The TUC and Education Reform

1926–1970

CLIVE GRIGGS

THE TUC AND EDUCATION REFORM 1926–1970

Previous Books

The Trades Union Congress and the Struggle for Education 1868–1925 (1983)
Private Education in Britain (1985)
Education – The Wasted Years? 1973–86 (1988) Co-editor with Max Morris
George Meek – Labouring Man: Protégé of H.G. Wells (1996) with Bill Coxall

THE TUC AND EDUCATION REFORM 1926–1970

CLIVE GRIGGS

WOBURN PRESS
LONDON • PORTLAND, OR

First published in 2002 in Great Britain by
FRANK CASS PUBLISHERS
Crown House, 47 Chase Side, Southgate
London N14 5BP

and in the United States of America by
FRANK CASS PUBLISHERS
c/o ISBS, 5824 N.E. Hassalo Street
Portland, Oregon, 97213-3644

Website: www.frankcass.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Griggs, Clive
The TUC and education reform, 1926–1970
1. Trades Union Congress 2. Labor unions and education–Great Britain–History–20th century 3. Educational change–Great Britain–History–20th century
I. Title
370.9'41'0904

ISBN 0-7130-0236-0 (cloth)
ISSN 1462-2076

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Griggs, Clive
The TUC and education reform, 1926–1970 / Clive Griggs.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-7130-0236-0 (cloth)
1. Working class–Education–Great Britain–History–20th century. 2. Trades Union Congress–History–20th century. 3. Labor unions and education–Great Britain–History–20th century. 4. Educational equalization–Great Britain–History–20th century.
I. Title: Trades Union Congress and education reform, 1926–1970. II. Title.

LC5056.G7 T73 2002
331.88'3711'00941–dc21 2002024999

Typeset by FiSH Books, London WC1
Printed in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Victoria Square, Bodmin, Cornwall

To
Sheila

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Association of Assistant Mistresses
ACE	Advisory Centre for Education
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AHM	Association of Headmistresses (Est. 1874)
AMA	Assistant Masters' Association (Est. 1891)
AMMA	Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
ASLEF	Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs
ATTI	Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMA	British Medical Association
BOE	Board of Education (1900–1944)
CAC	Central Advisory Council (Est.1944; one for England, one for Scotland)
CASE	Confederation/Campaign for the Advancement of State Education (1960)
CATs	Colleges of Advanced Technology
CBI	Confederation of British Industries (formed 1965 from amalgamation of FBI, British Employers' Confederation & National Association of British Manufacturers)
CEA	Council for Educational Advance (Est. 1942)
CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation
CFEA	Council for Educational Advance (Est. 1962)
CNNA	Council for National Academic Awards (Est. 1964)

CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
DES	Department for Education & Science (Est. 1964) see BOE and MOE.
EPA	Educational Priority Area
ETU	Electrical Trades Union
FBI	Federation of British Industries (Est. 1916)
FE	Further Education
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCE	General Certificate of Education (O = Ordinary, A = Advanced Level)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMWU	General and Municipal Workers Union
HMC	Headmasters' Conference (Est.1869)
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trades Unions
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IFTU	International Federation of Trades Unions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRSF	Inland Revenue Staff Federation
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ISIS	Independent Schools Information Service
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LCC	London County Council
LSB	London School Board
MOE	Ministry of Education (1944–1964)
NACTST	National Advisory Council on Training and Supply of Teachers
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers (Est.1897)
NAS	National Association of Schoolmasters (Est. 1919)
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters and Women Teachers (Union formed from merger of NAS and UWT in 1976)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCLC	National Council of Labour Colleges
NFEO	National Federation of Employers' Organisations
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NHS	National Health Service
NUAW	National Union of Agricultural Workers

NUBO	National Union of Boot Operatives
NUGMW	National Union of General & Municipal Workers
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NUS	National Union of Students (Est. 1922)
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
NUT	National Union of Teachers (Est.1870) N.U. of Elementary Teachers until 1889
NUWT	National Union of Women Teachers
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OU	Open University
PLEBS	The Plebs League
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PRO	Public Record Office
RCA	Railway Clerks' Association
ROSLA	Raising of the School Leaving Age
RSG	Rate Support Grant
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organisation
TC	Trades Council
TGWU	Transport & General Workers' Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress (Est. 1868)
TUCEC	Trades Union Congress Education Committee
TUCGC	Trades Union Congress General Council
UCCA	Universities Central Council on Admissions
UGC	University Grants Committee
URW	United Rubber Workers
USDAW	Union of Shop & Distributive Allied Workers
UWT	Union of Women Teachers (Est. 1965)
WEA	Workers' Education Association
WETUC	Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee
WFTU	World Federation of Trades Unions

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

Anyone undertaking academic study knows how much they owe to other people who provide vital information and support in the pursuit of the necessary research upon which such work relies. The Leverhulme Trust granted me a two-year fellowship to undertake this study of the TUC and Education, and for that I am truly grateful. The staff at the TUC afforded me every possible help. My special thanks to my wife, Sheila, who helped with the research and wordprocessing. The staff at the Modern Records Centre of Warwick University where we spent several weeks working through the files concerning education deposited there by the TUC provided every possible assistance. So too did the librarians at the University of North London where other TUC archives are housed. Both sets of staff have generously continued to provide further information when asked to do so. Thanks are also due to the service provided by the Public Record Office staff who have been most helpful. Many individuals who are already fully occupied provided detailed replies to queries I sent giving credence to the old saying, 'If you want something done give it to the busiest person in the room.' Roy Jackson, past secretary of the TUCEC was most helpful in discussing ideas with me, Ann Morton at the Public Records Office identified key TUC documents among government files on education, Dr Dennis Dean read through part of the work and provided valuable advice whilst Len Stapleton also agreed to undertake the arduous task of reading the text. I would also like to thank the following for replying in detail to requests for information and suggesting sources to follow up other related issues further: Professor Richard Aldrich; Professor Philip Bagwell; Bill Bailey; Elizabeth Boardman; Alan

Clark; Christine Coates; Brigit Collins; Brian Cornish; Dr Keith Gildart; Professor Peter Gordon; Professor Peter Gosden; Alan Grant; Lawrie Harries; Halina Hassett; David Horsfield; David Kelso; Robin Limmer; Stuart Maclure; Janette Martin; Steve Mills; Dr Jane Palmer; Victoria Peters; Professor Brian Simon; Mike Smith; Richard Storey; Professor Ted Tapper; Richard Temple; Debbie Wall; Christine Woodland.

My thanks are also due to the staff at the University of Brighton Library who responded readily to requests for various books and journals when required. The staffs of the following libraries and organisations have also been most helpful: BBC Written Archives Centre; British Esperanto Association; British Library Newspaper Collection; British Library of Political and Economic Science; Campaign for State Education; City of Glasgow Civic Library; The Conservative Party; Department of Education and Employment Information and Library Network; Eastbourne Central Public Library; Eastbourne and District Hospital Institute of Nursing Library; Macmillan Publishers Ltd.; Moray House – University of Edinburgh; National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education; National Museum of Labour History, Railway, Maritime and Transport Union; Ruskin College, Scottish Labour Party; Trades Union Congress; University of Birmingham; University of Leeds; University of Leicester; University of Reading; University of Sussex.

I hope that this volume will go some way to satisfy the efforts of all those who provided help regardless of whether they agree with the opinions expressed.

Clive Griggs
Eastbourne
July 2002

I would like to thank the following for permission to include the illustrations: Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, nos 3 and 4; TUC Publications Department, photographs nos 1, 2, 6, 8 and 10; TUC Collection, University of North London, no. 5; Public Records Office, no. 7; and Michael Frost, York, no. 9. All copies of photographs were kindly reproduced by TUC Publications Department.

INTRODUCTION

This study covers the years 1926 to 1970 – from the General Strike to Labour's electoral defeat in 1970 and, by following on from an earlier volume covering the years 1868–1925, completes just over a century of involvement by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in education. To some extent writing the first volume was an easier enterprise, for the nearer one comes to the present so the amount of documentary material available increases dramatically. One result of this has been that whereas in the first volume it was possible to cover TUC campaigns regarding schooling for children and young people as well as education for trade unionists, with a few exceptions, it has not been possible to repeat the pattern this time. It was decided therefore at an early stage that education for trade unionists would be excluded and this decision was made easier by the fact that there were several books which already covered this area and there could be a question of repeating information already well established by such studies as A.J. Corfield's *Epoch in Workers' Education*; John Holford's *Union Education in Britain; A TUC Activity;* J.P.M. Millar's *The Labour College Movement* and Brian Simon's edited volume *The Search for Enlightenment*. This has also allowed certain aspects of other areas to be included such as further education, youth training and higher education. The study therefore concentrates upon the manner in which the Trades Union Congress, through its Education Committee, acted as a pressure group within the education system to campaign for improved educational opportunities for children and young people and the closely related welfare programmes which would make such provision effective.

A chronological approach has been adopted dividing the period into

four sections which are reasonably convenient to deal with in this manner bearing in mind the danger of implying that history unravels in this way or that people experience life in such a sectional way. There is some logic to the divisions; a pre-war period, the war years, the immediate post-war years and the 1960s. The war did bring dramatic changes so the first two divisions are reasonably valid and the post-war period is fine, although the dividing line here is admittedly more arbitrary. Each section begins with a general overview and here there is a problem of deciding how much background information to provide. Yet as education clearly does not take place independently of economic, political and social developments some background information of the period is essential to any understanding of the changes which took place in the nation's education system. The danger here is in going into too much detail and ending up with potted histories of the period. How far this approach has been successful the reader will have to decide.

The TUC never confined itself to what might narrowly be called industrial questions and when the Labour Party in 1907 requested the deletion from their agenda 'of items dealing with such things as education, housing, land law, municipal trading, factory inspectors and nationalisation of national resources, (the) request was rejected in toto on the ground that none of these items was "outside the scope of (the TUC's) usual work".'[1] Their involvement in so many areas and the energy expended in carefully prepared policies pursued brought them increasing influence in many quarters. By the end of the Second World War there was probably no other major organisation with such extensive interests in so many aspects of British society.[2] The public saw them as an important body with growing status from the late 1930s onwards. They never affiliated to any other body and considered themselves the first among equals with the possible exception of the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions (ICFTU), but even here they saw themselves as the senior partner. They were in effect the parliament of the trade unions within the country and were able to speak on behalf of trade unionism. All governments, whether they agreed with TUC policy or not, were pleased to be able to deal with one central body on most issues rather than having to deal with numerous individual trade unions. For trade unions the TUC was a living example of strength through unity; a unity made possible by the fact that unlike some European countries there was no division within the British trade union movement on religious or political grounds. Religious disputes were avoided because in general delegates realised the divisive nature of such arguments. Political differences were inevitable and at times fiercely debated at Congress. Generally it was in matters of

foreign policy that the TUCGC were likely to face criticism from delegates.

Congress was fed by resolutions from affiliated trade unions covering the widest possible range of issues affecting the lives of the majority of working people and their families. They were debated at Congress in September where resolutions were passed. The next month the Trades Union Congress Education Committee (TUCEC) met to respond to Congress resolutions dealing with education in order for the General Council (TUCGC) to take appropriate action. The TUCEC would refer back to previous policy statements and Congress reports. This practice ensured that they were always guided by 'where they started from' and to that extent never had a 'clean sheet'. For example, the important statements made by the TUC to the Malcolm Reports in 1926 and 1928 were still being used as guidelines in the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst most trade unionists lacked the lengthy formal education of government ministers and civil servants they did have one major advantage when entering into discussions about the public education system; namely that unlike many of the former they had experience of the system as pupils and often as parents. They knew the reality of plans devised and advocated by well-meaning politicians and civil servants who rarely chose to send their own children to local authority schools. A practice which showed little signs of change throughout the period of this study.

The response of the TUCGC might take the shape of a letter to a government department or large company or a deputation to a government minister. The relevant TUC department would provide the necessary information based upon official government documents, research articles and newspaper reports. These in turn were supplemented by material from their own information network, the numerous trade union branches and trades councils throughout the land which reported on their local scene providing case studies as further supportive evidence for TUC representatives meeting ministers or giving evidence to recognised appointed committees of experts. Sometimes it is possible to search back further along the line to a trade union conference resolution and find a trade unionist belonging to another interest group who put forward a policy on their behalf. This practice has been illustrated for education from the Edwardian period when members of small Socialist groups such as the Independent Labour Party or Social Democratic Federation successfully steered policies through their own trade unions and the TUC.[3] There was nothing necessarily underhanded about this activity for trade unionists would still need to be convinced in a debate as to the wisdom of the policy. However, the TUC was always wary about the

danger of other organisations using them as a conduit to put forward policies of their own, as was the case sometimes with certain religious interests.

Education policy was therefore the product of the views of ordinary working people who had experienced the limited and limiting education system through which the vast majority of children passed and therefore were anxious that their own and other children should have better opportunities than had been afforded themselves. By the 1930s the TUCEC took a greater lead due to the need to respond more quickly to BOE initiatives such as the establishment of Committees to examine certain aspects of the educational system, e.g., The Hadow, Spens and Norwood Committees.

When faced by a government minister with rejection, possible compromise or a non-committal reply they might change their approach but still kept to the basic principles which underlay the policy. This was not born out of a failure to see an alternative view but a sound belief in objectives they were pursuing on the behalf of the interests of their members and their families. They exercised patience and worked within the system both by preparing papers based upon sound educational research and the intelligence they gained from the trade union network which kept them up to date with current developments. Apart from direct approaches to government departments they were willing to campaign through time-honoured practices such as the leaflet which could be spread widely through the trade union branch and trades council system and also by holding public meetings, often with like-minded organisations, to rally support in order to alert people to government plans and put forward alternative ideas.

The sheer volume of TUC detailed documentation is almost overwhelming and when one realises that the correspondence to so many organisations, production of reports and memorandum for TUC representatives, outline papers and summaries of reports from government-appointed committees of enquiry was undertaken by so few officers at TUC headquarters one is left wondering how the staff coped with such a work-load. The education department contained three members – the secretary to the Committee, a Director of Studies and an assistant who served both of them. As the TUC was based upon departments the education secretary set the agenda for meetings. It is remarkable that hardly any reference is made to these unsung heroes in histories of the labour movement. Even the secretaries of the TUC Education Committee during these years, A.S. Firth (1926–31), Jack Vernon Carl Wray (1932–49) and Denis Winnard (1950–74), each of

whom was very able and expected to cover all aspects of education from schooling to higher education, as well as education for trade unionists, receives no mention in *Who's Who*, the *Dictionary of Labour Biography* or the obituary columns of *The Times*. Yet without their dedication the TUC could never have produced such well-argued policies in the field of education.

In the early years, TUC officers were called upon to serve more than one function. Firth, for example was Assistant General Secretary to Citrine as well as leading the education department. In the past, posts within trade union organisations had been filled by those who had worked in the trade and been active in their union. Their experience was invaluable for the work they undertook. The chairpersons of the TUCEC all came within this category, usually skilled workers with a minimum of formal schooling but well read, able and articulate. George Hicks provides a good example. He worked in the building trade as a bricklayer, was a member of the SDF and gained further education though the NCLC. He was a supporter of the Plebs League (PLEBS) – founded at Ruskin College in 1908 – and appropriately wrote a Foreword to the 1927 abridged edition of Robert Tressell's (Robert Noonan's) *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* dealing with the conditions in the building trade in 'Mugsborough' (Hastings).[4] He recognised the picture of the building trade described by Tressell only too well and readily grasped the political analysis woven into the story. Like many active trade unionists he constantly encouraged other trade unionists to read the book. In his Foreword he wrote, 'I know of no better book to give to the newcomer into our Movement, or for circulation amongst the unconverted... the lessons contained in this book should be learnt by heart by all toilers.'[5] This almost missionary encouragement of education to gain knowledge of the political and social system in order to change it was common among many trade unionists, especially those supportive of adult education provided for working people; Ruskin College, the Central Labour College, NCLC and WEA. Understandably some of these trade unionists were attracted to the TUCEC.

Citrine believed that it was also important to recruit graduates from higher education to some of the departments within the TUC to cope with changing circumstances facing the organisation. Hence applicants for some posts would increasingly come from those who had attended a traditional university, Ruskin College or as in the case of George Woodcock, both. In addition they had a record of considerable work experience. This policy applied equally to education. Alec Firth joined the TUC staff in 1921. He had attended Shelley elementary school, won a

scholarship to Penistone Grammar School and then to Huddersfield Technical College where he studied economics. In 1915 he was awarded a Martin Fisher Travelling scholarship but could not take it up due to the outbreak of war. He studied for an external University of London B.Sc.(Econ) and was appointed assistant lecturer at Huddersfield Technical College. He joined the navy but was discharged shortly on medical grounds. He became deputy statistical officer in the Department of Wool Textile Production, then secretary of a large firm of wool brokers before taking a post in the Profiteering Act Department of the Board of Trade. Hence when he joined the TUC at nearly 30 years of age he was not only well qualified in economics and statistics but had also worked as a secretary at a senior level. He considered a political career, being asked to stand for Labour at Penistone in 1918, (an invitation he could not accept because he was a civil servant at the time), and he also stood for Labour in Cambridge in 1923 and 1924. However, he was probably best suited to the administrative career he chose having been described as having the 'temperament of a University lecturer and the training of a civil servant'. It was this combination of education and experience which enabled TUC officers to discuss relevant matters with their department counterparts in government.

Jack V.C. Wray took over the education role of Firth when the latter became Secretary of the WEA. He held the post for 18 years and was a member of the Crowther Committee between 1956 and 1959. Little is recorded about Wray's early years, but given his date of birth it is likely that he was in the First World War and from people who knew him at the TUC it has been suggested that he did not come from a manual worker's background. Denis Winnard won a scholarship to Rochdale Grammar School, matriculated as an Exhibitioner in history at Wadham College, Oxford, and graduated in modern history in 1937. He worked for the WEA as a tutor in Lancashire before joining the TUC in January 1950 as assistant in the education department, a post he took over on the retirement of Jack Wray. His successor, Roy Jackson, a graduate of Ruskin College and Oxford University, has spoken of Winnard's detailed knowledge of the public education system. Winnard served on the Newsom Committee from 1961–63. He retired in 1974. Hence two secretaries of the TUCEC spanned 42 years and this continuity, reinforced by other long-serving members of the Committee, brought not just stabilty but also the knowledge which comes from being so familiar with both past and present developments in an area, in this case education. Such long-serving Education Committee members included George Chester (1939–49), W.B. Beard (1948–67), R. Willis (1950–66) and

Dame Anne Godwin (1952–63). Anne Godwin was the first woman to become Secretary of a 'mixed' trade union, the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union. Born in 1898 she had joined the suffragette movement upon leaving school at 15 but her major interest was to become education and she focussed upon this issue in her opening address as President of the TUC in 1962, only the third woman to have reached that position by then. Given the ability, years of experience and knowledge of the area it is no wonder that TUC deputations were well briefed and able to discuss matters on equal terms with government ministers and their department. They did not have the power to make the decisions but they often won the argument.

The expertise in education of the TUC was recognised by many organisations through invitations to the TUCGC to provide representatives to serve on their governing boards, a practice which increased as time passed (see Appendix 3). This was true also for the government who invited TUCGC representatives to serve on several Education Committees, although only one was appointed during the inter-war period, Ivor Gwynne to the Hadow Committee from 1924–26. Later there would be others, all of whom understandably came from the TUCEC: G. Chester (Fleming 1944), Miss A. Godwin and J.V.C. Wray (Crowther 1959), Roy Jackson who became TUCEC Secretary later (Albermarle 1960), Denis Winnard (Newsom 1963), and Dame Godwin (Newsom 1968 and Donnison 1979). There were also representatives from other sections of the labour movement on such committees at times: Dr R.H. Tawney and Dr. A. Mansbridge both of the WEA (Hadow 1926 and 1931), Dr A. Mansbridge and Lady Simon (Spens 1938) whilst Frederick Mander (McNair 1944) and Ronald Gould (Early Leaving 1954) were both in turn secretaries of the NUT, although at the time the union was not affiliated to the TUC. H.E. Clay of the Labour party also served with Gould. Some were chosen because of their knowledge of, and national prestige within, education; others brought their personal experiences of the system and great knowledge because of their deep interest and involvement, this was especially the case of the TUCEC secretaries. In contrast to the TUCGC representatives nearly all those chosen to chair committees examining various aspects of education within the country had been educated at fee-paying schools and Oxbridge (see Appendix 4). How far and often the pattern of attitudes towards education in terms of government policies and official education committees might have been influenced by the contrasting education experiences of different participants is but one of many themes which will be examined within this study.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Martin, R.M. (1980) *TUC: The Growth of a Pressure Group 1868–1976*, p.14.
2. Ibid., p.328.
3. Griggs, C. (1985) 'Labour and Education' in Brown, K.D. (ed.) *The First Labour Party 1906–1914*.
4. Bellamy, J. and Saville, J. (eds) (2000) *Dictionary of Labour Biography* Vol. 10, entry on Robert Noonan, pp.156–62.
5. Tressell, R. (1927 edn) *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, pp. vi–vii.

PART 1 – THE INTER-WAR YEARS 1926–1939

CHAPTER 1

PUTTING SECONDARY EDUCATION ON THE AGENDA

CITRINE BECOMES TUC GENERAL SECRETARY

Both at home and abroad the period 1926–39 was one of great turbulence by any standards: the General Strike of 1926, the Wall Street Crash of 1931, the rise of Fascism in Europe with the Nazis taking power in Germany in 1934, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, and the war between Britain and Germany in 1939. Throughout the years Conservative governments were in power whether under that name or that of a National government, with the exception of the ill-fated second minority Labour government of 1929, which in spite of economic difficulties contained members who did try to make progress in education matters. Throughout the period there were never less than 1 million people registered as unemployed with the numbers peaking at over 3 million in 1931; affiliated TUC membership reflected these figures although there was a time lag.

Table 1. TUC Figures for the Unemployed in 1931

	Insured Workers Unemployed	TUC Affiliated Membership[1]
1926	1,505,000	4,365,619
1932	2,829,000	3,613,273
1934	2,171,000	3,294,581
1939	1,408,000	4,669,186

Partly as a result of the General Strike, and owing to their ideology,

many industrialists and Conservatives were hostile to organised labour at least until the second half of the 1930s and this needs to be borne in mind when making judgements about TUC policy and action. However, it also needs to be said that throughout the period there was hardly a significant official enquiry which did not include a TUC representative and there was an average of five TUC deputations per annum to government departments with only one year, 1931, when there is no record of such a meeting.

The TUC, with its long history going back to 1868, has often been depicted as an unwieldy organisation, criticised by various people for not being what they believed it ought to be; not radical enough is probably a common criticism. In fact, whilst such criticism can certainly be made, it is also possible to argue that they should at least be given considerable credit for surviving for a comparatively long time when some of the most powerful forces within the economy have been antagonistic to TUC activities. Whilst the leadership would have baulked in public at any association with the ideas of Karl Marx, nevertheless the German philosopher's writings may well provide an explanation for the tactics they learned to adopt: 'Men make their own history but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.'[2]

As the opening paragraph of this section has illustrated the circumstances the TUC faced between 1926 and 1939 were extremely difficult. Pragmatism is probably the simplest description to apply to the TUC and those seeking signs of a clear ideology are likely to be frustrated. For example, to take at random two items from the Minutes of the General Council. In 1927, 'Letter sent to President Coolidge protesting over the condemnation to death of Sacco and Vanzetti' (the two Italian Anarchist immigrants) and the following year, 'Letter of sympathy sent on the news of the illness of King George V'.[3] It is not necessary to see support for anarchism or monarchy in these actions but rather a reflection of the wide range of views within the TUC and the lack of dogma as well as genuine concern for the lives of people in completely different circumstances.

The TUC regarded the General Strike as a tactical disaster and turned to gaining improvements in the lives of their members by working carefully to strengthen their organisation and by adapting methods which would gradually increase their influence as a pressure group through as many sections of society as possible, including that of the government. This approach was reinforced with the appointment of Walter Citrine as General Secretary in 1926. Citrine was born in Wallasey in 1886, attended

elementary school leaving at the age of twelve and a half, having reached Standard VII.[4] He became an apprentice electrician, learned Gregg shorthand at evening classes and became full-time Assistant General Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) in Manchester in 1920. He applied to become Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, a post which attracted over 200 applications from which five candidates were chosen for interview in January 1924. Citrine, aged only 37, was successful and joined Fred Bramley, the TUC Secretary at the time. Bramley was in poor health and asked Citrine to overhaul the filing system as he had done earlier at the ETU. Citrine was a brilliant organiser setting up the Committee and support structure as well as a new filing system. Every incoming letter was given a reference, date stamped and put on a file using the Library of Congress reference system. His attention to detail was well known, and Aneurin Bevan, who was at odds with Citrine in terms of both ideology and personality, referring to the card-index mind of Citrine said, 'poor fellow, he suffers from files'.[5] On Bramley's death Citrine took over as Secretary in 1926.

In fact Bevan's summary quip was less than just. Citrine was far more than a good organiser, important though that aspect of his abilities was to the TUC. He had joined the ILP in 1904 and was to write many years later in his autobiography that he 'never weakened in his socialist faith'. He stood up against the encroachment of Fascism in Europe during the 1930s, argued endlessly with the National government of Baldwin to supply armaments to the legitimate elected government of Spain. His pragmatism was born out of political experience and his doubts about the ability or preparation of the TUC and affiliated unions to sustain the 'General Strike' for a lengthy period of time. He was also uneasy about the tactics necessarily involved but not about the justice of the miners' cause nor the mean-spiritedness of those who were determined to make the working people bear the brunt of the country's economic problems, as he made clear in his diaries, when recording the meeting of the TUCGC at Downing Street on 12 May 1926:

> I looked at them with mixed feelings – bitterness – when I reflected one of them at least would have butchered our people without compunction on any pretext which offered. I thought to myself what an anomaly it is that there should be such a thing as a governing class. I comforted myself with the reflection that some day that would be altered.[6]

He was instrumental in encouraging opposition to the cuts proposed by the National government and in having MacDonald expelled from the

Labour party. All of these facts underline his commitment to strong support of the labour movement but his tactics were those of a negotiator carefully appraising each situation to determine what was possible in given circumstances.

In 1928, Citrine was made President of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), a post he was to hold until 1945. Within a year of his appointment the *Sunday Express* ran a story on its front page entitled 'Mussolini Whips Mr Citrine – TUC Chief fails to 'save' Italy. "Audacity".'[7] It claimed that Citrine and Mr J. Sassenbach, Secretary of the ITFU

> were severely whipped by Mussolini after they had bearded the lion in his den in Rome. These two Socialists secretly planned what they thought would be a dramatic coup – the persuading of Mussolini to allow Italy to join the IFTU... they were to go to Rome... and return in triumph hailed as saviours of the world trade union movement for apart from Russia, Italy is the only nation outside the Federation.
>
> Not even closest friends were told. Mr Citrine told his closest friend, Mr Ben Tillett that he was going away on holiday for three weeks.

The report related their meeting with Mussolini, the furnishings of the room in the palace and the clothing worn by 'The Duce'. Apparently Sassenach spoke for 40 minutes explaining how Italian workers would benefit from membership whilst Citrine spoke even more elequently for 45 minutes during which time the Duce remained strangely silent. He then gave his reply which took an hour and 40 minutes. He told them of his powerful role as prime minister and head of five government departments finally pointing to their 'audacity to come here and ask me to delegate the rule of my workpeople to a handful of political fanatics in Amsterdam. Your visit here today only emphasises the incompetence and lack of vision of the Socialist Party. I AM MUSSOLINI.' A bell then rang to signal the end of the audience 'and the two great Socialist leaders made a rather undignified exit'. It was further claimed that upon Citrine's return from holiday he 'was indiscreet and the affair leaked out, and now prominent labour leaders are making frantic efforts to place a cloak over the whole affair'.

The report implied that Citrine had been secretive and duplicitous, was alongside Sassenach browbeaten and made to look ridiculous by Mussolini and tried to hide a failed attempt to persuade the dictator for Italy to join the IFTU. The mocking tone towards Socialists came as no surprise given the political sympathies of the *Express* newspapers and the

growing strength of Labour in the months prior to the spring General Election of 1929 may have been a factor in the prominent position the newspaper gave to the story. However in spite of the considerable power of the *Express* newspapers, Citrine sued for libel and in April of that same year the court was informed by Sir Henry Slesser acting for Citrine that he was 'a person of considerable public importance in the industrial world' referring to his prominent role 'in the Turner Nelchet proposals for conciliation and peace in industry'.[8]

The editor, James Douglas, and Express Newspapers Limited admitted that 'the whole story was a complete fabrication from beginning to end'. Citrine had never met Mussolini and the Italian Foreign Office confirmed that no such interview had ever taken place. The newspaper accepted 'the whole of the circumstances of the alleged interview are entirely without foundation'. They expressed 'their sincere regret that the article in question should have been published'. They agreed to pay substantial damages; £500 for 'very serious libel'– a sum approximately equivalent to twice the average annual wage in 1929. Citrine was satisfied and did not wish to take the matter any further. It was to be but one example of the hostility of so many newspapers to the labour movement during the inter-war period.

Under Citrine's new organisation, Education was one of eight departments serving the elected members of the TUCGC. At the time these mirrored government departments, making it convenient for direct communication with the appropriate source of government policy and administration. The Education Committee of about seven members met eight times during the year, commencing with the Annual Congress during the first week of September and thus coinciding with the academic year. Arthur Pugh, of the Iron and Steel Trades Federation, was in the Chair for most of this period. They dealt with masses of correspondence from individuals and organisations, provided briefing papers for the TUCGC on matters of government education policy and for TUC deputations to the President of the Board of Education (BOE) as well as providing written evidence on TUC education policy when requested to do so for committees such as Hadow and Spens. As a glance at TUC Education Committee (TUCEC) files will indicate, their representatives were provided with papers as detailed as those written by civil servants for government ministers.

The correspondence of the TUCEC indicates the range of issues they faced from those of national dimensions to those confronting individuals: a letter from a post-office worker in 1932 asking for advice regarding his son's career which received a detailed reply,[9] an invitation from the BBC

to discuss 'talks for adults' with the TUCEC in 1929,[10] an invitation to visit the Rachel McMillan Nursery School in Deptford which resulted in a lengthy favourable report from the Committee in 1933,[11] and a recommendation from Ellen Wilkinson for a teacher of physical education to attend a TUC Summer School,[12] which was rejected. There was a belief in many quarters that the TUC had an educational fund which could be tapped into by individuals or organisations, a mistake possibly arising from their funding of trade union students at the Central Labour College and Ruskin College. This known support for adult education probably explains requests from a student at Coleg Harlech in 1932[13] as well as those from overseas, such as one in 1927 from a Mr Weimann of the Socialist People's College at Castle Tinz, Berlin, to provide a scholarship for a British trade unionist to attend there for five months[14] and another in 1931 from the Principal of the People's College Elsinore, to support two students from Britain to attend during the summer term.[15]

Yet it was not just adult institutions which sought TUC financial support. Mr W.M. Fletcher wrote from the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), one affiliated to the TUC, that 'some of our members are under the impression that the TUC allot a certain portion of their income to a fund for the purpose of making grants to parents (whose children have been awarded scholarships)...' which brought the reply, 'I have to inform you that the TUC have no such fund as you describe...'[16] Mr M.L. Jacks, Headmaster of Mill Hill Public School wrote with a touch of condescension to the TUC informing them that,

> It has recently come to the knowledge of my Governors that the Headmaster's Conference has been considering the possibility of making Public Schools more accessible to boys of so-called working class parents; and although pressure on places is no way decreasing, we desire, if financially possible, to make an experiment along these lines. It is understood that funds are at the disposal of the Trades Unions which could be applied to educational purposes. The proposal would be that your Congress and the School should jointly found a scholarship to be held by such a boy. It costs about £180 per annum to keep a boy at this school... I should be glad to hear from you what proportion of this annual cost you would be prepared to find to forward this experiment.

A diplomatic reply pointed out that TUC education schemes were 'not yet sufficiently developed to allow of their giving serious consideration to the question of scholarships in public schools'.[17]

In fact TUC departments did have a small allocation to spend at their

discretion and this was sometimes used as a contribution to an organisation which had asked for a TUC representative to join them on their Board, but it was always made clear that this should not be seen as an affiliation fee because the TUC never affiliated to any other organisation.

In terms of the gender issue the TUC in both membership and more in leadership, was predominantly male. Indeed Margaret Bondfield (1873–1953), of the General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU) was almost the sole exception to the general rule of TUC leading figures being male during the first quarter of the twentieth century. She was the tenth of 11 children born in Chard, Somerset. Her father was a lace maker, strong non-conformist and held radical views. At 13 years of age she taught in her local school and at 15 moved to Brighton where she became a draper's assistant. It was here she was introduced to women's rights by a Liberal woman friend. In 1894 she joined the Shop Assistants' Union, became Assistant Secretary (1898–1908) and was the first woman delegate elected to the TUC in 1899. She subsequently served two spells on the TUCGC in the inter-war years (1918–24 and 1926–29). Such exceptions partly reflected the structure and values of society at the time but also arose from the fact that the most powerful unions at the TUC represented industries such as coal mining, railways, docks, heavy engineering and, increasingly, motor transport where the employees were overwhelmingly male. From this situation it would be misleading to assume that TUC education policy was framed in a way favourable to boys. Whilst it may be true that there were many parents in the country who regarded support for a boy to continue school as more important than support for a girl, there is no hint of such a view being expressed at the TUC in any debate upon education.

'Children' or 'juveniles' were words commonly used at the TUC and these clearly referred to boys and girls. An early TUCGC deputation to the BOE in 1925 provides just one example of the wide vocabulary used. Elementary schooling was listed among the proposals for discussion and 'children' mentioned later. It is true that Mr Hallas of the GMWU remarked that 'at present a boy left school at fourteen...', but such phrases were usually understood to include girls. He could hardly have been more all embracing in his statement a little later when he referred to 'the problem of boys and girls, youths and maidens roving the streets'.[18] When it came to categories, TUC delegates wanted better schooling for their own children, boys and girls, and generally saw the barrier to post-elementary schooling in terms of fees and low parental income, matters more clearly related to social class than gender.

SECONDARY EDUCATION – THE MAIN FOCUS FOR ADVANCEMENT

There were three major concerns of the TUC concerning secondary schooling during the inter-war period: a growing demand for free secondary schooling for all, raising the school leaving age to 15 immediately and 16 as soon as possible; and the establishment of maintenance grants to enable parents to cope with the expense and loss of earnings involved by children staying at school for a further year or two. In addition there were other issues to which the TUC responded, e.g. the development of associated welfare programmes in the form of school meals, medical inspection and treatment; nursery education; facilities at school for physical education and the content of individual text books used in schools, which were considered unsuitable for children.

The TUC contributed evidence to three major reports on secondary schooling during the inter-war years, (Hadow 1926; Malcolm, two reports on Education and Industry – published 1926 and 1928; and Spens 1938). The terms of reference for the Consultative Committee (Hadow) had been worded in such a way as to escape the financial implications of the superior funding afforded to secondary schools, i.e. 'study suitable for children who will remain in full-time attendance at schools, other than Secondary Schools' but there is little doubt that the issue of post-primary schooling was becoming caught up in the growing demand of 'Secondary Education for All' even if this was interpreted in a variety of ways. In his edited study for the Labour party which bore this title and which was to become a rallying call for leading sections of the labour movement, R.H. Tawney had written, 'the phrase, "secondary education" is not free from ambiguity. No statutory definition of it, so far as we are aware, has ever been given.' He did however provide a definition based upon what he saw as the purpose of a secondary school:

> its main aim is not to impart the specialised technique of any particular trade or profession, but to develop the faculties which, because they are the attribute of man, are not peculiar to any particular class or profession of men, and to build up the interests, which, while they may become the basis of specialisation at a later stage, have a value extending beyond their utility for any particular vocation, because they are the condition of a rational and responsible life in society.[19]

This liberal approach and fear of an education tailored to a specific trade or industry permeated thought within the labour movement. If this seems like a contradiction from a movement which supported the

apprenticeship system in fact this was not so. Specialisation and training were strongly favoured, providing they followed a general education.

The *Consultative Committee of the Board of Education of the Adolescent* (Hadow Report) set up by the Tory government in 1923, encouraged by Trevelyan when he was minister at the BOE in the first, short-lived minority Labour government of 1924, had framed a reference to investigate the different types of curricula suitable for children 11–15 years of age and the means by which they could be provided,[20] but the phrase 'other than secondary schools' prevented the intrusion of the 'Secondary Education for All' debate which had been stimulated by R.H. Tawney's paper of 1922. Apart from the wish to avoid increased expenditure on public education many did not believe that most children were capable of benefitting from secondary schooling. Both the high proportion of children failing the school certificate examination and the significant numbers leaving before the age of 16 gave some credence to this view but 'a comparison of fee-paying and free-place pupils reveals that the weaker were those paying fees, and the free-place or scholarship children not only tended to remain longer at school but were more successful in the School Certificate Examination'.[21] In 1927 for instance, 48.1 per cent of free-place but only 19.8 per cent of fee-payers gained the School Certificate, a tendency the BOE had noted three years earlier. Lord Eustace Percy, who had wished to reintroduce fees for elementary schools, argued that 'The attempts to bring all post-primary education on to one dead high school level, as it is, I am afraid, in the US, will do far more to prevent any real higher education in this country than anything else.'[22] He was to remain opposed to any compulsory raising of the school leaving age for many years.[23] Although considered reactionary by some he was believed to belong to the 'Socialist' or 'pink wing' of the Cabinet by the *Daily Mail*.[24] It says something about the political perspective of that newspaper when the views of Percy as given to a TUCGC Deputation are considered.

In May 1925 a meeting took place at the BOE between a 13-strong deputation from the TUCGC headed by George Hicks, MP., Arthur Pugh and Walter Citrine, and Lord Eustace Percy, Aubrey Symonds, E.H. Pelham and E.D. Marris.[25] The deputation presented a resolution on education asking that all future schools be built on the open-air plan, with playing fields, the school leaving age to be raised to 15 and maintenance grants provided, the gradual introduction of free secondary schooling and the provision of continuation schools to 18 years for youngsters as proposed in the 1918 Education Act. Percy listened to the trade unionists speaking in support of their programme then replied by saying, 'he did not

think there was anything in what had been said which he could not agree with in principle. They were all agreed on the educational ideal for this country and the lines which they wanted to pursue.' He then went on to disagree with all the proposals before him! He did not think that public funds should be used for all educational developments, disagreed that some countries had a better secondary education than Britain, claimed it was impractical to suggest all future schools should be open-air or have playing fields, argued that there were insufficient male teachers to deal with a large rise in the school leaving age, and believed that all these proposals could not be pursued at an early date because of the impact they would have on increases in taxation and rates. In short there was no meeting of minds between the TUCGC and Percy. They were left with vague platitudes 'many of the things stated (by the trade unionists) represented exactly the lines on which he was working.' He suggested a few regional conferences to consider the issues of an extension in the school life of pupils and the problems of juvenile unemployment: 'If employers and organised labour would have regular meetings and consult with local authorities about the drawing up of these programmes, so they could be assured that for the next three or five years they would represent a consensus of opinion as to the best that could be done, it would be moving towards the aims they all had in mind.' If this was even true for some of the aims it was certainly not the prolonged time span the TUC had in mind.

Yet there was another statement by Percy which could be regarded as socialist in principle and seemed completely at variance with nearly all his other views. It was in an expression of his priorities for improving education in the country. Having listed the cost of getting rid of bad schools he said, 'There was one other fact which he thought was very bad where it happened, and that was the segregation of the fee-paying part of the population from the non fee-paying part of the population. The segregation of the population into two classes was, he thought, one of the worst things they could have in this country, and he was anxious to break it down.'[26] Even if one includes those paying fees in the county secondary schools this still seems like an expression of condemnation of the 'public schools' of the time. In this he must have been unique as an old Etonian Conservative Education Minister.

THE HADOW REPORT 1926

On 26 June 1925, George Hicks, MP, R. Richardson and W. Jenkins gave evidence to the Hadow Committee on behalf of the General Council of the

TUC. A summary of that evidence covered seven areas: raising the school leaving age and maintenance grants, organisation of post-elementary schooling, age of transference, curriculum, leaving examinations, transfer from central to secondary schools and Higher Tops. The evidence was prefaced by a statement pointing out that the TUC had interested itself in the question of education of children for many years, 'in particular the children of the working classes.'[27] It continued, 'No objection would arise from working-class parents about the legal age being raised to 15+ provided maintenance grants as approved in the 1918 Education Act were given... In some areas (it was pointed out) such powers had already been given – but it was believed that only a universal 15+ leaving age would be of real benefit.' It was not suggested that all children were suited to the kind of secondary schooling provided in secondary grammar schools but there were objections to the restructuring of elementary schooling being offered to most children and the accompanying inferior resourcing of this sector. 'Trade unions held the view that at least 75 per cent of the existing Elementary School pupils were fitted to be given some form of post-primary education for at least 4 years from the age of 11. They were anxious however that *all* children should be transferred to some form of secondary or central school administered under Secondary Regulations suitably modified. Reorganisation should make it possible to increase considerably the number of secondary school places... Additional central schools of the existing type were not the provision for post-primary education which (were) envisaged, but rather there should be considerable extension of the secondary school system as it was known... Trade schools should be ruled out. The proposed schools should be free. Parents should be allowed to choose the type of post-primary school their children should attend – the central school if there was one, the secondary school or the technical school.' Given the necessary finance and the time for a considerable building programme to be undertaken, parity of funding and resources could be achieved, although there would always be the issue of the status gained by institutions from past reputations. Yet experience would show that parental choice for different forms of post-primary schooling was destined to be a focus for continual controversy.

Eleven was agreed as the most suitable age for transfer, partly because it 'permitted of a continuous and homogenous four or five years course of secondary or advanced education up to the age of 15 or 16'. As for the curriculum, 'it would be necessary to organise a wide variety of educational courses. About 25 per cent of any age group might be expected to take the existing type of secondary course. The courses for other children should have a bias, e.g. scientific or mining, commercial,

technical, agricultural, etc; whilst the possibility of transferring children at all ages from one course to another more suited to their abilities and needs, should be amply secured.' A vital corollary however, was the strongly expressed belief that parity of esteem should be given to all other forms of post-primary schooling. Hence the need for parity of funding. Within guidelines from the BOE, it should be the responsibility of the head teacher in consultation with 'responsible teachers' to design the curriculum. Furthermore, 'Any movement which would raise the status of handwork to that of bookwork, and relate instruction to local environment... would be welcomed,' although witnesses were opposed to any move 'to impose instruction of a narrowly vocational type or to confine the training of young people to preparation for employment in local factories'.

When Hadow published its 38 recommendations in 1926, the TUC gained some satisfaction in seeing that a considerable number of them were in common or closely related to the points they had made. A major agreement was a common division of schooling by age (excluding of course the private sector) – primary and secondary in name if not in curriculum or levels of funding; raising of the school leaving age to 15 by 1932; agreement that practical subjects should be given greater status and that there was need for teachers with an industrial, agricultural or commercial bias. Alongside such observations were statements such as 'courses of instruction, though not merely vocational or utilitarian, would aim at linking school work with interests arising from the social and industrial environment of the pupils'.[28]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cole, G.D.H. (1948) *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789–1947*, Table 11, p.481 and *TUC Report 1970*, p.845.
2. Marx, K. (1852) 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' in *Marx and Engels Selected Work in One Volume*, p.18.
3. *TUCGC Mins.* 5.3.1927 and 28.11.1928.
4. Citrine, W. (1964) *Men and Work; An Autobiography*, pp.20–21.
5. Foot, M. (1975) *Aneurin Bevan Vol.1, 1897–1945*, p.180.
6. Citrine Papers 1/8, pp.336–9. Cited in Taylor, R. (2000) *The TUC: From General Strike to New Unionism*, p.36.
7. *Sunday Express*, 13.1.1929, pp.1 and 13.
8. *Daily Herald*, 24 April 1929, p.5.
9. Citrine to Post Office Worker, *TUCEC Mins.* 9.4.1932.

10. BBC to TUCEC, *TUCEC Mins.* 7.8.1929.
11. Report by TUC Visitors, *TUCEC Mins.* 28.10.1938.
12. Ellen Wilkinson to TUCEC, *TUCEC Mins.* Ibid.
13. Coleg Harlech to TUCEC, *TUCEC Mins.* 10.3.1932.
14. *TUC Report 1927*, p.181 and correspondence 21.7.1927; 27.12.1927 and 26.6.1928. *TUCEC Mins. 1927* and *1928.*
15. Principal, People's College, Elsinore to TUC, *TUCEC Mins.* 16.4.1931.
16. W.M. Fletcher to W. Citrine 28.8.1930; W. Citrine to W.M. Fletcher 8.9.1930, *TUCEC. Mins*, 1930.
17. M.L. Jacks to TUCEC 4.5.1925; TUCEC to M.L. Jacks 15.5.1925. *TUCEC Mins.*
18. TUCGC Deputation to President BOE 25.5.1925, *TUC Report 1925*, pp.89–90.
19. Tawney, R.H. (ed.) (1922) *Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour*, p.29.
20. For details concerning the origins of the Hadow Committee's terms of reference and the reception of its findings see Doherty, B. (1964) 'The Hadow Report 1926' *Durham Research Review*, No.15 and Simon, B.(1974) *The Politics of Educational Reform 1920–1940*, Ch.3.
21. Banks, O. (1955) *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education*, p.125. For a comparison of free-place pupils and fee-paying pupil examination results from 1926–1927 and 1938 see pp.127–128.
22. *Hansard* 8.4.1925, cited in Banks, O., ibid. p.122.
23. *Hansard 1114*, 6.11.1930.
24. Doherty, B. 'The Hadow Report 1926'.
25. *TUC Report 1925*, pp.88–94. The members of the TUCGC Deputation were: A.B. Swales (Chair – TUC), A.A.H. Findlay, A.A. Purcell, R.B. Walker, J. Bottomley MP, J. Beard, J. Turner, M.F. Titterington, H.H. Elvin and E. Hallas.
26. Ibid., p.93.
27. *PRO ED/10/147.*
28. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent* (1926) p.88. Conclusions and recommendations of the Report are contained in Ch. Xl.

CHAPTER 2

RESISTANCE TO SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ALL

MINORITY LABOUR GOVERNMENT 1929

Early in April 1928 a joint Labour Party/TUC 90-page document was published covering the whole field of public education with a foreword by Ramsay MacDonald in which he stated:

> Labour approaches the problem from the experience of the elementary school and the workshop, the mine and the field. To it, the school is not a luxury that may be limited in a fit of economy, but a necessity that can be starved only at the national peril. The impetus that the short-lived Labour Government gave to everyone engaged in teaching was but a proof of what value it placed upon education and what enthusiasm it would spend to put it on a satisfactory footing.[1]

The joint document covered 19 points including areas associated with school welfare and challenged the constant question as to how far the government could afford to provide a good education for all young people. Ironically, within three years when Labour was returned to office, if not power, MacDonald was to support Snowden in finding economic reasons to thwart Trevelyan's best intentions to promote education.

The problematic and complex issues surrounding Trevelyan's Education Bills have been well documented:[2] the hostility of Snowden at the Treasury to increased expenditure on welfare; the failure of MacDonald to give Trevelyan support; the resistance to the Bills by the Roman Catholic Labour MPs from Glasgow and Liverpool under guidance from their

bishops; and the fear that if means tests were applied to maintenance grants they would then be applied to unemployment benefits, which worried many trade unionists. When the customary antagonism of a Conservative House of Lords to measures which might lead to increased taxation was added this combination of vested interests proved too powerful for Trevelyan to overcome. The TUC carefully watched the passage of events and realised in the autumn of 1930 that there was a danger of their ambitions for raising the school leaving age to 15 with maintenance grants being postponed to an undetermined future date.

Citrine issued a TUC Circular in 1930 bringing to the attention of all affiliated unions the threat before them and urging them to bring pressure to bear upon MPs.[3] It was made clear that the TUCGC regarded the Bill as

> of very great importance both on educational grounds and industrial grounds... [it] would withhold from the Labour market a considerable number of juveniles and this must necessarily have an effect upon the unemployment problem. The TUCGC regret the necessity which has compelled HM Government to postpone the Bill, the date for the raising of the age for leaving school, but the Council feel that it is now all the more necessary in view of the opposition being engendered by Chambers of Trade and other such bodies, that affiliated unions should do everything possible to support the Education (School Attendance) Bill and to defeat the opposition to it being fostered by reactionary bodies who do not desire to see the raising of the school leaving age to 15 in September 1932.

There was also a call to make sure the reorganisation plans which had become associated in many minds with the Hadow Report were carried out so that the extra year at school would not be wasted.[4]

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT 1931

Within months the cause was lost, Trevelyan had resigned and MacDonald was leading a National government of whom four out of five MPs were Tory. The influence of the TUC declined in terms of discussions with government. A.J.P. Taylor has written that they were excluded from Downing Street from 1931 to 1938,[5] but if that is literally true in terms of Number 10 it is not true with regard to access to government ministers.[6] The TUC certainly did not give up the fight to promote their views. They attacked the Board of Education Circular 1421 containing new regulations for secondary schools raising fees and

subjecting free places to a means test. They sent a resolution to the President of the Board of Education recording,

> their most emphatic protest against the proposal of the Government [for] if confirmed [they would] seriously increase the financial burden borne by working-class parents sending their children to secondary schools... in many cases [this] will result in the exclusion from these schools of children who, on account of their educational fitness, would otherwise attend them.[7]

SPENS COMMITTEE OF 1938

In the first half of 1934 the TUC were invited to submit evidence to the Spens Committee which had been set up in July 1933. Arthur Pugh, Morgan Jones MP and Wright Robinson gave oral evidence based upon the detailed memo they had submitted. They reminded the Committee of evidence they had provided 11 years earlier to Hadow and that their views 'were closely related to the views expressed in that year'. Referring to the Hadow Report they commented:

> We believe that, if the lines there laid down are to reach their full development and their logical conclusion, it is a corollary of the report that universal secondary education (in the wider sense of the term) should be provided. We think that the most urgent educational reform required to-day is that effect should be given to the report, but that much will be lost unless the far-reaching reorganisation proposed is carried out under the regulations of the Secondary Code. Indeed, in our view, the intended results cannot be achieved except under a single code of regulations applicable to all post-primary education.[8]

Again maintenance grants were suggested, the class distinctions resulting from the separation of public education into elementary and secondary highlighted, a belief in the need for all pupils to have some 'simple instruction in social and political science' to prepare them for citizenship. Much of this was well-established TUC Education Policy which they had been pursuing for many years. In terms of secondary reorganisation there was now carefully argued support for multilateral schooling. It was made clear that there was no wish for any stereotyped system of schooling for all pupils. 'We desire to see the greatest possible variety and elasticity within the system.' They were anxious to see neither narrow practical courses nor similar limitation for those pursuing a more