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FABIANISM, PERMEATION
AND INDEPENDENT LABOUR

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ABSTRACT

The leading Fabians held different versions of permeation: Shaw saw permeation in terms of weaning the Radicals away from the Liberal Party, so he favoured an independent party; Webb defined permeation in terms of the giving of expert advice to a political elite without any need for a new party. These varieties of permeation can be traced in the individual and collective actions of the Fabians, and, in particular, in their attitude to the formation of the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.). The Fabians did not simply promote the I.L.P. nor did they simply oppose the I.L.P.

Introduction

Historians have long debated the extent to which the Fabian Society acted as John the Baptist to the Labour Party. The Fabians presented themselves as the single most important group in winning for socialism a foothold on British soil: they replaced the alien creed of Marxism with a gradualist constitutionalism suited to British traditions, and their evolutionary brand of socialism precipitated the Labour Party, albeit by way of the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.).¹ Recent years, however, have seen the triumph of revisionists, inspired in large part by the scholarship of Professors Hobsbawm and McBriar, who dismiss the Fabians as vehemently as Shaw once extolled their virtues.² They argue that the I.L.P. took its strategy from Labour Marxists such as Champion, with the Fabians having little impact on the development of mainstream socialism from the early Marxists, through the I.L.P., to the Labour Party. On the revisionist view, the Fabians stand condemned as elitist and irrelevant: elitist because they ignored the grass-roots of working-class politics in favour of the high politics of the day; and irrelevant because the Labour Party arose from the interaction between the I.L.P. and the trade unions, both of which had been ignored, or even opposed, by the permeation-besotted Fabians.

The revisionists' distinction between the political strategies of the Fabians and the I.L.P. reflects a particular view of modern British politics.

The key idea is: the twentieth century saw the forward march of labour from the social to the political realm, so twentieth-century politics has been about class conflict in a way that leaves no room for the ideologies of the nineteenth century. Here the I.L.P. stood for the belief that the workers had distinct class interests requiring a new political party because these

interests had no place in the traditional ideologies of the Radicals, Whigs and Tories. The I.L.P. followed the strategy proposed by the Labour Marxists of sending working-class representatives to Parliament independent of existing political parties. The Fabians, in contrast, denied the reality of class conflict, suggesting that socialism was in the interests of everyone, or at least everyone but a handful of rentiers, and that the interests of the workers could be assimilated to traditional ideological divisions since the Liberal Party was moving, albeit unconsciously, towards a socialist programme.

The Fabians argued that socialists should advance their cause, not through a new party, but by permeating the existing Liberal Party. More generally, the Fabians were irrelevant because they remained wedded to traditional ideological conflicts at a time when the future lay with groups such as the I.L.P. who adopted the class-based outlook of the Marxists and, of course, the workers themselves.

The debate between the Fabians and their critics is one in which both sides capture an aspect of the truth. We can clear things further by challenging the erroneous assumption - made by almost every historian of Fabianism - that permeation denotes a single strategy.³

Shaw and Webb on Permeation

Brailsford Bright, an early Fabian, identified three outlooks within the Society:

British Socialists may, at present, be divided into three sections, namely: - (1) The Social Democrats of the Federation, and certain members of the Fabian and Christian Socialist Societies, and others who wish to remain an entirely distinct party . . . (2) Those Fabians and others who prefer to make use of the existing Radical party, forming an 'Extreme Left' wing thereof . . . (3) Those who hold aloof from all

existing parties without forming any political party or groups of their own, but would support any party, or any individual candidate or member of Parliament, who, for the time being, seemed to be promoting the growth of Socialism.⁴

Historians typically place Bland in the first category whilst failing to distinguish between Fabians belonging to the second and third categories. To highlight this distinction, we will analyse the views of the two leading Fabians: Shaw advocated a strategy akin to that of the second category, and Webb proposed a strategy akin to that of the third category.

The different political strategies of Shaw and Webb derived from their respective theories of rent.⁵ Shaw developed the arguments of nineteenth-century Radicals in a similar way to those O'Brienites who became Marxists.⁶ He thought economic rent was due to natural advantages of fertility and location, but he also identified various monopoly payments made for the privilege of using the means of production at all.⁷ Like the O'Brienites, he argued that monopolies enabled capitalists and landlords alike to charge the workers for access to the means of production.⁸ Like the O'Brienites, he argued that the amount that the monopolists could charge the workers was determined by an iron law of wages that meant the workers had to accept subsistence wages. Thus, his theory of rent suggested that the capitalists' monopoly of capital enabled them to purchase labour for less than the value of the commodities that that labour produced. Capitalists, qua monopolists, exploited the workers. There was a class war, but this class war was one reflecting a Radical hostility to monopolists at least as much as a Marxist hostility to capitalists. To Shaw, Radicalism was a class-based ideology which recognised the irreconcilable clash of interests between workers and monopolists. Socialism merely made explicit the underlying basis of Radicalism.

In 1884, Shaw, like Bland, left the Marxist, Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) for the Fabian Society, not because he thought that the class war was an illusion, but because he did not think that the workers were revolutionary.⁹ As Bland explained that "the revolt of the empty stomach ends at the baker's shop," so Shaw maintained that "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."¹⁰ Shaw believed in a parliamentary road to socialism. Yet he argued that the reality of class conflict meant socialists could not expect any help from the owners of property, that is, the monopolists. A new party was essential because the Liberals represented the monopolists, a class whose interests were diametrically opposed to those of the workers. Thus, as Bland called for "the formation of a definitely Socialist party," so Shaw told the editor of the Scots Observer that "I thirst for the blood of the Liberal Party; and if ever your sham fight with them becomes a real one, you may come to me for a lead."¹¹ Shaw wanted a new, socialist party. He asked that a Fabian manifesto "emphatically repudiate the Liberal Party and denounce Gladstone in express terms": we should "proclaim ourselves, not an advanced guard of the Liberal party, but definitely Social-Democratic."¹²

The S.D.F. entered three candidates in the general election of 1885, but they all polled appallingly.¹³ Shaw contrasted unfavourably the lack of support for these socialist candidates with the size of a demonstration of socialists and Radicals to defend a speaker's corner earlier that year: "out of our wonderful show of 50-70-80 or a hundred thousand men at Dod St., the polling has proved that not a hundred were Socialists."¹⁴ Clearly, Shaw concluded, a new party was not feasible since most workers were Radicals, not socialists. The current task of socialists was to drum up the support needed for independent action sometime in the future.

Where were socialists to find support? Shaw argued that the only differences between Radicals and socialists were ones of degree, and before long the Liberal Party would split in two with the Radicals joining the socialists. Liberals and Radicals were not natural bedfellows. They could cohabit momentarily only because of their mutual concern with home rule for Ireland. Once this disappeared, they would go their separate ways. Thus, Shaw advised a liberal friend to "read the Star & watch the struggle between our Social Democratic editor [Massingham] & your Home Rule Liberal editor [O'Connor]"; and he asked the friend, "when you have grasped the situation, will you join Goschen & [will] Hartington join us"; and he told the friend, "home Rule is not eternal, and when it is settled, the via media vanishes."¹⁵

Shaw believed that the true inclination of the Radicals was towards socialism: the Radicals, being workers, logically ought to line up against the monopolists who controlled the Liberal Party. Thus, Shaw wanted the Fabians to declare themselves "prepared to act with the Radical party as far as that party pursues its historic mission of overthrowing Capitalist Liberalism in the interest of the working classes, but utterly hostile to it as far as it is only the tail of the National Liberal Federation."¹⁶ Clearly, he did not foresee the Liberal Party being driven to socialism by the wire-pulling of the Fabians. Rather, he looked to a split in the Liberal Party leading to two parties, one of which would consist of monopolists, Conservatives and Liberals alike, and one of which would unite workers, Radicals and socialists alike. He wanted the socialists to encourage a split in the Liberal Party which would lead to Liberals combining with Tories in a party of reaction and Radicals combining with socialists in a "real Party of Progress."¹⁷

The question facing Shaw was how best to bring out the implicit conflict between Radicals and Liberals, workers and monopolists, so as to attract Radicals into the socialist camp. Shaw initially followed the S.D.F.'s

strategy of zealous propaganda and outdoor demonstrations, but in the late 1880s he began to advocate what he called permeation. He wanted socialists to join Radical organisations and work within them to turn the Radicals into socialists. For example, he advised the North Kensington branch of the S.D.F. to pursue a Fabian policy and "throw in their lot with the Radicals" since "socialism must be established, if it is to come at all, by the whole working class of the country."¹⁸ Socialists should co-operate with the Radicals because they need the support of the workers, not because they need the help of the Liberals. Indeed, whereas socialists could work with Radicals, since most Radicals were workers who opposed monopoly, they could not work with Liberals, since most Liberals were monopolists who defended private property.

Unlike Shaw, Webb regarded interest as strictly analogous to land rent.¹⁹ As land rent derives from advantages of fertility and location, so interest derives from advantageous industrial circumstances. Webb objected to interest on the grounds that these advantages were neither necessary to attract capital, nor a result of entrepreneurial ability, but rather the effect of social forces. Society created the social advantages which made some capital more productive than other capital; from the perspective of the individual, interest was the result of "opportunity and chance."²⁰ No surplus value was taken as a tribute from the worker: all surplus value was social value. Thus, since society, not the working-class, was exploited, there was no class war, and so no need for a new party.

When, in 1886, Webb first declared himself to be a socialist, he advocated moralisation of the capitalist, not collective ownership of the means of production.²¹ When, around 1888, he turned to collectivism, he did so, not because of economic theory, but because he began to identify socialism with the efficient organisation of society as prescribed by empirical sociology.²² Webb believed socialism was based on scientific knowledge of the

requirements of an industrial economy. Thus, he argued that socialism could arise from experts appealing to the reasonableness of a policy-making elite: socialists would triumph by rational argument because the "intelligence of the natural leaders of the community" would lead them to recognise the need for socialism.²³ Webb wanted to win over the minds of opinion-makers, not the votes of Radicals. He told Pease that "nothing in England is done without the consent of a small intellectual yet practical class in London not 2000 in number."²⁴

Webb's political strategy began with the idea of Fabian experts showing politicians what policies were necessary for an efficient society. The Fabians would be backroom-boys coming up with bright ideas which rational politicians would see to be wise. In principle, therefore, the target of permeation was a cross-party elite since Conservatives too could recognise the impartial merits of socialist legislation. Webb believed that "the avowed Socialist party in England will probably remain a comparatively small disintegrating and educational force, never itself exercising political power, but supplying ideas and principles of social reconstruction to each of the great political parties in turn as the changing results of English politics bring them alternatively into office."²⁵ In practice, however, Webb considered the Liberals to be more open to Fabian expertise than the Conservatives. According to his blueprint, the Liberals would adopt a progressive programme, get elected and introduce socialist legislation, with the Fabians teaching them the merits of socialism, and providing them with suitable policies. Webb saw the Fabian Society as an intellectual advisory group - a Jeeves to the Liberal Party's Bertie Wooster. It was from this perspective that he complained to his future wife, Beatrice Potter, that "it is difficult to know how to treat the Liberal leaders" since "they are generally such poor creatures, and so hopelessly 'out of it'" - "I wish their

education could be taken in hand in some way that would save the Fabian Society from becoming more and more conceited."²⁶ In the late 1880s, however, Webb became concerned that the Liberal politicians were not listening to the advice of the Fabians, and so he extended his strategy to include permeation, that is, the tactic of joining local Liberal Associations and using them as platforms from which to gain the ears of the Liberal elite.

Webb opposed independent parliamentary candidates. He thought independent action was unnecessary because the existing parties could be shown the impartial advantages of socialism, and so led to introduce suitable legislation; and he thought independent action was impolitic because it would antagonise the local Liberal Associations which were an important channel for influencing the Liberal leaders. Webb did not want a split in the Liberal Party resulting in a new party combining Radicals and socialists. He believed the existing Liberal Party was quite capable of establishing socialism. Thus, he spoke of his hopes of the Liberals, not the Radicals: "I feel no doubt that we shall be able to drive the official Liberals on into a very sea of Socialism."²⁷

The Fabian Society in the 1880s

The Fabian Society included people other than Shaw and Webb, so we will examine the history of the Society from 1884 to 1890 in order to see how these two views of permeation functioned within the Society as a whole. When we do so, we will find that the early Fabian Society was dominated by people such as Shaw. The early Fabians, far from hoping to foist socialist policies on a recalcitrant Liberal Party, typically wanted a new party through which socialists and Radicals would advance the interests of the workers. Shaw was not a maverick. He represented the dominant outlook amongst the early Fabians.

The founding Fabians were extreme Radicals. They had backgrounds in the S.D.F. and the Land Reform Union (L.R.U.).²⁸ The first executive committee of the Society consisted of Bland, Podmore, a land reformer, and Frederick Keddell, a Marxist who soon left to commit himself entirely to the S.D.F.²⁹ The second executive consisted of Bland, Alice Hoatson who was Bland's lover, Pease who was a fringe member of the S.D.F., Shaw who was also associated with the S.D.F., and Mrs Wilson, an anarcho-communist who followed Kropotkin.³⁰ It was because most of the founding Fabians were extreme Radicals converted to socialism by the Marxists that their views so closely resembled those of the O'Brienites within the S.D.F. Throughout much of the 1880s, the S.D.F. attacked idlers, emphasised the evils of monopoly, and promoted land nationalisation. The early Fabians took up a similar stance. The second Fabian Tract, for example, insisted that everybody should labour to provide for their own wants, that monopolies of land and capital caused poverty and divided society into warring classes, and that the solution to these problems lay in land nationalisation and state competition with private enterprise.³¹ These were the standard beliefs of extreme Radicals in the 1880s. Indeed, there was not much here to distinguish the Fabians from the S.D.F., which adopted a collectivist programme only in 1884.³² When Besant joined the Fabians, in 1885, she, like Shaw, talked of socialism as the logical outcome of Radicalism, and so of the need to wean Radicals from the Liberals.³³

Fabians such as Besant, Bland and Shaw wanted a new party of socialists and Radicals, and their attempts to create such a party brought them into close contact with both the S.D.F. and the Radical workingmen of the metropolitan clubs. They joined the Marxists in outdoor propaganda: Besant was a much practised stump orator who exercised her skills from both S.D.F. and Fabian platforms, whilst Shaw joined his old S.D.F. colleagues in the struggle to prevent the police closing the traditional speakers' corner at Dod

Street. They spent numerous evenings addressing the Radicals and secularists of the London Clubs. Besant had been a Vice-President of the National Secular Society, and now she held public debates with prominent secularists, as well as speaking at individual branches and other local clubs.³⁴ Shaw, his most recent biographer tells us, gave sixty-six public lectures in 1887 alone: "every Sunday he spoke, usually in the London area, sometimes against the blaring of brass bands, often at workmen's clubs and coffee houses, to secular societies and radical associations, expounding and arguing from squalid platforms in dens full of tobacco smoke, to a little knot of members."³⁵ The goal of such propaganda was always a new party. In 1886, for example, the Fabians organised a conference of Radicals and socialists, including members of the S.D.F., at South Place Chapel to discuss a "common basis on which Radicals, Socialists, and Social Reformers of all kinds can cooperate for practical work in and out of parliament."³⁶

Mrs Wilson, however, was an anarchist who disapproved of parliamentary politics. Consequently the Fabians called a special meeting, open to all socialists, to discuss political action. The meeting was held on 17 September 1886 at Anderton's Hotel. Here Besant proposed, and Bland seconded, a possibilist motion declaring that "socialists should organise themselves as a political party for the purpose of transferring into the hands of the whole community full control over the soil and the means of production and distribution of wealth," to which Morris proposed, and Mrs Wilson seconded, an impossibilist rider saying that "it would be a false step for Socialists to attempt to take part in the Parliamentary contest."³⁷ The battle lines were drawn: Mrs Wilson backed by the Socialist League confronted the possibilist Fabians backed by the S.D.F.: "Morris, Mrs. Wilson, Davis, and Tochatti did battle with Burns, Mrs. Besant, Bland, Shaw, Donald, and Rossiter."³⁸ The latter won. The meeting passed Besant's motion by forty seven votes to

nineteen and rejected Morris' rider by forty votes to twenty seven.

On 5 November 1886, the victors formed the Fabian Parliamentary League.

The original council of the League consisted of Ashman, Besant, Bland, Bolas, Brailsford Bright, Olivier and Shaw, all of whom favoured independent action.³⁹ The League's manifesto called on British socialists to follow the lead of those continental socialists who had made electoral progress in national and local government. The manifesto announced that in local elections the League would run candidates where it was strong enough, and that in general elections the League would support the candidate who was most sympathetic to socialism, though this strategy was only a stop-gap "until a fitting opportunity arises for putting forward Socialist candidates to form the nucleus of a Socialist party in Parliament."⁴⁰

Up until 1886, therefore, the Fabian Society followed a strategy akin to that advocated by Shaw. The Society concentrated on trying to build a new party uniting Radicals with socialists. Having seen off the impossibilists, the early Fabians committed themselves, through the Fabian Parliamentary League, both to fielding independent candidates in local elections, and to striving to form a new party in parliament sometime in the future.

When Webb joined the Fabians in May 1885, he found himself opposed to the dominant thinking within the Society. He disapproved not only of Mrs Wilson's anarchism, but also of the extreme Radicalism of the other early Fabians. He felt little sympathy for the land nationalisation and Marxism which had led the earlier Fabians to socialism. When Shaw asked him to join the L.R.U., he replied that he was not a land nationaliser, but that he still would join since nationalisation was "not an article of faith"; and, when some Fabians began a Capital reading-group, he joined Edgeworth in trampling Marx underfoot, before asking Shaw to come and defend Marx.⁴¹ Webb reached socialism by way of liberalism and positivism, not Radicalism and secularism.

Now he opposed the desire of the other Fabians to create a new party. He wanted them to work through the Liberals.

Webb's main ally was Wallas, who joined the Fabian Society in 1886, and whose background lay in ethical positivism and Aristotleanism.⁴² Wallas too was a committed gradualist who rejected the class war and considered the Liberal Party quite capable of introducing socialism by means of piecemeal legislation. Thus, whilst Besant, Bland and Shaw, together with Bolas, Brailsford Bright, Hoatson, Olivier, Podmore, and others, held conferences to lure the Radicals away from the Liberals, Webb wrote to Wallas identifying their interests with the electoral success of the Liberals, and complaining that "we have gone a tremendous crash in the towns."⁴³ Indeed, Wallas and Webb actively disapproved of the Fabian Parliamentary League on the grounds that an independent party would hamper efforts to provide the Liberals with an efficient socialist programme: Webb even complained to Pease, saying "I hardly understand your so heartily supporting the party of action rather than education."⁴⁴

By 1886, then, two main political viewpoints coexisted within the Fabian Society: the party of action wanted to build a new party, whilst the party of education wanted to teach socialism to the Liberal elite. Fortunately for the Fabians, the nature of London politics enabled these two camps to agree on a single strategy at the local level. Here Firth had led the London Municipal Reform League in a campaign for reform of London government, and the Local Government Act of 1888 finally had created a city-wide government in the form of the London County Council (L.C.C.).⁴⁵ The members of the first L.C.C. then split into Progressives, who supported Firth, and Moderates, who did not want to go so far so quickly. The Progressive councillors, who included Burns of the S.D.F., introduced legislation to give council workers an eight hour day, and to write a fair wages clause into council contracts. Now, Wallas and Webb

wanted to permeate the Liberal Party, but, since there was no Liberal Party on the L.C.C., they tried instead to permeate the Progressives. Thus, because the Progressives were Radicals, Wallas and Webb effectively agreed with people such as Besant and Shaw, who, even in national politics, wanted to fuse socialists and Radicals in a new party. Thus, the Fabians agreed on a single strategy for London. In 1888, for example, Besant wrote a lead article, and Webb wrote a letter, in which they proposed Joint Democratic Committees to coordinate the votes of Radicals and socialists in the forthcoming elections for the London School Board.⁴⁶ No wonder, therefore, that when Wallas and Webb were elected to the council of the Fabian Parliamentary League at its second meeting, they steered the League towards local politics, and away from the independent parliamentary action to which they were opposed.⁴⁷ Before long, Webb became the Fabians' acknowledged expert on local government, writing numerous tracts on municipal reforms to promote a programme indebted to Firth, Hyndman's vision of a commune for London, and Chamberlain's policies in Birmingham.⁴⁸

Although the Fabians agreed on a strategy for London, they disagreed on national politics. When, for instance, the Liberals disappointed the socialists by adopting the Nottingham Programme of 1887, Shaw responded with a "Radical" programme designed to pull Radicals towards socialism, whereas Webb wrote a pamphlet for private circulation among "leading London Liberals" calling on them to adopt a programme that would win the support of Radical workingmen.⁴⁹ Whereas Shaw wanted to attract the Radicals into a third Party, Webb thought that the threat of a third Party was useful only as a way of encouraging Liberals to adopt progressive policies.

The mid-1880s was a time of unemployment and social unrest. Trafalgar Square became the focal point of numerous disturbances, and, on 8 November 1887, the police forbade demonstrations from the Square. The ban only made

things worse. Whereas the Radicals had had little sympathy for the unemployed, they now complained that the ban infringed the right to free speech, and they therefore arranged a rally against coercion in Ireland to culminate in the Square in defiance of the ban. The 13 November 1887 became known as Bloody Sunday. Four columns of demonstrators set out from different parts of London to reach the Square simultaneously. Besant and Shaw marched at the head of the column from the East End. The police baton-charged the demonstrators and broke up the protest without sizeable numbers congregating in the Square. One hundred and fifty people were detained, Burns and Cunninghame Graham were jailed, and three days later a socialist died from injuries sustained on the day. The experience of Bloody Sunday led Shaw to reconsider his political strategy. He turned away from vigorous propaganda towards his version of permeation, according to which socialists should infiltrate local Liberal organisations so as to convert Radicals to the need for a new party.

Webb never took an interest in political demonstrations. He spent the mid-1880s making direct approaches to the Liberal elite, sending a draft Eight Hours Bill to Herbert Gladstone, one of the Liberal Party managers, and a Fabian Tract on leasehold enfranchisement to every Liberal M.P. just before a parliamentary debate on that issue.⁵⁰ In the late 1880s, however, Webb began to stress the importance of participating in local Liberal Associations so as to secure the attention of the Liberal elite. Just after Bloody Sunday, for instance, he wrote to Pease ignoring "the most sensational political event of the year," and concentrating instead on the tactic of working through local Liberal Associations to win over Liberal politicians:

I believe very much in getting hold of the Liberal caucuses. They are just on the turn, without knowing it, and a little push from inside does much to send them in our direction. I hope you take part in the

Newcastle one. Champion relates how he talked the matter over with John Morley [the Liberal M.P. for Newcastle], who was quite friendly and sympathetic with our aims, but said he had not had occasion to look into social matters, and could not do so at present, as his constituents were not interested in the questions. Now this is just where the use of political Socialism comes in. If you managed to get resolutions passed at ward meetings etc., as to the necessity of dealing with these things, John Morley would take them up.⁵¹

After Bloody Sunday, then, both Shaw and Webb adopted the tactic of joining Liberal groups, but whereas Webb hoped thereby to get Liberal leaders to adopt socialist policies, Shaw hoped thereby to pull the Radicals towards a new party. Although Shaw adopted permeation, his view of permeation differed from that of Webb. He saw permeation as a way of establishing a new party.

The Fabians and the I.L.P.

Most of the early Fabians wanted a new party, though a minority, led by Webb, concentrated their hopes on Liberal politicians. These different strategies rarely came into conflict during the late 1880s because the socialists were too weak for a new party to be a serious prospect. The Fabians agreed on a single strategy at the local level and went their separate ways at the national level: Besant and Shaw marched on Trafalgar Square, whilst Webb posted draft Bills of Parliament to M.P.s. In the early 1890s, however, socialism expanded rapidly, with the Fabians attracting large numbers of new recruits, partly due to the success of the publication of Fabian Essays, partly due to an extremely successful lecture tour of North England, and partly due to the growth of a peculiarly ethical socialism in the northern counties. The London Fabian Society grew from a hundred and seventy three members in 1890 to six hundred and forty members in 1893. In the rest of the

country, membership grew from about three hundred and fifty in 1891 to about one thousand and three hundred in 1892.⁵² In the early 1890s, the Fabian Society spread out of London, with new branches appearing in places such as Bradford, Bristol, Manchester and Sheffield.⁵³ The spread of socialism made a new party an increasingly viable prospect.

The new Fabians included people such as Blatchford, Katherine Conway, Hardie, and Tillett. They supported demands for a new party. Indeed, many of them helped to found various local labour parties for just this purpose: the independent labour party in Manchester, for example, was formed by Blatchford and John Trevor, both of whom had joined the Fabian Society. Whilst Webb dallied with the Liberals, and whilst Shaw tried to use Liberal Associations to convert Radicals to socialism in preparation for a new party, the new Fabians went ahead and founded local organisations that constituted the nucleus of the future I.L.P. Support for a new party reached new levels within the Society. Thus, when the Fabians held their first annual conference in February 1892, fifteen local societies sent delegates who passed the following motion: "this meeting, being of the opinion that the best way to forward the Labour cause is by the workers acting independently of both political parties, hails with satisfaction the formation of an independent labour party, and heartily wishes success to the movement."⁵⁴

How did the leading Fabians react to the growing demand for, and possibility of, a new party? In brief, Webb opposed such a party, whilst Shaw continued to support the idea of such a party, insisting on certain conditions only because he saw them as essential if such a party were to prove workable.

Shaw sympathised with the desire of the new Fabians for an independent party. He told the first conference of the Fabian Society that the permeation "game is played out," and "the time has come for a new departure."⁵⁵ He thought permeation had involved working in Liberal organisations to wean the

Radicals away from the Liberal leaders; and, so understood, permeation had succeeded:

The Radicals are at last conscious that the leaders are obstructing them; and they say to us, in effect, 'Your policy of permeating has been successful: we are permeated; and the result is that we find all the money and all the official power of our leaders, who are not permeated and cannot be permeated, arrayed against us. Now show us how to get rid of those leaders or to fight them'.⁵⁶

Permeation had been about propaganda and it had worked. Permeation had turned numerous Radicals into socialists: "there are thousands of thoroughly Socialised Radicals to-day who would have resisted Socialism fiercely if it had been forced upon them with taunts, threats, and demands."⁵⁷ Yet the Liberal leaders represented property, so they could not be permeated. Indeed, now the official Liberals realised what was going on, they undoubtedly would "close up the ranks of capitalism against the insidious invaders."⁵⁸ Permeation, in other words, had brought the war between Liberals and Radicals, "property versus labour," out into the open, thereby making a new party a real possibility.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, Shaw warned, there remained the difficulty of political organisation. Certainly there was enough support for an independent party, but "it is one thing to make people shout and another to make them pay."⁶⁰ No doubt the workers could finance an independent party, but they did not do so because they preferred beer and football to liberty. Thus, "there are unfortunately very few constituencies in which the Working Classes are politically organised enough to take the overwhelming lead in politics which their superiority in numbers has placed within their reach."⁶¹ Any workable strategy had to take account of this fact. Further, the poor organisation of the workers meant that, given Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system,

there was a danger that an independent candidate would not only fail to get elected, but also split the progressive vote, thereby enabling a reactionary to triumph. Shaw, therefore, advised the workers to run independent candidates only if the candidate had a good chance of winning or of polling well enough to make the labour cause respectable or if the Liberal and Conservative candidates were equally backward on labour issues. Elsewhere the workers should support the most progressive candidate amongst those available.

The Fabians adopted Shaw's proposals as their manifesto for the general election of 1892. They supported Tillett as a labour candidate in Bradford because they believed that he had a chance of victory, but they backed Morley against a labour candidate in Newcastle because they thought the latter wrong to stand as his cause was hopeless and he would split the progressive vote.⁶²

Similar considerations governed Shaw's attitude to the movement for an independent labour party. The success of permeation had established sufficient support for such a party, but there was still a shortage of finance. Consequently, Shaw favoured a new party, whilst also proposing that in the absence of a suitable organisational-base such a party should remain tactically flexible, running candidates in some constituencies, trying to get the Liberals to adopt progressive candidates in others, and so on. Indeed, Shaw now defined permeation as much in terms of local flexibility as in terms of agitation within the Liberal Party to attract the Radicals. He said, for instance, that he intended, at the Bradford Conference that founded the I.L.P., "to go uncompromisingly for Permeation, for non-centralised local organisation of the Labour Party."⁶³

Shaw felt some trepidation as the Bradford Conference of January 1893 drew near. He supported a new party, but he feared that a national organisation might undermine local flexibility. His main concern was with the fourth clause of the independent labour group in Manchester which pledged

members not to vote for any candidate associated with the Liberals, Liberal-Unionists or Conservatives. In addition, however, Shaw feared that a Tory plot lay behind the Bradford Conference. Burns had become a respected Liberal, and he must have played on Shaw's fears, since Shaw told him that "I have been thinking over what you told me, and I think it looks like a formidable Unionist intrigue with Champion at the wires."⁶⁴ Such suspicions were common amongst delegates to Bradford due to Champion's notorious part in the Tory Gold incident of 1885 when he had accepted money from sources linked to the Conservative Party to finance socialist candidates in a general election.⁶⁵ What is more, Hardie's involvement with the Conference would have heightened such suspicions because, having stood at Mid-Lanark with Champion's backing, he was widely seen, in socialist circles, as a "tool" of the "Tory intriguer."⁶⁶ Indeed, nasty questions had been raised about the source of Hardie's finance for the Mid-Lanark contest, and, although Margaret Harkness had eased the pressure at the time by saying publicly that she had donated one hundred pounds, she also indicated privately, to Beatrice Webb, that really she had not donated a penny but merely acted as a go-between.⁶⁷ Small wonder, then, that the Fabians regarded Hardie with as much suspicion as they did Champion: Shaw described him as one of the "ultra-Opportunist ex-candidates who do not object to contest Parliamentary seats in the name of Labour with finances derived from the man in the moon."⁶⁸

The London Fabians sent De Mattos and Shaw as delegates to Bradford with the provisos that attending the Conference implied neither that they would merge into a national labour movement nor that they would be bound by decisions the Conference reached. The Conference debated their credentials before eventually voting to allow them to attend.⁶⁹ Shaw was delighted by the proceedings. His fears proved unfounded. The Conference rejected the restriction on flexibility embodied in clause four and also refused to have

any truck with Champion. As Shaw explained, those present checkmated "the Tory money move," and, when the anti-permeationists "wheeled up their big gun (the 'fourth clause')", those present "spiked it at one smack," thereby securing "the freedom of the branches to nobble the Liberals wherever that is obviously the right Labour policy."⁷⁰

The I.L.P. seemed to correspond to the Shavian dream of a new party committed to tactical flexibility. Shaw now began to look forward to a time when the Fabians could concentrate on "bringing the Labour party up to the Socialist mark instead of bringing the Radical wing of the Liberal party up to the Independent Labour mark."⁷¹ He believed that the I.L.P. had gone some way towards splitting the Radicals from the Liberals, and that, once this process was complete, the socialists could turn from the need to establish a new party incorporating the Radicals to the task of ensuring that this new party embraced a truly socialist programme. The next question, however, was that of money. Shaw had demanded tactical flexibility only because of the organisational weakness of the I.L.P. What was needed was the transformation of the I.L.P. into an effective political body with a strong enough organisation to be able to forget about tactical niceties. Thus, Shaw made the financial support of the T.U.C the litmus test of the viability of independent action.⁷² Without the unions' backing, the I.L.P. would be just another socialist sect, a more flexible, and so slightly superior, version of the S.D.F. To become truly effective, to develop into Shaw's cherished new party, the I.L.P. needed a solidity that only the financial backing of the unions could provide.

At the 1891 T.U.C., Hardie had proposed a penny levy on union members to finance a parliamentary fund for labour candidates, but his motion had been defeated by two hundred votes to ninety three. Now, however, the 1893 T.U.C. both declared for public ownership of the means of production, and passed

Tillett's motion providing for financial aid to labour candidates in local and parliamentary elections - Burns helped to ensure that the motion covered workingmen standing as Liberals or Conservatives as well as independent candidates. In Shaw's mind, this motion clinched the matter. It suggested that the I.L.P. could obtain the finance, as well as the support, needed to become a national force capable of winning parliamentary seats. He had his long hoped for new party.

Webb, in contrast, did not welcome the movement for an independent labour party at all. He remained wedded to the Liberal elite. Not only did he spend much of 1891 talking to Fenton about a safe Progressive seat on the L.C.C., he also talked to Schnadhorst about standing as a Liberal candidate for Parliament in South Islington.⁷³ Webb and his allies were courting assiduously the ears of Liberal politicians such as Asquith, Grey, Haldane, and Rosebery. In 1890, for instance, Beatrice talked to Wallas and Haldane in an attempt to forge links between the Fabians and the Liberal elite - when she visited London, early in 1891, she discussed her plans with Wallas and Webb, but not with any other Fabian.⁷⁴ Clearly, these three were not thinking of independent action. Rather, Webb actively opposed the enthusiasm of the new Fabians for the movement for an independent labour party. At the end of 1891, for example, he told Beatrice that Wallas could not visit her for the weekend because Wallas was needed at a Fabian meeting to "save the society" from the "impatient element" who want "to throw the whole movement entirely into the Labour Party."⁷⁵ Webb spoke against the very idea of a labour party at a meeting on 11 December 1891. He reiterated his belief that socialism was about social feeling, not class militancy, saying he wanted a collectivist party "not restricted to manual workers or any one class," and "not pursuing its own class interest, but open to all and seeking the welfare of the whole community."⁷⁶ Webb, however, found little support: he lamented the fact that

"Wallas and I are losing influence because we are suspected of too much attachment to the Liberal Party."⁷⁷

In fact, however, Webb was growing increasingly disillusioned with the Liberals, complaining that the new Fabians had turned on him even though "these nine months have not made me more Liberal, but less."⁷⁸ He thought the Liberals were drifting without a suitable programme. What is more, the Liberal government that was elected in 1892 further incensed him by failing to live up to the promise of the Newcastle programme of 1889. A disgruntled Webb now told Wallas, "the time has come I think for a strong tract showing up the Liberal Party."⁷⁹

By 1893, therefore, Shaw was fired with enthusiasm for the independent labour movement and Webb was disillusioned with the Liberal politicians. Together they wrote "To Your Tents, O Israel," attacking the Liberal government for failing to implement the Newcastle Programme, and calling on the workers to abandon the Liberals, form a trade union party, raise thirty thousand pounds, and finance fifty parliamentary candidates.⁸⁰ The Fabian Society called for an independent working-class party sponsored by the trade unions. Unfortunately, however, the financial plan adopted by the 1893 T.U.C. relied exclusively on voluntary subscriptions from individual unions, and, by 1894, most people realised that the individual unions were not going to respond without more vigorous encouragement. Shaw's hopes were dashed. The leading Fabians returned to their different versions of permeation. Yet the publication of "To Your Tents, O Israel" had damaged the relationship between the Fabians and their Liberal sympathisers: Fabians such as Massingham and Ritchie had resigned, whilst friendly government figures had felt aggrieved at the dismissal of their efforts to introduce suitable policies.⁸¹ The Fabians, therefore, found it increasingly difficult to work through the Liberals. Thus, as Pease recalled, "at this point the policy of simple permeation of the

Liberal Party may be said to have come to an end."⁸²

For the rest of the century, the Fabians limped on with wounded forms of their respective versions of permeation. Shaw continued to argue that permeation "breaks down at a certain point because the parties in power are neither Socialists nor members of the working class working unconsciously towards Socialism in pursuit of their own interests."⁸³ He maintained that until a suitable alternative appeared, the Fabians should remain tactically flexible, advancing socialism in whatever way circumstances suggested.⁸⁴ The Webbs repented of the earlier outburst: Beatrice recorded her belief that the attack on the Liberal government had been a mistake, whilst Sidney became a Progressive member of the L.C.C. and, in the national arena, returned to a strategy based on the idea of impartial expertise.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The revisionist critique of the Fabians presupposes that all Fabians thought like Webb. The beliefs and actions of Fabians such as Shaw undermines their argument. First, by no means did the typical Fabian remain absorbed in the world of high politics. Besant, Shaw and their fellows constantly spoke to Radical Clubs, held outdoor meetings, and joined demonstrations. Their politics did not concentrate on an elite. Second, by no means did the typical Fabian remain wedded to the Liberal Party and hostile to the I.L.P. Fabians such as Shaw looked on permeation as a way of luring Radicals away from the Liberal politicians into a new party, so they welcomed the I.L.P., especially when it seemed to have a solid financial basis, and so a good chance of electoral success.

More generally, the oversimplification found in the revisionists' analysis of the political strategy of the Fabians points to an oversimplification in the dichotomy between nineteenth-century and twentieth-

century politics. Fabians such as Shaw do not fit into an easy distinction between a politics based on traditional ideologies such as Radicalism and a politics based on ideologies of class. They demonstrate that a continuing attachment to the Radical tradition did not rule out a belief in the importance of class. On the contrary, Fabians such as Shaw saw Radicalism as a diluted form of socialism that expressed the interests of the workers in their fight with monopolists, that is, landlords and capitalists alike. They understood Radicalism to be a class-based ideology.

Indeed, we might allow that, like Shaw, the founders of the I.L.P. set out to promote the interests of the workers understood in Radical terms. We might note that a number of the founders of the I.L.P. had been members of the Fabian Society, but not of a Marxist group; and, we might suggest that they found the Fabian Society a congenial setting precisely because people such as Shaw identified socialism with both the Radicalism in which they had been brought up and the interests of the workers.⁸⁶ After all, the dominant group within the I.L.P. later fought against people such as Blatchford who wanted to free the Party from entanglements with Radicalism, as well as people such as Grayson who wanted to free the Party from entanglements with the trade unions.⁸⁷ Here the Bradford Conference inflicted an early defeat on Blatchford by refusing, as Shaw pleaded, to adopt the fourth clause of the Manchester group, a decision designed mainly to allow members of the I.L.P. to vote for Radical candidates. What all of this suggests is: many British socialists did not break with the Radical tradition so much as draw on the Radical tradition for their understanding of the nature of the working-class, the interests of the working-class, the political strategy socialists should adopt, and even the socialist ideal itself.

NOTES

1. See G. Shaw, "The Fabian Society: What it Has Done and How it Has Done it", Fabian Tract 41 (1892). Also see M. Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism (London: Heinemann, 1961); E. Pease, The History of the Fabian Society (London: Fifield, 1916); and, to a lesser extent, P. Pugh, Educate, Agitate, Organise (London: Methuen, 1984). Some non-Fabians share their view: see A. Freemantle, This Little Brand of Prophets (London: G. Allen, 1960); J. Milburn, "The Fabian Society and the British Labour Party", Western Political Quarterly (1958), pp. 319-340; and D. Ricci, "Fabian Socialism: A Theory of Rent as Exploitation", Journal of British Studies 9 (1969), pp. 105-121.

2. See E. Hobsbawm, "The Fabians Reconsidered", in Labouring Men (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964); and A. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1962). The revisionists' view of the labour Marxists derives from H. Pelling, "H. H. Champion: Pioneer of Labour Representation", Cambridge Journal 6 (1953), pp. 222-238. For works combining these themes see G. Foote, The Labour Party's Political Thought (London: Croom Helm, 1986); S. Pierson, Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism (Ithica: Cornell University, 1973); and, to a lesser extent, P. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour 1885-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

3. For useful histories of the Fabians that largely avoid taking sides in the dispute over their relevance see I. Britain, Fabianism and Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982); and N. & J. MacKenzie, The First Fabians (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977).

4. J. Brailsford Bright, "English Possibilists", The Practical Socialist 2 (1887), p. 10.

5. For details see M. Bevir, "Fabianism and the Theory of Rent", History of Political Thought 10 (1989), pp. 313-27.
6. On these O'Brienites see M. Bevir, "The British Social Democratic Federation 1880-1885: From O'Brienism to Marxism", International Review of Social History 37 (1992), pp. 207-229.
7. See G. Shaw, "Concerning Interest", Our Corner 10 (1887), pp. 162-175 & 193-207; and G. Shaw, "The Economic Basis of Socialism", in G. Shaw, ed., Fabian Essays, intro. A. Briggs (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962). On Shaw's political thought at this time see M. Bevir, "The Marxism of George Bernard Shaw, 1883-1889", History of Political Thought 13 (1992), pp. 299-318. For a recent biography see M. Holroyd, Bernard Shaw, 3 Vols. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988-1994), pp. 192-193.
8. Many socialists interpreted Marx as having made similar arguments. For contemporary Marxists see H. Hyndman, The Text Book of Democracy: England for All (London: Allen, 1881), pp. 39-50; and W. Morris, "Monopoly: Or, How Labour is Robbed", in The Collected Works of William Morris, 24 Vols., intro. M. Morris (London: Longmans, 1910-15), Vol. 23: Signs of Change, Lectures on Socialism, pp. 238-254. For other Fabians see S. Olivier, "Perverse Socialism", To-day 6 (1886), pp. 47-55 & 109-114; and S. Webb, "Rent, Interest and Wages: Being a Criticism of Karl Marx and a Statement of Economic Theory", Passfield Papers (PP), British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES), London, PP.VII:4.
9. Compare the autobiographical accounts in H. Bland, Essays by Hubert Bland, ed. E. Nesbit (London: Goschen, 1914); and G. Shaw, Sixteen Self Sketches (London: Constable, 1949).

10. H. Bland, "The Socialist Party in Relation to Politics", Practical Socialist 1 (1886), p. 156; Shaw, ed., Fabian Essays, p. 235.
11. Shaw, ed., Fabian Essays, p. 253; G. Shaw, Collected Letters, ed. D. Laurence, 4 Vols. (London: Reinhardt, 1965-1988), Vol. 1: 1874-1897, p. 252. For Bland's calls for a new party also see Bland, "Socialist Party"; and H. Bland, "The Need of a New Departure", To-day 8 (1887), pp. 131-141.
12. Shaw, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 276.
13. On the S.D.F. see H. Lee & E. Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain (London: S.D.F., 1935); and C. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism (Oxford: Oxford University, 1961).
14. Letter of 14 December 1885, Scheu Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Cited by Tsuzuki, Hyndman, p. 71.
15. Shaw, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 235.
16. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 276. Compare G. Shaw, "The Attitude of Socialists Towards Other Bodies", Shaw Papers, British Library, London, BM.50700,5.
17. The Star, 1 April 1889.
18. Shaw, Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 350-351.
19. See S. Webb, "Rate of Interest and Laws of Distribution", Quarterly Journal of Economics 2 (1888), pp. 188-208; S. Webb, "The Rate of Interest", Quarterly Journal of Economics 2 (1888), pp. 469-472; S. Webb, "Henry George and Socialism", Church Reformer, March 1889; and S. Webb, "The Relation Between Wages and the Remainder of the Economic Product", PP.VI:41. On Webb's political thought at this time see W. Wolfe, From Radicalism to Socialism (New Haven: Yale University, 1975), pp. 183-214. For a biography see L. Radice,

Beatrice and Sidney Webb (London: Macmillan, 1984).

20. Webb, "Distribution", p. 203. Also see S. Webb, "The Need of Capital", PP.VI:28.

21. See S. Webb, "What Socialism is: A Call to the Unconverted", The Practical Socialist 1 (1886), pp. 89-93.

22. See S. Webb, "The Economic Basis of Socialism and its Political Programme", PP.VI:33; and S. Webb, "Rome: A Sermon in Sociology", Our Corner 12 (1888), pp. 53-60 & 79-89.

23. S. Webb, English Progress Towards Social Democracy (London: Modern, 1888), p. 15. For an example of his use of facts to appeal to common reason see S. Webb, "Facts for Socialists", Fabian Tract 5 (1887).

24. S. & B. Webb, The Letters of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, ed. N. MacKenzie, 3 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1978), Vol. 1: Apprenticeships 1873-1892, p. 102.

25. S. Webb, Socialism in England (Baltimore: American Economic Association, 1889), p. 20.

26. Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 132.

27. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 220.

28. On Radicals and the land reform movement see H. Perkin, "Land Reform and Class Conflict in Victorian Britain" in J. Butt & I. Clarke, eds., The Victorians and Social Protest (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1973).

29. For a list of executive members see Pease, History, Appendix 3.

30. On Wilson see N. Walter, "Introduction" to Three Essays on Anarchism by C.

Wilson (Orkney: Cienfuegos, 1979). As the leading anarchist within the Fabian Society, she lectured the Society on the nature of anarchism and she wrote the section on anarchism in an early Fabian tract outlining the different types of socialism: see Minutes of the Executive Committee, 23/12/1885, Fabian Society Papers (FP), Nuffield College, Oxford; and C. Wilson & Others, "What Socialism Is", Fabian Tract 4 (1886).

31. G. Shaw, "A Manifesto", Fabian Tract 2 (1884).

32. For the collectivist programme of the S.D.F. see Justice, 25 October 1884.

In 1883 the D.F. published a socialist pamphlet - The Democratic Federation, Socialism Made Plain: Being the Social and Political Manifesto of the Democratic Federation (London: Reeves, 1883) - but Justice still called only for social palliatives - Justice, 19 January 1884.

33. See, for instance, A. Besant, Radicalism and Socialism (London: Freethought, 1887); and The Link, 7 April 1888. For a biography see A. Nethercot, The First Five Lives of Annie Besant (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1961).

34. For one such debate see A. Besant & G. Foote, Is Socialism Sound? (London: Freethought, 1887).

35. Holroyd, Bernard Shaw, Vol. 1, pp. 192-193.

36. "Fabian Notes", Our Corner 7 (1886), p. 189. On the proceedings also see A. Besant, "The Fabian Conference" To-day 6 (1886), pp. 8-14.

37. Shaw, "Fabian Society", p. 12.

38. Ibid., p. 12.

39. See The Practical Socialist 2 (1887), p. 16.

40. "Fabian Parliamentary League Manifesto", Practical Socialist 2 (1887), p.

47.

41. Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 79 & 81. On the differences in the Capital reading group also see G. Shaw, "Bluffing the Value Theory", To-day, 11 (1889), pp. 128-35; and G. Shaw, "On the History of Fabian Economics" in Pease, History.

42. On Wallas see T. Qualter, Graham Wallas and the Great Society (London: Macmillan, 1980); and M. Weiner, Between Two Worlds: The Political Thought of Graham Wallas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). On his education see G. Wallas, "Fragment on Education", Wallas Papers (WP), BLPES. For his positivism see G. Wallas, "Personal Duty Under the Present System", The Practical Socialist 1 (1886), pp. 118-120 & 124-125. For his Aristotleanism see G. Wallas, "Aristotle on Wealth and Property", To-day 10 (1888), pp. 16-20 & 49-53; and G. Wallas, "Lecture on Aristotle's Politics", WP.

43. Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

44. Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

45. On London government and the Fabians see McBriar, Fabian Socialism; and Thompson, Socialists.

46. See The Link, 2 June 1888.

47. See The Practical Socialist 2 (1887), p. 16.

48. Compare S. Webb, The London Programme (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891); with J. Firth, London Government and How to Reform It (London: Kirkby & Endeay, 1879); and H. Hyndman, A Commune for London (London: Justice, 1888).

49. G. Shaw, "The True Radical Programme", Fabian Tract 6 (1887); S. Webb, Wanted a Programme: An Appeal to the Liberal Party (London: Labour, 1888).

50. See Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 157; S. Webb, An Eight Hours Bill, Fabian Tract 9 (1889); and S. Webb, "The Truth About Leasehold Enfranchisement", Fabian Tract 22 (1890).

51. Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 109.

52. For membership figures see H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), Appendix A.

53. Provincial socialism developed in many ways: see, on Bradford, J. Burgess, A Potential Poet (Ilford: Burgess, 1927); on Bristol, S. Bryher, An Account of the Labour Movement in Bristol (Bristol: Bristol Labour Weekly, 1931); on Manchester, R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years (London: Cassell, 1931); and, on Sheffield, E. Carpenter, My Days and Dreams (London: Allen & Unwin, 1916).

54. Workman's Times, 13 February 1892. The I.L.P. was not formed until 1893 but before its formation the word "party" was used to describe the growing movement of labour clubs.

55. Shaw, "Fabian Society", pp. 20 & 19.

56. Ibid., p. 20.

57. Ibid., p. 20.

58. Ibid., p. 19.

59. G. Shaw, "The Fabian Election Manifesto", Fabian Tract 40 (1892), p. 5.

60. Ibid., p. 9.

61. Ibid., p. 7.

62. See Workman's Times, 27 August 1892.

63. Shaw, Letters, Vol. 1, p. 377.

64. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 356 - for an indication of what Burns said see p. 362.

On Burns see W. Kent, John Burns: Labour's Lost Leader (London: Williams &

Northgate, 1950).

65. On the background to the Bradford Conference see A. Duffy, "Differing Politics and Personal Rivalries in the Origins of the Independent Labour Party", Victorian Studies 6 (1962), pp. 43-65.

66. Justice, 17 May 1890.

67. B. Webb, The Diary of Beatrice Webb, eds. N. & J. Mackenzie, 4 Vols. (London: Virago, 1982-1985), Vol. 1: 1873-1892, p. 302.

68. Workman's Times, 28 January 1893.

69. For the proceedings see Report of the First General Conference of the I.L.P. held at Bradford on 13 and 14 January 1893.

70. Workman's Times, 28 January 1893. Also see Shaw, Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 378-379.

71. Workman's Times, 22 April 1893.

72. See Workman's Times, 2 December 1893.

73. See Webb, Letters, Vol. 1, pp. 258 & 271.

74. See Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 241, 250, 252-253, 254 & 256.

75. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 350.

76. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 355.

77. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 237.

78. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 354.

79. Webb, Letters, Vol. 2: Partnership 1892-1912, p. 9.

80. G. Shaw & S. Webb, "To Your Tents, O Israel", Fortnightly Review, 60 (1893), pp. 569-589. For an indication of the importance of the decision of the 1893 T.U.C. to finance parliamentary candidates as a cause of the attack on

the Liberal government and the call for a trade-union party see Fabian Society Annual Report for the Year Ended March 1894, FP.

81. B. Webb, Our Partnership (London: Longmans, 1948), p. 110.

82. Pease, History, p. 117.

83. G. Shaw, "Typescript Syllabus of 1896", BM.50557.

84. G. Shaw, "Report on Fabian Policy", Fabian Tract 70 (1896).

85. Webb, Our Partnership, p. 110.

86. The leading figures of the I.L.P. were members of the Fabian Society, who, in varying measure, fused Radicalism with socialism and working-class identity: see K. Morgan, Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975); and D. Marquand, Ramsay MacDonald (London: J. Cape, 1977).

87. On the I.L.P., and theoretical disputes therein, see D. Howell, British Workers and The Independent Labour Party 1888-1906 (Manchester: Manchester University, 1983).