The Influence of Fabian Society on English Social Literature From 1884-1914

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THE INFLUENCE OF FABIAN SOCIETY
ON ENGLISH SOCIAL LITERATURE FROM 1884-1914

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Fabian Society was established in England in 1884 for the advancement of Socialism. Peculiar to the Society was its membership: well-educated, literary men and women with a cultural background and the belief that Socialism in England, by the very nature of the English temperament, could be furthered only by gradual and Parliamentary means.

The unusual literary talents of its members and their remarkable singleness of purpose and energy produced social literature of high literary quality and scientific merit.

The close association of such personalities as George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Graham Wallas, Sydney Olivier, and later Beatrice Potter Webb, H. G. Wells, and Harley Granville-Barker, in an atmosphere of gaiety, sharp wit, studious investigation, critical debate, and complicated political strategy, gave to the literature of the Fabian Society a distinctive manner: a quality of social realism and reformist zeal expressed with verve and self-confidence. Later, writing individually, George Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Graham Wallas, Sydney Olivier, and Granville-Barker carried the principles and the manner of Fabianism into their own works.

It is the purpose of this thesis to show the influence of the Fabian Society on the literature of England in the years 1884 to 1914 and to investigate the influence of Fabianism in the individual writings of George Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Graham Wallas, Sydney Olivier, H. G. Wells, and Granville-Barker. A literary evaluation is particularly aimed at,
but the purposes, achievements, and thinking of the Fabians and their unusual political situation as a Socialist society must be considered for an appreciative presentation.

In the unrestrained Individualism and aggressive Imperialism of Victorian England, with its middle class Capitalism on the one hand and wretched poverty on the other, the very word Socialism was anathema; since the general European unrest of 1848 it was considered one with Anarchism and Revolution. And that year, too, Chartism had collapsed and no serious collective agitation had followed it.1

But, as G. M. Young points out in Victorian England, even though the good tradition of English orderliness had been hardly interrupted by the excitement of 1848, or by the Sunday Trading Riots of 1857 or the Hyde Park Riots of 1866, which were not much more than processions which had got out of hand, in the eighties there was a growing awareness of the injustices of Individualism; the air of London was charged with protest.2

This metropolitan disaffection was but a part of a many-sided protest against the evils of economic Liberalism. The evolutionary ideas of Comte, Darwin, and Spencer, the economic analyses of the Utilitarians Bentham, James Mill, Malthus, and Ricardo, the political economy of John Stuart Mill, the reformist activities of Robert Owen, John Ruskin, William Morris, and the activities of Henry George in Ireland, a country which provided ever-recurr-

ing problems for the Gladstonian Liberal Government, were slowly preparing the public mind for the idea of society as a dynamic social organism able to be improved and in dire need of efforts in that direction.  

In literature Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, and William Morris had denounced poverty and middle class materialism. The social novels of Harriet Martineau and Bulwer-Lytton, the humanitarian novels of Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens, the Chartist novels of Charles Kingsley, and the political novels of Disraeli had presented their protest against their age. Literature had begun to consult the Blue Books.

Socialism as a repudiation of Individualism was represented by four societies: The Social Democratic Federation of H. M. Hyndmen; The Socialist League of William Morris; The Christian Socialist Society; and the Anarchist section led by Prince Kropotkine. Added to these were the Land Nationalization Society, The English Land Restoration League, and the Radical Party alienated from the Liberal Party by Imperialism.

But the visionary Utopianism, the revolutionary romanticism and heroics, the Marxist immediacy as presented by these organizations failed to obtain a hold on the English mind. It remained for the Fabian Society with its distinguishing characteristic of gradualistic realism to divert Socialism in

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6G. M. Young, op. cit., p. 33.
England from romanticism, and by its profoundly rational temper and opportunism to make Socialism the essential attack on the liberal ideal of the nineteenth century.\(^9\)

CHAPTER I

THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY

In the autumn of 1883 Thomas Davidson, then visiting in London, founded The Fellowship of the New Life. The members were young and the ideals were communistic and spiritual: the cultivation of a perfect character in each and all, the subordination of material things to spiritual, simplicity of living, the importance of manual labour, and religious communion. The ultimate aim was the reconstruction of Society according to the highest moral possibilities.

On January 4, 1884, a group of more practical-minded members, modestly feeling that Society would long await reconstruction if dependent on their first attaining personal perfection, seceded from the Fellowship and established the Fabian Society, named in allusion to the victorious policy of Fabius Cunctator in his wars with Hannibal and having for its goal the advancement of Socialism in England.

The Fabian Society, in spite of its literate and tempered name, was as anarchistic in 1884 as the Land Nationalisers, the Social Democrats, and the Anarchists; nothing less than immediate reconstruction of the social order would do, an ideal which proclaimed a concerted ignorance of existing conditions and of the British temperament.\(^1\) The essential difference between the Fabian Society and the other Socialist Societies, a difference which de-

terminated eventually the character of the Society, was its members: "educated persons of the professional and the higher official classes including civil servants of the upper division, stockbrokers, and propertied bourgeoisie generally, all under the age of thirty with their careers still before them". For critical students and upper class people the Fabian Society was the ideal: the nucleus for a society of their own class with an unformed constitution.

Paradoxically, however, the first tract of the Society was written by the one genuine workingman member, W. L. Phillips, a house-painter. It was titled Why Are the Many Poor? and was issued on April 4, 1884. Tract Number 1 is commonplace and uncertain and its significance lies in the motto appearing on the cover, not traceable to any history but henceforth to be identified with Fabianism: "For the right moment you must wait, as Fabius did most patiently, when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays, but when the time comes you must strike hard, as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain and fruitless."

However, the sane and temperate atmosphere proclaimed in the Fabian motto was destined to exist for a year largely in the motto alone. The men who were to make the Society's reputation, with the exception of Hubert Bland, who was an original member, had not yet joined the Society; the Fabians did

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3 Ibid., 2-5.
not yet know the distinction between Anarchism and Socialism and they were occupied with abstractions: Land and Capital, Industry and Competition, the Individual and the State. But on May 16, 1884, there appeared an heraldic and prophetic note in the minutes of the meeting. In pencil in his own handwriting was written: "This meeting was made memorable by the first appearance of Bernard Shaw". And on September 5, Bernard Shaw was elected a member of the Fabian Society.

The entrance into the Fabian Society of Bernard Shaw was a momentous event both for the Society and for himself, and through the influence of his personality and persuasion there was brought into Fabianism the group which was to make the Society's reputation for social realism in investigation and in literature, and who were as individuals to carry this social realism into their own writings. In quick succession there joined the Society: Sidney Webb and Sydney Olivier (1885), Annie Besant (1885), and Graham Wallas and William Clarke (1886).

Since Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Sydney Olivier, Graham Wallas, Annie Besant, Hubert Bland, and William Clarke were the determining personalities which brought the Fabian Society to the path of social realism in the literature of the Society and since the individual writings of the first four named are to be considered later in relationship to the Society's influence it is necessary to devote the following section of this chapter to an analysis of the careers of these Fabians up to their entrance into the Society.

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3b Ibid., p. 40.
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin in 1856. That his family was Protestant-Irish, that they were in the gentleman tradition, and that his father drank stealthily and steadily were the three important influences of his childhood. The first meant that he was not the conventional Irishman; sympathy with the Ireland of Cathleen ni Houlihan were not part of his heritage. By religion he was a member of an alien minority living in Ireland, a background likened by Chesterton to that of Swift and Parnell.

The fact that the Shaw family were in the Irish gentleman tradition meant that an appearance of family unity and an excessive discrimination in the choice of friends must be maintained. Although this strange snobbery was forever distasteful to Shaw, his background provided him with an outward self-sufficiency which stood him in good stead through future poverty and loneliness.

That his father, whose exceptional conventionality and remarkable wit he greatly admired, drank furtively affected the family to a profound extent. His mother, because she saw that a normal social life was impossible for the family and because she was a woman of amazing individuality and purpose sought refuge in music and formed a musical partnership with the famous musical conductor and singing teacher, George John Vandoleur Lee. The founder of the Amateur Musical Society. The finest music became a part of

the daily life in the Shaw home and Shaw has said, "I learnt more about music than about anything else in my youth".8

This intense occupation of his mother gave almost unlimited freedom to the child; at times he was in charge of servants who took him to see their friends in the slums. Of this he says, "Thus was laid the foundation of my life-long hatred of poverty, and the devotion of all my public life to the extermination of the poor and rendering their resurrection forever impossible. Note, by the way, that I should have been much more decently brought up if my parents had been too poor to afford servants".9

Later, after classes at the Wesleyan Connexional School, he could fill time at will. This he did by reading, by roaming through the National Art Gallery of Dublin and by listening to music at home. He was bored with school and explains this: "I was far too busy educating myself out of school by reading every book I could lay my hands on . . . and telling myself all sorts of stories, to puzzle about school." He was so absorbed in music that he could sing and whistle from end to end leading works by Handel, Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi.10

To Henderson, the attitude of amused sufferance of the Shaw family toward the father explains much of the later insouciance of Shaw. "With Irish lucidity and antiseptic humor, the family courageously took refuge in

7Ibid., p. 10.
a sort of mirth over the family joke. They treated it as Harlequin rather than as Death's Head.\textsuperscript{10a} A satiric view of the home and family life which characterizes many of Shaw's later writings had its beginning here according to his biographer.

But whatever the disadvantages of his independence there were certain qualities gained from it: the habit of freedom and independence and a sense of self-reliance.\textsuperscript{11}

When in 1871 his mother left for London to teach music there, Shaw and his father took lodgings in Dublin and Shaw went to work as a clerk in the Land Agency Office. Suddenly deprived of music and knowing that it was a vital necessity in his daily life, Shaw characteristically taught himself how to play the piano--and yet more characteristically began self-tuition, not with Czernys five-finger exercises but with the overture to Don Giovanni\textsuperscript{12}

During five years of responsible clerkship, which he did well, Shaw was uneasy and dissatisfied. Not being particularly pleased with being a good clerk and being unable to be proud merely of family background Shaw wanted tremendously to excel in something. Some literary effort had begun in an imaginative correspondence with a close friend, Edward McNulty, afterwards author of Mister O'Ryan, The Son of a Peasant, and Maureen; vivid letters were exchanged which were destroyed upon answering.

A chance remark by a fellow worker to the effect that every young fellow

\textsuperscript{10a}Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet*, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{11}Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet*, p. 43.
thought that he was to become a great man changed chronic dissatisfaction to action and Shaw resolved with the decisive resolution and purpose so characteristic throughout his life, to do two things: the first was that he was that he was a great man and that he would become a great writer; the second was that he would never do another honest day's work as long as he lived. With these two remarkable ideas Shaw at the age of twenty staked all on brain and character, resigned his excellent position, and went to London in March, 1876.13

To Chesterton, the entrance of Shaw into England was significant for what was brought from Ireland: an intellectual chastity and a fighting spirit. He says,

Ireland is a country in which the political conflicts are at least genuine; they are about something... Whether what he heard in boyhood was violent Nationalism or violent Unionism, it was at least something which wanted a certain principle to be in force, not a certain clique to be in office... Bernard Shaw entered England as an alien, as an invader, as a conqueror. In other words, he entered England as an Irishman.14

With no regular employment except for a brief period in 1879 and supported by his mother, with no desire for social life except to study it, with an outward manner of mockery and insufferable self-importance but with an inward shyness which caused him to suffer agonies before entering a social gathering, Shaw was as he termed himself The Complete Outsider in London from 1876 to 1884. But his years of clerkship had left him two invaluable

legacies: a business-like handwriting and the habit of regular work. He began to write whether inspired or not. His own inexhaustible curiosity added to this countless hours of reading in the British Museum. His love of music and art brought him to concerts and musicales and picture galleries in Trafalgar Square and Hampton Court.15

Through these years of genteel destitution five novels were written at the rate of exactly five pages a day, from 1879 to 1883, and these attempts to gain a foothold in literature were apparently a complete and hopeless failure.16

Immaturity, the first novel, was written in 1879. It was refused by every publisher in London because, in spite of decorous style and scrupulous composition, it had no plot and devoted itself to satirizing society.17 In his preface to Immaturity, published finally in 1931, Shaw attributes its refusal to the antagonism of the book to Victorian life and thought.18

Of the elaborately correct style in which Immaturity is written, the author says, "I have never aimed at style in my life; style is a sort of a melody that comes into my sentences by itself. If a writer says what he has to say accurately and effectively as he can, his style will care of itself, if he has a style."19 However, he did set up one condition in Immaturity; he planned never to write so as to be unintelligible to a foreigner with a

19Ibid., p. xxxix.
dictionary. Therefore, he carefully avoided idiom. Of this he says, "Later on I came to seek idiom as being the most highly vitalized form of language".20

However, in spite of the formal manner of the book, there is sensitive characterization, especially in the portrait of Robert Smith which is revealed as Shaw himself: "...closely cropped pale yellow hair, small grey eyes, and a slender lathy figure. His delicately cut featured and nervous manner indicated some refinement; but his shyness, though fairly well covered, shewed that his experience of society was limited, and his disposition sensitive."21

Important in the light of future events, is Shaw's reason for the failure of his first novel: he was the Complete Outsider:

Whether it be that I was born mad or a little too sane, my kingdom was not of this world; I was at home only in the realm of the imagination and at my ease only with the mighty dead. I was outside society, outside politics, outside sport, outside the Church. But the epithet would have been appropriate only within the limits of British barbarism. The moment music, painting, literature, or science came into question, the positions were reversed; it was I who was the Insider. I had the intellectual habit; my natural combination of critical faculty with literary resource needed only a clear comprehension of life in the light of intelligible theory; in short, a religion to set it in triumphant operation. It was the lack of this last qualification that lamed me in those early days in Victoria Grove, and that set limits to this ungainly first novel of mine, which you will not lose very much by skipping.22

In 1879 a noteworthy and prophetic interest was opened to Shaw. Through

20Ibid.
21Ibid., p. 4.
22Ibid., Preface pp. xiii-xiv.
the influence of a friend, James Lecky, Shaw visited the Zeletical Society, a junior copy of the Dialectical Society which had been established to discuss Stuart Mill's essay on *Liberty*. The Society was Millite and Individualistic: Shaw had read in his youth Mill on *Liberty*, on Representative Government, and on the *Irish Land Question*.

Despite his inward nervousness he took part in the debate and, overcome with fear that he had made a fool of himself, determined that he would join the Society, go every week, speak every week, and become a speaker or perish. In knowledge and comprehension of the evolutionist theories and philosophical theories of Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer he was on equal terms with the other members of the Zeletical Society, but he felt an alien and a recluse. However, with dogged persistence, Shaw spoke at every opportunity, was really listened to, and fascination of the platform grew upon him daily. He haunted every hole-in-corner debating society be it vegetarian, socialist, economic, ethical or free thought, and joined the Dialectical and Bedford Debating Societies. Shaw was gradually acquiring self-confidence and imper­turbability and the ability to arouse his listeners to indignation, or better still, curiosity, by an impudent and well-timed question.23

The Shavian critic of polite society appeared first in the character of Edward Connolly, hero of the *Irrational Knot*, written in 1880.24 This Irish-American engineer, blunt, ruthless and self-sufficient, was inspired from Shaw's brief connection in 1879 with the Edison's London Telephone Company, where he came in daily contact with American Technicians.25

The Irrational Knot has a social idea; the conviction that "society" is essentially unsocial, setting up an almost insuperable barrier between classes. Connolly, a democrat and a man who, scientific, individual and reasonable, marries a member of London's society, who lacks the sound and purposeful qualities of her husband. The marriage is a failure and the final abrupt departure of Connolly makes the novel, according to Shaw, a forerunner of Ibsen's A Doll's House.26

In Love Among the Artists, written in 1881, Shaw ascended the pulpit for the first time; it was a novel with a purpose. In "The Author to the Reader" he states that it was intended to illustrate "the difference between the enthusiasm for the fine arts which people gather from reading about them, and the genuine artistic faculty which cannot help creating, interpreting or at least unaffectedly enjoying music and pictures".27

The mouthpiece for the Shavian philosophy of art is the droll, original Owen Jack, the first of Shaw's privileged lunatics. Throughout the novel Owen Jack condemns fraudulency in art, sneers at the uninspired music of the academies and denounces the antiquated views of England's musical organizations, but he is tolerant of sincerity, sympathetic with effort, and his colossal self-sufficiency is humble in the presence of beauty.

Love Among the Artists just missed, according to Henderson, being a fine novel. The reason for its failure was that it was as innocent of a plot as a Sunday School tract. But the novel is filled with incident and clever satire and is distinguished for one delicately drawn character, the charming and piquant Polish pianist, Mademoiselle Szczyplicz, who, while emanating poetry and romance, is in reality the soul of commercialism.

Cashel Byron's Profession, written in 1882, is a romantic novel whose forthright hero is a pugilist who orates freely about the humanitarianism of prizefighting as opposed to the cruelty of vivisection, militarism, hunting, football, and steeplechasing and who is in love with a scholarly aristocrat never once guilty of idiom, a paragon who talks like a Walter Scott heroine. The highlight of the novel is the explanation of the art of boxing in terms of Beethoven and of Wagner. Social Democracy is prominent not only in the happy conclusion but also in the presence of Bashville, an adoring footman, who hovers about the aristocratic Lydia.

In the fall of 1882, wandering quite casually into Memorial Hall, Shaw, still uninformed on political economy, heard Henry George, author of Progress and Poverty, and greatly publicized because of his arrest by the British government in Ireland as a suspected member of the Clan na Gail and the Fenians. The importance of the economic basis dawned on him, and Shaw

29 Ibid., p. 72.
33 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 80.
34 Shaw, The Future of Political Science in America. N.Y., Dodd Mead & Co.
said of this chance lecture: "From that hour I became a man with some business in the world." 35

With this new interest, at 27, and still a romantic novelist, Shaw read Deville's French translation of Marx's Capital. The social problem became a religion and a mission. His former petulance against bourgeois morals became a revolt, a scientific conviction. He began to study economics seriously, and in the light of his new convictions, his career as a romantic novelist came abruptly to an end. He resolved to abandon character sketching and to produce a novel dealing with the entire social problem: the result was two gigantic chapters, later published as a complete novel, An Unsocial Socialist. 36

Humanity is sermonized as a product of Capitalism and morality is accused of being an elaborate comouflage for the fundamental proposition that property is theft. The hero, Sidney Trefusis, described by Henderson as a "Marx in Shaw's clothing" and "a licenced eccentric like his prototypic creator in real life", 37 is revolted by the horror of capitalistic civilization and particularly by his own role in it as the son of a Manchester capitalist. In defense of his abandonment of his ordinary way of life he explains:

I am helping to liberate those Manchester laborers who were my father's slaves. To bring this about, their fellow slaves all over the world must unite in a vast international association of men pledged to share the

35Ibid.
36Archibald Henderson. op. cit., p. 84.
37Ibid., p. 85.
world's work justly; to share the produce of the world justly; to yield not a farthing—charity apart—to any full-grown and able bodied idler or malingerer, and to treat as vermin in the commonwealth persons attempting to get more than their share of wealth or to give less than their share of work. This is a very difficult thing to accomplish because working-men, like the people called their betters, do not always understand their interests, and will often actually help their oppressors to exterminate their saviours to the tune "Rule Britannia", or some such lying doggerel. We must educate them out of that and meanwhile push forward the internatural association of laborers diligently. I am at present occupied in propagating its principles. Capitalism organized for repressive purposes under pretext of governing the nation, would very soon stop the association if it knew our aim, but it thinks that we are engaged in gunpowder plots and conspiracies to assassinate crowned heads; and so, whilst the police are blundering in search of these, our real work goes on unmolested. Whether I am really advancing the cause is more than I can say. I use heaps of postage stamps, pay the expenses of many indifferent lecturers, defray the cost of printing reams of pamphlets, and handbills which hail the laborer flatteringly as the salt of the earth, write and edit a little socialist journal, and do what lies in my power generally.  

On May 16, 1884 Shaw attended a meeting of the Fabian Society, and guided by his instinctive feeling that the Fabian Society would attract men of his own bias and intellectual habits and to gratify his ardent wish to work with a few educated and clever men, he joined the Society in the eighth month of its existence. From the first, the Society was affected by his critical temperament and the verve of his personality.

SIDNEY WEBB. With the entrance in 1885 of Sidney Webb the Fabian Society was the benefactor of a personality amazing in its positiveness and its

ability to influence organizations and individuals. Shaw had met Sidney Webb, an Individualist Radical as yet not converted to Socialism, at a meeting of the Zeletical Society in 1879.\(^3^9\) In a conversation with his biographer in 1905 Shaw described his first impression of Webb:

> . . . a young man of about twenty-one, rather below middle height, with . . . a profile that suggested an improvement on Napoleon the Third, his nose an imperial being of that sort. He had a fine forehead, a long head, eyes that were built on top of two highly developed organs of speech (according to the phrenologists), and remarkably thick strong dark hair. He knew all about the subject of the debate; knew more than the lecturer; knew more than anybody present; had read everything that had ever been written on the subject, and remembered all the facts that bore on it. He used notes, read them, ticked them off one by one, threw them away when finished with a coolness and clearness that to me in my then trembling state, seemed miraculous. This young man was the ablest man in England—Sidney Webb.\(^4^0\)

The result of this immediate appreciation was the resolution by Shaw to form a friendship with Webb; a resolution which had a lasting influence upon his own life and upon the history of English Socialism. In Shaw's own words: "Quite the cleverest thing I ever did in my life was to force my friendship on Webb, to extort his and keep it."\(^4^1\)

By heritage and by training Sidney Webb was the opposite of Shaw. Of completely Anglo-Saxon English ancestry he was born in the densely populated area of Leicester Square on July 13, 1859. His mother was competent and positive, his father was a Radical, an ardent Millite, an accountant, and a

\(^3^9\)Edward R. Pease, op. cit. p. 46.  
\(^4^0\)Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 143.  
\(^4^1\)Ibid.
Vestryman. The acquisition of scholarships was a child's play to Sidney Webb; he was a constant reader, had an encyclopedic memory and an unfailing curiosity. Added to these qualities were the advantages of travel; he was sent to Switzerland for French and later to Germany to study German.

At 16, having become a clerk in the Colonial Office, he continued his studying at the London University evening classes and received in 1880 an LLB. degree at London University. In addition to this he was an unpaid lecturer at the London University Workingmen's College.

Sidney Webb was, at the time of his meeting with Shaw, the ablest clerk in the Colonial Office, he was the master of systematic administration and investigation, and he was constantly insistent upon facts. He was inartistic. His powerful mental ability was accompanied by a genuine disinterestedness; he was unassuming and modest, indifferent to money and position. The "I" figures least frequently in his writings.42

Shaw in 1884, alive to the advantage of Fabianism of the scientific spirit of Sidney Webb, persuaded his friend to join the Society. The enthusiasm of Shaw finally prevailed and Webb joined in 1885. With his membership, Fabianism had a perfect and powerful contrast: the keen wit and agile logic of one and the sound judgment and sane conservatism of the other.43

SYDNEY OLIVER. Entering the Fabian Society on the same day as Sidney Webb, his close friend and colleague in the Colonial Office, Sydney Olivier brought to the Society an artistic, cultivated, and scholarly background,

43 Henderson, op. cit., p. 158.
supplemented by warm human sympathies which were to affect not only his Socialistic activities but were to reveal themselves in later activities and books when, as Lord Olivier and Governor of Jamaica, he viewed the colored question with the same humanity that prompted his entrance into the Fabian Society.  

A graduate of Oxford, Sydney Olivier was the author of Mrs. Maxwell’s Marriage, a play, which, though unpublished, was produced by the London Stage Society. In 1881 a book of his poems, Poems and Parodies, was published.  

Inspired by the works of John Stuart Mill and August Comte and more immediately by Progress and Poverty of Henry George, he cooperated in 1882 with H. E. Campion in the formation of the Land Reform Union. It was at a meeting of the Union in the following year that he first met Bernard Shaw whose wit and eccentricity caused Olivier to dub him: “flaming Phoenix combining all the appropriate eccentricities of the intellectual revolutionary, atheism, vegetarianism, and malnutrition.”

By the time Olivier entered the Fabian Society he knew Shaw well and was continually entertained and frequently astonished by him. However, from the first Olivier was sympathetic toward Shaw and recognized his ability, acuteness, and his knowledge of music and art.

ANNIE BESANT. The vivid personality of Annie Besant combined with her exceptional oratorical powers and publishing activities brought much to the

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44Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 46.
45Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 211.
46Ibid., p. 144.
47Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 145.
Fabian Society during her short-lived membership. A free-thinker and associate of the famous atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant owned, or rather was, the Freethought Publishing Company, and had established in 1883 a sixpenny weekly, the liberal magazine, Our Corner, as "an outlet for her personality." 48

Phenomenal energy and ability in organizing, debating and agitating experience which made her a formidable adversary, a publishing company of her own - all these attributes were to make Mrs. Besant an invaluable Fabian despite the fact that she was to prove more concerned with carrying the Fabian message to wider fields than the Fabian Society. 49

GRAHAM WALLAS. In April, 1886, Graham Wallas, an Oxford graduate and close friend of Sydney Olivier, joined the Fabian Society. 50 He was to become by virtue of his exceptional character and attainments and his freedom from home responsibilities an intimate associate of Shaw, Webb, and Olivier. While up to the time of his entrance into the Society he had no published writings to his credit he brought to it an experienced Socialist background, having been associated with Hyndman, William Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Bland, and Sydney Olivier in the Social Democratic Federation; 51 of further advantage were his remarkable talents as a speaker and lecturer. 52

48 Geoffrey West, Annie Besant, New York: The Viking Press, MCMXXVIII, pp. 79-80
49 Ibid., p. 82.
50 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, pp. 163-164.
51 Ibid., p. 146.
52 Ibid., p. 211.
WILLIAM CLARKE. William Clarke joined the Fabian Society in 1886. He had been a member of the Fellowship of the New Life and had stayed with that organization. He was by beliefs and temperament destined to be discontented as a Fabian. William Clarke was an M.A. from Oxford; he was an efficient journalist and an able lecturer with a successful lecture tour behind him in the United States. He was an ardent Whitmanite and had known Whitman in the United States. He worked constantly and was honest and thorough, but he was morose and quarrelsome. The gaiety and insouciance of Shaw, whom he regarded as an anarchist, particularly annoyed him. His antipathy to the personality of Shaw made him strive vainly to quarrel with the annoying Irishman, but Shaw always met these attempts with unwelcome understanding and appreciation.

However, during his brief period as a Fabian William Clarke made a strong impression as an industrious speaker, having the splendid ability from the Socialist viewpoint of making "every sentence an ultimatum".53

HUBERT BLAND. The last one of the group to be mentioned, Hubert Bland, was, as has already been mentioned, an original Fabian. Hubert Bland and his wife, Evelyn Nesbit the poetess, had been contributors to Annie Besant's weekly, Our Corner; they had also been associated with the Social Democrat Federation. In addition to this, Hubert Bland was the editor of the periodical, Today.54

A man of much individuality and common sense, he lived in a strongly

53 Ibid., pp. 212-213.
54 Ibid., pp. 164-165.
conservative social background in Blackheath and had an utter contempt for the Bohemianism of Shaw and his associates. His irreproachable black frock coat and a single eye glass infuriated the shabby and insouciant Fabians but his fierce Norman exterior and skill as a pugilist made him too formidable an adversary to trifle with. A strong conservative and Imperialist he was in sharp contrast to the Millite, Benthamite members of the Society, and argued upon every opportunity with their firmest advocate, Sidney Webb.55

The progress from 1884 to 1886 from anarchism to gradualism and constitutionalism was in itself a gradual process.56 That the Society was still indulging in abstractions after the entrance of Shaw can be seen by the first Fabian Tract composed by him - Fabian Tract Number 2, A Manifesto. It is four pages long and covers a wide field in a startling manner; but at no time is it factual; the problems of the working man are not dealt with; it is woefully abstract and nowhere does it touch upon cooperation, Trade Unionism, wages or hours of labour.57 The forty followers of Fabius Cunctator definitely did not know where to strike.58

However, Tract Number 2 is significant for its evidences of the cleverness of Shaw and the revolutionary attitude of pre-gradualist Fabianism:

That the most striking result of our present system of farming out the national Land and Capital to private persons has been the division of Society

55Ibid., p. 165.
57Edward R. Pease, op. cit., p. 44.
58Ibid., p. 39.
into hostile classes, with large appetites and no dinners at one extreme and large dinners and no appetites at the other.

That the practice of entrusting the land of the nation to private persons in the hope that they will make the best of it has been discredited by the consistency with which they have made the worst of it; and the Nationalization of the Land in some form is a public duty.

That the state should compete with private individuals — especially with parents — in providing happy homes for children, so that every child may have a refuge from the tyranny or neglect of its natural custodians.

That men no longer need special privileges to protect them against women, and that the sexes should henceforth enjoy equal political rights.

That the established Government has no more right to call itself the State than the smoke of London has to call itself the weather.

That we had rather face a Civil War than such a century of suffering as the present one has been.59

But the scientific spirit was inevitable with the entrance of Sidney Webb. He was the leading figure from 1885 to 1886 in an inner club called the Hempstead Historic, composed of Shaw, Webb, Olivier, and Wallas. Established for the study of social questions, it proved to be the determining factor in the Society's temperament. The members studied nightly, lectured one another on subjects they wanted to teach themselves, and equipped themselves with a barrage of facts which made emotional radicalism unthinkable.60

It was from this close association that the spirit of raillery which

59Ibid., pp. 41-43.
60Ibid., p. 64.
infected the Fabians and proved to be the bane of other Socialist societies came into being. Shaw attaches tremendous importance to this:

It was at this time that we contracted the invaluable habit of freely laughing at ourselves which has always distinguished us and which has saved us from being hampered by gushing enthusiasts who mistake their own emotions for public movements. From the first such people fled after one glance at us, declaring that we were not serious. Our preference for practical suggestions and criticisms, our impatience of all general expressions of sympathy with working class aspirations, not to mention our way of chaffing our opponents instead of denouncing them as enemies of the human race, repelled from us some warm-hearted and eloquent Socialists to whom it seemed callous and cynical to be even commonly self-possessed in the presence of the sufferings upon which the Socialists made war. But there was far too much equality and personal intimacy among the Fabians to allow of any member to get up and preach at the rest in the fashion which the working-classes still tolerated submissively from their leaders. We knew that a certain sort of oratory was useful for 'stoking up' public meetings but we needed no stoking up and when an orator tried the process on us we soon made him realize he was wasting his time and ours... And the irreverence which has become traditional with us, comes down from the early days when we often talked such nonsense that we could not help laughing at ourselves.61

The acquisition of facts became the leading passion of the Fabians; they worked with incredible energy at studying, discussing, and speaking.62 And the more they studied social statistics the more irate they became at the maudlin and the sentimental and the further detached they became from Anarchism.63 They found to their joy that power lay in facts and that a display of facts during question time at public meetings always overcame an

62 Harold J. Laski, "The Fabian Way", Current History, V. 41, p. 34.
63 Gilbert K. Chesterton, op. cit., p. 82.
audience to the same extent that it bored them during lecture time. The Fabians had found themselves. Chesterton explains the process: "This method may be approximately defined as that of revolutionising the revolutionaries by turning their rationalism against their remaining sentimentalism."64

The combination of natural genius with statistical information determined the character that the Fabian Society was fast assuming. The complete enthusiasm with which these remarkable persons expended their energies has been a source of wonder and speculation to many. This surprise is expressed by Chesterton:

I have in my time had my fling at the Fabian Society, at their pedantry and arrogance, nor do I regret it... And if I feel such a confession is due those Fabians who could hardly been experts in any society such as Mr. Sidney Webb... it is due more strongly to the greatest of the Fabians. Here was a man who could have enjoyed art among the artists, who could have made epigrams like diamonds and drunk music like wine. He has instead laboured in a mill of statistics and crammed his mind with all the most dreary details, so that he can argue on the spur of the moment about sewing machines or typhus fever... 65

Two paramount ideas were now in the minds of the leading Fabians. The first was Gradualism: they abandoned completely the idea of sudden social reconstruction; they realized that by the very nature of the British temperament social reform must be effected in the Parliamentary, Constitutional way. 66 This fact led immediately to the second idea: Permeation. They

64 Ibid., p. 67.
65 Ibid., p. 87.
knew that they must step beyond their drawing-room and debating club form of publicity and extend their ideas into political parties, local boards, workingmen's clubs, and every medium form of propaganda available.67

But the Fabians had to face two crises - one from without and one from within before these two policies were firmly established. The Fabians had long been derided as a group of drawing-room snobs by the other Socialist societies; William Morris especially was annoyed by them. To the question, "Why did not Morris join the Fabians? Shaw has answered:

The answer is that he would have been more out of place in our drawing-rooms than in any gang of manual labourers or craftsmen. The furniture would have driven him mad and the discussions would have ended in his dashing out of the room in a rage and damning us all for a parcel of half-baked, short-sighted, suburban snobs, as ugly in our ideas as in our lives. He could be patient with the strivings of ignorance and poverty towards the light if the striver had the reality that comes from hard work on tough materials with dirty hands, and weekly struggle with exploitation and oppression but the sophistication of middle class minds hurt him physically. . . He thought possibly the gradual Webb way would work out but could not interest himself in the process.68

The conference which ended all conferences with other Socialist societies and put the Fabians firmly on their own resources was called by the Fabians in June, 1886. It showed that the Fabians could completely outwit their critics in debate and could carry on a conference in a business-like manner. Self-confidence came also from the realization that their

67Harold J. Laski, op. cit., p. 34.
printed material was a credit to them:

It also, by the way, showed off our pretty prospectus with the design by Crane at the top, our stylish looking blood-red invitation cards and other little smartnesses on which we prided ourselves. We used to be sneered at as fops and arm-chair Socialists for our attention to these details; but I think it was by no means the least of our merit, that we always, as far as our means permitted, tried to make our printed documents as handsome as possible, and did our best to destroy the association between revolutionary literature and slovenly printing on paper that is nasty without being cheap. One effect of this was that we were supposed to be richer than we really were, because we generally got better value and a finer show for our money than the other Socialist societies.69

The crisis from within the Fabian ranks proved to be another triumph for the Gradualists.70 On September 17, 1886, a fierce debate took place between the Radical and the Conservative Fabians and the deliberative emerged victorious. "Watchful waiting" was definitely Fabian and the beloved motto was now a fact. But the intensity of the meeting can be realized from the meek statement in the minutes of the meeting: "Subsequently to the meeting the secretary received notice from the manager of Anderton's Hotel that the Society could not be accommodated for further meetings".71

69Edward R. Pease, op. cit., p. 56.
70George Middleton, op. cit., p. 534.
CHAPTER II
THE EARLY PUBLICATIONS OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Roofless, but firmly entrenched in Fabian gradualism and factual realism, the undaunted Fabians remained true to their middle-class conservatism and met henceforth at Willis's Rooms, an ultra-respectable rendezvous for select societies; they had cannily discovered that the fact that they had applied was recommendation enough. 1 Unhindered now by negative voices and with tremendous energy and remarkable singleness of purpose the Fabians entered the most positive era of their existence: studying, orating, writing, permeating, against a background of good will, merciless questioning, historical analysis, and endless statistics. Bernard Shaw, who was meanwhile alternately astounding and impressing another public, having been appointed art critic for The World with Edmund Yates 2 presents a glimpse of early Fabian atmosphere in the following quotation:

My own experience may be taken as typical. For some years I attended the Hampstead Historic Club once a fortnight, and spent a night in the alternate weeks at a private circle of economists which has since blossomed into the British Economic Association - a circle where the social question was left out and the work kept on abstract scientific lines. I made all my acquaintances think me madder than usual by the pertinacity with which I attended debating societies and haunted all sorts of hole-and-corner debates and public meetings and made speeches at them. I was president of the Local Government Board at an amateur

1Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 73.
Parliament where a Fabian ministry had to put its proposals into black-and-white in the shape of Parliamentary Bills. Every Sunday I lectured on some subject which I wanted to teach myself; and it was not until I had come to the point of being able to deliver separate lectures, without notes, on Rent, Interest, Profits, Wages, Toryism, Liberalism, Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Trade-Unionism, Co-operation, Democracy, the Division of Society into Classes, and the Suitability of Human Nature to Systems of Just Distribution, that I was able to handle Social-Democracy as it must be handled before it can be preached in such a way as to present it to every sort of man from his own particular point of view. 

I do not hesitate to say that all our best lecturers have two or three old lectures at the back of every single point in their best new speeches; and this means that they have spent a certain number of years plodding away at footling little meetings and dull discussions, doggedly placing these before all private engagements, however tempting. A man's Socialistic acquisitiveness must be keen enough to make him actually prefer spending two or three nights a week in speaking and debating, or in picking up social information in the most dingy and scrappy way, to going to the theatre, or dancing or drinking, or even sweethearting, if he is to become a really competent propagandist.

It is at such lecturing and debating work, and on squalid little committees and ridiculous little delegations to conferences of the three tailors of Tooley Street, with perhaps a deputation to the Mayor throw in once in a blue moon or so, that the ordinary Fabian workman or clerk must qualify for his future seat on the Town Council, the School Board, or perhaps in the Cabinet.

In 1887 the Fabian Society presented to the British public the first significant publication of the Society, Fabian Tract Number 5, Facts for Socialists from the Political Economists and Statisticians. It was the work of Sidney Webb and consisted of sixteen pages of proven facts and

3Tract Number 41, pp. 16-17.
hard-headed analysis. Facts for Socialists presented the case for Socialism not with emotion and rhetoric but by references to the Dictionary of Statistics, The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, the Report on the Industrial Remuneration Conference, the Annual Report of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, the Registrar-General's Report, the Inland Revenue Report, and the Census for England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. The statistics were vitalized by understandable graphs and the conclusions supported by complete references; John Stuart Mill's Political Economy was most frequently referred to.4

That England is a land of two nations, the rich and the poor, is the line of thought under the following headings: The Nation's Income; Who Produce It; How the Idle Rich Live; Rent; Interest and Capital; Profits and Salaries; The Classes and the Masses; The Two Nations; The Competitive Struggle; and Some Victims of the Struggle.5

The remedy for the divided nation is given calmly:

The evil can never be remedied until the 'two nations' are united by the restitution to public purposes of rent and interest of every kind and by the growth of social sympathy promoted by the accompanying cessation of class distinctions. It will be seen by the above quotations that this position is based on the facts of the case as ascertained and declared by the recognized authorities in statistics, and is in entire harmony with the doctrines of Political Economy.6

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4Tract Number 5, p. 4.
5Ibid., pp. 2-19.
6Ibid., p. 18.
That Socialism would gradually but surely come to England is the note on which Tract Number 5 concludes:

The restitution to public purposes of rent and interest of every kind cannot be effected by revolution, or by one or a dozen Acts of Parliament. . . Legislative reforms are needed, but they must be supplemented by a thoroughly organized exercise by all local authorities, from Parish to County Councils, of the powers they already possess. . . The restitution of the rent and interest to public purposes will be mainly brought about by means of progressive taxation, in the shape of graduated death duties, a graduated differentiated income tax, and the rating of land values. . . By these and similar means, very greatly extended, the emancipation of the workers from the burden of private monopoly will slowly but surely come.⁷

Strengthened by their by now profound grasp of political economy and emboldened by mutual appreciation of their own talents and tricks the Fabians now adopted a merciless debating technique. As Shaw expresses it:

"...Our favourite sport was inviting politicians and economists to lecture us, and then falling on them with all our erudition and debating skill and making them wish they had never been born".⁸

The Fabian meetings became a joy to the controversial and a hazardous experience to the uninformed. In an account of Fabian tactics given by George Standring in The Radical of March 17, 1888, under the title "Butchered to Make a Fabian Holiday" the typical technique of the Fabians was depicted. The victim, Mr. R. B. Haldane, a well known Radical member of Parliament, had finished his address "Radical Remedies to Economic Evils" and the massacre began. Sidney Webb spoke so rapidly as to be

⁷Ibid., p. 19.
⁸Tract Number 41, p. 18.
almost incoherent and Annie Besant argued with her back to the foe only to face him at indignant intervals. Bernard Shaw, whom a later victim describes as a "fox-coloured half-god, with a barely perceptible brogue and a habit of kicking up the cloven hoofs of his mind in a manner so engaging that you forgive him for at the same time having kicked the dust of obliquity on yours" would complete the massacre and retire, as did any speaking member, in a roseate glow of Fabian laughter and approval. This concerted barrage of talent and knowledge caused the Fabians to become from 1887 to 1889 "the recognized bullies and swashbucklers of advanced economics."

In 1888 the first Fabian publication by Sydney Olivier appeared: Tract Number 7, Capital and Land. The central idea of this tract is the promotion of community control of land and industrial capital but Sydney Olivier is also much concerned with the attitude of other Social reformers, and most particularly with the Land Nationalizers. Tract Number 7 complements the Sidney Webb idea of the inevitability of gradualness and observes, as Fabian publications were so frequently to do; that England was being socialized but refused to recognize it.

The idle are excoriated, not with venom and exclamations, but with moderate and at times poetically descriptive phrases:

Labour politicians, Land Nationalizers, Conservatives, Radicals, all who interest themselves in Social Science as the study of the well being of men will agree with us that the use of Land and Capital should be to serve

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9 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 74.
10 Mary Austin, "My Fabian Summer", The Bookman, December, 1921, p. 531.
11 Tract Number 41, p. 16.
as instruments for the active, the energetic, the industrious, the intelligent of mankind to produce wealth for themselves and for those who are necessarily dependent upon them and to maintain the condition of healthy existence for the society which they compose. And will they not agree with us that it is the abuse of Land and Capital that they should be made by the laws of any people a "property" often owned by entirely idle and unprofitable persons, who may exact hire from those who are working for the maintenance of social existence or may even refuse the would-be workers from access to these indispensable instrument of industry?

If the access be refused - land kept out of cultivation and turned into sheepwalks and sheepwalks into shootings; natural resources of wealth locked up from uses; the pleasant places of the earth, the mountains, the moors, the woodlands, the sea shores, parked and preserved and placarded, that the few may have space for their pride, while the many must crowd into squalid cities and dismal agricultural towns, and take their holidays in herds on the few beaten tracks left for them.12

Tract Number 7 closes with an appeal to Land Nationalizers to work for Nationalization of Capital as well as Land on the ground that the evolution of industry has rendered Land and Capital indistinguishable: "Why are these Reformers not Socialists? Why do they hesitate to join the only party of social reform which has definite principles of action and a clear vision of the course of economic evolution?"13

The Fabian policy of Permeation was now actively and energetically in operation but not without its critics. As a critic of this policy observed in The Spectator: "The founders of the Fabian Society seem to hold that it

12 Tract Number 7, p. 17.
13 Ibid., p. 17.
is better to creep down the mysterious bypaths on list slippers than to stamp noisily along the open road and they are not of course the only persons in the world who believe or begin by believing in that policy. The practical answer to that criticism is given by Bernard Shaw: "In 1888 it cost only twenty-eight postcards to convince the newly born Star that London was aflame with Fabian Socialism."

Shaw himself, from 1888 to 1890 Music Critic to The Star as Corno di Bassetto was frequently prompted by the sight of elegantly dressed audiences to muse on the poverty of London; he gives this account of Fabian permeation: it is significant for the strategic method it reveals and also for its indication of Fabian interest in municipal activities:

In 1888 we had not been found out even by The Star. . . the Liberal Party was too much preoccupied over the Parnell Commission, with its dramatic climax in the suicide of the forger Piggott, to suspect that the liveliness of the extreme left wing of the Radical Wing in London meant anything but the usual humbug about working-class interests. We now adopted a policy which snapped the last tie between our methods and the sectarianism of the Federation. We urged our members to join the Liberal and Radical associations of their districts or if they preferred it the Conservative associations. . . We permeated the party organizations and pulled all the wired we could lay our hands on with the utmost adroitness and energy; and we succeeded so far that in 1888 we gained the solid advantage of a Progressive majority, full of ideas which would never have come into their hands had not the Fabians put them there, on the first London County Council. The generalship of this movement was undertaken by Sidney Webb who played such bewildering

14 Needs data from The Spectator
conjuring tricks over the Liberal thimbles and the Fabian peas that to this day both the Liberal and the sectarian Socialists stand aghast at him. It was exciting while it lasted, all this 'permeation of the Liberal Party' as it was called and no person of the smallest political intelligence is likely to deny that it made a foothold for us in the press and pushed forward Socialism in municipal politics to an extent that can only be appreciated by those who remember how things stood before our campaign.16

Sidney Webb followed up this strategy by two tracts of municipal interest, Tracts 8 and 9, Facts for Londoners and An Eight Hours Bill.

Facts for Londoners is an exhaustive collection of statistics to the effect that London, the wealthiest city in the world, is in the hands of exploiters. With accompanying suggestions for Socialistic reform the tract deals with area and population, land values, housing, water, trams, docks, gas, markets, libraries, cemeteries, with the local government of the Poor Law Guardian, the School Board and the schools, the County Council and the City Corporation. Facts for Londoners insisted that Socialism did not mean immediate control of all industry by a centralized state; reforms could be brought about piecemeal by local elections.17

Tract number 9, An Eight Hours Bill, was in reality a model Parliamentary Bill providing eight hours for government workers, railway men, miners, and other trades if they wished. Coming as it did after the great strike of London dockers of August, 1889, the tract proved sensational and twenty thousand copies were sold.18

16Ibid., p. 18.
17Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 18.
18Ibid., p. 84.
In the summer of 1888 the Fabian leaders believed that they had a message for the world and they resolved that their subsequent lectures should be planned with a view to future publication. Thus was planned the most momentous book of the Society—and indeed termed the most momentous book in the history of English Socialism—the Fabian Essays in Socialism.19

The Fabian Essayists, Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Sydney Oliver, Graham Wallas, Hubert Bland, and Annie Besant, planned the book in advance as a harmonious whole and then allotted the individual parts. Bernard Shaw was appointed editor, a position which he fulfilled with the utmost care, subjecting his own work and the work of others to the most exact scrutiny to maintain a high literary level.20

Invitations to subscriptions were sent out in the spring; three hundred were obtained. The Fabians decided upon the bold course of printing and publishing books themselves. Mrs. Besant's Freethought Publishing Company printed the book, the frontispiece was designed by Walter Crane, and the cover by Miss May Morris. And just before Christmas in 1889 the Fabian Essays in Socialism were issued to subscribers and to the British public.21

The Fabian Essays—written by seven writers of strong individuality and yet attaining unity; a six shilling book whose title was not understood, and not advertised in the press; published by a society of one hundred and fifty members at a private dwelling house was an astonishing success: it sold

19 Ibid., pp. 86-88.
20 Ibid., pp. 88.
21 Ibid.
almost as rapidly as if the writers were Cabinet Ministers. The first edition of one thousand was soon exhausted, a second of one thousand was presented in March, a new shilling paper edition of five thousand was sold in September, and twenty thousand more were sold within the year 1890.22

The publications of other Socialistic organizations were unwittingly responsible for the success of the Fabian essays which were as good for what they left out as for what they contained. Hitherto, Socialism as presented to the British public by the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League was revolutionary—at a bound the nation was expected to reach the millennium. Obsolete technical language, studded with the then strange words of "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie", excoriated the non-Socialists—the Liberals (all capitalists), the Tories (all landlords), the churches (all hypocrites), the rich (all idlers) and the organized workers (all sycophants). While William Morris did not at all times present this picture, and the Fabian propaganda had had some effect, Socialism up to 1890 was generally regarded as insurrectionary, dogmatic, utopian, and almost incomprehensible.23

But in the distinctively English Fabian essays there is no trace of Marx or Proudhon; the economics are orthodox; based on Ricardo's law of rent and Jevon's law of value. Revolution by physical force is dismissed as catastrophic; the transition from Capitalism to Socialism is dealt with as part of ordinary constitutional evolution.24 "Socialism is presented as the creed of a constitutional political party pursuing its aims precisely

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 90.
24 G. Bernard Shaw, Fabianism in Socialism: Principles and Outlook and
as any other constitutional political party does and involving no sacrifice whatever of current respectability and morality on the part of its adherents."25

In the Preface to Fabian Essays the writers clearly state their position as Social Democrats and a humble note is struck: "There are at present no authoritative teachers of Socialism. The essayists make no claim to be more than communicative learners."26 The essays are then presented as follows: The Economic Basis of Socialism, by G. Bernard Shaw; The Historic Basis of Socialism, by Sidney Webb; The Industrial Basis of Socialism by William Clarke; The Moral Basis of Socialism by Sydney Olivier; Property Under Socialism by Graham Wallas; Industry Under Socialism by Annie Besant; The Transition to Social Democracy by G. Bernard Shaw; and The Outlook by Hubert Bland.

In The Economic Basis of Socialism, G. Bernard Shaw gives promise of the Shaw of the future, combining with painstaking analysis and measured conclusions passages of fiery and sweeping statements leading up to a shock; especially does the hypocritical capitalist call forth his ire. Basing all economic analysis on the cultivation of the earth, Shaw, after viewing the results of capricious Nature and the consequent desire of Man for an intercepting agency of power and good will, strikes the gradualistic keynote: communes, kingdoms, principalities, manors, and finally the Social Fabianism, London: The Fabian Society, 1930, p. 12.

Democratic State are the social organizations of man in his march onward.27

The institution of the County family, and the association of property with idleness which so frequently comes under his censure provokes the first sweep of Shavian rhetoric. The receiving of income without working is the secret to him of ingraining cynicism "which produces the curious Ricardian phenomenon of the man of business who goes on Sunday to church with the regularity of the village blacksmith there to renounce and abjure before his God the line of conduct which he intends to pursue with all his might during the following week."28

To the capitalist exploiting the labour of the many poor Shaw speaks mercilessly, describing the insidious revenge of the suffering:

You withdraw in disgust to the other end of town from them; you appoint special carriages on your railways and special seats in your churches and theatres from them; you set your life apart from them by every barrier you can devise; yet they swarm about you still; your face gets stamped with your habitual loathing and suspicion of them; your ears get so filled with the language of the vilest of them that you break into it when you lose your self-control: they poison your life as remorselessly as you have sacrificed theirs heartlessly. You begin to believe intensely in the devil. Then comes the terror of their revolting; the drilling and arming of bodies of them to keep out the rest; the prison, the hospital, paroxysms of frantic coercion followed by paroxysms of frantic charity.29

The results of Capitalism are termed not wealth but "illth": all the merchant-princely enterprises have achieved only a "monstrous pile of

27 Ibid., p. 4.
28 Ibid., p. 7.
29 Ibid., 9. 22.
frippery, some tainted class literature and art, and not a little poison and mischief."30

His ever-recurring resentment of the precept of his 'unfortunate' childhood, the reverence of proprietary respectability, expresses a warning to the acceptors of the present conditions:

Since we found our childhood hearts so hard and unregenerate that they secretly rebelled against and hated respectability in spite of that teaching, it is impossible to express the relief with which we discover that our hearts were all along right and that the current respectability of to-day is nothing but a huge inversion of righteous and scientific social order, weltering in dishonest, uselessness, selfishness, wanton misery, and idiotic waste of magnificent opportunities for noble and happy living."31

But Utilitarian questioning and scientific answering have challenged tranquil acceptance of a supposedly malignant Nature; they have shown that there is no cruelty and selfishness outside man himself. Shaw presents finally the active benevolence of Socialism - challenging individualism, skepticism, and pessimism on the ground of science - Political Economy.32

The second Fabian Essay, The Historic Basis of Socialism by Sidney Webb, is a strongly factual, logically developed analysis of the background of the evolution toward Socialism. There is no flourish of phrase or poetic prose; there is positive presentation of the case and no more. The Historic Basis of Socialism is divided into five sections: Development of the Democratic Ideal; The Disintegration of the Old Synthesis; The Period

30Ibid., p. 23.
31Ibid., p. 29.
32Ibid., p. 28.
of Anarchy; The Intellectual and Moral Revolt and Its Political Outcome; and The New Synthesis.

It is through the slow turning of the popular mind that social reorganization comes, according to the first section; and Democracy has borne European society toward Socialism of the past hundred years; the progress of Socialism is Democratic, gradual, moral; and, in England at least, constitutional and peaceful. 33

The second section, The Disintegration of the Old Synthesis, is a brief consideration of the changing social order of the 17th century to Victorian England: the collapse of Medievalism in the Industrial Revolution; the growing power of the populace in the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, the Reform Bill of 1832, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, Sir Charles Dilke's Act (enfranchising tenant occupiers) of 1878, the granting of the vote to agricultural labor in 1885, and the governing of London by popularly elected councils in 1888. Paradoxically, while the industrial evolution left the laborer a landless stranger in his own country, the political evolution is rapidly making him its ruler. 34

The force of Political Economy is described in the Period of Anarchy - a period of unrestrained Individualism resulting in the horrors of Capitalistic tyranny. Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Grote and Ricardo, political economists reinforced by such rational divines, Chalmers, and Kingsly made "Utilitarianism the Protestantism of Sociology" 35 and "how

33 Ibid., p. 35.
34 Ibid., p. 40
35 Ibid., p. 45.
to make for itself and family the best of both world's' was assumed to be the duty, as it certainly was the aim, of every practical Englishman. 36

In spite of opposition, Sidney Webb continues in the Intellectual and Moral Revolt and Its Political Outcome, referring briefly to the revolt against Philosophic Radicalism from the artistic side - 'the nest of singing birds at the Lakes' and Robert Owens and Carlyles loftier ideals - the tide swept onwards and the conception of the Social Organism has at last penetrated the minds of Victorian England. 37

The current Socialist demands, he adds, are summarized in the Star of August 8th, 1888- in the Radical Programmes: the Revision of Taxation, Extension of Factory Acts, Educational Reform, reorganization of Poor Law Administration, Extension of Municipal Activity, and Amendment of Political Machinery. 38

In the final section, The New Synthesis, there is the unceasing emphasis of the Fabians - the inevitability of gradualness in the realization of the Social State:

The perfect and fitting development of each individual is not necessarily the utmost and highest cultivation of his own personality, but the filling in the best possible way of his humble function in the great social machine. We must abandon the self-conceit of imagining that we are independent units, and bend out jealous minds, absorbed in their own cultivation, to this subjection to the higher end, the Commonweal. 39

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36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 46.
38 Ibid., p. 54.
39 Ibid., p. 58.
To substantiate this historically Webb cites the cases of cultivated Athenians, the Saracens, the Provenscals, the French in the War of 1871, - all went down in the face of a stronger Social organism. That Socialism is upon us is his concluding idea:

The steady increase of the government regulation of private enterprise, the growth of municipal administration, and the rapid shifting of the burden of taxation directly to rent and interest, mark in treble lines the statesman's unconscious abandonment of the old Individualism, and our irresistible glide into collectivist Socialism.

William Clarke begins his brief essay, The Industrial Basis of Socialism, with a tribute to gradualism: "The great change is proceeding silently every day, the true prophet is not the ignorant soothsayer who foretells some Armageddon, but rather he who perceives the inevitable drift and tendency of things." To substantiate this statement from the industrial viewpoint, the author, after viewing the horrors of conditions in mines, mills, and factories under unrestrained capitalism, tabulates the growth of government restraint from 1802 to 1807.

Turning then to a denunciation of capitalism the author reflects his American lecture experience in his reference to American monopoly. An interesting and morose prophecy is ventured: the greatest capitalistic competition will concern itself with the vast market of China, England, America, France,

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40Ibid., p. 58
41Ibid., p. 60
42Ibid., p. 63.
43Ibid., p. 75.
and Germany will compete; the whole globe will soon be the private property of the capitalistic class.44

The Standard Oil Trust is the object of the essayist's investigation. He traces its formation: "The germ of this huge monopoly was a small petroleum refinery near Cleveland, bought by one Rockefeller, a bookkeeper in a store, and a friend of his, a porter, with borrowed money.45 And paradoxically, Individualism which permitted its growth is defeated by this Capitalistic monopoly. William Clarke's ardent admiration for Whitman is reflected in his eloquent conclusion:

The real reformer will prepare the people, educated and organized as a true industrial democracy to take up the threads when they fall from the weak hands of a useless possessing class. By this means will the class struggle with its greed, hate and waste be ended, and the life hinted at by Whitman in his Song of the Exposition be attained:

Practical peaceful life, the people's life, the People themselves,
Lifted, illumined, bathed in peace - elated, secure in peace.46

With the same appreciation of the importance of cultural opportunities and gracious daily living shown in his Tract on Capital and Labour, Sydney Olivier considers the benefits of Socialism in the Moral Basis of Socialism. Socialism, he maintains, would bring the highest morality; starvation and misery are not inevitable; material evils are not good discipline. Social-

44Ibid., p. 82.
45Ibid., p. 94.
46Ibid., p. 101.
Individualism rationalized, organized clothed, and in its right mind. Socialism is taking form in advanced societies and the social revolution must be brought to its formal accomplishment through the conscious action of innumerable individuals seeking an avenue to rational and pleasant existence for themselves and for those whose happiness and freedom they desire as they do their own. ..

Existence to this cultivated writer is not concerned with the bare necessities of life: Society has now grown to be for the man the indispensable guarantee not only of nutrition and protection but of the opportunity to imagine and attain a thousand varieties of more refined satisfaction.

But - here again is an echo of Capital and Labour - the private property system has made a country of two classes; and one class lives idly through the double labour of the other.

There follows now a bitter denunciation of the parasite class. With a code of morality different from the other class, temperance, Christian Morality, industry and economy are not observed; lying in the fashionable world is not only a perfectly lawful means of avoiding an undesired visitor it is a conventional necessity, almost a virtue.

The essayist scorns the idea that the propertied class is the safeguard of a nation's culture:

The prejudice against useful employment is balanced for decency's sake by a hypocritical laudation of useless ones... The amusements, the purely recreational activities of country gentlemen are glori-

47 Ibid., p. 103.
48 Ibid., p. 117.
As soon as the mind has been trained to appreciate the inexhaustible interest and beauty of the world, and to distinguish good literature from bed, the remainder of education, granted leisure, is a comparatively inexpensive matter. Literature is become dirt cheap and all other educational arts can be communally enjoyed. The schools of the adult are the journal and the library, social communication, fresh air, clean and beautiful cities, the joy of the field, the museum, the art gallery, the lecture hall, the drama and the opera; and only when these schools are free and accessible to all will the reproach of proletarian coarseness be done away.\textsuperscript{52}
Property Under Socialism represents Graham Wallas' first literary contribution as a Fabian. It reflects wisdom and restraint; it reaffirms the importance which his friend Sydney Olivier places on cultural opportunities. But unlike the other Fabian essayists, Graham Wallas directs an appeal for idealism to the Capitalists. Beginning with the inevitable Fabian affirmation of Gradualism he regards "the slow and often unconscious progress of the Time spirit as the only adequate cause of social progress." Discounting such idealistic communal experiments as Fourier's "Phalanterre" and Owen's "New Hampshire" Graham Wallas grants the right to man of possessing his home and its equipment and of bequeathing them to his family. But Land in its widest sense is to be owned by the community: Mines, harbors, sources of water, must be nationalized because they represent the natural wealth of the nation; the profits from enterprises would then be used for the common good. Elaborate extension of cultural opportunities is emphasized; Wallas uses Ibsen's phrase "every child should be brought up like a nobleman".

In his closing words the essayist for the first time writes flourishingly, discounting the hope of a utopia under Socialism and appealing for nobility in the motives of the wealthy:

Socialism does not guarantee perfect happiness . . .
but in the households of five men out of six in England on a weekly wage, Socialism would be a new birth

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53 Ibid., p. 149.
54 Ibid., p. 131.
55 Ibid., p. 134.
56 Ibid., p. 147.
of happiness. Hopeless work and squalor would be
gone and education and refinement and leisure would
be part of their life. Socialism hangs over them if
they will but lift up their eyes. And even to the
few who seem to escape and even profit by their misery
of our century Socialism offers a new and nobler life
when full sympathy with those about them, springing
from full knowledge of their condition, shall be a
source of happiness and not, as now, a constant sorrow
when it shall not longer seem folly or hypocrisy for a
man to work openly for his highest ideal, -- They can
live simply as the equal rights of their fellows re-
quire; and they justify their lives by work in the
noblest causes.57

With phrases which suggest the feminine agitator but with ideas which
reflect the Fabian Annie Besant looks forward to a new day "more than the best
that men can dream of".58

Introducing Industry Under Socialism with a salute to the transition
toward nationalism the essayist then decries Capitalism: She accuses
capitalism of lacking human sympathies, presenting as an illustration, the
uses of the word "hands" as a term for a human laborer.59 Becoming more
general the essayist introduces the then growing Fabian plan "convert the
electors; and capture the County Council". Mrs. Besant outlines a plan of
national and local supervision of industries: "the demarcations are of
expediency not of principle."60

With a forceful eloquence and in a manner different from many of the
other Fabians, the essayist concludes with a picture of the new day when life
will be used in living instead of struggling for the chance to live:

57 Ibid., pp. 148-149.
58 Ibid., p. 169.
59 Ibid., p. 151.
60 Ibid., p. 153.
Under healthier and happier conditions, Humanity will rise to heights undreamed of now, the most exquisite Utopia as sung by the poet and idealist, shall to our children seem but dim and broken lights compared to their perfect day. All that we need are courage, prudence, and faith. Faith, above all which dares to believe that justice and love are impossible and that more than the best that man can dream of shall one day be realized by men.61

Bernard Shaw's second Fabian essay, The Transition to Social Democracy, strategically placed and brilliantly written, reviews pointedly the growth of Social Democracy and ends with a sharp and surprising defense of the Socialists who are not Gradualists; while realizing their unreasonableness he admires the compassion which will not recognize expediency.62

Eloquently describing the combination of pious motives and piracy which is Capitalism, a typical Shaw sentence flays hypocrisy:

We all know the merchant princes whose enterprises, whose steady perseverance, whose high personal honor, blameless family relations, large charities, and liberal endowments of public institutions mark them out as very pillars of society; and who are nevertheless grinding their wealth out of the labor of women and children with merciless greed.63

Pointing out the actuality of the gradual trend toward Social Democracy the essayist presents a sparkling picture in contrast to the dreams of the young and Marxian Socialist:

The young Socialist is apt to be catastrophic in his views - to plan the revolutionary programme as an affair of twenty-four lively hours, with Individualism in full swing on Monday morning, a tidal wave of

61 Ibid., p. 169.
62 Ibid., p. 201.
63 Ibid., p. 175.
insurgent proletariat on Monday afternoon, and Socialism in complete working order on Tuesday. A man who believes that such a happy despatch is possible will naturally think it absurd and even in human to stick at bloodshed to bring it about. He can prove that the continuance of the present system for a year costs more suffering than could be crammed into any Monday afternoon, however sanguinary.64

And this, Shaw significantly points out, is the only kind of Socialism familiar to newspapers. The difficulty in the conversion of the ardent Socialist to Gradualism is illustrated:

You cannot convince any man that it is impossible to tear down a government in a day - you cannot convert rookeries and palaces into comfortable dwellings and jewellers and dressmakers into bakers and builders, by merely singing the Marsellaise . . . demolishing a Bastille with seven prisoners in it is one thing; demolishing one with fourteen million prisoners is quite another; the necessity for cautious and gradual change must by quite obvious to everyone here and could be made obvious to every one elsewhere if only the catastrophists were courageously and sensibly dealt with in discussion.65

Shaw recalls himself in his youth speculating in open debate that a fortnight would be sufficient for the new order - and he was one of the more reasonable Socialists. But the thinking Social Democrat of 1889, according to the essayist, works for a constitutional programme - manhood suffrage, abolition of property disqualification, abolition of the House of Lords annual elections - all having on them the stamp of vestry so congenial to the British mind: no guilotine or declarations of the Rights of Man, or intensity, can stamp them as un-English.66

64 Ibid., p. 183.
65 Ibid., p. 183.
In a remarkably courageous and brilliant conclusion Bernard Shaw dares to present himself as an un-Fabian Revolutionary in sympathy, but a Fabian gradualist in expediency:

Let me in conclusion disavow all admiration for this inevitable but sordid, slow, reluctant, cowardly path to justice. I venture to claim your respect for those enthusiasts who still refuse to believe that millions of their fellow creatures must be left to sweat and suffer in hopeless toil and degradation, whilst parliaments and vestries grudgingly muddle and grope towards paltry instalments of betterment. The right is so clear, the wrong so intolerable, the gospel so convincing that it seems to them that it must be possible to enlist the whole body workers, soldiers, policemen, and all under the banner of brotherhood and equality; and at one great stroke to set Justice on her rightful throne. Unfortunately such an army of light is no more to be gathered from the human product of nineteenth century civilization than grapes are to be gathered from thistles. But if we feel glad of that impossibility; if we feel that the change is to be slow enough to avert personal risk to ourselves; if we feel anything less than acute and bitter disappointment at the discovery that there is yet between us and the promised land a wilderness in which many must perish miserably of want and despair; then I submit that our institutions have corrupted us to a most dastardly degree of selfishness. The Socialists need not be ashamed of beginning as they did by proposing militant organisation of the working classes and general insurrection. The proposal proved impracticable; and it has now been abandoned - not without unspoken regrets - by English Socialists. But it still remains as the only possible alternative to the Social Democratic programme which I have sketched today.67

The first word's of Hubert Bland's essay, The Outlook, testify to the individuality of the essayists because they sharply contradict the last words of the essay immediately preceding it, an essay of the editor Shaw. But it is the contradiction of emotion, not of principle.68

66Ibid., p. 200.
67Ibid., p. 201.
Hubert Bland, the most conventional of the Fabians, rejects any sympathy for the Radical; and the rejection is expressed in words which leave no doubt about the reason for the awe in which he was always held by his flippant associates: "Revolutionary heroics, natural and unblameable enough in exuberant puerility, are imbecile babblement in muscular adolescence, and in manhood would be criminal folly."69

The outlook as defined in the essay is a political one: the world political will gradually become a reflex of the world economic. And because of the gradual extension of suffrage the conflict will be one of parties, with the insecure proletariat making full use of his political weapons.

In the light of future events the forthright statement that the Liberal Party is not the party for Socialism is a momentous one. The author urges in the name of Fabianism the establishment of a definitively Socialist party, a party pledged to the communalization of all the means of production and exchange and prepared to subordinate every consideration to that purpose.

Hubert Bland emphasizes the need of a high-minded leader for this mission and observes, with the first evidence of whimsy that he has shown: "He is probably at this moment in his cradle or equitably sharing out toys or lollipops to his comrades of the nursery".70

The Outlook closes with the strong affirmation of the cause of the Fabians and the futility of the cause of the opponents of Socialism; and as

68Ibid., p. 203.
69Ibid.
70Ibid., p. 218.
William Clarke closed his essay with lines from Whitman, so Hubert Bland closes his, and the volume of Fabian Essays, with Robert Burns:

Those who resist Socialism fight against principalities and powers in economic places. Every new industrial development will add point to our argument and soldiers to our ranks... The Proletariat is even now the only real class: its units are the only real human beings who have nothing to hope for save from the leveling up of the aggregate of which they form a part... The intensifying of the struggle for existence while it set bourgeois at the throat of bourgeois, is forcing union and solidarity upon the workers. It is just when the storm winds blow and the clouds lower and the horizon is at its blackest that the ideal of the Socialist shines with divinest radiance, bidding him trust the inspiration of the poet rather than heed the mutterings of the perplexed politician, bidding him believe that

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'For a' that, for a' that, 
It's coming yet for a' that, 
That man to man the world o'er 
Shall brothers be for a' that.'71

No one was more surprised at the success of the Fabian Essays than the Fabians themselves: but they were so busy going forward that they did not stop for elation.72 But the fact remained: with the Fabian essays the Fabian Society was the center of Socialism in England.73

In 1890 the Fabian boom was reflected in a remarkable series of tracts and in a brilliant series of lectures. Of the twelve Fabian tracts of 1890, What Socialism Is, by Bernard Shaw, and, English Progress Towards Social Democracy, by Sidney Webb, are the most impressive from the literary viewpoint.

71Ibid., p. 221. 
72Edward Pease, op cit., p. 93. 
73Ibid.
What Socialism Is might have been another Fabian Essay, so similar is it to the style and thought of the author's previous contributions. The thought-provoking introductory sentences, "We English have a habit of speaking of England as if it belonged to us. We are wrong. England is now private property,"74 is substantiated with reference to Tracts For Londoners. The inequality now substantiated by fact is rhetorically denounced by Shaw in a series of bitter condemnations:

If you are a person of common sense and natural feeling, you must have thought over these inequalities and their cruel injustice . . . If you are poor, you must know well that when inequality is so outrageous as the figures above show, it offers nothing but despair, wretchedness, and drunkenness among the very poor; arrogance and wastefulness among the very rich; meanness, envy, and snobbery and brutality, drink and violence, stunted bodies and unenlightened minds. Riches heaped up in idle hands means flunkeyism and folly, insolence and servility, bad example, false standards of work and the destruction of all incentive to useful work in those who are best able to educate themselves for it. Poverty and riches together mean the misuse of our capital and industry for the production of frippery and luxury while the nation is rotting for want of good food, thorough instruction, and wholesome clothing and dwelling for the masses. What we want in order to make true progress is more bakers, more schoolmasters, more wool-weavers and tailors, and more builders; what we get instead is more footmen, more gamekeepers, and more jockeys. That is what our newspapers call 'sound political economy.'75

Tract no. 15, Webb's English Progress Towards Social Democracy, reveals that the author, while retaining the strength of expression which characterises all his writings, is adding to this quality of cleverness in epigram which resembles his close friend, Bernard Shaw.

74 George Bernard Shaw, What Socialism Is, p. 1.
75 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
The opening sentence is an example: "There are three stages through which every new notion in England has to pass: It is impossible: It is against the Bible: We knew it before." The tract continues in the vein of the Fabian essay, The Historic Basis of Socialism, quoting Mill more frequently than any other authority. A nice point is brought out in reference to Gradualism:

"But this definition of Socialism does not satisfy some people. They want a complete description of the Socialist State, an elaborately worked out detailed plan like St. Thomas More's Utopia, or Gulliver's Travels. Such fancy sketches have indeed at times been thrown off by Socialists as by all other thinkers; but with the growing realisation of social evolution, men gradually cease to expect the fabrication of a perfect and final social state; and the dreams of Fourier and Cabet, like those of Godwin and Comte, because outworn and impossible to us. There will never be a moment when we can say, "Now let us rest, for Socialism is established."76a

One of the most important Fabian activities at this time was the inauguration of the Fabian lectures, which became more and more popular as the fame of the Fabians increased. In the spring of 1890, the Fabian Society, at a loss for a course of lectures to occupy the summer meetings planned a series of papers on Socialism in Contemporary Literature. Sydney Olivier was prevailed upon to "take Zola" and Hubert Bland undertook to read all the Socialist novels of the day with disastrous results. William Morris gave a paper on Gothic Architecture and Sergius Stepniak discussed "Tolstoi, Tchernytychersky."

76Sidney Webb, English Progress Towards Social Democracy, p. 3.  
76aIbid., p. 4.
and the Russian School." But on July 18, 1890, the amazing lecture of Shaw on Ibsen, which took two hours and later was published under The Quintessence of Ibsenism "overwhelmed a large audience and made the discussions following it seem like 'a debate after an oratorio.'”77

As Bernard Shaw explains in his Preface to the First Edition of 1891 the essay is not a critical essay on the poetic beauties of Ibsen but simply an exposition of Ibsenism, which was startling the public of London into indignant protest.78

Comparing the condemnation of Ibsen to that of Blake, Shelley, Ruskin, Zola, and Wagner, Shaw casts the blame on the idealists who have shrouded their own unhappiness and are louder than the Phillistines (who are stolidly content) in condemnation of a valiant realist. The interesting ratio which Shaw presents is: out of one thousand persons seven hundred are suitably happy, two hundred and ninety-nine are miserable and idealists, and the remaining one is the courageous realist. It is then Ibsen the realist that Shaw explains.79

The first of the ideals to arouse Shaw's ire is the ideal of the Womanly Woman. Because he has just read William Stead's condemnation of The Diary of Marie Bashkirtseff as the story of an unwomanly woman the essayist devotes an entire chapter to vindicating Ibsen and expounding Socialist ideas on the subject.

77 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 95.
79 Ibid., pp. 3-28.
Two startling statements are forthcoming: "Unless Woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to society, to the law, and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself."80 And the second: "She pays duty to herself by fulfilling her individual will - in that lies her freedom."80a

Shaw takes in order the works of Ibsen up to 1890. First Brand (1866) Peer Gynt (1867) and Emperor and Galilean (1873). He then groups together what he terms the Anti-Idealist plays: The League of Youth (1869) Pillars of Society (1877) A Doll’s House (1879) Ghosts (1881) An Enemy of the People (1882) The Wild Duck (1884) Rosmersholm (1886) The Lady From the Sea (1888) and Hedda Gabler (1890). To all of the plays Shaw applies unflinchingly his definition of the idealist.81

Brand, according to this line of thought, dies a saint "having caused more intense suffering by his saintliness than the most talented sinner could possibly have done with twice his opportunities".82

The idealist Peer Gynt is an accomplished rascal - his prototype according to the critic is the success-loving man of the world. The satisfaction of his own will is his ideal whereas Julian in Emperor and Gallilean never really believes in himself.84

In the exposition of the Anti-Idealist Plays Ibsenism is amplified: The League of Youth has for its hero a politician of the people who succumbs

80Ibid., p. 44.
80aIbid., pp. 45.
81Ibid., pp. 48-118.
82Ibid., p. 51.
83no note.
to aristocratic flattery; the pillars of society, in the play of that name, are Truth (facts) and Freedom (from ideals).85

In the remaining seven plays the case is further presented. In Doll's House the wife flies in the face of ideals; in Ghosts the idealist wife shields husband and son from the world; in An Enemy of the People political ideals are attacked.86

The two enemies of Woman, form the anti-idealistic viewpoint, are presented in The Wild Duck as the old-fashioned idealist, and the new-fashioned who wants to send her out into the world before she is ready.87

Rosmersholm warns of the danger of forming ideals for other people; The Lady from the Sea gives unhappiness again as the cause of ideals.88

Hedda Gabler has no ideals—but, woefully, no realities. Boredom is the result and the Socialist Shaw again takes up his banner:

This scourge, unknown among revolutionaries, is the curse which makes respectability as dust in the balance against the unflagging interest of rebellion and which forces society to eke out its harmless resources for killing time by licensing gambling, gluttony, hunting, shooting, coursing, and other vicious distractions for which even idealism has no disguise. These licenses, however, are only available for people who have more than enough money to keep up appearances.89

Shaw in conclusion sums up the significance of Ibsenism in the light of England of 1890: the real slavery is the slavery of ideals; the ordinary

84 Ibid., pp. 51–58.
85 Ibid., p. 81.
86 Ibid., pp. 82–86.
87 Ibid., pp. 101–114.
88 Ibid., pp. 105–114.
89 Ibid., p. 120.
Philistine is harmless; the greater is harmful. He offers this advice:
"Let everyone refuse to sacrifice himself and others from the moment that he loses faith in the reality of the ideal . . . conduct must justify itself with its effect upon happiness, the fulfillment of the will, and not by its conformity to any rule or ideal."90

The Fabian outlook at the close of the year 1890 was a happy one. Bernard Shaw was the brilliant favorite son of an indulgent and amazed society; Sidney Webb was a marvel of energy and information; the lesser lights were working with them in unenvying harmony; the tracts and the Essays were immensely popular; and the Fabian lectures were of a high standard and well attended. The Fabian Society was definitely the center of Socialistic thought in England. And this Socialistic thought was English and conservative. Feargus O'Connor's soldier of liberty of the "unshaven chin, the horny hand, and the fustian jacket" had retreated before the fact-finding, statistic- quoting, drawing-room Fabians.91

90George Bernard Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 141.
CHAPTER III
THE EXPANSION OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Accepting without undue excitement the recognition of their worth, the Fabians entered into a period which from 1890 to 1914 was characterized by consistent energy, by sharp political strategy (approved of as cleverness by their supporters and condemned as trickery by their enemies), by amazing expansion in membership, by the rising stars of at least four of its members, by the clash of personalities which went beyond the bounds of stimulating debate into bitterness and resentment, and by the boldness with which, in bitter realism, they abandoned Permeation and were instrumental in forming a Labor Party.

Seizing the day, the "Lancashire Campaign", a lecture tour of the countryside, was organized; local branches of the Fabian Society were formed and in March, 1891, Fabian News was established. It was intended as a means of communication about the activities of the Society and new books germane to its work; it was not a journal of opinion. 1

In 1891 Sidney Webb's Fabian Tract Number 23, The Case for the Eight Hours Bill presented the situation, as always in tracts written by him, as an historical evolution up to the present circumstance; always, too, there is the note of measured thought; the present success is not a panacea itself; it is merely one step further in the progressive Socialistic march. 2

1 Pease, op. cit., pp. 96-100.
The case proved, but not until then, a Webb tract invariably permits itself a rhetorical finish. Illustrative of this is the conclusion of this tract:

An Eight Hours Bill has now become a political necessity. But let no one imagine that its enactment will accomplish all that is needed... It will do little to remedy the evils caused by the great disparity of incomes, or by the individual ownership of the means by which the worker lives. It will not restore to health the 'submerged tenth' wasted by the demoralisation of extreme poverty or the results of drink and disease. But if it secures for millions of tired workers an hour or two of leisure which would otherwise have been spent in toil, if it enables many who would otherwise have plodded the daily round of monotonous labor to obtain access to some share in that large life from which they are now relentlessly excluded, if it protects the future generation of the race from physical degradation or mental decay, if it makes brighter the lives of those who have toiled that a small class among us might have education and holidays and culture; if it accomplished only partially some of these great ends, an Eight Hours Bill will be no mean achievement for the greatest statesman, and no unfitting close to the century of the Factory Acts."3

Following Tract 23 there appeared, all in 1891, five "Question" Tracts:

Tract 24, Questions for Parliamentary Candidates; Tract 25, Questions for School Board Candidates; Tract 26, Questions for London County Councillors; Tract 27, Questions for Town Councillors; and Tract 28, Questions for Candidates for County Councils. These were forthright investigations with their lists of pertinent questions, space provided for the candidates' answers and signatures. They were tantalizingly worded so that each answer would be in effect a definite promise in writing.

Fabian Tract Number 29, Graham Wallas', What to Read on Social and Econ-
onomic Subjects, appeared also in 1891. The result of intense scholarly
tabulation, this bibliography leaves no stone unturned to provide the
serious student with an adequate reading background. Its forty-eight pages,
divided into Introduction, Bibliographical Note, Synopsis of Contents, In-
dex of Authors, List of Books, and List of Publishers, What to Read treats
of books on Social and Economic History, Economic Theory, Political Science
and Government, Social and Industrial Problems, and Socialism. Tract 29
was not intended to be a complete bibliography: the books selected were
for the most part recent, inexpensive, and accessible.4 One of the most
scholarly of Fabian publications, What to Read was destined for immediate
popularity and continued value in the field of sociological investigation.5

By 1892 the Fabian Society had 541 members—personally vouched for with
membership regarded as a privilege.6 Of the ten new tracts printed from
1890 to 1891 98,349 copies were sold; of the twenty tracts printed between
1891 and 1892 378,281 were distributed. In all this activity accuracy and
literary excellence was the goal: each tract was criticized in proof by the
executive committee and by all the members of the Society: every tract had
to be approved and justified in open meeting.7

The Fabians had by 1892 achieved definite political success: six
Fabians were elected to the London County Council; Sidney Webb had resigned
his Colonial Office appointment, was chairman of the Technical Education

4Tract No. 29, op. cit., Introduction, p. ii.
5Pease, op. cit.
6Ibid., p. 101.
7Ibid., p. 107.
Board, and devoted all his time to political and literary work. There was a friendly press: The Star and The Daily Chronicle. George Bernard Shaw had in 1890 left as music critic for The Star for the World, not without a sly dig by the benevolently irrepressible editor "T.P." We are losing, we are sorry to say, Corno di Bassetto. The larger salary of the weekly organ of the classes has proved too much for the virtue of a Fabian, and he has abandoned us. We wish him well, and twice even the big salary that is coming to him from the bloated coffers of the aristocracy.9

Having foisted the "Newcastle Program" upon Mr. Gladstone's Liberal Party, (a program of constructive social reform largely attributed to the Fabians and more specifically to Sidney Webb's privately printed paper "Wanted a Programme") the General Election of 1892 was eagerly awaited.10

The perfectly timed Tract No. 40, The Fabian Election Manifesto by Bernard Shaw, a brilliant essay on labor and politics, was a ruthless appraisal of the Conservative and Liberal Parties - and an ominous call to arms for the establishment of a Labor Party.11

The Conservative Party is dismissed summarily: ". . . it has suppressed popular rights in Ireland and attacked them in England, using the armed forces at its disposal against the rights of Free Speech and Public Meeting as willingly in Trafalgar Square as at Mitchelstown, whenever the interests

8Ibid.
10Pease, op. cit., p. 111.
of the landlords were at stake". This condemnation of the Conservative party was of course to be expected; but when the scathing pen was turned upon the Liberal Party which "made the most desperate efforts to stifle English questions by agitation about Irish grievances" the boldness of the writer is apparent. Both parties are in a conspiracy of Hypocrisy; therefore there is only one alternative and in true Fabian manner this "amounts to little more than looking unpleasant facts in the face and considering how to make the best of them". Specifically, it is: Always Vote, Labor Candidate or no Labor Candidate: vote for the Liberal Party as the lesser evil and unite the working classes into an independent Labor Party.

It is noteworthy here to observe the "scolding of the public" manner of Shaw which was to become so familiar - the positive Shavian manner of piercing through nonsense and hypocrisy and sentiment and futility to reach the sensible, the workable, the expedient, the effectual.

One is reminded of the words of Shaw that "style is a sort of melody that comes into my sentences by itself" in the conclusion of Tract No. 41, The Fabian Society: Its Early History: even a plea for votes was enhanced by his manner of swift vitality:

Whilst our backers at the polls are counted by tens, we must continue to crawl and drudge and lecture as best we can. When they rise to tens of thousands we shall take the field as an independent party. Give us hundreds of thousands, as you can if you try hard enough, and we shall ride the whirlwind and direct

12 Ibid.
12a Ibid., p. 2.
13 Ibid., p. 15.
14 Ibid., p. 13.
Bernard Shaw, too, was the author of the next notable Fabian tract, No. 45, The Impossibilities of Anarchism. Although not published until 1893, it had been read as a paper to the Society in 1891. It distinguished the methods of Anarchism and Socialism in a general manner. It can be seen here that the Society at intervals published tracts dealing with the general concepts of Gradualism and Socialism (but historically and factually always) using them as a kind of bulwark for the tracts in which a particular labor, state, or municipal question is involved. Edward Pease contends that a very special talent is needed for this writing of the general tracts:

In fact, of course, something like genius or at any rate, very rare ability, is required for this sort of work; any competent writer can collect the facts about the Municipal Drink Trade, or Afforestation, or Poor Law Reform; many can explain an Act of Parliament in simple language; but only one here and there can write what others care to read on the principles of Socialism and the broad aspects of its propaganda. If our lists of tracts be examined it will be found that the great majority of the "general" tracts have been written by Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw.17

In Impossibilities of Anarchism, dismissing with quick disdain the capitalistic confusion of thought which classifies all Socialists as Anarchists and all Anarchists as incendiaries, assassins, and thieves, Bernard Shaw points out that in the principles of Justice, Virtue, Truth,

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16Tract 41, p. 28.
17Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 183.
and Brotherhood Socialism and Anarchism are one; in method they are opposite: the Anarchists recommend abstention from voting, the Socialists, active participation. The tantalizingly quick tricks of thought sweeping to a climax so evident in Shaw's style are apparent in the concluding exhortation to vote:

A House of Commons consisting of 660 gentlemen and ten workmen will order the soldier to take money from the people for the landlords. A House of Commons consisting of 660 workmen and ten gentlemen will, unless the 660 are fools, order the soldiers to take money from the landlords for the people. With that hint I leave the matter with full conviction that the state in spite of the Anarchists, will continue to be used against the people by the classes until it is used by the people against the classes with equal ability and equal resolution.

In The Fortnightly Review of November, 1893, the Fabian Society issued the challenge which was to conclude, by its utter cynicism toward the Liberal Party, Permeation as a policy and which was to lead the workingman one firm step closer to the formation of the Labor Party.

The spectacular "To Your Tents O Israel" was under the authorship of Bernard Shaw, who had by now begun his career as a dramatist, and Sidney Webb, who in 1892 had married Beatrice Potter, the author of The Cooperative Movement, and who, with Mrs. Webb, was at work on The History of Trade Unionism.

Describing the efforts and the patience of the workingman with the

19 Ibid., p. 27.
20 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 114.
Liberal Party, a party which had promised to be itself an ideal employer of Labor and which sixteen months after election had done nothing to justify its promise, the pronouncement proceeded to review in turn each great department of the government and to prove by this analysis that the "Case against the Government from the Labour standpoint was . . . unrelieved black." 21

But, since a Fabian was never able to condemn without offering in turn a practical solution, for each great department it was stated precisely what should be done to carry out the promise that the Government would be in the first flight of employers; and it was easy for the Executive to ascertain how the departments were treated under each chief: the Fabians knew the Government from the inside. The Post Office, War Office, The Admiralty, the Colonial Office, the Local Government Board, the Education Office, and the Treasury Board were surveyed, and all were found wanting; and all this, it was noted, while Mr. Gladstone was completely absorbed in Home Rule for Ireland.

The Manifesto asserted that the function of the Fabian Society ceases when Permeation has been carried to a saturation point and that the Society placed the responsibility for the organization of a Labor Party directly upon Trade Union members: the workers were urged to abandon Liberalism, to form a Trade Union Party, to raise 30,000 pounds, and finance fifty candidates for Parliament - the method by which the Labor Party was formed seven years later. 22 As Tract No. 40, A Plan of Campaign for

21Ibid., p. 116.
22The Fortnightly Review, V, 60. "To Your Tents Oh Israel!" By the Fabian Society, November, 1893, p. 574.
Labour, "To Your Tents O Israel" was sent into the Labor world. The Manifesto led to the resignation of H. W. Massingham whose paper, The Daily Chronicle, became bitterly hostile to the Fabians.24

In The Fortnightly Review of February, 1894, W. H. Mallock, author of Labour and the Popular Welfare, while proclaiming awareness that the Fabian essayists "are persons of high education and trained powers of reasoning; and that they are fully conversant with the orthodox theory of economics; that many of the orthodox doctrines form part of their own system, and have been adopted by them to new purposes in a most plausible and ingenious way; that many of their own views and arguments are highly suggestive and valuable, and that the principal writer, Mr. Sidney Webb is a lecturer on Political Economy at the City of London College" criticized from a Conservative viewpoint the Economics of the Fabian Essays as being an erroneous and incomplete analysis of the existing industrial system, and a false view of the economic system resulting primarily from a lack of recognition of the role of Ability in industrial success.25

Mr. Mallock in a rhetorical conclusion urged the Conservatives to defend the present system and to "speak to the intellect, the heart, and the hopes of the people of this country, like the voice of a trumpet, in comparison with which the voice of Socialism will be merely a penny whistle."26

Satirizing this criticism, Bernard Shaw in The Fortnightly Review of

23Ibid., p. 586.
24Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 117.
26Ibid., p. 182.
April, 1894 under the heading, "Mr. Mallock's Proposed Trumpet Performance" uses all his powers of raillery to answer the Fabian critic:

"... but one man in all Europe, Kosleck of Berlin, to wit, can be trusted to play the first trumpet part in Bach's Mass in B minor without missing a note. And yet that trumpet part is but a child's play compared to the one by Mr. Mallock for our aristocracy and plutocracy." 27

With characteristic sweeping condemnation of the idle rich Shaw is then off again on his favorite subject:

Think of the performance ... by our excellent county friends who give us our annual turn at shooting and hunting, or by our plutocratic host who make us so hugely comfortable when they put us up for the night in the west ends of our big manufacturing towns in the north and midlands; Think of their sons who flirt with our daughters and their daughters who are not allowed to flirt with our detrimental sons; think of the average breadth of mind and social purview characteristic even of the university sect on of their offspring - think of them in the name of all that is Utopian, extravagant, and hyperimpossible, going through a careful course of reading recommended by Mr. Mallock, and then proceeding to speak in trumpet tones to the intellect, the heart, and the hopes of the people of this country. ... Has he ever met a real live lady or gentleman ... why does he propound such a monstrous absurdity to us as a conservative Utopia based on extraordinary qualifications which he knows as well as I do that the average lady or gentleman no more possess than the average coal-miner does. 28

And the analogy is cynically pursued with "... politics will always march to the facile penny whistle and not to Mr. Mallock's apocalyptic trumpet." 29

28 Ibid., p. 471.
29 Ibid., p. 472.
The note of *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* reappears in Shaw's criticism of idealism: ideals and principles are in practical politics thrown to the winds every day. He denies Mr. Mallock's main criticism with: "We support and encourage Ability in order that we may get as much as possible out of it, not in order that it may get as much as possible out of us."30

It is interesting, too, to discover here the first appearance of Shaw's ingratiating manner of taking the public into confidence about himself: from a literary standpoint in regard to his relations with William Morris and his own Fabian friends the following passage is informative:

I have great affection for the historical part of that essay. [The Transition to Social Democracy] I wrote it in a medieval manorhouse far up the Thames, which is one of the most enviable possessions of our friend William Morris. . . . Here then with my soul at rest and the clock-hands creeping round at less than quarter the London speed, I made my sketch of the Middle Ages all out of my own head. I cannot say what things were already stored there to help me - scraps of old books, from Piers Plowman to Hakluyt's voyages . . . quaint discussions at the New Shakespeare Society, stray observations of things still surviving the wreck of those times, from beautiful cathedrals to horrible instruments of torture, and conversations over historical papers with the other Fabian essayists whose erudition in such matters is incredible and to whose coaching I owe such reputation as I possess for even the commonest literateness.31

In "A Socialist in a Corner" of the May, 1894, *Fortnightly Review* W. H. Mallock retaliated with a summary of the Shavian style of argument:

... a series of occult witticisms, and an anecdote about himself in a garret - a garret belonging to a Socialist - to a Socialist who is attempting to demo-

cratize production by printing books which cost five guineas apiece, and carpets and curtains which cost five guineas a yard. To sum up, Mr. Shaw is like a man at bay in a corner, who violently threatens all who offend him with instant death, but who, when the moment comes, drops half of what he says he will fight for; then instead of fighting, begins to dance a hornpipe; and, finally turns to the wall and pummels his own shadow.32

When, in 1895, the Conservative Party returned to power and as a result permeation was no longer possible, the Fabians entered a period from 1895 to 1900 of educational rather than political activity. A lending library of five thousand volumes on Socialism, Economics, and History, and Social Problems was established for the benefit of working-class organizations.33 The London School of Economics and Political Science was established under the leadership of Sidney Webb and through a trust fund donated by a Fabian, Henry Hutchinson, to teach Political Economy on more Socialistic lines.34

Of the fourteen tracts appearing in 1895 and 1896 the writings of two comparatively new members are noteworthy: the authors of two tracts spoke with particular authority and experience. The first, Tract 64, How to Lose and How to Win an Election by J. Ramsay MacDonald, is a simple and definite two page leaflet. It gives four rules for Losing: 1. Shouting at meetings; 2. Alienating all sympathizers who don't yet call themselves Socialists; 3. Spending all your time talking in the committee rooms; and 4. Betting that you will win. The happier advice, that of Winning an Election is, of

33Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 120.
34Elie Halevy
course, the Fabian way, brought to its simplest terms: 1. Organizing; 2. Canvassing; 3. Working to the last minute on Polling-Day; and 4. Again — for months beforehand, Organize! Organize! Organize!35

Mrs. Sidney Webb, co-author in 1894 of The History of Trade Unionism, called by Frederick Harrison "a classic monument of sympathetic industry"36 was the author of Tract No. 67, Women and the Factory Acts; this was originally a paper read before the Fabian Society in January, 1896.37 Richly annotated, this sixteen page publication, strongly factual and acutely sympathetic in style, is a plea for the extension of the Factory Acts prohibiting overtime work for women in the factories to prohibit also irregular and excessive hours in domestic workshops, such as laundries, dressmaker's workrooms and "all the thousand and one trades in which women's hours of work are practically unlimited."38

Reprinted from The Economic Journal of 1891, The Difficulties of Individualism by Sidney Webb was published as Tract No. 69 in 1896. It treats of the concept of gradualism, is general and historical in manner; it does not at any time particularize — a rare fact, indeed, for a Fabian tract.39

Tract No. 70, Bernard Shaw's Report on Fabian Policy and Resolutions, was presented to the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress in 1896 and is distinctive for uninterrupted seriousness and for the presen-

35Tract 64 in Fabian Tracts 1884-1905, pp. 1-2.
37Tract 67, op. cit., p. 3.
38Ibid., p. 15.
39Tract 69, p. 10.
tation of the current Fabian program: The Eight Hours Day; Child Labor Restrictions; Factory Legislation; Equal Working Opportunities for Women; Government Workshops; Nationalization and Municipalization of Industry; Public Works to Solve Unemployment; War and Foreign Policy ("That the only possible guarantee for the peace of the world lies in the consolidation of the interests of the most advanced States on a Social-Democratic basis. War exists at present only because huge profits can be made out of it by sections of the community. If this were made impossible by the socialization of industry in England, France, Germany, and the United States, these four nations would not only cease to threaten one another, but would combine to impose peace on nations less advanced in social organization") Prisons; Women's Political Rights; and the Minimum Wage.

For the first time as a Fabian writer Sidney Ball of St. John's College, Oxford and leading figure in the Oxford Fabian Society contributes The Moral Aspects of Socialism, reprinted as Tract 72, from the April, 1896 International Journal of Ethics. The Oxford Society had been organized in 1895 and University Fabian Societies were also established at Glasgow, Aberystwyth, and Cambridge. Formed by and for undergraduates, they maintain continuity through older members in permanent residence, such as Sidney Ball.

The Moral Aspects of Socialism deals with the inseparability of the moral and the material: the tract substantiates its contention with refer-

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40 Tract 70, p. 12.
41 Tract 72, p. 4.
42 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 103.
ences to Aristotle, Ruskin, Wagner, Morris, Comte, John Stuart Mill, Emerson, and Matthew Arnold. 43 Sidney Ball's literary manner is decidedly similar to the thoughtful, profoundly historical style of Sidney Webb.

The next significant Fabian publication, Tract No. 75, Labor in the Longest Reign (1837-1897) by Sidney Webb was published in 1897. The writer refers the reader to Lord Beaconsfield's Sybil, or the Two Nations, Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton, and Engel's Condition of the Working Classes in 1844 for a picture of the horror of the earlier days. 44 But, lest in viewing the picture of progress one may be inclined to be self-complacent, the Fabian warns that many sections have not been relieved at all since 1837; that higher wages have been counteracted by higher prices; and that overcrowding is more serious than ever. 45 The last mentioned Housing Problem is to be referred to again and again in the later Fabian tracts. Tract 76 immediately follows with Houses for the People (a Summary of the Powers of the Local Authorities Under the Housing of the Working Class Acts, 1890 to 1900, and the Use Which Has Been and Can Be Made of Them).

Quite unusual in the list of Fabian topics is the title of Tract No. 78 Socialism and the Teaching of Christ by the Reverend John Clifford, D.D. Originally it was an address delivered at the Christian Socialist League in 1895. 46 With its publication in 1897 there was a three page Bibliography of Christian Socialism. It was intended as an answer to the objection that

43Tract 72, p. 3.
44Tract 75, pp. 1-7.
45Tract 75, p. 7.
46Tract 78, p. 2.
Socialism tends to Atheism and that it is opposed to the teaching of Christ who did not preach a gospel of material blessedness. In reply Dr. Clifford maintains that Collectivism "does not advocate the absorption of the individual by the state; or the suppression of the family; or the total extinction of private property . . . but it seeks to accelerate the evolution of industrial life so that . . . it shall fulfill its Divine mission in the enrichment of mankind . . . It seeks to build a far better body for the soul of Christ's teaching, and the spirit of His life and death, than this fiercely competitive system, through which He now struggles almost in vain to make His voice heard and His power felt." 

In response to those who would permit things to remain as they are under Capitalism Dr. Clifford quotes the strong words of Ruskin in *Time and Tide*: "... to call the confused wreck of social order and life brought about by malicious . . . competition an arrangement of Providence, is quite one of the most insolent and wicked ways in which it is possible to take the name of God in vain." 

From 1897 to 1899 the Fabians occupied themselves intensively with Municipal Tracts: Tract 81, Municipal Water; Tract 86, Municipal Drink Traffic; Tract 90, The Municipalization of the Milk Supply; Tract 91, Municipal Pawnshops; and Tract 92, Municipal Slaughterhouses. These were all short, concise, statistical, and immediate.

The Housing Problem was again to the fore in Tract 101 printed in 1900

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 4.
as a survey: The House Famine and How to Relieve It. This tract consisted of seven papers, originally presented and discussed at a Conference on the Housing Problem in March, 1900.50 The scope of the publication is attested to by the titles of the seven sections: I. Bad Housing in Rural Districts, by Clement Edward; II. Laborers' Cottages, by Constance Cochrane; III. Facts as to Urban Overcrowding, by Dr. Edward Bowmaker; IV. The Existing Situation in London: Statistics of the Problem, by Mrs. R. C. Phillimere; V. Powers of Local Authorities, by Councillor W. Thompson; VI. Consideration of Practical Difficulties as Regards Building, by Councillor H. C. Lander; and VII. General Principles, by Councillor F. Lawson Dodd. A Select Bibliography by Sidney Webb completes the text.51

The problem of Imperialism with the declaration of war by President Kruger of the South African Republic on October 11, 1899 created an extremely delicate situation in Fabian ranks, a situation which presented itself as soon as October 13 with the motion that a resolution of sympathy be offered the Boers.52 Upon the advice of the Executive the motion was rejected but the problem grew more acute; the left wing which believed that capitalists had created the war (J. R. MacDonald, G. N. Barns, and Walter Crane) joined the right wing, the Liberals (Dr. John Clifford, Will Crooks, and Dr. F. Lawson Dodd) against the older leaders (the Executive) who believed that the question should not be touched.53

50Tract 101, p. 2.
51Tract 101, p. 2.
52Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 130.
53Ibid., p. 129.
However, the issue could not thus be so conveniently avoided, especially by a society that had heretofore considered all issues to be its province. George Bernard Shaw with Fabianism and the Empire settled it as far as the organization was concerned by reasoning as little to the taste of the Government as to the 'pro-Boers'. The theocracy of President Kruger he declared absolute and impossible; he "declared war on the doctrine that small nations had the right to determine their own government". All the assumptions of Imperialism were accepted as valid. A consolidated British South Africa (on lines later achieved) was demanded. In the words of Shaw about this startling document: "The Society already suspected of Toryism, now stood convicted of Jingoism. . ."58

This impression was carried to the limit of suspicion with the Liberal-Labour section when, after the war, the Fabians supported the Education Act of 1902 which gave rates to both rate and denominational schools. This roused the Nonconformist wrath but through the propaganda of Sidney Webb and the influence of Graham Wallas, now supreme on the London School Board, Fabian aid was effective. It was a "victory for the disinterested Machiavellianism which was the essence of the Fabian method."59

The sheer cleverness of Tract No. 107, Socialism for Millionaires,

55 Elie Halevy.
57 G. Bernard Shaw, Fabianism, op. cit., p. 15.
58 Ibid.
by Bernard Shaw, necessitates its discussion in a Fabian investigation.

While it had first appeared in The Contemporary Review of 1896, it was not printed as a Fabian tract until 1901; due, says the author to the millionaire movement resulting from Mr. Andrew Carnegie's statement that no man should die rich. Since then, unloading is the order of the day. But there is a great problem created by misguided generosity and Shaw explains it:

The problem is, how to unload without the waste, pauperization, and demoralization that are summed up in England under the word charity. It seems clear from some late sensational disbursements that the millionaires have not solved this problem. For this they cannot be blamed because the problem is fundamentally insoluble under the social conditions which produce it; but they can at least do their best instead of their worst with their superfluity; and, so far, they seem to prefer, with the best intentions, to do their worst.

As for the tract proper: it is in the most bantering, most scintillating, most ingratiating, and most astonishing of Shavian styles. With perfidiously sweet sympathy he gives us the Sorrows of the Millionaire: everything is produced for the millions and nothing for the millionaire:

Whilst the poorest have their Rag Fair, a duly organized and busy market in Houndsditch, where you can buy a boot for a penny, you may search the world in vain where the 50 pound boot the special dear line of hats at 40 guineas, the cloth of gold bicycling suit, and the Cleopatra claret four pearls to the bottle, can be purchased wholesale. . . And of what use is it to be able to pay for a peacock's brain sandwich when there is nothing to be had but ham or beef?

With protestations of sympathy for the plight of the man who has more money than he can spend, this annoying Irishman with the same sweet reasonableness proceeds to spend his money for him.

60 Tract 107, p. 2.
He may not leave his money to his family, for: "Anybody who has watched the world intelligently enough to compare the average man of independent means when he has just finished his work at the university, with the same man twenty years later, following a routine of fashion compared to which the round of a postman is a whirl of excitement, and the beat of a policeman a chapter of romance, must have sometimes said to himself that it would have been better for the man if his father had spent every penny of his money, or thrown it into the Thames".63

Family bequests disposed of, almsgiving is next eliminated as conducive to pauperization; ordinary hospitals are not to be helped because the millionaire is never to do anything for the public that it will do (because it must) for itself.64

The millionaire must be wary too of endowing education: "... it is beginning to be remarked that university men, as a class, are specially ignorant and misinformed... An intelligent millionaire, unless he is frankly an enemy of the human race will do nothing to extend the method of caste initiation practised under the mask of education at Oxford and Cambridge."65

Here, then, is the solution: never give the people anything they want; give them something they ought to want and don't; create new needs.66

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., p. 3.
63 Ibid., p. 5.
64 Ibid., p. 7.
65 Ibid., p. 10.
John Ruskin did by giving Sheffield a valuable museum, "which it does not want and would cheerfully sell for a fortnight's holiday with free beer if it could." 67

Two round insults are preferred at the close; firstly, other millionaires must do this rather than endow the Arts (as Ruskin did) because they are immensely ignorant of them; secondly, if the millionaire, heedless of the excellent advice of the Fabian, continues to give his money to charity indiscriminately, it will be a distinctly suspicious circumstance; it will look like conscience money, political bribery, or bids for titles. 68

In 1903 a profound event occurred in the history of the Fabian Society, and a decision was reached which might have been predicted by a gradualist-minded observer of the frequent challenge by the Fabians for the establishment of a Labor Party. When the Labor Representation Committee of 1900 led by Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald became in 1903 the Labor Party, the Fabian Society as a whole became affiliated with it and the Basis was changed to make membership in the Labor Party essential to Fabian membership. 69

One considerable advantage of the Society's entrance into the Labor Party according to Bernard Shaw, was the added time for research which disentanglement from intrigue and permeation left available. 70 From 1903 to 1914 the Tracts were continued, pressing the solution of the problem of

68 Ibid.
69 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 151.
70 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw, Playboy and Prophet, pp. 203-204.
Housing, Education, Municipalization, and Agriculture. From 1908 to 1911 the Socialist Series were published. The eight books contained in the series are: I. Socialism and Religion (1908), by Reverend Stewart Headlam, Percy Dearmer, and Reverend John Clifford (Reprint of Tracts Nos. 42, 78, 79, and 103); II. Socialism and Agriculture (1908), by Edward Carpenter and T. S. Dymond (Reprint of Tracts Nos. 115, 118, 123, and 136); III. Socialism and Individualism (1908) by Sidney Webb, Sidney Ball, Bernard Shaw and Sir Oliver Lodge (Reprint of Tracts Nos. 45, 69, 72, and 121); IV. The Basis and Policy of Socialism (1908), by Sidney Webb (Reprint of Tracts Nos. 5, 7, 51 and 108); V. Commonsense of Municipal Trading (1908) by Bernard Shaw; VI. Socialism and National Minimum (1909) (Papers by Mrs. Sidney Webb, and Miss B. L. Hutchins and reprint of Tract No. 128); VII. Wastage of Child Life (1909) by J. Johnston, M.D.; VIII. Socialism and Superior Brains (1910) by Bernard Shaw (Reprint of Tract No. 146); and IX. The Theory and Practice of Trade Unionism (1911) by J. H. Greenwood.

From 1906 the Fabians were aroused from relative tranquillity by the turbulent spirit, intervention, criticism, and attempts to reform H. G. Wells who, a member since 1903, did not force the crisis until 1906. Inevitably unimpressionable though the Fabians were, the literary background of H. G. Wells was considerable. He was already the author of The Time Machine (1895), The Wheels of Chance (1896), The Invisible Man (1897), The War of the Worlds

71Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 301.
Up to 1899 his picture of the future had been pessimistic and cynical; there was not a gleam of hope. But Anticipations was a forecast of what man might become by the year 2000. Mankind in the Making of 1903 was a discussion of social and individual problems. A Modern Utopia, written in 1905 after his membership in the Society, was a presentation of a scientific Utopia; but its deliberate imaginativeness was exactly what for twenty years the Fabians had been trying to avoid. In 1906 This Misery of Boots was published as a Fabian book.74

Referred to in The History of the Fabian Society with some hint of disdain as "The Episode of Mr. Wells"75 the controversy began in 1906 with his attempt to use the Society as an instrument for the social reconstruction which he had outlined in Anticipations. In February, 1905, in his paper read before the Society, "Faults of the Fabian" he criticized the Society as a drawing room circle with limited influence; the most unkindest cut was the allusion to the beloved motto by saying that Fabius never did strike and neither had the Fabians. He urged internal reforms and an expansion programme which included the superannuation of the Executive Committee.76

The "old Gang", whose practice in debate and dexterity in handling public meetings made them formidable adversaries indeed accused Wells of us-

74Ibid.
75G. Bernard Shaw, Socialism: Principles and Outlook, p. 18.
76Ibid., p. 17.
ing the Society to promote himself and his books and there resulted a series of verbal controversy, concentrated into Shaw versus Wells, whom many believed had not been treated too fairly in open debate, the intensity and cleverness of which attracted large and keenly appreciative audiences, until, in 1908, Wells, wearying of the enterprise, resigned from the Society. 77

In his Experiments in Autobiography Wells gives his version of the episode:

The idea was as good as the attempts to realize it was futile. On various occasions in my life it has been borne in one me, in spite of stout internal defense, that I can be remarkably silly and inept; but no part of my career rankles so acutely in my memory with the conviction of bad judgment, gristy impulse, and real inexcusable vanity, as that storm in the Fabian tea-cup. . . . I antagonized Shaw and Beatrice Webb by my ill-aimed aggressiveness yet both these people have since shown by their behavior towards Fascism and Communism respectively, that their trend of mind is all towards just such a quality of crude democracy as in 1906 I was so clumsily seeking. I was fundamentally right and I was wrong-headed and I left the Society, at last, more politically parliamentary and ineffective than when I found it. 78

In the May 19, 1907 issue of the Christian Commonwealth, Bernard Shaw wrote the following article, a defense of the Executive part in the controversy titled, in simple ominousness, "Wells":

Wells is a spoiled child. His life has been one long promotion. He was born cleverer than anybody within hail of him. He won scholarships. He did what he liked-unhindered, unchecked, unpunished, apparently

even undisliked. In course of time he took to Socialism and joined the Fabian Society where he was received with a distinguished consideration never accorded by that irreverent body to any mortal before or since. He insulted it freely and proceeded to rearrange it according to his own taste. No pen can describe his conduct during this process. Take all the sins he ascribes to his colleagues; touchiness - dogmatism - preoccupation - irresponsibility; add every other petulance of which a spoiled child or a successful operatic tenor is capable; multiply the total by ten; square the result, cube it; raise it to the millionth power and square it again, and you will still fall short of the truth about Wells. Yet the worse he behaved the more he was indulged and the more he was indulged the worse he behaved. He literally cost me personally over a thousand pounds by wasting my time, for it fell to my lot to undo the mischief he did daily.79

With a protestation of his gentleness in dealing with Wells, Shaw continues:

He repaid these acts of faith by refusing to attend committees or do any routine work whatever, and presently resigned, writing a letter for publication at the same time to explain that he had done so because we were a parcel of sweeps.80

The interest of the controversy caused Mrs. Webb to take an active part in the Society: she has since been the dominating figure. Besides Mrs. Webb many distinguished persons in politics, literature, and art also joined: Granville Barker proved to be one of the most active, serving on the Executive from 1907 to 1912. Arnold Bennett, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, and Rupert Brooke also joined during this period.81

An exceptionally brilliant series was inaugurated in 1911: between 1911 and 1913 the Society, by then forced to move from hall to hall by the

79 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, pp. 203-204.
80 Ibid.
81 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 186.
expansion of its membership, heard Bernard Shaw debate G. K. Chesterton, a
course, of lectures by Mr. and Mrs. Webb, lectures by Shaw, and a debate
between Shaw and Hilaire Belloc.82

In 1913, again impatient with the want of skill and knowledge shown
by those in power, the Fabians decided on a definite avenue of public
prompting: this involved the founding of a weekly review of high political
and literary quality which would serve Socialism as the Spectator and the
Nation were serving Unionism and Higher Liberalism. The Fabian leaders
accordingly established The New Statesman.83 The supplements on social
questions, which were the distinctive feature of The New Statesman, were
actually a development of the Fabian tracts. The Fabian Research Department
Publications which were published as New Statesman Supplements were:

Industrial Organization in Germany (1913) by W. S. Sanders; National Insurance Act (1914); First Draft Report of the Insurance Committee; Cooperative Production and Profit-Sharing (1914); Cooperative Movement (1914) by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb.84

Bernard Shaw maintains that there was no formal official connection
between The New Statesman and the Fabian Society; but as the "staff and
directorate were predominantly Fabian, The New Statesman was really a crea-
tion of the Society, and its public mouthpiece until in the course of time
it inevitably developed a journalistic style all its own".85

82 Ibid., pp. 232-233.
83 G. Bernard Shaw, Socialism: Principles and Outlook, p. 18.
84 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 301.
85 G. Bernard Shaw, Fabianism, p. 18.
When in 1914 the World War broke upon Europe, the Fabian Society made no official pronouncement, and adopted no policy. The famous pamphlet by Shaw, printed first in the Supplement of The New Statesman on November 14, 1914, Commonsense About the War which "fell upon the astounded public with the detonation of a thunder clap" will be reserved for Chapter IV.

86 Edward Pease, op. cit., p. 234.
87 Archibald Henderson, p. 627.
CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY ON THE SOCIAL WRITINGS
OF
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

When George Bernard Shaw joined the Fabian Society in 1884 he brought to it: an ability of self-forgetfulness in a cause; a manner of self-assurance which concealed a very great shyness; a habit of mockery begun in childhood over the unsolvable; a knowledge and appreciation of the finest music; five years of industry which had resulted in five unsuccessful novels; a keen interest in social problems; and a tremendous vitality and energy. He had, too, as emphasized by Edmund Wilson, the very special advantage of coming from pre-industrial Ireland, close to eighteenth century standards of literary precision, hardness, and elegance.¹

What Archibald Henderson specifies as the three great influences on Shaw's career—exhaustive research, efforts as a public man, an propagandist activities—the Fabian Society gave in turn to him.¹² Shaw himself, again and again, insists upon credit for his career being placed in the right quarter:

I never lived the literary life, or belonged to a literary club, and though I brought all my powers unsparingly to the criticism of the fine arts, I never frequented their social surroundings. My time was fully taken up . . . by public work, in which I was fortunate enough to be associated with a few men of exceptional ability and character.

¹²Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 134.
I got the committee habit, the impersonality and imperturbability of the statesman the constant and unceremonious criticism of men who were at many points much abler and better informed than myself, a great deal of experience which cannot be acquired in conventional grooves, and that 'behind the scenes' knowledge of the mechanism and nature of political illusion, which seems so cynical to the spectators in front.

I advise you in anything you write to insist on this training of mine, as otherwise you will greatly exaggerate my natural capacity. It has enabled me to produce an impression of being an extraordinarily clever and brilliant writer, deficient only in feeling, whereas I am in a way a man of genius - otherwise I suppose I would not have sought out and enjoyed my experience and been simply bored by holidays, luxury, and money - yet I am not in the least naturally 'brilliant' and not at all ready or clever. If literary men generally were put through the mill I went through and kept out of their stuffy little coteries, where works of art breed in and in until the intellectual and spiritual produce becomes hopelessly degenerate I should have a thousand rivals more brilliant than myself. There is nothing more mischievous than the notion that my works are the mere play of a delightfully clever and whimsical hero of the salons; they are the result of perfectly straightforward drudgery, beginning in the ineptest novel writing juvenility, and persevered in every day for twenty five years. . .

The real Shaw is the Socialist; for half a century attending committee meetings, guiding a Socialistic society, entering countless controversies on the platform, in the press, in magazines, and books, in an effort to awaken liberal thought, to make prevail the principles of Socialism.

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2 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, intro., p. xxiv
3 Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 328.
Fabian activities caused the publication of three of his novels. An 

unsocial Socialist was published in Hubert Bland's *Today* from January to 

December, 1884; *The Irrational Knot* appeared in Annie Besant's *Our Corner* 

from January to June 1885; and *Love Among the Artists in Our Corner* from 1887 

to 1888. They made no impression upon the British public but greatly pleased 

such men as William Archer, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Morris, and 

William Ernest Henley.

When in 1888 T. P. O'Connor established the Liberal paper, *The Star*, 

H. W. Massingham, a Socialist friend, persuaded the editor to hire the wholly 

unknown Shaw as assistant leader writer. Shaw in turn, hoping to permeate 

the Liberal Party accepted with enthusiasm; but his editorials were impossi-

bly progressive. To his horror O'Connor discovered "that Shaw was a Socialist 

as who should say Bolshevist today; that Massingham, his assistant editor, 

had strong Socialist leanings; and that the reliable Sidney Webb, to whom he 

wrote in remonstrance over Shaw's anti-Liberalism was also a Socialist!"

The editor happily compromised by making Shaw music critic, a seemingly 

harmless position from the political standpoint, from 1888 to 1890. But as 

Como di Bassetto Shaw alternately amazed and impressed his music-loving 

readers: he combined serious criticism with a heedlessly flippant manner; 

and interwoven with this genuine criticism and startling levities and irrel-

evancies there is the message of the Fabian. An investigation of London

Music (1888-1890) which is the collection of his Star criticisms, reveals numerous reformist influences, references which could be made only by a man who was steeped in practical Socialist activities.

For May 14, 1888 we find:

The late conflict between the Bishop of London and the Reverend Stewart Headlam (a Fabian) as to the godliness of dancing ended practically in the excommunication of the dancers and the inhibition of the popular clergyman, whose version of the Thirty-nine Articles includes Land Nationalisation, Free Speech, Communion for Stage Players, and a Democratic Constitution for the Church.

... We do not want to see Westminster Abbey turned into a ballroom; but if some enterprising clergyman with a cure of souls in the slum were to hoist a board over his door with the inscription, 'Here men and women after working hours may dance without getting drunk on Fridays; hear good music on Saturdays; pray on Sundays; discuss public affairs without molestation from the police on Mondays; have the building for any honest purpose they please - theatricals if desired - on Tuesdays; bring the children for games, amusing drill, and romps on Wednesdays; and volunteer for a thorough scrubbing down of the place on Thursdays' - well, it would be all very shocking no doubt; but after all it would not interfere with the Bishop of London's salary.7

In March, 1889 Shaw describes his attendance at, of all places, a recital in a girls' school:

I found the school in the margin of a common, with which I have one ineffaceable association. It is not my custom to confine my critical opinions to the columns of the Press. In any public place I am ever ready to address my fellow-citizens orally until the police interfere. Now it happens that on a fine Sunday afternoon I addressed a crowd on this very common for an hour, at the expiry of which a friend took round a hat, and actually collected 16s. 9d. The opulence and liberality of the inhabitants were thus very forcibly

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7 George Bernard Shaw, London Music, p. 34.
impressed on me; and when last Tuesday I made my way through a long corridor into the crowded schoolroom, my first thought as I surveyed the row of parents, was whether any of them had been among the contributors to that memorable hatful of coin. My second was whether the principal would have been pleased to see me had she known about the 16s. 9d. When the sensation caused by my entrance had subsided somewhat, we settled down to a performance which consisted of music and recitation by the rising generation and speechification by the risen one. The rising generation had the best of it. . . The deplorable member of Parliament who gave away the prizes may be eloquent in the House of Commons; but before that eager, keen, bright frank . . . audience, he qualed, he maundered, he stumbled, . . . and finally collapsed in the assuring us emotionally that he felt proud of himself, which struck me as being the most uncalled-for remark I ever heard, even from an M. P. The chairman was self-possessed, not to say hardened. He quoted statistics about Latin, arithmetic, and other sorded absurdities. . . I incited a little girl near me to call out 'Time' and 'Question' but she shook her head shyly and said 'Miss - would be angry'. . . Let him deliver that Speech next Sunday on the common, and he will not collect 16s. 9d. He will be stoned. . . There were many other numbers on the program but let it suffice to add that when God Save the Queen was sung, the substitution of two quavers for the triplet at the beginning of the last line so completely spoiled it that I instantly suspected the headmistress of being a Fenian.8

In May, 1899 the critic begs that if there is to be a Revolution that it not be enacted to The Marseillaise, a vulgar tune and a disgrace to the red flag. . . He ventures; "My own belief is that the men of Marseilles were horribly frightened when they went to the front, as any sensible person would be; and Rougest de Lisle's tune enabled them to face it out, exactly

8Ibid., pp. 71-72.
as 'Ta - ran - ta - ra' encouraged the policemen in The Pirates of Pen-

Again in London Music the anti-Anarchistic Fabian engages in a critical
testament. 9

argument with a Radical genius, Mr. Marshall Hunt who divides Society into
animated clothes-pegs and lovers of Beethoven in corduroys. Shaw's choice
of the middle way reads like a Fabian tract:

For Beethoven society is divided into people who can
afford to keep a piano and go to operas and concerts
and people who cannot. Mr. Marshall Hunt's idea that
people who cannot are nevertheless screwed up to con-
cert pitch by honest, thorough, manly toil, shows that,
though he be an expert in the music question, in the
labor question he is a greenhorn.

Take a laborer's son; let him do his board - schooling
mostly on an empty stomach; bring him up in a rookery
tenement; take him away from school at thirteen; offer
him the alternative of starvation or twelve to sixteen
hours work a day at jerry building, coupling railway
waggons, collecting tramway fares, field labor or what
not, in return for food and lodging which no 'animated
clothes-peg' would offer to his hunter; bully him, slave-
drive him; teach him by every word and look that he is
not wanted among respectable people, and that his children
are not fit to be spoken to by their children. This
is a pretty receipt for making an appreciation of Beethoven. 10

Genuine musical appreciation Shaw attributes not to the idle rich who have
no real appetite for enjoyment because they do no work, not to the laborer
who is too weary to listen, but to the shilling public, to the business and
professional men of musical tastes who work hard and to whom a Beethoven
Symphony is a recreation. But profering Beethoven to them does not correct

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., pp. 131-32.
the other evils:

What we want is not music for the people, but bread for the people, immunity from robbery and scorn for the people, hope for them, enjoyment, equal respect and consideration, life and aspiration, instead of drudgery and despair. When we get that I imagine the people will make tolerable music for themselves, even if all Beethoven's scores perish in the interim.\textsuperscript{11}

At every opportunity the Fabian pounces upon the faults of the wealthy music patrons, "their class mumbo jumbo; the box regulation for evening dress which are supposed to indicate high character".\textsuperscript{12} They will not forego their dessert to be on time; they visit too long; promenade and smoke too much; they make the act the interval and the interval the act; the Irishman even uses Tom Moore's last line of \textbf{The Young May Moon} and applies it to the aristocrat: "the best of all ways to lengthen your days is to steal a few hours from the night".\textsuperscript{12a} Then the Fabian indulges in a bit of un-Fabian dreaming:

If I were dictator I should settle the matter by enacting a seven hours working day, taxing the incomes of the stall and box-holders twenty shillings in the pound, and subsidising a National Opera out of the proceeds of the tax, using convict labor for the chorus and minor roles, as well as for the scene-shifting. As for the unfortunate soldiers who are now placed for show purposes in the vestibule - and I hold that it is an insult and a dishonor to make any such use of them - I should transfer them to the stalls, where they could enjoy the opera and turn their rifles to account by occasionally picking off the people who disturb the performance by talking loudly in their boxes.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{12a}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 137.
In July, 1889 Shaw discusses the proposed performance of Die Meistersinger at Covent Garden. To him the idea is comparable to making wild flowers spring from upholstery: the essentials of Die Meistersinger go beyond scenery, dress, voices, conductors, and bands to the need for the true Wagner-Nuremberg atmosphere where man habitually engaged in useful work; of which atmosphere, he insists, there was hardly a breath at Covent Garden. It may be noted here that Shaw's constant championship of Wagner began at this time; it may be further noted that the Fabian Shaw was at this time editing the Fabian Essays the constant theme of which was the condemnation of idleness.14

The criticism for January 24, 1890 reads again like a Fabian tract: it has the characteristic historical and factual note. The occasion is a Cinderella pantomime in Bristol; the protest is against Child Labor. The Fabian goes back to the Morals and Health Act of 1802 and progresses to the present Liberal campaign for the extension of the Factory Acts. He then demands a list of licenses issued for children to act to "open the eyes of the verdant dupes who thought the licensing clause was passed solely to provide Richard III with a little Duke of York, or The Doll's House with three little Helmers."15

For January 31, 1890 a letter of protest is printed:

'Dear Signor di Bassetto,

May I respectfully and deferentially invite your attention to the fact that it is about six weeks since we have had anything about music in your column,
and that the Popular Concerts have been running for the last fortnight in the vain hope of securing a fraction of the time that can be spared from the enlightenment of humanity at Bristol and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{16}

When according to T. P., the larger salary of the weekly organ of the classes, The World, proved too much for even a Fabian, Shaw left The Star and from 1890 to 1894 remained with The World as music critic. Music in London, the collection of his criticisms during that period, reveals, strange to say, that Shaw was, if anything, more forthright in his condemnation of anti-humanitarianism.

A terse application of Fabian reading appears in the September 16, 1891 criticism of a singer: "It may be said of him, as Marx said of Mill, that his eminence is due to the flatness of the surrounding country."\textsuperscript{17}

As in his Fabian tracts whenever referring to idleness Shaw is not amused, does not banter, but uses all his ability in arouse contempt for uselessness, so in the criticism of November 25, 1891 he writes in swift disdain of futility:

\begin{quote}
It is an age, we are told, of stress and strain, of fierce struggle for existence, in which men come to the theatre exhausted by work, and requiring something stimulating, exciting, amusing, and easily intelligible. If you search for a typical apostle
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 165.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 296.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 297.
\textsuperscript{17} Music in London (1890-1894), London: Constable and Co., 1932, p. 255.
of this view, you will generally find him to be a gentleman some six stones over his proper weight, who, not being permitted by his wife and housemaids to lounge about the house after breakfast, goes down in a first-class carriage to the city, where he receives a number of illiterate letters, and dictates equally illiterate answers to his clerks; goes out and eats enough confectionery to make a schoolboy blush; ... meets his fellow citizens and tries to get the better of them in a dull sort of whist without cards which he calls 'business'; takes a snack and two glasses of sherry to sustain him while he loafes and brags in whatever his particular line of brag may be; tries a little more whist; takes a heavy meal called lunch; orders something new to wear; goes to his club for afternoon tea or the evening paper until it is time to pay visits or go home to dinner; and finally turns up at the theatre under compulsion of his fashionable wife and daughters, in the character of victim of brain pressure as aforesaid. That man does not do as much real work in ten years as I have to put into every five lines I write; yet, whilst his clerks swelter willingly in an uncomfortable crow's nest for half-a-crown, during four and a half hour of Die Meistersinger he yawns in his box for an hour or so, secretly wishing that the opera were a dog-fight, and only imperfectly consoled by the advertisement of his money afforded by polite society by his wife's diamonds. Real work cultivates a man instead of brutalizing him; and what we want at present is more recreation for cultivated men, and less sacrifice of artistic resources to the stimulation of underworked or wholly idle persons, with all their higher appreciatory organs in an advanced state of fatty degeneration. Who ever heard a capable and active individual in sound health complain of a good play or opera as overstraining his or her faculties?18

When in 1892 Bernard Shaw began to write plays, he wrote them as a Socialist, as a Fabian: the theatre was a means of propaganda, of permeation; it was a vital, current, energetic medium for the presentation of Socialism.

18 Ibid., p. 285.
on an intellectual basis: it was the ideal avenue for presenting sharp
socialistic dialectic. For the proper perspective of Shaw as a dramatist
it is necessary to continue to see the man of the eighties: "fictionist,
debater, social worker, vestryman, borough councillor, shabby publicist, and
grubber in municipal details both dull and unimportant to the many who laugh
over his dramatic scintillations."

Shaw saw in the theatre a powerful instrument for education and instruc-
tion; he saw a school of manners and of morals. In his Preface to his
Dramatic Opinions he states that he considers the theatre "as important as
the Church was in the Middle Ages . . . a factory of thought, a prompter of
conscience, an elucidator of social conduct, an armory against dullness and
despair, and a temple of the Ascent of Man".20

Again and again, Shaw had insisted that the idea of Art for Art's sake
was foolishness: Art, he insisted, should be imploved for social, political,
moral, and religious ends.21 So to Shaw the play is not the thing; the idea,
the message, the moral, is the thing. In connection with this point, Edmund
Wilson believes that the moralizing of Shaw has caused him to be underated as
an artist. This critic sees the moralities in Shaw's plays as music - the
music of ideas; the symphonic development of which is a highly accomplished
art rather than mere didacticism.21a

Holt and Co., 1916, p. 29.
20George Bernard Shaw, Dramatic Opinions and Essays, V. I, New York:
Brentano's, MCMXXVIII, Introduction, p. XXIII.
21aEdmund Wilson, op. cit., p. 246.
21Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 365.
But the plays of the Fabian of hole and corner debates, of curbstone harangues, have all the debating virtues: the readiness of retort, the natural aptitude trained and disciplined by Fabian experience; all the technique of the skilled debater are combined to preach a moral to the public in "athletic prose". Of the walking ideas, the reference books, the dialectic humanizations, which are Shaw's characters, and of the speech used for purposes of mental shock, and of stimulating the intellect into thinking, P. P. Howe in Bernard Shaw A Critical Study says:

All Mr. Shaw's people are talkers . . . the small class talks with difficulty . . . then there is a much larger class who are apt and ready mouthpieces of their kind and class. Mr. Shaw runs gaily and lightly up and down the social ladder . . . his skill never deserts him . . . They are sufficiently personalized and have in addition a grant in aid from their creator's own readiness of repartee and deadliness of retort. But there is a third class of talkers who have this ultimate importance, that in them we may hear, without distortion and without dilution, their master's voice. These are the talkers by vocation, the apostles of the gospel, the priests of the cult. These are the figures who still hold the stage, when all the other puppets hang limp and depleted, with their virtue gone out of them. These are the real pillars of the theatre of discussion - these gigantic male caryatides, these huge spouting figures, which support the only true church and most characteristic temple of our subject's dramatic achievement".23

And to these talkers are added the direct voice of Shaw in the lengthy prefaces which are a distinguishing feature of his plays and create one more opportunity and another audience for his reformist ideas.

23Ibid., p. 135.
Of the direct statements of Shaw in respect to Fabian influences, one, in a letter to Archibald Henderson on June 30, 1904, is particularly noteworthy: "... in all the plays my economic studies have played as important a part as a knowledge of anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo".24 And, as Edmund Wilson observes in referring to this statement, Shaw, with economic insight and training joined literary qualities which had never before been combined with economics - the eighteenth century classical qualities of hardness and elegance preserved by a non-commercial Ireland.24a

Shaw had begun a play with William Archer in 1885; but he confesses that he was impossible as a collaborator. The Fabian distorted well planned schemes into a "grotesquely realistic exposure of slum landlordism, municipal jobbery, and the pecuniary and matrimonial ties between it and the pleasant people of 'independent' incomes who imagine that such sordid matters do not touch their own lives"25 Mr. Archer despaired of the whole venture and disowned the play: Shaw exhumed it in 1892, added a third act, and gave a mock-Scriptural title - **Widowers' Houses**.26 When it was presented in 1892 at the Royalty Theatre, the Socialists applauded furiously; the ordinary playgoers hooted - and Shaw made a speech: the play was not a success; it achieved, rather, an uproar. Delighted, the playwright, with Ibsen in mind, wrote **The Philanderer**, and then **Mrs. Warren's Profession**.

24Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 7.
24aEdmund Wilson, op. cit., p. 244.
26Ibid.
In the Preface to their later grouping as Unpleasant Plays, the author gives his motive in the writing of these plays: their dramatic force is used to make the spectator face unpleasant facts; slum landlordism in *Widowers' Houses*; hypocrisy and intrigue under existing marriage laws in *The Philanderer*; and prostitution necessitated by economic conditions in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.27

In these themes the spectator and the reader are confronted with social horrors, just as the writer intended them to be; and he further intends that the blame for them be placed in the right quarter: on the English citizen, who "whilst clamouring for a gratuitous millennium, will shut his eyes to the most villainous abuses if the remedy threatens to add another penny in the pound to the rates and taxes which he has to be half cheated, half coerced into paying."28 The guilt, then, he places squarely on "the whole body of citizens whose public opinion, public action, and public contribution as rate payers alone can replace Sartorius' slums with decent dwellings, Charteris' intrigues with reasonable marriage contracts, and Mrs. Warren's profession with honorable industries guided by a humane industrial code and a 'moral minimum wage.'"29

In investigating the plays for specific Fabian influences one finds in *Widower's Houses* complete cynicism (a cynicism so characteristic of the Fabian who worked in the field of practical politics); there are no heroes, no heroines. Sartorius is a slum landlord; Blanche, his very spoiled daughter.

27Ibid., p. xiii.
28Ibid., p. xxv.
29Ibid., Preface, pp. xxv-xxvii.
hides, and not very successfully, a vicious temper beneath a pseudo-charming exterior. She hates the poor who are to her "those dirty, drunken, disreputable people who live like pigs". Dr. Trench is shocked at his prospective father-in-law's source of income until he becomes aware that his own income is the result of ground landlordism; from sympathetic indignation his feelings degenerate to "A man must live." From the speeches of Sartorius, Blanche, Dr. Trench, and the wretched Lickcheese, a rent-collector for Sartorius, the whole dismal inhuman picture is painted by the Socialist Shaw. The Fabian's cynical knowledge of practical politics is revealed in such dialogue as that which takes place between Sartorius and Lickcheese in Act II:

Lickcheese. The Sanitary Inspector has been complaining again about number 13 Robbin's Row. He says he'll bring it before the vestry.

Sartorius. Did you tell him that I am on the vestry?

Lickcheese. Yes, sir.

Sartorius. What did he say to that?

Lickcheese. Said he supposed so, or you wouldn't dare to break the law so scandalous. I only tell you what he said.

Sartorius. Hm! Do you know his name?

Lickcheese. Yes, sir. Speakman.

Sartorius. Write it down in the diary for the day of the next vestry meeting. I will teach Mr. Speakman his duty - his duty to members of the vestry.

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Lickcheese. (doubtfully) The vestry can't dismiss him, sir. He's under the Local Government Board.

Sartorius. I did not ask you that. Let me see the books. (Lickcheese produces the rent book and hands it to Sartorius; then makes the desired entry in the diary on the table, watching Sartorius with misgiving as the rent book is examined. Sartorius frowns and rises.) 1 pound: 4s. for repairs to No. 13. What does this mean?

Lickcheese. Well, sir, it was the staircase on the third floor. It was downright dangerous; there weren't but three whole steps in it and no handrail. I thought it best to have a few boards put in.

Sartorius. Boards! Firewood, sir, firewood! They will burn every stick of it. You have spent twenty-four shillings of my money on firewood for them.

Lickcheese. There ought to be stone stairs, sir: it would be a saving in the long run. The clergyman says -

Sartorius. What! who says?

Lickcheese. The clergyman, sir, only the clergyman. Not that I make much account of him; but if you knew how he has worried me over that staircase -

Sartorius. I am an Englishman; and I will suffer no clergyman to interfere in my business. (He turns suddenly on Lickcheese) Now look here, Mr. Lickcheese! This is the third time this year that you have brought me a bill of over a pound in repairs. I have warned you repeatedly against deal-

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\[Ibid., \text{Act III, p. 67.}\]
ing with these tenement houses as if they were mansions in a West-end square. I have occasion to warn you too against discussing my affairs with strangers. You have chosen to disregard my wishes. You are discharged.

Lickcheese. (dismayed) Oh, sir, don't say that.

Sartorius. (fiercely) You are discharged.

Lickcheese. Well, Mr. Sartorius, it is hard, so it is. No man alive could have screwed more out of them poor destitute devils for you than I have, or spent less in doing it. I have dirtied my hands at it until they're not fit for clean work hardly; and now you turn me -

Sartorius. (interrupting him menacingly) What do you mean by dirtying your hands? If I find that you have stepped an inch outside the letter of the law, Mr. Lickcheese, I will prosecute you myself. The way to keep your hands clean is to gain the confidence of your employers. You will do well to bear that in mind in your next situation.32

Into the speech of Lickcheese, who, though wretched as his name, reveals some human sympathy, is put an eloquent presentation of the situation. Again in Act II he says:

Mark my words, gentlemen: he'll find what a man he's lost the very first week's rents the new man'll bring him. You'll find the difference yourself, Dr. Trench, if you or your children come into the property. I have got money when no other collector alive would have wrung it out. And this is the thanks I get for it! Why, see here, gentlemen! Look at that bag of money on the table. Hardly a penny of that but there was a hungry child crying for the bread it would have bought. But I got it out for him - screwed

and worried and bullied it out of them. I - look here, gentlemen: I'm pretty well seasoned to the work; but there's money there that I couldn't have taken if it hadn't been for the thought of my own children depending on me for giving him satisfaction. And because I charged him four-and twenty shillin' to mend a staircase that three women have been hurt on, and that would have got him prosecuted for manslaughter if it had been let go much longer, he gives me the sack. . . .33

And Lickcheese gives a lucid picture of the way profits are made:

Tenement houses, let from week to week by the room or half-room - aye, or quarter-room. It pays when you know how to work it sir. Nothing like it. It's been calculated on the cubic foot of space sir, that you can get higher rents letting by the room than you can for a mansion in Park Lane. . .

Every few pounds he could scrape together he bought old houses with - houses that you wouldn't hardly look at without holding your nose. He has 'em in Bethnal: he has 'em in St. Giles's; he has 'em in Marylebone. Just look at how he lives himself, and you'll see the good of it for him. He likes a low deathrate and a gravel soil for himself he does. You come down with me to Robins's Row; and I'll show you a soil and a death-rate, so I will!34

The persistent Fabian condemnation of the groundlandlords who receive interest with the calm belief that their lives do not touch the sordid details of poverty is given dialogue instead of tract medium in the words of Sartorius in Act II:

33Ibid., Act II, p. 34.
34Ibid., p. 35.
Sartorius.  ... And now, Dr. Trench may I ask what
your income is derived from?

Trench.  (defiantly) From interest - not from
houses. My hands are clean as far as
that goes. Interest on a mortgage.

Sartorius.  (forcibly). Yes: a mortgage on my
property. When I, to use your own words,
screw, and bully and drive these people
to pay what they have freely undertaken
to pay me, I cannot touch one penny of the
money they give me until I have first
paid you your 700 pounds out of it. What
Lickcheese did for me, I do for you. He
and I are alike intermediaries: you are
the principal. It is because of the risks
I run through the poverty of my tenants
that you exact interest from me at the
monstrous and exorbitant rate of seven
percent, forcing me to exact the utter-
most farthing in my turn from my tenants.
And yet, Dr. Trench, you have not hesi-
tated to speak contemptuously of me be-
cause I have applied my industry and fore-
thought to the management of our property,
and am maintaining it by the same honorable
means. 35

That the picture is not altogether bleak is pointed out in Act III.

When Sartorius, as houseowner, and Dr. Trench, as groundowner, engage in an
unholy and hypocritical plan to improve the property, not for humanitarian
reasons, but for increased compensations in the event of the buildings
purchase by the business people, they reveal that things are tightening up,
that the really "good old times" are no more - another instance of Fabian

35 Ibid., p. 46.
persuasion of the effectualness of permeation:

Lickcheese: You see, it's like this, Dr. Trench. There's no doubt that the Vestries has legal powers to play old Harry with slum properties, and spoil the house-nacking game, if they please. That didn't matter in the good old times because the Vestries used to be ourselves. Nobody ever knew a word about the election; and we used to get ten of us into a room and elect one another, and do what we liked. Well, that cock won't fight any longer; and, to put it short, the game is up for men in the position of you and Mr. Sartorius. 36

The statement by Archibald Henderson in European Dramatists that Shaw was fast assuming the character of the "Swift of his age with an Irish capacity for criticizing England with the detachment of a foreigner and a certain slightly malicious taste for taking the conceit out of her"37 is particularly evident in Shaw's second play, The Philanderer. Although this was written only one year after Widowers' Houses it does not contain any economic criticism; it is rather the Fabian lecture, The Quintessence of Ibsenism, written into dramatic satire.

Shaw had in the Preface to the Unpleasant Plays mentioned that The Philanderer was meant to criticize existing marriage laws; the philanderer, Leonard Charteris, is a philanderer only because of imperfect laws. Here, as always, the dramatist believes in the efficacy of legislation to improve on human nature.38 The setting is for the most part in an Ibsen Club where

36 Ibid., Act III, p. 66.
37 Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 353.
38 Richard Burton, op. cit., p. 47.
faddists try desperately to live up to their roles of "unwomemly women" and unmanly men.39

The Philanderer is a cleverer, gayer play than Widowers' Houses: it has no long social speeches; there is much rushing about and brilliant dialogue. A pet aversion of Shaw, vivisection, is criticized, but with the same light touch.40 It may be noted here that however clever and brilliant is the treatment of other questions in Shaw's plays his most devastating condemnation and most vigorous writing is on the subject of poverty and injustice to the helpless poor. And this same distinction prevailed, as has been mentioned, in his Fabian Tracts.

Mrs. Warren's Profession, the last of the three Unpleasant Plays, presents the harshest social criticism, but in a manner less reformist than Widowers' Houses, and more serious, certainly, than The Philanderer. But it is not prostitution that the Fabian condemns so much as the economic conditions which encourage it; indeed, the dramatist in the Preface sees its evils paling before those of "the dramatists and journalists . . . not to mention the legions of lawyers, doctors, clergymen, and platform politicians who are daily using their highest faculties to belie their real sentiments."41

There is more vivid character presentation in this play: the Shavian mouthpiece is Vivie, whose "I like working and getting paid for it. When I'm tired of working, I like a comfortable chair, a cigar, a little whisky

40Ibid., p. 29.
41Ibid., Preface to Unpleasant Plays, p. xxvi.
and a novel with a good detective story in it"42 must certainly please the
author of The Quintessence of Ibsenism. Vivie is as energetic and unemotion-
al as her creator and she is painfully honest with herself and those around
her; she aptly fits Henderson’s statement that Shaw’s dramatic characters
break through to the light.43

A hypocritical clergyman, a thoroughly unamiable baronet, and Mrs.
Warren herself, self-pitying, emotional, and greedy, are targets for the
dramatist.

But in spite of the fact that Vivie is the speechmaker in the interests
of truth and sincerity it remains for Mrs. Warren to speak the lines by which
the Fabian Shaw mounts the platform: in six pages she presents her defense
in trying to justify herself to her daughter. And this defense is executed
temporarily through such arguments as:

They were the respectable ones. Well, what did they
get for their respectability? One of them worked in
a white lead factory twelve hours a day for nine
shillings a week until she died of lead poisoning.
She only expected to get her hand a little paralyzed
but she died. The other was always held up to us as
a model because she married a government laborer in
the Deptford victualling yard, and kept his room
and the three children neat and tidy on eighteen
shillings a week – until he took to drink. That was
worth being respectable for, wasn’t it?44

The argument is picked up and given a new slant by Sir George Crafts:

that the seemingly respectable world is filled with hypocrisy:

43Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 362.
Come: you wouldn't refuse the acquaintance of my mother's cousin, the Duke of Belgravia, because some of the rents he gets are earned in queer ways. You wouldn't cut the Archbishop of Canterbury I suppose because the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have a few publicans and sinners among their tenants? Do you remember your Crofts scholarship are Newnham? Well, that was founded by my brother the M. P. He gets his 22 per cent out of a factory with 600 girls in it and not one of them getting enough wages to live on... If you're going to pick and choose your acquaintances on moral principles, you'd better clear out of this country unless you want to cut yourself out of all decent society.45

P. P. Howe, in Bernard Shaw A Critical Study, objects both to the classification of Mrs. Warren's Profession as an Ibsenist play and to the quality attributed by Shaw to Ibsen:

You may admire that play as much as you please, you may praise its author for the good he has done, for the pleasure his intellectual indignation has given you or for the sometimes humorous and always spirited quality of the dialogue; the fact remains that in it he has done exactly what he defines Ibsen as doing but what Ibsen did not do, and that is he has made Society the principal protagonist in the drama. There is not a word in Ghosts of abstract or theoretic discussion; not the smallest suggestion that the fixture of the evening is Mr. Ibsen versus the Social System.46

Mrs. Warren's Profession, says the critic further, is just the kind of play that we should expect from the Puritan turned playwright... It has all the author's intellectual integrity, but none of the aesthetic integrity of Ibsen.47

In 1898 in The Academy Grant Richards reviewed the Unpleasant Plays and gave an interesting analysis of the progress (and recession) of the social-philosopher from play to play. Titles "Socrates as a Playwright" Mr. Richards' criticism dismisses with, William Archer, Widowers' Houses as apprentice work from the dramatic point of view, filled with weaknesses, of mere literary exploitation.

And yet, he maintains, in none of the other plays does one find so tense an emotion, so white a wrath, as that shown in the dialogue between trench and Lickcheese: this is the preaching of Bernard Shaw. And, ironically, it is here that one must decide Widowers' Houses to be an exceedingly poor play. Shaw lets his passion at every point run away with his imagination: "Whenever the dialogue is bad from the dramatic standpoint it can be seen that the angry reformer has replaced the dramatist."48

But from play to play, according to the critic, the dramatist becomes stronger and the reformer bursts out only at indignant intervals: "the comedian, the character-monger, even the sentimentalist, come out more and more with striking distinction while the philosopher just hangs a little in the background rather restlessly, a little sulkily, but with occasionally audacious intrusion as if to assert, even with a struggle his independence of thought and the persistent consistency of his position."49

The Philanderer, he continues, has a philosophy too angry and a satire

48 Grant Richards, "Socrates as Playwright I", The Academy, V. 53, April 30, 1898, p. 461.
49 Ibid., p. 462.
too brilliant to have any humanity: the characters are but puppets.

But theatrical situation and character surmount the preacher in Mrs.

Warren's Profession: "We have said a master of character; with the exception of Vivie, who is the mouthpiece of Mr. Shaw's philosophic convictions, and is accordingly sacrificed upon the altar of verisimilitude. . ."50

The next four plays of Shaw - Arms and the Man (1894), Candida (1894), Man of Destiny (1895), and You Never Can Tell (1896) - were grouped together as "Pleasant Plays" and published in 1898. There is a remarkable difference between the atmosphere of these plays and that of the Unpleasant Plays: the playwright chooses to substitute satire for indignation. He chooses to be subtle rather than oratorical; and yet, investigation reveals that while these plays are not, as the Unpleasant Plays were accused of being, tracts or criticisms, or police reports in disguise,51 their author has not abandoned the essentials of a reformer and he is definitely not less realistic.52

In "Socrates as a Playwright II" in The Academy Grant Richards analyses the element of social reform as Shaw progressed from the Unpleasant to the Pleasant Plays:

Mr. Shaw found as he progressed from play to play that an excessive tendency to be didactic, to play the lecturer, is the destruction of the playwright's art. He found that though he had a gospel to preach, and a very serious

50 Ibid.
gospel too, the preaching of it with too great an insistence in his plays deprived him of a thousand delightful opportunities; and accordingly, he did what any romantic writer of his artistic accomplishment and artistic need of expression would have done - he succumbed to his own brilliant art. He had too apostolically restrained his humour, his wit, his exquisite gift of quickness in dialogue, of sudden surprise in speech, and all for the sake of his indignation and his insatiable passion for reforming the world.53

Precisely what social motive Shaw had is presented in the Preface to the pleasant Plays; he declared himself again against the idealism which he had condemned so relentlessly in The Quintessence of Ibsenism. The plays are anti-romantic; their author wishes ardently to open the eyes of his listeners, (and his readers, because the Prefaces, the elaborate stage directions and character descriptions were written for the larger reading public) to the sham, silliness, and pose of the mock-heroic world around him. He explains:

... for idealism, which is only a flattering name for romance in politics and morals, is as obnoxious to me as romance in ethics and religion. In spite of a Liberal Revolution or two, I can no longer be satisfied with the shedding fictitious glory on overcrowding, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, infant mortality, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretences that these things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the newspapers call them. On the other hand, I see plenty of good in the world working itself out as fast as the idealist will allow it; and if they would only let it alone and learn to respect reality, which would include the beneficial exercise of respecting themselves, and incidentally respecting me, we should all get along much better and faster. At all events, I do not see moral chaos and anarchy as the alternative to romantic

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Ibid.
convention; and I am not going to pretend that I do
to please the less clear-sighted people who are con-
vinced that the world is only held together by the
force of unanimous, stenuous, eloquent, trumpet-tongued
lying. To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the
consequences, sometimes terrible sometimes ludicrous,
of our persistent attempts to found our institutions
on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-
satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific
natural history. And with that hint as to what I am
driving at, I withdraw and ring up the curtain.54

The musical comedy setting of Arms and the Man - Bulgaria in 1885 with
a Balkan War going on - is the remarkable background for the character who
is to ridicule the pseudo - heroics of the romantic world around him; every-
one else in living up to what they think is demanded of them, is very busy
striking romantic attitudes. It is Bluntschli this time who is Shaw;
Bluntschli, a soldier who thinks a cavalry charge is like flinging a handful
of peas against a window pane; who is as nervous as a mouse after three
days under fire; and who believes a soldier should carry chocolates instead
of cartridges.55

In the light of Fabian factual realism it is significant to note Shaw's
references to these descriptions in the Preface: "When many of my critics
rejected these circumstances as fantastically improbable and cynically
unnatural, it was not necessary to argue them into common sense: all I had
to do was to brain them, so to speak, with the first half dozen military

54 George Bernard Shaw, Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant, V. II, Preface to the
Pleasant Plays, p. xviii-xix.
authorities at hand, beginning with the present Commander in Chief.56

But Candida is something else again. Candida has characters of deep emotion and tenderness and sincerity involved in a subtle problem.57 And for the first time in Shaw's plays is created a woman of sensibility and sympathy, of a possible character. The play is steeped in social atmosphere: the opening description of the Reverend James Morell presents him as a Christian Socialist clergymen of the Church of England, and an active member of the Guild of St. Matthew and the Christian Social Union; his bookshelves hold Progress and Poverty, Fabian Essays, Mars's Capital, and other "literary landmarks in Socialism".58 He is a good clergymen; and his lecture program includes the Guild of St. Matthew, The Independent Labor Party, the Social Democratic Federation - and the Fabian Society. The Reverend James Morell is energetic, enthusiastic, content, and unsubtle.59

His sincerity, and incidentally a bit of propaganda which hearkens back to the earlier plays, is established in an interview between the clergymen and his reprehensible father-in-law to whom he says:

Yes, the lowest tender because you paid worse wages than any other employer - starvation wages - aye, worse than starvation wages to the women who made the clothing. . . Those women were my parishioners. I shamed the Guardians out of accepting your tender: I shamed the ratepayers out of letting them do it: I shamed everybody but you. I won't have you here snivelling about being a model employer and a converted man when you're only an apostate with your coat turned for the sake of the County Council Contract.60

56 Preface to the Pleasant Plays, p. xvii.
57 Grant Richards, op. cit., p. 491.
59 Ibid., p. 86.
But with the entrance of Candida and later Marchbanks the socialist oratory ceases and the play has to the end a triangle problem with an Ibsenist tone. Through it all while the clergyman husband grows more harried and the poet-rival Marchbanks more aggrieved, Candida remains serene, dignified, and even a bit maternally amused, choosing at the conclusion her competent clergyman husband because he needs her more ("I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him, and stand sentinel always to keep little vulgar cares out") and having no fear for the welfare of the poet because "He has learned to live without happiness".

With four pages of character description and stage direction Shaw presents The Man of Destiny: Napoleon Bonaparte. This Napoleon at twenty-six and newly made a general is a hard-headed realist: he is imaginative without illusions and creative without ideals (but he can use ideals for affect when he needs to): humiliations have ground the conceit out of him; poverty and hardships have made him self-sufficient; and he is a prodigious worker.

And this one-act play has a significant difference from its predecessors. The mysterious lady involved with much cleverness and intrigue over disputed letters is as much a realist as he; and each admires the honest realism of the other. Together they burn the letters which for an idealist would have meant a duel, a scandal, and a ruined career.
In the midst of an astonishingly bold bit of dialogue Shaw mounts the platform once more; and the audacious speech of Napoleon is Shaw as an Irishman, as an Ibsenist - and as a social reformer.

It begins innocently enough:

Napoleon (abruptly). Where did you pick up all these vulgar scruples - this (with contemptuous emphasis) conscience of yours? I took you for a lady - an aristocrat. Was your grandfather a shopkeeper, pray?

Lady. No: he was an Englishman.

Napoleon. That accounts for it. The English are a nation of shopkeepers. Now I understand why you've beaten me.

Lady. Oh, I haven't beaten you. And I'm not English.

Napoleon. Yes, you are - English to the backbone. Listen to me: I will explain the English to you.

Lady (eagerly). Do. (With a lively air of anticipating an intellectual treat, she sits down on the couch and composes herself to listen to him. Secure of his audience, he at once nerves himself for a performance. He considers a little before he begins; so as to fix her attention by a moment of suspense. His style is at first modelled on Talma's in Corneille's "Cinna"; but it is somewhat lost in the darkness, and Talma presently gives way to Napoleon, the voice coming through the gloom with startling intensity.)

Napoleon. There are three sorts of people in the world, the low people, the middle people, and the high people. The low people and the high people are alike in one thing: they have no scruples, no morality. The low are beneath morality, the high above it. I am not afraid of either of them; for the low are unscrupulous without knowledge, so that they make an idol of me;
whilst the high are unscrupulous without purpose, so that they go down before my will. Look you: I shall go over all the mobs and all the courts of Europe as a plough goes over a field. It is the middle people who are dangerous: they have both knowledge and purpose. But they, too, have their weak point. They are full of scruples—chained hand and foot by their morality and respectability.

Lady. Then you will beat the English; for all shopkeepers are middle people.65

There now comes the climax of the dialogue, one of the boldest speeches to be found in any of Shaw’s writings:

Napoleon. No, because the English are a race apart. No Englishman is too low to have scruples; no Englishman is high enough to be free from tyranny. But every Englishman is born with a miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible. Like the aristocrat, he does what he pleases and grabs what he wants; like the shopkeeper, he pursues his purpose with the industry and steadfastness that come from strong religious conviction and deep sense of moral responsibility. He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the gospel of peace. The natives kill the missionary; he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights

65bid., pp. 211-212.
for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven. In defence of his island shores, he puts a chaplain on board his ship; nails a flag with a cross on it to his top-gallant mast; and sails to the ends of the earth, sinking, burning, and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him. He boasts that a slave is free the moment that his foot touches British soil; and he sells the children of his poor at six years of age to work under the lash in his factories for sixteen hours a day. He makes two revolutions, and then declares war on our one in the name of law and order. There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishmen doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles, and cuts off his king's head on republican principles. His watchword is always duty; and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost...

You Never Can Tell, the last of the Pleasant Plays, is a completely comic, gay, and disarming invention, with astonishingly energetic character descriptions, stage directions, and situations. But in the midst of laughter there are social ideas, touched upon swiftly and effectively with no evidence of indignation; irate parents and the ineffectualness of irascibility; a wise waiter who shows more commonsense than anyone else in the play by simply doing the job before him; and the realization of the New Woman, scientifically educated for a life of social reform, into a human being.

In 1895 Shaw became drama critic for Frank Hariss's Saturday Review.
where he remained "violently battering away at the gates of tradition" and writing rather as a propagandist than as a judge until 1898. The defense of Ibsen and of Wagner was carried beyond his dramatic criticisms to two essays of 1895: The Sanity of Art and The Perfect Wagnerite.

The Sanity of Art was written in response to the request of Mr. Benjamin Tucker, an American editor and publisher, that Shaw refute the attack made by Dr. Max Nordau in Degeneration on the great artistic reputations of the nineteenth century and notably upon Ibsen and Wagner. The offer of Mr. Tucker to Shaw, then "vacationing with a select party of Fabians, politicians, and philosophers", that he would pay the highest price ever paid any man for a magazine article, Gladstone not excepted, resulted in The Sanity of Art.

The reply, an open letter to Mr. Tucker, presents Ibsenism and Wagnerism as progressive, intelligent, wholesome, and thoroughly sane movements in art. For the reaffirmation of Shaw's persistent belief that art cannot be dissociated from usefulness this passage is significant: "The claim of art to our respect must stand or fall with the validity of its pretension to cultivate and refine our senses and faculties. ... Art should refine our sense of character and conduct, of justice and sympathy, generally heightening our self-knowledge, self-control, precision of action, and considerateness and making us intolerant of baseness, cruelty, injustice, and intellec-

68Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 144.
70Ibid., p. 75.
To Dr. Nordau's assertion that Socialism and all other forms of discontent are signs of degeneration, that Wagner in particular beat the air ineffectually, Shaw replied:

Wagner is named because the passage occurs in the almost incredibly foolish chapter which is headed with his name. In another chapter it might have been Ibsen, of Tolstoy, or Ruskin, or William Morris, or any other eminent artist who shares Nordau's objection, and yours and mine to our existing social conditions. In the face of this, it is really impossible to deny oneself the fun of asking Nordau, with all possible good humour, who he is and what he is, that he should rail in this fashion at great men. Wagner was discontented with the condition of musical art in Europe. In essay after essay he pointed out with the most laborious exactitude what it was he complained of and how it might be remedied. He not only showed, in the teeth of the most envenomed opposition from all the dunderheads, pedants and vested interests in Europe, what the musical drama ought to be as a work of art, but how theatres for its proper performance should be managed — nay, how they should be built, down to the arrangement of the seats and the position of the instruments in the orchestra. And he not only showed this on paper, but he successfully composed the music dramas, built a model theatre, gave the model performances, did the impossible...71

A delineation of The Ring of the Niblungs, presented in The Perfect Wagnerite is prefaced with the claim by Shaw to be the man in England for the job: "I came by them ideas myself much as Wagner did, having learnt more about music than anything else in my youth, and sown my political wild oats subsequently in the revolutionary school. This combination is not common in England; and as I seem, so far, to be the only publicly articulate result of it, I venture to add my commentary to what has already been

71Ibid., p. 107.
written by musicians who are no revolutionists and revolutionists who are no musicians." 72

_The Ring of the Nibelungs_, Shaw insists, with its gods and giants and dwarfs its water-maidens and Valkyries, its wishing-cap, magic ring, enchanted sword, and miraculous treasure is a drama of the last half of the nineteenth century; it does not belong to a remote and misty antiquity. The spectator must recognize in the story the life he himself is fighting through; but since it is to an inner ring of superior persons (of whom Shaw professes to be one) that _The Ring of the Nibelungs_ has its most urgent philosophic appeal, _The Perfect Wagnerite_ is given to those who wish to understand that appeal. 73

Shaw then proceeds to interpret _The Ring_ from a nineteenth century Socialistic viewpoint. The analogy is pursued as follows: the water-maidens love the gold simply because it is beautiful; the dwarf Alberic loves the water-maidens, is mocked, and turns his thoughts to the gold. Such dwarfs, the critic explains, who snubbed by aristocracy must become millionaires to be recognized, are quite common in London. And Alberic in possession of the gold now condemns hordes of his fellow-creatures to slave for him, overground and underground. The comparison to capitalism is continued:

They never see him, any more than the victims of our "dangerous trades" ever see the shareholders whose power is nevertheless everywhere, driving them to

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73 Ibid., p. 2.
destruction. The very wealth they create with their labour becomes an additional force to impoverish them; for as fast as they can make it it slips from their hands into the hands of their master, and makes him mightier than ever. You can see the process for yourselves in every civilized country today, where millions of people toil in want and disease to heap up more wealth for our Alberics, laying up nothing for themselves, except sometimes horrible and agonizing disease and the certainty of premature death. All this part of the story is frightfully real, frightfully present, frightfully modern; and its effects on our social life are so ghastly and ruinous that we no longer know enough of happiness to be discomposed by it. It is only the poet, with his vision of what life might be, to whom these things are unendurable. If we were a race of poets we would make an end of them before the end of this miserable century. Being a race of moral dwarfs instead, we think them highly respectable, comfortable, and proper, and allow them to breed and multiply their evil in all directions. If there were no higher power in the world to work against Alberic, the end of it would be utter destruction.74

The power which can prevail against Alberic is Godhead; but the gods must first prevail upon honest giants (who will give a day's work for a day's pay) to protect them; in return Wotan promises the giants Fricha's sister Freia. The giants in good faith come for their pay but are met by lies and hedging. Just as, Shaw says: "There are no moments in life more tragic than when the humble common man, the manual worker, leaving with implicit trust all high affairs to his betters, and reverencing them wholly as worthy of that trust, even to the extent of accepting as his rightful function the saving of them from all roughening and coarsening drudgeries, first discovers that they are corrupt, greedy, unjust, and treacherous".75

74Ibid., p. 11.
75Ibid., p. 17.
Later, when Loki, the god of Intellect, Argument, Imagination, Illusion and Reason goes with Wotan to prevail upon Alberic they plunge into the mine where the slaves are piling up wealth. And Shaw observes:

This gloomy place need not be a mine; it might just as well be a match-factory, with yellow phosphorous, phossy jaw, a large dividend, and plenty of clergymen shareholders. Or it might be a white lead factory, or a chemical works, or a pottery, or a railway shunting yard, or a tailoring shop, or a little gin-sodden laundry, or a bakehouse, or a big shop, or any other of the places where human life and welfare are daily sacrificed in order that some greedy foolish creature may be able to hymn exultantly to his Plutonic idol:

Thou mak'st me eat while others starve,
And sing while others do lament;
Such unto me Thy blessings are,
As if I were Thine only care.

In the mine, which resounds with the clinking anvil of the dwarfs toiling miserably to heap up treasure for their master, Alberic has sent his brother Mime - more familiarly Mimmy - to make him a helmet. Mimmy dimly sees that there is some magic in this helmet, and tries to keep it; but Alberic wrests it from him, and shows him, to his cost, that it is the veil of the invisible whip, and that he who wears it can appear in what shape he will, or disappear from view altogether. This helmet is a very common article in our streets, where it generally takes the form of a tall hat. It makes man invisible as a shareholder, and changes him into various shapes, such as a pious Christian, a subscriber to hospitals, a benefactor of the poor, a model husband and father, a shrewd, practical, independent Englishman, and what not, when he is really a pitiful parasite on the commonwealth, consuming a great deal, and producing nothing, feeling nothing, knowing nothing, believing nothing, and doing nothing except what all the rest do, and that only because he is afraid not to do it, or at least pretend to do it.76

76 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
After pursuing the comparison between The Ring and the modern world Shaw, by a presentation of Wagner's life history, would silence those foolish ones who believe that The Rhine Gold is just a "work of art" and that Wagner never dreamt of shareholders, tall hats, whitelead factories, or industrial and political questions looked at from the socialistic point of view. After a review of the Socialist activities of Wagner Shaw says: "This being so, any person who, having perhaps heard that I am a Socialist, attempts to persuade you that my interpretation of The Rhine Gold is simply 'my socialism' read into the works of an artist who simply borrowed an idle tale from an old saga . . . is wrong."77

An evolutionary idea is brought in with the assertion that in the old-fashioned order of creation superior persons were higher; but in the modern humanitarian order adopted by Wagner, Man is the highest - and Man will deliver the world from the dwarfs (the greedy, predatory people) and from the gods (the intellectual, moral, and talented people who administer State and Church).78

Later in the story Shaw classifies Siegfried as an Anarchist and proceeds from that assertion to the following:

One word of warning to those who may find themselves attracted by Siegfried's Anarchism, or, if they prefer a term with more respectable associations, his neo-Protestantism. Anarchism, as a panacea, is just as hopeless as any other panacea, and will still be so even if we breed a race of perfectly benevolent men. It is true that in the sphere of thought, Anarchism

77 Ibid., p. 36.
is an inevitable condition of progressive evolution. A nation without Freethinkers - that is, without intellectual Anarchists - will share the fate of China. As to the industrial or political machinery of society, Anarchism there must always reduce itself speedily to absurdity. Even the modified form of Anarchy on which modern civilization is based; that is the abandonment of industry in the name of individual liberty, to the upshot of competition for personal gain between private capitalists, is a disastrous failure, and is, by the mere necessities of the case, giving way to ordered Socialism. For the economic rationale of this, I must refer disciples of Siegfried to a tract from my hand published by the Fabian Society and entitled The Impossibilities of Anarchism, which explains why, owing to the physical constitution of our globe, society cannot effectually organize the production of its food, clothes and housing, nor distribute them fairly and economically on an anarchic plan; may, that without concerting our social action to a much higher degree than we do at present we can never get rid of the wasteful and iniquitous welter of a little riches and a great deal of poverty which current political humbug calls our prosperity and civilization. Liberty is an excellent thing; but it cannot begin until society has paid its daily debt to Nature by first earning its living. There is no liberty before that except the liberty to live at somebody else's expense, a liberty much sought after nowadays, since it is the criterion of gentility, but not wholesome from the point of view of the common weal. 79

The next three plays of Shaw: The Devil's Disciple (1897); Caesar and Cleopatra (1898); and Captain Brassbound's Conversion (1899) were published in 1900 as Three Plays for Puritans. In the first section of the Preface, "Why for Puritans", the author delivers another thrust against Romanticism, against the "Ten years of cheap reading [which] have changed

79Ibid., p. 95.
the English from the most stolid nation in Europe to the most theatrical and hysterical. Shaw, reasserting his own Puritan attitude toward Art, calls upon the Puritans to rescue the character of the nation by substituting intellectual activity and honesty for the softness and futility of Romanticism.

In the Plays for Puritans there is no direct reference to Shaw's Fabianism beyond the statement in the Preface: "I first caught the ear of the British public on a cart in Hyde Park, to the blaring of brass bands. . . ." The influence of Fabianism is apparent rather in the tone of Realism, the conscious deflation of Romanticism so evident in Arms and the Man and in The Man of Destiny.

Wretched hypocrisy is typified in an American Revolutionary background in The Devil's Disciple by Mrs. Dudgeon: a thoroughly bitter and unforgiving character with a religious pose. As an antithesis there is Richard Dudgeon, confessedly wicked and avowedly The Devil's Disciple, but yet capable of a sacrifice of purely selfish nobility.

The realistic satire of Militarism, begun in Arms and the Man and continued in Man of Destiny, is evident again in such lines as:

"Richard, I never expect a soldier to think, sir".

On the other hand, General Burgoyne is sympathetically humanized and his keen sense of realism provides a sardonic speech for both Burgoyne and

80 Shaw, Three Plays for Puritans, Preface, p. xx.
81 Ibid., p. xxi.
Shaw:

Burgoyne (enigmatically). And will you wipe out our enemies in London too?

Swindon. In London! What enemies?

Burgoyne (forcibly). Jobbery and snobbery, incompetence and Red Tape. (He holds up the dispatch and adds, with despair in his face and voice) I have learnt, sir, that General Howe is still in New York.

Swindon (thunderstruck). Good God! He has disobeyed orders!

Burgoyne (with sardonic calm). He has received no orders, sir. Some gentleman in London forgot to dispatch them; he was leaving for his holiday, I believe. To avoid upsetting his arrangements, England will lose her American colonies; and in a few days you and I will be at Saratoga with 5,000 men to face 16,000 rebels in an impregnable position.83

In the Notes to The Devil's Disciple Shaw discusses with bitter realism the making of Burgoyne a scapegoat by the oversight of Lord George Germain who had "overestimated the importance of a Kentish holiday, and underestimated the difficulty of conquering those remote and inferior creatures, the colonists."84

The cloaking of the inefficiency of the aristocracy provides Shaw with another volley:

Not only was he [Burgoyne] thrown over, in spite of his high character and distinguished services, to screen a court favourite who had actually been cashiered for cowardice and misconduct in the field fifteen years before; but his peculiar

83George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., p. 70.
84Ibid., Notes to Devil's Disciple, p. 84.
critical temperament and talent, artistic, satirical, and rather histrionic, and his fastidious delicacy of sentiment, his fine spirit and humanity, were just the qualities to make him disliked by stupid people, because of their dread of ironic criticism. ••• Every instance in which the critical genius is defeated, and the stupid genius (for both temperaments have their genius) 'muddles through alright' is popular in England.85

Caesar and Cleopatra is significant for the presentation of Caesar, who is depicted as brave, magnanimous, tolerant and kind; he is humanized by weakness.86 Archibald Henderson goes so far as to say: "The contemporary school of ironical biography began, not with Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria, but with Bernard Shaw's Caesar".87

Deeply philosophical, speaking the truth quietly and naturally, Caesar stands out in contrast to Britannus who, Shaw says in his Notes, represents the unadulterated Briton.88 The playwright inserts into the speeches of Britannus sly impressions of British commercialism and conventionality:

Caesar. Pardon him, Theocritus; he is a barbarian and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature.

Britannus. Blue is the color worn by all Britons of good standing. In war we stain our bodies blue so that, though our enemies may strip us of our clothing and our lives, they cannot strip us of our respectability.89

Again in Act III the contrast between Caesar's subtlety and magnanimity and the humourless staidness of Britannus is only too apparent:

85Tbid., pp. 83-84.
86Richard Burton, op. cit., p. 97.
87Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 492.
88Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 148 and Shaw, op. cit., p. 204.
89George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., p. 135.
Britannus. Wait till you hear, Caesar. This bag contains all the letters which have passed between Pompey's party and the army of occupation here.

Caesar. Well?

Britannus (impatient of Caesar's slowness to grasp the situation). Well, we shall now know who our foes are. The name of every man who has plotted against you since you crossed the Rubicon may be in these papers, for all we know.

Caesar. Put them in the fire.

Britannus. Put them - (he gasps)!!!

Caesar. In the fire. Would you have me waste the next three years of my life in proscribing and condemning men who will be my friends when I have proved that my friendship will be worth more than Pompey's was - than Cato's is. O incorrigible British islander; am I a bull dog, to seek quarrels merely to show how stubborn my jaws are?

Britannus. But your honor - the honor of Rome -

Caesar. I do not make human sacrifices to my honor, as your Druids do. Since you will not burn these, at least I can drown them. (He picks up the bag and throws it over the parapet into the sea.)

Britannus. Caesar: this is mere eccentricity. Are traitors allowed to grow free for the sake of a paradox?

Rufio. (rising) Caesar: when the islander has finished preaching call me again. I am going to have a look at the boiling water machine. (He goes into the lighthouse)

Britannus. (with genuine feeling) O Caesar, my great master, if I could but persuade you to regard life seriously as men do in my country!
Caesar. Do they truly do so, Britannus?

Britannus. Have you not been there? Have you not seen them? What Briton speaks as you do in your moments of levity? What Briton neglects to attend the services at the sacred grove? What Briton wears clothes of many colors as you do, instead of plain blue, as all solid, well-esteemed men should? These are moral questions with us.

Caesar. Well, well, my friend: some day I shall settle down and have a blue toga, perhaps. Meanwhile I must go on as best I can in my flippant Roman way. (Apollodorus comes past the lighthouse) What now?

Britannus. (Turning quickly and challenging the stranger with official haughtiness). What is this? Who are you? How did you come here?

Apollodorus. Calm yourself, my friend: I am not going to eat you. I have come by boat, from Alexandria, with precious gifts for Caesar.

Caesar. From Alexandria!

Britannus (severely). That is Caesar, sir.

Rufio (appearing at the lighthouse door). What’s the matter, now?

Apollodorus. Hail, great Caesar! I am Apollodorus the Sicilian, an artist.

Britannus. An artist! Why have they admitted this vagabond?

Caesar. Peace, man. Apollodorus is a famous patrician amateur.

Britannus (disconcerted). I crave the gentleman’s pardon. (To Caesar) I understood him to say that he was a professional...
The last of the Plays for Puritans, Captain Brassbound's Conversion, was written in 1898 and 1899 after the correspondence with Ellen Terry in 1897. It is a triumph of Shavian philosophy: wherein a very amiably managing woman, forthright as Vivie Warren but with the softening intuitiveness of Candida, contrives to bring peace and a modicum of justice out of a situation tense with vengeance, brigandry, lawlessness, and hypocrisy: it is Lady Cicely Wayneflete who looks with sympathy on one and all and in recognizing that egoism is the directing force of everyone is the Shavian protagonist.91

The realism of the play centers around the treatment of the administration of justice and the vindictiveness of the victims;91a Shaw comments on this in his Note:

One of the evils of the pretence that our institutions represent abstract principles of justice instead of being mere social scaffolding is that persons of a certain temperament take the pretence seriously, and when the law is on the side of injustice, will not accept the situation, and are driven mad by their vain struggle against it. Dickens has drawn the type in his Man from Shropshire in Bleak House. Most public men and all lawyers have been appealed to by victims of this sense of injustice - the most unhelpable of afflictions in a society like ours.92

Bernard Shaw was elected Vestryman and Borough Councillor in 1897. In 1898 there appeared in The Academy a clever interview, and significant from the point of view of this thesis, concerning his decision to give up

90Ibid., Act III, pp. 151-152.
91Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 129.
91aIbid., p. 157.
92George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., Captain Brassbound's Conversion, Notes to the Play, pp. 297-298.
dramatic criticism. The interviewer, "R. C." reports:

Question. "Then do you think of going in for Parliament?"

Shaw. "I haven't much voice", he said, "but I daresay I might get a place in the chorus and the opera. And I should be doing quite as much good there, and have a deal more fun than in the chorus at Westminster. Think of the incredible waste of time! And you must remember that for the last ten years I - I and a few of my associates - have practically directed public policy. There's no reason at all for my going into Parliament. But the Vestry - now there is some sense in the Vestry. It does something. Really, my dear fellow, you ought to be on a Vestry. If you take it humorously, you can laugh at the amazing difficulties it finds in doing the simplest things. . . You wonder that the world goes on at all, instead of smashing up in confusion. . . I have always made it a rule, you know, to be mixed up in practical affairs; that is where I score and the purely literary man fails. . . I know life - the life of action - affairs. The literary man can't write a play, because he knows nothing at all of life. The literary man ought to serve on a Vestry. For my part I have found my experience of affairs invaluable in the writing of plays.93

When William Butler Yeats requested Shaw to write a play as a patriotic contribution to the Irish Literary Theatre he got, in 1904 "rather more than he bargained for"94: John Bull's Other Island. This play is about as uncongenial as can be imagined to the Gaelic Movement to which it was supposed to contribute; in fact Shaw refers to the movement in his Preface as "only

a quaint little off-shoot of English pre-Raphaelitism" and he distinguishes his play from it with: "It was uncongenial to the whole spirit of the neo-Gaelic movement, which is bent on creating a new Ireland after its own ideal whereas my play is a very uncompromising presentment of the real old Ireland."96

In a fifty-two page "Preface for Politicians" Shaw gives his analysis of the Irish and the Irish-English situation: and it is this analysis which is the storm-center of the play.

To Ernest A. Boyd it is the work of an Irish Protestant, of an intellectual expatriate, of a denationalised Irishman "whose allegiance to England is one of the head not of the heart"97, who is sufficiently aloof from England to be critical but drawn so inevitably to the English people that he cannot really be inimical. "He is that perfect type of sans patrie which the anglicisation of Ireland has produced; men who cannot understand their own compatriots, and must necessarily take refuge among a people with whom they are condemned to be aliens.98

It is significant that John Bull's Other Island was a triumph in England, achieving a command performance for the King - and the Irish National Theatre found itself unable to produce the play which had been written for it.99

However, when considering John Bull's Other Island as a social play, as a play written by a social realist and gradualist, there is continual evi-
dance to show that the very lack of the qualities in Ireland which he had
preached as a Socialist for years — qualities of hard-headed business,
matter-of-factness, and practicality — aroused his Socialistic ire quite as
much as his Irish Protestantism.

Shaw sees Ireland as victimized by England, by Nationalism, and by the
tyranny of its priests, and he submits the following evolutionary Socialis-
tic prophecy: "A Roman Catholic party must submit to Rome; an anti-clerical
Catholic party must of necessity become an Irish Catholic party. The Holy
Roman Empire, like the other Empires, has no future except as a Federation
of National Catholic Churches; for Christianity can no more escape Democracy
than Democracy can escape Socialism. . ."100

Reminiscent of a Fabian tract is a reference to the comparative situation
of the English and the Irish;

As far as money or comfort is concerned the average
Irishman has a more tolerable life . . . than the
average Englishman. It is true that in Ireland the
poor man is robbed and starved and oppressed under
judicial forms which confer the imposing title of
justice on a crude system of bludgeoning and perjury.
But so is the Englishman. The Englishman, more docile,
less dangerous, too lazy intellectually to use such
political and legal power as lies within his reach,
suffers more and makes less fuss about it than the
Irishman. But at least he has nobody to blame but
himself and his fellow countrymen. He does not doubt
that if an effective majority of the English people
made up their minds to alter the Constitution, as the
majority of the Irish people have made up their minds
to obtain Home Rule, they could alter it without having
to fight an overwhelmingly powerful and rich neighbor-
ing nation, and fight, too, with ropes round their

96 Ibid., p. v.
97 Ernest A. Boyd, Appreciations and Depreciations, New York: John Lane Co.,
98 Ibid.
necks. He can attack any institution in his country without betraying it to foreign vengeance and foreign oppression. True, his landlord may turn him out of his cottage if he goes to a Methodist chapel instead of to the parish church. His customers may stop their orders if he voted Liberal instead of Conservative. English ladies and gentlemen who would perish rather than shoot a fox do these things without the smallest sense of indecency and dishonor. But they cannot muzzle his intellectual leaders. The English philosopher, the English orator, the English author can attack every abuse and expose every superstition without strengthening the hands of any common enemy.

In Ireland, every such attack, every such exposure, is a service to England and a stab to Ireland. 101

What Augustus Hamon, in an analysis of the dramatic method of Shaw in The Twentieth Century Moliere: Bernard Shaw, calls the Intellectual Action—

a development of a series of ideas voiced by a central figure moving among the other characters and on the same level of importance with these—is exemplified in John Bull’s Other Island by Laurence Doyle, an Irishman living in England. Fact-facing, free from illusion, keen, and industrious, Larry Doyle is indignant, through love of his country and annoyance with it, at the futility, the whimsy, the imagination, the unseriousness, the superstition, and the dreaming of Ireland as he remembers it. 102

In contrast is Tom Broadbent, a thoroughly ingratiating Englishman, who is fact-proof, hysterically enthusiastic, and imaginative and who, now that South Africa has been enslaved, turns with belligerant amiability to

100 George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., Preface for Politicians, pp. xxx-xxxi.
101 Ibid., p. xxxiv.
102 Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 134 and George Bernard Shaw, Ibid., vii.
Ireland to build a hotel and run for Parliament.

The impatience of Larry Doyle with Ireland is the impatience of Bernard Shaw:

But your wits can't thicken in that soft moist air, on those white springy roads, in those misty rushes and brown bogs, on those hillsides of granite rocks and magenta heather. You've no such colors in the sky, no such lure in the distances, no such sadness in the evenings. Oh, the dreaming! the dreaming! the torturing, heartscalding, never satisfying dreaming, dreaming, dreaming! (Savagely) No debauchery that ever coarsened and brutalized the Englishman can take the worth and usefulness out of him like that dreaming. An Irishman's imagination can never let him alone, never convinces him, never satisfies him... It's all dreaming, all imagination. He can't be religious. The inspired Churchman that teaches him the sanctity of life and the importance of conduct is sent away empty; while the poor village priest that gives him a miracle or a sentimental story of a saint, has cathedrals built for him out of the pennies of the poor. He can't be intelligently political; he dreams of what the Shan Van Vocht said in ninety-eight.

If you want to interest him in Ireland you've got to call the unfortunate island Kathleen ni Houlihan and pretend she's a little old woman. It saves thinking. It saves working. It saves everything except imagination, imagination, imagination; and imagination's such a torture that you can't bear it without whiskey.

But the Englishman Tom Broadbent is entranced by the prospect: "You know all this sounds interesting. There's the Irish charm about it. That's the worst of you; the Irish charm doesn't exist for you". To which the Irishman replies: "O yes it does. But it's charm is the charm of a dream. Live in contact with dreams and you will get something of their

103 Shaw, John Bull's Other Island, Act I, p. 18.
charm; live in contact with facts and you will get something of their brutality. I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts are not brutal and the dreams not unreal."105

In Ireland itself, the Intellectual Action of the play continues with Laurence Doyle as relentlessly realistic as he ever was, with Tom Broadbent completely captivated by the Irish scene and the wistful dreaminess of Nora Reilly, and with the introduction of another Shavian protagonist, but a tolerant and sympathetic, and even whimsical one: Mr. Keegan, a silenced priest.

It remains for Keegan to see through the bitterness of Laurence Doyle and the hysteria of Tom Broadbent and to contribute some of the most trenchant lines in the entire play:

In my dreams it [heaven] is a country where the State is the Church and the Church the people; three in one and one in three. It is a commonwealth in which play is work and work is life; three in one and one in three. It is a temple in which the priest is the worshipper and the worshipped the worshipped; three in one and one in three. It is the godhead in which all life is human and all humanity divine; three in one and one in three. It is, in short, the dream of a madman. (He goes away across the hill)106

In 1904 Shaw also wrote How He Lied to Her Husband, a one-act play intended to supplement The Man of Destiny. It is essentially what Shaw describes it: "A sample of what can be done with even the most hackneyed stage framework by filling it in with an observed touch of actual humanity

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104Ibid., p. 28.
105Ibid.
106Ibid., p. 125.
instead of with doctrinaire romanticism."

In the Preface to Major Barbara, "First Aid to Critics", Shaw gives the theme of the play: that the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty. And he hastens to say, lest the critics follow their usual custom and attribute this to the influence of Schopenhauer, of Ibsen, of Strindberg, or of Tolstoy, that he echoes Samuel Butler and trusts in consequence that he "shall hear a little less in the future of the novelty and foreign origin of the ideas making their way into the English theatre through plays written by Socialists." 108

The Preface sets the tone of the play: it is completely reformist: and Christianity, because it preaches the gospel of submission, of sufferance, of other-worldliness, receives quite as much blame as the Capitalistic State. 109 As Shaw presents the situation: "The crying need of the nation is not for better morals, cheaper bread, temperance, liberty, culture, redemption of fallen sisters or erring brothers, nor the grace, love, and fellowship of the Trinity, but simply for enough money. And the evil to be attacked is not sin, suffering, greed, priest craft, demogogy, monopoly, ignorance, drink, war, pestilence, nor any other of the scapegoats which reformers sacrifice, but simply poverty." 110

That the Salvation Army, of which Major Barbara is a member, accepts money for its continuance from Bodger (of Bodger's Whisky) and from Under-

107 George Bernard Shaw, How He Lied to Her Husband, p. 129.
109 Ibid., First Aid to Critics, p. 183.
110 Ibid., p. 171.
shaft and Lazarus (the cannon-makers) Shaw begs us not to be too surprised; for when an enthusiastic young clergyman first realizes the sources of the rents which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners receive he finds it is not from "sweet old ladies with independent incomes and gentle and lovely ways of life"; 111 he learns he must share the world's guilt or go to another planet.

A secondary idea in the play is presented: that what a man is depends on his character but what he does, and what we think of what he does, depends on his circumstances; that the characteristics which ruin a man in one set of circumstances makes him eminent in another, provides Shaw with another Socialistic volley in the Preface. The man in question is Bill Walker, who responds with wretchedness to abuse and with reasonableness to kindness:

In proof I might point to the sensational object lesson provided by our commercial millionaires today. They begin as brigands: merciless, unscrupulous, dealing out ruin and death and slavery to their competitors and employees, and facing desperately the worst that their competitors can do to them. The history of the English factories, the American trusts, the exploitation of African gold, diamonds, ivory and rubber, outdoes in villainy the worst that has ever been imagined of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Captain Kidd would have marooned a modern Trust magnate for conduct unworthy of a gentleman of fortune. The law every day seizes on unsuccessful scoundrels of this type and punishes them with a cruelty worse than their own, with the result that they come out of the torture house more dangerous than they went in, and renew their evil doing (nobody will employ them at anything else) until they are again seized, again tormented, and again let loose, with the same result.

But the successful scoundrel is dealt with very differently, and very Christianly. He is not only forgiven; he is idolized, respected, made much of, all but wor-

111 Ibid., p. 176.
shipped. Society returns him good for evil in the most extravagant overmeasure. And with what result? He begins to idolize himself, to respect himself, to live up to the treatment he receives. He preaches sermons; he writes books of the most edifying advice to young men, and actually persuades himself that he got on by taking his own advice; he endows educational institutions; he supports charities; he dies finally in the odor of sanctity, leaving a will which is a monument of public spirit and bounty. And all this without any change in his character. . . . Take a common character like Bill Walker. We meet Bill everywhere; on the judicial bench, on the episcopal bench, in the Privy Council, at the War Office and Admiralty, as well as in the Old Bailey dock or in the ranks of casual unskilled labor. And the morality of Bill's characteristics varies with these various circumstances. The faults of the burglar are the qualities of the financier; the manners and habits of a duke would cost a city clerk his situation. In short, though character is independent of circumstances, conduct is not; and our moral judgments of character are not; both are circumstantial. Take any conditions of life in which the circumstances are for a mass of men practically alike; felony, the House of Lords, the factory, the stables, the gypsy encampment or where you please; In spite of diversity of character and temperament, the conduct and morals of the individuals in each group are as predictable and alike in the main as they they were a flock of sheep, morals being mostly only social habits and circumstantial necessities.

The play itself, as Archibald Henderson terms it, is a "sermonic drama". The Intellectual Action of the Play is expressed by Andrew Undershaft, the cannonmaker. He is no stage millionaire; he has none of the qualities of Sartorius. In fact, he is an influence for good. Martin Ellehauge in The Position of Bernard Shaw in European Drama and Philosophy says of this:

"The Shavian representative of the gospel of egoism on a mainly materialistic basis is Undershaft in Major Barbara. . . . By his riches Undershaft has

112Ibid., pp. 184-187.
created a small community of health and well-to-do people, whose property is wholly rooted in his creative energy."114

Undershaft himself makes no apologies; he states his case with pretence:

I am obliged to you for making the usual excuse for my trade; but I am not ashamed of it. I am not one of those men who keep their morals and their business in watertight compartments. All the spare money my trade rivals spend on hospitals, cathedrals, and other receptacles for conscience money, I devote to experiments and researches in improved methods of destroying life and property. I have always done so; and I always shall. Therefore your Christmas card moralities of peace on earth and good will among men are of no use to me. Your Christianity which enjoins you to resist not evil, and to turn the other cheek, would make me a bankrupt. My morality - my religion - must have a place for cannons and torpedoes in it.115

Later in Act II, in the Salvation Army shelter he elaborates his philosophy:

Barbara. Sorry, I'm sure. By the way, papa, what is your religion in case I have to introduce you again?

Undershaft. My religion? Well, my dear, I am a Millionaire. That is my religion.

Barbara. Then I'm afraid you and Mr. Shirley won't be able to comfort one another after all. You're not a Millionaire, are you Peter?

Shirley. No; and proud of it.

Undershaft (gravely). Poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of.

Shirley (angrily). Who made your millions for you? Me and my like. What's kept us poor? Keepin you rich. I wouldn't have your conscience, not for all your income.

113 Archibald Henderson.
114 Martin Ellehauge, op. cit., p. 221.
Undershaft. I wouldn't have your income, not for all your conscience, Mr. Shirley.\textsuperscript{116}

In Act III Undershaft proposes a startling theory to console Barbara for her lost faith:

Undershaft. Come, come, my daughter! don't make too much of your little tinpot tragedy. What do we do here when we spend years of work and thought and thousand of pounds of solid cash on a new gun or and aerial battleship that turns out just a hairsbreath wrong after all. Scrap it. Scrap it without wasting another hour or pound on it. Well, you have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion or what not. It doesn't fit the facts. Well scrap it. Scrap it and get one that fits. That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it won't scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions. What's the result? In machinery it does very well; but in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year. Don't persist in that folly. If your old religion broke down yesterday, get a newer and better one tomorrow.\textsuperscript{117}

Shaw mounts the platform again in a series of speeches which pound away unsparingly at the main theory - that poverty is the greatest crime - and at the same time brings the second theory in with it; and the leaders of England receive some of the bitterest criticisms:

Cusins. Do you call poverty a crime?

\textsuperscript{116}George Bernard Shaw, \textit{Major Barbara}, Act I, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{116}Ibid., Act II, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{117}Ibid., Act III, p. 297.
Undershaft. The worst of crimes. All the other crimes are virtues beside it; all the other dishonors are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight sound or smell of it. What you call crime is nothing; a murder here and a theft there, a blow now and a curse then; what do they matter? They are only the accidents and illnesses of life; there are not fifty genuine professional criminals in London. But there are millions of poor people, abject people, dirty people, ill fed, ill clothed people. They poison us morally and physically; they kill the happiness of society; they force us to do away with our own liberties and to organize unnatural cruelties for fear they should rise against us and drag us down into their abyss. Only fools fear crime; we all fear poverty. Pah! (turning on Barbara) you talk of your half-saves ruffian in West Ham; you accuse me of dragging his soul back to perdition. Well, bring him in here; and I will drag his soul back again to salvation for you. Not by words and dreams; but by thirty-eight shillings a week, a sound house in a handsome street, and a permanent job. In three weeks he will have a fancy waistcoat; in three months a tall hat and a chapel sitting; before the end of the year he will shake hands with a duchess at a Primrose League meeting, and join the Conservative Party. I was an east ender. I moralized and starved until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed man at all costs - that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men. I was a dangerous man until I had my will; now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person. That is the history of most self-made millionaires, I fancy. When it is the history of every Englishman we shall have an England worth living in. And let me tell you this. Poverty and slavery have stood up for centuries to your sermons and leading articles; they will not stand up to my machine guns. Don't preach at them; don't reason with them. Kill them. It is the final test of conviction, the only lever strong enough to overturn a social system, the only way of saying Must. Let six hundred and seventy fools loose in the street; and three policemen can scatter them. But huddle them together in a certain house in Westminster; and let them go through certain ceremonies and call themselves certain names until at last they get the courage to kill; and your six
hundred and seventy fools become a government.118

In his critical biography of Shaw Archibald Henderson, in commenting on
the brilliant dialogue, the deadly accuracy of paradoxes, and the satiric
portraiture of social types in Major Barbara, considers the play as one of
the finest dramatic achievements of Shaw. He says: "From the dramatic
standpoint Major Barbara is the most remarkable demonstration yet given by
Shaw of the vitality of a type of entertainment in complete contradistinction
to the classical model. Shaw has created a form of stage presentation, not
differing externally from the conventional form of drama, in which material
action attains its irreducible minimum, and the conflict takes place abso-
lutely within the minds and soul of its character. Major Barbara consists
of a succession of logical demonstrations, flowing from conflicting reactions
set up in the souls of the leading characters by the simplest actions,
externally trivial but subjectively of vital significance."119 What Shaw
had defined as the cardinal test of his dramatic criticisms - that the
drama should be an illumination of life - is here carried out, not through
the presentation of love conflicts, but by the considerations of social,
religious, and humanitarian passions.120

Two other plays of 1905 besides Major Barbara were The Admirable
Bashville; or Constancy Unrewarded, and Passions Poison and Petrification; or
The Fatal Gazogene. They are both fantastic bits of fooling; the first a
satire about everything, the second a satire on modern melodrama. But even

118 Ibid., Act III, pp. 298-300.
119 Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 382.
120 Ibid.
in these light-hearted moments the dramatist inevitably incorporates an idea that reveals his main business in life. For example, in The Admirable Bashville (which is a dramatization in blank verse of Cashel Byron's Profession) Cashel says:

Go tell thy painters to turn stockbrokers,
Thy poet friends to stoop o'er merchant's desks
And pen prose records of the gains of greed.
Tell bishops that religion is outworn,
And that the Pampa to the horsebreaker
Opes nes careers. Bid the professor quit
His fraudulent pedantries, and do i' the world
The thing he would teach others. Then return
To me and say: Cashel they have obeyed;
And on that pyre of sacrifice I, too,
Will throw my championship.\textsuperscript{121}

And in the midst of the utter nonsense of Passions Poison and Petrifaction Adolphus finds time to say: "I hope, Mr. Fitzstollemache, you are not laughling at my clothes. I warn you that I am an Englishman. You may laugh at my manners, at my brains, at my national institutions; but if you laugh at my clothes, one of us must die."\textsuperscript{122}

A startling seventy-eight page Preface, intended to destroy the time-honored illusions concerning the medical profession, introduces one of Shaw's finest plays, The Doctor's Dilemma, in 1906. Containing some of the harshest criticisms yet voiced by Shaw, the Preface proposes to bring the members of the medical profession to the level of the rest of humanity with its good qualities, its unscrupulosities, and its conformities: "There is

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., p. 1115.
another difficulty in trusting the honor and conscience of a doctor.

Doctors are just like other Englishmen; what they commonly mistake for these is sentimentality and an intense dread of doing anything that everybody else does not do, or omitting to do anything that everybody else does."123

That evolution is at work in the medical profession as well as in any other department of public welfare is evident in the following statement:

The social solution of the medical problem, then, depends on that large, slowly advancing, pettishly resisted integration of society called generally Socialism. Until the medical profession becomes a body of men trained and paid by the country to keep the country in health it will remain what it is at present: a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and suffering. Already our M.O.H.'s (Medical Officers of Health) are in the new position; what is lacking is appreciation of the change, not only by the public but by the private doctors... For the M.O.H. as we know him is only the beginning of that army of Public Hygiene which will presently take the place in general interest and honor now occupied by our military and naval forces... It is silly that an Englishman should be more afraid of a German soldier than of a British disease germ, and should clamour for more barracks in the same newspapers that protest against more school clinics... Fortunately, when a habit of thought is silly it only needs a steady treatment by ridicule from sensible and witty people to be put out of countenance and perish. Every year sees an increase in the number of persons employed in Public Health Service who would formerly have been mere adventurers in the Private Illness Service.124

The Doctor's Dilemma in the play is the choice between the life of a great artist who outrages accepted morals and a sincere, but dull, fellow

124 Ibid., Preface, p. ixxx.
The play was partly founded on fact, having been suggested by a
situation in which Shaw's friend Sir Almroth Wright, a distinguished
scientific investigator and practitioner, once found himself.125

This tragedy is exceptional for the sharply individualised characters:
Sir Patrick Cullen is a shrewd and satirical commentator and is, as Augustus
Hamon comments, one of the few exceptions to Shaw's presentation of old
people as disagreeable or unsympathetic.126 The artist Dubedat is a com-
posite character. Jennifer, his wife, is remarkably attractive; that Shaw
made her a native of Cornwall Henderson considers inspirational - because of
that land's reputation for rhapsodic faith and splendid religious enthusiasm.
Even the wretchedly cross and unsubtle journalist at the death scene Shaw
assures us is not exaggerated, if one would but view the sort of interviewer
Northcliffe was at that time letting loose from the Daily Mail.127

There is a sharp distinction in social and class characteristics be-
tween the doctors in the play; and three out of the five doctors are very
honorable and likeable, which disproves any accusation of inordinate
prejudice. For that matter, Shaw victimizes himself with a reference, in
a discussion of beliefs in the play:

"No, no, he's [Bernard Shaw] the most advanced man
now living; he isn't anything."128

The recommendation by Shaw in the Preface to Getting Married, also in
1906, is that divorce should be granted whenever it is desired without ask-
ing why.129 The play itself ends with this clause a conspicuous provision

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125Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 55.
126Augustus Hamon. pp. 126 and 150.
in the new matrimonial contract drawn up by the committee and insured by
the British Insurance Corporation.130 There is, according to Augustus Hamon,
no plot at all.131 Archibald Henderson repeats this note in comparing
Getting Married with The Doctor's Dilemma; they stage an institution.
In The Doctor's Dilemma the institution staged is the institution of the
medical profession; it is followed in Getting Married by the institution
called marriage. But while The Doctor's Dilemma has a suggestion of a ro-
mantic plot, even of melodrama, Getting Married has no plot whatever, it
is about marriage and nothing else.132

A farcical opening provides the background for the discussion. The
daughter of a Bishop, and a very tolerant and approachable Bishop indeed,
is about to be married. But both the prospective bride and the bridegroom
receive anonymously a pamphlet entitled "Do you know what you are going to
do? By One who has Done It". The pamphlet sets forth the existing British
laws on marriage; they both refuse to be married; and the entire company is
plunged into a discussion of marriage.

Getting Married has cleverly drawn and sharply defined characters;
conspicuous is the appearance of the Shavian philosophical man of the people
in William Collins, a type already noted in the invaluable waiter in You
Never Can Tell and Hodson in John Bull's Other Island.133

127Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 393.
128George Bernard Shaw, The Doctor's Dilemma, p. 144.
129George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., Getting Married, Preface, p. 129.
130George Bernard Shaw, Getting Married, p. 347.
131Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 133.
133Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 149.
There is an interesting defence of snobbery, too; interesting since humanity has received so many orations in its favor. Hotchkiss gives it:

You're quite right; I am a snob. Why not? The whole strength of England lies in the fact that the majority of the English people are snobs. They insult poverty. They despise vulgarity. They love nobility. They admire exclusiveness. They will not obey a man risen from the ranks. They never trust one of their own class. I agree with them. I share their instincts. In my undergraduate days I was a Republican - a Socialist. I tried hard to feel toward the common man as I do toward a duke. I couldn't. Neither can you. Well, why should we be ashamed of this aspiration toward what is above us? Why don't I say that an honest man's the noblest work of God? Because I don't think so. If he's not a gentleman, I shouldn't let his son marry my daughter. And that's the test, mind, that's the test. You feel as I do. You are a snob in fact. I am a snob on principle. I shall go down in history, not as the first snob, but as the first avowed champion of English snobbery, and its first martyr in the army. The navy boasts two such martyrs in Captains Kirby and Wade, who were shot for refusing to fight under Admiral Benbow, a promoted cabin boy. I have always envied them their glory.134

Religion as represented by Father Anthony, the Bishop's very High Church secretary, receives from Hotchkiss a sharp criticism with Shaw's Will theory and the philosophy of egoism so apparent in Major Barbara being offered instead:

My dear Anthony, I find you merely ridiculous as a preacher, because you keep referring me to places and documents and alleged occurrences in which, as a matter of fact, I don't believe. I don't believe in anything but my own will and my own pride and honor. Your fishes and your catechisms and all the rest of it make a charming poem which you call your faith. • • Religion is a great force; the only real motive force in the world; but what you fellows don't realize is that you must get a man through his own religion and not through yours. • • You talk to me of the quintessential equality of coal merchants and British officers, and yet you can't see the quintessential equality of all religion.135
Shaw's lengthy and ferocious conflict with the British stage and theatre censorship flamed anew with the banning of *Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet*, described by its author as "really a religious tract in dramatic form". This restriction because of possible offense to popular moral and religious sentiment, had repercussions in Ireland and resulted in sympathy and aid to Shaw from Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats. The whole affair of the censorship is described by Henderson as an "amazing and enraging event".

The one hundred and seventy-two page Preface is a case against censorship. As Shaw presents it the censors are depriving the country of a definite need: "The toleration of heresy and shocks to morality on the stage and even their protection against prejudices and superstition which necessarily enter into morality and public opinion, are essential to the welfare of the nation".

*Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet* is a play about the religious conversion of an American. And even Archibald Henderson says that to any American the pseudo-realistic background is a grotesque failure to create the Bret Harte atmosphere. A Shavian protagonist in the guise of a cowboy is woefully unconvincing. But the theme is a remarkable one since a

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139Augustus Hamon, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
religious idea was so alien to the stage; yet Shaw used it frequently. In fact Shaw explained the religious motif of the play in a letter to Tolstoy in 1910: to convey the Shavian religious theory of the Life-Force that an imperfect God is seeking perfection and that all creatures are part of an evolutionary progress toward perfection.141

Blanco Posnet, in giving his reason for hitherto scorning religion strikes a familiar note: “I took the broad path because I thought I was a man and not a snivelling canting turning the other cheek apprentice angel serving his time in a vale of tears. They talked Christianity to us on Sundays; but when they really meant business they told us never to take a blow without giving it back, and to get dollars.”142

In 1909, too, there appeared three playlets - Press Cuttings, The Fascinating Foundling, and The Glimpse of Reality.

Press Cuttings, with its title elaborated with the addition of A Topical Sketch Compiled from the Editorial and Correspondence Columns of the Daily Papers During the Women’s War in 1909, is a completely delightful comedy - a satire about militant suffragettes who are supposed to possess the masculine qualities of positiveness and even insolence and frightened leaders who are represented as possessing in abundance the feminine qualities of timidity and indecision.143

Censor trouble greeted Press Cuttings because the ridiculous Prime Minister and the General bore suspiciously familiar names: Balsquith

141Ibid., p. 141.
142George Bernard Shaw, op. cit., p. 463.
143Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 509.
(Balfour-Asquith) and Mitchener (Milner-Kitchener). But American audiences saw in the playlet a return to the utterly irresponsible and incorrigible Shaw of Arms and the Man and You Never Can Tell. But this Shaw has an added quality; he can satirize his own ideas as well as those of the government, and just as delightfully.

This complete farce begins in the War Office where the frightened Balsquith is forced to come disguised as a woman; Balsquith gives his reason with pathos: "Yes it is indeed Balsquith. It has come to this; that only way the Prime Minister of England can get from Downing Street to the War Office is by assuming this disguise; shrieking 'Votes for Women'; and chaining myself to your doorstep. They were at the corner in force. They cheered me. Bellahristina herself was there. She shook my hand and told me to say that I was a vegetarian, as the diet was better in Holloway for vegetarians."

Mitchener's solution for all problems of state is simply: Shoot them down. Balsquith's astounded protests bring on an interesting discussion:

Balsquith. But public opinion would never stand it.
Mitchener. There's no such thing as public opinion.
Balsquith. No such thing as public opinion!
Mitchener. Absolutely no such thing. There are certain persons who entertain certain opinions. Well, shoot them down. When you have shot them down there are no longer any persons entertaining those opinions alive; consequently there is no longer any more of the public opinion you are so much afraid of. Grasp that fact, my dear Balsquith; and you have grasped the secret of good government. Public opinion

Ibid., p. 508.
is mind. Mind is inseparable from matter. Shoot down the matter and you kill the mind.

Balsquith. • • • What do you suppose would happen at the next election?

Mitchener. Have no next election. Bring in a Bill at once repealing all the Reform Acts and vesting the Government in a properly trained magistracy responsible only to a Council of War. It answers perfectly in India. If anyone objects shoot him down. • • You'll have to sooner or later, or the Socialists will make nobodies of the lot of you by collar- ing every penny you possess. Do you suppose this damned democracy can be allowed to go on now that the mob is beginning to take it seriously and using its power to lay hands on property. Parliament must abolish itself. The Irish Parliament voted for its own extinction. The English Parliament will do the same if the same means are taken to persuade it. You know that democracy is damned nonsense and that no class stands less of it than the working class. You know that we are already discussing the steps that will have to be taken if the country should ever have to face the possibility of a Labor majority in Parliament. You know that in that case we should disfranchise the mob, and if they made a fuss, shoot them down. • •"146

The suggestion of a possible German invasion of England and even of having to live under a German moon is met with dispatch by Mitchener: Shoot them down.147

The rest of the play is riotous with the arrival of the militant suffragette Mrs. Bangor, as soldierly a woman as even the most ardent

Ibsenite could ask for; and Lady Cynthia, romantic, but belligerently so.

But it remains for Mrs. Farrell, the Irish charwoman and a grim realist with no nonsense about her, to win General Mitchener and bring him safety and protection at last.148

_The Fascinating Foundling_ was written in 1909 at Ayot St. Lawrence for Elizabeth Asquith, Princess Bibesco, and it is complete comedy with the subtitle _A Disgrace to the Author_. But two noteworthy facts are evident: it satirizes the grave dignity of the Lord Chancellor; and it aims at a realistic presentation of the problems of the two fascinating foundlings, Horace Brabozon and Anastasia Vulliamy, who are remarkably like the sparkling twins of _You Never Can Tell_.149

_The Glimpse of Reality_ is exactly what the title says: and the glimpse of reality comes to Ferruccio at the hour of danger releasing him forever from what he now considers the superstitions of religion:

_Ferruccio_. . . .But now I have come up against something hard; something real; something that does not care for me. . . . A priest said to me once, 'In your last hour everything will fall away from you except religion'. But I have lived through my last hour; and my religion was the first thing that fell away from me. . . . When I believe in everything that is real as I believed for that moment in death, then I shall be a man at least.150

_The Preface of Misalliance_ of 1910 is a treatise on Parents and Children. In it Shaw pleads for greater liberty for both parent and child and seeks to deflate the customarily accepted ideals of _The Home, A Mother's_
Influence, A Father's Care, Filial Piety, Duty, Affection, and Family Life.

He would substitute what he terms genuine respect and humanity for these generalizations, and a mutual independence to offset childish docility and parental officiousness: "Liberty is the breath of life to nations; and liberty is the one thing that parents, schoolmasters and rulers spend their lives in extirpating for the sake of an immediately quiet and finally disastrous life." \( ^{152} \)

The child in the Shawian view, says George Bernard Donlin in the Dial of August, 1914 is a fresh experiment of the Life Force trying to improve on its parents. \( ^{152a} \)

Misalliance is essentially an 'acting play'. The characters are brilliantly delineated to bring out the theme. The two fathers, Lord Summerhays and John Tarleton, are successful, expansive, magnanimous men; Tarleton particularly has ideas about everything with an every-ready suggestion of an author to back them up - it is forever "Read Darwin"; "Read Ibsen"; "Read Chesterton"; "Read Mill"; "Read Kipling"; "Read Tennyson"; "Read Dickens".

The children are definite types: Bentley, Lord Summerhays' son, is hopelessly and utterly spoiled and incorrigible; Johnny Tarleton is conservative, staid, and inclined to be pompous. And, in keeping with the
play's theme, each father finds the other man's son more sympathetic, more reasonable, and more understanding. Mr. Tarleton expresses this view:

Tarleton: . . . Fact is, my dear Summerhays, once childhood is over, once the little animal has got past the stage at which it acquires what you might call a sense of decency, it's all up with the relation between parents and child. You can't get over the fearful shyness of it.

Lord Summerhays: Shyness?
Tarleton: Yes, shyness. Read Dickens.

Lord Summerhays: Dickens! Of all authors, Charles Dickens! Are you serious?
Tarleton: I don't mean his books. Read his letters to his family. Read any man's letters to his children. They're not human. They're not about himself or themselves. They're about hotels, scenery, about the weather, about getting wet and losing the train and what he saw on the roads and all that. Not a word about himself. Forced. Shy. Duty letters. All fit to be published; that says everything. I tell you there's a wall ten feet thick and ten miles high between parent and child.153

Hypatia Tarleton, described by Henderson as an "ultra-post war girl divined four years before the war"154 rails against her fate and in doing it takes up the note of the Preface:

Hypatia: . . . I'm fed up with nice things; with respectability, with propriety! When a woman has nothing to do, money and respectability means that nothing is ever allowed to happen to her. I don't want to be good; and I don't want

153 George Bernard Shaw, Misalliance, p. 40.
to be bad; I just don't want to be bothered about good or bad; I want to be an active verb.

Lord Summerhays. An active verb? Oh, I see. An active verb signifies to be, to do, or to suffer.

Eupatia. Just so: how clever of you! I want to be; I want to do; and I'm game to suffer if it costs that. But stick here doing nothing but being good and nice and ladylike I simply won't. Stay down here with us for a week; and I'll shew you what it means; shew it to you going on day after day, year after year, lifetime after lifetime... Oh home! home! parents! family! duty! how I loathe them! How I'd like to see them all blown to bits! The poor escape. The wicked escape. Well, I can't be poor; we're rolling in money; it's no use pretending we're not. But I can be wicked; and I'm quite prepared to be. Anyhow, I mean to make a fight for living.

Lord Summerhays. Living your own life, I believe the Suffragist phrase is.155

There is in Misalliance the long speech which is not only Socialistic in tone but is quoted by his biographer as evidence of Shaw's hatred of his own Dublin clerkship days:

The Man. Oh I'm a fool to listen to you and argue

Tarleton. Begin with yourself, if you don't mind. I've a good deal of business to do still before I die. Haven't you?

The Man. No. That's just it; I've no business to do. Do you know what my life is? I spend my days from nine to six - nine hours of daylight and

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fresh air—in a stuffy little den counting another man's money. I've an intellect; a mind, and a brain, and a soul; and the use he makes of them is to fix them on his tuppences and his eighteenpences and his two pound seventeen and tenpences and see how much they come to at the end of the day and take care that no one steals them. I enter and enter, and add and add, and take money and give change and fill checks and stamp receipts; and not a penny of that money is my own; not one of those transactions has the smallest interest for me or anyone else in the world but him; and even he couldn't stand it if he had to do it all himself. And I'm envied; aye, envied for the variety and liveliness of my job, by the poor devil of a bookkeeper that has to copy all my entries over again. Fifty thousand entries a year, that poor wretch makes; and not ten out of the fifty thousand ever has to be referred to again; and when all the figures are counted up and the balance sheet made out the boss isn't a penny richer than he'd be if bookkeeping had never been invented. Of all the damnable wastes of human life ever invented, clerking is the worst.

A scathing criticism of Misalliance appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in April, 1910, and the denunciation is primarily on the grounds of excessive propagandizing. The unsigned criticism, entitled "The Vestryman of the Theatre," does not temper its harshness:

His last effort is nothing but talk, talk, talk. Its conversation is conducted by nine persons. Some of them wear petticoats, others wear trousers. Some are young, others are old. And all are Shaw... Their talk is not good. It is suburban, parochial, vulgar. Mr. Shaw is the vestryman of dramatists. His work savours horribly of St. Panoras. He has the sad art of transmuting everyone he touches, big or small, male or female, into Progressive County Councillors...
We can only hope that Misalliance is the last 'debate in one sitting' at which we shall ever be asked to sit."157

In the Preface to The Dark Lady of the Sonnets, a play which treats Shakespeare as a gay philanderer writing sonnets which enrage "The Dark Lady" Mary Fitton, there is a noteworthy discussion of Shakespeare and Democracy. Referring to the accusation by Tolstoy, Ernest Crosbie and Frank Harris that Shakespeare was an enemy of Democracy, Shaw points out that Democracy was not a live political issue in Shakespeare's day; therefore, the real test of Shakespeare is his impartiality in judging classes, of weighing them both in the same balance. Shakespeare was certainly not alone in criticising the lower classes; such humanitarians as John Stuart Mill, Carlyle, Shelley, Matthew Arnold, and Ruskin also knew that the poor were co-heirs with the aristocracy of the failings of human nature.158

Shaw, after showing that Shakespeare criticized the plutocracy as well, proceeds to answer another charge: that Shakespeare's characters were for the most part members of the leisured classes. The refutation is expressed in reformist terms:

If, on the other hand, Shakespeare's characters are mostly members of the leisured classes, the same thing is true of Mr. Harris's own plays and mine. Industrial slavery is not compatible with that freedom of adventure, that personal refinement and intellectual culture, that scope of action, which the higher and subtler drama demands. Even Cervantes had finally to drop Don Quixote's troubles with innkeepers demanding to be paid for his food and lodging, and make him as free of economic difficulties.

as Amadis de Gaul. Hamlet's experiences simply could not have happened to a plumber. A poor man is useful on the stage only as a blind man is; to excite sympathy. The poverty of the apothecary in Romeo and Juliet produces a great effect, and even points the sound moral that a poor man cannot afford to have a conscience; but if all the characters of the play had been as poor as he, it would have been nothing but a melodrama of the sort that the Sicilian players gave us here; and that was not the best that lay in Shakespeare's power. When poverty is abolished, and leisure and grace of life become general, the only plays surviving form our epoch which will have any relation to life as it will be lived then will be those in which none of the persons represented are troubled with want of money or wretched drudgery. Our plays of poverty and squalor, now the only ones that are true to the life of the majority of living men, will then be classed with the records of misers and monsters, and read only by historical students of social pathology.159

Fanny's First Play, of 1911, is distinctive for three reasons. It is a genial satire on the dramatic critics: Arthur Bingham Walkley of The Times; E. A. Boughan of The Daily News; and Gilbert Connan of The Star; and a composite critic called Flawner Bannal. It contains a play within a play (the authorship of the inner play is concealed to provide a discussion of its authorship by the critics). And lastly it contains a discussion of the subjectivity of happiness. This last, Shaw explains in the Preface, is aimed at the middle class: "I hate to see dead people walking about; it is unnatural. And our respectable middle class people are all as dead as mutton. Cut of the mouth of Mrs. Knox I have delivered on them the judgment of her God."160

159Ibid., pp. 135-136.
160George Bernard Shaw, Fanny's First Play, Preface, p. 160.
The play within the play is by Fanny O'Dowda, student at Cambridge and member of the Cambridge Fabian Society. It is a lively story of rebellious youth with a gentle sermon by Mrs. Knox on the imitative quality of middle class morality: 

"... You may call it preaching if you like; but it's true for all that. I say that if you've happiness within yourself, you don't need to seek it outside, spending money on drink and theatres and bad company, and being miserable after all. You can sit at home and be happy; and you can work and be happy. If you have that in you the spirit will set you free to do what you want and guide you to do right. But if you haven't got it then you'd best be respectable and stick to the ways that are marked out for you; for you've nothing else to keep you straight".  

Later she attempts an explanation for the imitativeness which afflicts her class:

Mrs. Knox. Don't take offense where none was meant, Mr. Gilbey. Talk about something else. No good ever comes of arguing about such things among the like of us.

Knox. The like of us! Are you throwing it in our teeth that your people were in the wholesale and thought Knox and Gilbey wasn't good enough for you?

Mrs. Knox. No, Jo; you know I'm not. What better were my people than yours, for all their pride? But I've noticed it all my life; were ignorant. We don't really know what's right and what's wrong. We're all right as long as things go on the way they always did. We bring our children up just as we were brought up; and we go to church or chapel just as our parents did; and we say what everybody says; and it goes on all right until something out of the...
way happens; there's a family quarrel, or one of the children goes wrong, or a father takes to drink, or an aunt goes mad, or one of us finds ourselves doing something we never thought we'd want to do. And then you know what happens; complaints and quarrels and huff and offence and bad language and bad temper and regular bewilderment as if Satan possessed us all. We find out then that with all our respectability and piety, we've no real religion and no way of telling right from wrong. We've nothing but our habits; and when they're upset, where are we? Just like Peter in the storm trying to walk on water and finding he couldn't. 162

The conjectures of the critics as to the authorship of the play provides Shaw with a delightful opportunity to satire those critics who approached his plays with an established belief that they were traps baited with paradoxes and designed for their intellectual confusion. 163

The suggestion by Bannal that the play might be by Shaw is vehemently scotched by Vaughan on the grounds of the presence of emotion and Bannal wavers:

Banner. Yes, I know. Intellect without emotion. That's right. I always say that myself. A giant brain, if you ask me; but not heart.

Gunn. Oh, shut up, Bannal. This crude medieval psychology of heart and brain - Shakespear would have called it liver and wits - is really schoolboyish. Surely we've had enough of second-hand Schopenhauer. Even such a played-out old back number as Ibsen would have been ashamed of it. Heart and brain, indeed!

Vaughan. You have neither one nor the other, Gunn. You're decadent.

162Ibid., p. 162.
163Ibid., Preface, p. 160.
Gunn. Decadent! How I love that early Victorian word!

Vaughan. Well, at all events, you can't deny that the characters in this play were quite distinguishable from one another. That proves it's not by Shaw, because all characters are himself; mere puppets stuck up to spout Shaw. It's only the characters that make them seem different.

Bannal. There can be no doubt of that; everybody knows it. But Shaw doesn't write his plays as plays. All he wants to do is to insult everybody all around and set us talking about him.

Trotter. (wearily) And naturally, here we are all talking about him. For heaven's sake, let's change the subject.

Vaughan. Still, my articles about Shaw-

Gunn. Oh, stow it, Vaughan. Drop it. What I've always told you about Shaw-

Bannal. There you go, Shaw, Shaw, Shaw! Do chuck it. If you want to know my opinion about Shaw-

Trotter. No, please, we don't.

Vaughan (yelling) Shut your head, Bannal.

Gunn. Oh, do drop it.

(The deafened Count puts his fingers to his ears and flies from the centre of the group to its outskirts, behind Vaughan.)

Bannal (sulkily) Oh, very well. Sorry I spoke, I'm sure.

Trotter 

Vaughan 

Gunn 

beginning again simultaneously Shaw-

Shaw-

Shaw-164

164 Ibid., pp. 242-243.
In George Bernard Shaw A Critical Study, Joseph McCabe pronounces Man and Superman the culmination of Shaw's artistic skill and one of the dramatist's most brilliant literary pieces. The entire published work - the preface, play, interlude, and appendix - he terms a finished and serious presentation of Shaw's philosophy. The substance of Shaw's philosophy of Life Force, found in Act III of the play, is, according to Henderson, the substance of the play.

The Life Force, as inexorable as the Fate of the Greek tragedians, is incarnated in Ann Whitefield, who is called by Henderson "the quintessence of the Shavian woman". The pursual by Ann of the unwilling John Tanner is not, according to McCabe, only an individual conflict. He says: "Behind this petty struggle Shaw sees the cosmic struggle of the two incarnations of the Life Force as he conceives it. It seeks self-consciousness in the genius and makes him egotistic; it impels woman to life-giving, and when the two meet, we have the most dramatic conflict in the world. But the Life Force, or cosmic Will, being one, it makes the woman persistently hunt the man until he yields. This is the underlying philosophy, or, as Shaw afterwards said, the religion of the play". And, Henderson also observes in this tenor, a review of Shaw's works, from An Unsocial Socialist to Man and Superman, shows a persistent exemplification of his theory that...

166 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 365.
167 Ibid., p. 82.
woman is the pursuer and man the pursued. This reversal of the romantically accepted belief provides the dramatist with a superb motive for comedy and cleverness, for epigrams and aphorisms and delightful dramatic situations.170

From this play on Shaw appears as a race-futurist; the Eugenic Movement then making progress in England became the solution for Shaw's growing pessimism concerning the slow persuasion to Socialism.171

This pessimism is a definite note in the Dedicatory Epistle to Arthur Bingham Walkley:

I do not know whether you have any illusion left on the subject of education, progress, and so forth. I have none. Any pamphleteer can show the way to better things; but when there is no will there is no way... My nurse was fond of remarking that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and the more I see of the efforts of our churches and universities and literary sages to raise the masses above its own level the more convinced I am that my nurse was right.172

Shaw sees the quality of the race deteriorating; the growing love of pageantry, called fondly Imperialism, he classes as "obsequiousness, servility, cupidty roused by the prevailing smell of money."173

It is in this Dedecatory Epistle too that the famous lines of protest against selfishness and apathy appear: "This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a

170 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 82.
173 Ibid., p. xxv.
force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."174

The Intellectual Action of Man and Superman, the character who, like Larry Doyle of John Bull's Other Island, has an objective understanding, a realistic appraisal of his own and others' actions, is John Tanner, M.I.R.C. (Member Idle Rich Class) by his own designation.175 This brilliant, loquacious, paradoxical, and utterly ironic character, represented as Shaw to be a satire of H. M. Hyndman, the great Socialist orator, besides being a preacher of the Life Force as John Tanner in Act I and Don Juan in Act III, was the author of The Revolutionist Handbook and Pocket Companion which is printed at the end of the play.176 This is the handbook which McCabe describes as "A whole arsenal of explosive epigrams which seemed calculated to blast every human belief and institution."177

John Tanner explains the Life Force in Act I with: "Of all the human struggle there is none so treacherous and remorseless as the struggle between the artist man and the mother woman".180 At the same time it is the duty of the artist man to place his art above every human consideration: "The true artist will let his wife starve, his children go barefoot, his mother drudge for his living at seventy sooner than work at anything but his art."181

174Ibid., pp. xxxi-xxxii.
175Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 133.
176Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw His Life and Works, p. 364.
177Joseph McCabe, op. cit., p. 49.
180George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman, Act I, p. 23.
181Ibid., p. 22.
In Act II Tanner expresses the theme again in an effort to disillusion the romantic Octavius Robinson:

Tanner. You think that you are Ann's suitor; that you are the pursuer and she the pursued; that it is your part to woo, to persuade, to prevail, to overcome. Fool; it is you who are the pursued, the marked down quarry, the destined prey. . .

Octavius. I wish I could believe that, vilely as you put it.

Tanner. Why man, what other work has she in life but to get a husband? It is a woman's business to get married as soon as possible, and a man's to keep unmarried as long as he can. Don't be afraid. She has marked you for her own; and nothing will stop her now. You are doomed. . . 181a

Tanner, besides this theory, advances another idea but one which has a connection with the duty of an artist to his art; this time it is the defense of the imaginative, able-bodied pauper. The defense involves social advice which echoes the pessimism of the Dedicatory Epistle:

Precisely the same qualities that make the educated man an artist make an uneducated manual laborer an able-bodied pauper . . . the imaginative man, if his life is to be tolerable to him, must have leisure to tell himself stories and a position which lends itself to imaginative decoration. The ranks of unskilled labor offer no such positions. We misuse our laborers horribly; and when a man refuses to be misused, we have no right to say that he is refusing honest work. . . If we were reasoning, far-sighted people, four-fifths of us would go straight to the Guardians for relief and knock the whole social system to pieces with most beneficial reconstructive results. The reason we do not do this is

181a Ibid., Act II, p. 53.
because we work like bees or ants, by instinct or habit, not reasoning about the matter at all. Therefore when a man comes along who can and does reason, and who applying the Kantian test to his conduct, can truly say to us, if everybody did as I do the world would be compelled to reform itself industrially, and abolish slavery and squalor, which exist only because everybody does as you do, let us honor that man and seriously consider the advisability of following his example. Such a man is the able-bodied pauper. 182

Preceding the philosophical discussion of Act III there is a delightful interlude in which the brigands discuss, in their camp in the Sierra Nevada, the momentous question of Socialism. The desperadoes are organized into Mendoza Limited, of interesting conception. Shaw refers to this in the Dedication: "The conception of Mendoza Limited I trace back to a certain West Indian Colonial Secretary; who, at a period when he and I and Mr. Sidney Webb were sowing our political wild oats as a sort of Fabian Three Musketeers, without any prevision of the surprising respectability of the crop that followed, recommended Webb, the encyclopedic and inexhaustible, to form himself into a company for the benefit of shareholders." 183

In the midst of the discussion of Socialism which the brigands treat of in three aspects - theoretical, practical, and Utopian - John Tanner and his chauffeur Straker, another philosophically-minded man of the people, come upon the scene. 184

A clever conversation takes place:

Mendoza. I am a brigand: I live by robbing the rich.

182 Ibid., Act III, p. 72.
183 Ibid., DedicatorEpistle, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
184 Augustus Hamon, op. cit., p. 149.
Tanner. I am a gentleman; I live by robbing the poor.

Straker. (to Duval) ... Who are you pray?

Duval. Duval; Social-Democrat.

Straker. Oh, you're a Social-Democrat, are you?

The Anarchist. He means that he has sold out to the parliamentary humbugs and bourgeoisie. Compromise! That is his faith.185

Later in Act III, under the stars of the Sierra-Nevada, John Tanner dreams he is Don Juan Tenorio. The famous Dream in Hell, the philosophical discussion with the devil presiding and Ann now Dona Ana and Ann's father visiting from heaven, is the background for Shavian ideas, ideas of Art, of happiness, of Society, of the Life Force. This Dream in Hell is, according to P. P. Howe, the quintessence of Shavianism.186

Even the devil himself is parliamentary when he says: "From the beginning of my career I knew that I should win in the long run by sheer weight of public opinion, in spite of the long campaign of misrepresentation and calumny against me. At bottom the universe is a constitutional one; and with such a majority as mine I cannot be kept permanently out of office."187

The drifting dilettantes of art, the seekers after unreality, are placed in Hell by Shaw. When Ana expresses her reason for desiring heaven: "I am going to heaven for happiness. I have had quite enough reality on earth".188

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185 George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman, Act III, p. 73.
188 Ibid.
Don Juan points out that Hell is to drift, heaven is to steer: "Then you must stay here; for Hell is the home of the unreal and of the seekers for happiness. It is the only refuge from Heaven, which is, I tell you, the home of the slaves of reality".189

The essence of the discussion is of course the Life Force, the evolution, in this instance, toward a Superman, the plan of the imperfect God seeking perfection. The crux of Shaw's philosophy is expressed by Don Juan: "I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. This is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understand."190

To the devil the Superman idea is one which brings complications: "Wagner once drifted into Life Force worship, and invented a Superman called Siegfried. But he came to his senses afterwards. So when they met here, Nietzsche denounced him as a renegade; and Wagner wrote a pamphlet to prove that Nietzsche was a Jew; and it ended in Nietzsche's going to Heaven in a huff."191

The Dream in Hell ends with Ana's going off to seek a father for the Superman. And this she does in reality as Ann, pursuing John Tanner with such ingenious persistence, such Shavian unwomanliness, that John Tanner, the

189 Ibid.
190 Ibid., p. 129.
191 Ibid., p. 137.
artist man, finding himself vanquished by the mother woman has left only words:

I solemnly say that I am not a happy man. Ann looks happy; but she is only triumphant, successful, victorious. That is not happiness, but the price for which the strong sell their happiness. What we have both done this afternoon is to renounce happiness, renounce freedom, renounce tranquillity, above all, renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future, for the cares of a household and a family. . .192

The play Overruled of 1912 is a trivial farce concerning the philanderings of two married couples. There is nothing in the play of social moment but there is a midly significant remark in the Preface concerning the conventionality of the lives of persons with advanced views. Unconventional complications, observes Shaw, are more probable in the lives of persons who profess conservative social principles because there is so much friction set up between the theoretic libertine and his community by the expression of his advanced views that he cannot afford the further hindrance of personal scandals.193

Androcles and the Lion of 1913 is a mixture of religious feeling and sheer fooling; in the play Shaw attempts the creation of real characters; reasonable Christians and understandably monstrous persecutors; for, as Shaw pointed out concerning the social implications, monstrous institutions make monsters of quite ordinary men.194 And that is why he as a Socialist

192 Ibid., p. 174.
194 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 537.
keeps repeating his creed: that you must reform society before you can reform yourselves.

The dramatist uses the Preface as a means of discussing the doctrines of Christ and their relationship with economics. As an economist Shaw says: "... I must still insist that if the Jews could have worked out the practical problems of a Communist constitution, an admitted obligation to deal with crime without revenge or punishment, and a full assumption by humanity of divine responsibilities, he would have conferred an incalculable benefit on mankind, because these distinctive demands of his are now turning out to be good sense and sound economics."195

But, Shaw, maintains, the moneyed, respectable, capable world has been growing steadily anti-Christian and Barabasque since the crucifixion; and in all the centuries following, the specific doctrine of Christ has not been put into political or general social practice.196

The characters of Androcles and the Lion are realistic: Lavinia, a Christian of the highest type is particularly appealing in her lack of self-righteousness; Ferrovious, who was a Christian but found he really worshipped Mars, was intended as a satirical anticipation of the World War.197 And Henderson notes a fact in the play unusual enough to demand comment: "Shaw here achieves the greatest triumph of self-abnegation in his entire career as a dramatist; the creation of a leading figure who never speaks a word -

195 George Bernard Shaw, Preface to Androcles and the Lion, p. viii.
196 Ibid.
197 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 534.
the lion198

A moving summary of his motives is presented by Shaw in the Sequel to the Play. He has represented one of the Roman persecutions of the early Christians not as a false theology conflicting with a true but (and here he very evidently speaks as a Socialist) "as what all such persecutions essentially are; and attempt to suppress a propaganda that seemed to threaten the interests involved in the established law and order, organized and maintained in the name of religion and justice by politicians who are pure opportunist Have-and Holders. People, who are shown by their inner light the possibility of a better world based on the demand of the spirit for a nobler and more abundant life, not for themselves at the expense of others, but for everybody, are naturally dreaded and therefore hated by the Have-and Holders. • • My martyrs are the martyrs of all time and my persecutors the persecutors of all time."199

Two completely amusing farces appeared after Androcles: Great Catherine (Whom Glory Still Adores) and The Music Cure (A Piece of Utter Nonsense). While both are essentially merely gay and diverting each contains a thrust at the Government.

Great Catherine, a thumbnail sketch of Russian court life in the eighteenth century, has in its Author's Apology the echo of Shaw's long quarrel with the Liberal Party: "The main difference between her and our Liberal Governments was that when as she talked and wrote quite intelligently

198Ibid., p. 533.
199George Bernard Shaw, Sequel to Androcles and the Lion, op. cit., p. 46.
about liberal principles before she was frightened into making such talking
and writing a flogging matter, our Liberal ministers take the name of Liber-
alism in vain without knowing or caring enough about its meaning even to
talk or scribble about it, and pass their flogging bills and institute their
prosecutions for sedition and blasphemy and so forth, without the faintest
suspicion that such proceedings need an apology from the Liberal point of
view."

Beyond the mercurial, bouncing characterization of Catherine, and the
epigram-making Pationkin the main characterization to be noted is that of
the stodgy, conventional English captain. This, says McCabe, is just another
fling at God's Englishman, who commits the hundred stupidities that only
Shaw's Englishman can commit.

An irreverent parody on a ridiculous statesman, The Music Cure deals
with the devastating expose of the under-secretary in the War Office, Lord
Reginald Fitzambey. For being an opportunist and buying shares in The
British Macaroni Trust because he knew for a certainty that the army was
going to be put on a vegetarian diet, Lord Reginald faced a nervous breakdown
and the ruin of his career had it not been for the arrival of a forthright
feminine pianist and her diverting, if a bit positive, music cure.

Because of Shaw's persistent consideration of a modern play as a play
with a discussion and an old-fashioned play as one with an emotional situa-

200 George Bernard Shaw, Great Catherine in Heartbreak House Great Catherine
Playlets of the War, London: Constable and Co., V. 15, 1930, Author's
Apology, p. 153.
201 Joseph McCabe, op. cit., p. 224.
202 George Bernard Shaw, The Music Cure in The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw,
p. 1126.
tion, the critics, to whom Shaw had referred in *Fanny's First Play* as prejudiced beforehand against his advanced views, had created a 'bad press' for Shaw in England. To deliver and object lesson to the English critics and to the English public Shaw permitted *Pygmalion* (1913) to be produced first in Germany and Austria. This thoroughly modern play with its rational discussions throughout reached England as a confirmed success in April, 1914 and with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the role of Eliza Doolittle continued its success in the United States. 203

In the Preface Shaw gives his motive in writing the play: "It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him. German and Spanish are accessible to foreigners; English is not accessible even to Englishmen. The Reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast; that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play." 204

This hero, Professor Henry Higgins, an expert in phonetics, which was one of Shaw's hobbies, undertook to transform the almost incomprehensible vernacular of a shabby Cockney flower girl into the speech of a duchess in six months.

A preliminary experiment was successful; the shocking colloquialisms which Eliza let slip were even mistaken by her fashionable listeners as 'the new small talk'. 205

203 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 565.
But an emotional situation arises when, after the successful final appearance the modern Pygmalion finds that he has not merely given the Cockney Gallatea a superficial culture; he has awakened a human soul. 206

There is the criticism of the Socialist author in the midst of their conversation:

Higgins. (A genial afterthought occurring to him) I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well.

Liza. We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

Higgins. (waking up) What do you mean?

Liza. I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me and I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me. 207

And again Shaw puts in Eliza's words one of his favorite theories of social reform: that the individual will rise to improved social institutions:

"The difference between a flower girl and a duchess is not how she behaves but how she is treated." 208

The last of Shaw's plays within the time of this paper is Heartbreak House, begun in 1913 on the eve of the war but not published until 1919. The subtitle "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes" does not explain the play; it is a play of international politics.

In the Preface of 1919 Shaw says that Heartbreak House is cultured, leisured Europe before the war; the inhabitants of Heartbreak House are the

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206Ibid., Act V, p. 205.
207Pygmalion, p. 165.
208Ibid
idle rich, living their own lives in utter futility.²⁰⁹ Their society even with all its music, art and literature, is an economic, political, and moral vacuum. They are familiar with revolutionary ideas on paper; their shelves hold a few plays and stories by Granville-Barker, Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy.²¹⁰

As an alternative to Heartbreak House there is only Horseback Hall. The inhabitants of Horseback Hall are exiles from the library, music room, and picture gallery; they hunt nine tenths of the time and the remaining tenth devote themselves to charity and church.²¹¹ Lady Utterwood repeats this analysis in the play: "There are only two classes in good society in England: the equestrian class and the neurotic class".²¹² And they are both near a pit of dynamite.

Shaw, who in Man and Superman had described Hell as drifting and Heaven as steering, speaks sometimes through the half-mad Captain Shotover and again through the clairvoyant Ellie Dunn. To Ellie Dunn, who is the only person this old man in his anguish of spirit can talk to, he says: "I see my daughters and their men leading foolish lives of romance and sentiment and snobbery. I see you, the younger generation, turning from their romance and sentiment and snobbery to money and comfort and hard common sense. I was ten times happier on the bridge in the typhoon or frozen into arctic ice for months in darkness, than you or they have ever been. You are looking for a rich husband. At your age I looked for hard-

²⁰⁹ Martin Ellehauge, op. cit., p. 291.
²¹⁰ George Bernard Shaw, Heartbreak House, Act I, p. 5.
²¹¹ Ibid., p. xi.
ship, danger, horror, and death, that I might feel the life in me more intensely."213

Later, when Ellie Dunn turns from thoughts of wealth, Archibald Henderson pushes the analysis by comparing her to the new humanitarianism: "... poor in goods but rich in spirit, at once practical and visionary, aspiring - the new Britain of Labor and Socialism..."214

Edmund Wilson comments on a singular aspect of Heartbreak House: "For once, where Shaw has so often reduced historical myths to the sharp focus of contemporary satire, he now raises contemporary figures to the heroic proportions of myth. An air-raid brings down the final curtain; Heartbreak House has been finally split wide. The capitalist Mangan gets killed, and there is a suggestion that they may all be the better for it."215

At this conclusion of the consideration of Shaw's plays the following words of Augustus Hamon seem relevant:

The study of Shaw's drama shows us very clearly that, while touching upon everything that interests mankind - politics, art, love, Socialism, philosophy, the administration of justice, feminism, militarism, war, etc. - he displays throughout a wonderful unity of treatment. This unity is the outcome of the fact that Shaw possesses a philosophy of life, for the realization of which he looks to Socialism. ... Through the sayings and the doings of his characters, he affirms that the free play of instincts and the opposition to every kind of constraint give to the individual the maximum possible development. The aim of life is life itself - that is to say, the fullest possible development for every human being, enabling him to enjoy to the utmost. But for any individual to be able to develop to the full, and thus to enjoy the

212 Ibid., Act III, p. 131.
213 Ibid., Act II, p. 118.
214 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 580.
utmost of his capacity, it is necessary that all should have the same possibility. This possibility cannot be fulfilled until after the disappearance of capitalism, of militarism, of the administration of justice with its penalties and its punishments, of legal marriage, of coercive love, of authoritative education. This possibility will be fulfilled only when the entire social structure of capitalism has given place to a Socialist society whose members are free men and women, liberated from the bonds of capital, of authority, and of the thousandfold worldly, religious, and social conventions - in a word, when we have a society of supermen, capable of still further development. This is what is said and resaid, displayed and redisplayed, cried and cried again by all the characters of Shaw's drama, these characters incarnating the Life-Force, that force whose transformations are innumerable, illogical, and inconstant, but which pursues its aim without pause and without respite, regardless of all obstacles, pursues its single aim - to live. ... The Shavian comedy clothes its social criticism in so merry a dress that it carries with it those who regard it as false. ... Laughter renders possible the penetration of ideas which would have been rejected had they been presented in a severer form. Laughter fulfills the function of the sugar or the honey employed by the pharmacist. This is why it is that the humourist is a moralist. ... It follows that the comedies of Shaw, like comedy in general, constitute a series of moral lessons. His dramas censure the ills of social life, proffering as the remedy for these the destruction of all the conventions and the acceptance of a realist view of what exists.216

And in this connection too, P. P. Howe in The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Mr. Bernard Shaw comments: "Mr. Bernard Shaw confronts his age not so much a dramatist as a writer possessed of a philosophy and of a trick of the stage, who has employed the one to expound the other. ... The struggle between the Philosopher and the Playwright has been fearful, but the play-

216Augustus Hamon, op. cit., pp. 157-159.
wright has not won."  

In the midst of the exalted World War patriotism of England in 1914, of the romantic belief by the man-in-the-street that England had declared war on Germany because Belgium's neutrality was violated, Bernard Shaw, realizing as he explained in What I Really Wrote About the War that "in both England and Germany romantic exaltation reached the heavens; and deluded ignorance plumbed the bottomless pit" collected all the documents he could get, retired to Torquay where he sunned himself on the roof of the Hydro Hotel for nearly two months, and wrote the astounding pamphlet, Common Sense About the War.

Published as a supplement to The New Statesman on November 14, 1914, Common Sense About the War is a completely Socialist document. It has all the cold, factual, ruthless, brilliant criticism of a Fabian tract, with the same rhetorical denunciation of Capitalism with which Shaw had written his most brilliant passages in his Fabian literature.

Of his peculiarly neutral position as an Irishman which caused Henderson to note a startling parallel to Swift's historic Conduct of the Allies, Shaw refers in the first part of Common Sense: "I do not hold my tongue easily; and my inborn dramatic faculty and professional habit as a playwright prevent me from taking a one-sided view even when the most probable result of taking a many-sided one is prompt lynching. Besides, until Home Rule emerges from its present suspended animation, I shall retain

217 P. P. Howe, op. cit., p. 132.
218 Bernard Shaw, What I Really Wrote About the War, New York: Brentano's, 1932, p. 18.
my Irish capacity for criticizing England with something of the detachment of a foreigner, and perhaps with a certain slightly malicious taste for taking the conceit out of her."219

In this capacity he sees the people of England warring against Prussian Junkerism and the people of Germany warring against English Junkerism. He then makes the statement which more than any in the pronouncement proved shocking: "No doubt the heroic remedy for this tragic misunderstanding is that both armies should shoot their officers and go home to gather in their harvests in the villages and make a revolution in the towns; and though this is not at present a practicable solution, it must be frankly mentioned . . . but their is no chance, or as our Junkers would put it, no danger - of our soldiers yielding to such an ecstasy of common sense."220

Then, with social realism and contempt for aristocracy he dares to indulge in word-play by defining a deceptive word, with a dictionary definition and a different popular connotation, in terms of English as well as German condemnation.

With deceptive reasonableness he inquires: what is a Junker - a German officer of twenty-three cutting down innocent children with a sabre? Doubting this popular conception he turns to the dictionary and finds: a young nobleman; lording; country squire; country gentleman. And then perhaps the most unkindest cut is the application of the definition. With the statement that this is not peculiar to Germany he says: "Sir Edward Grey

219Ibid., p. 19.
220Ibid., p. 20.
is a Junker from his topmost hair to the tips of his toes; and Sir Edward
is a charming man. . . Lord Cromer is a Junker. Mr. Winston Churchill
is an odd and most disagreeable compound of Junker and Yankee: his frank
anti-German pugnacity is enormously more popular than the moral babble
(Milton’s phrase) of his sanctimonious colleagues. He is a bumptious and
jolly Junker, just as Lord Curzon is an uppish Junker... In these islands
the Junker is literally all over the shop.”221

With this point established he makes a vicious thrust at the romantic
idealism of war-time England in this prophetic statement: “Let us have no
more nonsense about the Prussian Wolf and the British Lamb, the Prussian
Machiavelli and the English Evangelist. . . We cannot shout for years that
we are boys of the bulldog breed, and then suddenly pose as gazelles. No.
When Europe and America come to settle the treaty that will end this business
(for America is concerned in it as much as we are) they will not deal with
us as the lovable and innocent victims of a treacherous tyrant and a savage
soldiery. They will consider how these two incorrigibly pugnacious and
inveterately snobbish peoples, who have snarled at one another for forty
years with bristling hair and grinning fangs, and are now rolling over with
their teeth in one another’s throats, are to be tamed into trusty watchdogs
of the peace of the world. I am sorry to spoil the saintly image with a
halo which the British Jingo journalist sees just now when he looks in the
glass; but it must be done if we are to behave reasonably in the imminent

221Ibid., p. 22.
day of reckoning."222

With sweeping condemnation he classifies Militarism as a bogus science, revolting to the sane and stared out of countenance by the broad facts of human experience.

He proceeds then to the diplomatic facts of the case and finds that "perfidious Albion" if a title undeserved by the English charm is not undeserved by the official diplomatic acts of England.223

The factual Socialist speaks more obviously in the following statement: "The general truth of the situation is, as I have spent so much of my life in trying to make the English understand, that we are cursed with a fatal intellectual laziness, an evil inheritance from the time when our monopoly of coal and iron made it possible for us to become rich without thinking or knowing how. . . ."224

Gaining wealth by selfishness, the English, he continues, always justified themselves and thus lost the power of objective thinking; pious phrases instead satisfied their corrupted and half-atrophied consciences.

With the astounding statement that the Junker diplomatists of the British Foreign Office led England into the War, that Germany did not really want the War, Shaw begs the Government to dispense with the twaddle, cant, and melodrama of their propaganda: "As far as popular liberties are concerned history will make no distinction between Mr. Asquith and Metternich. He is forced to keep on the safe academic ground of Belgium by the very obvious

222Ibid., p. 25
223Ibid., pp. 29-30.
224Ibid., p. 31.
consideration that if he began to talk of the Kaiser's imprisonments of editors and democratic agitators and so forth, a Homeric laughter, punctuated with cries of 'How about Denshawai?' 'What price Tom Mann?' 'Votes for Women!' 'Been in India lately?' would promptly spoil the pose.

The plain fact is that, Militarism apart, Germany is in many ways more democratic in practice than England. Indeed the Kaiser has openly reviled as a coward by his Junkers because he falls short of Mr. Asquith in calm indifference to Liberal principles and blank ignorance of working class sympathies, opinions, and interest."225

But, he agrees, it is the sacred duty of England to drive Germany out of Belgium, not for the selfish reasons that she is doing it, but because Germany is the leading exponent of Militarism in Europe.226

Shaw then begins the consideration of the specific problems of the soldier from the Socialist point of view. The Labor Party, he says, should abolish the Militarist soldier and substitute a trained combatant at Trade Union wages (with Trade Union rates for a skilled worker at a dangerous trade). Further, the Labor Party should not allow the Red Cross work to be done by fashionable amateurs—fashionable amateurs should pay Income Tax and Supertax instead.

With the contention that no soldier should be discharged from the army after the War, except at his own request, unless there is a civil position provided for him Shaw plays up a blunder of the War Office ruthlessly:

\[225\textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.\]
\[226\textit{Ibid.}, p. 49.\]
It suddenly began to placard the country with frantic assurances to its five thousand-a-year friends that they would be 'discharged with all possible speed the Minute the War is Over'. Only consideration of space, I presume, restrained them from adding 'Lawn - Tennis Shooting and All the Delights of Fashionable Life Can Be Resumed Immediately on the Firing of the Last Shot'.

Now what does this mean to the wage worker? Simply that the moment he is no longer wanted in the trenches he will be flung back into the labor market to sink or swim without an hour's respite. If we had had a Labor representative or two to help in drawing up these silly placards - I am almost tempted to say if we had had any human being of any class with half the brains of a rabbit there - the placards would have contained a solemn promise that no single man should be discharged save at his own request, until a job had been found him in civil life. I ask the heavens, with a shudder, do these class-blinded people in authority really intend to take a million men out of their employment; turn them into soldiers; and then at one blow hurl them back, utterly unprovided for, into the streets? 227

Stating that the Government Junkers have already taken advantage of the War to paralize democracy by excessive censorship, he warns the Labor Party to push to the utmost any attempt to suspend popular liberties and constitutional safeguards; the Labor members must press their cause because in reality the importance of the War to the immense majority of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans lies in the possibility "that when the Junkers fall out the common men may come into their own". 228

With a plea for a just peace without vindictive damages, Shaw makes the second astonishing statement of the pamphlet: "If we will attempt (after the War) to democratize the German constitution, we must consent to the democratization of our own. If we send the Kaiser to St. Helena (or whatever the

227 Ibid., p. 56.
228 Ibid., p. 60.
title of the Chislehurst villa may be) we must send Sir Edward Grey there, too."

After advocating the establishment of a Hegemony of Peace Shaw delivers an eloquent panegyric of pure Socialism:

Will you now at last believe, O stupid British, German, and French patriots, what the Socialists have been telling you for so many years: that your Union Jacks and tricolors and Imperial Eagles... are only toys to keep you amused and that there are only two real flags in the world henceforth: the red flag of Democratic Socialism and the black flag of Capitalism, the flag of Mammon and the flag of God? What earthly or heavenly good is done when Tom Fool shoots Hans Narre? The plain fact is that if we leave our capital to be dealt with according to the selfishness of the private man he will send it where wages are low and workers enslaved and docile; that is as many thousand miles as possible from the Trade Unions and Trade Union Rates and parliamentary Labor Parties of civilization; and Germany, at his sordid behest, will plunge the world into war for the sake of disgracing herself with a few rubber plantations, poetically described by her orators and journalists as a 'place in the sun'. When you do what the Socialists tell you by keeping your capital jealously under national control and reserving your shrapnel for the wasters who not only shirk their share of the industrial service of their country but intend that their children and their children's children shall be idle wasters like themselves, you will find that not a farthing of our capital will go abroad as long as there is a British slum to be cleared and rebuilt, or a hungry, ragged, and ignorant British child to be fed, clothed, and educated.230

The note of Androcles and the Lion is repeated in a bitter criticism of the attitude of the Church in the War; abandoning, he says, the worship of Christ for the altar of Mars.

Shaw brings, in the discussion of democratization, into one sentence the

229Ibid., p. 67.
230Ibid., p. 75.
Kaiser, England, the Hohenzollerans, and - the Shaws: the Kaiser has, he says, a "hereditary craze for playing at soldiers, is a naive suburban snob, as the son of The Englishwoman would naturally be, talking about 'the Hohenzollerans' exactly as my father's people in Dublin used to talk about 'the Shaws'.

Common Sense About the War ends with a positive encouragement for the British and the French people to fight this exponent of armed force: for Thomas Atkins, Patrick Murphy, Sandy McAlister, and Pitou Dupont to fight under what leadership they can get, lest Militarism shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

Common Sense brought severe denunciation upon Shaw: accusations of 'pro German and 'disloyal' and the desertion of many old friends and literary associations. Yet thousands of Socialists and Laborites and advanced thinkers applauded his realistic stand, and seventy five thousand copies were sold.

Common Sense had no immediate political effect in England; but it had a definite effect on the public opinion of the United States. That Shaw's attitude about the War was anti-idealistic had been intimated by the Open Letter to President Wilson which Shaw had written for The Nation of November 7, 1914. In this letter, of which the President took no public notice, Shaw had asked the President, as the head of the leading Democratic nation, to

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231 Ibid., p. 91.
232 Ibid.
233 Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 630.
request Britain, France, and Germany to withdraw their troops from Belgium and fight out the War on their own territories; for British shells, he observed, had the same effect as German shells. An anticipation of the forthcoming pamphlet had been given with the words: "In London and Paris and Berlin nobody at present dare say 'Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one another?'; for the slightest disposition towards a Christian view of things is regarded as a shooting matter in these capitals; but Washington is still privileged to talk common humanity to the nations."234

The propagandist significance of Shaw's writings was particularly noted in a condemnation of Shaw by J.O.P. Bland in "Self-Appointed Statesmen" in the Nineteenth Century for March, 1915. Labelling Shaw as an 'irresponsible comedian' with an 'insatiate passion for notoriety' the author considers the pamphlet's effect on the readers of the American Yellow-Press who will only too gladly agree with Shaw.

Referring to the nimbleness of Shaw's intellectual acrobatics, the biting malice of his irony, his aloofness and his impartial scorn, and their power to undermine England's position in the eyes of the world, Bland concedes that Common Sense is "likely to inflict upon the cause more serious injuries than all alien enemies in England together".235 For this the critic believes that Shaw deserves the Iron Cross from the Kaiser. But then he dismisses his subject with: "the mass of his countrymen have more serious

234 George Bernard Shaw, Open Letter to President Wilson in What I Really Wrote About the War, p. 234.
things to do than trouble about the pasquinades of this literary harlequin."236

Leaving George Bernard Shaw, appropriately enough, in 1914 in a storm of his own making, to summarize the influence of the Fabian Society on his social writings, one easily notes the thread of social realism running through his tracts, essays, criticisms, pamphlets, and plays. Added to this are of course the apparent results of years of debating opportunities, of unhampered and highly appreciated repartee, of studious investigation, and of loyal associations. His social literature remains essentially that of a man of practical affairs, of public life.

236Ibid., 566.
CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY ON THE SOCIAL LITERATURE OF
SIDNEY AND BEATRICE WEBB, GRAHAM WALLAS, SYDNEY OLIVER,
H. G. WELLS, AND HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER

When Sidney Webb joined the Fabian Society in 1885 he was already a realist; he was already a good debater; and he was already at ease in public life. Sidney Webb, more than any other member, set the Fabian Society on the path of social realism. His Fabian associates, and in particular Shaw, Wallas, and Olivier, conceded to him the generalship in any scientific inquiry or investigation. They considered his mind encyclopedic, his energy and purpose incredible, his ability to organize statistics phenomenal, and his unassuming manner, his talent for saying the hardest things in the gentlest possible way, of the greatest value in the program they had outlined for themselves.¹

Before Sidney Webb married Beatrice Potter in 1892 his individual writing consisted of two books: Socialism in England (1889) and The London Programme (1891). The thoughtful, factual, historical analysis so characteristic of his Fabian tracts and essays is present very conspicuously in these works. Socialism in England, in reality a long essay, was written after a trip to America with Edward Pease in 1889 for American readers; it

¹Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 143.
was published in the Publications of the American Economic Association for April, 1889. Writing this essay as a Barrister and a Lecturer on Economics at the City of London College Webb considered the Development of the Socialistic Ideal, The Rise of the English Socialist Movement, The English Socialist Organizations, Socialism in the Churches, Socialism in the Universities, Socialism in Political Economy, Parliamentary and Municipal Socialism, and Socialism in Politics.

In beginning Webb makes the most of a recent Parliamentary statement:

"We are all Socialists now avowed the Right Honorable Sir William Vernon Harcourt in the British House of Commons lately, and the Prince of Wales recently made the same confession. Whatever may be the value of these vague declarations, it is certain that the progress of Socialism is just now the most marked characteristic of English thought." 2

The inevitability of gradualness is of course the essence of the Webb presentation. He explains to his American readers the new constitutional Socialism in masterly fashion:

Socialism is the economic side of Democracy. Students have grown so accustomed to think of Socialism as a mere 'Utopia' spun from the humanity-intoxicated brains of various Frenchmen of the beginning of the century, that they find great difficulty in recognizing it in any other aspect. But on the part of the critics this is simple ignorance. Down to the present generation the aspirant after social reform whether Socialist or Individualist naturally embodied his ideas in a detailed plan of a new social order, from which all contemporary evils were eliminated. Just as Plato had his 'Republic'

Campanella his 'City of the Sun', and Sir Thomas More his 'Utopia', so Baboeuf has his 'Charter of Equality', Cabet his 'Icaria', St. Simon his 'Industrial System' and Fourrier his ideal 'Phalanstery'. Robert Owens spent a fortune in pressing upon a stiff-necked generation a 'New Moral World'; and even Comte, superior as he was to many of the weaknesses of his time, must need add a detailed 'Polity' to his 'Philosophy of Positivism'.

The leading feature of all these proposals (not excluding the last) was what may be called their 'statical' character. The ideal society was presented as a perfectly balanced equilibrium without need or possibility of future organic alteration. Now-a-days, owing mainly to the efforts of Comte, Darwin and Spencer, we can no longer think of the future society as an unchanging state. The social ideal from being statical had become dynamic. The necessity of the constant growth and development of the social organism had become axiomatic. No philosopher now looks for anything but the gradual passing of the old order into the new, without break of continuity or abrupt general change of social tissue. The new becomes itself old, often before it is consciously recognized as new, and history shows us nothing but constant gradual evolution.  

The London Programme of 1891 is especially significant because in 1891 Sidney Webb resigned his post in the Colonial Office to try successfully for the office of Councillor on the London County Council; it is noteworthy too as an indication of the ardent municipal spirit of Webb: his interest in his native London was a never-ending inspiration of his socialistic reforms.  

In The London Programme Webb urges the growth of the sense of common

3Ibid., pp. 8-9.  
4Mary Agnes Hamilton, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. 37.
life; this expansion of civic rather than individual life, this Municipal
Patriotism, he places as a positive development of character in the London
people.5

In considering 'London as it Might Be' the author permits himself a
bit of rhetoric: "The hope of the future for dense urban communities
admittedly lies in the wise extension of collective action. By himself the
typical Londoner is a frail and sickly unit, cradled in the gutter, housed
in a slum, slaving in a sweater's den, and dying in the workhouse infirmary.
Collectively he is a member of the greatest and most magnificent city which
the world has known, commanding all the latest resources of civilization,
and disposing of almost boundless wealth. . . "6

The book makes no claim as literature; it merely presents in readable
and understandable the municipal reforms known as 'The London Programme'.7

Beatrice Potter before her marriage was the author of The Cooperative
Movement in Great Britain. From a background of wealth and travel and
social advantages, the last of which wearied and disillusioned her, she
knew through her father Huxley, Tyndall, James Martineau, and Cardinal
Manning and was the valued friend of Herbert Spencer. Beatrice Potter had
read extensively of Social literature, had written socialistic essays, had
aided her cousin Charles Booth in a survey of London conditions, and had

Preface, pp. v-vi.
6Ibid., p. 207.
7Ibid., Preface, p. v.
visited workshops incognito. And what is most important she recognized the growing power the significance of which Karl Marx, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabians had never appreciated - Trade Unionism.

The Cooperative Movement In Great Britain was in itself as factual as any Fabian presentation; it contained an extensive Bibliography, lists of Parliamentary Papers, and Classified Tables. It was gradual also, explaining the cooperative movement as only an aspect of the trend toward Industrial Democracy.

She corresponded with Sidney Webb concerning The Cooperative Movement In Great Britain and it was he who read the proof. He commented that the book should have taken six weeks to write instead of seven months and that she needed his help for future work.

The career of the Webbs since their marriage in 1892 was so phenomenal in the scope and scale of its scientific investigation and methods of research and so remarkable in its achievements that it is necessary to the understanding of their books to describe the most unusual atmosphere in which they worked.

The Webb home at 41 Grosvenor Square was near Parliament and near the London County Council. Work was the essential thing always: hard, unremitting, sustained, and often dull, with great stretches of sheer drudgery; but this was a sympathetic industry and of a happily complementary

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8Mary Agnes Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 43-56.
character: his ruthless scientific objectivity was tempered by her more vivid and imaginative temperament and ability at generalization.12

Every view was mutually tested and then tried out on Bernard Shaw and Graham Wallas. For the Fabian friendships were not hindered by this marriage: in fact, Mrs. Webb, though not an active Fabian until the Well's controversy, took Sydney Olivier's place in the inner Fabian foursome when he was sent to Jamaica. Shaw in particular, 'our oldest friend and dearest comrade', was an intimate visitor and constant holiday companion.13

The social life of the Webbs was as gradual as their political principles; and even this was purposeful. Society as fashionably considered the Webbs despised; visitors were invited for what they could contribute in ideas or to be persuaded; to be permeated.

The ascetic and rigid discipline of their lives, the unfashionableness of Mrs. Webb, the conversation with the 'point' a bit too obvious, were not without their critics. Even their sympathetic biographer, Mary Agnes Hamilton, admits: "For some they talked too much; he softly, she shrilly; but their talk helped, notably in their constant habit of presenting the Socialistic point of view as the one that had really got to be taken by any rational, informed, intelligence. This enraged some people; enraged them the more when they saw them making Socialism respectable intellectually

11Mary Agnes Hamilton, op. cit., p. 65.
12Ibid., p. 307.
and also economically and morally respectable." But the house at Grosvenor Road was a formidable force; the leaders of Trade Unionism gathered there, John Burns, Tom Mann, and Ben Tillett; and the bright young men and women from the universities.

H. G. Wells in the *New Machiavelli* gives a much-criticized picture of the Webbs under the ill-concealed names of Altiora and Oscar Bailey. He presents them as leading ugly, unromantic, graceless lives, with weighty 'idea' gatherings and poor meals; and Mrs. Webb as ambitious, untidy, matter-of-fact, and managing: inclined to economize on food so as to hire another research secretary.

And yet it is the unambitious disdain of recognition that G. D. H. Cole and Mary Agnes Hamilton emphasize in the Webbs; the first writer particularly sees an almost mystical motive in their humanitarianism and their unceasing efforts to make it realizable.

The first result of the researches of the Webbs, *The History of Trade Unionism*, was published in 1894. This contribution to English social literature, declared by Frederic Harrison a "classic monument of sympathetic industry" and considered from many points of view the most important book of its kind produced during the last half of the nineteenth century, is significant in three main respects: first, the intensive research and

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15 Mary Agnes Hamilton, *"At Home With Beatrice and Sidney Webb"*, pp. 282-283.
organization which preceded the writing; second, the historical and gradual tenor of the books; and third, the literary interest of the book from the viewpoint of Fabian help and as a joint literary effort of husband and wife.

From the first point of view The History of Trade Unionism made the Webbs the creators of a new system of scientific research. 19 The investigation, as the authors say in the Introduction, was of necessity mainly original and involved such sources as: interviews with Trade Unionists themselves; studies of the archives, minutes, reports, old newspapers, and public records pertaining to Trade Unionism; personal attendance of meetings of Trade Union Councils; visits to workingmen's homes in London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Dublin, Glasgow, and Manchester; interviews with employers and secretaries of employers associations; periodical literature and contemporary pamphlets in libraries; the Report on Trade Societies and Strikes issued by the Social Science Association in 1860; journals of the House of Commons publications of the Record Office; petitions to Parliament; old tracts related to Trade Unions in the British Museum; and the manuscripts, newspaper cuttings and reports left by Francis Place. 20

Of the elaborate system of notetaking they found necessary they tell later in the Preface of English Local Government. All notes they recorded on separate sheets of paper, each sheet recording a single fact, of one

19 Mary Agnes Hamilton, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. 109
place, and of one date. The work of the Webbs and their research secretaries in the incessant mechanical shuffling and reshuffling of these notes is a testimony to the indefatigable energies of these sociologists.\textsuperscript{21} The History of Trade Unionism, with its Bibliography of forty-five closely printed pages, and its systematic arrangement and compression puts to shame, commented Frederic Harrison, "the huge unsorted pile of pamphlets collected by the last Labour Commission."\textsuperscript{22}

From the second point of view, that of historical gradualism, the book is equally commendable: there is no partisanship: Trade Unionism is represented from its origin at the beginning of the eighteenth century as merely a phase of a large evolution; but the organized workingman was considered a vital factor in this evolution towards Industrial Democracy. The influence of the Webbs in altering the approach to historical writing is a considerable one.\textsuperscript{23}

Fabianism is much in evidence in the Bibliography; the Fabian Essays and Fabian Tracts 1-50 are referred to. Fabian gradualism is Webb gradualism as can be seen from such statements as "...from 1889 onward the chief efforts of the English Socialist Movement have been directed, not to bringing about a revolution, but to impregnation the existing forces of Society with Collectivist ideals and Collectivist principles."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22}Frederick Harrison, op., cit., p. 957
\textsuperscript{23}Elie Halevy, History of the English People 1895-1905, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{24}Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, p. 400.
From a literary aspect the Webbs humbly concede the credit to Fabian associates "And there are two dear comrades and friends, [Bernard Shaw and Graham Wallas], to whose repeated revision of every line of our manuscript the volume owes whatever approach to literary merit it may possess." 25 M. A. Hamilton credits The History of Trade Unionism with the quality of enjoyable reading, a quality which of all the Webb books she gives to this alone. 26

Frederic Harrison further says from the literary point of view: "The book is itself a literary curiosity, as the joint product of husband and wife. Effective literary partnerships are very rare; and though there are many examples of husband and wife being both authors, it is not easy to recall an instance of elaborate work produced jointly by husband and wife with such perfect unity of method that their intimate friends cannot pretend to trace a separate hand in any part." 27

The next Webb book, Industrial Democracy of 1897, is in reality a sequel to The History of Trade Unionism. In this scientific analysis of Trade Unionism, a large portion of which had been given in the form of lectures at the London School of Economics and Political Science, the Trade Unions are considered as democracies and their functioning as democracies is outlined. 28 As the Webbs were so frequently to do, detailed advice is

25 Ibid., Introduction, p. xvi.
26 Mary Agnes Hamilton, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, p. 184.
27 Frederick Harrison, op. cit., p. 958.
given to the serious student of sociology. In the Preface of *Industrial Democracy* besides stressing the importance of completely verified and mechanically perfect notetaking the authors discuss the two other sources of sociological information: Personal Observation (Beatrice Webb has actually worked as a tailoress and rent-collector) and the Interview (the skilled interrogation of a competent witness).29 They emphasize that "Sociology, like all other sciences, can advance only upon the basis of a precise observation of actual facts."30

Fabianism is in evidence both from the gradualism of the outlook and the numerous references to Fabian tracts, particularly Tracts No. 5, *Facts for Socialists*, and Tract No. 67, *Women and the Factory Acts*.31

In 1898 the Webbs published a book which really consisted of essays and studies which they had written during the previous ten years. Some had appeared in *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *Economic Journal*, and the *Quarterly Review*. Called *Problems of Modern Industry*, it has as its last two chapters two of Sidney Webb's outstanding Fabian tracts: *The Difficulties of Individualism, and Socialism: True and False*. Special credit is given to the Fabians, other than the customarily praised Shaw and Wallas in the statement: "For many of the facts quoted the author is indebted to the personal experience of the working-men and working-women members of the Fabian Society."32

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29Ibid., xi and xii.
30Ibid., p. v.
31Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, p. 496.
In 1898 the Webbs, after traveling to the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, began the heroic task of investigation, research, and intellectual planning for their series on English Local Government, the first of which was not to appear until 1906.33 Meanwhile, Sidney Webb on the London County Council was following Fabianism by pushing Collectivism in a thoroughly workmanlike manner. With unvarying amiability Webb wrote and presented his Reports, Reports which carried practical social measures, with the guiding spirit seldom asserting itself. And although the Chairman might grumble and mutter 'the Webb mixture as before,' things did get done which was all Webb cared about.34

His strongest efforts were directed toward the improvement of London's Education. It was the only subject on which he was known to be aroused to anger; he wanted no class of hewers of wood and drawers of water.35 As Chairman of the Committee on Technical Education he pushed through the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, not letting the personal consideration of antagonizing Graham Wallas (then a member of the London School Board which the Act of 1903 abolished) affect him.36

The Webbs too, feeling that "after a whole century of marvelous discovery in physiological and biological science, the study of the conditions of human grouping had fallen lamentably behind"37 established the London

33Mary Agnes Hamilton, op. cit., p. 169.
34Ibid., p. 119.
35Ibid.
36Ibid., p. 129.
37Ibid., p. 135.
School of Economics and Political Science in 1898 by means of a trust fund provided by the Fabian Henry Hutchinson.\textsuperscript{38}

Between 1901 and 1903 Sidney Webb, with Permeation abandoned as a Fabian policy, urged the cause of Socialism and Education in the \textit{Nineteenth Century and After}. In September 1901 there appeared an especially vitriolic, for Webb, attack on the old political school. Liberalism is flayed for its continued "Individualism and admiration for the worn-out Fenian abstraction 'Principle of Nationality'...\textit{Gladstonianism is as dead as the dodo and Jingoism is going.}"\textsuperscript{39} And the 'We are all Socialists now' theme is emphasized in the statement:"...the propaganda of practical Socialism has, during the 1st twenty years, had a great effect on English thought...What hinders the formation of a separate Socialist party in England is always the increase of Socialism is so much faster than that of professed and organized Socialists."\textsuperscript{40}

Education was the theme of his \textit{Nineteenth Century and After} essays of 1902 and 1903. In June 1902 "London University: a Policy and a Forecast" is a practical analysis of the ways by which the seeming disadvantages of a city university can be turned into good:"...the very limitation of London University becomes its opportunity. Being, as regards its undergraduate class, essentially a university for the sons and daughters of households of

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\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 373
limited means and strenuous lives, it will not, like Oxford and Cambridge, set itself to skim from the surface of Society the topmost layer of rich men's sons and scholarship winners ... it must dive deep down through every stratum of its seven million constituents. ..."41 Culture born of classic scholarship and learned leisure may have to be sacrificed by London University but it can be made a testing ground for ambition and endurance in the fields of original social research. New progress, observes the author, can be made by developing the vast opportunities the city of London affords rather than trying with futility to fit new circumstances to old ideals.

Two very optimistic essays follow in the same publication and hail the gradual recognition of the importance of the Education problem as shown in the Acts of 1902 and 1903. Webb sees in them an adventitious centralization of education in accord with John Stuart Mill's principles of local government42 and a positive arrest of the nation's suicide: "The transformation affected in the course of half a century in the manner and morals of the London manual working class is one of the most remarkable chapters of social history."43

The first of the Local Government series, English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act: the Parish and the County, published in 1906, was another Webb triumph of scientific research.

The authors again devoted the Preface to the instruction of possible research students. The sources which they enumerate rival those of The History of Trade Unionism: official records, old manuscripts, minutes of Parish Vestries, primitive accounts (sometimes dating back to the fourth and fifth centuries); Order Books and Sessions Papers, Diaries of Justices of the Peace; proceedings of the Courts of Sewers, the Street Commissioners, the Turnpike Trustees, and the Incorporated Guardians of the Poor. In addition to these sources the local archives were consulted; journeys were made by the Webbs and their secretaries from Newcastle to Plymouth and to remote corners of England and Wales. Contemporary pamphlets, especially the controversial, newspapers, novels, plays, sermons, and local histories were still further sources. The libraries of Manchester, Glasgow, Oxford, Cambridge, the manuscripts of Lambeth Palace, and the official documents of the London School of Economics and Political Science were consulted in this vast procedure.

The fifty thousand separate sheets of notes involved in the composition of the book the authors further say have been given to the British Library of Political Science in connection with the London School of Economics and Political Science. The reading services of Bernard Shaw and Graham Wallas are again acknowledged.

46Ibid., p. xi.
47Ibid.

From the literary point of view M. A. Hamilton gives an interesting commentary on the Webb books. In this criticism she excepts the Trade Union books to which she concedes a more appealing style than the later publications. The average reader, she admits, just doesn't get the content of these books, and she endeavors to give the reason. The words and phrases are vivid and appropriate and facile; the authors have an immense vocabulary: Mrs. Webb has a special talent for psychological and Sidney Webb for institutional phrasing. But the sentences suffer from uniformity, from monotony; the pattern is imposing in sheer mass of material but uninteresting in its sameness.48

The literary style of the Webb books is both benefited and hampered by the dual authorship. The critic explains this: the use of the editorial "we" lends authority to the pronouncements of the authors but it also has effects of less merit:

The ample phraseology in which the pronouncements are clothed further tends to suggest that the corpus of opinion of persons of good sound sense, is, in fact, being set out. The impact of their joint utterance has a formidable weight. But this advantage, like others, carries drawbacks with it. The dual mind is stronger than the single one. Its logical processes are more rigorously tested, and its judgments presented with less individualistic angularity. On the other

hand, the point of the dual pen is less sharp, the idiosyncrasy of the dual voice is less challenging. Character, that mysterious element in style, suffers a blurring. The inclination must always be, in joint writing, to press as much into a given sentence as it can be made to hold; to make of it a portmanteau, accommodating for points that have occurred to either, views seen from a slightly different angle by one or the other. So the sentences get longer and longer, and have the tired fall of something submitted to repeated drafting, emended and extended, with a qualifying adjective tucked in here, an adverb there. This heavy reinforcement, by adjectives and adverbs, and very often, by clauses and parentheses, causes a clotting of the flow of living blood which is the essence of a vital style. The practice of dictation, like the extensive employment of secretaries, must increase every inherent difficulty of doing together something like writing, whose very essence is personal. 49

Furthermore, these authors have not deigned to make any concessions to their readers; the titles are unprepossessing; the volumes are formidable to look at and uncomfortable to handle; and the type is set with the smallest concession to visual sensibility. Thus even the passages of sombre eloquence in the later books fail to alter the general impression. The biographer sums up her criticism with both praise and blame: "They have given, generously, so many gifts through their writing - a fresh angle of approach, a method of study, a real illumination of subject matter, a new standard of disinterested thoroughness - that the greedy recipients want one more: the gift of enjoyment. They have to do without." 50

The Local Government series was interrupted by the intensive activities of the Webbs between 1905 and 1912 on the Minority Report of the Royal

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., p. 184.
Commission of the Poor Law. In the document itself, in the complications which attended its publication, and in the social and political frenzy which was to result from it, Sidney and Beatrice Webb were to experience at once the greatest triumph and the bitterest defeat of their career.

Mrs. Webb from 1905 to 1909 was a member of the Commission set up by Mr. Balfour. Of all the able persons on the Commission Mrs. Webb, because of her swiftness of mind, resourcefulness, imagination, and the range and scope of her knowledge, and because she was the only person on the Commission who knew exactly what she wanted to accomplish and made the Commission her first concern, was the dominant force. Further, in any investigation in which she could not persuade or force the Commission to act she used her own research staff paid by funds supplied by Mrs. Bernard Shaw. And the Chairman, Lord George Hamilton, was constantly invited to Grosvenor Road for luncheon or dinner - and discussion.

But Mrs. Webb, never subtle, made the fatal mistake of antagonizing the great John Burns.51

The Minority Report, wholeheartedly accepting the Government's responsibility for destitution and sounding the theme of prevention, the manuscript of which was actually the work of Sidney Webb, was published in 1909. But simultaneously with the Blue Books came the Webb's own edition: they had lent the plates to the Fabian Society for a cheap edition of one shilling. When the Treasury threatened the Fabian Society with an injunction on the grounds that the Crown copyright had been infringed Webb reminded them first,
that he had written the Report, and second, that since 1887 there had been no copyright monopoly for Blue Books. The Treasury then issued an Official Report at one-half the price; the Webbs reduced theirs and the Treasury then issued a fresh octavo edition. Between 1909 and 1914 five separate editions of The Minority Report were simultaneously on the market at different prices. By 1910 twenty five thousand copies were sold and the Minority Campaign had its vigorous beginning.52

From 1910 to 1913 the Webbs abandoned their Local Government series to work for the social reforms advocated in The Minority Report, and although Mrs. Webb had been an active Fabian since 1907 and in 1911 was elected to the Executive and established the Fabian Research Department, it was the Minority Campaign which was the focus of their activities.

An intensive program of publicity, advertisement, pressure, organized conferences, national and regional, resulted in the National Committee for the Break-Up of the Poor Laws. The Webbs used every social and political connection at hand; resounding names aided the agitation: Winston Churchill presided over meetings and Rupert Brooke delivered leaflets by bicycle. While Sidney Webb talked to bankers, Mrs. Webb, with new clothes, had society ladies to lunch.

The Committee had prominent members divided into representative groups. The Literature group was represented by Chesterton, Masefield, Graham Wallas, Hugh de Selincourt, Sarah Grand, Richard Whiting, and Maurice Hewlett.

52Ibid., 197.
'Learning' by Sir Oliver Lodge, A. F. Pollard, Gilbert Murray, James Seth, and L. T. Hobhouse. Drama was represented by Beerbohm Tree, Forbes-Robertson and Granville-Barker. At meetings in St. James' Hall in the spring of 1910 the Chairmen were: Gilbert Murray, Sir Frederick Pollack, Philip Snowden, Winston Churchill, Bernard Shaw, and Oliver Lodge.

The Webbs travelled the country preaching their reforms: Sidney Webb with the usual objective impartiality and Mrs. Webb with contrasting enthusiasm. Young men and women from the universities drudged at the central office and a Research Department was set up to keep the Report up to date. By January, 1911 this non-party Committee had a membership of twenty thousand and the name was changed to The National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution. "Destitution" became the thing to talk about, even in fashionable circles.53

During the Campaign the Webbs published three books with direct bearing on Poor Law Reform. The Break-Up of the Poor Law (1909) contained the Minority Report and English Poor Law Policy (1910) placed a definite responsibility on the individual and the community of the maintenance of a definite minimum for civilised life.54 The Prevention of Destitution (1911) avoided all controversy over the Poor Law. It aimed at the presentation of independent proposals for the prevention of involuntary destitution, worded simply, with administrative technicalities and phraseology avoided, so as to reach

53 Ibid., pp. 198-200.
the average educated citizen.\(^55\)

In this book an interesting distinction is made between Poverty and Destitution: the first is merely relative: "any person is poor who has less spending power than is common in the circle in which he lives. 'The poor ye have always with you' is merely a statement of the fact of inequality of wealth."\(^56\) But Destitution is the actual absence of the necessities of life; it is a "moral malaria which undermines the spiritual vitality."\(^57\)

The experience both of Trade Unions and the German Government is invoked to indicate the ways in which Insurance may be made a part of the provision for Old Age, Invalidity, Industrial Accidents, Sickness, and Involuntary Unemployment.

But the Webbs found that progress could be made only through political help. Their problem was political and it was here that they were failing. It seemed futile to hold enthusiastic meetings of members who were already converted when they could not cut across the party lines. And John Burns, then President of the Local Government Board was a powerful enemy. And if for a time they 'collared' Winston Churchill, he was no 'stayer'.\(^58\)

When in 1911 the Webbs returned from a world tour they found Lloyd George launching his Social Reform Program on lines far removed from theirs.


\(^{56}\)Ibid., p. 2.

\(^{57}\)Ibid.

\(^{58}\)M. A. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.
and the volatile Mr. Churchill detaching his support from the old Committee for newer fields.59

The politicians had administered a major defeat to the Webbs and they learned anew the relative inefficiency of non-party action. The Crusade, the organ of the Committee appeared for the last time in March, 1913 and in April, 1913 Sidney Webb became the editor of the Fabian-established New Statesman, which he was chiefly responsible for founding.60

The Local Government series was resumed in 1913 with the publication of English Local Government; the Story of the King's Highway, an historical analysis of road administration which "begins with the war-chariot of Boadicea and brings it down to the motor omnibus of today."61

In 1914 Sidney Webb as editor of The New Statesman and Beatrice Webb as a director, feeling that the Government had no alternative in the War, made no criticisms. But this did not interfere with the presentation in the Supplement of the sensational Common Sense by their old friend.

The fact that Sidney and Beatrice Webb were by nature realists and were social humanitarians before either entered that Fabian Society makes it difficult to judge just how far the Fabian Society influenced their social literature - or if the debt is rather on the other side. But it is true that persuasion of Shaw brought Webb into the Society and that it was as a Fabian that he first became prominent. And it was his prominence that

59Ibid., p. 206.
caused Beatrice Webb to seek information for her book, that caused his
election to the London County Council and enabled him to resign from the
Colonial Office.

To this problem too the words of Graham Wallas from The Life of Francis
Place seem applicable:

The history of any definite 'school' of philosophic or
political opinion will generally show that its founda-
tion was made possible by personal friendship. So
few men devote themselves to continuous thought, that
if several think on the same line for many years it is
almost always because they have encouraged each other
to proceed. And varieties of opinion and temperament
are so infinite, that those who accept a new party name,
and thereby make themselves responsible for each other's
utterances, are generally bound by personal loyalty
as well as by intellectual agreement.62

Beyond his essays and tracts as a Fabian Graham Wallas is the editor
of one and the author of three books. They are all on social subjects. In
1893 he edited Social Peace a Study of the Trade Union Movement in England
by Dr. G. von Schulze-Gaevernitz. In 1908 he published The Life of Francis
Place (1771-1854) and Human Nature in Politics; in 1914 The Great Society,
a Psychological Analysis.

In Social Peace a statement of the author reveals the fact that the
selection of the book resulted precisely from the Fabian associations and
principles of the editor:

In describing England as on the road to Social Peace,
I mean that England is sure of a peaceful solution of
her social difficulties and conflicts... The goal
of the English Labor movement is still far off, its
struggles are often hard and prolonged; but the efforts

62Graham Wallas, The Life of Francis Place (1771-1854), London: Longmans
Green and Co., 1908, p. 65.
made to reach that goal are along the lines of existing society. In fact even when speaking of Social Peace, I have in my mind the industrial struggles between capital and labour, the strikes and disputes, which as we shall presently see, come in the course of industrial development, to be carried out by peaceful methods.63

When Graham Wallas wrote The Life of Francis Place he was a lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The main sources for this book were of course the Place manuscripts in the British Museum and the autobiography and letter books in possession of the Francis Place descendents.64 These, it may be noted, were valued sources for the Webb books in which Graham Wallas' help was so considerable.

The Life of Francis Place is a carefully annotated book written in a restrained and thoughtful manner. In this as in his other books he applies psychology to politics and social problems.

The early life of Francis Place is presented with a rare sympathy; his later associations with the Benthamites, particularly his friendship with James Mill and the Francis Place accounts of the upbringing of John Stuart Mill are presented from the viewpoint of a psychologist.65 Even criticism of the harshness of Chartism is tempered with understanding:

Chartism as a means of revolution had failed as completely as Trade Unionism and the Chartists did not take their beating well. The conception of the

64 Graham Wallas, The Life of Francis Place, Introduction, p. v.
'solidarity' of a new heaven and a new earth to be achieved by brothers leagued against a world of tyrants and of slaves, is the greatest of all living forces. Perhaps without some measure of it very few men can be induced to fight for their ideas. But it is apt to make those who come under its influence cruel and intolerant in success, and to leave a peculiar kind of nagging bitterness after failure.65

In Human Nature in Politics, an analysis of representative government, Graham Wallas writes as a practical public man and warns against the tendency in modern politics of exaggerating the intellectuality of mankind and separating the study of political economy from human nature. Nineteenth Century Intellectualism errs in political science by too often analysing institutions and too little analysing men.67

A reflection of his Fabian and particularly his Webb investigations is contained in his comment on the conflict between the old and the new order of things:

... in parliamentary oratory that change from qualitative to quantitative method which has so deeply affected the procedure of Conferences and Commissions has not yet made much progress. In a 'full-dress' debate even those speeches which move us most often recall Mr. Gladstone, in whose mind, as soon as he stood up to speak, his Eton and Oxford training in words always contended with his experience of things, and who never made it quite clear whether the 'grand and eternal commonplaces of liberty and self-government' meant that certain elements must be of great and permanent importance in every problem of Church and State, or in an a priori solution of all political problems could be deduced by all good men from absolute and authoritative laws.68

The Great Society: A Psychological Analysis is a purely psychological

65Ibid., p. 65.
66Ibid., p. 376.
67Wallas, Human Nature in Politics, London; Constable and Co., 1908,
study of the general organisation from a social view of a large modern state, a state partly created by mechanical invention. In this social organisation men find themselves working and thinking and feeling in relation to an environment without precedent in the history of the world.69

The book is divided into two distinct parts. Part I studies the facts of human psychology in order to discover how they can be adapted to the needs of The Great Society and Part II examines the organisation in The Great Society with the purpose of discovering to what extent they can be improved by a closer adaptation to the facts of human psychology.

The Great Society bears the stamp of a man with an active knowledge of social realism: Trade Unionism, interviews with factory workers, and a realistic picture of London's poor give to this psychological book the mark of Fabianism.70

In 1914 Graham Wallas became Professor of Political Science at London University, a position which he held until 1923.

When Sydney Oliver, who from a background of advantage and culture had always been particularly noted for his sympathy toward the poor and downtrodden in his early Fabian days, began to achieve great distinction and honor, first as Secretary to the West Indian Royal Commission at Washington in 1897, and later as Acting Governor and Governor of Jamaica from 1902 to 1903, he applied the same discerning sympathies to the Coloured Question.71

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68 Ibid., p. 165.
69 Ibid., p. 3.
70 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
71 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw Playboy and Prophet, p. 250.
In 1906 he wrote White Capital and Coloured Labour which was published by the Independent Labour Party. In it, with great tact and restraint, Olivier attempts the discussion of colonisation, economic, not humanitarian, in motive, wherein the white man in his characteristically commercial activities considers the black man lazy and the black man in his character of manual producer and labourer feels (though he sometimes profoundly dissembles this) that the white man is in his land to exploit him.72

Sydney Olivier from his experience in the West Indies would show that while both impressions are justified neither is entirely just. Tolerance and a longer view are the solution as he expresses it: "No mixed community can attain unity and health if the white man assumes an attitude which stimulates and maintains this alienating suspicion in the black, or where one governing class bases its policy on the short sighted theory that the dividing habits of Race are permanently stronger than the unifying force of Humanity."73

The influence of the Fabian Society on the social literature of H. G. Wells is barely discernible. It remains as belligerently unaffected by Fabianism as Wells himself. While a member of the Society he wrote A Modern Utopia (1905) which depicted a scientific Utopianism but "of a deliberate imaginativeness that the Fabian Society had been trying for twenty years to banish".74

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73 Ibid., p. 175.
Wells defends this criticism in his *Autobiography*: "Both schools Fabian Socialism and Classical Marxism were so ignorant of the use of the imagination in scientific exploration, that they thought Utopianism 'unscientific' and their snobbish terror of that word 'unscientific' had no limits." However, Fabian Gradualism may be responsible for the presentation of *A Modern Utopia* as, according to Wells, a flexible and progressing organisation. But the criticism of John Beattie Crozier tends to cancel even this: "The truth is, this Utopia of Mr. Wells is a purely personal imagination of its author, founded, like any other millenial dream, on what he personally would like to see realised. As for his Utopia being one with a principle of evolution in it, and not rigid and fixed like those of his predecessors, - had he embodied his ideas in an abstract discourse, they would have been seen to be as immovable and fixed as the statues of the gods around the walls of a pantheon."

But Wells defends his idealism as inspirational in the same book: "It is good for awhile to be free from the carping note that must needs be audible when we discuss our present imperfections, to release ourselves from practical difficulties and the tangle of ways and means. It is good to stop by the track for a space, put aside the knapsack, wipe the brows, and talk a little of the upper slopes of the mountains we think we are climbing,

77John Beattie Crozier, "Mr. Wells as a Sociologist", *Fortnightly Review*, V. 34, September, 1905, p. 424.
would but the trees let us see it."78

In 1906 *This Misery of Boots* (Wells in a poverty-stricken childhood meditated on boots from his vantage point of an underground window) advocated two un-Fabian doctrines: the Abolition of Private Property by force not by Gradualism, and Revolution.79 Still more personally significant is the following statement, aimed at his then fellow-Fabians: "Let us be clear about one thing; that Socialism means revolution, that it means a change in the every-day texture of life... You will find Socialists about, or at any rate men calling themselves Socialists, who will pretend that this is not so, who will assure you that some odd little jobbing about municipal gas and water is Socialism and back-stairs intervention between Conservative and Liberal the way to the millennium. You might as well call a gas jet in the lobby of a meeting-house, the glory of God in Heaven.80

But in 1908 (the year he resigned from the Fabian Society) in *New Worlds or Old* in which he outlined his own Constructive Socialism, Wells did give administrative Socialism credit for being the physical structure and nerves between the substance of earlier Socialism and the collective mind of humanity of future Socialism. However, even this faint praise is tempered by an unromantic picture of Webb bureaucracy: "The mystical democracy of the Marxist, though manifestly impossible, has in it something attractive, something humanly and desperately pugnacious and generous, some-

80Ibid., pp. 47-48.
thing indeed heroic; the bureaucracy of the Webbitie, though far more attainable, is infinitely less inspiring. ... Instead of a gorgeous flare in the darkness, we have the first cold onset of day light heralding the sun."81

In European Dramatists Archibald Henderson emphasizes the influence of Socialism generally and Fabianism specifically on the plays of Harley Granville-Barker. This extremely versatile young actor, playwright, and producer had become a Socialist in 1901. And Henderson says of this: "Socialism proved the most transforming influence of his life. His whole attitude toward the theatre underwent a change that can be described as nothing less than revolutionary. For the first time he became profoundly imbued with the necessity of organizing the theatre, of making it a great instrumentality in the social life of our time."82 And Granville-Barker substantiates this statement with a pertinent statement of the purpose of Dramatic Art in The Exemplary Theatre:

Dramatic art, full developed in the form of the acted play, is the working out-in terms of make-believe, no doubt, and patchily, biasedly, with much over-emphasis and suppression, but still in the veritable human medium - not of the self-realization of the individual, but of society itself. A play is a pictured struggle and reconciliation of human wills and ideas; internecine with destiny or with circumstance. And it is generally in the development of character, by clash and by mutual adjustment, that the determinant of the struggle is found. What livelier microcosm of human society therefore, can there be than an acted play?83

82 Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 396.
Granville-Barker had been a close associate of Shaw since 1889 when he acted brilliantly in some of the London Stage Society presentations of Shaw's plays, notably as the poet Marchbanks in *Candida*.84

In 1904 Granville-Barker and J. E. Vedrenne established The Royal Court Theatre, a significant exponent of the New Drama in England. From 1904 to 1907 The Court Theatre produced plays of deepest social import, particularly plays by Shaw, Granville-Barker, and John Galsworthy; but numerically it conducted a Shavian Festival. Granville-Barker continued his remarkable success in Shavian portrayal, notably as Father Keegan in *Bull's Other Island* and as John Tanner in *Man and Superman* in which he was made up a youthful replica of Shaw.85

From 1907 to 1912 Granville-Barker served on the Executive of the Fabian Society and it is in two plays of this period, *Waste* and *The Madras House* where Fabian associations are most obvious. Of this influence and the strange, anti-sentimental, and chiselled art of Granville-Barker Archibald Henderson says in *European Dramatists*: "His associations with Mr. Shaw, Mr. Sidney Webb, and their confreres in committees of the Fabian Society wrought a tremendous change in his methods of thought, teaching him to co-ordinate, to concentrate, to think in terms of reality and realizable fact".86

*Waste*, bearing unmistakable signs of that influence and showing a power of dramatic intellectual conflict, was produced during 1906 and 1907 and was

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85Ibid., p. 423.
a sensation: a story of political maneuvering, threatened scandal, and suicide, it was banned by the King's Reader of Plays. This incident united objection to censorship and contributed vitally to the investigation of censorship by a joint committee of the Two Houses in 1909. In many ways this censorship was fortunate for Granville-Barker and for the future of the English Drama because it focused public attention upon him and made him an exemplar of the New Drama in England. 

This microcosm of human society, this poignant tragedy, culminating in the pitiful "waste of a good man" presents its widely diversified characters in a background of public moment: Disestablishment, Feminism, political maneuver, education, Socialism, Conservatism - all are discussed discerningly, and the first problem is the very fabric of the play.

The Fabian playwright certainly speaks in the discussion of disendowment of the Church of England. Henry Trebell, the central character, ruthless, honest, and cabinet-bound, discusses the question with a doctor friend:

Wedgecroft. I'm not pleased you have to be running a tilt against the party system. My friend ... it's a nasty windmill. Oh, you've not seen that article in the Nation on Politics and Society... it's written at Mrs. Farrant and Lady Lurashall and that set. They hint that the Tories would never had had you if it hadn't been for that bad habit of opposite party men meeting each other.

Trebell. Excellent habit! What we really want in this country is a coalition of all the shibboleths.

87 Ibid., p. 397.
with the rest of us in opposition • • • for five years only.87b

It is a secular Church that Trebell proposes, a turning of the "parson into the schoolmaster • • • and the Archdeacon into the Inspector • • • and the Bishop into - I rather hope he'll stick to his mitre, Gilbert."87c

The Madras House was produced in 1909 and 1910 and bears the stamp of Shaw in the loquacity and argumentativeness of its characters and the stamp of Fabianism in its themes: feminism, economic conditions, marriage, and politics. To this Granville-Barker added his own subtlety and psychological insight. Philip Madras of Madras House was Granville-Barker's speaker for the new order of things. For Philip Madras "to save my soul alive"88 must give up running a fashion shop to go on the County Council: "And not to cut a fine figure there either. But to be on committee or committees. Not to talk finely even then. • • Lord keep me from the temptation • • • but to do dull, hard work. • • • "89

To his sympathetic but incredulous wife, Jessica, who, beautiful, fastidious, sensitive, and gentle, the result of "three or four generations of cumulative refinement"90 is the playwrights representative of the conscious avoiders of the realities around them. Philip Madras explains his decision:

Jessica. Well • • • why Phil? I may as well know.

Philip. To save my soul alive.

87c Ibid., p. 251.
89 Ibid.
Jessica. I'm sure I hope you may. But what is it we're to cultivate in poor Mildred's soul?

Philip. Why not a sense of ugliness? Have you ever really looked at a London street? . . . walked slowly up and down it three times . . . carefully testing it with every cultured sense?

Jessica. Yes . . . it's loathsome.

Philip. Then what have you done?

Jessica. What can one do?

Philip. Come home and play a sonata of Beethoven! Does that drown the sights and the sounds and the smell of it?

Jessica. Yes . . . it does.

Philip. Not to me. . . . My God! Not to me!

Jessica. For so many women, Phil, art has to make life possible.

Philip. Suppose we teach Mildred to look out of the window of the life outside. We want to make that impossible. Neither Art nor Religion nor good manners have made of the world a place I'll go on living in if I can help it. . . . I tell you I haven't come by these doubts so easily. Beautiful sounds and sights and thoughts are all of the world's heritage I care about. Giving them up is like giving my carefully created soul out of my keeping before I die.

Jessica. And into whose?

Philip. I'm afraid into the keeping of everybody we are at present tempted to dislike and despise. For that's Public Life. That's Democracy. But that's the Future. . . .

91Ibid., pp. 203-204.
Granville-Barker, as producer, actor, and playwright, directed a forthright thrust in *The Forum* of August, 1910 at the customary criticism of the New Drama - that it was not drama.

The next time that you see in the papers that such and such a piece is 'not a play' please book your seats at once before the management is compelled to remove it; first, because you may, open mindedly find it very interesting; second, because it is more than likely to be a piece of mine. I will ask the next critic who uses the term to explain in return just what a play is and all that it is, and to explain it without reference to any authority whatever. A play is anything that can be made effective upon the stage of a theatre by human agency. And I am not sure that this definition is not too narrow. But it remains a helpful definition, calculated to attract to the work of the Theatre men of originality and force. That is why, incidentally, we must go on breaking new ground, enlarging the boundaries of the drama, fitting it for every sort of expression.92

That this New Drama was but a part of a larger movement in drama and that it was instrumental in introducing to the British public yet another social dramatist, John Galsworthy, who in his turn brought other influences, is the next consideration in the Fabian problem.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: LATER INFLUENCES OF FABIANISM; POSSIBLE EFFECT ON EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIAL FICTION AND DRAMA; THE PLACE IN ENGLISH SOCIAL LITERATURE OF FABIANISM AS A REFORMIST AND ARTISTIC INFLUENCE.

In an Outline of Contemporary Drama, Thomas H. Dickinson defines the condition of English Drama at the end of the Nineteenth Century as suffering from three handicaps: the repressive influence of popular codes of morality upon the imagination of writers, an archaic and materialistic commercial organization, and a dependence upon imported dramas for modern presentation. The remarkable vitality of the renascence of the British theatre in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century was the result of the concurrence of many forces, some working in England and some derived from the regenerative influences at work in the world theatre.¹

Connected with the movement for naturalistic drama, for adventure and liberal production were the Theatre Libre of Paris, founded in 1887 by Andre Antoine and Die Freie Buhne of Berlin founded in 1889. But, while in France and Germany the free theatre had fought against traditions, in England, as Bernard Shaw and Granville-Barker were so forcibly to discover, the problem was more complex. Dickinson says of it:

In England the independent theaters had to fight enemies more difficult than either of these. They had to fight an almost unbroken ignorance on the part of the masses of the people as to what constitutes the art of the theater,

and the inherited prejudices and philistinism of the classes which had the theater under control. . . . The lack of playwrights in England referred directly back to this condition of the popular mind, and to the system of organization which had until within fifty years been fastened to the principle of monopoly and was still under the control of the censor.  

The program of the independent theatre had a two-fold purpose: the establishment of repertory theatres pledged to the support of good plays and encouraging dramatic authorship by opposing the long run system; and the establishment of theatre in the provinces for original plays. The purpose was realized by the founding of The Independent Theater, the Court, the Kingsway, the Savoy, and Charles Frohman's Duke of York's Theatre.

Desmond MacCarthy in The Court Theatre, Granville-Barker in "The Theatre: The Next Phase", and John Galsworthy in Another Sheaf and The Inn of Tranquility all define the essence of the New Drama as truth and sincerity. Truth and naturalness as opposed to effect was the criterion for the choice of plays for Court Theatre productions.

Objecting to the lonely title "Advanced Theatre" and the more obnoxious one of "Intellectual Drama" Granville-Barker defines the New Drama as the Normal Theatre because it makes for righteousness, for a sincere and undistorted view of life.

Since the art of the theatre is an expression of modern life and since it can clarify confused issues and by its art of selection aid the art of

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2 Ibid., p. 107.
3 Ibid., p. 229.
living the theatre has a moral value and as such, he maintains, should be supported by endowment. And that this endowment should not be cadged from the rich but taxed from them is his Fabian suggestion.5

Further, if the Normal Drama is to develop, four things are necessary: it must be put on an economic footing; it must be free; it must have a highly trained body of actors for its interpretation; and there must be an open-mindedness in most of the critics of the New Drama. About this rigid adherence to dogma he is the most scathing: "To strike at the living future of an art, most of all in the name of its dead past, is a heinous sin."6

This sincerity, this distrust of tradition, prejudice, comfort, habit and authority, this truth to self as evident in the New Drama is seen by John Galsworthy as having two flagrant enemies: the commercial managers, because sincerity and commercial success are generally opposed, and the Censorship of Plays, "a bulwark for the preservation of their comfort and sensibility against the spiritual researches and speculations of bolder and too active spirits."7

A significant analysis, which may be applied to this situation, of the relationship and the process of social progress and ideas is made by Galsworthy in A Sheaf:

Social and political justice, then, advances by fits and starts, through ideas - children of the one great

6Ibid., p. 169.
idea of Harmony - which are suggested now by one, now by another, section or phase of national life. The process is like the construction and shaping of a work of art. For an artist is forever receiving vague impressions from people unconsciously observed, from feelings unconsciously experienced, till in good time he discovers that he has an idea. This idea is but a generalisation or harmonious conception derived subconsciously from these vague impressions. Being moved to embody that idea, he at once begins groping back to, and gathering in, those very types and experiences from which he derived the general notion in order adequately to shape the vehicle - his picture, his poem, his novel - which shall carry his idea forth to the world.

So in social and political progress. The exigencies and inequalities of existing social life produce a crop of impressions on certain receptive minds which suddenly burst into flower in the form of ideas. The minds in which the abstractions or ideas have flowered seek then to burgeon them forth, and their method of doing so is to bring to public notice those exigencies and inequalities which were the original fuel of their ideas. In this way is the seed of an idea spread among the community.  

The Court Theatre introduced Galsworthy's plays admirably and sympathetically to the British public; this dramatist never felt the hampering limitation that Shaw and Granville-Barker had to struggle against. Further, he came to the composition of plays with a social doctrine fully developed in his practice of the novel, having already published *The Island Pharisees* in 1904 under his own name.  

Galsworthy's method of deliberate observation, objectiveness, of quietude and serenity, of condensed emphasis, his dispassionate presentation of things as they are, his studious documentation of a social case without partisanship was singularly different from the propagandist argumentativeness of Shaw and Granville-Barker. And yet the effect of his art, its moral force, was a social one; but it was an effect produced rather by situation than by dialogue.

The individual is considered, not as an individual, but in relation to the social organism; and the definite problems of the individual in its relation with others, whether the problem is one of marriage, labour dispute, administration of law, or solitary confinement are treated with a consciousness of their complexity and a plea for understanding, for sympathy, for imagination, as voiced by Ferrand in *The Pigeon*: "If I had one prayer to make, it would be, Good God give me to understand!"

The lack of understanding which separates class still steadily further from class, which leads to unequal distribution of justice, to dispute and rancour, and to futility is so steadily, if dispassionately indicated that his reforming purpose is felt in *The Silver Box* (1906), *Strife* (1909), *Justice* (1910) *The Fugitive* (1913) *The Eldest Son* (1913) and *The Mob* (1914)

There is no evidence to show that John Galsworthy was ever a member of the Fabian Society; he had his social doctrine well defined, as evidenced by The Island Pharisees of 1904 before he wrote for the Court Theatre. Any possible influence, therefore, of Fabianism upon his novels must come from the freedom of ideas afforded by this theatre, from the enhancing of purpose by association, and from the influence upon his novels of his craftsmanship as a dramatist.

Andre Chevrillon points out a movement in English thought after the South African War to question the established political and intellectual ideas to question the existing scale of values; John Galsworthy narrows his target in his novels from the general social documentation of the plays to that most English portion of England, the governing class, the professional gentry of England.15

He delivers his message with quietness but with persistency against the static element in society as opposed to the dynamic. And this element, this aristocracy, was surrounded by its sense of property which valued everything in terms of money, by its conduct which was individual and yet tenaciously conventional and by its heredity which showed the aristocrats to be victims themselves.16

The colouring of the entire age Galsworthy attributes to this group: to the governing aristocracy in The Patrician, to the landed gentry in The  

16Helen Thoams Follett and Wilson Follett, op. cit., p. 271.
Country House, and to the moneyed professional class in The Forsyte Saga. And still, as in the plays, he does not denounce as Shaw or Granville-Barker or Wells, but rather shows what lack of comprehension, what Pharisaism can bring about. And further, he depicts the disturbing effect of beauty on materialism. 17

Sheila Kaye-Smith, in criticising the excess of social portent in Galsworthy's novels, maintains that, while the plays gain from the social and moral problems at their base, this same tendency impedes the development of the novels, especially since the novels lack further the individual touch which an actor can give to a play. 18 But, on the other hand, the novels, both the Folletts and Sheila Kaye-Smith agree, gain from the conciseness, form the exigent selectiveness and from the concentrated emphasis of the dramatist. 19

Arnold Bennett is listed as having joined the Fabian Society between 1907 and 1912 but there is no evidence that he was an active member. Further, since he had begun his annals of the Five Towns in 1902 and since so many other influences contributed to his factual realism, that of Fabianism is conjectural.

By 1903, Lafourcade states, Arnold Bennett had studied Smollett, Stendahl, Butler, Taine, and Dostoevsky and was under the direct influence of

18 Sheila Kaye-Smith, op. cit., p. 52.
George Moore and the French realists. And the great pottery manufacturing communities in the north of England, drab and dank and smoky, with the effect of their unloveliness so evident in the prejudiced, taciturn and pessimistic nature of their inhabitants, are the bases of Arnold Bennett's realism.

The critics of Bennett say that he has made wealth and authenticity of detail an end in themselves, that his books are "muddy with minutiae". But with all this exact registration and attention to fact there is always an ironic message: that the materialism which is supposed to represent solidarity is in reality keeping human souls apart from one another.

The evolutionary idea is present both in Galsworthy and Bennett but in a different manner: Galsworthy sees the errors of thought as a result of what has gone before while Bennett, while interested in the fact of the moment, is hopeful for the future.

As has been said both Galsworthy and Bennett came into association with Fabians and with Fabianism but since these associations were formed after both their realism and their social doctrine were firmly established any influence of Fabianism would serve rather as an emphasis or a confirmation than as an innovation.

There are divergent views of later Fabianism, of the wisdom of an active, self-sufficient Society which had always lived by its wits and whose chief

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24Ibid., p. 289.
political characteristic had been one of maneuver and strategy, in becoming an adjunct of the Labor Party and even altering its basis so that membership in the Labor Party was compulsory. Although conceding that the Fabian Society remains one of the main sources of Socialistic propaganda and information, Harold J. Laski points out that since the first World War the influence of Fabianism declined with the growth of the Labor Party. 25 R. C. K. Ensor goes further in criticism with the statement that the Fabian Society "wears the aspect of a stranded vessel, past which the main tides of political interest have flowed." 26 But to George Bernard Shaw, as spokesman of the opposite view, the new status of the Society is one of definite advantage; disentangled from intrigue the Fabians became potent prompters of public opinion and virtually became the Research Department of the Labor Party. 27

In the active politics of the Labor Party Sidney Webb's influence became considerable; he was president of the Board of Trade in the first Labor Cabinet, Secretary of State for the Dominions in the second, and in 1929 accepted a Barony to strengthen the membership of the Labor Party in the House of Lords. 28

Worthy of mention in view of the banner of Gradualism so proudly flown virtually from the beginning of its organisation is the momentous meeting of the Fabians in 1932 in which Mrs. Webb, temporarily exasperated by the

26 R. C. K. Ensor, "Fifty Years of Fabians", The Spectator, 1934, p. 43.
27 George Bernard Shaw, Fabianism, p. 19.
28 Donald O. Wagner, Social Reformers, pp. 509-510.
futility of the Labor governments of 1924 and 1929, and profoundly impressed
with the Russian systematic planning and detailed state control "threw
Gradualism overboard".29 And Bernard Shaw became an avowed Communist.30

Fabianism as a reformist and artistic influence in modern English social
literature occupies a distinctive position: the literature of the Society
in its own right, the tracts and the essays, reached a social realism un-
attained, and indeed undesired, by any other Socialistic organisation. It
remains, by virtue of the essentially middle class atmosphere of the Society
and its political maneuvering, a peculiar combination of opportunely applied
political economy and conservative terminology published in a discriminating
manner. Added to these qualities was the manner of gaiety and sharp criticism
retained throughout the years without once losing high seriousness of
purpose. These combinations with their peculiarly English appeal turned out
a respectable social literature hitherto unknown.

Artistically, the contribution of the Fabian Society is of course the
influence it had on the careers of its famous members. The stamp of Fabian-
ism on the plays of Bernard Shaw and Granville-Barker, on the sociological
works of the Webbs, on the psychological and humanitarian writings of
Graham Wallas and Sydney Olivier, is inevitably that of unrelenting social
realism.

29Ibid., p. 510.
30Harold J. Laski, op. cit., p. 38.
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