Chemistry and Experimental Physics at the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Combe, to the end of his life, cherished the idea of re-opening the school, but never succeeded in finding a suitable teacher.

The William's School was not by any means the only secular school in Scotland for a similar one was founded at Leith, Edinburgh, in 1852, and remained open successfully until the Scottish Education Act came into force in 1872.

Similar schools were opened in Glasgow in 1851, 1853 and 1854, under the auspices of the Glasgow Secular School Society, on the model of the William's School. Secular Sunday Schools were also opened by the Glasgow Sunday Educational Association, in an attempt to bring secular education "to the poorest, the most ignorant, the most helpless class of children", who, owing to the exhausting nature of their work, had, if they were to be taught at all, to be taught on Sunday.

(v)

#### Secular Schools in Manchester

Although the Manchester Model Secular School became one of the most successful of its kind, it was not the first to be founded in the borough. In 1851, the National Independent Oddfellows' Secular School was founded with the aid of William Ellis, and taught by a Mr. Shields who had previously taught at the Birkbeck school in Peckham. He was succeeded by John Angell, later to become Science Master at Manchester Grammar School, who had previously taught at

the William's school. The curriculum was identical to that of the Edinburgh school, the special objective of the teaching being, as with all the other secular schools, "the training and development of the mind, rather than the task of memory".<sup>1</sup> The school became co-educational in 1853 but only lasted a short time owing to the accumulation of debts.

In 1853 John Angell opened the Salford Mechanics' Institution School, and established it on the principles of the Edinburgh and Birkbeck schools. Starting with boys only, it later admitted girls. They were taught by a Miss Barron of the Oddfellows School, who had come originally from the Glasgow secular school. This school continued to flourish for many years.

Four years later, Angell is found as headmaster of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution School, founded on the same principles as the Edinburgh and Birkbeck schools. Evening classes, similar to those which he had previously introduced at Salford, were held in Latin, French, German, natural sciences, physiology, social economy, and "mental science". The school was extremely successful and received a superb report when it was visited in 1868 by the French Education Commissioners.

In 1869 Angell left to take up his post at Manchester

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1. Ibid., p.245.

Grammar School, and although the Mechanics' Institution school continued to flourish, the distinctive teaching in physiology and social economy could no longer be carried on in his absence.

Although all the schools mentioned were founded in urban areas, an exception was that of Mr. Bastard's school, which was opened in 1861 at Blandford, Dorset. William Ellis gave financial aid and George Combe corresponded with Mr. Bastard giving him the benefit of his experience. It is ironic that of all the schools that George Combe had been connected with in Scotland, London and the North of England, it was this most southerly and rurally situated establishment which bore the unique distinction of being the only one to erect a monument to the invaluable pioneering work of him and his brother Andrew, to whose generosity and devotion secular education in the nineteenth century owed so much.

(vi)

#### Chronic Shortage of Suitable Teachers

Nothing illustrates more fully the tremendous problem of finding suitable teachers than the account of these secular schools. One of their most interesting features is the way in which the staff moved from one school to another in a kind of closed educational circuit. This was probably admirable in some ways, showing that the secular schools could retain for a time, at any rate, able teachers within their group. Yet the sad conclusion to be drawn is that one school's gain was often another school's irrecoverable loss. The fate of the William's school is a perfect example of this, as also

are the Manchester and Salford Mechanic's Institution Schools, where the resignation in both cases, of John Angell, although not resulting in the closure of the schools, made it impossible to continue with the same progressive curriculum. The only means whereby a school could guarantee that it would always be able to find suitable teachers was to follow the example of the Birkbeck schools and train its own staff.

For most schools, however, this was impracticable, because few establishments were on a large enough basis to be able to put such a scheme into effect.

The schools remain therefore as irrefutable evidence of the inadequacy of the voluntary system, of which they, no matter how unwillingly, were inevitably a part, and of the desperate need for a system of national education.

## C H A P T E R   X I V

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE MANCHESTER MODEL SECULAR SCHOOL

#### (i)

#### Promises of Support for the New School

The Manchester Model Secular School was established mainly in response to Lord John Russell's criticism to the N.P.S.A. deputation in 1853 that they had not sufficiently practicalized their scheme to justify legislation in its favour.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Watts urged that this should be taken as a challenge, and arrangements were made to meet the influential friends of the Association to see what could be done. Once again he stands out as the leading spirit of this educational pressure group, urging his associates to make a reality of their aspirations in order to bring pressure onto the government, not merely by organizing public opinion in support of the N.P.S.A. but also by setting up an establishment which would embody all its principles; a model of what a good school should be. It would also be unique among other schools of its kind being an entirely free school at which the pupils would not have to pay any fees at all.

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1. Hins. N.P.S.A., Vol. 2, 1st August 1853.

Objections having been overruled with the aid of promises of money from William Ellis,<sup>1</sup> Richard Cobden and others,<sup>2</sup> R.M.Shipman was soon able to report that he had communicated in an unofficial capacity with several people on behalf of the projected school.<sup>3</sup>

In the early stages of the school's development, it is obvious that Shipman was one of its main supporters. His efforts received more support when Cobden expressed a desire to meet members of the N.P.S.A. who were interested in establishing a school, when he visited Manchester in October.<sup>4</sup>

(ii)

Great Care taken in the Choice of a Master

The first meeting of the school's promoters was held on 21st October 1853, presided over by E.R.Langworthy and attended by Richard Cobden, W.B.Watkins, R.N.Phillips, H.J.Leppoc, Archibald Winterbottom, Ivie Mackie, James Simpson, R.M.Shipman, Dr. McKerrow, Dr. J.R.Beard, W.F.Walker, Dr. Watts and other gentlemen interested in education. Resolutions were then adopted to establish a Model Secular School, and to secure the requisite guarantee for the expenses. A Provisional Committee was appointed and, sufficient subscriptions having been secured to justify the prosecution of the work, steps

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1. Ibid., 15th August 1853. Ellis promised 2500.
  2. Ibid., 15th September 1853.
  3. Ibid., 25th September 1853.
  4. Ibid., 10th October 1853.



were taken to obtain suitable premises. A Committee of Management was elected by subscribers on 5th July 1854,<sup>1</sup> and after making certain private inquiries the newly elected body advertized for a master.

Thirty applications were received, many of which were from teachers in National and British schools. It appears that not only were the applicants themselves scrutinized carefully, but the schools where they taught also underwent a thorough examination, members of the committee travelling to various parts of the country for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> The distances which they travelled are ample illustration of the zeal with which the promoters of the school went about their task.

The choice of the Committee finally fell upon Benjamin Templar "the master of a large prosperous British school in Bridport,"<sup>3</sup> and he was engaged from Midsummer quarter day". The premises selected by the Committee were on Deansgate, Manchester, at the bottom of Jackson's Row, and were considered to be admirably suited for the purpose. A description is given in the report of March 1855:

"The principal school room is a lofty, well-lighted and ventilated hall, of about fifty feet square, with a gallery extending across one end, having six convenient class-rooms, opening into the principal room. The suite is capable of accommodating above 300 scholars".<sup>4</sup>

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1. First Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, March 1855.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The report explains that the building belonged to the Society of Friends and was occupied by them on Sundays. It is emphasized, however, "that the day and Sunday Schools, carried on in the building, are totally separate and completely independent of each other", presumably to leave no doubt in the reader's mind as to the secular nature of the instruction.

(iii)

No Expense Spared in Providing Equipment

In furnishing the school, the Committee showed itself to be extremely energetic and far-seeing. Great care was taken "in the selection of the most modern and approved teaching apparatus, in books, diagrams, models, objects etc". In order that the most suitable equipment could be obtained Mr. Templar, the Headmaster, was sent to visit the "Educational Exposition", in St. Martin's Hall, London, in August 1854, and, at the same time, "all the School Repositories available, culling from the whole the teaching apparatus he might think most worthy of adoption".<sup>1</sup>

The Committee obviously intended that the adjective "model" should be applicable to their establishment in meaning as well as in its name.

(iv)

Great Demand for Places

No difficulty was encountered in finding pupils, and all the reports emphasize the excess of applications over the available places.

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1. Ibid., p.6.

Although the original plan had envisaged mixed schools, only boys were allowed to enter the Model Secular School. Selection was made by means of an application schedule, supplying information such as the boy's age, the school or schools previously attended, the length of time spent at school, how long since he had left school, the number of children in the family to which the applicant belonged, and the father's or guardian's occupation.

Publicity was given to the new school by the usual method of posting placards chiefly in the district in which it was situated, stating the nature of the instruction and the method of applying for admission. For this reason the majority of pupils came from the neighbouring district, although the report emphasizes that there was a sufficient number from remoter parts of the city, and from the townships of Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock, to indicate that there was a demand for similar schools in other areas.

(v)

#### Early Difficulties

The school was not opened without certain difficulties:

"The master was comparatively unaided at the commencement, and it was deemed essential to success that he should not have a larger number than he could completely control. His preliminary labours were accordingly directed to the reduction to a satisfactory state of discipline and order, of a limited number of boys, rather than to the work of actual teaching. From amongst the first applicants for admission the master selected about a dozen of the most promising youths, and about the beginning of July he commenced training these as monitors".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.7.

It was apparently very difficult to find suitable assistant teachers and youths in any way qualified to act as monitors, but this was gradually overcome by the patient labour of Mr. Templar who was not averse to putting in some overtime in order to train his monitors and assistants to the standard required.

The school was opened for the reception of ordinary pupils on 21st August 1854, when 130 boys were admitted. This figure gradually increased to 330, which is the figure given in the March Report of 1855, and remained fairly stable throughout the school's existence, for example, the figure for September 1897 is 324.<sup>1</sup> The boys had to be admitted in batches over the first seven months, and the school suffered a certain amount of absenteeism, particularly in February 1855. Although the average number on the books was only 300, the average attendance for the seven months was only 270. It is interesting to note how the seasons affected attendance; December, January and February having the worst figures. The smallest numbers absent on any half-day of these months were twenty, thirty-one and fifteen; and the largest, forty-seven, sixty-four and forty-eight, although the January figure of sixty-four was for the first day after the Christmas holidays.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Eighteenth Report of the Manchester Free School for the year ending February 1867-77-78-79. (Manchester, 1879), p.3.

2. First Report, March 1855, p.7.

(vi)

### Careful Selection of Pupils

The method of entry to the school was by means of an application form, obtainable from either Mr. Templar, the Headmaster, or the Secretary, R.W.Smiles, who combined this new post with that of secretary to the N.P.S.A. As the education given was completely free, great care was taken to ensure that the school was not exploited by those who could afford to pay fees. The following qualifications were required before a boy could gain admission:

"Honest poverty in the parents, and probability that the applicants will attend school regularly, and for sufficient time to render the real advantage from the instruction possible.....".<sup>1</sup>

The original staff consisted of Mr. Templar, four Assistant Teachers, and twelve regular and a few occasional monitors. selected from the pupils.

(vii)

### Some Examples of the Curriculum

The methods of teaching consisted of the monitorial system combined with the simultaneous method. Reading, spelling, writing, and, in part, arithmetic, were taught by the former method, while Mr. Templar gave "collective" lessons, "in which the scholars are evidently deeply interested", in some of "the more important subjects".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.8.

It is interesting to note what these "more important subjects" were considered to be. One of them described as "common things"<sup>1</sup> embraced the "origin, qualities and uses of natural objects; from its origin in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, raw material is traced to its ultimate uses,... and the great truth is thus clearly demonstrated that, 'the earth is full of His riches' beneficently stored in it for the happiness of man".

The collective method of teaching was also used for instruction upon what are termed "organic laws, as operating in material creation; concerning the ascertained natural causes of disease and poverty, of health and wealth; concerning moral obligation and its intimate relation to individual and social happiness or misery".<sup>2</sup>

An extract from a lesson on "lying" is contained in the report as an example of the moral training received by the pupils as a substitute for religious instruction which would have involved reading the Bible. This, it was feared, might have excluded the children of some sects from the benefits offered by the school. The procedure was to tackle the meaning of the word by attempting to arrive at a definition by the question and answer method, in the course of which the master explained the implications of lying.

It is emphasized that in these collective lessons the master

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1. Miss Angela **G. Burdett Goultz**, the Victorian philanthropist was a great propagandist for the teaching of "common things" (Tropp, op.cit., p.23. note).

2. Ibid, p.3.

dispensed with text books, and throughout the whole course of teaching, the learning by heart of large numbers of facts and formularies was reduced to a bare minimum. This obviously was an attempt to obviate one of the worst features of the monitorial system,<sup>1</sup> whereby children learned parrot wise many facts, often answering in the original order despite changes in the order of the questions. The pupils were only required to commit to memory such words or form of words, figures and facts, as "are indispensable to enable them to acquire the arts of reading, ciphering, and, as far as possible, of judging, inferring, and estimating correctly."

(viii)

#### Use of Visual Aids

Visual aids were used at every opportunity as a basis for oral instruction, and for this purpose a store of "common things" of all descriptions was acquired, for example:

"A first lesson in lineal measurement is illustrated by a graduated yard stick, and a real conception thereby imparted.<sup>2</sup> A lesson in corn is illustrated by the exhibition of samples of various cereals, flour, meal, pearl-barley, bran, etc."<sup>3</sup>

One cannot read the reports of the school without being encouraged, and also by the breadth of the curriculum. The following description of a lesson in physiology illustrates this:

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1. Hammond, J.L. & Barbara, The Bleak Age, (Pelican Edition), p.145.
  2. First Report, March 1855, p.8.
  3. Ibid.

"A lesson in physiology, respiration, and circulation, given recently, was illustrated by the contents of a sheep's thorax, procured for the purpose, and dissected in the presence of the boys; a more accurate conception it is certain was thereby conveyed of the nature and function of the thoracic organs, than could possibly have been conveyed by words or books, unaided by such tangible palpable illustrations".<sup>1</sup>

(ix)

### The Enforcement of Discipline

The approach to discipline was equally enlightened, and the report for March 1855. refers to the astonishment of some of the visitors to the school at the fact that corporal punishment was scarcely ever used:

"It is dispensed with as being less powerful for purposes of discipline and control than other means, and as being destructive of the master's moral influence over the boys".<sup>2</sup>

In case the reader might not be impressed with this achievement the report reminds him that:

"The class of boys attending are the most unlikely possible, it may be supposed, for government by 'moral suasion' and 'the power of gentleness', but the master has the best reason to be satisfied with the results of his treatment in this respect".<sup>3</sup>

The idea of punishment was subdued and the boys were taught to regard discipline not as a punishment, but as part of the training necessary for their individual correction and welfare.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.



(x)

## Methods of Enforcing Good Attendance

After the first few months, attendance at the school improved and remained good throughout its existence. For example, in the report for August 1856, the average attendance is stated to be 95%, which, it was claimed, was not surpassed by any other school in the country, and in fact was in great contrast with the majority of schools. This high attendance figure was attributed to the appreciation by the parents of the instruction given and the excellence of the discipline. The report goes on to describe the procedure used when pupils were absent. A message as follows was sent to the parents, demanding, wherever possible, a written reply:

"Manchester Free Secular School

Mrs. -

Please state the reason for your son's absence from School this morning (or afternoon as the case may be)

185 B. Templar. Master  
N.B. Please to write the answer. "

Apparently a reply was usually received, and the excuses in the majority of cases were acceptable. Very often these are remarkable for their stark illumination of the appalling social conditions under which the parents of the pupils of the Model Secular School existed.

If the absence of a pupil persisted, the parents would be reminded that:

"It is of the first importance that your son should be regular in his attendance; for if he be not, he will not only lose much valuable instruction, which no future diligence can make good, but he will get into the bad, and ~~of~~ ruinous, habits of irregularity, and thereby, it may be, endanger his future success in life. If you insist upon regularity, your son will see that you attach importance to his attending school, and will be the more likely to prize the privilege; whereas if you show that you think lightly of it, by often keeping him at home to run upon errands or do other matters that may be done at other times, or by other persons, he will in all probability become careless, and give you and me great trouble and sorrow.

Nothing less than serious sickness, or other pressing necessity, should be considered a sufficient excuse for keeping your son at home.

I hope you will, for your son's sake consider these things, and for the future send him very regularly. If no improvement takes place, he must be dismissed, and make room for another who will attend regularly.

B. Templar. Master".<sup>1</sup>

As one can see from the above letter, the Headmaster was at pains to educate the parents of the children who attended his school to a full appreciation of the responsibilities they bore towards them. Having had little or no schooling themselves, they would, no doubt, be quite oblivious of the importance of regular attendance, nor would they have a sense of priorities with regard to what were valid reasons for absence. Hence Mr. Templar had to explain in simple terms that severe illness warranted a child's absence from school, but that running errands did not.

This policy appears to have been successful, with the result that, despite the poor background of the boys, the school was filled

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1. Second Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, August 1856, (Manchester, 1856).

for the most part with pupils whose parents were very conscious of the privilege their sons were enjoying, and who, consequently, encouraged them to behave well at school. By August 1856 out of 676 boys admitted since the opening of the school, only eleven had been dismissed for irregularity of attendance.<sup>1</sup>

(xi)

### The School as a Social Service

An interesting feature of the reports is the fact that although academic achievement takes an important place in the account of the year's progress, equally, if not more, important are the examples of the social work done by the school, clearly illustrating the need for a system of free instruction. Here are some examples of the people who took advantage of the Model School:

"A widow with four children - keeps a small greengrocery shop".<sup>2</sup>

"An old woman who is guardian of her four grandchildren, whose father died of cholera in 1849".<sup>3</sup>

"The orphan son of a soldier who died in India, where the boy was born. The boy was sent home at his father's dying request, to his friends in Manchester who maintained him".<sup>4</sup>

"A boy whose father was a clerk in a factory till 1851, when he was incapacitated by the loss of his right fore-finger. Soon afterwards he was afflicted with a softening of the brain, which brought on mental derangement, and so made him dependent on the earnings of his two eldest children, and on what little his wife gets by selling milk. The boy, though nine years of age, has never gone to a day school".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. First Report, March 1855.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Fifth Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, September, 1860.

Poverty pressed extremely heavily on the majority of parents, many of whom were widows "or females upon whom the children have been case for their maintenance".<sup>1</sup> Most of them were impoverished; "privation, toil and care, are their daily portion".<sup>2</sup> Yet it appears that there were those in an even worse plight. The Report for 1855 maintains that it was the mothers, in the majority of cases, who brought their children for admission, for "in many cases, although their fathers are alive, they are utterly incompetent through the enervating and prostrating, or vitiating influence of poverty, which has overborne them in the past or present, to provide for the education of their children. Many of these men are very irregularly employed, and the earnings of others, even when in constant employment, leave little if any margin for 'school wages' after the primary necessities of food, clothing, etc., have been provided".<sup>3</sup>

According to the report, this ever present poverty had made some despair and, in some cases, the fathers had become reckless and indifferent to the interests of their families concentrating all their energies on depravity. The writers of the report might well ask: "Is it well for society that the sons of such fathers should be left to their fate?"<sup>4</sup>

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1. First Report, March 1855.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.12.

The school reports, therefore, are not only resumes of the year's progress, but also polemics reminding the reader and indirectly the government, that a large section of the population was in need of care, and that the task was too great for voluntary organizations to perform, being one of national proportions. By setting up the school the members of the N.P.S.A. were able to combine a great work of social improvement with a campaign which was orientated towards forcing the government to provide, on a national basis, a system of education which would satisfy the needs of a large section of the population, but particularly that section with which they had become involved; those who, being neither paupers nor able to afford to pay fees, escaped any educational provision.

Not all the parents whose children attended the school were unable to pay school fees, but the Committee of Management emphasized "that the children whom they have admitted are of the juvenile population which is permitted to grow up without any day school instruction; or of the much larger class who (wretched and delusive alternative!) receive it in the smallest modicum, stinted in quantity, often miserable in quality. Nine-tenths of the cases in our criminal calendars, it may be remarked en passant, are drawn from these two classes".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid.

An Attempt to give an Education Relevant  
to the Pupils' Needs

Children such as these were in need of an education which would be of some use to them in the industrial framework of Manchester. It had to be relevant to their environment, and it is interesting to observe Templar's attempts to provide this.

The full curriculum consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, original composition, geography, physical science, drawing, human physiology, political economy, social ethics, and the uses and properties of "common things". Templar's aim was to meet the prospective wants of the individual child when apportioning the time that each should spend on any particular subject. It was his "constant endeavour to strengthen the perceptive and reasoning faculties, to increase their reproductive powers, and to cultivate a love for all that is morally beautiful".<sup>1</sup> He believed that the teaching of social economy had made the boys in some degree conversant with the conditions of industrial success"... and with the circumstances that determine the value of labour, and that the instruction given in the subject, supplied them with some correct principles and motives for their guidance in future industrial and commercial life".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Master's Report, contained in the Second Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, August 1856, p.13.
  2. Ibid.

The lessons in human physiology seem to have been quite detailed and advanced. They included the study of the processes of mastication and digestion of food; "the most nutritive kinds of food". After the course was completed, each boy was required to write as much as he could remember. This in itself, it appears, was something that none of the boys had been asked to do before. One of these exercises which is described as "neither the best, nor the worst", is printed in the report, complete with errors, and shows that a remarkable degree of literacy had been attained by at least some of the pupils, with words such as "saliva", "masticate", and "epiglottis" used with accuracy, and only occasionally mis-spelt.<sup>1</sup>

(xiii)

#### Lessons in "Practical Religion"

In place of Bible-reading, the pupils were given lessons on practical morality which Templar and the School Managers claimed to be practical religion, "inculcating a love of truth, honesty, temperance, cleanliness, diligence, punctuality and order; obedience and love to parents, respect for teachers and kindness to each other".<sup>2</sup>

The teaching was not merely didactic, "for Mr. Templar was able to draw from every day experience examples which were freely used to illustrate moral concepts". In his opinion, the beneficial results of such training could be seen in the personal appearance of the boys "who have begun to feel the pleasure consequent upon cleanly habits, and, by the daily practice of them, show a feeling of

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1. Ibid.

2. First Report, March 1855, p.9.

self-respect to which previously they were strangers. He cited the good attendance at the school as evidence of the value that the parents placed on the instruction given there, and as a refutation of the assertion frequently made in opposition to the Association's principles of free rate supported education, that 'what costs little is but little valued'.<sup>1</sup>

(xiv)

#### The School as an Instrument of Social Regeneration

One can clearly see that the school was not merely intended to be an educational establishment, but also an instrument of social regeneration. It was set up by "the friends of education" in the hope that it might prove to be a remedy for the evils caused by the inadequacy of public education which, they believed, was the cause of most of the nation's social problems. The 1855 report explains that one party<sup>2</sup> advocated the "law of supply and demand" as a remedy, but this had been shown to be ineffective and "voluntary liberality" had had to be appealed to "at once to augment the 'supply' and increase the 'demand' for instruction". Despite all this, "the prevailing opinion 'was that the matter was so important that it could not be left' under the unaided operation of this law. The report continues:

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1. Ibid., p.10.

2. The Voluntaryists.



"Reliable means can only be provided by society at large for the instruction of all who need it; or even the destitute, - sometimes called 'the perishing and dangerous classes'."<sup>1</sup>

(xv)

Secular Education the only Possible Solution to  
the Problem of National Education

In the opinion of the Management Committee, as expressed in the report, responsibility for providing public education did not devolve on any one particular section of the community, or religious or political body, but on society at large, "for ignorance is a social evil affecting the well-being of the whole people". It was maintained, therefore, that the only way to pay for national education was by a rate. Despite the fact that the religious organizations, who, it was admitted, had hitherto been the chief promoters of education, urged "that the inculcation, in day schools, of the peculiar religious doctrines of the respective denominations" were essential "to a complete and truly valuable education", it was contended that those bodies should forego "the inculcation of their peculiar doctrines as a part of ordinary instruction" if the schools were to be supported by public money.<sup>2</sup> It was the tenacity with which the denominational schools clung to their religious peculiarities that precluded the possibility of their ever serving a whole district. For that reason the committee's solution had been

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1. First Report, August 1855, p.1.

2. Ibid.

to teach secular knowledge only. The circumstances of the people dictated "the property of separate religious instruction", but there was no obstacle to combining intellectual and moral training for the children of all religious denominations. The report submits that when religious bodies were the only providers of education, they were perfectly right to teach their own religious doctrines, but when public money was involved: "The quid pro quo for the public support should be a course of instruction which persons of all religious denominations can accept".<sup>1</sup>

(xvi)

#### Justification of Secular Education

At this point the compilers of the report must have realized that something was needed to explain their attitude to religion, in order to refute any allegations of "godlessness". Consequently, while admitting that they had established the school "as their respectful reply to the challenge" of Lord John Russell, they were quick to emphasize that it had not been established for the purpose of demonstrating that special religious instruction was valueless as a part of education, but that its omission was the best solution to the extremely difficult problem facing them. In fact they claimed that the course was religious, in **so** far as it "unfolds the laws of God as instituted in the records of Creation and teaches the consequences of obedience and disobedience to those laws".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Ibid., p.5.

The question of religious teaching, however, was something which had to be faced because it was an obstacle to state education, something which had been stumbled against when seeking the ultimate goal of national education.

(xvii)

#### Education to Defeat Ignorance and Crime

Their main objective, they claimed, was to fight crime through the education of the public, and one can only admire the great faith that these people had in the powers of this concept:

"It is unquestioned that very much waits and presses to be done, and may be accomplished by such instrumentality (secular education) in the removal of the noxious and putrifying miasmata, moral and physical, which springs from untrained ignorance, which corrupts and degrades society, which is the prolific source of suffering, poverty, crime and disease, and which threatens the entire social fabric with retributive ruin".<sup>1</sup>

The use of the word 'retributive' is interesting, because it betrays a feeling of guilt which must have troubled the conscience of many a Victorian who, seeing on the one hand the tremendous material progress that man was making through his discoveries in technology, saw on the other the horrifying degradation of the less fortunate members of society, who, instead of profiting from the progress, appeared only to suffer from exploitation, insecurity, and the whims of trade fluctuations.

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1. Ibid.

Optimism and Faith in Man's Achievement

The First Annual Report is fascinating because not only the feeling of guilt is betrayed, but also the tremendous optimism and feeling that the human race was on the threshold of unimagined achievements. The following quotation from a speech by Prince Albert, contained in the report, illustrates this faith in progress, but also an awareness of the need for more technical knowledge without which 'Nature' could not be fully conquered:

"Man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reasons being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs his Creation; and by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer Nature to his use - himself a Divine instrument. Science discovers these laws of power, motion and transformation; industry applies them to the raw material which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge; art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our production forms in accordance with them".

Educational Destitution too Great for Voluntary Effort

The promoters of the Model Secular School were at pains to point out that merely to follow their example would not be a remedy for the country's educational defects, for, after all, they were a voluntary organization: "The want is too great for any such agency".

Voluntary subscriptions, they insisted, could never support an establishment large enough to remove the problem. Some idea of the

educational destitution in the poorer districts of the town is given by the following statistics:

"Ancoats (Manchester): accommodation for 5,297; actual number of children between three and fourteen was 12,629; 7,332 children were not provided for.  
Hulme (Manchester): accommodation for 5,437; actual number of children in the district between three and fourteen was 12,927; deficiency therefore was 7,490".<sup>1</sup>

(xx)

#### The School also a Means of Political Pressure

Admittedly in some respects the school was, without doubt, being used as a means of bringing pressure onto the government as a practical demonstration of the N.P.S.A.'s principles, and as such was part of the campaign to bring about a system of national education. However, the school outlasted the Association by well over twenty years, for, once they had encountered the difficulties which beset the working classes of Manchester and had seen what tremendous help the school was capable of giving to these people, the managers realized that its social value so far transcended its political value that they were ready to abandon one of their dearest principles, rather than abandon their pupils to educational destitution.

These circumstances only arose in 1862. Meanwhile they hoped by their example to persuade "practical educators and philanthropists" first to inspect the school and secondly to aid them in their work, if they were convinced after inspection that it was "wise, merciful, and good".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid.

## C H A P T E R    X V

### A PROLONGED STRUGGLE WITH THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

#### (i)

#### A Premium on Pauperism

A feature of the reports which is quite as interesting as the actual progress of the school is the criticism of government policy. In the Second Report of August 1856, the Committee of Management complained bitterly that the class of children who attended their school were untouched by any of the systems of educational aid, either in existence or recently proposed in Parliament, except the N.P.S.A.'s Free School's Bill. The particular class referred to were those children who were unable to pay 'school pence', and yet who were outside the pauper class. This argument was frequently used by the Association to justify their demand for free education.<sup>1</sup> The following extract expressed the Committee's opinion of the ridiculous situation whereby pauper children received free education, while the great potential pauper and criminal class was allowed to go ignorant and unprovided for:

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1. See Dr. McKerrow's evidence at the deputation to Lord John Russell, 3rd June 1853. (Mins.L.P.S.A., Vol.2, 6th June 1853).

"It is well that juvenile criminals should be cared for by the legislature, - that philanthropists should organize a "National Reformatory Union", - that everything should be done for the rescue of this class. It is well that educational relief should be given to outdoor paupers, as is now being done; but these advances stop far short of the full measure of the educational remedy for our social ills. Juvenile reformatories, and doles out of the poor-rates for the education of pauper children do not reach such as are in the Model Secular School, inasmuch as these children, or their parents, are not paupers nor criminals, in the eye of the law. Is it well that this, if to their credit, should be to their disadvantage, educationally? It is doubtless a good investment on the part of society to spend money on the education of juvenile paupers and criminals, but is it just that the children of struggling honest poverty should be put to the disadvantage inevitable, if they are to be uncared for and unhelped? The supply of paupers and criminals cannot be stopped by such measures; one set may be lifted up, but only that another, and more deserving, wighted in the competitive race by ignorance, may be forced down to occupy their places".

These arguments were all the stronger for their being founded on first-hand experience. No longer could Lord John Russell accuse the Association of having no material proof of the need for greater provision of educational facilities nor any evidence of the practicability of their scheme. The existence of "honest poverty"<sup>1</sup> had been proved, as also had the existence of a demand for free education by these same people.

(ii)

#### The Reports a Means of Propaganda

The annual reports of the school were printed in the form of a pamphlet which could easily be distributed, providing yet a further

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1. First Report, 1855, p.7.

medium for widely distributing the Association's propaganda, and for severely criticising every shortcoming of the existing provision of education. However, because the Association had produced their own scheme which they would have been only too eager to substitute for the one in existence, the charge of destructive criticism was invalid.

(iii)

### The Injustice of the Existing System

Emphasis was placed on the injustice caused by parents having to provide, by means of rates and taxes, free education for "criminals" and "paupers", without having the right to use them for their own children.

"It is doubtless the duty of the parent primarily to educate his own children; and the right of society, for the common weal, to compel him to do so, if the means are within his reach".<sup>1</sup>

However, under the system in existence a premium had been put on pauperism as one of the only means of obtaining education free of charge.

Although the Committee of Management insisted on free education for the less fortunate members of the society, its quality was to be of the best and its range to be limited only by the capacity of the individual. There was to be no inculcation of "habits of submission

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1. Second Report, August 1856, p.9.



and respect for their superiors",<sup>1</sup> merely to preserve the class status quo:

"The utmost development to each individual nature, should .... be regarded as the only limit to the measure of education, - this alone can enable every individual member of the community to render to society the utmost service of which his nature is capable. Society throws away its means of advancement and happiness just in proportion to the degree in which it leaves the intellectual and moral nature of the rising generation untrained and uncultivated...!"<sup>2</sup>

The Committee claimed that many applications were received from parents whose children were already attending denominational schools, asking for permission to transfer their children to the Model Secular School, preference being expressed for its "plan of instruction". It appears that many of these parents had offered to pay fees, and the Committee were not slow to point out that if parents would pay to take advantage of such a school, they would be all the more willing to take advantage of such schools if set up on a system of 'rate' support.<sup>3</sup>

(iv)

#### A Variety of Denominations

An interesting feature of the school was the variety of denominations which were represented there. In the Second Annual Report it is claimed that 95% of the boys admitted during the year attended Sunday School, and, of the remaining 5%, several did not

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1. Mr. Sharpe, House of Commons, 24th April, 1807, quoted in Gregg, op.cit., p.246.
  2. Second Report, August 1856, p.9.
  3. Ibid.

attend for the want of suitable clothing. The following table is taken from the annual Tabular Report showing the various religious denominations represented by the pupils. Here again was something that the Committee wished to emphasize, for only in a "secular" school could such a variety of denominations receive a common course of instruction:

"Number attending the following Sunday  
Schools of the 181 pupils admitted  
during the year

Church of England	76
Various denominations of	
Methodists	31
Roman Catholic	21
Society of Friends	13
Independents	13
United Presbyterian	12
Unitarian	3
Swdenborgian	2
Baptist	2
None	8
	181
	181

Showing that 95% attended Sunday School".<sup>1</sup>

During the year six pupils had been withdrawn and sent to Roman Catholic Schools "at the command of the priests, but in opposition to the parents". However, four of the six were later re-admitted at the request of the parents "who were exceedingly dissatisfied with the intellectual and moral training of the Catholic schools".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.25.

2. Ibid.

The Committee could not have asked for a better vindication of the 'secular' system than this one. The evidence pointed to the fact that a sound secular education was valued far more by parents than whether or not their children were receiving the correct religious teaching.

(v)

Wasteful Emphasis on Learning Scriptures  
Criticized

The Model School Committee members were not afraid of ridiculing what they considered to be the useless emphasis on religious teaching by some of their colleagues in the schools belonging to the voluntary organizations. As illustrations, quotations from Her Majesty's Inspector Mr. Jelinger C. Symons<sup>1</sup> were used, in which he complained that many children recited the Creed and Lord's Prayer glibly, but were incapable of associating the sounds with the ideas. Consequently the commencement of the Lord's Prayer became, "Our father charter hev'n". When questions on the scriptures were asked in a slightly different order from the customary one, the answers, which had been committed to memory, often bore no relation to the questions, for example:

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1. Quotation from J.C.Symons' Report for 1854-55, p.136 in Second Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, August 1856.

"Q. What is the meaning of the parable of the Sower and the Seed? What does it teach us to do?"

A. "Ten virgins. A. Take compassion".

Q. "What duty does the parable of the Good Samaritan teach"?

A. "A neighbour as yourself".

Q. "Who is your neighbour"?

A. "Everybody as comes to the door".

Q. "Who was John the Baptist"?

A. "Son of Jesus Christ".

The conclusion drawn by the Committee was that the resources of the country were being wasted "and a most mischievous delusion is being sanctioned and perpetuated, in proportion as public money is bestowed upon such schools as those reported on by the reverend gentleman".<sup>1</sup>

(vi)

#### The Need for Increased Subscriptions

During 1855 the amenities of the school were enhanced by the provision of a playground, sanitary conveniences and a library. Not all the boys, however, were given automatic access to the library, for it was used as a reward for good work, and therefore the right to use it freely was considered to be a great privilege. The provision of such amenities was costly. Finance was, therefore, a nagging problem and the Committee constantly had to beg for increased

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1. Second Report, August 1856.

subscriptions. The appeal in the report for 1854-55 re-appears in most subsequent reports. The following passage, although most persuasive, did not bring affluence to the school:

"The Committee venture to think that its indisputable usefulness as a philanthropic institution, - that the absolute and palpable good that it is accomplishing, and the evil that it is certainly averting - constitute a claim upon the general public which deserves a ready and generous recognition".

It was this constant lack of funds which prompted the Committee, advised by Cobden, to apply to the Committee of Council on Education, in February 1856, for the right to be inspected and participate in the Parliamentary grant.<sup>1</sup>

(vii)

Application for Participation in the  
Parliamentary Grant. Rebuffed

The letter of request written by the Secretary, R.W.Smiles, contains a description of the school and a request that it should be admitted to participation in the Parliamentary grant, and in the advantages of the pupil teacher system.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this was that most of the able boys tended to leave the school in order to get a job rather than become monitors. It was hoped that the government allowance would be sufficient inducement to retain them.

Enclosed in the letter were an explanation of the policy of

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1. Ibid.

2. The pupil-teacher system was set up by Kay-Shuttleworth through the provisions of the Committee of Council on Education. See Connell, op.cit., p.16.

substituting moral training for reading the Bible, and six testimonials from the Rev. W.F.Walker M.A. of Oldham, the Rev. Dr. McKerrow, the Rev. Dr. Beard, Thomas Bazley, Chairman of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and Mark Phillips, brother of the Treasurer R.N.Phillips, and one of Manchester's two original Members of Parliament. There was also added a joint testimonial by gentlemen who had recently visited the school, most of whom were managers and members of the N.P.S.A. Executive Committee.

Admittedly the views of the above-mentioned people might be somewhat biased in favour of the school as they were all interested in its welfare, but in order to provide an impartial judgment the report of J.D.Morell M.A., one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, giving a glowing report of the school was included. This emphasized that:

"It (the school) is in every way valuable to the neighbourhood, as the training is sound in its matter and methods, its moral influence good, and every encouragement given to the children to attend some of the Sunday Schools in the vicinity".<sup>1</sup>

Smiles's letter, which was sent in the form of a memorial, was acknowledged by the Secretary to the Committee of Council, R.R.W. Lingen, but a reply was only received after a 'reminder' had been sent on 16th June. This was certainly a most discouraging document and was, in fact, identical to one made to the promoters of the William's Secular School, in Edinburgh, in 1853. Its message, in short, stated that unless "instruction in revealed religion" were given, no money

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1. Ibid. , p.34.

would be granted. Considering the amount of local opposition that the Association's Secular policy had aroused, particularly the efforts of the Manchester and Salford Local Education Committee, the following reply cannot be claimed to be entirely without reason:

"Their Lordships are of opinion that the principle so sanctioned (that religious as well as secular instruction should be provided) is in accordance with the will of the country, as it certainly is with the views of the great majority of the promoters of education, and of those who desire to co-operate with the Government encouraging schools for the children of the labouring classes".<sup>1</sup>

Although the amount of money collected by subscriptions amounted to £390. 10. 6d in 1856, it was achieved only by tremendous hard work, and constituted by far the most difficult problem that the Committee had to face.

(viii)

#### Criticism of the Allocation of the Government Grant

The government policy of making grants "in aid of Private Subscriptions... for the Education of the children of the Poorer Classes in Great Britain"<sup>2</sup> was heavily criticized by the Committee on the grounds that where there were no voluntary subscriptions in the first place there could be no grounds for a claim. The report for January 1859, expresses the following opinion:

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1. Ibid.

2. Commons Journal Vol.87, pp.692-3, an extract from the resolution of 1833 which resulted in the allocation of £20,000 to educational societies, quoted by Barnard, op.cit., p.69.

"The government plan of education (if it can be called a 'plan') has all the defects of an usurpation, It only spreads where it is received; for its reception it requires not only good will but wealth. The gospel was preached to the poor; but Parliament only educates those who can afford partly to educate themselves. We give the light to the enlightened, and leave the blind in total darkness. The thousands that swarm in the streets of our great cities, and the other thousands that are early absorbed in hard labour, we leave to take care of themselves".<sup>1</sup>

In making provision for only part of the population the Committee of Council, it was indicated, was discouraging people from making voluntary contributions to education, for the attitude of many "friends of education" was:-

"This school is a public good, supplying the wants of the educationally destitute irrespective of class, religious denomination, or any other party whatever, not serving the peculiar interests of any class or party, but promoting the common weal, and has an equal claim upon all for support, according to their means. I shall willingly pay my share of a rate to maintain the school; but I cannot afford to take any further share of my neighbour's burdens".<sup>2</sup>

It was the Management Committee's opinion that many would be happy to participate in a general rate, knowing that this was a burden shared by many, who would be willing to make voluntary contributions.

This passage is yet another example of how the school's annual reports were used as a means of thrusting before the public its virtues as an educational establishment, and also the virtues of the N.P.S.A.'s plan.

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1. The Third Report of the Manchester Model Secular School.  
January 1859.

2. Ibid., p.1.



## The Question of Grants to Mechanics Institutes

The Committee did not refrain from further pressure on the Committee of Council. On 27th November 1857, another application was sent on the grounds that:

".... the elementary schools and classes of certain Mechanic's Institutes in Lancashire (which are purely secular institutions) are admitted to receive aid under the Minutes subject to the simple condition of inspection by Her Majesty's School Inspectors".

These grounds, however, were insufficient for the Committee of Council in whose reply of 18th December it was stated that "the classes of the East Lancashire Union of Mechanics Institutes might be admitted to participate in the Parliamentary grant for education", but the objections to extending the public grants "to such schools as the 'Manchester Model Secular School' remain unaltered".<sup>1</sup>

After this the method was tried of making out a case on the school's behalf "as a philanthropic educational institution, which was providing the inestimable benefits of education for a class for whom no other educational provision exists".

This was reinforced by testimonials from various public figures including several ministers of religion. For example, the Dean of Hereford stated that "the order in the school is extremely good", and a barrister, J.H.Dawson, expressed his delight at seeing "unsectarian education so successful, as is exemplified by the ready appreciation of the pupils of the instruction given, and by the order maintained".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.6.

2. Ibid., p.8.

## A Third Approach to the Committee of Council

In 1858 the Committee suggested that, knowing as they did of the relaxation which had been made in favour of Mechanic's Institutes in which secular instruction alone was given, the Committee of Council might be willing to make a similar relaxation in the case of the Model Secular School and to submit the change in the minutes to Parliamentary sanction, as in the case of the Mechanics Institutes.

The reply of 19th July 1858 was uncompromising in the extreme, stating that "no grounds have been alleged for reversing the decision of the Committee of Council, that the school does not come within the terms upon which the grant for education is voted and administered".

The school's promoters described this as "not a very fit reply to a communication addressed to their Lordships in a spirit of respectful self confidence, on a subject of acknowledged public interest". To them the school was a social necessity, particularly so when, according to their statistics "every fifteenth family has a widow at its head.... and with many of these widows the battle of life is a battle indeed; and it is deplorable but true, that in almost all ranks, but more especially in the lowest, there are many wives whose condition is worse than widowed".<sup>1</sup> The hosts of unskilled labourers with large families, low wages and uncertainty of employment, the 'street folk' earning a living in a variety of

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1. Ibid., p.6.

ways, and even some better placed people, found the 'school wage' to be an insuperable bar to the education of their children. If, as in the depression of the winter of 1857-58<sup>1</sup>, even skilled labourers were out of work, in some cases for as long as five months, if as they were "unable to provide bread, how were they to find school pence? Is it well for society, well for the temporal and eternal welfare of the children of these indigent and destitute persons that they should be deprived of light and life and strength of wholesome instruction and training"?

Again such questions were addressed to society as a whole, because the Committee wanted to arouse public indignation over the social evils that the government permitted to exist by employing an educational policy which excluded a considerable portion of the population by means of its religious and financial provisions. Once more they emphasized that only a secular free school could correct these faults:

"The Model School is the only free school available for poor persons of all religious denominations; including Jew and Christian, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Trinitarian and Unitarian. Abundant agencies for special religious instruction exist, and are taken advantage of, and increased facilities could doubtless be brought into existence if the proper parties willed it".<sup>2</sup>

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1. This was caused by the failure of an American Trust Company and became a world-wide crisis, necessitating the suspension of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. (M. Briggs & P. Jordan, (London, 1960), An Economic History of England, p.484.
  2. Ibid., p.15.

unfortunately these appeals fell on deaf ears, and, despite the obvious success of the school, the Committee of Council left no doubt that until the reading of the Bible were introduced into the curriculum, the school would receive no money.

(xi)

#### A Deteriorating Financial Position

Meanwhile the overall financial position was satisfactory for the time being, "mainly owing to the very liberal and repeated donations of £50 from Mr. H. Ellis of London and Mr. Schunck of this city". William Ellis, an original benefactor of the school gave it his unceasing support, and Martin Schunck's annual subscription was seldom less than £10 per year.<sup>1</sup> But by the end of the next year the school's financial position was causing some anxiety and it received a great deal of attention at the next annual meeting.

(xii)

#### The Annual Meeting and Examination, 1860

The annual meeting for 1860 was held on 31st October. According to the Annual Report it was "the most numerously and influentially attended of any since the formation of the school, showing the progress of public opinion in the direction of sound unsectarian education". The proceedings were reported by Mr.

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1. Model Secular School, Subscriptions, 1853, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, Third Report, 1859.

Henry Pitman<sup>1</sup> of Manchester, whose observations on the method of examining pupils show to what extent these were social occasions. The boys were seated on raised seats "their intelligent and eager looks showed that they were impatient to be questioned". They were examined by the Headmaster:

"Mr. Templar displayed great tact in this examination not only drawing forth the information that the boys had been previously taught, but in inducing them to think. The answers were for the most part very accurate and smart, and even the mistakes showed reflection, and some of them were very amusing. An examination at this school is one of the pleasantest treats that an intelligent person can enjoy".

The particular examination was "upon the shape, motions, and surface of the earth, and the situations, directions, distances, etc., of the countries from which cotton, sugar, etc. are brought".<sup>2</sup>

(xiii)

#### A Change of Policy urged as a Solution to the Financial Position

The Treasurer, R.N. Phillips, having described how the school at one time nearly had to be closed because of the lack of funds, but had survived by dint of the generosity of the founders and subscribers,

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1. Henry Pitman was the brother of Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of Phonography. He reported news items for the Manchester Examiner and Times, and it was, no doubt, his connection with the newspaper which gave him an interest in the Model Secular School, where he gave lessons in phonography, free of charge, to selected pupils. (Biographical cuttings in Manchester Central Reference Library and Model Secular School Reports).
  2. The Fourth Report of the Manchester Model Secular School,  
September 1859, p.4.

was obliged to appeal for more money, because, although £420 had been received in subscriptions, the year's expenditure amounted to £508. It appears, moreover, that Mr. Templar's salary was between £50 and £60 lower than it might have been, owing to the fact that the school could not share in the government grant.<sup>1</sup>

A visitor, Mr. Charles Sever, "did not think that the objection to reading the Bible was insuperable" and felt that the sanction of the Privy Council would not only be advantageous from the financial point of view, but also that it would enlist the sympathies of a large portion of the community. Sever advised the dropping of the word 'secular' from the school's title, because "there were excellent persons who took the name of secularists, and who repudiated religious teaching".<sup>2</sup> This, he felt, would gain more subscribers for the school, and more sympathy. The Rev. Drummond whilst admitting that "no-one who had listened to the examination could say that the teaching in the school was in any way irreligious", thought it was desirable to remove the word 'secular' for it had caused prejudice in his own mind until he visited the school.

On behalf of the Committee Dr. John Watts, repeating the usual answer to this objection, said that one in fifty of the population of Manchester were Roman Catholic and a fairly large proportion of children of the school were of that faith. Many children of other religious sects attended and he would, therefore, regret any

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1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Ibid., p.15.

alteration "when the alteration must necessitate a still greater prejudice... If they were to introduce the Bible, they would immediately lose the Roman Catholic children, - a class that most needed aid. The proper way to act with the government was not to be beaten by them, but to beat them". If they "continued knocking at the doors of the Government", they would achieve their object. Watts therefore was not willing to throw N.P.S.A. principles overboard in order to gain the Privy Council's blessing. The school to him was still a part of the campaign which the Association as a pressure group was still fighting, albeit somewhat less powerfully after 1857. However, the Rev. William Gaskell of Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester, also complained of the word 'secular' in the name of the school and suggested that 'non-sectarian' would be less offensive.

The most constructive suggestion, pointing the way to the future policy of the Committee, came from the Rev. King who thought that the solution would be to adopt the American system of reading the Bible in school. without comment. He, too, disliked the word 'secular'.

This exchange of views is very interesting in the light of Cobden's objection to the use of the word in 1850, when it was proposed to call the N.P.S.A. the "National Secular School Association". Judging by the unpopularity of the word ten years later, his objection was not unfounded.

Presentation to Mr. Templar

The occasion was a particularly happy one because Templar had recently married and was presented with a purse of fifty guineas as a wedding present. In demonstrating the Committee's indebtedness to the Headmaster's invaluable services to the school, H.J. Leppoc, on making the presentation, described him as a man "whom no amount of money could remunerate; for teaching with him was a labour of love".<sup>1</sup> The promoters of the school were exceedingly fortunate in their choice of Benjamin Templar as the first Headmaster, because he was obviously a man endowed with tremendous ability, strength of character and boundless sympathy for the type of child who came to his school. On their part the managers were unstinting in their praise for his work, and R.N. Phillips left no doubt that the creditable performance of the pupils in the public examination was due entirely to the diligent teaching and skill of Templar and his staff. The Committee also let it be known that one hundred and forty-six out of the one hundred and ninety-three boys entering the school could neither read nor write.<sup>2</sup>

The compliments bestowed on Templar on this occasion and during the whole term of his headship of the school constantly show

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1. Ibid., p.17.

2. Tabular Report, Appendix to Fourth Report, September 1859.



how highly he was regarded by the Committee, and in what harmony he was able to work with them.<sup>1</sup>

It is gratifying to know that in an age noted for materialism and relentless competition there were people who were ready to show a generous appreciation of the work of their employees.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For an independent assessment of Mr. Templar's ability see J.A.Newbold, "The Case of the Manchester Free School, no Argument for Universal Free Schools", Manchester Tracts on Education No.1 (Manchester-London 1887), p.15, in which the author comments on Templar's ability not only as a teacher but also as an author. His writings included: On the Importance of Teaching Social Economy; Questions for School Boards; The Religious difficulty in Education; and Religion in Secular Schools. He read papers before the Social Science Congress in 1858, 1859 and 1866.
  2. For similar examples of generosity on the part of the Anti-Corn Law League, see McCord, op.cit., p.206.

## C H A P T E R   X V I

### THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM SOLVED

(i)

#### The Manchester Model Secular School Becomes the Manchester Free School

The inevitable result of the financial position revealed in the 1860 report, and the opinions expressed at the annual meeting of 31st October, was that changes were made in the way the school was run. The following criticism of the Committee of Council, although true, did not alter its policy:

"It is a matter of regret, that while the Government is aiding, in Manchester, many who could afford to pay for the whole of their education, and is also subsidizing every form of sectarianism, it will give no aid to a purely unsectarian school, which is doing good service by educating those who have no power to educate themselves, only because its supporters will not conform to a merely nominal, useless, and often practically mischievous regulation".<sup>1</sup>

Consequently on Wednesday, 18th September, 1861, at the annual meeting held at the school the following resolution was passed:

"That owing to the great difficulty of getting sufficient voluntary contributions, and the impossibility of getting Government aid, the Model Secular School be discontinued on the 29th of this month".

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1. The Fifth Report of the Manchester Model Secular School, September 1860, p.5.

This was followed by a further resolution:

"That after the 29th of this month, the School be continued under the name of the Manchester Free School, and on such a plan as will secure Government aid".<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

The Model School's success proves the  
Inadequacy of Voluntaryism

The report for the session ending September 1861 emphasizes the Committee's conviction that in the seven years of its existence the school had proved all that the N.P.S.A. had contended, and disproved all the objections of its opponents, namely: that a school in which the Bible is not read is godless and therefore unacceptable to the people; secondly that being free, the instruction would be little valued and the attendance irregular; and thirdly that free education would tend to lessen the self reliance of the people. All this, claimed the Committee, had been disproved:

"For competent and impartial witnesses have declared that religion and morals are better understood here than in most schools where the Bible is used;<sup>2</sup> and that its course of instruction is acceptable to, and highly prized by, parents of all the various religious denominations. It has proved that the instruction, though absolutely free, is, highly valued. From the commencement of the school the average attendance has been ninety-three per cent of the number on the books! - an attendance which is nearly twenty per cent above the general average throughout the country, and which the Committee believe to be not only unequalled, but unapproximated by any pay school in the country. It has proved

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1. The Sixth Report of the Manchester Model Secular School,  
September 1861.
  2. Fifth Report, 1860, p.8: Comments of Mrs. Alfred Higginson of Liverpool (sister of Harriet Martineau) and W. Davis, B.A., Inspector of British Schools.

from personal observation that the parents of free scholars are no less self-reliant than other members of their class. It has proved also the great difficulty, if not impossibility, of efficiently maintaining a large school by voluntary contributions alone".<sup>1</sup>

The last observation shows how quick the Committee of Management were to turn an admitted failure to advantage. For under the system of management which prevailed from 1854 until 1861, the school was in fact a voluntary school, and the inability of the Managers to provide what they considered to be an adequate education under the existing conditions was, they claimed, complete proof of the hopelessness and inadequacy of the Voluntaryists attempts to provide education without financial aid from the state.

Down to September 1861, 1500 boys had been admitted into the school, 352 of whom were pupils at that time. Of these 1500, 200 had never attended a day school and 450 had done so for less than a year. As proof of the extent of educational destitution the report for 1860 claims that although boys were not admitted under the age of seven years old, no fewer than 1,000 were totally unable to read. Out of the 1,150 who had left the school, 850 had gone to work, and of those who had been traced to their employers, satisfactory reports had been received. The average time spent at the school was two years, "a length of stay which, compared with that in most working-

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1. Sixth Report, 1861, p.5.

class schools, and considering the poverty of the parents, is highly satisfactory".<sup>1</sup>

In blaming the Committee of Council for its intransigence in obstructing their scheme, the promoters of the school were conscious of a social obligation to the pupils. The following extracts illustrate this:

"The Committee are sorry to find that a body of men who have the dispensation of money taken from all, think it to be consistent with their duty to limit their spheres of action by restrictions as practically useless as they are vexatious and unjust, and still refuse to aid this school, though fully aware that it suffers from the want of funds, and is in danger of being closed".

For these reasons the Committee had decided to close the school for a time:

"....but in confident hope that it may be re-established in compliance with the condition of reading a small portion of Scripture daily, rather than turn 350 poor children into the streets. They do it under strong protest, as a matter of hard necessity, and not because they have changed their opinion as to what schools ought to be and eventually must be".<sup>2</sup>

At the 1861 annual meeting, an obvious time for recriminations, H.J. Leppoc, the Treasurer of the school, blamed the Voluntaryists for thwarting the attempt of the N.P.S.A. and the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education to come together as a united party in order to obtain the passage of an educational measure through Parliament. By failing to give the required support they had "done much harm, and achieved but little counterbalancing good".<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that

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1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

some of them might be animated by pure and holy motives and the conviction that the state should not interfere with the education of the people, in consequence of which they had founded their schools on voluntary principles, their effort had been inadequate: "What can a comparatively small number of well-meaning and open-hearted gentlemen do when hundreds of thousands are in want of education"?<sup>1</sup> he asked. He was convinced that without interference by the voluntary organizations the state would have been compelled long before that time to take education into its own hands "and we should not now have to lament the mass of ignorance that meets us everywhere".<sup>2</sup>

Leppoc was in fact describing the dilemma in which education found itself in the mid-nineteenth century. The Voluntaryists were quite convinced that their method of providing education was the correct one, but for the rapidly growing urban population of an industrial country, it was quite inadequate. The Manchester educators, on the other hand, saw the need to educate those who did not have the facilities to help themselves. They also understood how vast must be the scale of an organization for it to be able to carry out the task of educating the nation.

The reports of the Model Secular School often seem to be

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1. Report of Proceedings at the Annual Examination and Meeting of the Friends and Subscribers, 1861, p.5.
  2. See Barnard, op.cit., p.104, for corroboration of this view.

repetitious, for the same arguments appear each year. But this is understandable because the problems remained the same as each year passed. The Committee hoped, by repeating their arguments often enough, to build up a body of opinion strong enough to get a bill through Parliament. Consequently criticism of the Voluntarists appears quite regularly. Another frequent argument to appear in the reports is that of the connection between education and the incidence of crime. Accordingly the report for 1861 points to the fact that educating the poor was not merely a problem of administrative organization. It was a moral obligation devolving upon the government:

"It is the duty of the State to educate before punishing the ignorant for crime committed, and so in some measure to prevent it".<sup>1</sup>

H.J. Leppoc found his sentiments very conveniently expressed in verse by Eliza Cook:

"Better to build school rooms for the boy  
Than cells and gibbets for the man".<sup>2</sup>

(iii)

The Principle of Secularism not lightly abandoned

The principle of no Bible-reading had not been abandoned without a struggle, for, five months previously, the subscribers had met to discuss the school's precarious financial position and had doubled their subscriptions, but that had only sufficed for a short time.

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1. Ibid., p.6.

2. Ibid.

Forty individuals paid three-quarters of the expenses for 1861, but obviously this was only a temporary solution.<sup>1</sup>

Every possible alternative was considered before agreement was finally reached. The Committee had even considered charging the children a penny or twopence a head per week but they realized that this would have caused at least half of them to leave. The system whereby the Headmaster visited the houses of all applicants to ascertain their "honest poverty", and inability to pay "school wages", as a qualification for entry into the school, proved this point.

Dr. Watts was probably the most adamant of those present at the 1861 annual meeting over the question of Bible-reading. Mr. W. R. Wood attempted to apologise for the Committee of Council on the grounds that it was the servant of Parliament and could not go beyond the limit of its authority, but Dr. Watts blamed it for making no attempt to put the secular position fairly before the House. One cannot deny that he, above all people, should have been able to gauge public opinion on the subject, having addressed one hundred and fifty meetings on the subject of secular education, only one of which (in Ashton-under-Lyne) opposed the scheme. He felt that given a fair chance the public would accept secular education.

Mr. Charles Sever, on the other hand, was quite optimistic about the use of the Bible for he thought that it would aid moral instruction and be beneficial to the boys, as well as bring in a further £200 per year to aid the finances.

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1. Ibid., p.9.



Dr. McKerrow, however, obviously did not find any pleasure in abandoning the principle. With H.J. Leppoc he blamed the voluntary organizations and dissenting ministers for not joining forces with those who wanted national education, in order to force the government into providing secular education in the large towns at least, and, once again, he brought the attention of those present to the failure of the voluntary system to reach the destitute children in the streets. Whenever he had enquired why such children were not found in denominational schools he had been told, "Our scholars would not mingle with these poor children; we cannot receive them". Nevertheless, despite his strong views on the subject, he saw no reason why the Bible should not be read in school provided that no doctrines were drawn from it.

R.M. Shipman thought that the reading of the Bible might bring more subscribers to the support of the school, a view which was corroborated when Mr. George Dawson stated that in view of the new policy, he would like to become a regular subscriber.

(iv)

#### The School Receives a Further Set-Back

After the School Managers had reached agreement on the future of the school, an application was sent to the Committee of Council on Education for inspection and aid, and the school committee was informed that its establishment would be inspected before March 1862; and if the inspector's report were favourable and all necessary conditions complied with, the school would receive aid.<sup>1</sup> However,

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1. The Seventh Report of the Manchester Free School, September 1862,  
p.4.

a further set-back was in store for the Committee who were informed, in November 1861, that "as the children are admitted to the benefits of the school without paying fees, the capitation grant will not be available". This was a great disappointment. It might have been some consolation to know that the school was providing more evidence of the inadequacy of the existing provisions for educating the poor, but this was very small indeed, for the N.P.S.A. was about to go into liquidation and the main problem was to keep the school open as an alternative to turning the pupils into the streets.

The staff, however, did gain some benefit from the change, for the salaries of Mr. Templar and his assistants were increased, and likewise the stipends of the eight pupil teachers, but money for the general running of the school was not forthcoming.

Quarantors had to be found who would undertake to refund the money paid on account of interrupted apprenticeships, if at any time further inspection should be refused, or the premises should not be available for carrying on the school. This was because the Free School could boast only hired premises instead of ownership. The problem was solved by the ever willing members of the Committee; H.J.Leppoc, R.M.Shipman, John Watts, A. Winterbottom and John King.

Once this set-back had been overcome the school continued to prosper. The eight pupil teachers, mentioned above, were chosen from eleven youths, four of whom were bound until December 1865, and the other four until December 1866.

The Religious Difficulty Averted

The big test of the new system was the effect of Bible-reading on the pupils. If the results had turned out to be as some members of the Committee predicted, all the Roman Catholic children and possibly those of other sects would have had to leave the school. However, when the bridge had to be crossed it was found to be a much less difficult one than expected. Despite the fact that some of the priests forbade the parents to keep their children "in the only school open to them", under the pretence that the scholars were being instructed from a Protestant book, only one Catholic family carried out the threat to withdraw their child from school, although several such intimations had been received.<sup>1</sup> The school continued to educate thirty Catholic children; as many as had ever been in the school at any time. The fact that so many remained must be attributed entirely to the skilful handling of the situation by Mr. Templar, who "solely from a desire to promote the welfare of the Catholic children"<sup>2</sup> had a long interview with a Roman Catholic canon in which he endeavoured to show that the children would hear nothing other than what his parishoners would approve of, but it was of no avail. Finding that he could gain no promise from the canon to

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1. Ibid., p.6.

2. Ibid.

refrain from denouncing the school he decided to approach the parents on the subject.

Accordingly some thirty of them met in the school room and Mr. Templar showed them how he used the Bible. He read to them several portions of the scripture which he had read to the boys and asked whether they objected to such reading. All said that they did not object and some expressed pleasure in what they heard, and expressed their determination to resist domination by priests and to continue to send their children to the school.<sup>1</sup>

(vi)

#### Relative Unimportance of Bible Reading

In view of these facts it seems that the N.F.S.A. in declaring certain reservations against the reading of the Bible in schools had burdened itself with something that had made its task far more difficult than was necessary, for it had made co-operation with the Manchester and Salford Committee all the more difficult at a time when an early alliance between the two might have achieved a great deal in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The tragedy is that so much effort was wasted at Parliamentary level, when it appears that the general population who wanted to provide their children with a good education were ready to grasp at every opportunity to achieve this object, irrespective of the creeds taught in the school, provided that the secular instruction was good enough. This episode illustrates the relatively slight

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1. Ibid.

2. The fact that the two sides were able to join forces in the General Committee on Education ~~and Society~~ proves that they had come somewhat balatedly to this conclusion.

importance of Bible-reading in schools. To administrators of education such as Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, members of pressure groups such as the N.P.S.A., and the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education, and those with vested interests such as Church of England and Non-conformist ministers, together with all those who had no vested interest but genuinely thought that the Bible was a good influence in schools, the question of whether or not it should play its part in the school curriculum was obviously very important. But to the widow and the labourer with slender means, the people who sent their children to the Model Secular School, it assumed little or no importance. Of far greater significance to the poor was the question whether the instruction was given free or not. Benjamin Templar had realized this as early as 1858 when he wrote:<sup>1</sup>

"I must express the surprise I have felt that those who are so laudably anxious to educate the children of the poor, do not take some efficient means of ascertaining what kind of education these poor people wish their children to receive. It has always seemed to me that the ministers of state are too dictatorial in this matter... treating the British public as if they were a senseless apathetic, totally indifferent public, willing to accept any education which these same ministers and statesmen may seem fit in their goodness to give them. Knowing what I do of the wishes of parents concerning, I cannot help feeling that all the clamour that is being made about giving Biblical instruction in the day-schools is a noisy mistake...Of my own certain knowledge, I can assert that parents do not care to have their children religiously taught in the day schools;... and in many cases their sole object in sending them to the day-school is, that they may get good secular instruction".

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1. B.Templar, The Religious Difficulty in Education (London, Manchester, Edinburgh, 1858).

He concluded that "it is not the people who insist upon the combination of religious and secular education, but the ministers".

This seems to be the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the experience of the Manchester Free School. Unfortunately it was later assumed that if all education were made free, people would eagerly send their children to school, but the experiences of the Education Aid Society disproved this, showing that the Free School was an exceptional case.<sup>1</sup>

(vii)

#### A Fall in Subscriptions in Reaction to Government Aid

The financial report for 1862 shows only too clearly how much the school was in need of financial assistance, for the deficit was £172. 17. 10d., the subscriptions having decreased by £200. The reason for this is clear on examining the subscription list. Several members had reduced the amount of their donations, no doubt thinking that they might relax their own efforts now that the government was taking a share of the burden.

Martin Schunck provides a good example of this. In 1861 he paid a subscription of £60 to cover 1860 and 1861. He paid £10 in 1863, 1864, 1865 and 1866, after which his payments ceased. Mark Phillips regularly subscribed £20 per year until 1861, after which his subscription remained at £10 until 1871. The year 1861 was exceptional because a number of subscribers either doubled their

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1. See Chapter XVII for the development of this point.

subscriptions or paid for a previous year, and the amount realized was £588. 17. Od in subscriptions and £49. 14. Od in donations, but this was a remarkable year. In 1860 only £404. 17. Od was subscribed and £16. 18. 6d given in donations. Subscriptions in 1862 realized £410. 8. 6d and £22. 14. Od in donations, and although it was not as good as the 1859 sum when William Ellis and Martin Schunck each donated £50, at least the amount exceeded £400. This is precisely why 1863 might have been a disastrous year for the school had it not been for the donation of the balance of the money left in the N.P.S.A.'s account of £206. 13. Od, for the subscriptions had fallen to £380. 15. Od.

This situation is ample evidence of the school's need for government grants. In no year could the Managers predict how much money they would receive, consequently they had to rely on the generosity of one of the wealthy supporters, such as Martin Schunck or William Ellis, or a windfall, such as that from the winding up of the affairs of the N.P.S.A., in order to pay off the deficit. Only after 1864, when the money from the Privy Council was first received under the Revised Code, was this precarious position in some way ameliorated, and even after that the school was still partly dependent on subscriptions. There is no doubt that without government aid it would have had to close down.

(viii)

#### The Effect of the American Civil War

The early 1860s were uncomfortable years for many people

living in Manchester, as a result of the "cotton famine" caused by the American Civil War. The attendance at the school however did not suffer, and "notwithstanding the badness of the time has been most regular".<sup>1</sup> Conversely, owing to the continued distress, "the applications for admission during the year have been very numerous and urgent; hence the school has been unprecedentedly full, as many as 364 having been present out of 380". Mr. Templar, from his knowledge of the home circumstances of the pupils as a result of his visits to the parents, was able to report that boys often come to school barefooted in the severest weather, having eaten neither breakfast nor dinner. As a result of the benevolence of some of the school promoters and "a London Schoolmasters' Relief Committee", he was able to help several families with gifts of food and clothing.<sup>2</sup>

(ix)

#### Beneficial Effect of the Revised Code

The tenth year of the school's existence was the first year in which it benefitted by the Revised Code. On 26th March 1864, Dr. Morell inspected the school for the first time under the new code, and examined three hundred and thirty-two boys in reading, writing and arithmetic. Three hundred and twenty-three passed resulting in the receipt from the government of £193. 18. 8d, "a great proportion of which went to repay the salaries of the twelve

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1. The Eighth Report of the Manchester Free School, September 1864,  
p.5.

2. Ibid.



pupil-teachers and monitors, and a part to the masters in lieu of what they were personally entitled to under the 'Old Code' in lieu of extra services.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the pecuniary gain, the balance due to the Treasurer was a mere £28. 12. 6d., and it is interesting to note that only twice in the first ten years of the school's existence was there a balance in hand. These years were 1859, when it was £64. 12. 1d., and 1854, the first year, when it was £54. 19. 4d. In all the other years the Treasurer constantly had to appeal for donations and for more subscribers.

(x)

#### Resignation of Benjamin Templar

The other important event in 1864 was the resignation of the Headmaster, Benjamin Templar, from the position he had held for ten years.<sup>2</sup> At the meeting on 16th February 1864, at which his resignation was received, it was unanimously resolved:

"That this meeting receives with deep regret the resignation of Mr. B. Templar, as Head Master of the Manchester Free School, an office which he has held since the school was opened, - a period of ten years - with great credit to himself, with much advantage to the community, and with entire satisfaction to the Committee of Management. The Committee in accepting his resignation, express the wish for his future success".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Eighth Report of the Manchester Free School 1864, p.6. Mr. Templar resigned in order to become Headmaster of a "middle-class" school in Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

3. Ibid.

The Resolution, printed on vellum, was presented to Templar and, as a mark of respect for his unflinching service to the school, he was elected to the Committee of Management on which he served until his death, fifteen years later.

In addition to this ceremony, Templar held his own farewell tea party on 25th June 1864 at the school, to which were invited a large gathering of old students:

"The Meeting was a most gratifying one, for it was largely composed of well-dressed, gentlemanly looking young men, many of whom were holding situations as clerks, shop men, draftsmen, machinists, warehousemen, etc., and who were ready and grateful in acknowledging their deep indebtedness to the School and their teacher".<sup>1</sup>

In order to remove any doubt of this, the senior pupil teacher read an address and presented him with a "handsome ink-stand" inscribed to the effect that it was presented as "a mark of affection and esteem from the pupil teachers of the Manchester Free School".<sup>2</sup> Thus after ten years of valuable service the architect of the school's educational structure handed over to a successor.

(xi)

#### Benjamin Templar and the Teaching of Social Economy

Any account of the Free School would be incomplete without some reference to the subject of social economy as it was taught there. Popularized by William Ellis and George Combe, it was a

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1. Ibid., p.7.

2. Ibid.

notable feature of all the secular schools and lost none of its importance in the hands of Benjamin Templar who was not only a man of great ability and a first-class teacher, but also an author. Some idea of the high regard in which he was held can be gained from the fact that he gave papers on various aspects of education at three Social Science Congresses.

One of the most interesting of these was the one he read at the Liverpool congress in 1858, entitled The Importance of Teaching Social Economy in Elementary Schools, in which he described his reasons for teaching the subject.

Its two main virtues, he said, were the utility of the information and its eminent suitability for purposes of education. The information was useful, because it taught the future working man to make his labour as remunerative as possible and to spend its proceeds wisely. It also taught that a man's remuneration would depend on the quantity and quality of his labour "which will bear exact proportion to his industry, knowledge and skill".

Templar also hoped to impart, by means of the rudiments of social economy, what he termed "the conditions of industrial success". In his opinion nothing militated against this more than strikes and trade unions:

"Now it is evident that it will be the utmost importance, not only to themselves and to their families, but also to the interests of trade, and therefore of society in general, that before such time comes, they should be sufficiently well informed to resist such overtures (to go on strike), and, if possible, expose the fallacies by

which they are supported... When so instructed and not till then, will they see that since trade combinations cannot alter the conditions upon which the value of their labour depends, they cannot permanently alter wages".<sup>1</sup>

Quite as interesting as his middle-class attitude to industrial disputes are what he considered to be the factors that made the subject suitable for intellectual, moral and religious education. It was a religious subject, "because none can reflect upon its teachings without having their veneration for and gratitude and love towards God strongly excited".<sup>2</sup> It was moral, because "no instruction in the conditions of industrial success would be complete which did not include amongst them a good moral character, - a well-deserved reputation for honesty, truthfulness, industry, sobriety and punctuality...The science of Social Economy proves these strictly moral qualities to be as essential to the workman's, shopkeeper's, merchant's and manufacturer's prosperity, as are skill, economy, or any others".<sup>3</sup> As for its intellectual qualities: "What a fine, extensive field for the exercise of the perceptive and reflective faculties is afforded by a careful consideration of the conditions of, and fluctuations in value, and of the advantages that arise from a division of labour, commerce, the uses of money and credit, the protection of wealth..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. B.Templar, The Importance of Teaching Social Economy in Elementary Schools (Manchester, 1858), p.5.

2. Ibid., p.8.

3. Ibid., p.7.

4. Ibid., p.6.

Templar was convinced that as a subject social economy was of greater value "to the children of the working classes than Grammar; while as a means of education, it is almost infinitely superior".<sup>1</sup> He would not go so far as to advocate the subject to the exclusion of Grammar, "but", he said, "I do advocate the necessity for letting it **have** precedence of that subject".

It is unlikely that present day teachers of economics would find the same virtues in the subject as Templar did. Having grown up in an age in which capitalism and competition are viewed with a great deal of mistrust they might find his arguments strange and morally unsound. One must bear in mind, however, that he was preaching "self-help" in an age when competitiveness and self reliance were regarded as great virtues. If, in advising his pupils to remain aloof from industrial disputes, he seems to be putting the interests of the employer before that of the employee, it is worthy of reflection that strikes in the nineteenth century invariably ended disastrously for both unions and individual workers, and that this was the period of the "New Model Unionism", when skilled unions were beginning to realize that far more could be obtained by negotiation and the provision of benefits for members than by withdrawal of labour. Templar, therefore, was giving his pupils what he sincerely considered to be good advice, and, under the circumstances, it was extremely sound. He had only need to point to a self-made man like

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1. Ibid., p.11.

Archibald Winterbottom, a member of the school committee, to show what "self-help" and a certain amount of native intelligence could do for somebody with determination in nineteenth century Manchester.

(xii)

#### Mr. George Mellor Appointed Headmaster

Templar's resignation might have created a difficult problem, had there not been on the staff a gentleman named George Mellor, who first appeared as a member of staff in 1861, and who had had the advantage of a long training "in one of the best schools in Manchester, a supplementary training in a London Normal College, and considerable experience as sole master in more than one public school". He also held a certificate of competency from the Committee of Council on Education,<sup>1</sup> and having been unreservedly recommended as his successor by Templar, he was unanimously appointed Headmaster.

So the school emerged from its first ten years of existence with the promise of greater financial aid under the Revised Code, and a new Headmaster who promised to conduct the school in the same enlightened way as his predecessor. Moreover the dreadful difficulties which had been foreseen as a result of the introduction of Bible-reading into the school had been proved to be virtually non-existent. In addition to this the school had demonstrated, on a small scale, the value of free education and had acted not only as

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1. Ibid.

a useful aid to a pressure group, but, much more worthily, had performed an important charitable and social function. The fact that there were people, other than the promoters of the Free School, who were equally weary of the various struggles over principles, both political and religious, which impeded satisfactory legislation on education, is demonstrated by the following quotation from The Times of 8th March 1856:

"Is it quite impossible that all sects and classes should agree to forego any possible triumphs, and settle on some plan which shall give everybody an education and force on nobody a religion not his own"?

Similarly Charles Kingsley in Alton Lock was not loth to point out that people in authority were far too anxious about maintaining their own positions, rather than bringing their integrity to bear in an effort to do what was right. He wrote:

"Our little children die around us like lambs beneath the knife, of cholera and typhus, and consumption, and all the diseases which 'the good time' can and will prevent; which as science has proved, and you the rich confess, might be prevented at once, if you dared to bring in one bold and comprehensive measure and not sacrifice yearly the lives of thousands to the idol of vested interests and a majority in the House".<sup>1</sup>

Admittedly the author was not writing purely on behalf of education, but he was expressing the need for politicians to have courage, to define what was needed in order to combat social ills, and to act in a statesmanlike manner, instead of seeking prestige and political capital.

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1. Ibid. Quotation from Alton Lock contained in the Eighth Report

## C H A P T E R    X V I I

### THE SCHOOL AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED CODE

(i)

#### The Effect of the Revised Code

The year 1864 saw the school entering into a period of comparative financial comfort. The money received from the government amounted to £175. 18. 8d, made up of four shillings per head for every pupil who had attended the required number of times, and two shillings and eightpence for each of three subjects passed, which meant that each successful boy was worth twelve shillings a year to the school funds.<sup>1</sup>

When Mr. Brodie, Her Majesty's Inspector, made his examination in 1865, 283 of the 288 boys presented for examination were successful, which the Committee felt was a credit to any school "because most of the children come from homes in which they get no assistance in learning, and because their educational status is so low, when admitted here, that 77% are unable even to read".<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Tenth Report of the Manchester Free School, September 1865, p.1.

2. Ibid., p.1.



It is interesting to read in what way the Committee felt that the Revised Code had affected the school:<sup>1</sup>

"So far as this school is concerned the operation of the Revised Code about which so much has been said, has been beneficial. It has somewhat increased the Government grant, and improved rather than deteriorated the instruction given".<sup>2</sup>

The Committee took the opportunity to state that the increased attendance<sup>3</sup> caused by the provisions of the Revised Code in most schools, had had little effect on their school "where the average attendance had always been from ninety-one to ninety-three per cent ...", therefore little improvement could be expected. However, as the new regulations required that the individual attendances of each boy should be kept on record, some "pleasing facts" had been learnt. During the past year the school had been open 456 times, three boys not having been absent at all. One had attended 455 times, three 454 times, three 453 times, two 452 times and three 451 times. When one considers the difficult home circumstances encountered by some of the boys, this record of attendance is quite remarkable. The Committee's reports tend to be rather self-satisfied over this question of attendance, but the Free School's record was certainly very good in comparison with many other establishments.

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1. Board of Education, Reports on Elementary Schools by Mathew Arnold, quoted by S.J.Curtis in History of Education in Great Britain, p.263 et.seq.
  2. Tenth Report, September, 1865, p.4.
  3. "The immediate effect of the Revised Code was...a rise in average attendance. In 1862 this was 888,923; in 1866 1,048,493". (Barnard, op.cit., p.112).

Perhaps the greatest criticism levelled at the Revised Code was that it would confine the curriculum to the teaching of the three paying subjects, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold complained that this had happened in many schools, but the writers of the School's Tenth Annual Report assure their readers that this was not the case with their establishment:

"So far as this school is concerned, these fears have not been realized. Time is still found for Grammar, Geography, History, Physical Science and Social Economy; and that the teaching of these does not interfere with the three "paying subjects", as they are called is shown by the remarkable fact..... that 99% of the boys have passed in these subjects".<sup>2</sup>

In fact the Committee was so pleased with the system that they vindicated it in the report, apportioning quite a large amount of space to the following justification:

"Instruction in other things besides Reading, Writing and Arithmetic is neither forbidden by the Revised Code nor rendered impossible by it, while on the other hand, by raising a somewhat high standard for these fundamental branches of instruction, and by compelling teachers to work up to it, it has affected considerable improvement in them".<sup>3</sup>

Despite the self-satisfied nature of this particular report, the Committee's attitude might have been well founded, for in considering the breadth of the curriculum of the school it is difficult to imagine the following criticism of English schools by Matthew Arnold (on his return from the Continent after spending

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1. Curtis, op.cit., p.262 et. sec.

2. Tenth Report, September 1865, p.4.

3. Ibid.

the year 1865 there) as being at all applicable to the Free School:

"I cannot say that the impression made upon me by the English schools at this second return to them has been a hopeful one. I find in them, in general, if I compare them with their former selves, a deadness, a slackness, and a discouragement which are not the signs and accompaniments of progress. If I compare them with the schools of the Continent I find in them a lack of intelligent life much more striking now than it was when I returned from the Continent in 1859. This change is certainly to be attributed to the school legislation of 1862".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, what was applicable to other schools did not necessarily have any relevance to the Free School, which, in its management, quality of teaching, and breadth of curriculum, was extremely fortunate, and, thereby, an exception to the general rule.

(ii)

#### The Training of Pupil Teachers at the School

The course which pupil teachers underwent certainly appears to militate against this judgment. The following description shows that it was extremely rigorous and comprehensive. Indeed it might be more justly criticized for being too diffuse:

"Their education has been somewhat comprehensive and, above all, very thorough, They are well acquainted with the highest branches of Arithmetic, with Algebra and with the first four books of Euclid; with English History, and the structure of the English Language. In this latter subject they are sufficiently skilled to analyse (as they have done) the most difficult portions of Milton's "Paradise Lost". They have learnt thoroughly the Geography of all parts of the world, and are so well up in this subject as to be able to draw, from memory, well executed maps, not only of every continent, but of nearly every country also. Besides this they have made sufficient progress in Vocal Music and Drawing to find and give pleasure in them; and they have so far advanced in Latin, as to be able to translate "Caesar". In addition th

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1. Quoted by Connell, op.cit., p.224, from F.S.Marvin (ed.), Reports on Elementary Schools 1852-82, p.197.

all this, they have for years past received instruction in Physical Science, and in the important principles of Political Economy".<sup>1</sup>

Although attention was drawn to the fact that, but for the charitable nature of the school, those who were pupil teachers would not have had the opportunity to receive such a valuable training, the students' personal contributions to the success of the school were not ignored by the Committee and were acknowledged in the report:

"Each of them for the past six years has had the care of a class of from thirty to forty boys, whom they have taught with a degree of order and skill that has always excited the admiration of visitors".<sup>2</sup>

Under the headship of George Mellor the school maintained its high standards and success, and when examined during the school year 1867-68 by H.M. Inspector E.H. Brodie, there was not a single failure in the three pay-subjects. The Inspector's report was full of praise for the work of the school:

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1. Tenth Report, September 1865. Charles Dickens in Hard Times satyriized, with some reason, what he considered to be the tremendous amount of useless information that teachers attempted to absorb at this period. Their knowledge often lacked depth and exact accuracy. Yet this is the key to understanding the teachers of the day who possessed "an almost fierce desire to acquire knowledge.... The large numbers of teachers who did succeed in educating themselves in the full sense of the word, is a tribute not to the pupil teacher system but to the pupil teachers and teachers themselves", (Troop, op,cit.,p.24-25).
  2. Ibid.

"This school is a model of good order, and most thoroughly taught. Every boy presented for examination passed without a single failure. Considering that the scholars are all free, admitted on the ground of poverty, and therefore from the very lowest social class, this fact reflects the highest credit on the master and his staff of teachers".

A comparison between the attendance of children at the Free School and those from the same social class, whose education was subsidized by the Manchester Education Aid Society at other schools,<sup>1</sup> shows that the Free School's average attendance was 90% over a period of thirteen years, compared with only 50% for boys aided by the Society. This should have been abundant proof that the simple provision of free education did not guarantee regular attendance, but the lesson took a long time to be absorbed.<sup>2</sup>

(iii)

#### The Work of the Education Aid Society

In its Tenth Report the Committee acknowledged the excellent philanthropic work of the Manchester Education Aid Society in sending thousands of poor children to school in all parts of Manchester and Salford. The Society's fundamental idea was borrowed from E.P. LeMare, an influential member of Canon Stowell's congregation at Christ Church, Salford, who had, with the aid of a few friends, privately subscribed funds for the purpose of assisting poor parents to educate their children. LeMare became a member of the General Committee of the Education Aid Society, the object of which was "the

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1. Ibid., p.96.

2. Ibid.

general education of the poor upon such principles as may unite members of all denominations in a common effort".<sup>1</sup> The Society's objective was to be attained first in existing schools, by paying for the children of poor parents as much of the school fee as necessary, and secondly by aiding, and if advisable, by establishing free schools for the children of parents who were unable to pay any portion of the school fee. The committee consisted of eminent Manchester men, including some former members of the N.P.S.A. and current supporters of the Free School, such as W.R.Callender, Francis Taylor, Dr. John Watts and Edward Brotherton.

An extract from the Education Aid Society's second report shows their Committee to be as highly critical of the Voluntaryists as the Free School Committee were:

"The Committee believe they have proved that no private or voluntary effort can reach the depths of this evil in the social constitution and that further legislation is urgently needed - such legislation as shall boldly seek to provide, and so far as possible secure, the primary education of every child in our great community".<sup>2</sup>

Both the Education Aid Society and the Manchester Free School suffered a heavy blow in 1864 on the death of Edward Brotherton, who had become a member of the School Committee in the year 1862-63. A philanthropic business man, he had come into the public eye by

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1. Newbold, op.cit., p.33.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p. 97.

writing seven ardent letters to the Manchester Guardian on "The Present State of Popular Education in Manchester" in January 1864, after which he had become Honorary Secretary of the Education Aid Society. He died from a fever caught in the course of his investigations among the poor of Manchester. This could have meant the ruin of the Education Aid Society but fortunately the work continued.<sup>1</sup>

(iv)

Belated Realization of the Need for Compulsory  
Education

It is interesting to note, in the Twelfth Report of the Free School, the appearance for the first time in any of the reports of the word "compulsory". R.M.Shipman, who succeeded R.W.Smiles as secretary of the school, commented with pleasure on growing support for compulsory education in rate-supported schools under local management, and stated that the experience of the Free School had always pointed to these conclusions, adding with a touch of pride that "whenever the subject of national education comes to be fully discussed, the experience of this school will yield highly important data for the settlement of the question".

This is strange when one considers the school's outstandingly good attendance record. However, the explanation lies in the fact that by 1866, the Manchester Education Aid Society had been able to

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1. Ibid., p.98.

draw some conclusions from the experience gained since its formation in 1864, and also in the fact that the National Association for the progress of Social Science met in Manchester in that year. The occasion was marked by the reading of a paper by Benjamin Templar in which he described his experiences and the conclusions he had drawn from ten years teaching at the Model Secular and Free School.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on the features of the school which had struck him most profoundly, he said the first was the large class of children who fell between the ragged school class of people and the pay school class.<sup>2</sup> It was for these people that education had to be provided either wholly or partly free, and he suggested that their need for aid should be ascertained by house to house visitors; an occupation in which he had abundant experience.

As for the moral effect of free education, he resolutely denied the assertion of its opponents that it would pauperise the parents. As evidence of this he stated that those whose children attended the Free School never felt degraded, and were always extremely grateful for what was being done for them. The excellent record of attendance at the school proved this.<sup>3</sup>

He was convinced that this class of children should be educated

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1. B. Templar, Ten Years Experience of the Manchester Free School, (Manchester, 1866).
  2. Ibid., p.5.
  3. Ibid., pp.6 & 7.



in schools which were specially provided for them, like the Free School, for they tended to drift away from ordinary schools as they had done under the scheme of the Education Aid Society. The voluntary system, he believed, was completely inadequate, as had been proved by the Free School's early financial difficulties. Only a rate-supported system would solve the problem.

The most interesting part of the paper, however, was his demand for a compulsory system of education, despite his admission that the school had always been blessed with a surplus of applicants. The following extract clearly explains his reasons:

"When eligible boys have been admitted, it has been no uncommon thing for parents to feel the regulations for securing cleanliness of person, and punctual, constant attendance, too irksome for their irregular habits, and they have allowed their children to lose the privilege of attendance, that is, to run the streets rather than comply with the rules. There being nothing unreasonable in these rules, I have felt it would have been well for the children if compliance could have been enforced".<sup>1</sup>

He complained also of the obstinate refusal of many parents to have their children educated, even when the cost to themselves was nothing:

"In visiting the homes of several hundreds of poor people, I have found many who were so selfish that they would not take the trouble to make a formal application for admission. Moreover, I have found some parents plead poverty as the excuse for not educating their children, when the father and mother have both spent more on beer, spirits and tobacco than would have paid for their children's schooling. At these times I have felt it a matter of deep regret that there was no strong arm of the law to reach the parents and compel them not only to send their children to school, but to keep them there regularly".<sup>2</sup>

On other occasions, when visiting houses in the neighbourhood

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1. Ibid., p.7.

2. Ibid., p.8.

of the school, he had "found many who were so selfish that they would not take the trouble of making a formal application for admission, or to wash or mend clothes, or put themselves at all out of the way to get their children educated".<sup>1</sup>

Templar finally described the process by which experience had converted him from an idealist into a pragmatist. Originally on coming to Manchester, he said, he had believed through blind enthusiasm:

"That nothing but the means of obtaining a good free education could be wanted, to induce all parents to send their children regularly to school, A few years' experience completely destroyed that romantic notion, and I have been for some time convinced that nothing short of a proper power to thoroughly investigate the circumstances of those parents who plead poverty, and compelling the attendance of their children at school, either with or without aid, according to their means, will ever cause all to be instructed that should be".<sup>2</sup>

(v)

#### Three Cardinal Principles of a National System of Education

At the same conference in support of Templar's paper, we find the Committee of the Education Aid Society demanding the following principles as a basis for a national education system:

1. Nothing less than some system of compulsory school attendance can effectually grapple with the difficulty of non-attendance caused by apathy and indifference of a large proportion of parents.
2. If state compulsion is introduced education must be free.
3. If free education is provided then a compulsory local rate must be levied".

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.10.

Manchester, therefore, through the agency of the N.P.S.A. and the Education Aid Society had established the three cardinal rules of the modern educational system. The former had advocated free, rate-supported education, and had demonstrated the necessity of these principles by establishing the Model Secular School, while the latter had demonstrated the need for compulsion before any system could be worked efficiently.

The fact that religion and the use of the Bible were not mentioned at all among these three principles, reflects the relatively unimportant place that this former great obstacle to progress was gradually assuming in the education question. This was another factor which had been revealed by the experiences of the Free School, particularly by the action of the Roman Catholic parents in continuing to send their children there after the adoption of Bible-reading.

At the Social Science Conference Benjamin Templar, repeating what he had written in 1858<sup>1</sup>, confirmed this, when, in describing interviews with parents, he said that they never asked "what religion was taught or whether we taught any. Moreover he continued, "I have found that parents will not only send their children where, according to popular notion, no religion is taught, but where they know they will be taught what they deem religious error, if only they can secure good secular instruction".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Templar, op.cit., p.11.

2. The Religious Difficulty in National Education, (1858).

The Unwillingness of Educationalists to Accept  
the Findings of Fifteen Years Experience

Nevertheless, the fact that the above organizations had conclusively proved certain facts did not necessarily mean that the government would take heed of their findings. Consequently in 1869, R.M.Shipman was complaining of the deliberate evasion of conclusions which, to him, and to many supporters of national education, seemed to be self-evident:

"The accumulated facts of the fifteen years experience of this unique and remarkably successful school would teach all the educational theorists who are now discussing rival schemes for national education some very important truths, if they would but study them. Strange to say, however, the desire for facts seems very small, for "few and far between" are the visits of inquiry by those who, in close proximity to the school, propound education theories which the experience of this school completely disproves".<sup>1</sup>

The facts "conclusively proved" so the Committee claimed were:

1. That there is no reason why free schools, whether supported by rates or by voluntary contributions, should not be as regularly attended as pay schools; for the Manchester Free School has for fifteen years had an average attendance rarely if ever equalled by any pay school.
2. That though a good and absolutely free education be offered to some parents, they will not avail themselves of it, but will let their children run the streets till forced to send them.
3. That a school of long-proved excellence cannot depend solely upon voluntary contributions for its support, but must derive aid from some kind of taxation.

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1. The Fourteenth Report of the Manchester Free School, September, 1869, p. 4.

4. That while the school was a secular school, admission was as eagerly sought as it is now.
5. That in a 'secular' school, where no Bible is read, and no creed or catechism used, the fundamental principles of religion and morals may be taught most successfully.
6. That it is possible to have daily Scripture reading so conducted as to give no offence to parents of Jews, Catholics or any denomination of Protestants, that is to use the Bible when desired, and yet keep an absolutely unsectarian school.
7. That even if children received no religious instruction in the day school, at least 95 per cent would get it in Sunday Schools and places of worship.<sup>1</sup>
8. That parents do not inquire what religious instruction is given, or if any is given, They make no demand for anything but good secular instruction, and therefore they are not the creators of the 'religious difficulty'. The demand made for religious instruction in the day school is a demand made for the parents, but not by them".

Thus after fifteen years of experiment, R.M.Shipman presented the conclusions of the Manchester Model Secular and Free School. The clear and concise method in which the findings are presented could quite accurately be described as the "scientific method" applied to education, for the eight statements adequately sum up every aspect of the education question as they were encountered during the fifteen years of the school's existence. These final words of the N.P.S.A. on the problem of educating the masses would have delighted Richard Cobden, who had died in 1865, for they are a clear admission that after a prolonged experiment the results could only be interpreted as indicating the eminent suitability of the American Common School System for adoption in this country.

The second conclusion clearly reflects the experience of the

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1. This is borne out by the Annual Tabular Reports of the school.

Education Aid Society in its attempts to persuade irresponsible parents to send their children to school. It demonstrates the need for legislators to take into account the experience of pressure groups if their policy is to be at all relevant and effective. Compulsion was not a principle of the L.P.S.A.'s plan of 1847, for at that time its need had not been made manifest by educationalists, but fifteen years "in the field" had convinced the Manchester pressure groups of its necessity. Their evidence was collected in a form that the government of the day could easily have profited by. Yet, as R.M.Shipman complained in the Fourteenth Annual Report of 1869, "the desire for facts seems very small", consequently the Elementary Education Act of 1870 did not implement the findings of the Education Aid Society, and it was only in 1876<sup>1</sup> that the principle of compulsion was admitted into the legislation governing education.

(vii)

#### The Effect of the Elementary Education Act on the School

As for the school, its annual reports become almost monotonous for the fulsome praise of H.M.Inspectors. The Fifteenth Annual Report for 1870-71 refers to Mr. Brodie's General Report to the Committee of Council on Education, in which he named the Free School among seventeen out of the two hundred and thirty-six that he inspected, which he specially named as "the really excellent schools".  
... "It is in this report that he describes the school as:  
... "the well-known Free School, admirably managed, controlled, and

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1. Lord Sandon's Elementary Education Act, 1876.

instructed, and which has conferred on Manchester pre-eminent benefits".<sup>1</sup>

The record is certainly impressive for down to 30th September 1870, 3,290 boys had been admitted, and 2,936 had left, leaving 354 on the books, and during the school year the average attendance had been 96 per cent.

At this point in the school's history, the effects of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 were felt. The Manchester School Board, formed on 24th November 1870, began to send to other schools boys who, so the Committee claimed, would normally have been admitted to the Free School, and children who would have come from Salford were sent to the Borough's own schools.

There was also a serious fall in the annual subscription. In 1869 it amounted to £293. 9. Od., in 1870 £271. 15. Od., and in 1871 £252. 10. 6d. R.M.Shipman made an eloquent appeal for financial aid in the Sixteenth Report for 1871-72, stating that the school, then seventeen years old, had become one of the institutions of Manchester and that no school anywhere was doing more necessary work or doing it more thoroughly. Unfortunately his appeal was without avail and subscriptions continued to fall. In the mid-sixties the school always had a balance in hand of something in the region of £180.<sup>2</sup> whereas, after 1870 the position deteriorated, and

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1. The Fifteenth Report of the Manchester Free School, September, 1870, p. 4.

2. Reports: 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868.

in 1871 the adverse balance was £49. 9. 9d., the first adverse balance since 1864. This situation is reflected in the absence of any reports, which were no doubt costly to print, after the sixteenth, until 1876.

The report for 1876 shows that since the opening of the school, 4,115 boys had entered and had stayed on an average for fifteen months, which by modern standards seems to be ridiculously short, yet this period, according to the report for 1876, was longer than in other schools, and "the regularity of attendance has added some twenty per cent to the instruction which they would have obtained in other schools". The number of pupils at the school had fallen to 293, and the adverse balance amounted to £100. 10. 5d.<sup>1</sup>, despite the sale of £219 worth of stock, and by 1878<sup>2</sup> it had reached £294. 17. 0½d. By the next year this had reached the appalling figure of £525. 14. 8½d., and although it was reduced to £343. 9. 8½d., in 1880<sup>3</sup>, the date of the school's last report, it was certainly a crippling deficit.

The policy of the new Manchester School Board is reflected in these reports. Manchester did not build Board Schools immediately, but used existing accommodation for several years.<sup>4</sup> Consequently small sums of money were paid annually to the Free School by the

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1. The Eighteenth Report of the Manchester Free School for the years ending 1876-77-78-79.
  2. Ibid.
  3. The Nineteenth Report of the Manchester Free School, February 1880.
  4. Curtis, op.cit., p.261. This was done under Clause 25 of the Act of 1870.



School Board until 1878, after which time the payments ceased. The amounts varied between £60. 5. 2d., in 1872, to £11. 2. 5d in 1877. These, however, were never great enough to affect the ever increasing deficit incurred by the school.

(viii)

#### The School's New Premises

In 1876 the widening of Deansgate, Manchester, necessitated the removal of the school to another building. The Society of Friends, to whom the Jackson's Row building belonged, moved to Byrom Street, closing the burial ground which surrounded the Jackson's Row school, and reintering the bodies at Ashton-on-Mersey.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately for the Free School new accommodation was found at the new school, completed in 1876, in Hewitt Street, off Deansgate, for the Sunday School pupils of St. Peter's Church. This the school was still occupying in 1887, which is the last record that appears to exist.<sup>2</sup> The Hewitt Street building behind the railway arches of Knott Mill railway station is still standing (1965), its first floor now occupied by a printing firm, and its top floor having been graced until recently by the Hallé Concerts Society, who used it as a rehearsal room. The position of the new building vividly portrays the dingy surroundings amid which the pupils of the Free School lived, emphasizing quite as vividly as any of the reports

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1. Centenary Booklet of the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, 1830-1930 (Manchester, 1930), p.13.

2. Newbold, op.cit. pL

the social pioneering aspect of the work. The buildings in the area are as old as, if not older than, the school itself, and have not, as yet, been disturbed by either bombing or the activities of the demolition experts who are removing so many signs of the Industrial Revolution in Manchester.

(ix)

#### High Standards Maintained by Mr. Mellor

Despite the difficulties with finance, the standards of the Free School were still maintained by Mr. George Mellor. For example, in 1875 fifty-one boys had maximum attendances, the average for the whole school being 96.4 per cent.<sup>1</sup> This remarkable attendance record was mentioned by the Bishop of Manchester who, in 1879, distributed the prizes at the annual examination. It was, he said, "unparalleled in the history of elementary education, being nearly thirty per cent above the average attendance at pay schools. In the examinations 283 boys qualified to take the examination, out of which number 271 passed in reading, 269 in writing and spelling, and 267 in arithmetic, and all the 220 boys presented for examination in geography and grammar were successful. Inevitably the Revised Code does appear to have affected the curriculum because the later reports make no reference to the teaching of social economy and physiology. It was this narrowing tendency which so bitterly annoyed Matthew Arnold.

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1. Nineteenth Report, 1880, Tables 1 & 2.

Although the school continued at least until 1886 and possibly longer, before its pupils were finally absorbed into one of the large Board Schools, set up in Manchester, the last report available appears to be that of 1880. Examination statistics may be misleading as a judge of a school's success, especially under the Revised Code, but the reports of inspectors are likely to be more reliable. From this point of view Her Majesty's Inspector, Mr. H.E.Oakeley gives some impression of the good work that was being carried out by the school. In 1880 his official report read:-

"This is a very pleasant School to inspect. All the work taken up was admirably well done; not the least sign of slovenliness. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, and Geography were all excellent".

In addition to the official report the Managers received the following letter from the Inspector:

" Whitehall, March 14th, 1880

Sir,

I have just finished looking through the papers worked at the recent examination of the Free School, and have been really astonished at the wonderful neatness and accuracy throughout the school.

Of the fifteen single failures, six were due to two boys of weak intellect in the first standard. Everything gave me and my assistants the impression of care and thoroughness; there is not the least trace of anything like slovenly teaching.

As an illustration of the accuracy I will state that about nine sums out of every ten given were worked correctly and the rate of errors in spelling was about two to every five boys; or, to put it another way, about one mistake in every hundred words dictated. Considering the class of boys attending the school, these results are surprisingly good.

Grammar and Geography were also very strong points indeed.

You will probably not receive my report from the Education Department for some weeks, but it gives me pleasure at once to inform the Managers of the school how excellent an examination their boys have passed.

Yours faithfully,

H.E.Oakley".<sup>1</sup>

There is little doubt, therefore, of the school's ability to give boys of exceptionally poor circumstances the rudiments of an education, giving them a chance to make a better living than they would have had if left to fend for themselves. Its reputation spread beyond Manchester, and among its visitors could be counted Miss Davenport Hill of the London School Board, and her sister Florence (daughters of Sir Rowland Hill), the Hon. Lyulph Stanley of the London School Board, Joseph Lupton of the Leeds School Board, A.H.Hill, Editor of The Labour News, and many others. Perhaps the greatest vindication of the school's work, emphasizing the close connection between education and social service which is so marked in the history of the school, and serving as a final tribute to the aspirations of the members of the N.P.S.A. and others, who supported it, are the words of the Bishop of Manchester, spoken at the Social Science Congress held in Manchester in Autumn 1879:

"There is a school in this city which I should recommend such members as take an interest in the question which it illustrates and who have time at their disposal, by all means to visit. It is called the Manchester Free School. It has, since its establishment in 1854, received 4,770 scholars, - they are all boys - and there are at present 324 on the books. They are almost all of the class commonly called "gutter children" and certainly come from the very poorest and lowest homes. I distributed the prizes there at an almost private visit in 1878

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1. Nineteenth Report, 1880, p.6.

and nothing ever struck me more in my life than the admirable order discipline and intelligence of the boys. But the phenomenon in the school is the regularity of attendance, the more remarkable when the character of the homes of the boys and the distance, which in many cases, they have to come, are taken into account.

In 1878, when I distributed the prizes for regular attendance - the only prizes, I believe, that are given - out of 462 possible there were 69 who had never missed school at all.

In 1879 there were 92; 28 who had only missed once, 15 twice, 13 three times and the percentage of the average attendances upon the whole number enrolled was 98.

I have collected the statistics of a good many schools, both in America and this country, but this result far exceeds anything I have ever met with elsewhere".<sup>1</sup>

(x)

#### James Newbold's Criticism of the Free School

The Free School was an obvious success, and with the glowing reports it received from H.M. Inspectors and distinguished visitors, it might be wondered why it was not used as a model for other schools, especially those set up by the Manchester School Board. It would be a simple matter to assign specific reasons for this, but of more interest is a contemporary view of the school, written by James Newbold, B.A., a member of the Manchester School Board and a former president of the Manchester Teacher's Association, entitled The Case of the Manchester Free School no Argument for Universal Free Schools (1887). He was moved to publish this article, it appears, because so many people had criticized other schools in the town adversely in the light of the Free School's success, and, having himself taught in some of these less fortunate establishments, was at pains to defend their members of staff, and to describe the

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1. Ibid., p.7.

difficulties with which they had to contend, compared with the infinitely superior conditions which existed at the Free School. The value of the article lies not only in its verification of the school's success, but also in its analysis of the secular circumstances which enabled it to be successful.

Newbold freely admitted the phenomenal standards of punctuality and regularity of attendance at the school, which were "perhaps unparalleled in the history of elementary education".<sup>1</sup> According to the published returns the average daily attendance for the past four years had been 98 $\frac{1}{2}$ %:

"That is to say that out of every 80 children whose names are on the registers, 79 are in actual daily attendance. To put the matter in yet another light, taking one child with another, a Free School scholar makes a day's absence in every sixteen weeks during which the school is open".<sup>2</sup>

This extract is particularly interesting, because the last official school report is dated 1880. Newbold's statistics, therefore cover the years 1881 to 1886, showing that the school's excellent record was still maintained. The average result of the attendances for the year ending February 28th, 1885, showed that "out of 294 children on the books, 147 or exactly one half, were never once absent during the twelve months; 19 only missed once, 14 only twice, and 5 only thrice".<sup>3</sup>

The first reason for the school's success, he maintained, was the choice of its committee which was "unique" in that it consisted

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1. Newbold, op.cit., p.7.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

of "a band of men distinguished above their fellows even in a city which has long been famous for the enlightened educational zeal of its leading citizens".<sup>1</sup> For example, Richard Cobden, Thomas Bazley, R.N. Phillips and William Brown were already, or later became, Members of Parliament. Sir John Potter, besides being an M.P., shared with Ivie Mackie the distinction of being three times Mayor of Manchester. Elkanah Armytage and Joseph Whitworth both received knighthoods, and the latter founded the Whitworth Scholarships. Dr. John Watts and Dr. W.B. Hodgson were both distinguished for their scholarship, and Dr. McKerrow served on the School Board and founded the McKerrow Scholarships. Finally Dr. J.R. Beard was a leading Unitarian, E.R. Langworthy founded the Langworthy Scholarships and Langworthy Art Gallery, and H.J. Leppoc later became Chairman of the Board of Guardians.

The second requisite for success was the employment of an excellent teacher. No obstacle was too great that it could not be moved in the successful achievement of this extremely important objective:

"The earnestness and zeal of the sub-committee may be inferred from the fact that they travelled hundreds of miles in the performance of their duty, their choice ultimately falling on the teacher of a school in Dorsetshire, more than two hundred miles from Manchester".<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the best and most up-to-date apparatus was chosen especially for the school by Templar himself, Newbold maintained,

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1. Ibid., p.12.

2. Ibid.

made the place into a "show school", a distinction which it always retained, being visited by such people as Sir John Pakington, the Dean of Hereford and the daughters of Sir Rowland Hill.

The school was also unique in that its management was concentrated into one department, whereas the Manchester School Board had one hundred and fifty to cope with:

"That one school was the local outcome of the labours of a rich and influential public association; - on that one school were concentrated the zeal and experience, and liberality of a committee perhaps unique in the history of elementary education".

Moreover the school never lost prestige nor "the distinctive position won for it in the beginning by the high social position and enlightened philanthropy of the original promoters".<sup>1</sup> As proof of this Newbold referred to the fact that the Mayor was an ex-officio governor of the school "and on this school alone, among all the elementary schools of Manchester, was the distinction conferred in 1886 of having the use of the Mayor's Parlour, in the Manchester Town Hall, granted for the meeting of subscribers and friends".<sup>2</sup>

Another reason for success, Newbold alleged, was that the teaching was of a particularly high order, and "a good teacher is the best attendance officer". As evidence of Templar's ability he quoted H.J.Leppoc's words in praise of the Headmaster when, presiding over the subscribers' annual meeting in 1861, he said, "I

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1. Ibid., p.14.

2. Ibid.



freely confess that the success which the Manchester Model Secular School has attained is greatly owing to Mr. Templar; and although thoroughly convinced that our plan was the right one, I do not think that our experiment would have succeeded well if he had not been at its head".<sup>1</sup> Newbold also quoted good reports of George Mellor's ability. The school had also been fortunate in its continuity of tradition, for at the time of writing Dr. John Watts was still on the committee, (his death in 1887 is mentioned in a footnote) "while in the head-mastership there has only been one change, and the present teacher (George Mellor) has held his office for twenty-three years".<sup>2</sup>

Up to this point the article, while admitting the peculiarly favourable circumstances, tends to be favourable towards the school, but subsequently it is severely critical of the school's policy with regard to regularity of attendance, the importance of which Newbold felt was exaggerated beyond all proportion. He had obviously read Darwin on "Natural selection" and was most intrigued in the way the "fittest" of the children available were "selected" by the school.

They were selected, he alleged, first of all by sex, in that girls, whose attendance records were always worse than boys, were not admitted. Secondly, they were selected by age, for children below the age of seven, the age-group noted for poor attendance, were also not admitted, nor were half-timers. Further selection by parentage then took place, "honest poverty" being the criterion by which their

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1. Ibid., p.15.

2. Ibid., p.25.

suitability was determined. This meant that, in most cases, only children whose parents were keen to send them to school gained admittance. By reserving the right of dismissal the Committee were able to select further for regularity, punctuality and bodily-health. This being the case, "who", asked Newbold, "could not make a good show if the poorer specimens might be thrown on one side"? He was particularly critical of the Committee with regard to selection for health: "The sick have enough to bear in their sickness without being punished by exclusion from school"; and claimed that the same selection process was the reason for the excellent standard of behaviour and absence of any need for corporal punishment: "There was no cruelty in the case of the Free School pupils **just** because they were not pupils taken at random".<sup>1</sup> He did admit, however, that children were no longer dismissed for absence through bad health, but maintained that "the first eleven years of a school's history go far to determine its subsequent character".<sup>2</sup>

He accused the Free School of being more concerned with regularity than with the welfare of the pupils, for they had made it into "an idol, still less converted it into a Juggernaut".<sup>3</sup> Such a percentage of attendance, he believed, was neither possible nor desirable. "In fact the Free School regularity is an artificial creation, and as such offers no criterion of what is possible in ordinary circumstances".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid. p.24.

2. Ibid. p.26.

3. Ibid. p.41.

4. Ibid. p.6.

At the time Newbold was writing, it appears that several critics of the educational system were putting forward the argument that many of the problems which beset education at that time could be rectified, simply by making education completely free. They often quoted the Free School's excellent record in an attempt to prove their case. Newbold competently exposed the inherent false logic of the argument, stating that it was a clear example of "hoc ergo propter hoc", and referred to both Benjamin Templar's own admission that compulsion was necessary,<sup>1</sup> and the bewildering experience of the Education Aid Society to illustrate how the mere lack of obligation to pay fees had not solved the problem of absenteeism.

Newbold was extremely critical of the Free School, and one cannot help feeling that his criticism was all the more acrid for his own experience, in that, as a teacher himself in what was probably a larger and much less well appointed school, he had grown tired and frustrated at the constant glorification of the achievement of an establishment which had the good fortune to operate under artificially good conditions. The Free School presented, in his opinion, a distorted view of the educational picture. The Education Aid Society's experience was the true story, for they "counted their misses as well as their hits, whereas the Free School only counted their hits", only "the fittest as to regularity survived".<sup>2</sup>

The school can, however, be defended from these criticisms, It

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1. Ibid., p.33.

2. Ibid., p.38.

was not designed to cope with conditions at their worst, but to put the N.P.S.A.'s policy of secular education, as far as possible, into practice. Furthermore it was there to demonstrate the existence of a large section of the population who neither qualified for Ragged Schools nor could afford to pay "school pence". Accidentally, through its own financial difficulties, it proved the inadequacy of voluntaryism, demonstrated the need for compulsion and established the need for a rate-supported system of education, performing in the meantime an extremely charitable service by providing an education for several thousands of children who, otherwise, would not have had such an opportunity.

In spite of his criticisms, Newbold admitted that, by 1878, three of the four principles for which the school's founders had fought had, directly or indirectly, been achieved: namely free education to all those unable to pay fees, rate-support, and legal compulsion. The only objective which remained to be secured was that doctrinal religion should not be taught in schools, a rule which has now been adopted in the majority of state schools.

For its work in illustrating the need for such principles within the framework of a national education system, the Manchester Free School can be described unreservedly as a fitting monument to the work of the National Public School Association.

## C H A P T E R XVIII

### CONCLUSION

As a pressure group the N.P.S.A. had no resounding successes which could be compared with the Anti Corn-Law League's triumph in 1846, when the Tories were forced to repeal the Corn Laws. Yet when one considers the advantages of the League, compared with the meagre assets of the Association the wonder is that it was able to do so much. Lack of finance, lack of unified party support and, above all, lack of a really good rallying cry made the Association's task seem impossible. Yet, in 1870, its principles of rate-supported, locally controlled, free, secular education, were all admitted, directly or indirectly, with the exception of the secular principle, and even this was approached by the Cowper-Temple clause which permitted pupils to withdraw from lessons in religious doctrine on grounds of conscience. This indirect success was achieved as much through the nature of the education question, which cut across party lines, being one more of religion than politics, as through the peculiar circumstances which existed in Parliament. A cause which severs party lines depends very much for support on the influence of those who are interested in it. The fact that Parliament was still dominated by individuals in the nineteenth century gave such a

question a reasonable chance of being adopted by some influential person. As Norman McCord wrote:

"This was not a democratic age, but a time when a man's chances in the political sphere depended less on the support of great numbers than on status, influence and respectability".<sup>1</sup>

This statement sheds even more light on the Association's desire for men of status, such as Cobden and Milner Gibson, to become associated with them.

It also explains why, despite the vast numbers and resources of the League, its position was not very powerful inside Parliament until Cobden and Bright had been able to establish their reputations. For this very reason the N.P.S.A. started off with a great advantage in Parliament, for its two main protagonists, Cobden and Milner Gibson although not in the "charmed circle" of power, commanded reputations which were immeasurably greater in the 'fifties than they had been in the 'forties.

The Association's disadvantages, however, were formidable in the extreme. The opposition of the Voluntaryists to both state aid, and secular education, severely weakened the Radical wing of the Liberal party, and this disability, coupled with the fact that the period between 1846 and 1868 coincided with a series of weak governments, made the presentation of a united educational front virtually impossible.

The N.P.S.A. were also unfortunate in the nature of the crisis

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1. McCord, op.cit., p.29.

which befell them in the fifties, compared with the crisis in which befell the Anti Corn-Law League in the 'forties. The Irish Famine had the effect of playing into the hands of the League and forcing the government to implement their policy. The Crimean War, which came when the N.P.S.A. were hoping to get a bill into Parliament, had completely the opposite effect, distracting attention from the education question to such an extent that, had it not been for the persistence of the N.P.S.A. and other pressure groups, the problem might have remained unsolved for much longer than it did. It is one of the achievements of the N.P.S.A. at this period, that despite Milner Gibson's advice against attempting to force legislation, it maintained a steady pressure, under difficult circumstances, for the implementation of its principles.

A further disadvantage, initially, was the nature of the members of the N.P.S.A., some of whom were ready to demand a purely secular programme, even when it was obvious that a much more flexible approach was needed. For example Dr. Hodgson gradually lost interest in the Association because he felt that its principles were being violated. On the other hand Dr. Watts, who began as a much more convinced Secularist than Hodgson, was one of those who showed himself to be ready to compromise with the Manchester and Salford Committee, because, as J.M. McKerrow pointed out, with several of the other Manchester educationalists he had realized that it was better "to accept whatever we can get, and work and wait for the rest".<sup>1</sup>

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1. McKerrow, op.cit., p.109.

Nevertheless although a compromise was achieved in 1857, if the Association could have been a little more flexible earlier in its career, it might have gained more co-operation and less opposition from those who formed the Manchester and Salford Committee on Education.

One of the greatest blows received by the Association was the defeat, in 1857, of the "Manchester School", when as a result of their denunciation of the Crimean War, Cobden, Bright, Fox and Milner Gibson all lost their seats. Although this was only a temporary reversal for them, it was a particularly tragic occurrence for the N.P.S.A. in that Bright, who had only become a member three years before, was immediately invited to stand as member for Birmingham. He accepted and remained its representative for the rest of his Parliamentary career. If, after Bright's adhesion to the Association in 1854 the progress of education had not been so severely impeded in the succeeding two years by the war, it is possible that legislation on education might have been achieved long before 1870, because Cobden, Bright, Fox and Milner Gibson together would have presented a formidable front.

The blow, however, was not confined to the N.P.S.A. for, with the removal of Bright to Birmingham, the centre of Radicalism moved with him from Manchester to his new constituency.<sup>1</sup> Bright, by far the most vigorous of the Manchester Radicals,<sup>2</sup> left behind him a group

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1. A. Briggs, Victorian People, (London, 1954), p.230.

2. He represented Birmingham until his death in 1890.



of elderly men such as Dr. McKerrow, Dr. Beard and John Watts who, in comparison with their Birmingham counterparts, were spent forces as far as Radicalism was concerned. Not one of the new men who were coming up to replace them. was of the calibre of Joseph Chamberlain, the undisputed leader of reform in Birmingham. For this reason Birmingham at the end of the century took over the leadership which Manchester<sup>1</sup> had held in the 'forties and 'fifties. Although there is no indication of any connection of the two events in the minutes of the N.P.S.A., it is a very interesting coincidence that in the year of the "Manchester School's" rejection by its own borough, the N.P.S.A. lost its most valuable members to the General Committee of Education. The defeat of their "Parliamentary friends" possibly had the effect of finally persuading Dr. McKerrow and his colleagues that the problem of education could only be solved by a compromise.

Despite this defeat, however, it is most interesting to note the distorting effect of a limited electorate on election results, for although the "Manchester School" had been defeated over its opposition to the war by the middle-class electors, there is evidence that the result would have been completely reversed under a system of universal suffrage. As Donald Reid explains in his article

North of England Newspapers 1700-1900:

"Detailed circulation of figures can sometimes point to important undercurrents of opinion. In the general election of 1857 John Bright lost his seat as M.P. for Manchester after a contest which had national importance. Yet throughout that year and subsequently up to 1861, circulation of the Manchester Examiner continued to rise, even though it strongly

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1. The "Manchester School" was soon to lose some of its most influential members for Fox died in 1864 and Cobden and Lucas in 1865.

supported Bright. There is no check on the steadily rising figures of circulation claimed by the Examiner, but they were not disputed by contemporaries. Their interpretation would seem that Bright retained (and indeed increasingly attracted) the support of the working-class non-electors of Manchester even while he was losing that of the middle-class electors".<sup>1</sup>

It is not too much to hope, therefore, that the hard work which was done in fostering interest in education among the working class by the N.P.S.A., and the sincere attempts to show them that its members had their welfare at heart, was reflected in the increasing sales of the Manchester Examiner during the 'fifties.

The leadership in the education question was taken by the secularist National Education League, which had its centre in Birmingham. But the work which had been accomplished in Manchester had not been in vain, because the way to the settlement of 1870 was not achieved by all-out secularism, but by the compromise method which was worked out in Manchester after 1857:

"The work of the Educational reformers in Manchester between 1850 and 1865, though it seemed to be a failure, was in fact the foundation on which the new system of English public elementary education was based. The conflict of opinion in Manchester represented a national conflict. The patience and energy of Manchester organizations produced, in the end, assuagement of the conflict by disclosing the wide extent of common ground upon which the disputants were agreed and the necessity for aid being given to education from local rates as well as from central taxation".<sup>2</sup>

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1. D. Reid, "North of England Newspapers and their value to Historians", Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical Society, Vol. VIII, pt.iii p.212.
  2. W.H.Brindley, The Soul of Manchester, (Manchester, 1929) p.51.

George Dixon of the National Education League admitted that Manchester would still have been leading the nation in educational matters in 1869 but for the reluctance of the Manchester Education Bill Committee, composed of former N.P.S.A. and Manchester and Salford Education Committee members, to extend their movements on a national basis.<sup>1</sup> Manchester, however, was no longer interested in a secular victory and even Dr. Watts admitted to H.A. Bruce that, despite the fact that he had carried one hundred and fifty meetings for secular education, after twenty years labour he had come to the conclusion that secular education was opposed to the most deeply rooted convictions of his countrymen.<sup>2</sup>

The real accomplishment of the N.P.S.A. was that it ensured that every possible aspect of the education question received the maximum amount of publicity, so that no government could pass an educational measure without its every detail being dissected and exposed to public scrutiny. The N.P.S.A. and the Manchester and Salford Committee "thrashed out between them the fundamental questions which arise through the relations of the government to national education" with the result that their deadlock was the "preface to the Elementary Education Act of 1870",<sup>3</sup> and although the N.P.S.A. conceded the leadership to the National Education League, J.M. McKerrow claims that "scarcely any point was raised in the discussions

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1. Maltby, op.cit., note, p.109.

2. Referred to in a speech by H.A. Bruce in the House of Commons, 23rd June 1870.

3. Brindley, op.cit., p.51.

promoted by the latter which had not been anticipated in the consideration of the question by the former".<sup>1</sup>

The N.P.S.A. therefore, although it did not succeed in achieving its objective in its original form, had not failed, despite the fact that at its break up it seemed as though the Voluntaryists had carried the day. It is fitting to give the last word to S.E.Maltby:

"Considering how unformed public opinion was in 1830; how tenacious the Established Church was of its privileged; how divided on this subject were the most progressive politicians, especially Radicals, Liberals and Dissenters; how distrustful the Conservatives were of real universal education; and how afraid were the Radicals of State control - considering all these things, it is not surprising that a great national scheme had not been carried. What is surprising is that year by year for twenty-five years, the men in Manchester who knew the condition of the people and cared for their enlightenment had fought on so optimistically with so much ability and devotion. They kept before the country the fact that the Education Question was in the very front of all its problems; and not because of the unimportance of the subject, but just because of the fundamental nature, the great day of the fulfilment of their hopes was still postponed".<sup>2</sup>

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1. McKerrow, op.cit., p.198.

2. Maltby, op.cit., p.94.

## APPENDICES

### THREE PLACARDS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKING-CLASSES

1. To the Inhabitants of Ashton:

A placard illustrating the bitterness that existed in Ashton-under-Lyne between supporters of the L.P.S.A., on the one hand, and the admixture of Chartists and the Established Church, represented by the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, on the other.

2. Secular Education:

A placard showing an attempt by the L.P.S.A. to "pack" public meetings with their supporters. Activities of this nature brought complaints from the Rev. Hugh Stowell. (See p.182).

3. Secular Education or No Education:

A notice critical of Canon Stowell informing L.P.S.A. supporters of the Town Hall Meeting on Easter Monday, 1850.

# To the Inhabitants of Ashton.

FELLOW TOWNSMEN,

On Monday Night last at the Town Hall, you had the strange spectacle presented to you of a band of *Gentlemen* in clerical uniform, and in close alliance with the notorious Charlestown renegade,—writhing, bellowing and grinning, in defiance of those who would give the people a free and a fair system of educating themselves. Do not, however, judge of the Church of England by these her unworthy representatives. There are Prelates and Ministers, within her pale, who have seen the real wants of their Country, and who heartily advocate a system of unsectarian education;—men who do not one day *Eagerly* prosecute poor Dissenters for Easter Dues and on another bawl about “Rights of Conscience” and “Religious Liberty.” Such men are the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of St. David’s, Dr. Hook, Dr. Holmes, Mr. Walker of Oldham, and many others, with more learning in their heads than all our platform heroes together, with Stewell thrown into the bargain.

But what was it these reverend gentlemen had really to say? They told you that the Secular Educationists were proposing to tax you, but they took care not to inform you that you are taxed already to an enormous amount *for their special benefit!* Four-fifths of the whole sum granted for schools from the public tax-fund, *to which you are forced to pay*, are monopolized by the Church of England; yet to these Schools, *for which you have been taxed*, you have no right of admission without paying a *second tax* for school-wage, and consenting to have the Catechism crammed down your children’s throats with the grammar and geography. Over these *taxation Schools* you have no control. So that this cry of “the Bible!” means nothing from their lips, but “Catechism, double taxation, and irresponsible power.” In other words, they brandish the sacred volume before your eyes, because they think it is broad enough to hide the priestly face which lurks behind!

On the other hand, examine the plan of Secular Education, and you will find in it three things.

1st.—Every child may be sent to the Public Schools, free of charge for School-wage.

2nd.—No Creed or Catechism will be crammed down the child’s throat.

3rd.—Every rate-payer will have a voice, through his representative, in the management of the schools.

So much for the two plans. The fatal flaw of the Secular Scheme, is, that it gives no exclusive advantages to the Church, over the rest of the community. This it is which pulls the white cravats so tight, that they *must* bellow out “Godlessness!” to relieve themselves.

The Rev Mr Eagar was so zealous for the Bible that he tacked to it a little private Revelation of his own. He told you that God does not disapprove of “a tax on sanitary accommodation, or a window tax.” After thus impiously ranging Deity on the side of dirt and darkness, one can hardly wonder that he thinks he is serving God in the cause of Ignorance!

Of Mr Alderman George Heginbottom and his friend Stephens, I have only one thing to say, “*and that is this here*”;—Mr Heginbottom did right to rub shoulders with the wretched buffoon of Charlestown Chapel before he ventured to turn out such a mass of sophistry as his speech was composed of. For him to place in the same class, a rate for teaching religious doctrine about which the rate-payers differ, and a rate for spreading general knowledge, of which all approve; for him to make a bother about taxation for the Church schools; and for him, the Vice-President of a secular Educational Institution, to insist that *no* education shall exist that is not religious,—all these things show how much of *the real Joseph* has already got into him. As for poor Joseph himself, the way in which he was *put down*, after threatening to speak an hour, shows that he is no longer to bully the people of Ashton, even when backed by a regiment of white cravats, who despise while they use him.

**A RATE-PAYER.**

W

Ashton, April 24th, 1850.

# Secular Education

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## MEN OF MANCHESTER:

You often complain that you are unjustly dealt with; that your labour is not protected, that you are not represented in Parliament, that you are expected to obey laws of the existence of which you know not.

Our laws are *written*, and many of you cannot *read*; Parliament only receives *written* petitions, and many of you cannot *write*; developed intellect alone makes its way in the world, but you and your children are *uneducated*.

You value your conscientious opinions, and cannot all therefore learn Theology at one school, and unless we have FREE SCHOOLS there is no chance of education for your children: but a zealot faction declares that unless there be thorough submission to its despotism, there shall be no free schools.—That faction is represented by the Rev. HUGH STOWELL, and if you would overthrow it, and liberate the minds of your children, you must be early in attendance at the

## FREE TRADE HALL

On Thursday Evening next,

AND

## AT THE TOWN HALL

On Easter Monday Morning,

AND VOTE IN FAVOUR OF SECULAR EDUCATION.



# SECULAR EDUCATION OR NO EDUCATION! THAT'S THE QUESTION.

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God's will is that man's faculties be fully developed in this world as the best preparation for another: men of all sects pray, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

ction of the Church, headed by CANON STOWELL, while uttering this very  
r, stand in the way to prevent all education of which they are not the dictators;  
as all men cannot bow the knee to the *Idol*, STOWELL, all national efforts for  
Education is thereby to be prevented. We pay Taxes for Paupers, for Criminals, for  
Judges, for Hangmen, and all this is not denounced as Anti-Christian; but, to pay a  
Tax for the School-master, and thus save all the rest, is, according to Mr. STOWELL,  
Godless!!!

Men of Manchester, you will not fail, on **EASTER MONDAY**, to assemble early at the **TOWN HALL**, and by voting for Secular Education, rather than none, will show that you prefer fulfilling the will of God, as expressed in your daily prayer, to being cheated into a continuance of brutish ignorance, and all its evils, even to please the Rev. CANON STOWELL.

## BE EARLY!

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Jam<sup>s</sup>. Leach, Printer, 42, Turner-Street, (near St. Paul's Church,) Manchester.



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