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**An Enquiry into the Abolition of the Inner London Education  
Authority (1964 to 1988), with Particular Reference  
To Politics and Policy Making**

**Alan Radford**

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

University of Bath

Department of Education

June 2009

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# **An Enquiry into the Abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (1964 – 1988), with Particular Reference to Politics and Policy Making**

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## **Abstract of Thesis**

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) (1964 – 1990) was abolished by the Education Reform Act, 1988. This ended an unitary system of education that had existed in inner London for over a hundred years.

This thesis examines the question of the political reasons and motivations for the ILEA's abolition, considering both the move to the right by the Conservative party which abolished it, and the move to the left by the Labour party. In effect the polarisation of politics left little room for the form of pragmatic politics and policies which had enabled the ILEA to develop under previous Conservative and Labour administrations. Under these conditions the radical step to abolish the ILEA became possible.

Given this political climate the question is asked as to whether there were good grounds for the abolition of the ILEA, over and above ideological considerations. Two strategies are adopted to answer this question. The first examines the history and processes of policy making with reference to the support for Special Educational Needs and Adult, Further and Higher Education. These may be considered 'success stories' while a third case, that of William Tyndale, considers whether there were also weaknesses in the ILEA's policy processes. The second examines the claims that the ILEA tolerated low standards in education and failed to give value for money.

It is concluded that the evidence does not sustain the claims made against the ILEA and that therefore, its demise can better be explained by the polarisation of politics at the time.

## **ILEA Glossary**

### **ILEA**

**Inner London Education Authority.** Established, London Government Act 1963, abolished, Education Reform Act 1988. It differed from most LEAs (Local Education Authorities) in that apart from its funding through the GLC (Greater London Council), it was virtually autonomous. When the GLC was abolished, the ILEA in 1986, became directly elected, consisting of 2 or 3 members from each borough.

### **GLC**

**Greater London Council** – the ILEA’s parent body, abolished in 1986.

### **Members**

Mainly Elected Representatives. Before 1986, the ILEA consisted of 35 Members of the GLC, plus one representative of the 12 inner London boroughs, plus one from the Common Council of the City of London. There were 5 Additional Members including teacher representatives.

### **Education Committee**

Main Committee, served by five or six Standing Sub-Committees covering Finance, Policy Co-ordinating, Schools, Further and Higher Education, Staff and General, Equal Opportunities etc. These were re-organised in the 80s, and became Policy, Quality of Education, Equal Opportunities, Cultural Review Section, Further Higher Education, Schools and Development Sub-Committees.

### **Leader and Deputy Leader**

Both were chosen by the majority party, and likewise, the minority party elected similar ‘shadow’ appointments.

### **EO (Education Officer)**

The ILEA’s principal professional advisor, appointed by the Education Committee. Up to the late 1970s, the Education Officer had a Deputy (DEO) and a Chief Inspector – both of equal rank. After this change the Education Officer was assisted by a Deputy Controller and two Directors of Education – Schools and Further

Education and Community Education. The Education Officer had in effect, three deputies.

**AEO (Assistant Education Officer)**

Subordinate to the above Officers but responsible for major departments, such as Teaching Staff, Community Education and Careers, Primary and Secondary Schools, Development and Equipment etc.

**DLR**

Director of Learning Resources

**DRS**

Director of Research and Statistics

**Establishment Officer**

Concerned with the ILEA bureaucracy. Matters relating to teachers were dealt with by TS Branch (Teaching staff).

**DOs**

Divisional Officers – responsible for the ten ILEA Divisions – each based at Divisional Office.

**DEOs (Divisional Education Officers)**

In the late '70s, this was the new title for DOs and the appointees were then recruited from both inside and outside the ILEA.

**Education Welfare Service**

Principal Officer and supported by DEWOs in each Division (Divisional Education Welfare Officers).

**Managers or Governors**

Appointed by the Authority, and the Minor Authority (the boroughs). These included representatives of the school – heads and teachers, parents and one governor on the nomination of the Institute of Education, London. The significance of governors or managers is illustrated in the chapter on William Tyndale School.

## **CI**

Chief Inspector. The Education Officer's principal professional advisor. In the late '70s, the Chief Inspector was supported by two deputies; a Chief Inspector, Further and Higher Education, and Community Education, and a Chief Inspector, Schools. Further and Higher Education had specialist inspectors in its team.

## **SIs**

Staff Inspectors. Senior Inspectors who covered primary and secondary school branches, general duties, and all main subjects taught in schools were covered by specialist Staff Inspectors.

## **DIs**

District Inspectors with general responsibilities for a number of primary and secondary schools. They may also have had some responsibilities for the subject in which they had specialist skills.

## **Div Is**

Divisional Inspectors – an appointment of the late 1970s, which indicated the Senior Inspector of each Division.

**Special Educational Needs** – had their own inspectorate consisting of about 12 members led by a Staff Inspector.

**Staff Inspector (Primary)** – headed a team of about 15 inspectors, based mainly in the Divisional teams.

**Staff Inspector (Secondary)** – and **Staff Inspector (General Duties)**

## **Principal Education Psychologist and Divisional Educational Psychologists**

Principal Education Psychologist at County Hall, with Education Psychologists based in the ten Divisions.

## **County Schools**

Under direct control of the ILEA, but each school had its own governing body. These bodies, with an elected chairman, exercised considerable powers.



## **VA**

Voluntary Aided Schools – usually, but not exclusively – church schools, where their governors had considerable powers over staff appointments and the admission of pupils.

## **VC**

Voluntary Controlled – usually church schools with more limited powers than VA schools and fewer in number.

## **Teachers**

Assigned posts. Teachers appointed to the staff of a particular school. Divisional Staff, teachers, permanent appointments where the teacher – in theory – could be moved to another school in the Division.

## **TT Staff**

Temporary Terminal Teachers, normally appointed for one term, but this could be extended. Teachers on Supply Staff: casual teaching staff who were approved by ILEA Inspectors and were used primarily to cover staff absences.

## **EPS**

Educational Priority Schools. Schools that were assessed as having special difficulties and were given additional resources.

## **AUR**

Alternative Use of Resources. Schools were permitted, within certain limits, to use part of their allocation at their own discretion. This included the increase of teacher or ancillary worker support.

## **Full Inspection**

Made by the ILEA or the DfEE (now Ofsted). ILEA Inspections could be made on the initiative of the District or Divisional Inspector or could be ordered by the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee. Inspection would usually take place if a Governing Body formally requested a full inspection of their school. All inspection reports were received by appropriate committees: The committee chairman could also order a re-inspection of a school or college.

## **Part 1**

### **The Politics of the Abolition of the ILEA**

## Introduction: with notes on Politics

**‘In other words, the educational issues that the ILEA posed for the state cannot, unlike the ILEA, be legislated away...’**

**Crispin Jones**

When Crispin Jones wrote the above comment about the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority by the Education Reform Bill of 1988, he was fully aware of the difficulties faced by educators in the major inner cities. In this case, the 1988 Act abolishing the ILEA was a last minute clause, added to the main measures of the Bill. The abolition was the result of seven years hostility to the Labour-controlled local authority by the New Right Conservative government.

Jones saw the abolition of the ILEA as something of a tragedy and he linked it ‘to a wider struggle for the democratization of education, and it is hoped a fairer society’.<sup>1</sup> Stuart Maclure, who knew the ILEA well saw, the abolition as ‘an act of educational vandalism.’<sup>2</sup>

The first real threat to the ILEA came in 1980 when Kenneth Baker<sup>3</sup> as a London MP, but not a Minister, submitted the findings of some London MPs, recommending that the ILEA should be broken up. The Minister, Mark Carlisle, quickly dismissed the main recommendation. The second period from 1980, to the demise of the Authority in the Education Reform Bill of 1988, was marked by increasing bitterness. L.S. Amery<sup>4</sup> in his book, ‘Thoughts on the Constitution’, commented on how strong characters can influence policy making. This was precisely the case of Mrs Thatcher who led the Conservative government at that time. Dennis Kavanagh<sup>5</sup> quoted a Gallop Poll that indicated Mrs Thatcher had the lowest rate of approval of any Prime Minister since 1955, but he attributed her later dominance in Cabinet, with the acceptance of her economic and political strategy, to her leadership in the Falklands War. As an opposition party, following its defeat at the polls in 1970, Labour adopted much more socialist goals, culminating in the 1973 Party Conference approval of Labour’s Programme for Britain, with a massive increase in proposals for state involvement in the nation’s economy. Moreover, these controversial policies were introduced when Party membership was declining rapidly. It would appear that this shift to the left in national Labour politics had a growing influence on local ILEA policies by the end of the 70s, when the ILEA’s leadership by the essentially middle of the road socialists, epitomized by Sir Ashley

Bramall, began to be questioned. Ken Livingstone, who was left-wing in outlook, challenged Sir Ashley as Leader of the ILEA in 1976, and although he failed, he weakened the middle of the road leadership. This then set the scene for the polarisation of politics in relation to the ILEA.

On the face of it, a large powerful Authority had much in its favour, such as the expertise that came from a history of one hundred years' service, by three bodies in total, serving much the same areas of inner London, and by the wide range of support services it could provide. Above all, there was the capacity to understand the complexities of a socially divided city, and to translate this experience into policy making, which in its view could not be matched by central government. Its very size meant that it could provide economies of scale and it could co-ordinate school admissions policies across inner London. This power of co-ordination was particularly useful in running the Special Needs programme and in providing adult education, and support services, such as a schools' Psychological Service and a Careers Service. The abolition of the ILEA was a last minute addition to the 1988 Education Reform Bill. Many of the influential figures in the Tory party, such as Sir Keith Joseph, had reservations about the ILEA's abolition as they saw that the needs for co-ordination of some services exceeded what they saw as an ideological rather than pragmatic approach to educational administration: a view which may be considered somewhat atypical of a man with such a strong commitment to a radical conservative agenda.

After the ILEA's demise, a different education service exists both in London and nationally. In an education article, published by the *Economist* 'How to be Top', the writer quoted<sup>6</sup> Sir Michael Barber, once adviser to the former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who wrote, 'the British Government has changed pretty much every aspect of education policy in England and Wales, often more than once. The funding of schools, the governance of schools, curriculum standards, assessment and testing, the role of local government, the role of national government, the range and nature of national school admissions, you name it, it's been changed, and sometimes changed back'. Sir Michael did not acknowledge how much of the origins of such policies lay in New Right thinking nor did he, as the *Economist's* international correspondent somewhat astringently observed in the same article, add that 'The only thing that hasn't changed has been the outcome.

The 1988 Reform Act accepted the need for the local administration of a considerable part of the education service, hence the devolution of substantial powers to the boroughs of inner London. But in the key area of policy making, the boroughs were much weaker than the former ILEA. No doubt, the electorate in the predominantly Conservative boroughs such as Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea, Camden and Westminster, were well pleased with their having a separate administration. But these are, of course, the more wealthy boroughs and the majority of inner London boroughs still face the sort of problems, outlined by Crispin Jones in the caption heading of this chapter. A number of these boroughs, Lambeth, Islington, Tower Hamlets, for example, have struggled to provide an efficient service and have been criticised by Ofsted. There is also the divide-and-rule argument here; a comprehensive, large Authority such as was the ILEA, with its predominantly Labour support from voters, represented a much stronger opponent to government, than several separate inner London boroughs. Given the ambitions that the then Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, had for the reconstruction of Britain according to a combination of conservative and neo-liberal ideologies, the presence of an opposition as powerful as the ILEA clearly presented a threat.

Mrs Thatcher had had dealings with the ILEA when she had been Education Secretary of State in Edward Heath's conservative administration, 1970-74, but it would seem her antipathy to the ILEA heightened towards the end of the 1970s and into the early 80s, when she absorbed significantly more right-wing ideas.

Writing her memoirs, published in 1993<sup>7</sup> she directed her fire at the ILEA, mainly at its alleged high spending, coupled with her view that it was 'achieving the worst examination results'. Her second reference,<sup>8</sup> was to the high spending of the ILEA, linked (presumably by its relationship with the Greater London Council) with its capacity to increase the business rates, and her third and final reference,<sup>9</sup> was to efforts to reduce the ILEA's costs by dispensing with the more moderate scheme of dual running, (a more cautious scheme to allow for a transition period, when the rating system, and the new community charge would co-exist). Mrs Thatcher did not seem to concern herself with the socio-economic problems that the ILEA faced, with some of the most severe problems faced by inner London boroughs, such as Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Greenwich, coupled with boroughs, such as

Kensington and Chelsea, Camden and Westminster and Wandsworth, that had areas of significant social deprivation alongside relatively well off districts.

The essentially paternalistic side of conservatism, as exemplified by Timothy Raison (MP for Aylesbury), Sir Ian Gilmour, and so to some extent, the party's former Leader, Edward Heath, were put to the sword when Mark Carlisle, whom Mrs Thatcher considered to be a 'Wet', was replaced as Secretary of State for Education in 1981. This newly ascendant Radical Right Party had differing sectional interests, but Knight<sup>10</sup> also wrote about the considerable period of gestation in their development. However, of all the powerful influences in the formulation of policy, Nigel Lawson, was perhaps the most straightforward. He exerted a powerful influence on Mrs Thatcher, probably stemming from occupying the influential Chancellor of the Exchequer's post; but his prime concerns were with the inadequate grounding that the current education system then provided for our young people, and the adverse effect this had on Britain's position in a very competitive world. He wanted to abolish<sup>11</sup> LEAs, use a national curriculum, monitored by a hard hitting inspectorate, and to use a strong 'statist' administration, on the French lines. Market-led policies, with parental choice, the expansion of popular schools and the contraction, or closure, of less successful schools were common views in the 1980s but some Conservatives were concerned over the 'capture' of the National Curriculum by the education experts within the Department of Education, and some did not see the market in education as the panacea.<sup>12</sup> Knight quotes Lady Young, Demetri Argyropulo, and Robert Rhodes James who expressed unease at this prospect. Stephen Ball<sup>13</sup> quotes an interview which Stuart Sexton had with Mrs Thatcher in which she repudiated the idea that Prime Minister, James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College was the turning point in the Labour party's demand for higher standards in our schools and colleges. She maintained that Conservative party educationists, such as Norman St. John Stevas, had vigorously campaigned for higher standards for several years before James Callaghan had made his speech at Ruskin College (1976). Mrs Thatcher's views would seem to have been confirmed,<sup>14</sup> by Christopher Knight, when he wrote, 'Stevas had good reason to feel cheated. The Party's new strategy document spoke of a return to commonsense. (The Right Approach: A Statement of Conservative Aims, October, 1976 CCO) and under the section 'Standards in Education', (authored jointly by C Patten, A Maude and J Ranelagh) and enunciated a number

of objectives which Callaghan had himself canvassed...'. The situation in both major political parties was further complicated by the rise of increasingly strong factional interests. In party terms (but this did not necessarily apply to the Labour party within the ILEA), as Paul Whiteley,<sup>15</sup> wrote, 'The Left grew in strength in the 1970s, as the economic orthodoxy produced an ever increasing slump, but after the defeat in the General Election of 1979, it changed strategies. Whiteley maintained that the Left realised that controlling the party conference (as a route to power – our quote) was not enough, it had to obtain control over the parliamentary party and the leadership.' These policies were outlined by supporters of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, such as the mandatory re-selection of MPs during the lifetime of each parliament, an electoral college to choose the party leader, and the right of the National Executive Committee to draw up the Party Manifesto.

The Conservative party in the early 1980s followed an equally radical line. Professor Ball,<sup>16</sup> wrote 'the crusading radical New Right had changed all that by the 1980s. Neo-liberal texts, particularly the work of Hayek, and monetarist theories like those of Friedman, are paraded as a basis for social and economic policy making.' He goes on to outline the complexity of the factions in the Conservative party in 1980 when he wrote,<sup>17</sup> 'While the neo-liberals see the community as founded upon economic relations, the neo-conservatives see it as founded upon social bonds arising out of a common culture and sense of national identity, held together, and, if necessary enforced by strong government.' Professor Ball does not mention the so-called 'Wets', who were a diminished but not insignificant force within the party, that was in essence much more in line with the traditional Conservative view of avoiding radical change in the established order. In translating this into the London educational scene, the 'Wets', as epitomized by Mark Carlisle, Edward Heath and Sir Ian Gilmour, did have serious reservations about abolishing a form of unified education service in inner London, that had existed for over a hundred years. Edward Heath attacked the proposal to abolish the ILEA in the House of Commons, 1988 Education Reform Bill debate.

Norman Tebbit,<sup>18</sup> who had good words to say for the ILEA in the education of his young children, contended that it became wholly politicised, and was more concerned in its later years with dogma, rather than good educational practice. He held the posts of Employment Secretary (1981-83), Trade and Industry Secretary

(1983-85) and Party Chairman (1985-87) but seemed to lose influence with Mrs Thatcher during his period as Party Chairman. The prime enemy of the ILEA was Kenneth Baker who, in spite of Mrs Thatcher's often lukewarm support for him as a Minister for the Environment (1985-86), Education Secretary (1986-89), Party Chairman (1989-1990), had recommended<sup>19</sup> to the Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle, that the ILEA should be broken up (1980-81) and its powers distributed to the inner London boroughs. In his political memoirs, Kenneth Baker claimed he had a sustained strategy to abolish the ILEA<sup>20</sup> by whittling away its powers, before finally disposing of it. The ILEA in 1981 (when he submitted his Report) was in political terms, centre Left at the time, but Kenneth Baker claimed in his memoirs, that the ILEA's policies over the closure of grammar schools provoked his hostility.

The ILEA, as a Labour controlled body, was influenced by Labour politics at Westminster, and the challenge by Ken Livingstone to the Party (ILEA) Leadership in 1977 was significant. There can be no doubt that the cut-back in public spending, engineered by Prime Minister Callaghan and his Chancellor Dennis Healey, in 1976/77; was, in effect, a challenge to ILEA policy making at that time. The ILEA, perhaps with some justification, was always hypersensitive about financial cut-backs, but in defence of the then Leader, Ashley Bramall, who had been an MP, he seemed to show a 'constitutional regard' for the primacy, in terms of policy making, of central government, and always urged caution in opposing government in fiscal matters. And yet for those who worked in the ILEA's service at that time, the rapidly falling rolls, the consequent efforts to move teachers from schools where their rolls had fallen sharply, and the problems of secondary school reorganisation on comprehensive lines, seemed to pre-occupy the administration and the inspectorate.

The GLC, in a financial sense, the parent body of the ILEA was closely intertwined with the Authority on policy issues. The ILEA was clearly affected by Labour's success in the GLC elections in 1981, when the Labour party deposed Andrew McIntosh as Leader and Ken Livingstone took over this post.<sup>21</sup> David M Kogan<sup>22</sup> wrote, 'the previous leadership posts in the GLC and ILEA were emptied in favour of left-wing newcomers. Almost all major committee chairmanships fell to the left.' This heralded the more radical left-wing policy making by the ILEA in the 1980s.



This thesis is about politics and policy making with regard to the ILEA and it is therefore important to say something about how these terms are understood in this thesis.

### **A Note on Politics and Policy Making**

Sir Bernard Crick, who knew the ILEA political scene well, wrote,<sup>23</sup> ‘Aristotle first stated what should be recognised as the fundamental elementary proposition of any possible political science. He saw the true polis as an aggregate of many members, not a single tribe, religion, interest or tradition.’ Politics arises from accepting the fact of the simultaneous existence of different groups, hence different interests and different traditions, within a territorial unit under a common rule.’ Aristotle clearly saw freedom and respect for differences to be essential. One could argue therefore that the ILEA, in political terms, was closer to the thinking of Aristotle, whereas many New Right policies, such as market-led education policies were, it could be argued, almost the negation of the Aristotelian approach in that instead of democratic debate about policies such as selection, the market would be left to decide, taking politics out of the decision-making process.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, ideology, in relation to the principle of the free market, could be seen to dominate other aspects of Conservative policy.

In some ways, politics implies a much more, almost day-to-day adjustment, to the problem of attaining, and keeping power, than does party ideology which can be seen to be based on fundamental principles. However, political party ideologies are often made up of coalitions of interests and therefore their ideologies contain principles that are in contradiction with one another, as Professor Whitty has pointed out with respect to the New Right.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to politics, policies can be seen as the attempt to implement the principles held by political parties. However, policies are always subject to reinterpretation and change in the process of implementation. Professor Ball summed this up when he wrote: ‘Policies shift and change their meaning in the arenas of politics; representations change, key interpreters change; .... Policies have their own momentum inside the state.’<sup>26</sup>

In post-war Europe, Kavanagh<sup>27</sup> looked at the ideologies of many Western European states, and posed the question, does politics matter? Governments in many of these states sought moderation in wage settlements from organised labour and other producer groups in return for policies covering unemployment, welfare expenditure and taxation. There was a degree of consensus about the role of the state in ensuring economic growth by developing policies that created stability and an element of harmony between capital and labour. To some extent this was true in the UK but consistently low levels of productivity made the situation more difficult here. This status quo, was destroyed by the New Right in the 1980s by aggressive policies towards local government, and the claims on the economy made by the welfare state. However, what is ironic about the New Right ascendancy was that it was built on the platform that it would be doing away with social engineering and returning society and the economy to the ‘natural’ state of the market. The common sense of market policies was to replace the ideology of an interventionist state. But the New Right project was far from being non-ideological in asserting the natural order of the market and its right wing ideology can be seen as a political manoeuvre that requires critical examination. This thesis seeks to investigate this issue by considering the extent to which the rightward shift in ideology provoked a leftward shift within the ILEA.

### **Thesis Structure**

In order to understand the demise of the ILEA some background is required in terms of the history and political and administrative structure of the Authority. This is given in Chapters 1-3. Given the polarisation of politics outlined above, this thesis will document in greater detail the ideological and political considerations which led to this polarisation in Chapter 4. In chapter 5, the implications of this polarisation for the ILEA are considered. Here there are two sub-themes. The first is that polarisation led to a vacuum in which pragmatic politics, based on compromise was no longer possible. Here a key question to be addressed is whether it was only the move towards the radical right by the Conservative party which explains the abolition of the ILEA or whether or not, if the Labour administration of the ILEA had been prepared to compromise, rather than moving to a more radical left position, the ILEA could in some form have been saved. In considering this

question, the breadth of the radical Conservative critique of the ILEA needs to be considered. It was not only issues concerning educational standards and values that were at stake but related to these was an opposition to ILEA policies on the Inspectorate, teachers' unions and school governors, all of which were seen to collude in the maintenance of low standards.

Underlying these issues is another question, which concerns the degree to which at that time, and subsequently, more power has, until recently under devolution, accrued to the central state. In other words, behind the politics discussed in this thesis, there appears to have been a more secular trend in which the autonomy of local politics and administration was reduced.

Having considered the nature of the polarisation of politics at this time the thesis goes on to address the question of whether the charges made by the Conservative party on which it based its policy of abolition stand up to scrutiny. Here two strategies are adopted to answer this question. The first evaluates case studies of the policies and processes relating to the provision of Special Needs; Adult, Further and Higher Education and the William Tyndale crisis. One of the claims made by the critics of the ILEA was that it was highly bureaucratic and inflexible, and that this added to what they saw as the excessive costs of running the Authority. The following three chapters examine this claim by looking at the policy processes and innovations introduced by the ILEA. Chapter 6 examines the history and processes of policy making with reference to the support for Special Educational Needs. It demonstrates both the need for a wider service than single London borough authorities could provide and how innovative the ILEA was in the provision of this service. The inclusion of Chapter 7 on Adult, Further and Higher education could be criticized in view of the fact that most of these responsibilities were taken from the ILEA before its demise. The chapter is included because, (a) It showed how the ILEA handled with skill and sensitivity a major reorganisation of Higher education in the late 1960s, (b) It also showed the need of close co-operation of LEAs and schools, when much more emphasis was placed on school-based experience for teachers in training and, (c) The ILEA had a highly developed and integrated Adult Education service, and it seemed to be a folly to break it up.

These may be considered ‘success stories’ while a third case, that of William Tyndale (Chapter 8) considers whether there were also weaknesses in the ILEA’s policy processes. Here it is argued that in spite of failings by ILEA administrators, politicians and inspectors, the ILEA showed its complete openness in the way it investigated the crisis and that its response showed great flexibility and readiness to learn from the experience. The second examines the claims that the ILEA tolerated low standards in education (Chapter 9). The crucial issue of standards in ILEA schools and colleges was a source of great concern to the New Right. It is possible to argue that alleged low standards, in some ILEA schools, represented a much more difficult problem than many New Right supporters believed it to be, in that pupils’ performances in schools often involves complex economic and social issues. And finally the question is considered as to whether the ILEA failed to give value for money (Chapter 10). The ILEA’s spending policies, were characterised by the New Right as profligate. This chapter explains what in essence the ILEA hoped to provide as an educational service in inner London, and in this sense gave value for money. We see this as a vital matter in the differing viewpoints of the New Right and the ILEA as to what was the real purpose of the Authority’s educational service. There could be something in the claim of the New Right that the ILEA should have been more prudent in some of its spending policies, and even the last leader of the Authority, Neil Fletcher,<sup>28</sup> expressed the view that there was too great a hyper-sensitivity about curtailing expenditure in some cases by the ILEA, but he did not accept the very limited view of what, as he saw it, the New Right expected of an educational service in inner London.

With this structure in mind the questions this thesis will address are:

- 1) To what extent can the demise of the ILEA be explained by the advent of a radical Conservative party under Mrs Thatcher?
- 2) Did a move to the Left in the Labour Party at large and London in particular preclude the possibility of a politics of compromise that may have ensured the survival of the ILEA in some form?
- 3) Were the charges of low standards, high costs and excessive and rigid bureaucracy levelled against the ILEA by the Conservative government justified in the light of the evidence?

## **Methodology and Reflexivity: Notes on Sources, with a brief account of the writer's involvement with the ILEA and his career résumé**

As stated in the Abstract of Thesis, most of the primary source material in this work comes from the enormous volume of committee minutes of the London School Board, the London County Council and the ILEA, all housed within the London Metropolitan Archives. The minutes, on the whole, do not include details of discussion, but they give a clear impression of the increased opposition by the Conservative minority party in the 80s and 90s, which mirrored the increased hostility of government to the ILEA on the national political scene.

Ken Livingstone, who challenged Ashley Bramall for the Leadership of the Party in 1976, was unavailable for interview. I interviewed two Conservative Secretaries of State, Mark Carlisle and Kenneth Baker. I also interviewed the Conservative Minister, Sir Rhodes Boyson and received letters, in answer to my request for information, from Norman Tebbit and Norman St. John Stevas. This was balanced on the Labour side, by interviews with two ILEA former Leaders of the Authority, Ashley Bramall and Keith Fletcher. I interviewed Anne Sofer, a Member, who was an experienced Chairman with the ILEA, who changed her Party allegiance to the Liberal Democrats. I also interviewed Steve Bundred as a Member, who later moved to the National Audit Office. I interviewed all the Senior Officers of the ILEA, Peter Newsam, William Stubbs and David Mallen, with the exception of the late Dr Briault. My usual practice was to ask the interviewee to concentrate on two or three of what I saw to be the main issues. I did make notes of the interviews but did not use a tape recorder, as I felt this could engender excessive caution on the part of the interviewee. I believe I did secure a fair balance of viewpoints from the main participants. I also interviewed several inspector colleagues, 10 former ILEA head teachers, a senior NUT officer, six ILEA school governors, several teachers and some former ILEA pupils. \*

Hansard gives an extremely good account of how most London Labour MPs, led by their spokesman Jack Straw, attacked the provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Bill. In this debate, Jack Straw showed he had a good grasp of detail when he pointed out that John Maples (Cons. Lewisham West) had misquoted Bill Stubbs, the ILEA Education Officer (1982-1988), when he indicated that Stubbs favoured the abolition of the Authority. Jack Straw also made clear that Kenneth Baker, as

\* Additional notes and comments on interviews are appended to this Introduction

Secretary of State, had visited but one ILEA school in his two years in office, and that this was a voluntary aided Catholic girls' school! The third reading of the Bill was more contentious than most third readings, and contained a moving and well-documented defence of the ILEA by Mr Fraser, MP for Lambeth. This debate, interestingly, showed some division in the ranks of the Tory MPs. For example, Timothy Raison, MP for Aylesbury, had served on the ILEA as a Member for Richmond Council (co-opted) and whom I had met at Henry Compton School, 1970, and he spoke with understanding of the ILEA's problems. This school had had a poor reputation in Fulham in the 1960s but was on the road to recovery.

The Public Record Office was extremely useful in its possession of HMI papers and detailed reports on ILEA schools, and on ILEA Sports Centres and Rural Field Centres.

Printed memoirs or autobiographies of the senior figures of Mrs Thatcher's government, including Mrs Thatcher herself, present something of a problem. Even among colleagues who shared her political convictions there are notable discrepancies. For example Kenneth Baker<sup>29</sup> attempted to show a dynamic self-image when he was asked by Mrs Thatcher to become Secretary of State for Education. He wrote<sup>30</sup>, 'I told her (the Prime Minister) that I had three priorities: first to deal with immediate problems, and for this I would need money, ... second, I had to resolve a very damaging teachers' strike. Third, I told her within six months I would bring proposals for a fundamental reform of the education system'. However, Nicholas Ridley<sup>31</sup> paints a very different picture. Although he was Secretary of State for the Environment, he clearly claims the authorship of the Grant Maintained School concept and gives the impression that in allowing education provision to be enshrined in the 1987 Party Manifesto, 'Kenneth Baker took a lot of driving, he was hesitant about the plan throughout ... she dragged him inch by inch in the direction we all wished to go'. Nigel Lawson<sup>32</sup> in his memoirs also gives a clear impression that Mrs Thatcher gave Kenneth Baker his marching orders. Kenneth Baker<sup>33</sup> wrote of a meeting (14/4/1983) in Mrs Thatcher's room, in the House of Commons to canvass London Conservative MP's views about the abolition of the ILEA. Four out of the five MPs favoured a 'more cautious approach', in view of the forthcoming General Election. Even the Minister, Keith Joseph, expressed reservations about proposing the abolition of the ILEA!

## **Positioning the Researcher Reflexively**

Ball<sup>34</sup> argues that the researcher is the primary research tool in that the researcher does not stand apart from the world he or she are researching, rather they are part of it. In the case of a subject like the politics and policy-making associated with the demise of the ILEA, this is of especial significance because the subject matter has occasioned such emotional responses and debate.

Since no qualitative researcher can be seen as making ‘objective judgements’ it is important to consider and record my own experience and motivations since they will undoubtedly colour the way the data is interpreted, particularly in relation to the interviews.

The interviews were conducted with senior policy makers and this presents its own problems. Policy makers have their own agendas and it is important for the researcher to often explore what lies behind these agendas in order to understand the position of the policy maker.<sup>35</sup> However, in this case nearly all the interviews were conducted after the demise of the ILEA and the policy makers had retired from their positions within the Authority. Ball<sup>36</sup> has argued that retired policy makers are likely to be more forthcoming in their views because they no longer have the political pressures associated with their former positions to consider in the responses they make. With these considerations in mind I now give an account of my own professional biography.

From my personal experiences, in working for two local authorities, the former West Riding County Council and the former North Riding County Council, and the ILEA, I have to declare a pre-disposition in their favour, but am also aware that there could be substance in some of the New Right’s claim that some LEAs lacked financial prudence and allowed their political inclinations to affect policies in their schools, a point I discuss in this thesis. In my time as a Deputy Head, in Morley (West Riding County Council - 1957-59) and Head, Eston County Modern (a new secondary school, North Riding County Council – 1959-66), I did not experience any political interference, nor interference in curricular matters. In fact, I

appreciated the support of my county administrations that allowed me to 'keep out of the office' and to teach a proper timetable in school.

In 1966-81, I was the District (later Divisional Inspector), Division 1 in the ILEA, which as District Inspector included the responsibility for 80 primary schools, 8 secondary schools and five Special Needs schools. There was a direct responsibility for the performance of these schools in both academic performance and for other general welfare. At Divisional Office there were strong supporting agencies, such as the schools' staffing officers, and the management clerks of the schools. I also had close contact through committee work with the Divisional Welfare Officer. The District Inspector had to work in tandem with the Divisional Officer, later Divisional Education Officer, whose responsibilities included the general administration of schools. For some ten years, I worked alongside my District Inspector colleague, Howell Davies, with whom I could share problems. In taking early retirement, in 1981, I completed my post-graduate studies at Birkbeck College in the degree of MSc (Politics and Administration), taught part-time from 1982-86 at Stowe School (Economics and Politics), and I also taught part-time in a school for children with severe learning problems in Ealing borough. I did return, to work for the ILEA in 1986, at the request of David Mallen (then Deputy Education Officer, ILEA) to work two days and nights at Wolverstone Hall, a boarding school, near Harwich, when the school had had an adverse HMI Report. I also had one years' experience in the USA (1955-56) as an exchange teacher.

It will be seen that although I reached a senior position in the ILEA, I was not involved with it during its last years. That period was one of an intense atmosphere that developed during the struggles for its continued survival. Looking back twenty years later I have embarked on a critical policy scholarship thesis (see the Conclusion) that seeks to assess the ideological claims underlying the New Right's abolition of the ILEA. To foreshadow the later argument, it is clear that the reasons giving for its abolition largely masked its ideological commitments.



Brief biographical notes on educationists interviewed, or corresponded with, and indicating any significant points made in interview, with regard to policy issues.

George Carter: Interviewed 1999. Teacher Member of the ILEA with strong connections with the Inner London Teachers Association and the NUT. ILEA Member of the Auld Committee (William Tyndale Schools' Inquiry). Recently retired Head of Isaac Newton School at the time of interview. He considered that (a) the William Tyndale teachers were in error in not permitting the ILEA to inspect their school, (b) He felt that some senior officers 'got off lightly' whereas he was sympathetic to the two ILEA officers, close to the dispute, the Divisional Officer and the District Inspector.

Anne Sofer: Interviewed 2001. Elected Member of the ILEA, who in the early 1980s left the Labour Party to join the Liberal Democrats. She was a university graduate, who was a strong supporter of Sir Ashley Bramall (Centre-right ILEA Leader) and unusually, became a 'professional' when she became Director of Education (Tower Hamlets) after being an elected Member (ILEA). She was a Member of the Deputy Education Officer's team that visited New York to investigate inner city problems. She gave strong support to Peter Newsam, as Deputy, and later Education Officer in his wish to establish innovatory multi-ethnic policies in the ILEA. She was a former Chairperson of the ILEA Schools Sub-Committee.

Sir Ashley Bramall: Interviewed 1998. Long-term Leader of the ILEA, who was replaced in 1981. He had experience of government as a former Labour MP and was a long-term Chairman of Pimlico School governors. A very able administrator who was a strong advocate of comprehensive schooling, particularly the 11-18 school. In interview he regretted that his successors in the ILEA did not, in his view, properly use the Policy Coordinating Committee, in order to give more coherence to ILEA policy making. He contended that it was possible some 'accommodation' could have been made with central government to help the ILEA to survive.

Lord Carlisle PC: Interviewed 1999. Conservative Secretary of State for Education replaced after two years in office by Mrs Thatcher as one of the so-called 'Wets'. He first developed new policies in Special Needs Education and was a prime mover

in the Assisted Places scheme. He had strong beliefs in 'traditional' Conservatism and rejected the idea of breaking up the ILEA.

Lord Baker PC: Interviewed 1998. Former MP for Dorking (Cons) and at time of interview, former Secretary of State for Education, and Chairman of his party. He was a prime mover in the abolition of the ILEA and confirmed that his tactics of a step by step approach to the abolition process was the right one. He gave me a lengthy interview and contended that his innovations, the City Colleges of Technology and the National Curriculum, were of fundamental importance. He did not believe that the National Curriculum was a 'rushed job'.

Steve Bundred: Interviewed 2002. Member of ILEA who recommended and supported more left-wing policies in the early 80s. At the time of interview he was Head of the Audit Commission.

Peter Newsam: Interviewed 1991. Later knighted for his services as ILEA Education Officer and his national work in Race Relations. I had worked previously with Peter Newsam (1959-66) when he was Assistant Education Officer, North Riding County Council and I was Head of Eston Grange County Modern School. Peter Newsam wished to create improved primary schools and he favoured the interchange of staff of ILEA primary schools with 'out county' schools. He provided Members with a more flexible approach to comprehensive schooling and was less in favour of the 11-18 comprehensive school, that was favoured by his former Chief, Dr Briault.

Dr Rhodes Boyson: Interviewed 1998. Privy Councillor, later Lord, at time of interview. Former head of very traditional Highbury Grove Comprehensive School, ILEA subscriber to Black Paper (right-wing) educational movement. He deplored the educational levels of his new entrants, from some feeder primary schools, to Highbury Grove. In interview, he still advocated the break up of the ILEA into four quadrants. But he was by no means as antagonistic to the ILEA as might be supposed. He was nevertheless a supportive right-wing Minister to Mrs Thatcher, responsible for Further Education.

Neil Fletcher: Interviewed 2003 (after the end of the ILEA). Former Leader of the ILEA (the last one). Education Consultant, former Chairman of Hampstead School Governors. He had also been Chairman of the ILEA's Further and Higher

Education Sub-Committee. He was opposed to some of the more left-wing policies of the immediate predecessors in the ILEA. He took a rational view of some of the New Right innovations, e.g. Specialist schools, but believed strongly in the need for an elected body in inner London. He was opposed to what he termed non-constructive attitudes of the teachers' unions. He wanted them to play a more constructive role in policy making. He believed that too much 'hot air' had been expressed over cuts in spending by the ILEA, at the behest of the New Right government and had a strong belief in school improvement in performance programmes.

Frances Morrell: \* Not interviewed but written to. Had parliamentary experience working for Tony Benn MP and was a qualified teacher. She had been an 11+ pupil in a girls' grammar school in York and saw problems with her working class background in adjusting to this. As stated, she was policy adviser to Tony Benn when he was Minister (Secretary of State for Industry, and later Energy). ILEA Member 1981-87. Chairman of ILEA Schools Sub-Committee and later Deputy and then Leader of the ILEA. Left-wing, gained support for her policies over the greater rights for parents (to be Members of the main Committees) and for parents to know of school examination results. She played a big role in new policies to help racial groups and to promote girls' education. Arguably she achieved power because her colleagues were beginning to appreciate the seriousness and totality of the New Right's attacks on the ILEA and they gave support for her initiatives.

Lord Tebbit PC: Correspondence. Strong New Right supporter of Mrs Thatcher. Had resided in London and sent his children to ILEA primary schools, which he felt were then good schools but he claimed the ILEA had become too political! When questioned by letter, 'if the end of the ILEA was inevitable', he replied 'No but the ILEA should have concerned itself with improving standards in schools, with less political indoctrination of officers and teachers.' He had had ministerial experience and had been Chairman of the Conservative Party.

Dr Bill Stubbs – Sir William: Interviewed 1998. Former Education Officer, ILEA. When interviewed he had left the ILEA and had been headhunted by the Minister Kenneth Baker to head the Higher Education Funding Council. He was not always at ease with some ILEA Members whom he found to be 'too political'. He had county experience in England as an administrator, although he was a Scot, and he

was not used to some ILEA politicians who were full-time politicians and ‘not always as receptive and cooperative with their professional advisers as they should have been.’ He still believed (after the abolition of the ILEA) that there was a need for a coordinating authority in inner London.

David Mallen: Interviewed 2000. Last Education Officer of the ILEA and was Chief Education Officer for East Sussex when I interviewed him in Lewes. I worked with him first as an Assistant Education Officer, ILEA and later as a fellow student, on a part-time Master’s degree course at London University. He had a teaching background. He was warmly approved by Frances Morrell in her book, ‘Children of the Future’. As an administrator he gave full support for the more left-wing policies in the mid 1980s.

Professor Peter Mortimore: Interviewed, 2004. Peter Mortimore was a distinguished head of the ILEA Research and Statistics Branch, and when interviewed, he was the Director of the Institute of Education, London. He did much work on education performance by pupils, in close relationship with the quality of their schools and their social and economic background. His work, with others, includes ‘School Matters’, Open Books 1979, ‘Ethnic Background and Exam Results 1985/86: Secondary School Exams: The Helpful Servants.’ 1986 (both at the London Education Institute). Peter was essentially non-political. Frances Morrell (Children of the Future) spoke highly of him and he was equally well regarded by the centre right Labour Party (ILEA). His build up of statistical data on ILEA schools helped to give an accurate picture of the state of ILEA schools.

Two head teachers, with different views of the ILEA Both were interviewed.

Don Green: Interviewed 2000. Head of Henry Compton Boys Comprehensive school in Fulham (ILEA Div 1). This school had a poor reputation in the 1960s but recovered its former reputation under Gordon Innes and Don Green (both heads). Don was an internal appointment, as head of Henry Compton school. In 1969/70 I met him in school and we devised a plan to give a boost to his school teaching strength. It was as follows: New, probationary teachers, who applied for posts in ILEA schools, were usually interviewed by ILEA inspectors at County Hall at Easter time. Those who were successful were usually divided up for work in the ten ILEA divisions, and their applications were sent to Divisional Officers. Here they were usually allocated, as Divisional Staff to schools which were showing

vacancies. This depended on the skill and experience of Divisional Staffing Officers, and in Division 1, I had the great expertise of Staffing Officer, Margaret Wise and her colleague Mrs Joey Annable, to assist her. The plan, hatched with Don Green, was for me to arrange the allocation of five or six really promising new entrants, to fill vacancies at Henry Compton School. This had to be a 'one-off' scheme, as it could be seen to be giving preferential treatment to one particular school, but in this case the school was a special case, in that it was a school on the difficult path of recovery. The scheme worked; the head and his senior staff gave these young men and women full support, and the school benefited from this infusion of new blood. Most of these young teachers stayed at Henry Compton for a few years and many earned early promotion after a short time. The point we are making, is that, the ILEA's 'machine' did give room for flexibility and initiative. Don got on well with ILEA officers and inspectors but he expressed the view that his school would have benefited from local borough control, Hammersmith and Fulham, in preference to ILEA control. He felt more 'local' control of his school would be better for getting local support.

Ted Field: Interviewed 2003. Ted had a background of Modern Language teaching at Ealing Grammar School, and was an unusual appointment as head of Hampstead Comprehensive School (ILEA Division 2). He was a staunch supporter of the ILEA, which he considered to be both compassionate and efficient. One of his deputy heads, Mrs Carol Smith, became a District Inspector (ILEA). In retirement, Ted went to great lengths to raise funds for Tim Brighouse's (former ILEA Assistant Education Officer) legal defence against a Conservative (New Right) Secretary of State for Education, over an alleged slander. This was an expression of loyalty to a former ILEA colleague.

#### Interviews or meetings with ILEA head teachers

Ken Hooton: Interviewed 1981. Head of Christopher Wren Boys Comprehensive School, Division 1 (Meeting in his retirement at Sheringham in 1981). Ken became head of Christopher Wren School in 1965 after experience in grammar schools in Hackney. He had strong support from his governors (which had representatives from the Universities (2) who attended meetings assiduously). Ken was appreciative of the ILEA but he refused successfully to accept ILEA policy, which favoured their heads to become school governors, as well as head teachers. . The wide range

of practical teaching courses (semi-vocational) provided motivation for students and gave useful skill training.

Mrs Kerr-Waller: Interviewed in her retirement (2001). She had over ten years at Hammersmith County School in the 1960s and 1970s and had a successful ILEA Full Inspection of the school in 1968. Key points: Her staff relations were good and her approach was straightforward. She had an excellent Business Studies/Commerce emphasis in the curriculum, that led to most successful placements of students, on leaving school. Her suggestions for an off-site centre for disruptive pupils became ILEA policy, through the offices of her politically powerful ILEA Member and Chairman of Governors, Jane Phillips.

Ms Morwen Jenkins: Interviewed 2001, 2003 and 2007 (3 times in her retirement). She became head of Hammersmith County, after my retirement in 1981. Had been Head of Annexe and Deputy Head, before becoming head of the combined Christopher Wren, Hammersmith County Schools in 1982. Strengths: She took over a most difficult reorganisation of the two schools and gave the ILEA strong support in two schemes: the Self Assessment of Schools programme, and the London Compact (close links with local commerce and industry). She felt she could not work satisfactorily with the local borough, after a long career with the ILEA, and she took early retirement in 1990.

Meeting with Miss Gray and Miss Cavendish, 1968: Heads of Godolphin and Latymer (Voluntary Aided and non-denominational, and Lady Margaret Voluntary Aided C of E schools respectively). The meeting was held because the ILEA Green Paper, 1967 had proposed a merger of Godolphin and Latymer School (academically, very strong) with Mary Boon, a 3 or 4 form entry type of Secondary Modern School, with an emphasis on dress making skills and domestic science. Lady Margaret School (Secondary Voluntary Aided) two form entry, was given little future, on grounds of its size, by the DES but occupied delightful buildings and was strong academically. The purpose of the meeting with the heads was to see if we could plan a future for these schools together, using an upper and lower school, as an alternative to the ILEA Green Paper proposals that seemed to us in Division 1 as not making sense. I got a tentative agreement of the heads, but when I took the proposals to the Chief Inspector both he and Dr Briault (Education Officer) dismissed the scheme out of hand as 'The Members wanted comprehensive

education and would not see Mary Boon School disadvantaged.’ My suggestion was, and this was later accepted, that Mary Boon School should combine with Fulham-Gilliatt School. As a result Lady Brooke, Chairman of Governors (who was well disposed to the ILEA) and her colleagues decided the Godolphin and Latymer School should take independent status. Lady Margaret School now has a wider intake but is one of the most successful (Voluntary Aided) small schools in England. This example, may sustain the view that the ILEA was committed to comprehensive education at all costs, or it may be that a local viewpoint should have received more consideration by the ILEA in preparing its Green Paper proposals.

Eric Bolton: Interviewed 1998. Senior Chief HMI. Professor Bolton, Institute of Education, London University believed the ILEA should have given more support to the relatively few seriously under-achieving secondary schools. He commended the ILEA on their inspectors’ publications but intimated more ‘hands-on work’ should have been done by ILEA inspectors on failing schools.

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## Chapter 1

### **An Outline of Inner City Education in London since the Establishment of the London School Board in 1870**

**‘For in the long run, if you want to say how much of a chap there is, you can only measure his memory.’**

**R Hughes in Hazard.**

This brief chapter is not intended to labour over the long and rich history of education in inner London since 1870, but rather to bring out what appear to be the salient facts, in both its history and organisation, that affected the working of the ILEA, since it was established in 1965.

The first point we would make is that the framers of the Education Act (1870) permitted the establishment of relatively large administrative bodies, such as the London School Board. The LSB had the following qualities:

- (a) It was elected, on a limited franchise.
- (b) It covered the whole of inner London, and established a divisional structure.
- (c) It served, as did the ILEA, an area of real social and economic deprivation, within which were areas of relative prosperity.
- (d) Its membership (of the Board) included able and distinguished national figures, as did the ILEA.
- (e) In policy making, it soon developed political factions, rather than national parties, that vigorously debated policy issues. Religious influences in policy making were a major issue.
- (f) In terms of its aims, the Board wished to expand its remit, to allow it to cover more advanced education, beyond the confines of elementary education.
- (g) The Board was vigorous, hence its hugely ambitious school building programme. It also established its own influential inspectorate, but was mindful not to delegate too much power, other than the proper implementation of its centrally laid down policies, to its ten Divisions.

- (h) Professional teacher unions emerged, with the militant qualities that often characterized teacher politics, up to and including the days of the ILEA.
- (i) The London School Board gained some reputation as a ‘big spender’ criticized later by the Conservative New Right government of the 1970s, in its criticism of the ILEA’s high spending policies. Professor Eaglesham<sup>1</sup> quoted a spokesman of the Local Government Board, who stated, ‘Upon the whole I am disposed to support the view of the Auditor and am glad to be able to do so, as it is not good policy to encourage this great School Board in their disposition towards lavish expenditure’!
- (j) A distinguishing feature of the School Board days, that had a profound effect on the working of the ILEA, was the established position of the ‘church’ schools. They were, of course, strongly established from the days when church bodies were the main providers of elementary education, but the School Board days put the church bodies in a strong position where their schools became funded, largely from the public purse, if they were proved to be efficient by Inspectors.
- (k) In the important question of funding its schools, the School Boards were empowered to levy a rate.
- (l) Religious instruction was given in most Board Schools, but under the Cowper-Temple clause, no sectarian formulations could take place.

The last three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the church schools emerge as strong participants in public education in contrast with the USA, France and most European countries.

Andrew Roberts,<sup>2</sup> in his biography of Lord Salisbury, wrote of views of that most traditional of Conservative party Leaders, that had echoes within New Right policy making; when he stated that Salisbury was determined on returning to office in 1885, to protect denominational schools against the state; Salisbury also showed his mistrust of education administrators when he stated<sup>3</sup> that parents should directly receive grants (10 shillings), if their children regularly attended school, rather than by giving grants to bureaucrats, i.e. school managers and school boards!

Quite clearly, the London School Board had a profound effect on the workings of an educational system in inner London, even in the physical sense, that most inner London children were housed, even in the post Second World War years, in primary schools that were built by the London School Board!

### **The London County Council Years (1903 – 1965)**

Balfour,<sup>4</sup> the Conservative Prime Minister whose party promoted the 1902 Act, which gave local councils greater powers, i.e. control of technical and secondary education, as well as primary education, had little sympathy for the politically and educationally ambitious London School Board but felt the new local authorities, the County Councils and the County boroughs, would act more responsibly. He was a realist, in political terms, and in the case of LCC's newly acquired control of education, accepted the good sense of having a single administrative body, as opposed to a complicated borough administration in London, which the Conservatives introduced in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The LCC was a success as an education authority and retained an enviable national reputation throughout the country, until its demise in 1965. Similarly, in many respects to its successor the ILEA, it had a strong political orientation; it had influential political Members, and it was an effective policy making body. Its main task was to establish a pattern of secondary schools (including Central schools and grammar schools) in London. The LCC was not the only LEA that began to favour the large purpose built comprehensive school in the immediate post World War II world. However, with its Holland Park, Woodberry Down and Kidbrooke schools, it was probably in the van of this education development. Conservatives in the 60s were beginning to open up a divide between those who were hostile to ending selection and those who saw comprehensive schools as inevitable, in certain education environments. Dale<sup>5</sup> writes of Edward Boyle (Shadow Minister of Education) who believed that in some rural areas and on new housing estates, comprehensive schools seemed appropriate. He also writes of Timothy Raison who had been a junior minister (schools), when Edward Heath was Prime Minister, and before that a junior minister under Edward Boyle,<sup>6</sup> who had, as a Member of Richmond on Thames Council (1967-70) supported Richmond's switch to

comprehensive education. He was a co-opted Member of the ILEA when the Conservatives were in control, 1968-70.

The list of truly innovatory policies of the LCC is impressive. These include (a) widespread provision of school meals, after 1906, when the Liberal government gave the LCC greater financial support, (b) a comprehensive schools' medical and psychological service, (c) the widespread establishment of Special Schools (an integrated service, cutting across divisional boundaries) which were able to deal with a wide range of pupils with mental and physical disabilities, (d) a School Care system that involved voluntary workers, (e) the involvement in teacher training (Avery Hill Training College), (f) the London Plan, that was a major futuristic scheme for secondary school re-organisation, and it also contained a blueprint for primary school development. The Plan was principally due to Graham Savage, Education Officer, appointed in 1940 and his Chief Inspector colleague, Dr John Brown.

The LCC proved its worth as a highly efficient administrative machine in dealing with problems created by two major World Wars, and their aftermath. These problems included an acute shortage of teachers in World War I, and the mass evacuation of children to rural areas, and problems of bomb damage to schools and colleges in World War II.

### **The Inner London Education Authority 1965-1990**

The ILEA thus inherited in 1965 the basic fabric of a powerful, well organised machine, that was highly innovatory in policy terms.

ILEA innovatory policies include the following:

- (a) Additional finance and staffing for schools in socially deprived areas, which were defined by the ILEA's statistical service (1968).
- (b) AUR - Alternative Use of Resources 1970, schools were allocated funds which could be used for additional staffing or other educational supports, all at the discretion of school heads, in consultation with their staffs.

- (c) The ILEA (1970) was the first Authority to establish Educational Guidance Centres for the placement (temporary) of disruptive children.
- (d) An imaginative transfer scheme (11+ level) which helped to give secondary schools balanced intakes, with regard to ability of children transferring to their secondary schools.
- (e) Keeping the School under Review (1981) (self-assessment programmes for the use in secondary schools, to help get an objective view for governors, heads and teachers of the quality of their schools.)
- (f) The London Compact (1982) The progress record of pupils developed and firm agreements for work opportunities for secondary school students with local firms and businesses.
- (g) The abolition of 'confidential' reports on teachers seeking new posts (1976).
- (h) Comprehensive reports on the 'condition' of ILEA primary schools (Thomas Report), secondary schools (Hargreaves Report), special needs (Fish Report). The reports were prepared in the early 1980s by independent experts in their fields.

More importantly, which the New Right government of the 1980s found to be an obstacle, it commanded the support and respect of Londoners, their teachers and the ancillary workers.\*

The structure and organisation of the ILEA is dealt with, in some detail, in Chapter 3 in this work, but it may help if we attempt to outline some of the main issues and problems it faced. They were as follows:

- (a) In political and ideological terms it faced real hostility from central government in the 1980s and 90s.
- (b) Its authority was diminished by government in the 1980s when it ceased to administer Teacher Training and Tertiary education.

\* The ILEA Referendum (1987) with voting restricted to ILEA parents, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the ILEA (Baker K, The Turbulent Years, p228).

- (c) The ILEA was innovatory in establishing its first-rate Research and Statistics Branch; its specialist teachers' centres and its Media Resource back-up programme for schools. It used its huge economies of scale in areas such as the provision of school furniture and books and equipment, and its provision of environmental education (Field Centres). It could therefore recruit on a national basis talented administrators and officers.
- (d) It had internal disputes, affecting the ILEA's more left-wing influence in policy making in the early 1980s, when Coulby<sup>7</sup> wrote: 'To take the example of London, against considerable central government opposition, which indeed ultimately contributed to its demise, the former ILEA announced in 1983 major initiatives to counter educational disadvantages on the basis of class, race, gender and handicap. These initiatives led to debate, sometimes conflict, and often significant changes in practice over a thousand schools.'

It would be premature at this stage in this work to side with this point of view, but at least it exposes the deep ideological divide between the New Right government and the Authority. This view of Coulby's accords with one of the most knowledgeable educationists, as regards the London scene, S Maclure<sup>8</sup> who saw the abolition process, not based on educational grounds but rather as a vengeful act. However Denis Lawton,<sup>9</sup> knowing just how focussed New Right politicians were on the high levels of public spending, attributed a main cause of the ILEA's demise to high spending, when he wrote 'The effect of the 1988 Education Reform Act was to abolish the ILEA, which Baker (Secretary of State for Education) had long regarded as the worst example of a high spending left-wing authority.'

However, with regard to the crucial problem of the provision of a unified system of education in inner London, if a substantial part of state education has to be provided at the local level, then the London School Board, even in pre-telephone days and when transport in London was rudimentary, showed that inner London could be efficiently administered as a single unit. Moreover, economies of scale, in providing the service, including the provision of equipment, even to the extent of school building plans, and carrying them out, and curricular issues, were apparent to many Londoners.

The ILEA thus inherited a pedigree of successful administration of education in inner London. Whether or not this gave the ILEA a false sense of security in the 1980s is difficult to assess. The ILEA was a politically controlled body and as such, its essentially Labour-orientated policy goals were bound to come into conflict with most policy goals of a 'radical' Conservative government. In policy making, the ILEA had to be mindful that three of its boroughs were consistent Conservative supporters. To its credit, however, the ILEA did not deviate from its major policy goals; but it did, however, have financial constraints put upon it by government.

### **Summary**

The legacy of history in inner London, from 1870 had a profound effect on the psyche and policy goals of the three bodies that controlled education in inner London. The London School Board's desire to provide meals for impoverished children,<sup>10</sup> and its wish to expand an education service, beyond the elementary level, are evidence of this.<sup>11</sup> The LCC's innovatory schools' Psychological service, its School Care service (voluntary workers), and its efforts to create Central schools to widen the career prospects of many youngsters, are further examples of a progressive body at work.

This culture of care, extending to its teachers and ancillary works, and the innovatory thrust in policy making seemed to infiltrate the minds of politicians, teachers and administrators in inner London. The ILEA's capacity (Research and Statistics Branch) to mount high quality research programmes were an especially noteworthy development in giving information and guidance to ILEA policy makers. However, the key policy of creating a secondary school comprehensive policy was maintained, in the face of difficulties in finance and in having such a high proportion of voluntary aided schools in inner London.

It can be inferred that the ILEA had good relations with the main church bodies so that the ILEA got considerable agreement from them in establishing a viable comprehensive school system. The reason why this inference can be made is that the ILEA was faced with the problem that 30 per cent of its pupils of secondary school age attended voluntary aided (and voluntary controlled) schools but it still had to try to ensure that parental choice of secondary schools was met and that its



schools received properly balanced intakes. This was not easy, as various criteria, such as church attendances by parents, were often part of the voluntary aided schools admissions policies, but a general agreement over school intakes was achieved.

Issues such as the claim that it showed too much political bias, or that it was too costly and tolerated low educational standards, are the stuff of politically controlled education bodies and the observer can only be as 'non-political' as is possible, in coming to judgement.

## References in Chapter 1 (An Outline of Inner city Education in London)

- <sup>1</sup> Eaglesham E (1956) **From School Board to Local Authority** (p182) – Routledge and Kegal Paul
- <sup>2</sup> Roberts A (1999) **Salisbury: Victorian Tutor** (p818) – Phoenix
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p558
- <sup>4</sup> Webb R K (1980) **Modern England** (p456) – Allen and Unwin
- <sup>5</sup> Dale (1989) **The State and Education Policy** (p35) – Open University
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p78
- <sup>7</sup> Bash L, Coulby D (1989) **The Education Reform Act** (p12) – Cassell
- <sup>8</sup> Maclure S (1990) **A History of Education in London 1870 – 1990** (p238) – Allen Lane
- <sup>9</sup> Lawton D (1994) **The Tory Mind on Education (1979-94)** (p65) – Falmer
- <sup>10</sup> London School Board (1989) **Education and the State from 1833** (p108) PRO Publication  
Ed 14/24) Morton A.
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p69

## Chapter 2

### **The ILEA Machine: Its Structure and Organisation**

**‘No, the ILEA was incapable of reform. It had to go.’**

**K Baker, *The Turbulent Years***

**‘I believe that this is very largely a confidence trick.’**

**Sir Edward Heath’s comments in the debate over the Education Reform Bill’s (1988) proposal to abolish the ILEA**

In the previous chapter we looked at the historical development of the ILEA. In this chapter we intend to look at its organisation, and to see how it responded to change from both internal and external influences. What strikes one is the essential similarity of the basic structure of the ILEA with that of its two predecessors, the London School Board and the London County Council. Both these organisations devolved limited powers to their ten Divisions, but kept most power within the central administration. However, these powers do not seem excessive, if one remembers that the ILEA always devolved the maximum powers, (permissible by government) to its head teachers and to its school governing bodies. Moreover, most of these governing bodies had a considerable component of local borough representation on them, which could give local political interests an opportunity to gain expression.

There were problems in this type of Divisional structure; one was that the Divisional boundaries did not always conform to the boundaries of the component boroughs. For example, Division 1, ILEA, included the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham with part of the Royal boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea. When the political control of the constituent boroughs varied this too, could be a problem.

A further problem in the ILEA’s divisional structure could be where a London borough had aspirations to govern its schools, such as was the case in Kensington and Chelsea. This problem also emerged in the William Tyndale schools’ crisis (Chapter 8) Islington borough. The borough of Wandsworth (usually Conservative controlled) consistently had strong aspirations to become a local education authority.

Fluctuations in the school populations of the divisions also caused problems, but these rapid fluctuations probably made sense for the ILEA to retain its ten divisional structure because increases in school population could come rapidly. The numbers of children in maintained primary and secondary schools in England declined strongly from 1976. Numbers fell even more sharply in the ILEA, although inaccurate figures of the level of immigrant entrants to inner London and of their high mobility, make accurate figures difficult.

#### **Figures for England**

<b>(figures in thousands)</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1986</b>
<b>5-10</b>	4484	3851	3350
<b>11-15</b>	3405	3476	3027

Source: Burgess R G (1986) *Sociology, Education and Schools* – Batsford P.233

The ILEA divisions were not just administrative ciphers, they exercised considerable powers, for example, they administered school staffing and management affairs, including staff appointments; they had considerable financial responsibilities and were effective administrative instruments in the Education Welfare and Careers Services. The functioning of the ILEA Divisions is discussed more fully towards the end of this chapter.

In the post-war era, there had been two major commissions or reports on the educational provision in inner London.\* As part of the process of examination of government in London, the Herbert Commission (1957-60) recommended that there should be a single authority under the aegis of the GLC. Herbert was concerned about what the commission perceived to be the lack of proper involvement of the boroughs in the education service. Herbert's recommendations were criticised by G. Rhodes<sup>1</sup> who commented, 'The GLC was to have overall responsibility for the education service, whilst being largely excluded from day to day operations'. The Ministry of Education at that time under a Conservative government, submitted a not very enthusiastic comment on the LCC's performance, when it stated 'that there is no part of this area (inner London) where the system works, at least tolerably well'.<sup>2</sup>

\* The Herbert Commission (1957-60) and the Marshall Enquiry 1978

With hindsight, there was probably more to Herbert's logic than was given credit at the time of the publication of the Report. There was good sense in giving the boroughs more say in educational matters, given the differences in their political control, whilst at the same time, having the GLC in charge of overall, strategic planning. It is possible, that if a system had emerged on the basis of Herbert, we would not have ended up with the present fragmented borough control of education. However, the 1961 Government White Paper did not approve of Herbert's proposed division of responsibilities and said the system would not work. In the 1950s and 60s, the Conservatives were opposed to any idea of creating an enlarged authority in London, where they felt that the normally Conservative controlled outer boroughs would be swamped by the mostly left-wing controlled inner boroughs. At that time, both Christopher Chataway, the Junior Minister, and the Minister, Sir Edward Boyle, had doubts about the abilities of the outer boroughs to provide a viable education service, but as Labour, spearheaded by Mr Pargitter, the MP for Southall, pressed for an enlarged authority, this was enough to convince the Conservatives that there should be no enlarged authority for London. The Inner London Teacher's Association did not favour an enlarged authority which, was probably because they feared that Labour could lose political control over the proposed enlarged body.

The result was the Act of 1963, which established the ILEA with no directly elected members (the Conservatives changed this in the 1980s). The Authority was commissioned to submit its financial estimates to the GLC, which in turn issued a rate precept to the boroughs. This did not seem a very satisfactory arrangement at the time, and the government included a proviso that the Minister should review the administration of education in London, with a view to transferring authority to the boroughs, but Sir Edward Boyle, the Minister at the time, looked on this phrase as not being mandatory, but merely permissive.

## **The Constitution of the ILEA**

When it was established under the 1963 Act, the ILEA consisted of:

- 1) 35 Members of the GLC from inner London boroughs, the City of London and the Temples
- 2) 12 Representatives of the inner London boroughs, appointed by their Councils
- 3) One Representative of the Common Council of the City, appointed from among its Members.

This was altered when direct election was introduced as part of the GLC Abolition Bill (1985) but this did not change the political control of the ILEA.

## **The Education Committee**

The full Education Committee met four times a year and had seventeen additional members, who were appointed at the Education Committee's Annual General Meeting and of these, five were teachers nominated by their professional associations, and the remainder were nominated by the political parties in proportion to their political strengths. The Chairman of the Authority, elected annually, was normally Chairman of the Education Committee. The majority party appointed a Leader and Deputy Leader and the major party in opposition, appointed a Leader and Deputy Leader.

## **The Sub-Committees**

These were appointed by the Education Committee and were the workhorses of the Authority. They were as follows: Schools, Further and Higher Education, Staff and General Development, Finance, Staff Appeals and Policy Co-ordination. In the mid 80s a Multi-Ethnic and an Equal Opportunities sub-committee were appointed.

Towards the end of its life, the main sub-committees of the ILEA were as follows: Policy, Quality of Education, Equal Opportunities, a Cultural Review section, Further and Higher Education, and a Schools and Development sub-committee.

Most ILEA politically appointed members of the ILEA, and its committees, had experience as school governors in schools with widely differing educational environments. Many, such as Sir Ashley Bramall, (Pimlico school) were long term Chairs of Governors, Jane Phillips, Hammersmith County School, Tony Powell (Lawyer) Chairman of ILEA in the 1980s. Henry Compton School, Neil Fletcher (last Leader of the ILEA), Hampstead School, Bill Smith (Conservative), Christopher Wren School. The following Teacher Members were heads of their schools: John Luzio, Bill Richardson, George Carter. Ex-officio Members included a strong representation of the universities in the London area. Anne Sofer (Chairman of Schools, Sub-Committee), a graduate who went on to become Education officer, Tower Hamlets in 1989. These were the people who manned the ILEA committees, and many such as Ken Livingstone, had GLC political experience.

When Dennis O’Keefe wrote ‘Effectively monopoly powers in education accrue to the group of bureaucrats, politics and academics who control ‘educational transmission’’,<sup>3</sup> he did a disservice to the quality of large LEAs such as the ILEA, as powerful policy makers, that were able to challenge the present ‘monopolistic situation’ in which central government is the main instrument of education policy making.

The Tyndale Report<sup>4</sup> gives a brief introduction to the administration of the ILEA and pointed out it was normal for a party caucus to decide policy before sub-committees met, and Auld (the Chairman of the Inquiry Committee) highlighted the Policy Co-ordinating Sub-Committee as the most important, from the point of view that it established the Authority’s general policy. This view was queried by Sir Ashley Bramall,<sup>5</sup> a former Leader of the Authority, who pointed out that the party was less inclined to use the Policy Co-ordinating Committee in the 80s, and tended to make policy ‘outside committee’.

The minutes of all ILEA committees are held in the London Metropolitan Archives, and their perusal gives some idea of the change in tone, with regard to the Opposition in the late 60s, when an almost Butskellite accord existed between parties, to the very confrontationalist attitudes that existed in the 80s. The Leader of the Authority and his/her deputy were ex officio members of the sub-committees and they attended the main committees assiduously, especially when the opposition became more vigorous. In the 70s, the Opposition under the leadership of Robert Vigars queried, in Schools Sub-Committee, problems about alleged poor attendance<sup>6</sup> and the latitude the Authority was said to show to teachers who were involved in unofficial strike action. The accusations that the Authority condoned poor educational standards featured widely in the schools' sub-committee minutes in the late 70s, that seemed to accord with Conservative national policies, over alleged poor standard in schools, the Standards 77 Policy, put forward by the Shadow Education Minister, Norman St John Stevas. Another important function of the schools sub-committee was to receive inspection reports on its schools. As a result of the alleged failure of its officers to report properly on the gravity of the William Tyndale Schools crisis, the sub-committee insisted that the Divisional Education Officer and his/her inspector colleagues from each Division, should meet regularly with Members of the Committee to discuss in detail the 'educational health' of their Division.

Consultative procedures always played a large part in the ILEA's decision-making process. Probably, the most important was the Standing Joint Advisory Committee that had representation of the professional associations on it. There was also the Central Consultative Committee of Head Teachers, (there were Divisional heads' consultative committees), a Parents' Consultative Committee, a Committee for Voluntary Schools, a Youth Committee, and finally, the ILEA Tertiary Board.

The ILEA survived an enquiry, which was commissioned by the Conservative controlled GLC in July, 1978. This was the Marshall Enquiry, to which we have already referred. The Marshall Enquiry took the view that a single education authority would be most appropriate for inner London, either as a statutory joint purpose authority, or preferably, as a directly elected, single purpose authority. Marshall commented, 'Decentralisation of the education service in inner London



would give responsibility to the boroughs working independently of one another. This I consider would make little sense for the operation of the education service'.<sup>7</sup>

In 1980, Mark Carlisle as the Conservative Secretary of State, set up a working party, consisting mainly of Conservative London MP's, to examine the structure of the education service in inner London. This working party, chaired by Kenneth Baker, recommended that the ILEA should be broken up and its powers were to be devolved to the boroughs of inner London. The recommendations were rejected by the Secretary of State, Mark Carlisle, and the minister was supported in this decision by his deputy, Lady Young.

### **The Administration of the ILEA:**

Up to the late 70s, the Education Officer had a Deputy Education Officer and a Chief Inspector, both being of equal rank. This dual arrangement seemed to achieve a parity of the professional administration with the Inspectorate, whose task was to offer the Education Officer, and his administration, professional advice about schools, colleges, and policy in general.

This structure was altered by the committee on the advice of the Education Officer. It should be remembered that Peter Newsam had worked in several LEAs where the normal pattern put inspectors and advisors well down the pecking order. It is possible that the admittedly poor performance of the Inspectorate over the William Tyndale affair, had helped the Education Officer to facilitate this change, with the Education Committee's approval. The system that emerged in the late 70s consisted of the Education Officer, a Deputy Controller, a Director of Education (Further and Higher Education), Community Education and Careers, and a Director of Education charged with the Administration of Schools. The Authority had a Principal Administrative Officer and a Finance Officer. The Chief Inspector still retained a senior position in the management team, but his/her status was reduced.

Below these came Assistant Education Officers who were responsible for (a) Teaching Staff (b) Community Education and Careers (c) Special Education (d) Primary and Secondary Education (e) Further and Higher Education (f) Development and Equipment and (g) School Support Services. The Education

Officers' co-ordination committee which consisted of all the Senior Officers and inspectors, was chaired by the Education Officer and met every three weeks.

In addition to the senior colleagues there were a number of senior officers who controlled such departments as (a) Learning Resources – this became a very successful department under the skilful and vigorous leadership of Leslie Ryder. (Leslie Ryder was responsible for the appointment of Media Resource Officers in most of the large schools), (b) the Establishment Officer, (c) the Education Catering Officer, (d) the Departmental Accountant, (e) the Research and Statistics Branch – this became a highly influential branch, (f) General Services, (g) a Director of Information and, (h) the Clerk to the Authority. When the Authority required legal advice, it was able to use the GLC legal advisors, before the demise of the GLC.

In the mid 80s, the ILEA had yet another change in its administrative hierarchical structure. The Education Officer was also styled the Chief Executive Officer: he was thus supported by a Director of Education (Schools). It will be seen later that the first occupant of this position, Baroness Blackstone was headhunted for this post by Sir William Stubbs, the Education Officer. He contended that he wanted someone who had good administrative experience and, bearing in mind some of the new policy initiatives by Members, he required a colleague who would be tough enough to handle difficult negotiations with the unions.

There were also Directors of Education for Equal Opportunities and for Policy Co-ordinating, for Building Projects, for Post-School Education, for Finance, for Personal Services and Equal Opportunities. Then came the Clerk to the Authority and finally, the Chief Inspector.

### **The Divisional Structure**

There were ten Divisional Education Officers,\* one for each of the ten Divisions and they were the Education Officer's main representatives at local divisional level. They were responsible for a considerable administrative machine, which included staffing duties in the schools, organising much of the work of school governors, and for a substantial Finance Department. The Divisions often included more than one

\* After 1977, they were formerly Divisional Officers, which signified their previously administrative role.

London borough and it was the Divisional Officer's duty to liaise with these, as the Education Officer's representative.

There were large disparities in the size of the school population of the Divisions, and there were significant differences in their socio-economic composition. Each Division was similar to any other in its administrative structure but, as a main point of reference for parents and teachers, they did have different profiles. The Divisional Education Officer had close contact with borough Members and administrators and with representatives of many voluntary bodies in the Division. There was occasional friction between Divisional Education Officers and Divisional Inspectors as to what were their respective spheres of interest but on the whole, the system worked satisfactorily and in most cases, one could see the value of having the administrative experience of the Divisional Educational Officers alongside a 'professional' input from the inspectors. There were of course, discussions about the possible future of the divisional structure, which had survived for over a hundred years. The two real threats to the Divisions came from the educational aspirations of some of the boroughs, and from the unprecedented fall in population in the 70s and 80s, which created doubts about the viability of some Divisions, north of the river.

Apart from problems of disparities in the size of school population in the Divisions, there were discussions about creating separate four segment structures (Dr Rhodes Boyson favoured four School Boards)<sup>8</sup> but these did not go far, presumably because of the fear that the four Divisions could become too powerful, and would destroy the concept of central control. In his plans for restructuring London education, Kenneth Baker shrewdly estimated that the boroughs would accept their own control of education but would repudiate any other contrived structures.

The ILEA Divisional Structure worked well enough, and the Authority was probably wise in not delegating too much power to the Divisions, as this could have impeded major policy decisions that were well formulated at County Hall. Some Divisional Offices could have been more welcoming to visitors, particularly parents, but the Authority addressed itself to this issue in the 80s. However, in the process of policy formulation the Authority could well have used the 'Divisional

team' – the Divisional Education Officer and the Divisional Inspector more usefully; for example, when the ILEA published its Green Paper over comprehensive school re-organisation in the late 60s, the Divisional Officer and the District Inspector (as they then were) were often witnesses to schemes that were a nonsense as far as they were concerned. The idea of a Green Paper simply outlining a range of possibilities, prior to the issuing of firm intentions (the White Paper stage), was in many ways a failure. It created insecurity in the minds of parents and teachers alike. The consultation meetings often held in schools affected by Green Paper proposals often completely misfired, and added to misgivings about the Authority's intentions.

### **Working Relationships between the Members of the Committee and the Senior Administrators**

Senior Officers who appeared before committee were faced by Members who often themselves had a professional background in education, and had an intimate knowledge of inner London. Sir Ashley Bramall, the Leader of the Authority for almost fifteen years, had a legal training. Under his leadership and under that of his successors, the main policy initiatives emanated from elected Members. Senior Officers were, of course, closely involved in the creation of policies, but one could argue that in view of the virtual monopoly of power by the Labour party, (apart from two years in the 60s) that Senior Officers could become too enmeshed in Labour policies. For example, when public meetings were arranged in the 60s and early 70s over proposed plans for comprehensive education, senior officers appeared on the platform and often their contributions were hardly distinguishable from their Member colleagues, who had party allegiance.

The ILEA's first Education Officer, Sir William Houghton had had experience with the LCC. He was widely respected in the Authority and had the difficult task of carrying out the comprehensive school restructuring process. His early death was singularly unfortunate, and it was left to his deputy, Eric Briault, to complete this process. Dr Briault had spent the best part of his life in both the LCC and the ILEA. He got on well with Dr Payling, the Chief Inspector and this seemed to bind the administration and the professional in a tight relationship. Dr Briault was always concerned that schools should have big enough entries to allow truly viable sixth forms to be created. He was not as flexible in creating consortia of schools and

other linking procedures, to get round the problems of limited funds for capital building projects, as was his deputy Peter Newsam. There was some friction between these two officers. Peter Newsam, who had come to the ILEA from the West Riding CC, wanted to open the Authority to more external senior appointments and his creative ideas about post-16 education had much appeal to Members. The much more professional approach to primary education and the realisation that multi-ethnic provision in the ILEA was inadequate are but two examples of this. Peter Newsam shifted the power structure within the ILEA more to the administration, to the detriment of the Inspectorate, either as a result of his experience with other LEAs, or possibly because of the Inspectorate's poor showing over the William Tyndale crisis.

The Chief Inspector Dr Birchenough, whose appointment had been supported by Dr Briault, who was then Education Officer, had substantial senior experience with H M Inspectorate. Shortly after his appointment, he ran into the William Tyndale crisis, which was hardly a fair introduction to the ILEA. William Stubbs, who succeeded Peter Newsam as Education Officer in the early 80s, had been an outside appointment as Deputy Education Officer. Stubbs was a man of great determination and an able administrator. He had a difficult period of office when the left-wing of the party in the ILEA came to power in 1981. He makes it quite clear that, based on his previous experiences with other authorities, he was surprised at the degree of control of policy, exercised by ILEA members, as they were practically full-time politicians in the service of the ILEA, and that the hype and political in-fighting within the same party, was an added difficulty for an administrator.<sup>9</sup> Stubbs incurred some criticism for leaving the Authority to take over a senior post with the Higher Education Funding Council, but this was unfair; he showed total commitment to the ILEA and his move from the ILEA represented a well-earned promotion. The last Education Officer, David Mallen, handled the more politically active leadership of the ILEA with skill and the new leader, Frances Morrell, paid a very warm tribute to his contribution<sup>10</sup> but his tenure was cut short by the abolition of the Authority.

## **Summary**

The ILEA in its essentials was based on an administrative structure that had existed for a hundred years. There were serious criticisms of its alleged monolithic structure, of its alleged political bias and of its low educational standards, which are examined critically in this thesis. Our task in this chapter has been to describe its structure, and how it evolved and how it worked.

## References in Chapter 2 (The ILEA Machine: Its Structure and Organisation)

- <sup>1</sup> Rhodes G (Ed) (1972) **The New Government of London: The First Five Years** (p152) – Weidenfeld and Nicolson
- <sup>2</sup> HMSO (1959) **Memorandum of Evidence from Government Department (Education)** (p23)
- <sup>3</sup> O’Keefe D (2005) **Government Control of Schools Education in Margaret Thatcher’s Revolution** Eds S Roy and J Clark Continuum
- <sup>4</sup> ILEA (1977) **William Tyndale Schools Public Inquiry** (The Auld Report)
- <sup>5</sup> **Interview** With Sir Ashley Bramall 11.11.98
- <sup>6</sup> **ILEA** (21.01.75) **Schools Sub-Committee** – Minutes
- <sup>7</sup> GLC (1978) **The Marshall Report**
- <sup>8</sup> Baker K (1993) **The Turbulent Years** (p225) – Faber & Faber
- <sup>9</sup> **Interview** With Sir William Stubbs 07.06.98
- <sup>10</sup> Morrell F (1989) **Children of the Future** (p96) – Hogarth Press

## Chapter 3

### The ILEA Machine at Work:

**‘If we wish to enhance liberal democracy, and lighten the ‘dark side’ of bureaucratisation, then greater participation should be the direction of our travel’**

**C. Pollitt, Democracy and Bureaucracy**

The ILEA administrative machine, spread across County Hall, its 10 Divisional Offices and numerous supporting agencies, such as its Research and Statistics Branch, the School-Keeping and School Meals staff, compared in size to that of a medium to large international business enterprise.

Although the structure of ILEA’s top administrative arrangements changed over the years, the basic responsibility of the senior officers remained much the same. The system that emerged in the late 70s consisted of the Education Officer, a Deputy Controller, a Director of Education (Further and Higher Education), Community Education and Careers, and a Director of Education charged with the administration of schools. The Authority had a Principal Administrative Officer and a Finance Officer. The Chief Inspector, who had ranked second in the hierarchy, equal to the Deputy Education Officer, in the first half of the Authority’s existence; still retained a senior position in the management team, but he/her status was reduced. Below these came the Assistant Education Officers who were responsible for (a) Teaching Staff (b) Community Education and Careers (c) Special Education Needs (d) Further and Higher Education (e) Development and Equipment and (f) Schools Support Services. The Education Officer had his/her own officers’ co-ordinating committee, which includes the senior branch heads, and senior inspectors, and this was essentially advisory.

In addition to the senior colleagues there were a number of senior officers who controlled such departments as (a) Learning Resources (b) the Establishment Officer (c) the Education Catering Officer (d) the Department Accountant (e) Research and Statistics Branch (f) General Services (g) a Director of Information and (h) the Clerk to the Authority.

In the mid-80s, the ILEA experienced another change in its structure: the Education Officer was supported by a Director of Education (Schools) and Directors of



Education for Policy Co-ordination, for Post School Education, for Finance, for Personal Services and Equal Opportunities, and finally, the Chief Inspector.

Policy was implemented in the ten ILEA Divisions by sizeable teams, led by the Divisional Education Officer. Most of the day-to-day problems faced by schools were handled at Divisional Office. Management teams controlled relations between schools and their governing bodies, and they were important in helping to make arrangements for schools' staffing appointments. The staffing officers gave advice to heads and teachers and controlled local supply teacher arrangements. The Education Welfare Officers were based in Divisional Offices and they worked closely with the Divisional Education Officer's staff, and with the Inspectors.

The bureaucratic machine was complicated in the ILEA because of the influence of professional advisors from the ILEA schools inspectorate, and because the schools also had considerable powers, exercised through the head teachers and their governing bodies.

Most of the major administrative departments of the ILEA, such as Schools, Further and Higher Education, Finance and Policy Co-ordinating, were mirrored by the committees of elected and co-opted Members, which were, of course, of much greater significance in the field of policy formulation. A characteristic of the ILEA in general was the very powerful control over policy, which elected Members exercised. This point was made in interview with Bill Stubbs (07.06.98), Former Education Officer, who clearly advocated the need for more senior officer input into policy making.

The Education Officer and his senior colleagues were influential in policy making but their roles were very much on the lines of Permanent and Assistant Secretaries of the Civil Service, who give advice to Ministers (Members in the ILEA). The degree of influence exerted by the officers depended on a whole host of personal and political factors, which could help to establish a high degree of rapport between the elected politician and the officers. The Education Officer, was closely consulted over major policy initiatives and as we shall see later in this chapter, was often capable of creating policy initiatives himself. The degree of influence of the Education Officer varied; for example, Dr Briault was politically and educationally

attuned to creating a comprehensive school structure in the ILEA, in line with the then Leader of the Authority, Sir Ashley Bramall; his successor, Peter Newsam was perhaps more flexible in his plans to achieve this policy goal at a time when funds were limited for building projects.

It is probable that William Stubbs, as Education Officer in the 80s, found it more difficult to work with his left-wing leader Frances Morrell, whereas his successor David Mallen, was seen to be more flexible by the same leader.<sup>1</sup>

As with most bureaucracies, the ILEA bureaucracy had the essential function of carrying out the policies formulated by an elected body (the ILEA membership was directly elected after 1984); it also had a prime responsibility to ensure that there was administrative efficiency in carrying out these policy goals. The bureaucracy, particularly at senior officer level, enjoyed the right to be consulted by Members about the formulation of policies, and it also had the important right of submitting policy proposals to the political Members. The Members, were of course, free to take advice from any quarter, and indeed, favoured the setting up of advisory or consultative bodies, such as the Parents' Consultative and Special Needs in Education forums for teachers and for parents, as a way of keeping contacts with the grassroots. The bureaucracy should normally be able to provide statistical and specialised knowledge, and in the case of the ILEA, many of the senior officers had had considerable experience with other LEAs, and in the commercial world. The Research and Statistics Branch could provide the sort of help that its title suggests. Members were also able to take advice from fellow-Members in committee, from people in their constituencies, and perhaps more importantly, from their heads and teachers, where as Members, they were often governors of one or more ILEA schools.

One of the important functions of a bureaucracy in democratic society is to play an key part in the preparatory work of policy making. It is also important that these policies are loyally carried out, on the lines prescribed by Weber.<sup>2</sup> The ILEA, traditionally, took a liberal point of view in permitting a wide range of viewpoints to be made by its bureaucrats. Arguably this was seen as a necessary precondition for good policy making given the problems ILEA officers faced brought about by considerable social deprivation among considerable numbers of inner London

children. Most writers on bureaucracy do not dwell on the emotional stress on bureaucrats, but Dunleavy<sup>3</sup> was near the mark when he wrote of the neutral state pluralists (in which administrators should safeguard the public interest) speaking of their politically disregarded and unrecognised role in the process of policy formulation, and seeking in to maintain the rules of the game. The position outlined by Professor Dunleavy did not appear to present a great problem to ILEA administrators, bearing in mind the ILEA's traditional approach to social deprivation. In the late 1960s, when for a short period the ILEA had a Conservative administration, senior officers did not seem to have much difficulty working for a Butskellite type of authority, but if the New Right had been in power, then the problems outlined by Professor Dunleavy could well have taxed officers raised in the tradition of the ILEA commitment to the disadvantaged.

When the New Right criticised the ILEA, criticisms of the ILEA centred on its alleged over-politicised bureaucracy, and its tendency to overspend. One of Niskanen's<sup>4</sup> strongest criticisms of bureaucracies was of their tendency to pursue policies of budget maximisation. The structure of the ILEA, with so many quasi – self-governing agencies, such as the Transport service, the Careers and School Meals services, and by the increasing delegation to schools of their right to allocate resources as they wished, all made tight control of expenditure difficult. There would seem to be very real problems of budget maximisation in the bureaucracy, where the increase in the size of a department and its budget enhances the controller's status, and probably his/her salary. This probably applied more to the ILEA in the days before the New Right began to apply serious financial restrictions on the Authority. For example, in the late 60s and 70s the ILEA Television service made an encouraging start but it soon became apparent that schools were making greater use of the major TV channels and the ILEA TV service was becoming something of a 'white elephant'. Inner London Teacher's Union representatives knew the service was not needed but as it provided work for some of their Members, they were happy to see the ILEA TV service extend its lifespan.<sup>5</sup>

A serious criticism that could be levelled against the ILEA administrative machine was of its essentially 'closed' nature. The bulk of the recruitment was at post-school level, but it was possible for talented people to reach the highest level of the administration, that of Divisional Officer and Assistant Education Officer. This

could seem to be a narrow, closed shop method of working, but this was not so. Because of the size and variety of the Authority, it was ILEA policy to insist on their workers having wide experience. Moreover, tested methods of promotion and regular in-service courses, added to the quality of its officers.

However from the mid 1970s a more open type of recruitment, particularly at senior level came into being. Formerly, Divisional Officers were recruited internally but they were soon to be styled Divisional Education Officers, and many were then recruited from outside the ILEA.

After the demise of the ILEA in 1990, most of the constituent boroughs of the former ILEA developed considerable administrative machines. What then were possible advantages of work in the former ILEA?

- 1) The obvious one was perhaps the pay and status of holders of senior ILEA appointments. ILEA officers were recruited widely for senior posts nationally but even so, senior ILEA officers tended to stay with the Authority.
- 2) The scale of the ILEA provided a range of experience, in so many branches, that a small Authority simply could not provide.
- 3) In spite of the high cost of living, London provided an attraction, particularly for young recruits. Nevertheless the high cost of living was a significant cause of teacher shortages after a three or four year initiation period.
- 4) The variety of work, over a great and varied urban environment was an attraction.
- 5) The ILEA's real social and educational problems provided a challenge to many idealistic young people.
- 6) The ILEA was known as a good employer, which normally worked closely and co-operatively with professional and trades unions.

- 7) The ILEA had its own 'training centre' in Copperfield Street, close to County Hall, and this provided excellent in-service courses. Moreover, the Authority gave generous grants, and study leave for those officers who wished to improve their status.

## Summary

On balance, the ILEA was well served by its administrative service. If it had been a badly administered service, it is doubtful that the ILEA would have retained the support of its teacher organisations, and indeed its parents. (Parents' poll 1986).

When Michael Apple,<sup>6</sup> who was no great friend of powerful bureaucracies, considered that to function well, the officers should be in 'sympathy' with the aims of the directors of the bureaucratic machine, he was probably right. But there are obvious dangers that the bureaucrats could become too assertive in a democratically controlled machine. But the sort of ethos, and pride in working for a reputable body, did influence ILEA bureaucrats. Their training had involved them usually in close contacts with schools and teachers, so that hopefully, the individual child did not get too far out of their horizons. At a senior level, it is suggested that the administrators benefited from having to work with an influential inspectorate, and in turn the inspectorate benefited from advice from colleagues who had wide administrative experience. Because of its size, the ILEA went to great lengths to give access to the Leader and his colleagues to head teachers and Chairman of Governors. It is of note that John Mackintosh, head of London Oratory school, which had opted for grant maintained status, disclosed to the writer that he found it far more difficult to deal with government education administrators than he did with ILEA officers! (Private meeting in 1987).

Finally, the charge made by the New Right that the ILEA's bureaucracy was needlessly expensive is difficult to answer. Perhaps there is a tendency for any large organisations to tolerate a degree of over staffing, for example, in the private sector.<sup>7</sup> Ingrid Mansell in *The Times* reported that 'Richard Baker, the new Chief Executive of Boots had cut the headquarters staff in Nottingham by 1400 in seven months'. However, Tiebout's<sup>8</sup> solution of fragmenting large bodies to promote a greater responsibility in public spending is controversial and could lead to the loss

of economies of scale. The fragmentation of the ILEA into a borough structure gives no evidence of reducing total expenditure on education in inner London and little mention is made of the increased staffing at the Department of Education and skills to handle school administration and the huge increase in individual school's administrative branches.

### References in Chapter 3 (The Machine at Work)

- <sup>1</sup> Morrell F (1989) **Children of the Future** (p96) – Hogarth Press
- <sup>2</sup> Pollitt C (1994) **Critical Discussion of Max Weber in Democracy and Bureaucracy** Eds. Held D & Pollitt C (1984) *New Forms of Democracy* – Open University
- <sup>3</sup> Dunleavy P & O’Leary B (1989) **Theories of State** (p31) – Macmillan
- <sup>4</sup> Niskanen W (1993) **Bureaucracy: Servant and Master Lessons from America** (p33) – The Institute of Economic Affairs
- <sup>5</sup> This account was given to me in confidence by an ILEA Teacher Member of the ILEA.
- <sup>6</sup> Apple M W (1996) **Cultural Policies and Education** (p216) Open University
- <sup>7</sup> **Times** (16-1-2004) Article by Ingrid Mansell
- <sup>8</sup> Tiebout C (1956) **A Pure Theory of Public Expenditure** (p416-424) – *Journal of Political Economy* 64

## Chapter 4

### **The New Right, The Left and the ILEA: with notes on Policy**

**‘Things of this world are in so constant a flux that nothing remains long in the same state. Thus people, riches, trade, power, change their stations.....’**

**An essay concerning the true and original extent and end of civil government,  
John Locke**

An examination of Conservative New Right policies is crucial to any study of the ILEA because the New Right government attacked most of the policies of the ILEA in the 1980s, as a prelude to its abolition. Thus, when some politicians and educators question the wisdom of abolishing the ILEA, and in so doing by giving more power to central government, and to delegating some powers to the constituent boroughs of inner London, they may take some hope from John Locke’s views, given below the chapter heading.

#### **The New Right and the ILEA**

When we come to address specifically the relations between the New Right government and the ILEA, the position is complicated because of the competing interests, and viewpoints of Conservatives, who worked under the New Right umbrella.

Stephen Ball wrote,<sup>1</sup> ‘But clearly that which is the New Right, and indeed which is Thatcherism does not begin and end with economic orthodoxies and a minimal state. In fact, aspects of the New Right present a very different view of the role of the state and give emphasis to social rather than economic orthodoxies; that is neo-Conservatism.’ He then goes on to write of the neo-liberals ‘who see the community as founded upon economic relations, and the neo-conservatives, who see it as founded upon social bonds, arising out of a common culture and sense of national identity, held together, and if necessary enforced by strong government.’

The ILEA, after its swing to the left in 1981, was in the unfortunate position of having both barrels of the two wings of the New Right shotgun, aimed at it with telling effect.



On the neo-liberal front, the ILEA fell foul of its adherents by its complete rejection of the 'market' as a key influence on policy making.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the neo-liberals saw the ILEA as a high spender with pronounced social democratic aims, often involved in giving financial support, to what the ILEA saw as the less favoured members of inner London society. In short, the ILEA's policy platform was the negation of the market force believers. To add to the ILEA's rejection of the market, as the key to directing policy and funds in a provided education system, the ILEA believed the New Right never understood the complexity of the London school system. For example, the voluntary aided schools in inner London provided about 30% of all secondary school places, yet their admissions policies were entirely under their own school governors' control, and in this sense, where parents' religious commitment was a key factor, they were 'outside the market'. Arguably, neo-liberals failed to understand the significance of the great fall in the number of pupils in inner London in the 1970s and 80s, where market forces, would harm more of those children in vulnerable schools, facing staffing problems, and possible school closure. The market response to a schooling problem often had a time factor that could put at jeopardy the quality of education provided for many children (Lauder and Hughes, 1999). However, probably the greatest criticism of the market in education, applied to the ILEA, was the way that the better-off parents could manipulate the system to secure places for their children in the more desirable schools. The fact is that Frances Morrell, and the left-wing of the ILEA, made little reference to the hugely impressive effort that the ILEA, under Ashley Bramall's leadership in the late 60s and 70s, put into schemes to balance the ability levels of children entering ILEA secondary schools. The Authority even got, probably because of its generally good relations with all the main church bodies, a fairly effective, gentleman's agreement, over voluntary aided secondary schools' admissions policies. No doubt, the neo-liberals would see such a transfer scheme as an aspect of 'social engineering'. Norman Tebbit, a Conservative minister, and later Party Chairman, had the 'enviable' position of having a foot in both the neo-liberal and neo-conservative factions. Stephen Ball wrote, 'freedom is market freedom, very much the basis of 'on yer bike Tebbitism' (state activity can only reduce freedom).<sup>3</sup> The neo-conservative side of his views is seen in the need for immigrants to express loyalty to the UK, and that the ILEA 'should have stuck to educational standards, rather than to attempt 'social engineering' in inner London.'<sup>4</sup>

The neo-conservatives would also have taken issue with the ILEA, especially in the 1980s. For example, Ken Livingstone, as Leader of the GLC, and with close links with the ILEA politicians, was suspect in neo-conservative eyes because of his involvement in Irish politics and those of the Middle East. Stephen Ball wrote,<sup>5</sup> that although ‘the neo-conservatives were committed to freedom, but in this case ‘freedom’ is circumscribed by the needs of the nation, proper authority, and the need to control the excesses of human nature.’ Stephen Ball<sup>6</sup> quotes Peregrine Worsthorne, as stating ‘social discipline is much more a fruitful theme for contemporary Conservatism than individual freedom.’ If we, therefore, see strong links with traditional Conservatism, with its respect for the strong state, tradition and the acknowledgement of human failings, it is not surprising that this New Right influence would clash with the ILEA. These issues could be (a) the right of the ILEA to challenge government in some policy issues, e.g., spending programmes, (b) the ILEA’s views on the rights of racial minorities, in gender, and problems over sexual orientation, (c) the ILEA’s repudiation of a National Curriculum and its belief that it could develop a better curriculum control system,<sup>7</sup> (d) the persistent belief in the comprehensive school as the main engine for effective education, which was held by the ILEA. Even on the question of raising educational standards the differences in approach by the New Right and the ILEA were readily apparent. Although there were probably differences in emphasis in the need for improving standards within the New Right Conservative party, i.e. the neo-liberals needed better educated and trained recruits for the competitive market economy and the neo-conservatives belief in excellence and selection, both were essentially different goals from those of the ILEA. The ILEA saw raising educational standards as an essential part of realising the potential of all students, but particularly those who were less well off, and they saw it as a way of developing the true potential of Londoners. This view, would be expensive, but it stretched out to supporting educational schemes for groups of immigrants, supporting schemes to widen the experience of children in musical education and financial support for poorer children.

To this general approach by neo-liberals and conservatives must be added Mrs Thatcher’s particular preoccupations. Ken Jones<sup>8</sup> pointed out that we have to separate Mrs Thatcher’s personal beliefs and goals from those of her administration.... ‘The term Thatcherism is used in three different contexts. The

first refers to Mrs Thatcher's no-nonsense style of leadership and hostility to the premium placed on gaining agreement by consensus. This latter view is in contrast with the traditional Conservative belief in tradition and minimal conflict in society and which had previously been reflected in a form of pragmatic politics, as we shall see. The second usage refers to her personal insistence on having a 'government strong enough to resist selfish claims of pressure groups by having law and order with traditional moral values, a stable currency and free economy (via cuts in state spending and taxes and reducing state intervention and privatization)'<sup>9</sup> However, we would add, that she seemed to ignore the inconsistency of her claim to reduce state intervention in her policies, for example, by the introduction of a National Curriculum for state schools, and indeed to dispose of the ILEA! Ken Jones' 'third use of the term refers to the international influence of her policies of tax cuts, privatization, prudent finance, squeezing state expenditure....'<sup>10</sup>

In the event, she followed neither of the leading neo-liberal gurus, Friedman and Hayek slavishly.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, elements of her thinking owed much to the influence of Friedman's libertarian economic theories in the USA, in particular with its emphasis on monetarism. Mrs Thatcher had an almost obsessive concern over the level of the Public Spending Borrowing Requirement, which was in fact the amount which the government would have to borrow by selling gilt edged stock, in order to finance the deficit incurred by central government itself, by local authorities, and by public bodies, such as the National Health Service. The spending of a very large local authority, such as the ILEA, was a significant component of the PSBR. However, Denis Healey,<sup>12</sup> as Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, stressed the unpredictable nature of it (PSBR), and did not appear to give the same significance to it, as an economic tool, as did Mrs Thatcher, when she came to office. The New Right was not alone in challenging Keynesian policies, as the policies pursued by Labour's Chancellor were anything but Keynesian.<sup>13</sup> The point we are making is that although this thesis is concerned with education policies, it has to be remembered that the charge of being a profligate spender, was one of the strongest and most persistent that was held against the ILEA, particularly by Mrs Thatcher herself. In policy terms, it would seem that Mrs Thatcher's belief in the efficacy of the free market, much derived from Hayek,<sup>14</sup> when applied to education policy in the ILEA, necessarily involved cuts in its services. This then led to a fundamental clash between the ILEA over both the role of the market and the need

to spend substantial sums, to attempt to remedy large scale inner city social and educational deprivation.

Ken Jones<sup>15</sup> does not develop the apparent inconsistency in the Mrs Thatcher's and the New Right's position, in policy terms, which has concerned many educationalists<sup>16</sup> of attacking the strong state involvement in business, and in parts of the education system and then by the autocratic central government direction of policy, in a very prescriptive National Curriculum for schools.

Christopher Knight and Denis Lawton<sup>17</sup> both give closely chronicled accounts of how Conservative educationists began to express their resentment about the ineffectiveness of maintained education, which began to emerge in the late 1950s and early 60s. The declaration of the policy intent to introduce comprehensive schools (Circular 1065), in 1966, by the Labour Secretary of State, Tony Crosland, produced something akin to a massive electric shock to most Conservative educationists. Here was something that was anathema to all brands of Conservatism, because it took away selection, and in the minds of many Conservatives, this meant a lowering of educational standards. This charge was a principal one of the Black Paper activists, a number of influential practising traditional right-wing educationists, who started a whole series of publications, in which they hoped to arouse concern over the implications of comprehensive school policies for educational standards. However under the assault of the New Right, comprehensive education policy goals hardened the London Labour party's resolve, leaving little room for negotiation.

### **The Internal Politics of the Labour Party in London**

The 1970 years were a period of great internal strife in the Labour party. The party outside Parliament continued to move left after 1970. Dennis Kavanagh<sup>18</sup> wrote of the decline of revisionism (the term applied in general to more moderate socialist policies espoused by John Strachey, Hugh Gaitskell and Anthony Crosland, who saw bitter, all-out antagonism to capitalism, in all its forms, could be self defeating), but was reversed in Labour's Programme for Britain in 1973, which promised a fundamental and irreversible shift in the distribution of wealth to working people and their families<sup>19</sup> The Party supported bitter trades union disputes in which the

unions opposed the Conservative Industrial Relations Act. The National Union of Mineworkers also successfully challenged the Heath government over its incomes policies in 1972 and 1974. The Labour party, when it regained power as a minority government in 1974, faced huge problems of inflation. It failed to secure an effective incomes policy and, 'the Labour party's standing in the country swiftly crumbled. Between January and February 1979, Gallop showed a Conservative lead over Labour increasing from 7½% to 20% and in March, it was still 14½%.<sup>20</sup> Kavanagh wrote, 'from a position where the British Labour party dominated trades unions and had been relatively cohesive, that by 1979, Labour had undergone the most spectacular electoral decline of any socialist party in Western Europe.'<sup>21</sup> In terms of GLC/ILEA politics, although the London Labour party had deep divisions in the latter part of the 1970s and 80s, the key feature would appear to be the Left's capture of the GLC in 1981. Ken Livingstone rapidly consolidated his power as Leader of the GLC, his 'Red Ken' reputation, fostered by the *London Evening Standard*, seemed to help consolidate his position as an effective Leader. Moreover, Mrs Thatcher's position as Leader of her party, was at a nadir at that time. In July 1982, 'The jobless total had topped three million and one in two school leavers was out of work.'<sup>\*</sup> It seems to be widely accepted that Mrs Thatcher's standing as the nation's leader improved after her management of the Falklands War in 1983, but Labour's control of the GLC, and the ILEA was never under threat, until the New Right abolished both institutions in 1986 and 1988 respectively.

### **The Politics of Pragmatism Before the Advent of the New Right**

What has been described above is the process by which politics in London polarised. However, prior to this period the two major parties and their representatives had often come to an accommodation over general policy and tolerance with respect to dissenting views. In terms of Labour policy making in inner London, the comprehensive school policy was an absolute bedrock. Sir Ashley Bramall, was undeviating in promoting the comprehensive school over his fourteen years of stewardship. What is interesting, however, is that the relatively short period of Conservative control of the ILEA (1968-70) was one of relative

<sup>\*</sup> Times 31/7/08 Register (obituary to Lord Varley).

calm in the Authority. Under the Leadership of Chris Chataway, assisted by Lena Townsend and Lady Plowden and Timothy Raison (who as a Conservative co-opted councillor, supported the introduction of comprehensive schooling in the borough of Richmond), traditional Conservative policies of ‘little change to the established order’ prevailed. These Conservative educationists were not enamoured with the comprehensive school; in policy terms, they wished to retain most, but not all, grammar schools in inner London, which would have frustrated any coherent comprehensive school policy making. But they took a tolerant view of established comprehensive schools, along the lines of the Minister, Sir Edward Boyle, and urged caution over allegedly ‘botched’ schemes, which could be considered too drastic. They demanded adequate funding before a comprehensive school could be established, which may well have been an educational escape clause! Sir Ashley Bramall, stated that having experienced this tolerant Conservative administration, he was taken aback by the incidence of New Right policy making, shortly before his defeat as Leader in 1981.<sup>22</sup> Both Conservative and Labour politicians in London during this period displayed a form of pragmatism in which there was a degree of give and take and compromise

In terms of its relations with its schools and colleges, the ILEA was seen by many as liberal and tolerant in many policy issues. To give specific examples of the ILEA’s tolerance; Dr Rhodes Boyson, the headmaster of Highbury Grove School, ILEA, openly championed right-wing, ‘Black Paper’ policies, even to the extent of his proposing to break up the ILEA into four segments, and yet he was never ‘hailed over the coals’, and in terms of school policies, Holland Park School in the 1970s was committed to non-streaming yet the head of geography chose to stream pupils in his department, and in this he received no serious opposition from his head or the ILEA. Sir Ashley Bramall, as Leader of the Authority, on a platform at Sherbrooke Teachers’ Centre in 1978, as part of a Members and local school governors, informal consultative procedure, listened intently from the platform when one of his officers was critical of the Authority’s new policy to abandon confidential reports on teachers, and resort to ‘open’ documents. However, this attitude by his officer did not trouble him greatly, but any failure on the part of the officers concerned to carry out the policy loyally, would not have been tolerated.

The ILEA appeared to work over the twenty eight years of its existence under two very different relations with government. This does not include the in-fighting, which was clearly influenced by national Labour travails from the middle 70s onwards, which we have already written about in this chapter. The first policy relationship was influenced by 'Butskellism' in which the Authority was relatively free to carry out its own policies, the second half, however, was characterized by a much stronger domination over policy by central government. For a variety of reasons, some with regard to the direction of the nation's economy, or with the arousal of the electorate's interest in educational matters, and possibly the political advantage that could come to a party in its education policies, education is of much more significance, in policy terms, today. The question then is whether this second period of central policy domination, leading to the abolition of the ILEA could have been avoided?

### **A Consideration of the Possibilities for Compromise**

L S Amery,<sup>23</sup> an experienced Conservative politician, wrote in 1953 that it would be wrong to underestimate the effect of personal intervention in policy making. He wrote, 'Again the more I see things at close range, the more I have been impressed by the power of individuals and their personality to shape the course of events.' In order to consider the possibility of compromise we need to examine not only the ideology of the Conservative party but also the key players because they translated the ideology into practice. In drawing together this assessment of the incidence of New Right policies and the ILEA, it would seem that the appointment of Keith Joseph as Education Secretary of State in 1981, marked the real divide between a more pragmatic Conservatism and what followed. While an ardent member of the New Right, Keith Joseph could see no sensible alternative to having a single body to administer education in inner London. In Sir Keith's<sup>24</sup> *Campaign for Excellence in Education* between September 1981 and June 1983, he launched a series of initiatives designed to raise educational standards of children of all abilities, and these were (a) to make teacher training more rigorous, (b) the pursuit of agreement on a national curriculum, (c) the transformation of the public examination system and, (d) to have a proper system of recording pupils' achievement. He also advocated a strong vocational element in the education of less gifted pupils, allied to teaching a sense of social responsibility and a capacity to work on one's own. His

views in this respect reflect his own interest in the business world and that of the CBI, which persistently complained of an inadequately trained labour force. But in spite of his family business background, there is little evidence that he was impressed by market-led education. Moreover, this programme could arguably have produced a bipartisan consensus through negotiation and compromise. Viewed with hindsight, it seems eminently sensible and perhaps more likely to raise pupil achievement than many of the market-led reforms that followed.

Thereafter, the personal influence and intervention in political affairs of Mrs Thatcher, Kenneth Baker and Nigel Lawson became prominent. Politics is an arena for hard fighting, but it does seem that Kenneth Baker's antagonism, when Secretary for Education (1986-87) towards the ILEA was a little unreasonable. For example, when he supported the ILEA abolition clause in the 1988 Act, he was fully aware that in an ILEA referendum (1988), a considerable majority of parents who had children in ILEA schools, had voted in favour of the retention of the ILEA.<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Baker's avowed goal was to abolish the ILEA, and he set out to do this by a war of attrition, in which he systematically weakened the Authority.<sup>26</sup> Following this policy, the ILEA, as part of the GLC abolition bill became a directly elected body (1986), which 'misfired' in the sense that Labour was returned with a sound majority in the first election process. Kenneth Baker (May, 1987) followed the election process by allowing individual boroughs to secede from ILEA control. This was a heavy blow to the ILEA, in that the loss of the mainly Conservative boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Camden and Westminster, and most probably Wandsworth, would create an administrative nightmare for the ILEA, and would significantly weaken the ILEA's financial base.

Nigel Lawson,<sup>27</sup> as a powerful and influential figure in the New Right government, who wrote directly to Mrs Thatcher on educational matters, and caused her to set up a sub-committee to investigate his concerns, was out-and-out anti-local authority and saw a powerful central government, able to apply a national curriculum to self governing schools, as the way out. His concerns seemed to be centred on the alleged indifferent performance of provided schools, which, he considered were contributing to our poor economic performance in world productivity terms.



Underlying these antagonisms to the ILEA were more secular issues concerning the strengthening of the central state while paradoxically and at the same time, striving to delegate substantial powers to schools and parents. Geoff Whitty,<sup>28</sup> writing shortly after the 1988 Education Reform Act put these policies on the statute book, explored what he saw ‘as a piece of policy legerdemain.’ These policies were also examined by Clyde Chitty and John Dunford ten years later. In their book<sup>29</sup> Peter Downes wrote of the huge range of administrative studies that had befallen secondary school head teachers, after the 1988 Education Reform Act, that must have impaired the role of head teachers as ‘thinkers and planners’ of policy for their schools. Clyde Chitty and John Dunford<sup>30</sup> saw ‘the abolition of the ILEA as part of a wider programme designed to reduce the powers of local education authorities’. It would seem, in our view, that the devolution of more powers to schools and their governors and parents, was part of this pincer movement, to break the power of local authorities.

It is against this background of ideology, political machination and the convictions of individuals that the question of whether or not the ILEA should have concerned itself more with strategies for its own survival when it came under threat from the New Right government. Given the principles that defined their opposition to New Right policies as described above, were they prepared to forsake some of these principles in order to compromise and survive?

In looking at the relations between the New Right and the ILEA, it would be wrong to underestimate the repugnance that the New Right had for the ILEA’s alleged ‘social engineering’ policies. This is a highly controversial area, but there is no doubt ‘social reform’, in its widest sense, was a policy bedrock for the ILEA. Norman Tebbit was very concerned over the ILEA’s intent to ‘reform society’ in inner London, and he expressed this view, forcibly in a letter to the writer of this thesis. When asked point blank if he favoured the abolition of the ILEA, he replied, in his letter, ‘No, if the ILEA had stuck to providing an efficient education service and not engaged in ‘social engineering’ it could have survived.’<sup>31</sup> In this attempt to relate the ILEA’s downfall to much wider social and political influences, Roy Hattersley made an interesting point<sup>32</sup> about the general social, political and economic climate that prevailed in the late 70s. He wrote, ‘It did not change the nation’s judgement about what was wrong with British society. It merely confirmed

it.’ He went on to write that New Conservatism, based on a bar room version of Hayek and Friedman, was articulating the country’s dissatisfaction with collective bargaining and ‘corporate planning’. It is possible to see in Roy Hattersley’s analysis of the breakdown in what Stephen Ball<sup>33</sup> characterised as the prevailing culture where ‘old values of community co-operation, individual need, which underlay public systems of comprehensive education, are being replaced by marketplace values that celebrate individualism, competition, performativity and differentiation. These latter qualities were not made visible and explicit, but emanate from the changing social context ... They can be seen to constitute the hidden curriculum of marketised relations’.

However, it is worth noting that the New Right’s emphasis on the strong state may have been part of a wider secular trend. Between the late 1980s through to New Labour’s policies of devolution in Scotland and Wales most political parties have given support to the increased influence of central government in policy making, hence it could be argued that the ILEA would have lost power and significance anyway. The Conservative government of John Major was just as hostile<sup>34</sup> to local authorities as was Mrs Thatcher’s government. While one could not envisage any New Labour government actually disposing of a body such as the ILEA, it would most likely have assumed many of the ILEA’s powers, leaving it as with local authorities today with the task of improving school performance and regulating admissions.

However, in many ways it could be argued that the ideologies of both the Labour Left and the New Right failed to address the problems faced by teachers in the inner city. The Labour Left in the ILEA, for example, began to lose patience with teacher militancy and, with the national party, had no clear plans to increase the numbers of specialist teachers, and to give adequate rewards for teachers of merit who stayed in inner city schools. The New Right attacked teacher militancy without looking properly at its causes. It piled on criticism of politicized and inadequate teaching in the inner city and had no real plans to help teachers stay in a very expensive urban environment. Many educationists, felt the New Right did not realise just how profound and complex were the education problems in major inner city environments.

It was ironic that Kenneth Baker, the 'arch villain', saw the need to give substantial pay rises to teachers when he became Secretary of State. However, he took what was seen as a disastrous step, when he approved of the removal of the teaching bodies from Burnham-style pay adjudications.

Gerald Grace<sup>35</sup> saw policy as the outcome of a series of power struggles when he wrote, 'Concepts of conflict and power have to be placed at the centre of policy analysis rather than at its margins.' This would seem to apply to the ILEA, when as a product of internal strife, more left-wing policies emerged in the 1980s. It was probably the realisation that this bitter internal strife was self-defeating, that ushered in more moderate policies under the new Leader of the ILEA, Neil Fletcher, in the last three years of the Authority's existence. But it would seem, however, that the impact of the quite revolutionary New Right policy developments of central governments, inspired more left-wing ILEA policy making in the 1980s. The ILEA, was not deflected from its cherished beliefs in social reform, for example in its dedication to comprehensive education. But so great was the provocation of the New Right government to the ILEA, that the Authority in 1987, almost refused (quite unlawfully) to set a rate!



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## Chapter 5

### Policy Changes in the ILEA

**‘I vowed that I would do anything to bring an end to an Education Authority where dogma took precedence over good education.’**

**Kenneth Baker**

#### Section 1 - Changes in the Politics of Policy Making

The size and influence of the normally Labour controlled ILEA, made it a significant player in both local and national policy making, especially with respect to innovation. For example, ILEA policies included strong school governing policies, which involved the membership of parent and teacher representatives on those bodies,<sup>1</sup> well before they were recommended by the Taylor Report in 1977 for all schools. Important studies of schools’ academic performance, and studies of the relative performance of racial groups within its schools were all backed up by a very influential Research and Statistics Branch. The development of schools’ own self-assessment of performance and a plan for Freedom of Information<sup>2</sup> were developed shortly before the demise of the ILEA.

We wrote, in Chapter 1, of the historical, pioneering attitude in policy making, that stretched back in inner London for over a hundred years. McCullough<sup>3</sup> wrote of the power of the London School Board in Victorian times, with a membership of some fifty members, whereas most school boards were much smaller, both in numbers and in influence. He wrote<sup>4</sup> of the way the Board used the services of ‘middle class educated females’ (who were somewhat under-valued and under-regarded by Victorian society). The ambitions of the London School Board to extend its work beyond the restrictive limits of ‘elementary education’, are well documented.

In its simplest terms, there has been a strong ‘welfarist’ component in all three education bodies, which served inner London for over a hundred years; they were what one would term ‘progressive’, whereas the New Right in the 1980s considered social policies were not only expensive, but failed to produce an efficient service. The lifetime of the ILEA has also to be seen in the context of a huge shift of power, from which local government was a quite significant broker of shared power in policy making with government, which obtained in the 1950s and 60s, to a situation

where government is now in the 'driving seat'. Writers such as Roger Dale<sup>5</sup> and Douglas Ashford<sup>6</sup> have strongly confirmed this view.

Ashford<sup>7</sup> wrote, 'when we look at the policy process in Britain, it appears that there are a large number of practices that prevent politics from entering policy making. In so far as parties decide policies, choices are made by a small circle of politicians who are, compared with any other democracy immune to demands from their own party organisation and party activists ... Local government is virtually an executor of national policies, but rarely used nationally to mobilize public opinion or criticize policies'. In contrast to this view, the ILEA was certainly influenced by small activist groups in the 1980s and it did attempt to mobilize public opinion when it was threatened by government and it did openly criticize the New Right government.

When we come to examine policy making in the ILEA, it has to be recognised that close links were always maintained by Labour party activists and those of the then quite significant GLC, and the ILEA. The activities of the Labour party in the 70s and 80s incurred some wrath from some fellow members of the Labour party, for what the latter saw as divisive, too polemical policies that most likely weakened the public's perception of a 'party fit for power'.

But this is not a fair analysis; the demand for more grass root influence in policy making in the sort of policies demanded by the 'Campaign for Greater Labour Party Democracy', concerning the use of a widely based Electoral College, to select the Party Leader, and to the re-selection of sitting MPs could be seen as a demand for more local voices to be heard.

In some ways the ILEA was less affected by these power struggles in the 1970s because it had its hands full over a very demanding comprehensive schools policy. The comprehensive plan was a huge exercise. Some proposals for the schools caused bitter controversy and these were no less contentious with schools controlled by religious bodies. ILEA Members, often as school governors, sometimes opposed ILEA proposals for their schools. Cuts in government, or local government funding were seen by Labour, as an attack on the general quality of its service.



The ILEA was always highly sensitive about any demands that it should suffer financial cuts, that were seen to damage the full range of its supportive services and cuts were demanded by the Labour government in 1976. Ken Livingstone became active in GLC politics in 1973, after Labour won control of the GLC, and he became disillusioned with the Leadership. In 1975, with his allies, he launched an organisation, 'Labour Against the Cuts'. He had also been a Member of the ILEA since 1973 and in April 1976, he stood against the ILEA Leader Sir Ashley Bramall, in opposition to the reductions in expenditure then proposed.<sup>8</sup> He was not successful but he was astute in selecting the cuts in spending as a key target.

Paul Whiteley<sup>9</sup> wrote of the socialist resurgence that came after Labour's 1970 election defeat which culminated in *Labour's Programme for Britain*, which was accepted at the 1973 Annual Conference. He<sup>10</sup> was quite clear that 'The disillusionment with the 1964-70 government had led to a re-formulation of Labour's policy goals in a more socialist direction.'

Maurice and David Kogan claimed there were parallels between national events and those involving the London Labour party. They claimed that 'Outside Left'<sup>11</sup> (which had successes at national level) 'took control of the drafting of the GLC Party Manifesto, and also secured the re-selection of all Councillors and installed a new method of electing the Leader (1977-79).' Thus it could be argued that after Mrs Thatcher's success in the 1979 General Election, and when the significance of early New Right policies was beginning to emerge, that Sir Ashley's previously unchallenged position as Leader of the ILEA, was then weakening. The left-wing of the ILEA picked the issue over cuts in spending (1980-81 budget), required by government, as the key one. Kogan<sup>12</sup> wrote 'Livingstone attacked his own GLC colleagues on the ILEA for agreeing to the cuts (£21 million). *London Labour Briefing*, a broadsheet instrumental in advancing the Outside Left cause, lambasted those members, and it gave their names of those who had agreed to the ILEA's cut of 4.2% of the budget (thus almost meeting the Government's target of 5%).'

The issue over the cut in the ILEA budget in the Labour years 1974 and the New Right (1980-81) presented the biggest problem for Sir Ashley. His strong 'constitutionalist' sense that it was the duty of local government to give primacy to central government in major policy issues, proved to be his Achilles Heel. When Sir

Ashley was interviewed,<sup>13</sup> he maintained it was essential for the ILEA to conform, as far as was possible, with central government requests for the ILEA to cut expenditure. His position was vulnerable because of the strengthening of the Left of his party, following the 1980 elections. Sir Ashley complained, with some justification, that the policies of his successors were not properly planned and that the Policy Co-ordinating Committee was not used to establish priorities in policy development. When asked if his 'accommodating attitude' over the government's demands for cutbacks in ILEA spending could have saved the ILEA, if the cuts had been applied, he demurred. In view of the later, very damaging, rate-capping measures, applied under the auspices of Michael Heseltine,\* it is doubtful that the ILEA could have co-operated in what were almost punitive measures. But in terms of general strategy, Sir Ashley<sup>14</sup> did believe that if he had been at the helm of the ILEA during the New Right years, the ILEA in some form or other would have survived.

In moving against Sir Ashley, there may have been some reaction against a perceived lack of a cutting edge in policies, especially as the GLC Labour party was on the offensive. The defeat of the Labour government in May, 1979 could have added to the gloom over the lack of fight in the ILEA. The left-wing dominance of the Constituency Labour parties is shown by the fact that 82 out of 92 voted for the left-wing candidate Tony Benn in the contest for the Deputy Leadership of the party at the time when Jim Callaghan succeeded Harold Wilson.<sup>15</sup>

On the face of it, Sir Ashley Bramall as Leader of the ILEA seemed secure in the middle and late 1970s, espousing 'middle of the road' socialist policies. He had considerable support from his party and he was also well supported by the professional teachers' associations in inner London. The ILEA had close working relations with the GLC Labour Party, and with the Labour government then in power and it would be surprising if some of the active left-wing ferment at that time in the national Labour party, and in the GLC, did not have some influence on ILEA Members at that time. For example, as we have seen in this chapter, Ken Livingstone had a growing influence in calling for more left-wing policies, both as a Member of the ILEA in the 1970s and of the GLC.

\* Environment Secretary 1979-83

What is certain, however, is that in the early 1980s, with the influx of new Members, ILEA policy making appeared to move to the Left. Sir Ashley himself was then most vulnerable because of his agreement to institute cuts in ILEA spending in 1980/81 that was called for by Mrs Thatcher's New Right government. \*Four Members of the former ILEA, interviewed by me over a four year period, and who were by no means all left-wing, Steve Bundred (Nov 2002), Anne Sofer (Oct 2001), George Carter (Mar 1999) and Neil Fletcher (the last ILEA Leader) (Nov 2003), all indicated that they believed at that time that new policy initiatives were called for in the ILEA in the 80s.

Frances Morrell, who became a Member of the ILEA in 1981, and called for more left-wing policies, quickly moved to the influential Chairmanship of the Schools Sub-Committee to Deputy Leader and Leader of the Authority in four years. In her account of her days with the ILEA<sup>16</sup> she believed that there were two main failings of the Authority; they were (a) that Members were too much concerned with increasing expenditure and not giving enough attention to improving the quality of the education service, and (b) that the ILEA was failing its parents by not publishing schools' examination results.<sup>17</sup> She stated<sup>18</sup> that Ruth Gee (her Deputy as Leader), Steve Bundred (Chair of Finance) and Leslie Hammond (the Chief Whip) all gave her support in this. Sir Ashley Bramall,<sup>19</sup> the former Leader, when interviewed, conceded he was probably wrong in not agreeing to the publication of exam results. He was influenced in this decision by the teachers' professional associations but both he and the associations had a good case. The publication of these results in schools that worked in a demanding social and educational environment could put off parents seeking school places for their children, when the school concerned could be on an upward trend, and that this type of publicity could badly affect staff morale in those schools, and could have an adverse effect on the recruitment of new teaching staff.

Frances Morrell<sup>20</sup> also made it clear that she rejected totally the New Right policy of the introduction of 'market forces' as a major instrument in school selection policies and in the funding of schools. She never deviated from her belief in the need for an all-purpose local education authority in inner London.<sup>21</sup> It was unusual

\* Dates of Interviews

in that she made no reference in her book to the protracted teachers' pay dispute in inner London (*Chapter 6 Children of the Future, The Crisis in our Schools*), which lasted for six years in the 1980s, nor did she dwell on the fact that the publication of schools' examination results was such a valuable tool for the proponents of the market in education!

When Neil Fletcher replaced Frances Morrell as Leader in 1987, this ushered in a less assertive left-wing phase in policy making. Neil Fletcher was certainly not well disposed to the New Right but he was prepared to take a more balanced view of its policies. He made it clear<sup>22</sup> that he thought some of the more extreme policies of the teacher's unions were ill advised and that they could have been more constructive in policy making. In interview, when he had the benefit of hindsight, he was aware that New Right policies in many ways, such as the systematic testing of pupils, regular school inspections, the devolution of powers to schools and the creation of new secondary schools with different aims and control systems had all been accepted as New Labour policies.

In looking back at the real break in policy making in the ILEA, at the time of Frances Morrell's ascendancy (1981-7), she had support, in part because of the unreasonable hostility of the New Right government to the ILEA, and for the agreement of her colleagues in office that new policies were needed that for example, gave membership of parent's representatives to decision making committees of the Authority, and for new policies to tackle under achievement by pupils, and for policies to address forms of discrimination against students on the grounds of gender and of race.

But if we are to look at these issues from an even wider perspective, Professor Halsey<sup>23</sup> and his fellow contributors wrote of some of the major effects of New Right policies (which were certainly relevant in such a complex urban environment in inner London). They wrote, 'At a time of increasing social inequality and injustice, when self-regulating market theoreticians threaten to undermine the foundations of social solidarity; when advances of post-war welfare reforms have been revised and when the dominant ideology of meritocracy in liberal democratic societies have been seriously weakened at the same time that right-wing politicians proclaim a classless society, a new political arithmetic must be asserted as a tool of

democracy as well as of sociology.’ These words would assist the claims of ILEA policy makers that they were the best interpreters of the complex needs of a large urban community and the support for this view was expressed recently (2007) in an eloquent passage by Ruth Lupton and Alice Sullivan.<sup>24</sup> They wrote ‘London’s education system must harness the opportunities of growth and diversity, while responding to the challenges of mobile students, students for whom English is not a first language, and students from workless families on low incomes and inadequate housing ... perhaps most importantly London’s education system must do its part to counter social, economic and ethnic segregation, to offer inclusive and equal schooling and to build values of tolerance and community that can heal London’s divisions as well as to foster its continued growth.’ These views would seem to highlight the differences in policy goals of the ILEA and those of the New Right.

If we accept there were three discernible phases in policy making in the ILEA’s lifetime, the first being a centre Labour administration, (1964-67/1969-1981), the second more radical left Leadership from 1981-87, and the third more moderate Labour leadership, until the ILEA’s demise in 1990, it is possible to attempt an interpretation of these. Having interviewed at length many of the prime players at that time Steve Bundred\*, Anne Sofer\*, Bill Stubbs, Neil Fletcher\*, David Mallen and Peter Newsam, there was a genuine feeling that new policies were required in the late 70s and early 80s and that, competent as Sir Ashley was, and in spite of the loyalty he inspired in many colleagues, and in the London’s teachers’ associations, he was not going in the right direction. In moving against Sir Ashley, there may have been some reaction against Mrs Thatcher’s policies in government, but one senses that there was a deep feeling in the ILEA Labour party that it had to move on. The policies of the more left-wing ILEA administration were an unusual mix. Frances Morrell (Leader from 1981-87)<sup>25</sup> demanded greater information about school performances, more parental involvement in policy making (more elected parent representatives as school governors, voting parent representatives on policy making committees at County Hall, more determination in closing failing schools, and those with seriously falling rolls, and a better, more scientific monitoring of the performance of ILEA schools.)<sup>26</sup> Many of these policies were in fact were similar to New Right policies, but at bedrock, Mrs Morrell would not accept ‘market-led’ policies of the New Right. She had the traditional socialist suspicion of the capitalist

\* Members, all the others sometime Education Officers.

Steve Bundred, when interviewed by me, headed the Audit Commission

free market.<sup>27</sup> There can be little doubt that Mrs Morrell led a reforming ILEA, which involved policies over groups that could be discriminated against on grounds of gender and in race; she also helped to introduce major surveys of all branches of the ILEA education service. In terms of policy making, in such measures as Self-Assessment procedures in schools, the London Compact (really effective links with major local employers), IBIS (school based inspectors), her period of office was one of the most fruitful. She demanded more of the ILEA administrative machine in monitoring the progress of schools and in policy making in general.

The third phase, under Neil Fletcher's leadership was a return to less radical policies but it was by no means a reversion to the ILEA's first phase. Neil Fletcher's leadership seemed to usher in New Labour's approach to government. In interview,<sup>28</sup> he was frankly critical of some of the teachers associations' policies; and he was prepared to look at New Right policies with a fair, but analytical eye. In my view, he understood the complexities of the inner city schools better than any political Member that I encountered. The demand for quality in performance in schools was as great as was Frances Morrell's. Neil Fletcher believed in the comprehensive school as the workhorse of secondary education but he raised some of his colleagues' eyebrows when he showed regard for 'specialist schools'. He was critical of the mushrooming growth of so many categories of secondary schools, often with bewildering management controls, and still put his faith in more effective control and the running of schools by elected local bodies. Clyde Chitty in<sup>29</sup> quoting Professor Ben Pimlott's plea for more support from New Labour for comprehensive schools wrote, 'But his words have gone unheeded as Labour politicians have preferred to believe that many comprehensive schools are performing badly and therefore need 'modernising'. Nowhere is there a clear realisation that the divided system militates against comprehensive success'.

Finally, when we come to address the core issue of policy making in the ILEA, we should look at the question of what input ILEA officers, and the teachers' professional associations, made in the process of policy making.

The ILEA certainly encouraged policy making initiatives from its professional advisers. Dr Briault, as Deputy Education Officer, put forward a scheme for an ILEA Television Service in the late 1960s. This developed into quite an effective

service but developments in school television services by the major national channels, in effect, killed off the ILEA service. Dr Briault, later as Education Officer instituted 'An Education Service for the Whole Community' (1972), in which the ILEA gave financial support for grass-root generated schemes. Dr Briault was a devotee of the 6-8 form entry comprehensive school, which in his view was essential to create a viable sixth form in these schools. The professional associations in London in the 60s and 70s favoured the standard comprehensive school, and were opposed to the development of sixth form Colleges, and to the concept of feeder 11-16 age secondary schools. Peter Newsam, as Deputy Education Officer, and later as Education Officer, had flexible views of how post-16 education should be carried out and his views were welcomed, by an Authority that wanted comprehensive schooling, but had problems over limited funds for school building.

The ILEA benefited from giving some of their truly creative officers, such as Leslie Ryder in media resource provision, and Peter Mortimore, in the greatly successful Research and Statistics Branch, their full support.

But the 'golden period' of 'officer created' policy making would appear to be under Frances Morrell's Leadership, when major school surveys were undertaken,<sup>30</sup> and the Schools' Self Assessment policies were established, as was the London Compact. Fifteen Thousand Hours (Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children) was first published in 1979, by Open Books. In fact this survey was made possible because of the commitment of the ILEA towards it and was a pattern for future development.

### **The Politics of the ILEA and the New Right**

There is a certain irony in the policy response of the Labour leaders to the attack by the New Right. In many ways the responses by the leader considered the most 'left-wing', Frances Morrell, could well have been endorsed by the New Right. Indeed, it could be argued that policies which sought to monitor school performance, and to close failing schools were more a matter of what was good for the education of students rather than being ideologically driven. Equally the work of the Research and Statistics Branch could be considered a sine qua non of good governance anywhere, irrespective of political allegiance. It is the case that policies addressing

inequalities in race and gender may well have raised the ire of *Evening Standard* readers but it could be argued that this ire failed to understand the very complex multi racial nature of the students in London schools.

It is the case that the ILEA consistently rejected the New Right advocacy of the 'market' in education, largely because it felt it was a blunt instrument that often led to more influential parents gaining greater advantage from the system, notably on their choice of schools for their children. In spite of great problems, brought about by the high percentage (30%) of voluntary aided schools, the ILEA did develop an 11+ transfer scheme for pupils. What the New Right may have considered a bureaucratic solution to what should have been a problem resolved by the market. Undoubtedly this was a fundamental point of difference that, given the climate of the times, could not be reconciled. In a previous era it is hard to imagine that it would have provided the undoing of an Authority like the ILEA.

However in drawing these conclusions we need to look further into the details of key aspects of ILEA policy with respect to the inspectorate, the teacher unions and the constitution of governors. These were particular targets of the New Right because they were seen to both politicise education as well as abetting the maintenance of low standards. And this takes us beyond what appear to be the rather small points of difference outlined above.



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## Section 2 - The Inspectorate

**‘You are not writing ... why are you idling?’ ‘Please Sir, I was only thinking what to say.’**

**Dialogue between church schools inspector and pupil  
Lark Rise to Candleford  
Flora Thompson**

When the President of the British Educational Research Association<sup>1</sup> observed at his inaugural lecture in 1992 that ‘the present government and their advisors have treated educational researchers and other educational professionals to what Stephen Ball<sup>2</sup> calls a ‘discourse of derision’..... the same trenchant criticism would certainly have applied to HM Schools’ Inspectorate. Key figures in the New Right Conservative’ intellectual assault on the then education status quo, such as Sheila Lawlor,<sup>3</sup> considered HMI to be ‘trendy’, not rigorous enough in coming to judgement of the nation’s schools, and too prone to give bland generalisations, as opposed to opinions based on facts. In other words, HMI, with their colleagues in LEA Inspectorate teams, and inner city teachers, were all concerned with ‘producer’ processes in education, and not nearly enough with the needs of the ‘consumers’, i.e. the parents, employers and not least, the pupils.

The New Right’s attack on the inspectorate, both local and central, was maintained while Mrs Thatcher was in power and culminated in measures taken by Kenneth Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education, in 1992, when he established the Office for Standards in Education and set up a full four year cycle of inspections for all schools. Money was taken from LEAs in order to finance Ofsted, and LEAs were forced to bid for Ofsted’s inspection work, in order to finance their inspectorate and advisory services.<sup>4</sup> Every Ofsted inspection team was to include a lay inspector, who would, it was hoped, represent the common sense view of the consumer in education. The Secretary of State aimed to cut the numbers of HMI from 480 to a target of 175 inspectors whose main task would be the accreditation and subsequent monitoring of inspection teams. The Department also produced a “Framework for Inspection”, as part of a comprehensive handbook for the inspection of schools which it was hoped would help schools prepare for inspectors, and would be to give procedural guidance to inspection teams.<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Clarke clearly represented the New Right’s views that Inspectors were ‘trendy’ and lacked rigour in assessing a school’s performance.

Thus the independent professional judgement of the inspectors was devalued. John Major, the Prime Minister who produced the Citizen's Charter in 1991, stated, 'If an inspectorate is too close to the profession it is supervising there is a risk that it will lose touch with the interests of people who use the service. It may be captured by fashionable theories and lose the independence and objectivity that the public needs. A professional inspectorate can easily become part of a closed professional world'.<sup>6</sup>

Underlying this attack was a fundamental point of principle embraced by the New Right which made a strong distinction between funders and providers. It was argued that there had to be a clear distinction between the two in order that there was no collusion of the kind described by John Major between the inspectorate and teachers. In the view of the New Right the inspectorate worked on behalf of the funders of education to ensure that funds were being used efficiently and effectively. However, as we shall detail below, the ILEA inspectorate saw its role as being about the development of professional practices as well as judging them. From the New Right's perspective this merely muddied the waters between lines of responsibility and raised the possibility of professional collusion in the maintenance of low standards. Given the circumstances and challenges facing education in London was this a fair concern?

We intend, therefore, to look critically at just how well the ILEA's own inspectorate performed, and whether or not it deserved the severe criticisms that HM Inspectorate got from the New Right, and to assess what part the inspectorate played in ILEA's key policies to achieve genuine school improvement. There were fundamental differences between the way government, i.e. the politicians, viewed HMI and most local educational inspectorates, and the way that ILEA political Members regarded their own inspectorate. The William Tyndale crisis, examined later in this thesis, weakened the normally high regard that Members had for their own inspectorate.

For example, it is no secret that Professor David Hargreaves,<sup>7</sup> who had completed a comprehensive survey of ILEA comprehensive schools, was headhunted by Frances Morrell, the Chair of the Schools Sub-Committee and her colleagues, to take the post of Chief Inspector, with the prime task of raising educational standards in

ILEA schools.\* The inspectorate was seen by ILEA Members as the key instrument in the field of school improvement.

In terms of influence and power, the ILEA inspectorate owed much to the work and significance of its predecessors in both the London School Board and the LCC. The inspectorate assumed probably more than most other LEA inspectors or advisory staffs, that they would have a key role in the formulation of policy by the Authority. ILEA inspectors moved freely into senior administrative posts within the Authority, and even the Education Officer, Dr Briault, had begun his career and with the LCC as a District Inspector.

The ILEA inspectors were different in background from most LEA inspectors, and indeed HM Inspectors, in that they were usually more experienced on appointment than most of the other non-ILEA Inspectors. For example, more than half of the ILEA District Inspectors had been head teachers, often with other LEAs, before appointment, and others had been senior professional academics or administrators. This pattern of appointment was altered somewhat when Dr Briault was Education Officer in the 70s, and he was influential in getting the Members to approve the appointment of junior inspectors, usually with a subject orientation, who were recruited from the schools. There would seem to have been a deficiency in professional advisors in primary education and Peter Newsam, Dr Briault's successor, played a significant part in this development. However, the subject range covered by the ILEA's Inspectorate was indeed wide, from a multi-ethnic team of inspectors to a very powerful group of twenty inspectors, led by their own Chief Inspector, dealing with Further and Higher Education. So that the regular monthly conference of the Authority's Inspectorate, chaired by the Chief Inspector and usually attended by some 100 inspectors, was in the nature of a public meeting. It was also used to maintain contact with other senior officers of the ILEA.

The ILEA inspectorate did not escape serious criticism both from observers of the ILEA and some of its teachers. This sort of criticism of the inspectors – that was sometimes levelled at an HMI by politicians and teachers, that the inspectors promoted progressive ideas in the classroom to the detriment of bread and butter

\* ILEA Improving Secondary Schools (1984) (Hargreaves Report)

learning, was also made of ILEA inspectors. In defence of the inspectors, there is a good case that any inspectorate worth its salt, must be involved in new thinking and practice, in a profession that tends to be conservative in general attitude.

Perhaps the most serious criticism of the ILEA inspectorate was how it performed in the William Tyndale crisis, which is discussed in some detail later in this thesis. The criticism was made (by the Auld Report)<sup>8</sup> that the full gravity of the situation was not conveyed by inspectors on site to their senior colleagues and to the Members of the Authority. Professor Tim Brighouse a former assistant education officer with the ILEA joined in the criticism of the inspectorate.<sup>9</sup> He put most of the blame for the way the Tyndale crisis was handled on to the ILEA Inspectorate. Some criticism was certainly due, but the late Sir Ashley Bramall<sup>10</sup> the Leader of the Authority at the time, was probably nearer the mark when he asserted that Tyndale was due in good measure to the ambiguities of the 1944 Education Act, over such fundamental questions as to who, or what body, controlled the curriculum of the schools concerned, and just when and how school governors and inspectors should act in such extreme situations where a head and the school's staff, the governing body, and parents, were all so divided over just how the school was run. The fact is that neither the ILEA administrative machine, nor the Members (the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee was criticised in the Auld Report) come out of the Tyndale crisis with much credit.

It is possible that Professor Brighouse, who wrote critically in the context of Tyndale of the divide between the inspectorate and the administration in the ILEA, was conditioned by his experience with other authorities where in fact, real power resided in the administrative side of those bodies and not in the inspectorates or advisory services. The ILEA's inspectorate's power and influence was much greater than in most other LEAs but in the case of Tyndale, neither the inspectorate nor the senior administrators came out well in this crisis.

The ILEA's inspectorate did experience a diminution of power and significance in the aftermath of William Tyndale. The structure of the hierarchy of the ILEA administration during the first half of its existence illustrates the true standing of the inspectorate in which the Chief Inspector ranked equal with the Deputy Education Officer, immediately below the Education Officer.

When Peter Newsam came to the Authority as Deputy Education Officer, from a similar post in the former West Riding CC, he would not have experienced such a powerful inspectorate as existed in the ILEA. It was in his period of office, either as Deputy or as Education Officer, that the inspectorate changed, so that by the 80s, it was beginning to look more like a normal county inspectorate or advisory service. There could be two main reasons why this came about; the first is that Peter Newsam may have wanted a clearer command structure, and secondly, he could well have considered that the efficiency of the inspectorate could be improved by the changes. However, there was a constructive side to his changes when he was Education Officer; he threw his weight and influence behind a much needed strengthening of the Primary Inspectorate and in the establishment of the Multi-Ethnic Inspectorate. A further change in the late 70s, that was warmly supported by Dr Birchenough, the Chief Inspector, was the establishment of Divisional Inspectors, who were asked to head the teams of inspectors in their divisions.

Ofsted inspectors, today, have to be much more judgemental in assessing the quality of the schools they inspect. They are assisted by numerous guidelines to help make their assessments fair. After the William Tyndale Schools' crisis, the ILEA inspectors were asked to be much more concerned with the quality of education provided by ILEA schools, in more systematic schools inspections, in more in-service training, at all levels in school, and there was particular care of the first year years. The welfare of teachers was considered a high priority of the ILEA inspector's duties, including help in their professional development and in making teaching appointments in school. There was always the danger that any schemes that took schools out of LEA control, particularly in the inner cities could lack some of these supportive services.

However, under Dr Hargreaves' period as Chief Inspector, much more 'system' was injected into the inspectors' work patterns, and he stressed the need to inspect schools, which all had indices of performance, prepared by the Authority's Research and Statistics Branch.

Stuart Maclure<sup>11</sup> considered that the ILEA was in the 80s, better informed about schools than any other local education authority. Maclure<sup>12</sup> also made the point that

when Neil Fletcher took over as Leader of the Authority from Frances Morrell, whom he defeated in the 1987 election, he was determined to make schools more accountable, and to give parents more information about schools failing to meet the required standards. In support of this contention by Stuart Maclure, the ILEA inspectorate produced excellent papers on ways in which schools could gain access to their own performance on the basis of agreed criteria (Keeping the School Under Review)<sup>13</sup> and also by the IBIS scheme of basing inspectors in schools. It is of note that Eric Bolton<sup>14</sup> the former HM Chief Inspector of Schools, who knew the ILEA well, and was more aware of the effects of adverse social and economic conditions in inner London than were many of his political seniors in government, had some reservations about the number of ILEA publications at this time. He made the point that it is possible that some of the skills and energies of the inspectors, who were involved in the admittedly valuable guides, should have concentrated much more on the seriously under-performing secondary schools. He had something in mind of about 10 or 15 ILEA schools that were in this category. Eric Bolton was full of praise for the unique contribution that the ILEA's powerful subject teams made on a breadth of topics, ranging from multi-ethnic education to health education. It was also a fact that a large inspectorate could provide attractive career opportunities, not only within a highly specialised inspectorate team, but it was also possible for inspectors to change course, and enter the ILEA's senior administrative structure.

Undoubtedly there was a danger that an inspectorate such as the ILEA's, which worked for most of its lifetime to left-wing masters, and was dealing with a mobile population consisting of many disadvantaged children, could become too concerned with the social and emotional aspects of deprivation and not enough with educational standards. This could lead to a neglect of what the ILEA leaders in the 80s saw, that the real tool to fight social and economic disadvantage, is to supply a high demanding level of attainment for its school population. Quite clearly, the New Right did not see left-wing LEAs as pathfinders for standards, but rather as authorities that condoned unacceptably low standards, often served by highly politicised teachers.

There is also the point that teachers and head teachers of schools in the inner cities have a most challenging task. No matter how much a school in the inner city improves, the improvement is fragile, these schools do not improve and then go on



to automatic pilot.<sup>15</sup> Most heads welcomed their contacts with their inspectors, most of the latter would at least have had some experience as heads, if not in quite the same demanding schools (although at least 15 District Inspectors in 1980 had been ILEA head teachers) and there was a colleague in the inspectorate, whom they could contact at short notice. The ILEA, no matter how much it was under pressure, constantly backed policies, which provided pastoral care for its workers. The inspector could help to adjudicate in, or perhaps ameliorate, a dispute that a teacher had with his/her head where, apart from the help from the teachers' union, there was no other influential third party who could help to unlock the problem. The ILEA also valued its own inspection procedures in which its own inspectors, usually drawn from different Divisions, took part and shared professional views, with specialist subject colleagues, often with very different viewpoints, in such a large Authority.

In short, the ILEA insisted that there must be a caring, pastoral side to its inspection work and indeed it saw this type of service as the other side of the coin in the steps towards school improvement.

The ILEA inspectorate was not, on the whole, excessively judgemental, a criticism that is made of some Ofsted teams. The inspector's report, after a full inspection, could be challenged by the school governors, as indeed so could HMI full inspections also be challenged and queried by the governors. But the Reporting Inspector had a much more daunting task when he had to stand by the findings of his colleagues before the ILEA Schools Sub-Committee. This was a highly professional committee whose members often knew the schools concerned well, and would certainly know of the particular school's social environment. Neil Ferguson<sup>16</sup> accepted the value of the systematic inspection policies of Ofsted compared with the previous inspection policies of HMI. He was aware that week-long inspections impose a great strain on heads and their staffs, but he also reported that three-quarters of schools inspected considered that the inspection had been fair and were encouraged by their reports. He quoted a number of schools that felt that the 'hit and run' method did not give schools adequate follow-up. He also raised the problem of many of inner city schools where adverse reports affected staff morale, which was fragile enough anyway, and often made the recruitment of new staff extremely difficult. Ferguson<sup>17</sup> had some reservations about the form inspections

took and he tended to disparage the visits by inspectors to just parts of a teacher's lesson, and felt it would do more good if the inspector witnessed the whole lesson. It may be that there was a danger that ILEA Inspectors could be perhaps 'softer' and less hard-hitting than some Ofsted Inspectors later proved to be, because it was felt by many in the ILEA that inspectors should not spend too much time on formal inspections, and that their time should be spent more profitably on routine visits. Certainly, the ILEA improved its inspections plans and procedures in the 80s, but it still had the advantage of having a reporting inspector who had an intimate knowledge of the school that was being subjected to the inspection. The ILEA's teams, too, were multi-disciplinary, but above all, it was most likely that the inspectors and the team would have had good experience of inner city education.

The pastoral support side of the inspectors' work was regarded by the New Right Conservatives with suspicion; and there was a real danger that inspectors could get into the 'William Tyndale' trap, where either from a professional disinclination not to dogmatize in schools, or from too great an empathy with teachers and heads, who were working in a demanding inner city environment, they could fail to see clearly the goals of good order and improved educational standards.

However, it should not be considered that the Inspectorate was necessarily 'soft' in the way caricatured by the New Right. As is detailed below some of the issues of reorganisation that they had to advise on could lead them into conflicting roles.

Perhaps the biggest problem the ILEA inspectors faced in their quest to maintain and raise educational standards, was in their involvement in the ILEA comprehensive school programme of the late 60s and early 70s. Their task was to implement loyalty schemes that often involved the creation of new school structures, either through amalgamation or the closure of schools. To this extent, the inspector was much more closely involved in a procedure that could be painful for teachers, parents and children, in a much more personal way than any administrator or ILEA politician ever was. The inspector was involved in public meetings; he/she had to give professional advice to teachers whose pattern of work had to change, and he/she had to sit in and give governors advice in making appointments to the 'new schools', in a process that could be painful to many loyal and effective teachers.

There was also the pain of being part of a process that in effect ended the life of a good school, albeit perhaps a selective school. The ILEA's Green Paper, 1967 outlines possible new comprehensive school structures, on a divisional basis. Some of these plans were not well thought out. For example in Division 1 it proposed the amalgamation of one of London's most successful schools, in academic terms, Godolphin and Latymer Voluntary Aided girls' school with Mary Boon school, a struggling secondary modern school in Hammersmith which presented problems. There were thus very real problems for the teaching staff in both schools and this put the inspector into the vortex of a difficult situation. Moreover, the inspectors perhaps far more than administrators, or politicians, were soon to realise that 're-organised' schools often required a considerable period of 'gestation' and that standards could fall, albeit temporarily. These examples should give some idea of the closeness of the ILEA inspectorate to the sharp end of educational change, which could not be experienced by administrators or politicians.

The final question we have set for ourselves in this chapter concerns the degree to which the inspectorate contributed to genuine school improvement. The greatest perceptible contribution inspectors made in this field, was most probably in the quality of in-service courses inspectors ran, ranging from sensitive programmes for the probationary teachers, which certainly eased the burden of teachers in their first year, to professional courses for heads and aspiring heads. The ILEA in the late 70s and 80s considerably increased the number of advisory teachers, who worked to inspectors, on such topics as multi-ethnic education, literacy and language support schemes, and on schemes such as Reading Recovery. At the same time, as Stuart Maclure<sup>18</sup> pointed out, the inspectorate became more systematically organised in the 80s, and had strong factual and statistical back-up from the Research and Statistics Branch, to help identify schools at risk. The inspectorate was closely involved in establishing the first Educational Guidance Centre<sup>19</sup> to provide help for schools in off-site centres for youngsters with considerable behavioural problems. These centres became ILEA policy institutions and each Division of the Authority established such a centre, and many other LEAs followed the ILEA in this sort of schools' support measure. It will be remembered that the first Educational Guidance Centre, set up in 1970, was from the influence of a Division 1 head teacher, through her Chairman of Governors.

There is every indication that primary education in inner London improved in the 80s. The 1980 HMI survey<sup>20</sup> of education in inner London, was generally warm and supportive, given the inherent problems of the inner city, but it did comment on some schools' rather stolid, unimaginative teaching. The London Reading Test\*<sup>21</sup> also indicated some improvement from 1978 to 1983. The advantages to the primary schools in the early and middle 80s came from the Authority's ability to recruit more well-trained probationary teachers, from better support services from advisory teachers and from the primary inspectorate. The primary schools, moreover, were not normally faced with the problems that faced their colleagues over secondary school re-organisation, but the sharply falling school rolls did bring about amalgamations and closures of primary schools and the consequent redeployment of staff.

The secondary school scene was, however, rather different. There were the problems of secondary comprehensive school re-organisation which were aggravated by sharply falling school rolls, that did, in effect, bring about subsequent reorganisations. The inspectorate's involvement in preparing schools' own assessment procedures (Keeping the School under Review) and the close involvement in schemes linking schools and local employers (London Compact) and the London Record of the Students' Achievement and finally, the IBIS scheme (Inspectors Based in Schools), were all substantial improvements.

In terms of examination results and league tables<sup>22</sup> Grey and Jesson, by using what were in effect, value added measures put the ILEA in about the middle of a group of inner city LEAs, which was perhaps no more than satisfactory and, it has been described as 'par for the course'. Could the ILEA Inspectorate have achieved more, as Eric Bolton, a former Chief HMI, hinted?<sup>23</sup> It is possible that more could have been done for the relatively few, seriously under-performing secondary schools, but these measures could well have required major policy changes by both the ILEA and government. School closure programmes involved legal and political problems that were beyond the compass of the inspectorate. The 80s was a period of intense turmoil in London schools, particularly the secondary schools, over teachers' pay problems and the Authority itself was coming under serious attack from the New

\* Table and explanation of London Reading test, given with References (Chapter 9)

Right government, particularly over the ILEA's spending policies, so it is difficult to see how much more could have been achieved in the circumstances. The ILEA could firmly claim that its large inspectorate gave 'professional' judgement in administering its education service, it had the capacity to develop such a wide range of professional services, that would have been denied to smaller LEAs. It provided powerful pastoral and professional help that a 'market-based', autonomous, school system could not match. The ILEA believed that the unique conditions of the inner city required strong and highly specialised support systems.

Finally, in terms of policy making, the Chief Inspector, in close association with the Education Officer, could and did propose major policy initiatives that were taken up by Members, Dr Briault's Television service, an Education Service for the Whole Community, and Dr Payling's (Chief Inspector) recommendation that all special needs schools should be part of the District Inspector's responsibility, are examples of this. We have stressed in this thesis that major policy goals were in the hands of political Members, but Members had to rely on professional judgements and opinions that were freely expressed by heads, senior administrators, school governors and finally the Authority's Inspectorate.

Did the ILEA's inspectorate leave a useful legacy? We would suggest that this is important in respect to policy making, and in having such an influential position in the administration. In many LEAs the major input into policy making by paid officials, was made by administrators. Often they were short on classroom experience. The ILEA administration almost always deferred to the inspectors' 'professional judgement'; the inspector could draft in teachers to a school in crisis; they could move teachers, who were manifestly failing, to enjoy rehabilitation in a more favourable school. They could ensure that good first appointment teachers went to schools that needed them and where they would be likely to succeed.

There is little doubt that at times they experienced conflict in their roles as both assisting in school development and improvement and in making judgements about those same schools. Nevertheless given the period of turmoil outlined above, it can be argued that on balance this dual role ensured that there was much greater knowledge of the problems schools faced and how they might be addressed within the ILEA than otherwise would have been and now is, the case.

## **Appendix**

### **Inspection Procedure**

The New Right saw regular inspections as a key policy in the case of school improvement. It is difficult to say at this stage, whether or not this is cost effective and this has to be seen against a good deal of stress in some teachers and heads. With regard to inspection purposes and procedures, the ILEA differed from the New Right. An ILEA District Inspector would have been unwise to subject one of his 'problem' schools to an inspection (the ILEA Inspector normally submitted two or three of his/her schools for inspection to his Chief Inspector, on an annual basis). If the school had problems he/she had the means to do something about it, such as drafting in additional staff, including ancillary help and getting increased funding and deploying more help from inspector colleagues. In a real crisis, such as the William Tyndale one, the inspection should have been deployed sooner.

In our view an inspection programme for schools needs to be flexible. An inspection needs careful timing. It may be used where the inspector is worried about a school and he/she needs a wider view. In 1975, for example, Inspector Howell Davies, inspector of a newly re-organised Chelsea Secondary School, was worried about the disproportionate range of social and educational problems faced by the school. He discussed this with the head, Mr Jones, and decided to recommend a full inspection. The inspection led the way to increased help for the school. The point we are making, is that the ILEA viewed inspection as a more 'creative' institution than did the New Right. However, this is not to deny 'old style' HM Inspector inspections were not equally fruitful. HM Inspectorate, on inspection, called on the services of inspectors from the whole country, which helped to create a good balance of experience in the team.

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### **Section 3 - Teacher Politics**

**‘The Trades Unions role is not to manage or govern but to prevent abuses of power of those who do.’**

**H A Clegg in Industrial Democracy  
M Kiloh**

When H A Clegg, the former Director of Education in the West Riding County Council expressed the view that the ‘Trade Unions’ role is not to manage or to govern but to prevent abuses of power of those who do’, this somewhat limited view would not have been accepted by the leaders of the ILEA. For most of the ILEA’s existence, its senior politicians saw the professional associations as partners in the policy making process. The fact that the Authority had teacher representatives on the main committee is evidence of this.

In this section, we intend to assess just how important the teacher unions were in policy making, and to assess what role they played in the ILEA’s struggle for survival in the 80s. Stuart Maclure<sup>1</sup> writing in 1990 saw the protracted industrial dispute of 1982-87 as more damaging to London’s Education Service than the similar dispute in the early 70s, and by implication, it harmed the ILEA’s battle for survival. The dispute was primarily concerned with the levels of pay and with the alleged inadequate London Allowance for teachers. There was also a problem of limited promotional prospects, at head of department/head of year level, in the secondary schools that became more apparent when the New Right government assumed power. There was also resentment about some aspects of the transfer of teachers from schools where the rolls had fallen. Although Maclure was convinced the ILEA teachers had a good case for substantial pay increases he was unequivocal in condemning the unions for their tactics, and he was no less condemnatory of their employers, for not taking a firmer line in handling its teachers, when these policies were clearly harming the children’s education, and were beginning to alienate the parents, who gave strong support to the ILEA. It is important that the militancy by the teacher unions is placed into historical context because there had been a tradition of trade union activities in inner London, going back to the days of the London School Board.



## **The Trade Union Tradition Amongst London Teachers**

Although there had been teachers' professional associations almost from the inception of the London School Board, they had not necessarily been tarred with the brush of militancy. For example, the Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association, a branch of the National Union of Elementary Teachers, founded by George Colliers in 1872, was by no means militant. Stuart Maclure<sup>2</sup> pointed out that in a rather confusing political scene in the London School Board, the Progressive Party was somewhat similar to the Liberal Party; whilst the other main party, the Moderates, which was bent on financial retrenchment, had distinct overtones of the Conservative party. Yet Tom Heller, the first Secretary of the National Union of Elementary Teachers, was returned as a Member of the Moderates, and he remained in power for fifteen years from 1875 onwards. It seemed that the main targets of the teachers' association were the inspectors, and a particular figure of hatred was one Rev D J Stewart, who was virtually forced to take early retirement, after pressure for his removal by W J Pope, the President of the National Union of Elementary Teachers, was put on Sir George Kekewich, the President of the Board of Education.<sup>3</sup> Maclure considered that the efforts by the London School Board to provide better training for its teachers, hence the improved status of the elementary school-teacher, plus teacher membership of the School Board, and the sensible policies of the National Union of Elementary Teachers, all did much to achieve the professional emancipation of the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. A hundred years later, Ken Jones<sup>4</sup> pointed out that the NUT was not just part of a trade's union organisation, but also had a co-responsibility for the well being of an educational service.

With the advent of the LCC in 1902, there was a constructive period until the impact of the First World War was felt. The drain on the schools, when almost half of the teaching strength went into the armed forces, speaks for itself, but relief from this could only be achieved by having married women teachers come into the schools, and by getting over-age teachers of both sexes, to return to the classroom. In the post First World War era, there was promise of better things to come from the ambitious 1918 Education Act, but the post-war boom was soon cut short by a slump of extraordinary severity. Teachers actually lost pay under the so-called Geddes Axe. But Maclure<sup>5</sup> considered in spite of this setback, the education service

as a whole improved. In 1931, however, the National Economy Act introduced cuts of 10% in teachers' salaries, but any opposition to these measures did not involve strike action.

In 1934, the Labour party replaced the Municipal Reform Party as the controlling force in the LCC. Thus began a long period of reasonable accord with the teachers' associations. As we have seen, militancy after the Second World War, particularly by the young teachers in the National Association of School Masters (Male members only at this stage) in the early 1960s, including strike action, acted as a catalyst on NUT policies, and by the 70s, the NUT became just as militant as the NAS.

The NAS joined the TUC in 1968, followed by the NUT two years later. One could argue that the efforts of both unions to enter a new era of white collar trade unionism was a mistake, but it is difficult to see how the teachers could bring pressure to bear on the government (principally on the Burnham Committee), unless they embarked upon a course of direct action. This was at a time when teachers' pay increases were relatively small compared with most other professions, which had more effective lobbying systems. The London Allowance, which the NUT insisted should be on a flat rate and not related to any of the teachers' pay differentials, was hardly a fair reward for the high costs in London of housing accommodation and travel. Thus there was a record of militancy in some of the professional associations in inner London before it reached its peak under the New Right government in the 80s. For example, the NUT called for an all-day strike on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1973, which closed 124 primary, and 22 secondary schools, much to the concern of the local press and many parents. The Hackney Gazette<sup>6</sup> on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1975 roundly criticised teachers for refusing to cover for colleagues who were absent from school for more than three days, and for refusing to work a timetable that been tailored to cuts in the school's staffing. Strikes also took a political dimension when for example, the Inner London Teachers' Association called for a half-day strike (10<sup>th</sup> November 1973) in opposition to the Government's trades unions legislation. Even moderate ILEA Members, such as the ILEA Leader Sir Ashley Bramall, were prepared to join in public demonstrations over the need for improved London pay allowances.

## **Militancy in the 1980s**

Maclure, writing of the dispute in the 1980s, noted that<sup>7</sup> ‘The unions withdrew their goodwill; teachers were instructed to refuse to take part in any activity of a voluntary nature. This they interpreted as including attendance at staff and parents’ meetings, extra-curricular activities like games and drama productions, and all forms of supervision at lunchtime. They also staged occasional (unofficial – my quote) strikes lasting a day or a half-day, and shorter guerrilla stoppages, which could effectively shut a school down, without their teachers suffering any substantial penalty. The teachers’ unions, most likely inadvertently, did much to destroy the voluntary giving up of a teachers’ own time, thereby harming the idealistic commitment of teachers to the cause of public education. There can be little doubt that direct action by teachers influenced Keith Joseph when he was Secretary of State for Education. In 1985, he attempted to broker a deal<sup>8</sup> which failed. It would have given the teachers a 4% pay deal, in return for clearly-defined contractual duties and a revision of the career structure, to reflect more closely the abilities of individual teachers. Denham and Garnett<sup>9</sup> pointed out the weakness of Sir Keith Joseph’s position, partly his own doing, because of his previous inflexibility over any pay deal. He wanted co-operation from the teachers over the introduction of new GCSE courses, but was faced with the unions, divided amongst themselves and in disagreement with their local authority paymasters.

It could be argued that the ILEA, although it was in general sympathy with its teachers, had failed to insist on its contractual rights with its teachers, and permitted this professional indiscipline to persist. The Leaders of the ILEA may have failed to appreciate the significance, in policy terms, of the critical need to curb public spending by a democratically elected government at a time of recession, even if these policies appeared to run counter to Keynesian influenced policies. What we are arguing is that Sir Ashley Bramall, the deposed ILEA Leader, was right when he acknowledged that central government was the primary power and that it was the duty of local government to make ‘some accommodation’ with its senior partner. In short, the government was strong and inflexible and the ILEA began to lose some of its most influential supporters, its parents, who as a pressure group, could possibly have obtained more concessions from the government than any other body. But it is

still true that the teachers' militancy was the key cause of the weakening of parental support.

It is sad that Keith Joseph, had failed to appreciate the frustrations of the inner city teachers. In July 1985, he addressed a local authority conference, in the wake of a 48% pay award to top civil servants, when his audience of teachers and councillors of all parties, booed him on the platform for his ministerial miserliness.<sup>10</sup> He was in some ways paying the price for the New Right view that teachers were playing a political game.

Denham and Garratt<sup>11</sup> commented on the advice that Keith Joseph gave to Kenneth Baker, when he handed over his department to him, 'not to make the same mistake as I did in attacking the teachers', yet his successor Kenneth Baker, saw the utmost need, on assuming office, to settle the long-standing teachers' pay dispute at a price to the teachers.

It is clear from the above discussion of the tactics of the teachers' associations, that the ILEA attached great importance to its relations with the major associations of teachers and lecturers. The main associations were the National Union of Teachers, which through its ginger group in inner London, the Inner London Teachers' Association, had become much more militant over the years; the National Association of School Masters and Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT) also had a militant image. Other professional associations included AMMA, representing mainly teachers in selective schools which later became the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) and NATFHE, consisting of lecturers and teachers in the Further and Higher Education sector. The Association of Professional Teachers had no great representation in inner London, but one of its main tenets was that strike action was counter-productive to teachers' professional interests.

The ILEA not only had teacher representations on the Education Committee, but it had formal consultative procedures with the main unions. Perhaps more important, were the day-to-day relations between elected officers of the professional associations and paid officers with elected Members of the ILEA and its senior officers. Most major policy initiatives including the organisation and structure of

the educational system, were discussed with the professional associations. For example, when the Authority was faced with rapidly falling school rolls in the 70s and 80s it was clear that surplus teachers would have to be moved, preferably on a voluntary basis, but if necessary, by compulsory transfer. A procedure by which teachers could be identified for transfer, was thrashed out between the Authority and the unions. The unions also had representatives on the Divisional Committees that oversaw the workings of the 11+ transfer scheme in each Division.

It was the close working with the teachers' bodies and the Authority that the New Right resented. The two were seen as political 'birds of a feather' in which all allegedly left-wing teachers, were not effectively controlled by equally politically biased employers. Inside the ILEA itself, as early as 9<sup>th</sup> May 1967\*, the Conservative Members in committee criticised the Authority for its alleged weakness in not 'disciplining' twenty teachers from Hill Cross School, and for actually restoring pay cuts that had been made when the same teachers had been in breach of contract, by going on unofficial strike.

But a good deal of the unrest in schools in inner London reflected the difficult conditions of teachers in London Schools; there was the problem of low pay and the decrease in promotion prospects for teachers in the 1980s, because of unemployment and falling school rolls. Those teachers who were in the London Service in 1974, felt that they were appreciated when the Houghton Inquiry awarded teachers a substantial salary increase and teachers' morale thus improved. It will be remembered that in spite of efforts to stem all pay increases, that the Heath government, before the Wilson Labour government of 1964, had sanctioned the Houghton recommendations, and had awarded the miners a 22% pay increase, whereas the teachers received a mere 9%!

During the years from 1982-87 the ILEA was in a difficult situation, it was aware that many of the unions, through their work-to-rule policies, were not only alienating the parents, but were getting adverse publicity in the London press, but it was also conscious, as a left-wing political body, of their need to give some support for the teacher's pay claims. Robin Oakley<sup>12</sup> wrote of Mrs Thatcher, 'She had led

\* Minutes of ILEA Schools Sub Committee

the Tories to great success, but in the process she had turned them from a pragmatic party interested in getting and holding power, into an ideological party interested in winning arguments. It was the nature of this strong Tory ideological conviction that saw trades unions as an impediment to social and economic progress, which put her party on a collision course with the ILEA, which was also emerging from a left-wing ideological conversion.

In terms of policy formulation, the professional associations' influence with the Authority probably weakened in the 80s. The strong support for the 11-18 comprehensive school given by the unions was seen to be impractical in the 70s and early 80s, because of the rapidly falling school rolls, and the difficulty of the Authority to create viable schools, which would produce 6<sup>th</sup> forms of a proper size.

In an interview, Sir Ashley Bramall,<sup>13</sup> given after his retirement, stated that that Authority had made a mistake in giving the unions support in their demands for 11-18 schools and that devising alternative arrangements for post-16 education had come too late in the day. Indeed, it was not always the case that teachers supported the official positions of their unions or professional associations. Maclure<sup>14</sup> stated that ILEA teacher representatives, Colin Yardley and John Luzio, both of whom would be styled 'left-wingers', gave Frances Morrell, the newly appointed Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee, full support in her drive to raise standards in schools, and also in her attack on policies which had taken too little notice of gender and racial discrimination. On balance, many of the ILEA head teachers and the rank and file union members, were unhappy with some left-wing policies, which were often given unfair exposure in the national tabloids, and local press in London.

However, the teachers both in the ILEA, and nationally paid a high price for their militancy. Before the enactment of the 1987 Teachers Pay and Conditions Act, which ended the teachers right to be involved in discussions over pay, Bill Stubbs,<sup>15</sup> the Education Officer, attempted to broker a deal with the unions over a fair and comprehensive agreement over teachers' conditions of service with the Authority, but a left-wing putsch in the inner London Teacher Association, led to the outright rejection of what seems, with hindsight, to have been a generous offer by the ILEA.

Within the ILEA Labour party a significant number of leaders were beginning to despair of this teacher militancy. In fact, some of the ILEA officers and inspectors also felt that the Authority was often too conciliatory to the unions, and failed to back them up in what they saw to be a proper implementation of policy. The slow and involved procedures for re-locating teachers because of falling school rolls, were the direct result of the policy of close ILEA and union collaboration, and although the ILEA on occasions often huffed and puffed over the need to dispense with the services of truly incompetent teachers, it still failed to grasp the nettle. In many cases, teachers of proved incompetence, had recourse to Industrial Tribunals, which made the chances of dismissal very remote indeed. The ILEA in the 80s, bears some responsibility for the irresponsible actions that Tamsyn Imison<sup>16</sup> wrote of with some bitterness. As head of Hampstead School, she claimed that teacher militancy had ‘inflicted damage on the normal educational process in her school by nationally sanctioned industrial action by teachers (1984 – 86) and was worsened by the Inner London Teachers’ Association unofficial action in 1986 – 89, which outraged many parents of children in her school. By refusing to agree to the publication of schools’ examination results, the teachers in the inner city had a valid case because ‘raw scores’ were too brutal a weapon; but their refusal to take part in discussions over policies that would be imposed in some form, either by government or the ILEA, were ill-advised and ran counter to Ken Jones<sup>17</sup> advice that besides protecting their Members’ interests, ‘the unions had a co-responsibility for the well-being of an educational service.

From a teacher’s perspective in the inner city, a strong supporting union would seem to be even more essential when faced with a powerful government, with a strong ideological commitment to introduce its own agenda for change. The breaking up of authorities, such as the ILEA, that had traditionally accepted close union involvement in policy formulation and implementation, posed a threat to teachers who were now faced with a more inflexible power structure. They were also faced with a much more powerful inspection procedure, with the introduction of Ofsted, and they were vulnerable to the endless policy initiatives, many of which needed some professional ‘direction’ or guidance.

But one could also argue that the ILEA in the 80s had handled the professional associations badly. If we accept that survival of a single authority for inner London

should have been the main strategy for ILEA Leaders, then the 1982-87 teachers' dispute possibly played a significant part in the ILEA's downfall. Somewhere there should have been a greater awareness by both bodies of the peril they were in at that time.

However, some of the ILEA Leaders towards the end of the Authority began to question the ILEA's attitude to the teachers unions and to New Right policies in general. Neil Fletcher became Leader of the ILEA at a time (1987) when some of its Members began to question the out and out 'confrontation' approach of the Authority. It will be remembered that on reflection and out of office, the centre left, former leader, Sir Ashley Bramall<sup>18</sup> had grave reservations about the unions support for policies over the very structure of the schools system and over the publication of examination results. But, when Neil Fletcher made his criticisms of the unions, he was a product of the reforming left-wing of the party, that assumed power in 1981. Ken Jones<sup>19</sup> pointed out that Fletcher was different, he denounced teacher trade unionism more strongly than any Labour politician for decades. He attacked the unions over their strike policies that were alienating the most powerful supporters of the ILEA – the parents. Fletcher wanted policies that could accept some criticisms of the New Right, with initiatives that incorporated the soundness of traditional education. He admitted that change and quality depended on the use of talented heads and expert teachers who must be supported and he played down the influence of the teacher unions. He had in mind a unity in which the teachers 'were professional and not too political'. His most telling criticism of the ILEA was its tendency to see its problems in purely financial terms and to ignore the quality of the service it provided.

Geoff Whitty<sup>20</sup> wrote of the profound effects of 'a policy discourse' on education that had blamed teachers for poor educational standards, and that in England in particular, the reforms were accompanied by swingeing attacks on the integrity of the teaching profession in general, and the teachers' unions in particular. He wrote of the policy of 'marketisation' that was seen (Whitty, Power and Halpin in 1998;<sup>21</sup> see also Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995)<sup>22</sup> to identify a new managerialist position in education that contrasted with the former social democratic welfarist approach to educational administration, that could include teachers' associations in decision-making. What he seems to be saying is that the market induced measures of



performance, the introduction of competition, especially by smaller units, and the stress on professionalized commercial style management had taken over from the 'welfarist' teachers, who were imbued by a strong professional sense of providing a social service in their teaching programmes. He quotes Codd<sup>23</sup> who argued that in New Zealand, there is a dominant technocratic reductionist managerial discourse within the culture of New Zealand schools, which competes, with the traditional educational discourse of many teachers. If this is so, one suspects that within the former ILEA the approach of Neil Fletcher could be seen as an exploratory move in the new managerial direction. What he wanted was a more professional approach by teachers, but this need not have diminished the essential 'welfarist' approach of a powerful ILEA.

The New Right was suspicious of the ILEA's involvement in teacher education because of its alleged left-wing bias and its highly political teacher unions. Stuart Maclure<sup>24</sup> saw the government as an instrument to 'de-professionalise' teaching by the downgrading of university involvement in teacher training, whereas David Hargreaves (ILEA Chief Inspectorate) saw this differently when he welcomed 'school-based training as signifying that the profession of school teaching had come of age'. Both these educationalists knew the ILEA from first hand experience. Kenneth Baker<sup>25</sup> wrote of Mrs Thatcher's distrust of the quality of teacher training. Her views were a reflection of the New Right's concern that teacher education should not be contaminated by allegedly left-wing 'social engineering' tutors. The teachers' unions naturally gave support to the 'shop floor' aspect of teacher training.\* But they were aware of the rather brutal cut back by government in teacher training in the 70s and had concern over a too strong involvement of government in teacher training. Union leaders also approved vastly improved 'inset' measures that helped teachers in their probationary year. The ILEA proved to have some of its most imaginative schemes for the induction of its LEAs (London first appointment teachers) which released its teachers from full-time teaching to continue their professional induction to teaching.

The relations between the Authority and its professional associations can be broken down into two halves; the first was the apogee of teacher union relationships, under

\* As recently as Feb 2004 the ATL magazine complained that school mentors were unpaid for their considerable duties.

Sir Ashley Bramall's leadership, when the unions made a major contribution to policy making, and the second (1981-7) when Frances Morrell became Deputy Leader and union influence on policy making declined. In her book,<sup>26</sup> *Children of the Future*, there is no mention of union activities during the period when she was Chairman of Schools Sub-Committees and then Deputy and later, Leader of the Authority.

The ILEA, on balance benefited from its co-operation with the unions. The trust it had in the union leaders is shown by its inclusion of teacher representatives George Carter, alongside two senior ILEA Members on the William Tyndale Inquiry panel and by union approval of its procedure for relocating teachers because of falling school rolls. There was a debit side to this close co-operation; for example, union leaders confessed that their members gave strong support for the continued existence of the ILEA schools TV service, to protect their members' jobs, long after they knew that the service was not living up to the high expectations that were held for it when it was set up.

### **Summary**

The out and out attack on the professional associations by the New Right was epitomised by Kenneth Baker who was determined to end the close relationship that had existed between the Education Department and the unions,<sup>27</sup> and stated his determination to marginalise the unions, as he had when he was Minister for the Environment. Kenneth Baker virtually dictated the pay award to teachers and imposed his terms in the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill (March 1987),<sup>28</sup> and given the tenor of his remarks on trade union involvement in public education, the militant attitude by the unions was almost inevitable. In a sense, the Secretary of State's victory was a pyrrhic one, because it could be argued that the imposition of the National Curriculum was hasty, and showed that these high handed policies failed to appreciate the need for goodwill from the key players in the system, namely the teachers. The New Right, by its insistence on contractual terms with teachers, certainly diminished the teachers' voluntary activities.

The traditional anti-union attitude of Conservatives, and certainly the New Right, did not see policy making as a function of trade unions, but the ILEA was surely on firm ground, when it carried the goodwill of its teacher associations in the policy making process. With hindsight it can be seen that the close co-operation between teacher associations and the ILEA was part of the broader Butskellite arrangement which characterised the 1950s and 1960s. However as it broke up, it was replaced by a New Right managerialist ethos which saw no place for teacher associations in the process of policy making. The teacher militancy of the 1980s can be seen as the death throes of a way of policy making and decision-making that was to be overtaken by a new ideology. There is no doubt that with the advent of Kenneth Baker to the Education portfolio, the ILEA was tarred with the brush of union militancy and although its union leaders in its final days were also concerned with the close relationship of the Authority, as were some of its key officers, the concern was probably too little too late. In effect the perceived connection between the ILEA the teacher associations was a convenient target for New Right ideologists.

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## Section 4 - School Governors

### Governing Bodies

**‘All reforms since the Taylor Report have been aimed at removing the unacceptable face of politics in school governing bodies...’<sup>1</sup>**

**Terry Mahoney**

There has long been a measure of uncertainty about school governors or managers as to just what their powers were and how they should exercise them. The authors of the 1944 Education Act have been held responsible for the ambiguities of the ‘areas of responsibility’. Patrick Cosgrave<sup>2</sup> wrote of the incredible difficulties Rab Butler as Secretary of State, faced in preparing the 1944 Act, notably from the church bodies, and not least from his Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who showed no great interest in education reform. Cosgrave was adamant that Rab Butler saw his Act as an essential stage in the reform process. He wrote,<sup>3</sup> ‘He (R A Butler) never expected his Act to last forever and believed, indeed, that the impossibility of getting a final settlement on the nature of the system through Parliament, at that time, meant there would have to be a good deal of change as the years passed. What distressed him was that the efforts he made to build flexibility into the Act, to allow for change and improvement and development, have so often failed because succeeding minister and governments have not shared his vision. Thus, for example, more than once during the passage of the Bill he forecast, at least in some parts of the country, the gradual melding of grammar and secondary modern schools into a comprehensive system.’

The 1944 Act seemed to confirm the LEAs paramount position in the functioning of school governors/managers by having the right to determine the general education of the school and its place in the local education system, subject to which, the governors had the general direction of the conduct and curriculum of the school, whereas heads were to control the internal organisation and management and discipline of the school’.<sup>4</sup> What this meant, in effect, was that there would be little interference in the schools’ control of the curriculum and the LEA’s, later to be excoriated by the Conservative New Right for alleged bureaucratic control over schools and the governors, and for political bias, were to be in the ‘driving seat’. The rights of parents or local community leaders were more or less ignored in this educational arrangement.

This system was clearly not working and in 1975, Mr Reg Prentice, the Labour Secretary of State set up a committee to 'review the arrangements for the management of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales.... and the Committee chairman was Mr Tom Taylor.'<sup>5</sup>

The ILEA, still in the throes of the William Tyndale schools' crisis (see Chapter 8), which involved many issues concerning school manager's responsibilities, had to await the findings (1976) of its own, internal report on the crisis (Auld 1976), nevertheless welcomed the main findings of the Taylor Report. The Taylor Report, the main outlines of which we give later in this chapter, was highly significant and asked for a wholly different type of school governing body. What may seem surprising, is that the ILEA, alleged by the New Right government in the 1980s to be bureaucratic and highly politicised, supported the main recommendations of Taylor. Sallis<sup>6</sup> pointed out 'that governors have responsibility at policy making level, not in the day-to-day running of the school, and that power belongs to the governing body as a whole; the individual governor has no power to make decisions or to take action.'<sup>7</sup> This particular issue was to surface in the William Tyndale dispute in which some of the Tyndale teachers objected to visits to their school by individual governors when the school was in session. Maurice Kogan,<sup>8</sup> writing ten years before Sallis, with his colleagues, suggested that governing bodies 'operate within four principal models, namely, accountable, advisory, supporting and mediating', and that the lay person as a governor was seen as an 'outsider', a guest on the territory of the professionals.

Taylor recommended that governing bodies should be allowed to exercise their full authority as outlined in the 1944 Act which was to determine the general conduct of the school. The Report proposed that no group on the governing body should be allowed to have a dominating presence; governing bodies should be a forum of all those with a legitimate interest in the affairs of the school. The Report also argued for a partnership, in equal proportions of all the parties concerned for the school's success: the LEA, teachers, parents, community. All schools should have individual governing bodies to make decisions about the way the school operates because of 'the need to ensure that the school is run with as full an awareness as possible of the needs and wishes of the parents and the local community, and conversely to ensure

that these groups in their turn are better informed of the needs of the school and the policies and constraints within which the local authority operates, and the head and other teachers work'.<sup>9</sup> Taylor, in keeping with most Conservative critics of the New Right in the 80s, was opposed to the domination of school governing bodies by the local education authorities. Apart from the re-assertion of the governor's role in the school curriculum, Taylor put the school in its community setting, with much closer links to parents and local community interests. Taylor was, in a sense a rebuff to local authorities, that had, in many cases, exceeded their powers, according to the 1944 Act.

The ILEA, as we have asserted had no great quarrel with the Taylor Report. The Authority, in line with its predecessors, had always delegated the maximum legal powers to its governing bodies. It is true that it permitted the 'weighting' of local political representation (i.e. the constituent Borough political machines), and gave smaller opposition party representation, but this did not seem to make most ILEA governing bodies overtly 'political'. The ILEA also welcomed regular contributions as members, from the Colleges of Education and the Universities in London.

Even in pre-Taylor days (1977)<sup>10</sup> the ILEA did genuinely give status and significance to its school governors. For instance, most internal appointments in schools were governors' appointments, usually with the head present. Aspiring head teachers were interviewed first by the school managers/governors and they then selected three candidates to go forward for interview by the Appointments Sub-Committee at County Hall. The Chairman of the governors, and a colleague, attended the interview at County Hall, so that the governors' views were fully represented. The governors could indicate to the Sub-Committee, any candidate whom they found to be outstanding, based on their previous interview. Any Chairman of Governors always had ready access to the Leader of the Authority and any representations, made to the Authority by resolution from a governing body, were given the utmost consideration. Any proposal to alter the status of the school was first put to the governors, usually by senior officers, and the governors' views of the proposals were given proper consideration by the appropriate sub-committees. When schools were well run, this seemed to promote harmony in governing bodies and inspectors who attended these governor's meetings, would have had difficulty in determining the political allegiance of individual school



governors. Head teachers often benefited from the advice of their Chairman of Governors and an astute head teacher could use the influence of their governing bodies, or individual governors, to bring pressure, at the highest Member/Leader level, to oppose any perceived excess of authority by administrator or by inspectors.

Well before Taylor, in 1971, the ILEA was one of the first LEA's to appoint parents and school staff governors.

It is true that the ILEA was targeted by the New Right government as one that was over-politicised but the way it had opened the way to non-political influences in the composition of its school governing bodies does not seem to support the New Right criticism in this respect. The first piece of legislation, of any significance was the 1980 Education Act, when the essentially middle of the road Conservative, Mark Carlisle, who was Secretary of State, brought in the Assisted Places scheme, which the ILEA opposed, but it did ensure that parents and teachers, elected by secret ballot, had to be included in school governors (the term managers disappeared) and from August 1981, detailed instructions were laid down concerning actual functioning of the governing bodies. Again, these proposals presented no problem to the ILEA.

The 1981 Regulations properly restricted the number of governorships exercised by a single individual to five, and penalised poor attendance by governors. Before the Act, local party machines, in the boroughs, ensured that their nominees attended governors' meetings on a fairly regular basis, so that local party influence on governing bodies was not wholly malign!

The 1986 Education Act was passed, under the behest of Kenneth Baker, who as Secretary of State for Education, was an avowed enemy of the ILEA. The principal aim of the Act would seem to secure more parental involvement in governing schools, it was concerned with the composition of governing bodies, the allocations of functions between governors and the LEAs and the head teacher. A main provision of the 1986 Act was also concerned with teacher appraisal of performance. 'The intention of the Act was to raise standards by improving the management of schools and improving teaching quality.'<sup>11</sup> The 1986 Act was political and highly prescriptive, for example, it wished to have the local business

community represented on the governors, it detailed procedures for the suspension of pupils, it was concerned with the delivery of the curriculum, sex education and political indoctrination, finance, the governors' Annual Report to Parents, the use of premises and how to formally govern staff discipline procedures. The School Curriculum (Sections 17, 18 and 19) prescribed the LEAs duties with regard to keeping the secular curriculum under review, to make a written statement of the policy and furnish governors and head teachers with a copy of this statement of policy.

The 1986 Act was more political than educational and was aimed at the so-called left-wing LEAs. At about the same time Anne Sofer and Tyrell Burgess, both with ILEA experience, published an excellent Handbook<sup>12</sup> for governors and potential governors. Anne Sofer, was an assiduous Member of the ILEA and school governor. For example, she always visited schools, before their new head teachers were appointed at County Hall, so that she had first hand knowledge of the school and its environment. From the ILEA's point of view, it could be argued that the basic structure of governing bodies worked effectively but in the aftermath of the William Tyndale crisis, rights and responsibilities of school governors did need tidying up.

In this thesis we are concerned with policy issues, and as such governing bodies were important instruments of policy. They had a valuable consultative role, for example, on building proposals for schools and on major reorganisation issues. Their role was, in a sense, more reactive in policy making, than in the formulation process. But they had important rights and duties; they could question the purport of both HMI and ILEA school inspection reports; their rejection of major development plans could lead to their cancellation by the Authority. For example, an ILEA, Youth Committee proposal for the development of Brackenbury Primary School in Division 1, which involved the building of a Sports Hall, was quashed in 1977, largely because the plan was opposed by the head teacher and the governors of the school. It was rare for head teachers to complain about their governors and the ILEA management clerks, who served the governors, were extremely important official, and unofficial links with the Administration of the service. The ILEA governors usually knew their District Inspectors well, and they decided on the value of the inspectors' advice, in the light of their own experience.

However, the role of school governors has to be seen in the context of the overall management of maintained education. In the aftermath of William Tyndale, Dale wrote, 'It was already clear before 1975 that the basis of management of the English education system, enshrined in the 1944 Education Act was in a rapidly advancing state of decay.'<sup>13</sup> There was huge pressure within the Conservative party in the Thatcher years to address the inadequacies of the educational system in the wish to create a competitive economy as Stephen Ball pointed out,<sup>14</sup> 'But clearly that which is the New Right, indeed that which is Thatcherism, does not begin and end with economic orthodoxies and a minimal state. In fact, aspects of the New Right present a very different view of the role of the state and give emphasis to social rather than economic orthodoxies; that is neo-Conservatism'. In this sense, the very different interpretation of the 'social' by the ILEA causes the most concern because it seemed, as seen by Professor Ball, that it was the antithesis of the New Right's interpretation of this social aspect of policy making.

If we see the ILEA, with its governing bodies, based on a fairly wide representation of local interests, as a means of diffusing power from County Hall, we can see a purpose for school governors in policy making and in carrying this out. Roger Dale quoted V Bogdanor,<sup>15</sup> who reviewed the distribution of power in this 'failed' system in 1979. Bogdanor saw the Act of 1944 as a 'balance of power between central and local government and that any undue assumption of much greater powers, would lead to failure of the system.' He asked for 'mutual restraint' and a limit to the degree of politicisation. At the same time Bogdanor saw dangers in this so-called parity scheme leading to a sort of policy making paralysis. However, this quality would not seem to apply to the ILEA, nor indeed to the New Right. Bogdanor was accurate in seeing that a period of national economic retrenchment was conducive to squabbles between the parties to the consensus. This was indeed the case during the late 1970s when the Labour government faced an economic crisis, and also in the 1980s when Mrs Thatcher's government faced harsh economic conditions. But perhaps the most significant point made by Bogdanor, concerns the national and local move 'towards a managerialism', emphasizing efficiency rather than broadening access. This trend has been 'challenged by an increasing desire for participation in the control of the education system by many of the groups affected by it, but excluded from influence over it.' In this light, we would argue that the

former ILEA, with its supportive language teaching to non-English speaking citizens, its support for environmental education, its support for those who failed in mainstream schools, indeed its whole social democratic ethos, was more able to help the ‘unrecognised’ groups. And in this, its version of governing bodies, well represented by parents and teachers, and not forgetting local council members, who often had access to agencies and organisations within their boroughs, was by no means a bad way of using decentralised power effectively.

Looking back at the working of the old system and the new, John Dunford and Clyde Chitty<sup>16</sup> wrote, ‘A critical but difficult distinction has been crucial to the success or failure of this model of governance: that between policy and day to day management of schools, governors have the responsibility for the evolution and monitoring of policy and head teachers are responsible for management within the framework laid down by the policy of the governing body. In practice, this is not a clear distinction. Setting the school budget is a central function of governing bodies and against a background of severe funding restraints, some hard choices over staffing, curriculum provision and repair of the premises have had to be made.’

Rosemary Deem,<sup>17</sup> writing immediately after the 1988 Education Reform Act, implied that the 1986 Education Act was over-prescriptive and that the ‘governors were to consider, in conjunction with the head teacher, the curriculum aims of the school and how; if necessary, to modify the LEA’s curriculum policy’, which were considerable powers, but were later restrained by the 1988 Act, which set up the National Curriculum. The 1986 Act clearly saw the consumers, the parents, as the ones who could put authoritarian LEAs in their places. In the previous statement, the phrase ‘how if necessary to modify the LEA’s curriculum policy’, tells us much about the attempt to hollow out the ILEA’s powers.

In many ways, the prescriptive nature of the 1986 Act, sex education, banning partisan political activity, and involving relations with the police over aspects of the curriculum, are the antithesis of traditional Conservative policy and show how far the New Right had gone down the road of the central control of public education.

Rosemary Deem<sup>18</sup> wrote, ‘it is hard to see governing bodies as anything other than political organisations, since what they do, implicitly, or explicitly, is to exercise

power over the running of schools'. The New Right saw this power as an antidote to over-weening politically biased, LEA influences. In the case of the ILEA, was this insertion of a new power structure inside the school, a benefit?

In many ways, the New Right misjudged the ILEA. In fact the ILEA had long supported the policy of having effective school governors and had a good record of widening the power base of its governing bodies, by including teachers and parents in their composition.<sup>19</sup> The political allegiance of school governors, which the New Right feared, did not seem to be a great problem in ILEA schools, as governors usually 'come together' in supporting their schools. One can see little advantage in the New Right schemes for the reform of governing bodies, certainly in the context of how these bodies were composed, and how they functioned in the former ILEA. In concluding her chapter on the Reform of School Governing Bodies, Rosemary Deem<sup>20</sup> commented, 'If, however, the consumer power over schools' strategy succeeds, in conjunction with LMS,\* it is likely to move us closer to a privatized system of education, which appears to be one of the hidden agendas of the 1988 Education Act.' She would seem to have assessed the situation fairly.

An effective governing body depended greatly often on the skill and charisma of its elected chairman.<sup>x</sup> His/her role was crucial in the often neglected appreciation of the capacity of school governors to keep the Authority's bureaucracy in check. A H Halsey<sup>21</sup> quoted R H Crossman, who marvelled at the mistakes that the 'professionals' could make in the Welfare State. In practical terms, governors could reject proposals made by the ILEA for the future of their schools, they could, and did, reject professional advice over teaching appointments. Often they were the most reliable interpreters of local opinion.

\* Local Management of Schools.

<sup>x</sup> Sir Ashley Bramall, is an example of this. After he was replaced as Leader of the ILEA (1981), he continued as Chairman of Governors of Pimlico school. This is a purpose built, large comprehensive school in ILEA Division 1. His statement, in response to the threat to the ILEA (in Haviland D (1988) Take Care Mr Baker Fourth Estate) was seen by many as a succinct, masterly statement in favour of comprehensive education.

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## Conclusion to Part 1

In part 1 of the thesis we have looked at the political factors behind the abolition of the ILEA. Here the question was canvassed as to whether the move to the Left by the ILEA during the 1980s contributed to its demise or whether it was the ideological conviction of the New Right which alone can be seen as the primary motivation for the ILEA's demise. Changes in the national political scene were documented, as were their implications for politics within the ILEA. In addition, three particular aspects of the ILEA's activities that had been the focus of many of the attacks on the ILEA: the inspectorate, teacher politics and the role of governors were also considered.

It seems clear that in many respects the attacks on these elements of the ILEA were with little foundation and that a combination of an antithesis to comprehensive education from the traditional Conservative right and a commitment to markets and parental choice by the Conservative New Right were the fundamental factors which initiated the abolition of the ILEA.

In part 2 we examine two kinds of evidence in relation to the ILEA's performance. Here we need to distinguish between the ideological conflicts that led to the abolition of the ILEA and evidence concerning its performance. The Conservatives claimed that the ILEA was inefficient and costly and tolerated low standards. Were the Conservatives right in making these claims because they had considerable merit or were these claims just a way of rationalising their ideological commitment to the abolition of the Authority?

In addressing these issues we first consider the question of whether the ILEA was a poorly functioning organisation. The judgement of organisational performance is particularly difficult if context is taken into account. Today, various quantitative measures or targets are used to judge performance but it can be argued that they omit as much as they include in the measures involved. In the case of the ILEA the following chapters will make the case for three criteria to be included. These are: (i) context (ii) innovation and (iii) the benefits that arise from having an overall authority in a large conurbation that enabled 'joined up' services to be offered.

When LEAs are judged today, there are always questions about how well one performs relative to similarly situated authorities. This assumes that the history and context of these authorities are sufficiently similar for valid comparisons to be made but this is a moot point. In what follows, we shall consider whether the ILEA was confronted with a set of problems that were not necessarily unique in a major inner city environment, did nevertheless present particular difficulties in inner London.

As regards innovation, challenges of the kind outlined in the following chapters demand novel approaches in order to address them. The picture that was drawn of the ILEA by the New Right was that of an inefficient and moribund organisation. Was this the case?

Finally, the issues of context and innovation cannot be divorced from the 'efficiencies' that could be gained by having an overarching education authority for London rather than a series of much smaller authorities. In particular did the ILEA enable a degree of co-ordination and consistency in which London-wide problems were addressed?

With these questions in mind we turn to an evaluation of key aspects of the ILEA as an organisation and then consider whether it provided value for money and whether it tolerated low standards, as the New Right claimed. Three areas of the ILEA's organisation are considered, Special Needs, Adult and Further Education and its response to what was a major crisis the 'Tyndale' affair.



## **Part 2**

### **An Evaluation of the ILEA's Performance**

## Chapter 6

### **ILEA's Special Educational Needs and Selected Support Services**

**‘Special Needs in Education: The Warnock policy of integration may, ironically, and unintentionally, result in a drift of children with special education needs to ‘sink schools.’**

**Denis Lawton  
The Tory Mind on Education, 1979-1994**

When we come to look at the positive advantages of having a large, integrated education system in inner London, then the field of Special Educational Needs would appear to give strength to the supporters of the former ILEA. It would be tempting to state categorically, that in view of the diverse needs in special education, an Authority which provided almost 100 day Special Schools, 40 Boarding Special Schools, some 15 units for partially-hearing children in County Schools, 50 Hospital Schools etc., was better equipped to deal with these special needs, across a broad territory, than were 12 disparate, individual boroughs. However, the story is complicated by the minor revolution that took place in the 1980s in both public and professional interest in Special Educational Needs (SEN).<sup>1</sup>

It would be fair to say neither the ILEA nor its predecessor, the LCC, was at ease with the educational and social separation of children, which was a basic tenet of the 1944 Education Act. The LCC's forays into creating purpose built comprehensive schools in the 50s and 60s was an example of this educational disquiet and was aimed at providing an integrated system. Catherine Clarke<sup>2</sup> (et al) suggested that two factors came to challenge educational disposition of the 44 Act, and they were, (a) ‘doubts about the capacity of the 11+ test to discriminate between academic and non-academic pupils, and there were similar destabilizing moves in the special needs education: it became evident, for instance, that for every child placed in special education by reason of their learning difficulties, there were many others in mainstream schools whose difficulties were equally great, that the system made it extremely difficult for pupils to move out of special education once placed there, regardless of their progress, and that many children had learning difficulties which might, best respond to short-term intervention rather than to permanent segregation’. The second factor concerned ‘notions of ‘rights’, equality

of opportunity and multi-discrimination, which gradually came to inform the broader social agenda.’ The ILEA did, wherever possible, attach groups of children with sight and hearing disabilities to schools with a view to integrating the children into their mainstream schools. But in the case of the relatively few schools for children who were assessed as ‘maladjusted’, they remained in those schools, one suspects, because of possible behavioural problems they could present for mainstream schools.

When it came to the prospect of providing an integrated service in the educational system as a whole, in the post-Warnock years, and by the policies outlined in the 1981 Education Act, the ILEA was ideologically enthusiastic for integration, but was aware of the need for radical new thinking, if the scheme were to work. The ILEA was well aware of the fragility of some of its secondary schools, and fewer of its primary schools, where staffing shortages and discipline problems were real issues. For example, when reviewing the success of the whole school approach, with regard to Special Needs, as late as 1990, the Senior Chief HMI, ‘judged that at least 30% of schools visited were judged poor in this respect and from these figures, a large number of pupils were getting a raw deal. Furthermore, and sadly, less able pupils were much more likely to experience the poor and the shoddy than the able...’(HMI 1990 (Para 4))

Following the Warnock Report,<sup>3</sup> the 1981 Education Act accepted the abolition of the 1944 Act’s definition of ‘handicap’ and replaced it with the generic concept of special education needs, (DES 1978). Drawing on a wide range of epidemiological and longitudinal research, the report recommended that services should be based on the assumption that up to 20% of children would have some form of special education needs at some stage in their school career, and up to 15% at any one time.<sup>4</sup>

The 1981 Education Act followed the Warnock Report pretty closely; it widened the concept of what special education needs were for – 20% of the school population, compared with 2% who received special education treatment under the 1944 Act, and it provided for a ‘statement’ of the child’s needs, based on a multi-professional assessment, that could be challenged by parents. It also ushered in the concept of mainstream schools becoming more adaptive to children who were

considered to have special needs. However, as Galloway pointed out, the government did so without providing any new resources from central funds.<sup>5</sup>

When Tony Dessent<sup>6</sup> reviewed the state of Special Education in 1987, he was concerned about the low status of Special Education and said it was regarded as a 'fringe activity area'. However, there was a period, immediately before and after the 1981 Education Act, when Special Education achieved something like proper governmental and public interest. The ILEA had never allowed Special Education to be something of a Cinderella in its education service. Warnock was warmly accepted by the ILEA and indeed it led to the creation of its own report – The Fish Report (ILEA, 1985). Fish, it was claimed, added to an alleged deficiency in Warnock, in that Warnock provided a framework for the assessment of special needs, but had little to say about the educational context in which the needs became apparent. The Fish Report also started to broaden the debate by identifying provision for SEN\* as an important part of the Authority's politically high profile on equal opportunities.

In the mid-80s, the ILEA officers were fully conversant with the works of Galloway (1985) and Rutter (et al) 1979, which pointed out the difficulties in establishing precise criteria for what constitutes a handicap and that conditions in both home and school can both create, or diminish, the child's needs. At about the same time, the by now more left-wing ILEA, head hunted David Hargreaves as its new Chief Inspector, who had previously produced the Hargreaves Report on its secondary schools. This confirmed that through the 'hidden curriculum', it had led to many pupils, mainly, but not exclusively working class children, 'who have suffered a destruction of their dignity which is so massive and so pervasive that few subsequently recover from it'.<sup>7</sup>

The Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle, at that time (1980), was acutely aware of the public concern about the stigma of some aspects of special education, but he probably underestimated the difficulties of incorporating special needs education into main-stream schools, especially those in the inner cities. From the ILEA's point of view, it had barely time to re-evaluate its special needs programme,

\* SEN Special Educational Needs

and to deal with the accepted under-performance of many of its children in mainstream schools, when it became involved in an educational furore, leading up to the 1988 Education Reform Act. The ERA was, of course, put forward because of the alleged utter failure of the existing system.

But the 1988 Act did little for the cause of Special Education; it did provide exemptions or ‘disapplications’<sup>8</sup> within the National Curriculum and increased the responsibilities of school governors for their school’s annual budget, but did not give any real protection to the Special Needs element. Open enrolment, a key feature of the 1988 Act, meant that well subscribed schools received a higher annual budget than less favoured schools, which threatened the latter with a sort of pariah status, that could produce the sort of influences on pupils that the ILEA’s Chief Inspector, David Hargreaves had written about.

The concept of integration of special needs children into mainstream schools, no matter how acceptable the concept was with ILEA Leaders, presented difficulties. The first concerned the use of many highly attractive modern special needs school buildings, as the Authority had always put special education needs to the fore in its development plans. For example, in Division 1 (ILEA), covering the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea, it was estimated that by 1980, 70% of the children with special needs were being educated in attractive purpose-built, modern buildings. The second main problem concerned the extreme pressures on some inner city secondary schools, with persistent acute staffing problems, as to whether or not they would be able to find the time to give their minds not only to the logistics of these schemes, but also to the new type of ‘Tony Dessent’<sup>9</sup> thinking’, that integration required the obvious need for positive discrimination. What is at issue here is not the need for more resources (essential as these might be) but is also about the ethical decisions, which have to be made about the way the resources are distributed. If more resources are required, they are required for all children, not just those deemed ‘special’. He (Dessent) was right in asserting that value judgements had to be made first, but he probably underestimated the difficulties education administrators, both centrally and locally, faced in getting their hands on increased funds. A further problem that Dessent raised concerned the competitive atmosphere of the current education scene. He

considered that what was otherwise a good school was doomed to failure if it got a reputation as being 'good with slow learners', with an implication that it did not stretch the brighter children. Dessent, writing in 1987, was utterly pessimistic about the capacity of many mainstream schools to integrate successfully when he claimed 40% of school leavers would have no educational qualifications whatsoever, and many of these schools could not give real help to the handicapped.<sup>10</sup>

Professor Stephen Ball in his professorial lecture\* at the Institute of Education (London University) suggested that 'choice policies and a market system of education, in the current socio-economic context, were an effective response to current anxieties of the middle class. His quotation of a Mrs Henry, who considered a school with 'loads of children with special needs' was no place for her daughter, who was a bright little girl, is an example of how the New Right; market solution to selection could frustrate policies aimed at the inclusion and integration of special needs children into mainstream schools.

When Dessent complained about the 'in fighting' in many LEAs by the professionals, the educational psychologists, medical advisors, advisors and inspectors, it is doubtful that this was a major problem in the ILEA. The close working of the administrative and the professional sides at County Hall helped, as did the fact that both the educational psychological service and the inspectorate, were under the aegis of the Chief Inspector. Whether or not the apparent demotion of the Chief Inspector in the major restructuring of the ILEA's administrative machine in the late 70s, and again in the mid 80s, affected this, is a moot point. Six Directors of Education, each being responsible to the Education Officer and Chief Executive, were established in this last re-organisation. Special Education, probably reflecting Warnock, was an integral part of the Director of Education (Schools) and the Chief Inspector, who had previously ranked as joint second, with the Deputy Education Officer, was put alongside seven other colleagues. The Education Officer (Schools) was an influential officer and could probably make a stronger assertion for Special Needs Education than was possible in the old system, where special education came under the aegis of an Assistant Education Officer.

\* Ball S J The More Things Change 12/3/03 professorial Lecture (p13 & 15) Institute of Education University of London

A welcome development in these structural changes was the establishment of a Director of Education, Equal Opportunities and Policy Co-ordination. This post would also enable the holder to acknowledge the growing concern of the ethnic minorities, particularly from those with an Afro-Caribbean background, about the disproportionately high numbers of children who were assessed as in need of Special Education. The Rampton Report (1981) produced as an interim report by a committee which aimed to assist the development of a multi-cultural education system that could value the culture of ethnic minorities and reduce racial bias. The Rampton Committee was re-constituted under another chairman, and later produced the report, Education for All (The Swann Report, 1985). Largely because of the concern shown by the Education Officer, Sir Peter Newsam, by the 80s, the ILEA had five inspectors to deal with multi-ethnic and community relations. As early as 1967, the ILEA had found that immigrant children were twice as likely to be placed in ESN schools than were indigenous children. Many parents saw it as something of a stigma, that their children were taken from mainstream schools and were naturally worried about the poor job prospects for their children on leaving school. Today, the creation of Special Needs Tribunals, (they hear about 2,400 appeals every year), at least give parents a chance to express their concern at proposed, or actual treatment of children with special needs.

Christine Mabey,<sup>11</sup> a former Member of the ILEA research team, established in her PhD thesis, that children who failed in basic skills in the early days in the primary schools, would most likely go on to failure in the secondary school. She stressed the need for intensive remedial teaching to take place at this early stage. It could well be that when boys, in particular, who got through the net, became so frustrated and bewildered, that they added behavioural problems to their difficulties. There could well have been increased pressure from the primary schools to have the children assessed as future pupils for Special Needs Education, particularly if these children had a record of bad behaviour.

A further proof that the ILEA was not inflexible in its thinking about Special Education, is evidenced by Dr Leonard Payling's measures in the late 1960s, to restructure Special Education in the ILEA. Dr Payling (the Chief Inspector) attempted a compromise to help the Authority move some way towards a closer integration of Special Schools with those of the mainstream. He proposed that most

Special Schools in each Division should come under the general supervision of the District Inspectors. The inspectors still worked alongside the core of about twelve specialist inspectors, who could give help in a field where the inspectors lacked professional knowledge.

Apart from the obvious criticism that ‘generalist’ inspectors lacked expertise for work in Special Schools, there were additional problems, highlighted in Sir Robin Auld’s report on the William Tyndale School, that the District Inspectors had a very heavy caseload. But Dr Payling’s ideas had a core of good sense. They did put Special Schools on the same footing as mainstream schools and it did integrate the former more effectively within the divisional structure, particularly at a time when Divisional ‘Teachers’ Centres were beginning to revolutionise in-service training. There was also the supporting argument, put forward when we were writing about primary education, that a high percentage of ILEA District Inspectors had been head teachers and were therefore reasonably familiar with the range of problems confronted by their head teachers. There was also the case that the District Inspector was better able to recruit or to arrange for the transfer of teachers from mainstream schools to work in Special Schools. The staffing situation was critical in some Special Schools; for example in St Hubert’s ESN School in the 70s and 80s, over half the staff had had no training or experience in special needs education whatsoever. Dr Payling’s system was abandoned after about ten years, when it was considered advisable to transfer responsibilities to a special education inspector, who then related to his/her inspectors colleagues in the Divisional Inspectorate teams.

There were two further developments in special education in the ILEA in the post-1981 Education Act period; one concerned the establishment of a Learning Support Service and the other, concerned the establishment of co-operative clusters of primary schools, stemming from a recommendation of the ILEA’s Fish Report.<sup>12</sup> The first involved the increasing number of referrals of children with learning or behavioural difficulties, after the 1981 Act, and so in response, the ILEA set up a Learning Support Service that allocated 0.2 of a teacher from this service to each child identified in a ‘Statement’, as having learning difficulties, and who could then be retained in a mainstream school. Galloway was in favour of the scheme but he was critical of the lack of effective contact between the Learning Support Service



teacher and the other teachers in the school. He wrote,<sup>13</sup> ‘All too often, discussion with the class teacher was minimal. For the remaining 80% of the week, child and teacher had to survive as best they might’. The increased number of referrals, plus the financial constraints applied by the government’s rate-capping measures, forced the ILEA to reduce the teacher allocation to 0.1 instead of 0.2. The recommendation of the Fish Report that a cluster of primary schools should work together (similar to the Bonding Project, Jones and Sawyer, (1983) to give specialist help, with the use of peripatetic teachers, was sound. Fish did not recommend that assessment and placement should rest with the head teachers of these schools but that this function, plus additional resourcing, should fall within the remit of the Divisional Management Team. All these schemes were introduced into an existing infrastructure that covered such schemes as home tuition, tutorial classes, and language and remedial teaching.

The ILEA Members in the 80s were concerned at the volume of criticism from the public about special education needs and as a result, two consultative bodies were set up, one for teachers and one for parents, where interested parties could express their points of view directly to Members. One of the main concerns expressed at these forums was the alleged failure of the Authority to carry out effective integration schemes. Much of the criticism centred on the disproportionately high percentage of children from the ethnic minorities actually in Special Schools that John Bangs wrote about in his chapter on Special Education in ‘Education in the Capital’<sup>14</sup> But as we have pointed out before, many of the mainstream schools faced a huge range of problems, not least in the persistent shortage of specialist teachers.

Although the present system of special education stems from the 1981 Education Act, approved by a Conservative Secretary of State, the right-wing of the party is still unhappy about the provision of special education. John O’Leary,<sup>15</sup> the Education Editor of the Times, quoted a report by the Centre for Policy Studies, a right-wing think tank, that claimed the criteria for assessing special education needs are vague, and there is no accurate account of how much is spent on assessment procedures. O’Leary reports Dr Marks, (the Director of the Educational Research Trust), as stating that the ‘statementing’ of special needs has risen alarmingly. Dr Marks contends that the number of children with special needs has doubled in a decade and he not only queries the rising costs, but also casts doubts about the

efficacy of integration into mainstream schools. However, his contention that the new figure of one in five children being 'statemented' is not so far from Lady Warnock's contention twenty years ago, that 20% of the school population had special needs in education!

The ILEA, because of its size and range of specialisms in the field of special education, was able to provide career opportunities for some of the finest professionals in this sphere of education. This however, is not to deny that a single borough in London, committed to special education, could not provide a service that would be close and receptive to parents' needs. Such a borough could work well in cooperative schemes with other boroughs but it would seem that the ILEA's structure had tremendous advantages in this specialised sphere of education. In respect of resources alone, for example, the ILEA was the one Authority in the country that could and did provide peripatetic advisory teachers for deaf and blind children.<sup>16</sup>

Philippa Russell<sup>17</sup> voiced her legitimate concern that the ferment over the 1988 Education Reform Act could lead to Special Educational Needs 'slipping off the educational agenda', and also the lack of attention in the Act for those children under the age of five, who could well have special needs. Moreover, as Maclure<sup>18</sup> has pointed out, 'Baker's Act (the Education Reform Act, 1988), quite simply set up the wrong incentives. The local authorities were now forced to distribute their money in the form of weighted per capita grants, and this did not help the integration process. Not only were pupils with Special Educational Needs likely to lower the school's score in the examination league tables, but they were also going to pre-empt more of the budget. So that schools that were in sympathy with integration, were positively hindered in so doing by the economics of school finance.'

A Senior Special Needs administrator and a Senior Inspector, the late Drs Marie Roe and Mary Wilson, both of whom had experience working in their fields with smaller authorities, expressed the view that the ILEA had a vast range of specialist inspectors and administrators, and that the work in this particular sphere often benefited from contact with colleagues in other specialisms, and that this was the case in the ILEA. Both saw the sense in seeing integration as a process, not a state,

and both gave strong support to the view that integration did not mean placement only, 'But had to be seen as a process by which school, relevant professionals, pupils, parents, and the child, worked together to achieve maximum co-operation and genuine integration in all aspects of school and community life'.<sup>19</sup> Their joint knowledge of the whole spectrum of maintained education would have been invaluable in the process of integration, had the ILEA survived.

In 1994, the South East Region branch of the Society of Education Officers, reviewed some of the problems that were faced by the individual boroughs in inner London. This was in no way polemical, and did not concern itself with the rightness and wrongness of the abolition of the ILEA. In looking at special education needs, they commented on the complexity of problems that resulted from the break up of the Authority. It gave the example of Lambeth, where through the accident of land availability in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the borough had inherited thirteen Special Schools, together with a great array of units and special classes attached to mainstream schools.<sup>20</sup> The same article quotes Leisha Fullick, CEO Lewisham, who stated, 'Lewisham inherited no specialist provision for physically disabled students ... no provision for disabled students in mainstream schools, and no primary school provision for partially hearing or partially sighted children, and no provision for autistic children (secondary age)'.<sup>21</sup> The interesting summary states, 'Don't believe that making provision for SEN is simply a question of maintaining whatever is inherited, and buying in what is not available. The whole provision will need to be given a new coherence.'<sup>22</sup> It would seem that in this field (SEN), the idea of breaking up the ILEA has not been successful. The problems experienced by the South East Region of the Society of Education Officers gives some idea of the problems caused by abolishing the ILEA. In the early part of Mrs Thatcher's administration, when Mark Carlisle was Secretary of State for Education, there are some good policy initiatives in special needs education, such as sensible integration of special needs children into mainstream schools and in giving parents much more status and power in statementing procedures, but it would be true to say that after the departure of Mark Carlisle, special needs education 'slipped off the agenda'.

## **Support Services**

The range of ancillary services provided by the ILEA was frankly enormous. These include catering services, ancillary staff in schools, the College of PE, Sports Centres, Centres for Rural Studies, A TV Service, Teachers' Centres, Educational Guidance Services, a Museums Service, Nature Study Schemes, Research and Statistics, Learning Resources and so on; the list is almost without end. We can only select a few of these, and assess whether or not the ILEA showed it could provide a distinctive service.

### **Teachers' Centres**

Teachers' Centres in the ILEA developed rapidly from the early 70s. They consisted in the main, of multi-purpose centres, usually based in each Division, and of specialist subject centres that were spread across inner London. The multi-purpose centres, usually run by a Warden and Deputy, with administrative staff, gave a social and professional focus in ILEA Divisions, where previously the Divisional Office had been the main administrative link with the Authority, but could not give the type of services offered by the centres.

The multi-purpose centre's key role was in the provision of in-service work, particularly with regard to schemes to help the probationary teacher. All centres had management committees that consisted of heads, teachers and inspectors, to help keep contact with teachers' needs. The falling rolls in the ILEA, provided more than adequate accommodation for the Centres in schools or similar buildings. The situation of Sherbrooke Teachers' Centre in a primary school in Fulham was seen by both the head of the primary school, in charge of the main building, and the Warden of the teachers' centre, as providing great mutual benefit.

The multi-purpose centres were relatively expensive to run, but in policy terms they represented good value for money for the Authority. It is difficult to assess fully the quality of their work, but not only did they help give the Authority a more humane face to teachers, but they also gave many real professional help. They publicised the work of remedial teachers and advisory teachers, through contact in the centres, and gave attention to reading skills, just at the time when this need was being expressed,

by both the DES and the ILEA. The attachment of Media Resource Officers to the centres meant that they were easily accessible to teachers, and the MRO could then visit the school to see first hand just what the special requirements were, before devising help.

The specialist teachers' centres were usually run by Wardens, under the supervision of a specialist Staff Inspector. There were in addition specialist language and literacy centres. These centres were often inaccessible to teachers, who had to travel considerable distances to get to them, so that after-school functions, that were a feature of the multi-purpose centres, were fewer, but they were used for day release courses. These centres did improve the quality of specialist work, and they were particularly useful for giving teachers an introduction into new schemes, such as the Mathematics SMILE Scheme put out by the ILEA, and they were good areas of contact between teachers and their specialist inspectors. The specialist centres, in particular, with the range of work they covered in specific areas of the curriculum, probably presented opportunities that would have been denied to teachers in smaller education authorities.

Most of the inner London boroughs have retained multi-purpose teachers' centres, occasionally more grandly named. The specialist centres of the calibre of those, which the ILEA provided, as we have already indicated, would be beyond the capacity of most single boroughs, if it were desired to work across the whole range of subjects taught in school.

### **The Schools' TV Service**

The ILEA TV Service was established in the late 60s. It owed much to the late Dr Briault, who was Deputy Education Officer at the time. The service involved the appointment of permanent staff, and some worked on secondment. It included mastering the technology of TV programme production and the creation of programmes. Most schools had TV sets to receive these programmes. An article in *Education*, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1967, spoke glowingly of the training facilities of the Laycock TV Centre. The service was to be under James Wyke as Director, and laid stress on its training facilities for teachers on secondment. Programmes were

planned for transmission in 1968, and preparatory work in the schools was made by audio-visual aids Inspectors.

Although it had a measure of success with such programmes as 'You in the 60s', it was overtaken by the wide range of good quality programmes put out by the BBC and ITV services. In spite of this strong competition faced by the ILEA TV services, it still managed to broadcast seventy-eight of its own programmes by 1972. It was a relatively large employer, some one hundred staff, and although it provided valuable in-service training, it never fulfilled its optimistic early goals.

It is probably true that the ILEA persisted with the service too long and indeed, some would say that it should not have entered this field. Even at its inception it proved to be a costly service. The 1966-67 estimates show that £2.2 million was allocated by the Committee for the TV Service and Media Resources. In fact this was half the amount allocated for all in-service work. However, even the largest LEAs in England would have found it difficult to mount a TV Service. In discussion with a former Teacher Representative on the ILEA Education Committee, appointed because of his NUT connections, he confessed that his colleagues knew that the TV Service was something of a 'dead duck', but that it provided valuable work experience for a number of teachers, hence he did not oppose the service!

The ILEA persisted with the service even when it was clear that schools did not want many of its programmes and when the professional programmes of the BBC and ITV were in the main, better than those of the ILEA. In the economist's terminology, it represented an opportunity cost failure.

### **Field Centres and Environmental Education**

The ILEA inherited a number of Residential Field Centres from its predecessor, the LCC. The two main centres, Marchants Hill and Sayers Croft, had a combined capacity of about four hundred places. They had formerly housed government sponsored pre-Second World War centres, run by the National Camps organisation. In addition to the main centres, the ILEA rented, owned, or worked in co-operation with other bodies, in running centres in the New Forest at Swanage, and in Kent.

The Authority also had an impressive advanced Field Centre at Tyr Morwydd at Abergavenny. A Mountain Outdoor Pursuits Centre was run by the College of PE.

The two large centres at Marchants Hill and Sayers Croft had enthusiastic support from many ILEA schools, where the schools' staff supervised their own children, but they also had help from teachers trained in field studies, who were on the staff of the Centres. Both Centres were close to villages and the behaviour of children, in a very different environment from the one at home, caused occasional problems. These large centres were inspected by HMI in 1968 (Reports in Public Record Office), and were given generally favourable reports. The main concern in both centres was the fact that the Wardens were drawn into administrative duties, to the exclusion of teaching. HMI suggested that the appointment of bursars could take the administrative chores from wardens and teachers. This problem was not resolved in the lifetime of the ILEA.

It could be argued that the centres were too large, and that the Authority would probably have been better served by a number of smaller centres. However, the centres were not too far from London, and were situated in interesting rural environments. They also provided work for a number of local people, grounds men, nurses, cleaners, cooks, meals assistants and so on. In cost terms, they were expensive to run, and could well have suffered from 'diseconomies' of scale. For example, many LEAs ran effective centres for perhaps thirty visiting children, with a single teacher warden in control and minimal support services.

The centres were administered by a department in County Hall (Primary/Secondary Branch), as indeed were all ILEA Centres, apart from individual school centres, where their administration was shared with the school. The administration was effective and had the advice of the ILEA Inspectors, principally the Staff Inspector (Geography) and his/her District Inspector colleague. There could well have been an element of Niskanen's 'budget maximisation' in Primary/Secondary Branches' administration of the Centres. One would hardly expect the administration to be innovatory. In other words, the bureaucracy tended to administer well on established procedures, and would in no way oppose any expansion, given extra administrative staff. The large Centres had no governing bodies, which was probably a mistake, as a governing body could well have included, besides one or

two Members, representatives of the local community and of their workers and teaching staff at the Centre. Thus the lack of Members' or councillors' input into administering the Centres, which of course, most schools had, tended to keep field centre administration within the hands of the bureaucracy. It is true that the section came within the remit of a Director of Education, but the requirements of field centres were highly specialised.

As regards innovation, it was very much the case of the curate's egg. At inspector level in 1974, there was a move to share jointly with the Lincolnshire LEA, the use of redundant (perhaps two or three) village schools in the Lincoln Wolds. The ILEA had found great mutual benefit came from a working contact of their children with a strong urban background, and those from a rural environment. For example, Christopher Wren School (Hammersmith) made regular residential visits to a rural secondary school in Lincolnshire and also received their partners in London. The Lincolnshire link with the village schools would not have cost much, but it was not possible to get this initiative off the ground without Member influence and support. It was often crucial to get the support of Members in the ILEA to introduce any new ideas.

On the other hand, the Authority moved with imagination to set up, jointly with Southern Television, on the prompting of rural studies presenter Jack Hargreaves, a purpose-built centre virtually attached to a working farm in the New Forest. But this scheme was supported by Members who liked the idea, and perhaps the national publicity it was likely to engender.

The ILEA could show considerable flexibility, particularly if the 'initiative' had significant support of a Member. Lord Burnham, in the mid 70s, offered the use of a large barn on his Buckinghamshire estate (Beaconsfield) for a vaguely worded intention 'to help inner city children appreciate the countryside'. Within a matter of months, a day rural centre called Harrias Barn was established with a non-resident teacher, and two part-time teachers in post. The idea was that primary children from Hammersmith and Fulham should visit the centre, for one whole day, in all the main seasons of the year. The Centre had access to farms and farm animals, as well as farmland and woodland. It also provided all weather clothing for the children. This



scheme proved to be highly popular and was economical to run, but however, it was a casualty brought about by the ILEA's demise!

Another 'shoestring' initiative of the ILEA was brought about by a meeting on a teachers' course, of some of the staff of Merrist Wood College and ILEA Inspectors. In this case, a large truck carrying bales of straw, a Noah's Ark complement of animals – lambs, hens etc., with young students and staff, visited inner city primary schools. Compounds of bales of straw were established in either the school hall, or the playground, and ILEA children got an inspiring experience through their contact with the animals. This was an inexpensive experiment, and was a popular assignment with the college staff and students, many of whom knew little of inner city children, and the children came into contact with farm animals for the first time.

The advanced Field Centre at Abergavenny proved to be successful, but was expensive. The Architect's Department insisted on bringing the centre up to very high building standards in the conversion from its former use as a religious centre. This should have had a tighter budgetary control, but it may be the very term 'advanced field centre' permitted this high expenditure. In this centre, too, as was the case at Marchants Hill and Sayers Croft, the Warden and staff were too heavily involved in administrative duties.

The Authority's Centre at Swanage Camp, about 30 capacity, was popular, but as with most field centre wardens, the wardens finished up as administrators and did not get into a proper teaching or researching role. There was a complication at Swanage Camp in that the local Rotary Club owned the site, and the accommodation was for many years restricted to boys only. Some schools in fact, particularly secondary ones, did not object to the centre having a non-teaching warden, and in fact preferred to provide their own teaching arrangements.

A number of the large secondary schools had their own field centres, administered by the school and by P/S Branch at County Hall. The acquisition of schools' centres had been haphazard and, often did not always represent good value for money for the Authority. Some centres, such as St Mark's School's at Gorefield, were in the wrong place and were not fully used. The rather haphazard policy of allowing

schools to get their own centres, which were subsequently funded by the ILEA, ceased in the late 70s, and field centres were then planned on a Divisional basis.

With hindsight, the ILEA policies in the field of environmental education lacked coherence. The range and type of centre provided was impressive – we should also mention the other day, non-residential centre at Horton Kirby Environmental Studies Centre, and Margaret MacMillan House in Wrotham, which did valuable work on a one-week residential course for primary children. The Authority did see the urgent need to give inner city children an induction into a different rural environment, and for the provision of facilities for older children to do studies for public examinations. There was a general consultative panel of wardens and inspectors and P/S Branch that met at County Hall, but this had few teeth. A planning committee, with perhaps Members who showed an interest in environmental education, the head of P/S Branch, and/or with the administrative head of the section, and the Chief Inspector's nominee, could well have provided for long-term development in this field. But the ILEA had reservations about bodies that mixed the professional with the politician.

In summary, the ILEA showed rare initiative in developing its unique centres such as the one developed jointly with Southern Television, and the centre at Harrias Barn in Buckinghamshire. It did not, prudently, over-expand field centre provision at the rate many authorities, such as Buckinghamshire, did in the 70s, only to see these authorities badly exposed when the 1980s retrenchment programmes in fact, forced them to close many such centres. But the London Authority was slow to tackle the problems of the very large centres, such as Sayers Croft and Marchants Hill, and it was an error to permit schools to develop their own centres. On the whole, it probably did not get value for money, although there never was any doubt about the Authority's commitment to widening the horizons for its inner city children. The financial support for school journeys, with special help for needy children was generous.

### **Sports Centres**

The ILEA, as an inner city Authority, lacked green playing fields when it came to providing a full range of opportunities for its schools in field sports. A good number

of the London boroughs provided hard surface playing areas for football and basketball, and Youth Clubs often used school playgrounds and schools halls for appropriate games. The increased provision of attractive swimming pools in inner London made both school, and after school swimming classes, a significant feature of the curriculum.

There were something like 10 Sports Centres in the ILEA. Many of them were developed before traffic congestion in London had become such an acute problem. The Centres, such as Warren Farm in Ealing, were superbly equipped and were well staffed. A feature of their later lives was the increased use of the Centres by Primary Schools, when the more flexible finance arrangements (AUR) for schools, permitted the hire of coaches.

The ILEA provided facilities for the teaching and coaching of rowing and some girls' comprehensive schools such as Fulham Gilliat, later Fulham Cross, did well in a sport that would normally have been beyond the reach of girls with a typical inner city background.

These centres were, as we have stated, well equipped and relatively expensive to run. The College of PE understandably gave strong support to their creation and to their retention within the system. Colleagues, at the College of PE, wanted primary children to get a good introduction to orienteering, to basic sports such as cricket and hockey, and to act as a platform for achieving good standards at secondary school and afterwards.

However, many secondary schools felt the time spent in going to and fro was wasted, and began to look at the increasing range of facilities both in school, in sports halls, and outside, on hard surfaces areas. One could argue that London's large park areas could have been used more widely, but use of these by the public presented the schools with problems because the public had free access to them.

Perhaps the ILEA did not adapt quickly enough to the changing circumstances of difficult travel arrangements and the growth of alternative options for games. It could have saved public money. However, the schools voted with their feet, and this indicated a slowness on the part of the ILEA to deal with the situation. However,

the ILEA College of PE's views that specialist sports centres were essential, beginning at the primary school age level, were valid if the government wished to achieve higher levels in international sporting competitions. In this case, as it was in France, when President de Gaulle decreed that standards should be improved, additional financial help by the government would have been necessary.

### **The Youth and Play Centre Service**

The Youth and Play Centre Staff consisted of a Principal Youth Officer and Deputy, both based at County Hall. In addition, there were Assistant Principal Youth Officers, all based at County Hall, to cover North London, South London. There were additional Youth Officers and Play Centre organisers, based not in the Divisions, but in separate boroughs of the ILEA. The senior Play Centre advisor was also based at County Hall.

The Play Centres answered a need for parents who were working, and who could be sure that their children were taken care of after schools hours. The service also provided play centres in designated primary schools in the main holiday periods. The play centre support was particularly helpful for working parents. There was occasional friction between the play centre leaders and heads and staffs of schools where the centres were based, largely over the shared use of facilities. This could be eased if play centre teachers were recruited from the school, on which the centre was based. It also helped in that an existing relationship was there between the children and their 'normal' teachers. The ILEA was anxious that the centres were not to be seen as child minding centres, and that the children were exposed to creative educational experiences. Play centre activities in the holidays usually included educational visits. One of the problems in staffing play centres was that when teachers were used to work in the centres, they were often tired and exhausted after a day's teaching in an inner city school. However, there is no reason to believe that these facilities could not have been provided equally efficiently by any single London borough.

## **The Youth Service**

There were problems in running the Youth Service that impinged on the Adult Education Service, apart from those that affected schools. It is proposed therefore that the Youth Service should be referred alongside Adult Education, in the chapter on Further and Higher Education.

## **The Transport Service**

The ILEA had a fleet of its own buses deemed suitable for school use. The buses provided a valuable service in collecting children with mental or physical handicaps, and getting them to their schools. In addition, schools could book coaches to provide transport for school games and to undertake school journeys. The coaches were, of course, well maintained, and thus minimised the worry about possible questions of road-worthiness in the use of coaches. The advent of schools' own mini-buses, greatly assisted by the Alternative Use of Resources Scheme, meant that eventually, even primary schools, could own their own mini-buses. The Authority laid down strict rules to ensure that there was driver competence for school mini-buses, and training and testing schemes were carried out by the Service.

Some schools maintained that ILEA buses came from a strongly 'unionised' service and that the drivers inclined to be inflexible. Others created good relationships with particular drivers, and they preferred to use one of the Authority's coaches rather than going to private hire. The logical alternative would have been to disband the Transport Service and to devolve this work on to the Divisions, which could use private hire companies. However, the need for a supervisory body to check the roadworthiness of schools' own minibuses, and to provide driver-training courses, makes a good case for a large, central organisation. So too did the cause of special needs children, who often had to travel considerable distances to specialist units or schools.

## **Educational Guidance Centres**

Educational Guidance Centres were set up as a result of pressure by Mrs Kerr-Waller, head mistress of Hammersmith County School for Girls, who pressed her

Chairman, Jane Phillips, who was a powerful Member of the ILEA, to develop a scheme for children who were proving difficult to handle in school but yet did not merit suspension. The idea was that the pupils would spend a short period there. The first centre was set up in the early 70s in premises occupied by the Harrow Youth Club with a teacher in charge and one assistant. Many authorities have followed the ILEA in developing these centres. Eventually every ILEA Division established an Education Guidance Centre. The ILEA evolved management committees that usually included a Member, an educational psychologist and heads of schools, mainly secondary, in each Division. Sometimes the dull and repetitive work at the centres was criticised by inspectors, but often they did help to develop better attitudes by many of their pupils. The problem was to encourage schools to allow their youngsters to return back, so that they did not become 'institutionalised' in the centres.

One of the functions of the management committee, the Divisional Education Officer was represented there, was to facilitate the return of the youngsters to a school, if not their parent school. There was concern that schools would not want their 'problem' children back, and other schools would be disinclined to take them on roll, and that as a consequence, the period spent by these children in the centres was far too long. The educational psychologists were closely involved with the administration of the guidance centres. It is ironic that the use of Educational Guidance Centres, was seen by Mr Hague, former Leader of the Opposition, as the key to solving the problem of what to do with pupils who are suspended from school. He made no acknowledgement of the Labour controlled ILEA that pioneered the whole concept thirty years previously!

### **Summary (Support Services)**

The selection of support services, sometimes styled ancillary, has been eclectic. There is little doubt that some services, such as the distinguished Careers' Service, the Research and Statistics Branch, and the Learning Resources Branch, were all greatly successful, and owed their success to distinguished leadership, but also to the fact that they could only be effectively run by a large Authority such as the ILEA. Any one of these services could well have merited a separate treatise.

The purpose in including these components of the ILEA was to give some idea of the range and nature of the educational provision of the ILEA, to show that it could be a highly innovative Authority, but also too, that as a large organisation, it faced the usual problems of a bureaucracy.

It would be fair to say that most of the services provided by the ILEA in this chapter indicates that, with regards to policy making, the Authority showed initiative, and for a large body, powers of flexibility. In the field of Special Education needs, probably the most significant of all the so-called support services, the range and quality of service provided was outstanding. When it came to policies over the integration of special needs children into mainstream schools, after the 1981 Education Act, as we stated in the section on Special Needs Education in this chapter, the ILEA was enthusiastic about this aim, but was aware that all schools, special and mainstream had to fundamentally change their thinking. Catherine Clark (et al)<sup>23</sup> wrote of the narrowness in background of many of the leading figures in Special Education needs, when she wrote, their backgrounds ‘were extraordinarily narrow’, few if any of the key figures in the ‘special needs community’ has a background in politics, educational policy making at the national level, economics, social policy, or even, with relatively few exceptions, in mainstream education as such. This led, she contended, to an ‘insularity of thinking’. This criticism would not apply to the ILEA, which although it had a strong team of special education officers and inspectors, had its policy goals laid down by a committee of vast experience. The Evening Standard<sup>24</sup> quoted that the number of Special Schools in England and Wales fell from 1352 in 1982 to 1161 in 2002 and that the rates of inclusion of children into mainstream schools, a policy issue left in the hands of LEAs, varied between local authorities. For example, Newham in 2004 (never an integral part of the ILEA) had 98% of its children in mainstream schools, but had been over-ambitious in this respect, and it is suggested this would not have been the extreme route that the ILEA would have followed, had it survived.

The ILEA regularly used management consultants to assess its efficiency, and of course, its expenditure was carefully audited. No doubt if the ILEA had survived, it would have been subjected to regular visitations from the Central Government Audit Commission. The latter, now includes inspectors and members of the teaching profession, when it undertakes the examination of educational

establishments. Whether or not the Audit Commission would be a proper instrument to examine the ILEA is a moot point. Any worthwhile study of education in the inner city needs considerable time, and highly experienced team members. Value for money is a highly complex issue in that it involves an understanding of the educational and sociological aims of the educators.

Holloway<sup>25</sup> questioned the validity of some of the Commission's value judgements, and considered it often 'punched above its weight'. The ILEA could well have benefited from a visitation by small mixed teams of Members and officers from selected large urban authorities, to perhaps challenge some of the ILEA's thinking and its procedures. For instance, in the case of the ILEA's environmental education schemes, which we have outlined in this chapter, there was no apparent 'outside view', that was badly needed.

On balance, the range of ancillary support services was excellent; they showed the ILEA to be both innovatory and keen to exploit the economic and educational advantages of scale. But they did need more effective outside agencies to cause the Authority to reflect more deeply on its programmes; there was also the need to be more mindful of the financial implications of many of its initiatives.



## References in Chapter 6 (Special Educational Needs)

- <sup>1</sup> Galloway D (et al) (1994) **The Assessment of Special Education Needs: Whose Problem?** (p3) - Longmans
- <sup>2</sup> Clarke C (et al) (1997) **New Directions in Special Needs** (p4) - Cassell
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## Chapter 7

### Adult, Further and Higher Education

**What is certain is that the government is determined that higher education should be more actively involved in engendering and propagating the so called culture of enterprise.**

**David Coulby, 1989**

When Norman Graves<sup>1</sup> wrote ‘One of the jewels in the ILEA’s crown is its Further Education and Adult Education Service’ in 1988, his main concern about the proposed break up of the Authority was the likely inadequacy, on grounds of expertise and resources, of the constituent inner London boroughs in attempting to run a comprehensive education service. He quoted Baroness Blackstone who considered, ‘That there would be a diminution in the range and quality of services if the ILEA were to be abolished’, but he stressed that the real concern was that the record of these (inner boroughs) in running some of their non-education services is such that no confidence can be placed on their ability to run schools.<sup>2</sup>

The long range view of just how government policy could affect adult learners was indicated by Alan Tuckett, who writing in January 2008, quoted the latest figures from the Learning and Skills Council that showed a ‘drop of 1,400,000 adult learners from publicly funded education in the last two years and that there had been a decimation of provision for adults over 40’. He attributed this fall, in part, to the formation of the Further Education Funding Council in 1993, when funding for credit-based courses was nationalised and ‘anything else was left to the discretion of cash-strapped local authorities’.<sup>3</sup>

Adult, Further and Higher Education were hugely important parts of the ILEA service. In the administration, The Deputy Controller, in hierarchical terms the officer immediately below the Education Officer, was the Director of Education (Further and Higher Education), and under him/her was an Assistant Education Officer, with day-to-day responsibilities for running the department. In the inspectorate, the Chief Inspector for Further and Higher Education ranked just below the Chief Inspector.

However, the history of the ILEA is one that showed a gradual diminution of its powers in Adult and Further and Higher Education, culminating in the abolition of the Authority in the 1988 Act. Even if the ILEA had survived the Act, by 1992, it would have lost its control of the sixth form colleges, and a good deal of post-16 education. So that from the 80s onwards, (some would argue that the process began as early as the late 60s) there was an assertion of government power in maintained education, at the expense of the local authorities' power and influence.

In this chapter, we hope to look at Adult Education in the ILEA, and Further and Higher Education, which includes the Colleges of Education and the Polytechnics.

### **Adult Education**

Vince Hall<sup>4</sup> divided adults in Further Education into two groups; those in adult education and those in adult training. He wrote, 'While the boundaries between education and training are not totally delineated, they are sufficiently clear for the two groups to be separated. In adult continuing education, the name of the course will usually identify the type of student involved. With adult training, it is the occupational/vocational group and the category of training scheme that distinguishes students, although there can be considerable overlap. For example, in adult recreational studies, learning a language can be a leisure course taken for pleasure, while for an export manager, it is a vocational requirement.' In policy making terms, Adult Education, because of its long tradition of service in inner London, was an effective lobby influence in the powerful ILEA Higher and Further Education Committee.

Most of the ILEA teachers saw Adult Education very much in terms of skill training or cultural recreational studies, often causing a little local annoyance, because of the nature of sharing their school premises with the Adult Institute. But in fact, a considerable amount of adult education was carried out in the Colleges of Further Education. The ILEA was particularly helpful in providing language classes for ethnic minority groups, and for adults who had serious language and literacy problems. The Authority, from the early 80s had done a great deal of research work on equal opportunities, and on policies on gender, class and race, both in the schools and in Adult Education.

Chris Middleton and Sheila Miles<sup>5</sup> both praised the ILEA for these policies which concerned what they perceived to be corrective measures, to remedy the disadvantages that a number of inner city inhabitants experienced. These policies, they considered, offended some of the right-wing lobbies, such as the Adam Smith Institute and the Hillgate group, as they were considered to be products of the producers of an education service, in that they were very much fabrications of educational ideologues, and did not reflect the true needs of the customers in education.

Principals of Adult Institutes in London in the 80s had two main concerns: they were the high level of enrolment of young people who wished to attain specific qualifications, many of whom should not have been there, if the schools had performed well, and the second concern, which was much less pressing, was the relatively high numbers of quite well educated middle-class students and the paucity of students with what we would term an under-privileged, working-class background. The ILEA was particularly successful in Access Courses, which provided a route-way for adults to Higher Education. Vince Hall<sup>6</sup> quotes the high level of provision for adult education in the inner London Borough of Tower Hamlets, where almost one in ten of the adult population was engaged in this process, and that in 1988, the Adult Education Institutes were sending more students into Higher Education than all their borough's sixth forms added together!

Adult education had a long pedigree in London through the Mechanics' Institutes, the Working Mens' Education Association, the Literary Institutes and the Evening Institutes, and so it ranked highly in the pantheon of socialist education priorities. Thus Adult Education possessed great influence over the senior politicians at County Hall. There were two significant developments in Adult Education in inner London in the 70s: the first was the Russell Report of 1973, which gave a picture of what adult education should be about in England and Wales. The Russell Committee, which issued the report, had terms of reference 'to assess the need for, and to review, the provision of non vocational adult education', and it identified three groups of people who had specific needs; they were those who wished to continue formal education, those who wished to pursue creative study, and finally, those who could, through their studies, play a more effective role in society, such as

voluntary workers, shop stewards and trade union officials, and magistrates.<sup>7</sup> The second significant influence in the ILEA was the Educational Officer's (Dr Briault) paper on Educational Service for the Whole Community (ILEA 1973).<sup>8</sup> Dr Briault's paper and the ILEA's main submission to the Russell Committee, 'A Chance to Choose: a social structure of the student body of Adult Education Institutes',<sup>9</sup> were both submitted to the Russell Committee.

In the case of Dr Briault's initiative, he was accurate in assessing that there was often a lack of co-ordination between the various parts of the ILEA's service. He managed to secure an allocation of funds from the Committee, so that groups could put forward requests for financial backing for projects that accorded with the general idea of drawing the community together. He convened a meeting of his senior officers, at that time, because he was aware that he needed his colleagues to 'kick start' policy initiatives.

Bill Devereaux, who was a distinguished Assistant Education Officer, wrote an account of Adult Education in London in which he strongly asserted that there was an absolute need for a single service in inner London. He wrote, 'No service would have suffered more than Adult Education if the functions of the LCC (ILEA) had been distributed between the boroughs.'<sup>10</sup> What I think Bill Devereaux was getting at was that Adult Education would not have been a strong player in any borough administration, but that there were powerful influences in favour of Adult Education on both historical and intellectual grounds in the LCC and the ILEA. In responding to both the Russell Committee's Report and to the Education Officer's, the ILEA's officer's working party, in which Bill Devereaux was prominent, perceived that the Youth Service was not attracting young people in sufficient numbers in both ILEA initiatives and in voluntary groups in the boroughs, and that the numbers of young people below the age of eighteen were 'clogging up' the Adult Institutes, hence the thrust of this paper.

Although the Youth Service, both in the County and the Voluntary Sector, was failing to attract significant numbers of young people in the 16-21 age bracket, it still commanded strong support, both by ILEA Members and their colleagues in the inner boroughs. In the year 1968-69, 21,000 young people under 21 had in fact enrolled for courses run by Adult Institutes. This influenced the decision of an ad

hoc committee, set up by Bill Devereaux, to recommend (Document ILEA Ed 839)<sup>11</sup> to the ILEA Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee that there should be a fusion of both the Youth and Adult Education Services in an Education Community Service. This indicated that the people in charge of the Youth Centres would be responsible to the principals of the Adult Institutes. The report also recommended that the youth officers should become advisors to voluntary clubs, and that the Principal Youth Officer, responsible for his/her field workers, should work to the Assistant Education Officer, Further Education. The Borough Youth Committees would become the ILEA Community Committees and would advise the ILEA on Youth and Community programmes. The committee of the GLC Standing Committee on Voluntary Organisations, would act as the advisory body to the ILEA. The Committee also recommended a training programme for Youth Officers. This report was submitted to the Committee and it got short shrift. In rejecting the report, the Committee had no intention of 'burying the Youth Service in some ill-defined Community Service Scheme' (Ed 938).<sup>12</sup>

Lord Longford, as an independent chairman, was asked to review the finding of the ad hoc committee, and he and his colleagues confirmed the view of the Further and Higher Education Committee, that it would be wrong to combine the Youth Service with the Adult Institutes. Thus the Education Officer and his colleague Bill Devereaux, misjudged the political realities of the problem. There was no doubt that many politicians in the boroughs, who were well represented on the Committee at County Hall, were highly suspicious of what they perceived to be empire building by the ILEA. Bill Devereaux was greatly influenced by Dr Briault's paper 'An Education Service for the Whole Community'. and it was perhaps a blessing that two other schemes promoted by Bill Devereaux at Brackenbury Primary School in Hammersmith and Fulham, and at Wells Park School in Lewisham, were dropped, on financial grounds. The Brackenbury scheme, which was to combine Youth and Community work, allied to a substantial building programme, that included a Sports Hall, was unrealistic in that it was to put a hard-pressed head teacher in overall responsibility for the scheme, for which he had little enthusiasm. One suspects that Hammersmith Council politicians, some of whom were managers of the school, had the same quiet fears of the ILEA's empire building.

The participation of young people in Adult Education courses, particularly those which led to academic qualifications, should not necessarily be seen in negative terms, however, as many of these young people integrated extremely well with more mature students. For example, the ILEA made extensive use of the Authority's Art Colleges for both day and evening Adult Education services. The classes, made possible because they could use the specialist facilities and lecturers from across the Authority, were a godsend to many housewives who had family commitments, and could find time during the day to attend such courses. In the early 80s, when levels of unemployment were high, these courses often provided the basis for Foundation Courses in Art education, that gave a sense of purpose for many young people, and often led to successful careers in the creative arts.

The lesson to be learnt from policy initiatives, stemming mainly from the Officers, was that the ILEA was not a monolithic machine, and that quite rightly, the boroughs' interests were at the heart of many ILEA policy decisions. However, the proposed break-up of the ILEA Adult Education Service was indefensible on almost any grounds. Adult education catered for the needs of many who were outside the mainstream education service, but this concept of community service carried little weight with the New Right. Financial pressures on the ILEA, which led to increased fees for students, particularly out County students, could well have added to the growing unpopularity of the New Right government in the 90s.

Fieldhouse<sup>13</sup> highlighted the contribution of the ILEA to the disadvantaged, and he pointed out that Second Chance Opportunities had pre-dated the Russell Report. He stated that, 'By the mid-80s, nearly half the ILEA students had no formal educational qualifications on leaving school, which gives some idea of the task facing Adult and Further Education teachers. If the New Right appeared to lack understanding of Second Chance and Basic Education programmes, it was in their eyes, that the system was failing to provide efficient basic education'. But as Fieldhouse also pointed out, '45% of the large group of youngsters who lacked formal educational qualifications, were from the ethnic minorities and the demise of the ILEA seriously affected the working of the ABE (Adult Basic Education programme) and moreover, broke up the ILEA's Language and Literacy Unit that had pioneered important work'.<sup>14</sup> Fieldhouse considered that the important Access

courses were in fact derived from Fresh Horizons courses, that commenced soon after the ILEA began to function in 1965.<sup>15</sup> No matter what type of service that was provided, either on the lines of the New Right or the ILEA, there would still have been a need for a supportive programme for these large ethnic groups.

### **Summary – Adult Education**

There can be little doubt that the break-up of the ILEA did a disservice to the cause of Adult Education in inner London. Not only would there be a need for co-ordination of its services provided by the boroughs, which had been done relatively smoothly by the former ILEA, but there was the danger that the new fractured structure in inner London, could hinder the developmental potential of the service. There was a need for clarification of Adult Education; the distinctions between ‘vocational’ and ‘non-vocational’ were confusing and could in fact, put off some of the very people who would benefit most from the right courses.

The ILEA gave strong support for Adult Education and it was a closely integrated service, which it covered by a comprehensive information booklet. Mark Corney<sup>16</sup> (the Director of M C Consultancy) noted the lack of government support for Adult Education in 2008 when he wrote (Education Guardian, 22.1.08), ‘There is a vast inequality between financial support for part-time students and full-time adult further education (FE students). There is limited tuition and financial support for part-time HE and part-time adult FE students.’

### **Further and Higher Education (including Sections on the ILEA Colleges of Education and its Polytechnics)**

Tom Whiteside summed up the problem in Britain’s post-Second World War 16-19 education and training programme, ‘as a divided system, which had been confirmed by all the major reports from Crowther onwards’.<sup>17</sup> He commented on the bifurcation of the system, at the post-16+ age level, into academic and vocational divisions, which were markedly different in content, style of delivery, and assessment. Writing in 1992, Whiteside wrote of, ‘A loose alliance of interests that did not share a total consensus over the nature of the problem or the most appropriate solutions, but it does hold a view that radical change will have to take place in the very near future, and that this is crucial for our economic survival. The



main concerns were: to increase participation and attainment levels at post-16; the need for a coherent curriculum and qualifications system that valued academic and vocational elements equally, and permitted 'credit transfer'; the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and the need for co-ordination and planning in 16-19 education teaching programmes'.<sup>18</sup> His loose alliance included interests such as the CBI, the TUC, professional educational associations, and strong governmental interests. However, many of the concerns expressed by the Alliance go back to the Holland Report, *Young People and Work*, published in 1977, which recommended the setting up of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), described as the first comprehensive scheme for jobless school leavers, and it was scheduled to last for five years.<sup>19</sup>

The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in its publication, *Outlook on Training* (1980), also pointed out the grave deficiencies in our Further Education system, which were highlighted by more successful programmes of most major European countries. Although the MSC was composed of representatives of employers, trade unions, local authorities, and educational interests, it became a major training agency under the aegis of the Department of Employment. It was essentially an expression by government that the local system was not working, and that government was to be the main instrument for change. The lifetime of the ILEA saw the introduction of the government as a major player in the 16-19 age group Further Education programme, not only its organisation, but in such matters as qualifications, where for example, the DES in May 1982, produced its booklet, *17+, A New Qualification*, with its concept of TEC and the BEC courses.

Soon after its foundation in 1965, the ILEA was involved in a major review of its Further Education college system. In planning any major changes at that time, central government was in no way so heavily involved as it was in the 80s, but nevertheless it had substantial interests in such matters as salaries (which were to follow centrally agreed guidelines), the approval of building programmes, and controls over college re-organisation. If a local authority wished to establish, or discontinue a course, under Section 42 of the 1944 Education Act, consent had to be gained from both HMI and the Regional Advisory Council.

The system of FE was inherited from the LCC, which had been introduced by the latter in 1962, and was not really satisfactory, but it was very much a reaction by the LCC to the failure of government to establish the County College system, that was one of the provisions of the 1944 Education Act. The LCC had decided that junior colleges should be developed as Colleges for Further Education (CFEs) to provide all the needs of the under 18s, including the compulsory day-release courses. Their ceiling would remain at 'O' level and senior colleges of advanced technology, (regional and area colleges), would continue to offer courses above this level.<sup>20</sup> The fact that the LCC was enthusiastic in building large, up to 12 form entry, purpose built comprehensive schools, to the apparent exclusion of any concern for the FE proposals, did not seem to be a major issue for the then LCC.

In 1969, the Further Education lecturers' association requested that the ILEA review this two-tier structure that was having a restrictive influence on both types of colleges. As a result of this, the Education Officer and his colleagues, spent a year, up to November 1971, to recommend to the Authority's Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee, that subject to consultation, 'the present system of thirty three senior and junior colleges, should be re-organised to form a smaller number of all-through, multi-disciplinary colleges covering the entire range of work outside the Polytechnics.'<sup>21</sup>

In 1970, the maintained colleges consisted of three groups of colleges. First, there were four Art Colleges, which provided mainly post GCE 'A' level courses, secondly, area colleges which specialised in providing skills in such crafts as the design and making of furniture, and for the printing industry, and thirdly, local colleges which provided education for students under the age of 18. Within this third group, provision was made for commercial training for the post-18 age group. These Colleges of Further Education also provided day release courses, mainly in basic education.

The following table gives a numerical breakdown of all the students enrolled in 1970:

**Students at ILEA Colleges (day full-time equivalent) in November 1970**

1) Aided Colleges	16167
of which polytechnics	15507
2) Maintained Colleges	24949
of which Art Colleges	1523
Area Colleges	14883
Local Colleges	8543
Of which CFEs	6818
G and Cs	1725
Total (1 & 2)	41118

**Source: ILEA 1970**

The ‘aided’ Colleges, set-up under charitable trusts were grant aided by the ILEA but had a great measure of independence. Most of these became polytechnics in the 60s.

Advanced work is shown in the following table:

**Advanced work at ILEA Colleges  
(Student Hours in Academic Session (1970-71))**

	<b>Degree Level</b>	<b>Sub Degree</b>
Polytechnic	9371435	5674487
Art Colleges	1493500	41748
Area Colleges	1371223	5100987

**Source: ILEA R & S Branch 1971**

There was certainly a good case for much greater participation by government in Further and Higher education in the 70s, in view of the growing need for coherent planning and the 16+ age level, and for the need to rationalise the qualifications system. No Conservative party since Mrs Thatcher's days, either in or out of power, has had much brief for local government participation in the education process, and New Labour, in policy terms, favoured direct government dealings with schools and colleges, without the need for local government involvement. However, the Labour government in the first decade of this century, received a serious check in its policy making by large groups of its own backbenchers, who in effect demanded greater local authority involvement in the post-primary/secondary school selection process, to attempt to promote a fairer system. The disposition of specialist colleges, for example in printing and furniture making, and in art education, caused problems when the ILEA was broken up. One could also make a good case for greater involvement of local authorities in education at the post-16 level. For example, in LEA's such as York City, where feeder 11-16 schools, provide students for a huge purpose built sixth form college, one could see good sense in having a significant input by LEA's into policy issues at the post-16 age level.

The ILEA never achieved a satisfactory relationship between all the various parties concerned with post-16 education. The lobby for the 11-18 comprehensive schools was a strong one in the ILEA. Even as early as 1968, the Authority rapidly dismissed a suggestion from its own Inspectorate's working party that, following studies of sixth form colleges at Mexborough and at Luton, the Authority should consider some experimentation with the sixth form college. Dr Briault, the Education Officer in the early 70s, was acutely aware of the dangers of many comprehensive schools not being able to sustain viable sixth forms, and given the choice, he would perhaps have favoured a much more drastic policy in involving school closures to achieve these aims. His deputy, Peter Newsam, was more amenable to co-operative arrangements between schools, to accommodate the problems of rapidly falling school rolls, and to avoid some of the anxieties of Members over drastic school closure policies. Consortia between the schools sharing sixth form teaching are not an easy solution to the problem. By 1986, however, the ILEA issued a discussion document, 'Planning for post-16 Education and Training 1989-90'. It was late in the day but did at least put forward proposals

that took a proper cognisance of the range of opportunities that could be provided by FE.

The proposals were:

- a) 11-18 Schools and Colleges of FE (the prevailing situation)
- b) 11-16 Schools with Sixth Form Colleges and FE Colleges
- c) 11-16 Schools and 16-19 Tertiary Colleges
- d) 11-16 Schools and Tertiary Colleges of any age.

The Tertiary college offered a solution for LEAs where there are rapidly falling school rolls, particularly with the 16-19 age group. The colleges would operate under Further Education regulations, and could offer a whole range of non-advanced courses both academic and vocational, and as Cantor and Roberts pointed out, could provide a post-16 equivalent of the comprehensive school.<sup>22</sup> The idea of Tertiary colleges, in working alongside sixth form colleges, in which the latter would concentrate on the academic element, and thus ‘cream off’ the most academically able youngsters would have been wholly unacceptable to the ILEA. A more widespread use of the Tertiary colleges was limited by the fact that they came late in the ILEA’s history (by 1981 only sixteen Tertiary colleges were in operation nationally). By that time (the late 70s), the ILEA had begun to establish sixth form colleges in boroughs such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets. The strength of the 11-18 school lobby, and the implications for more change in the existing Further Education structure, slowed down the impetus for change.

But in general, ILEA influence in Further Education was a declining one. The end of the responsibility for technical and vocational education by LEAs was spelled out as early as 1982. Roger Dale<sup>23</sup> writes how Margaret Thatcher announced in the House of Commons on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1982, that she proposed to set up, The Technical and Vocational Studies Initiative. She said that the growing concern, she was accurate in this, not least as expressed by the National Economic Development Council, had caused her to ask the Chairman of the Manpower Services Commission, together with the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, for Employment, and for Wales, to develop a pilot scheme to start by September 1983, for new institutional arrangements for technical and vocational education for 14-18

year olds within existing financial resources, and where possible, in association with local authorities. Dale wrote of the announcement coming ‘like a bolt from the blue’ to all directly interested parties. He pointed out that TVEI did not follow the traditional routes of bringing about major educational change in Britain, but was essentially a political intervention, in the sense that it was introduced into the educational system from outside. The TVEI scheme, consisting of a four year course commencing at the age of 14, had great potential implications for Further Education structures, because of the relatively young commencement age of pupils, that the delivery of the scheme by the state was its real significance, as in fact only fourteen authorities were selected to host the pilot scheme.<sup>24</sup>

### **Summary – Further and Higher Education**

The ILEA could be criticised for not having more coherent policies in post-16 educational arrangements, but the situation nationally was confused to say the least. The Conservatives could argue that the complexity of provision for courses and qualification for 16 to 19 year olds, was such that it could be described as both chaotic and confusing. Some action was necessary by the Conservative government to resolve the situation, although as the Conservative ideological obsession with the distinction between education and training did not help. The ILEA did not carry this ideological baggage, and one of the aims of the Further Education restructuring process of the early 70s, was to ease this particular problem.

The ILEA incurred some criticism of its vocational FE and post-16 arrangements by the former Senior Chief HM Inspector,<sup>25</sup> but the government itself had not given a clear guidance in the 80s. The ILEA proved that it was capable of handling the major re-organisation of its FE provision both capably and humanely.

In 1986, when Neil Fletcher was Chairman of the Further and High Education Committee, he instituted a review of the ILEA’s policies in this field and the Review was supervised by the National Advisory Board for Local Authority Higher Education.<sup>26</sup> In 2008, long after the demise of the ILEA, Mark Corney,<sup>27</sup> pointed out that the Learning and Skills Council had moved £7bn of its 16-19 (year group) budget to local education authorities which seems to strengthen the belief, which was long held by the ILEA, that it had a useful role in FE. He commented on what

he saw as the support of Labour MPs for a fixation, by government, for support for HE, with the consequent ‘disregard’ of Adult Further Education. He wrote, ‘More specifically, they are obsessed with getting bright young people from poor backgrounds, into full time 18-21 HE, to increase social mobility.’<sup>28</sup> However, local education authorities had a key role in implementing this policy. The ILEA wanted to improve links between Further and Higher Education, and to keep up the momentum of its drive for more equal opportunities and for its anti-racist policies. The Authority also added funds for developing further its Access courses, aimed at equipping students who lacked qualifications, to climb further up the FE ladder, but the ILEA’s intention of inspecting some of the course work in this particular field in the Polytechnics, because it funded the work, proved to be controversial. As a result of this Review, the ILEA managed to create the London Institute, which integrated its Art Colleges, and Colleges of Fashion and Printing, just before it was abolished. This final act of the ILEA in Further Education, showed its capacity to work on a large canvas, and that it had better understanding of what was required in inner London than government; it also had the historical background that Gerald Grace<sup>29</sup> deemed necessary to the understanding of problems of urban education.

### **Colleges of Education**

As a result of a major re-organisation in the wake of the Government’s White Paper ‘A Framework for Expansion’, the ILEA was responsible for seven Colleges of Education in 1980. The whole process of re-organisation nationally, was a ‘bloody’ affair. It raised the question of how teacher training capacity got so badly out of step with schools’ needs for teachers. The process was described as ‘the largest and most controversial re-organisation of Higher Education that has ever taken place in England and Wales.’ Nationally, the distinctiveness of 152 Colleges of Education was destroyed; 25 were closed, 27 re-organised, and the remainder merged with Polytechnics, Colleges of Further Education and the Universities.

The government’s aim was to reduce the numbers of teachers in training from 114,000 in 1971/72, to 25,000 in 1980/81, reflecting the rapidly falling school rolls. The ILEA, because of its statutory responsibility for its Colleges of Education, and indirectly for the Voluntary Colleges, was very much involved in this process. So willy-nilly, the ILEA was dragged into a process of cut-back and rationalisation in

teacher training provision, on a time scale, that was not of its choosing. The chaotic situation in teacher training capacity must have convinced the government of the day, and its successors, that the direct involvement of the DfEE in teacher training, was to be the pattern of the future.

It is difficult to deny central government a more positive role in the capacity of teacher training institutions, and as we stated earlier, that although direct involvement in the workings of its Colleges of Education, because the maximum powers were conferred to governors, was not great, nevertheless, in the field of funding, the Authority had important statutory duties with regard to these Colleges.

Although the consensus of opinion was that the colleges should be freed from local authority control, the case for local authority involvement in teacher training is a strong one. If the whole thrust of government policy is to involve the schools more in teacher training, presumably to satisfy Mrs Thatcher's views that much more training should be done 'on the job', then local authority involvement in such a process would make sense. Consortia of schools are now major instruments in teacher training. The ILEA went to great lengths to assist its colleges in their teaching practice needs for students in its schools. Moreover, many trainee teachers who had teaching practice experience in Inner London schools, decided to begin their teaching careers in London. Eric Bolton, the Senior Chief HMI, commented on this show of confidence in inner London schools.<sup>30</sup>

Another indication of the ILEA's useful role (and that of the former GLC) in co-ordinating a change in policy, adumbrated by central government, may be seen in the case of Avery Hill College's expansion in 1966. The DES Circular 7/65 suggested that to increase teacher training capacity, LEAs should encourage their colleges to progressively increase the capacity of some of their courses. The ILEA at that time responded and increased the number of places at Avery Hill College, from 1000 to 1200 places. This action needed approval from the Finance Committee, the approval of the Planning and Communications Committee of the GLC (now defunct),<sup>31</sup> and the decision had to be in accord with the Town and Country Planning Regulation (1964). Building programmes entailed by this sort of expansion, obviously impinged on local communities, and the co-ordinating role of



the ILEA was not simply bureaucratic, but was a very valuable part of a large policy co-ordination process.

Another indication of the ILEA's sensible involvement in teacher training, may be seen from its submission to the James Committee on Teacher Training (1972). In spite of Mrs Thatcher's advocacy of close involvement of the schools in teacher training, the ILEA in its submission to James, requested that more emphasis should be given in training, to the teaching of basic skills in numeracy and literacy. It also requested that more attention should be given to the teaching of less able children (of whom the ILEA had a generous share, with its level of urban deprivation), and for the regular interchange of teachers and college lecturers. The language difficulties of the ethnic minorities itself<sup>32</sup> merited special attention in teacher training, when, in 1971, 32% of all ILEA pupils were born outside the UK.

The chaotic situation that had arisen in teacher training in the early 70s when capacity far exceeded requirements, obviously needed a greater role to be played by the state than had existed hitherto. But the dangers of tight government control over teacher education, ranging over course content, is obvious. Mrs Thatcher made some rather sharp comments about a course, approved by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE), which was part of the B.Ed. Course at Brighton Polytechnic. The particular course was, 'To what extent do our schools reinforce gender stereotypes?' She claimed the course puts 'too much stress on sociological and psychological aspects.'<sup>33</sup>

Pratt, Burgess and Lock wrote that, as the government revised its needs for teacher training, 'then as if inexorably, came the need to take more control over Advanced and Further Education, a process which culminated in the establishment of the National Advisory Body, to manage the allocation of funds and to co-ordinate the provision of courses'.<sup>34</sup> The manifest arbitrariness of the government's attitude to over-capacity of teacher training places in 1972, was further highlighted by the same authors when they drew attention to the situation in 1966, when 30 polytechnics were so designated and 'No re-organisation in terms of numbers and types of Colleges of Education was envisaged at that date – 1966, when it was becoming obvious that there was an over capacity in teacher training institutions'. However, the 1972 White Paper did project the move toward graduate training for

all teachers, which led to 84% of teachers in training by 1980/81 being of graduate status. It was just this sort of exercise that required positive government intervention. But allowing for the obvious limitations of teacher training being under the control of LEAs, one cannot help but see the fears of excessive state control, albeit under the guise of giving Colleges and their governing bodies more delegated powers.

Robbins had recommended that the Colleges should go into University Institutes, or into Schools of Education, with Academic Boards responsible to University Senates for maintaining standards. The Colleges would still have their own governing bodies with substantial LEA representation on them. In Circular 7/73, the late Reg Prentice, as Secretary of State, had put the responsibility for change on the local authorities, with the Department of Education as handmaids. But as Pratt pointed out<sup>35</sup> nonetheless, the officers of the DES knew of the hopeless overcapacity of the colleges and knew that central government would have to take firm control over funding arrangements in the future.

When we come to look more specifically at the operation of the rationalisation programme that took place in teacher training after the 1972 White Paper, one is struck by the difference in policy between succeeding Conservative and Labour governments. The Conservatives were much more concerned with cutting costs, whereas Labour ministers were much more concerned with human factors, such as the likely damage to the lecturers' careers in any drastic re-organisation.

On the whole, the thrust of the New Right in Conservative thinking was exemplified by Keith Joseph, Lady Thatcher's second Secretary of State for Education, supported by his advisors Stuart Sexton and Rhodes Boyson, who was his Parliamentary Under Secretary. All favoured more government involvement in what was taught in the Colleges of Education. Hartnett and Carr showed the consistent move to the right in Conservatives government policies,<sup>36</sup> which culminated in the removal of Colleges of Education from all local authority control (1993 Education Bill). A further move to control teacher education institutions was when the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) took over the Higher Education Funding Council, which was directly appointed by the Education Secretary. By these means, not only would initial teacher training courses be centrally controlled, but also in-service courses

for teachers (including higher degrees, as well as educational research), would be controlled likewise.<sup>37</sup>

But not all Conservatives were happy about the role of government in teacher training. Keith Hampson put it, as Vice Chairman of the Conservatives Parliamentary Education Committee, (when not in power) ‘the whole exercise has been marked by an arrogant assertion of Central Power...Ministerial power...to ensure an adequate supply of teachers, and has been ruthlessly extended to control Higher Education ... it is scandalous that an entirely new type of Higher Education has emerged from piecemeal decisions’.<sup>38</sup>

There can be little doubt that the ILEA, even when pressed by a very tight time schedule in the 1970s, would have done a better job over the rationalisation process, judging by the way it tackled its Further Education problems a little earlier. Colleges such as Maria Assumpta and St Gabriel’s, were put to the sword, and long serving staffs were not given sympathetic treatment in what was, admittedly, an overdue restructuring process. Judging by the way the ILEA handed the delicate problems of school amalgamations and closure, as a consequence of the government’s wish to establish a comprehensive pattern of education, then given time, the ILEA would have done this more effectively. The ILEA was forced into a process, and on a time scale that was certainly not of its choosing. There is no question that a more positive role for government in teacher education was right and proper, and this has been accepted throughout this chapter.

But if the ILEA had survived it could, along the lines of Robbins, have played a significant part in teacher training. The use of its schools as a major part in the training of teachers, and its successful recruitment of potential teachers from those who had done teaching practice in inner London schools, were justification enough. It is difficult to see how the subsequently created separate boroughs, responsible for education, could have played the sort of role that would have been possible for the ILEA. The ILEA induction procedures for probationary teachers, which involved day release schemes, were among the finest in the country.

Although there was some merit in the Conservative concern over the possibility that teacher training institutions would turn out teachers who were ill equipped professionally to face the demands of the classroom, there was always the danger that the training could become over-prescriptive and not have the challenging and unbiased content that one associates with a good university, in a democratic society. Carr and Hartnett wrote, 'Between 1981 and 1983 Keith Joseph launched a series of initiatives to achieve his objectives. These included greatly centralised controls over initial teacher training, and discussions about an agreed national curriculum.' None of these moves towards the centralisation of power has been reversed by New Labour in power.<sup>39</sup>

Some criticisms of the Colleges of Education were merited. In some cases, they did fail in the 60s and 70s to train young teachers adequately for their future tasks. In part, this was due to the appointment of some lecturers of poor calibre, and to having potential teachers who did not merit admission to teacher training courses. There were also those student teachers who were clearly inadequate and should not have been allowed to complete their courses. A good many of these problems were caused by teacher shortages, compounded by inadequate salary scales for teachers, and for the lecturers in Colleges of Education. These failures brought the whole system into disrepute. The New Right in general was concerned that too much emphasis was being placed on problems of race and inequality and on so-called 'social engineering'. What the Conservatives did not seem to accept was that in training teachers, there could be too much emphasis on the functional, the technical side of teaching, and that it was inevitable that young potential teachers, would need an element of idealism and concern over social injustice in their training programmes. The irony is that the general consensus in the schools was that in the 80s, that teachers entering the profession were of a higher calibre and were better trained than ever before.

## Changing the Structure of Teacher Training in London by 1978

Rachel MacMillan	}	Goldsmiths College (University of London)
Goldsmiths	}	“ “
St Gabriels	}	“ “
Dartford		Thames Polytechnic
Battersea		South Bank “
Gypsy Hill		Kingston “
Trent Park/All Saints		Middlesex “
Borough Rd/Maria Grey		Chiswick Polytechnic (West London Institute of Higher Education)
Digby Stuart	}	Roehampton Institute for Higher Education
Froebel	}	“ “
Southlands	}	“ “
Whitelands	}	“ “
Shoreditch		Brunel University

The Polytechnics were to receive University status.

### Summary – The Colleges of Education

The ILEA, as was the case with its predecessors, had a long and successful link with Training Colleges, later Colleges of Education. The sudden realisation that the system had grown ‘topsy like’, and that we were producing too many teachers, often with the wrong skills in allegedly uneconomic small colleges, spurred to government into action. The brunt of the re-organisation fell on the LEAs and, of course, the Colleges themselves, after the DES spelled out the position in the 1972 White Paper.

We would reiterate that the whole programme of rationalisation of the Colleges of Education was handled badly by government with regard to its urgency and to the time scale, which it imposed on the LEAs. The LEAs were the whipping boys for inadequate government policies. The New Right in general, had a profound suspicion of teacher training, (a) over the alleged failure to equip young teachers

with adequate pedagogical skills, and (b) that it was often too 'sociological' in content. Government did not seem to appreciate that the level of training given to young teachers in the 80s, was in general, of a higher standard. The New Right seemed to be oblivious of the possible dangers to the fabric of a democratic society of having too tight a control by government of teacher training.

The goal that Mrs Thatcher so earnestly desired, of controlling teacher training courses, had been partly achieved by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE), which had been set up by Sir Keith Joseph in 1984. This was later to be effectively controlled, after Mrs Thatcher's resignation, when the government led by John Major passed the 1993 Education Bill (Teacher Education). Teacher Education institutes would, in future, be removed from the Higher Education Funding Council and handed over to a Teacher Training Agency, directly appointed by the Secretary of State. Denis Lawton wrote; 'By this means not only would initial teacher training courses be centrally controlled, but also in-service courses for teachers (including Higher Degrees) as well as educational research'.<sup>40</sup> This powerful quango is able to perform tasks that would have been beyond the capacity of the ILEA, such as the £5,000 'golden hellos schemes' to attract people from other jobs into shortage areas. J O'Leary,<sup>41</sup> the Times Educational Correspondent, wrote of an apparent indifference by government to the plight of older teachers, whose length of service makes them expensive to employ permanently. A spokesman for the Teacher Training Agency's Communications Department, was quoted in the Times as saying, when discussing the plight of these older teachers, 'that it may be that many are in the wrong place or have the wrong qualifications!' One can be quite sure that the ILEA, as an employer with strong links with the professional associations, would never have shown such a cold, unresponsive attitude to the problem. In spite of this expression of sentiment, there is no case for the ILEA to have retained its old responsibilities for teacher training, had it survived. On the credit side, no other LEA put so much care and effort into the provision of in-service support (in effect, day release) for its first year, probationary teachers. However, as we pointed out earlier, it would have made sense for the ILEA to have had some effective input into the work and organisation of colleges, in view of the heavy commitment of the schools to teacher training, and, of course, the use of school premises by the Adult Institutes, which could be better planned by a large authority.

## **The Polytechnics**

The five Polytechnics in inner London formally enjoyed 'corporate' status and had considerable powers of independence. In a speech in 1965 at the old Woolwich Polytechnic, Tony Crosland, the Minister, gave the reasons for his new conception of the Polytechnics.

- 1) There was a need for vocational, professional and industrial courses, not met by the existing universities.
- 2) Part of Higher Education should be under social control, responsive to the needs of society.
- 3) They would provide education for working people where the traditional university just could not do this.
- 4) Technical Education was the responsibility of LEAs, here there was no inconsistency in having polytechnics under some local, social control.

The numbers of students greatly increased from 1965 – 14,000 full time students (11,000 part time) to 51,000 (59,650 part-time) in 1992. The ILEA was involved in administering the City of London Polytechnics, the Polytechnic of the South Bank, Thames Polytechnic, the Polytechnic of Central London, and for North London. The control exercised by the ILEA was not great, but it was involved in providing some governors and the provision of funds through the Block Grant. The ILEA ran into controversy with left-wing protests by students and staff, mainly over issues concerning the funding of the colleges by the Authority.

John Pratt<sup>42</sup> wrote of the end of the Polytechnic experiment, when the Council for National Academic Awards was abolished, and when the Further and Higher Education Act provided separate Funding Councils for all Higher Education institutes. (The First Chairman, Sir William Stubbs, a former ILEA Education Officer, was headhunted by Kenneth Baker for this post). Pratt pointed out that the end of the so-called binary system took Polytechnics out of local authority control. The Conservatives had nightmares over doctrinaire local education authorities having any sort of control over these institutions. Pratt writes about the wide difference in the composition of the student bodies in the Polytechnics. For

instance, Plymouth had 69% of its student body full-time, whereas only 37% were full time in London. In general, London had a higher percentage of mature students. East London had 9% of its roll consisting of overseas students. However, in a study of black minorities in education, Lyon's survey of the South Bank Polytechnic, found that 5% of the student body were from the black minority, whereas there were 14% black pupils in ILEA schools.

The Polytechnic of North London had a policy objective of increasing its percentage of students from ethnic minorities; their make up was not identified, and in 1986, 30% of all the first year students were from the ethnic minorities. John Pratt<sup>43</sup> was outspoken in his criticisms of the government's control over funding the Polytechnics. The ILEA had been criticised over its funding policies, particularly by the Rector of the Central London Polytechnic, who claimed that ILEA policies were hindering the efficiency of the Polytechnic. The ILEA suggested there was mismanagement of funds, and some members of the ILEA even suggested that the Rector should resign. Pratt saw a depressing 'statist' approach to the Polytechnics when the LEAs were taken out of any position of control, and he saw control coming through the government's quango, the Funding Council (PCFC), later HEPCE, in determining what funds would be allocated to the Polytechnics.

The ILEA was not the employer of the staff of the Polytechnics; they were employed by the governors. Lyons<sup>44</sup> writes of the supportive role of the ILEA in backing up the Department of Education and Science's request, for the establishment of 'access' courses for students with 'special needs'. Three-quarters of such courses were set up by ILEA Polytechnics. DES Inspectors had looked at European Institutions, such as the French Institutes – Universitaires de Technologie, which were essentially non-university, but had distinct policy aims, and had both academic and technical rigour in their courses. These could well have influenced the Minister, Tony Crosland, in opting for the so-called binary system.

Any real links with the local authorities were destroyed by the Conservative government, and LEAs could now be effectively controlled by the hold on the purse strings. In an article by Joel Wolchover, the Evening Standard's Education Correspondent, 'Why it all went wrong when we changed our Polys into Universities'.<sup>45</sup> he gave a depressing account of the working of the 1992 Act. He



pointed out that some Conservatives, such as George Walden, had opposed the change from Polytechnic to University. Wolchover showed that the former Polys languished at the bottom of all results league tables. Many had been severely criticised by the Quality Assurance Agency, the Higher Education watchdog, and that several Vice Chancellors had had to resign. A few former 'Polys' had done well, but London's nine new universities continued to struggle. Wolchover quotes Sir Ronald Oxburgh, Rector of Imperial College, as saying 'the move to get rid of the 'binary divide' was not an educational move, but was to do with money and politics'. He said that unit costs of education in the older universities had grown alarmingly, and that John Major had inherited Mrs Thatcher's cool attitude to them. 'There was an element of bringing the older universities to heel'.<sup>46</sup>

### **Summary – The Polytechnics**

The ILEA's control of the Polytechnics was not onerous, and by taking them out of ILEA control, there was but a change of paymaster. Secretary of State for Education, Crosland's ideas of a Polytechnic with local links were not followed; but it was not just the Conservatives who were opposed to any form of local control. The status of University was, of course, a step up in prestige. It was inevitable in many ways that the Polytechnics would be severed from LEA supervision, and certainly this was the case when they received university status. However, a considerable percentage of students in the London Polytechnics, had received their formal education in ILEA schools, and this link was obviously weakened. Wolchover's article shows that there are still real doubts about changing their status.

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## Chapter 8

### **The William Tyndale Schools' Crisis: A Catalyst for Policy Makers?**

This chapter is a 'one off' account of a particular crisis and is presented as a case study. Within the Authority, it had a profound effect on policy making.

When Mike Baker<sup>1</sup> looked back at the William Tyndale Schools' crisis, he used as his yardstick the Auld Report, based on a Public Inquiry into a major crisis, centred on two ILEA Primary Schools in 1973-1975. He commented that the Report apportioned blame to many players, including the managers (governors), but the strongest criticism was aimed at some teachers, one of whom was described as the main architect of the troubles. The report concluded that education at the Junior school was not efficient nor was it suitable to the requirements of pupils, under the terms of the 1944 Education Act.<sup>2</sup> The Auld Report covered both William Tyndale Junior and Infant schools but offered no serious criticism of the Infants school, which was under a separate head teacher. Mike Baker<sup>3</sup> confirmed the view that 'the real significance of media attention was it focused on the issues of discipline, teaching methods and curriculum. In a public forum it raised big questions about the ownership of schools, and who decides what is taught and how it is taught in them...'

Writing in 1999, with the benefit of hindsight, John Dunford and Clyde Chitty<sup>4</sup> claimed that the educational world was rocked by the William Tyndale schools' crisis in which the dispute between the ILEA and some teachers and William Tyndale Junior School, centred on the latter's claim to be allowed to operate an extreme version of child-centred education. Both Dunford and Chitty were quite clear that the Tyndale crisis had influenced Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan, in his speech at Ruskin College in 1976, when he demanded 'A great education debate in response to a general dissatisfaction by government, and opposition, with the alleged failings of a public education system.' Chitty and Dunford claimed that from now on 'the gloves were off; every aspect of education was now under scrutiny, and government intervention seemed necessary to tackle a national system which was universally suspected of having failed at a variety of levels.'<sup>5</sup>

The William Tyndale Junior Schools' crisis of 1973-74 was totally unexpected in many ways. In essence it was an assertion by the newly-appointed head of the Junior school, and some of his colleagues, that they had the right to determine and control a school's curriculum, no matter if it was highly unorthodox, and in the face of opposition of many of the school's parents, governors, and ultimately of the ILEA. The school's staff was also divided over this issue, but the head and three or four of his colleagues, were the really strong voices. The critics of this new regime complained of low educational standards in the school and of poor behaviour of many of the pupils. The crisis provoked a good deal of attention of the news media. This was, of course, a publicly maintained school and there was much public concern of just how there could be such utter confusion in why such a school was so badly run and the apparent failure of the Authorities to put the school on a stable footing.

What then were the practices at William Tyndale which precipitated this crisis? The William Tyndale Junior and separate Infants school both occupied its traditional London 'three-decker' building in Sable Street, near the main Upper Street in Islington, London N1. The Junior School occupied most of the two upper floors, but in fact shared part of the first floor with the Infants School, that was based mainly in the ground floor. The then District Inspector, ILEA, writing a profile of the school for information to potential candidates for the vacant headship in 1973 wrote, 'the children come from a wide range of backgrounds. Though these are mainly working class children, and some parents are poor, but there has been an increasing choice of the school by middle-class and professional families from the Canonbury area. The proportion of immigrants is low (roughly 16%) and there are few language problems.' The Inspector concerned, Laurie Buxton, knew the area well and his notes did not indicate any real problems for the new head teacher. In view of the high mobility of parents in inner London throughout most of the ILEA's existence, there was certainly nothing unusual about the pattern of pupil enrolment in the two Tyndale schools.

Because of the wider implications of the William Tyndale Schools' crisis, it is proposed that we use this as a case study, to examine any possible influence on an educational policy making at both local educational authority and at central government levels.

The main framework of this chapter will be, first to use the Auld Report\* to attempt the difficult task disentangling the causes of the crisis, and then to assess its repercussions on policy making at all levels. Even at this stage of our inquiry, it is certain that with regard to the ILEA, it is easier to attribute specific policies as a result of the Tyndale experience, whereas the influence on government policy making is more difficult to decide. For example, neither Mrs Thatcher nor Kenneth Baker made any reference to the Tyndale dispute in their memoirs.

The Auld Report<sup>6</sup> was commissioned by the ILEA by resolution of its Schools Sub-Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1975, under standing order 49 of the ILEA to:

1. Institute a Public Inquiry into the teaching, organisation, and management of William Tyndale Junior and Infant schools, Islington, N1, and that the purpose ...
2. To appoint a committee of Inquiry, consisting of four members of the Schools Sub-Committee and an independent legally qualified person to act as Chairman; and
3. To carry out, prior to the Public Inquiry, by means of the Authority's Inspectorate a full inspection of both schools, and put in evidence to the Public Inquiry the report of such inspections.

Robin Auld QC was duly appointed Chairman of the Inquiry and of the four Members of the ILEA who were to assist him, one of these was Mr George Carter, a London head teacher who was also an Additional (teacher) Member of the Education Committee. The Committee gave full facilities to the press to report proceedings and all witness statements and documentary evidence were made available for public scrutiny. The Report was published by the ILEA 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1976.

As result to the Inquiry, disciplinary proceedings were taken against some of the teachers by the ILEA, which led to their dismissal from the service.

\* The Auld Report was based on an official Inquiry into the dispute that was commissioned by the ILEA Schools Sub-Committee, and was chaired by Robin Auld QC.

However, as Roger Dale pointed out, the dismissal was not on the grounds of their lack of professional competence but on grounds of their taking an unofficial strike action.<sup>7</sup>

So many parties involved in the Tyndale dispute were attempting to assert their rights in an effort to legitimise their actions, that it was wise of the ILEA to ask a senior lawyer to chair the inquiry. However, no matter how thorough such an inquiry is, it does result in a 'full stop' judgement. For example, under the ILEA's staff code a teacher who was recommended for dismissal from the Authority (the disciplinary proceedings were detailed in paras 86-92 by a Tribunal of Inquiry), then the teacher concerned had the right of appeal to the Staff Appeals Sub-Committee. So it would appear that the individuals whose conduct was criticised by the Auld Inquiry could feel that they could do little to redress what could be a damaged professional reputation.

Stuart Maclure<sup>8</sup> pointed out that 'Tyndale was a struggle about power as to what body or person(s) controlled the head of the school. Moreover this crisis arose at a time when there was real concern over the direction and quality of public education, and the national news media soon realised the significance of William Tyndale.' Roger Dale quoted David<sup>9</sup> who had shown that pressure towards greater participation by government in the control of education was already building up in the late 1960s. He went on to quote Bogdanor (1979)<sup>10</sup> who wrote 'In particular the move towards greater participation in education has done much to undermine traditional arrangements. For the system of consultation worked best when only a small number of interests were involved, whose rank and file were content to defer to elites, and could therefore be relied upon to act 'sensibly', Tyndale came at a time when, for a variety of reasons, teachers were more militant than ever, parent pressure groups were emerging, aided by the news media, and local authority power and significance seemed to be at their weakest.'

The William Tyndale crisis came to the Authority's notice in the spring term of 1974, after the appointment of Mr Terry Ellis as head teacher. Terry Ellis<sup>11</sup> made it quite clear at the outset 'that the educational aims and teaching methods of the school should be determined by the teaching staff as a whole and that, if possible, there should be full agreement among the staff about such matters.' What seemed

clear, that contrary to the above statement, Terry Ellis embarked on major policy changes without having anything like a consensus of his teacher colleagues.

He then permitted Mr Haddow,<sup>12</sup> who held a post of special responsibility, and had been acting deputy head for one term, to introduce a radical system of class options in which he gave his 10 – 11 year-old children ‘a very wide choice as to how they would spend a day at school.’ Moreover, the change was implemented when the staff was clearly divided between the ‘traditionalists’ and ‘progressives’. Mrs Chowles<sup>13</sup> the deputy head, who was essentially a traditionalist, was not even aware that Mr Haddow’s class option scheme had started. The situation was summed up by Auld<sup>14</sup> ‘I am satisfied that both Mr Haddow and Mr Ellis were urging in their staff discussions, the need to consider the system of teaching adopted by the school as a vehicle for social change. Whether or not this was a correct approach, Mrs Walker and Mrs Chowles (staff members) were suspicious of and impatient with the introduction of such political and philosophical generalisations into staff room discussions.’

At this stage of their inquiry, it may be useful to list some of the main protagonists in what became a protracted struggle.

1. The head of the Junior school, Terry Ellis<sup>15</sup> made it clear that staff meetings were to be a democratic forum and not a stage-managed meeting that they had been under the previous head. This upset some members of staff who did not want ‘philosophical’ debates.
2. The most bitter dispute was between Mr Ellis<sup>16</sup> and some of his colleagues with the School managers. (Auld Para 719). The head approached Ron Lendon, Treasurer of the North-London Teachers Association, to complain that his staff was being harassed by managers and he, Terry Ellis had decided to ‘ban’ visits by managers during school hours.
3. The Infant school had no lack of support from managers and the parents, but it was completely at odds in its relationship with the Junior school. It would be fair to say that the infants school was run on more traditional lines.
4. Following from Para 3,<sup>17</sup> none of the Infants staff took part in unofficial strike action (Para 315), whereas the Junior school head and seven members



of his staff did take unofficial strike action on three occasions, May, June and July 1974, which was contrary to the ILEA's instructions.

5. On balance, Terry Ellis and his colleagues lacked the support of the bulk of the parents. The parents concerns seem to have been over alleged poor pupil behaviour and with alleged low standards of education.
6. The head of the Junior school was at odds with the inspectorate (ILEA) but it is true that Don Rice, the District Inspector, would not normally have been dogmatic in his advice to a newly appointed head. Inspectors' advice varied according to the character and attitude of the individual inspectors, but some inspectors would certainly have advised a newly appointed head not to institute radical changes at an early stage. What is interesting, is that (Para 49)<sup>18</sup> the Chief Inspector (ILEA) stated that 'inspections or checking on the quality of education being provided in the Authority's schools was not a prime function of the inspectorate'. It will be obvious that the New Right challenged what they saw as weak and innocuous functioning by an inspectorate, with regard to educational standards.
7. Mr Ellis was certainly at odds with the Education Officer, Dr Briault, who gave advice that was disregarded by Mr Ellis and some of his colleagues. This advice was that he should submit his school to a full inspection.
8. There was disagreement between some local Islington Councillors, some school managers, and the Chairman of the ILEA Schools Sub-Committee, Mr Harvey Hinds.

The complex nature of this dispute virtually made coherent policies impossible. Out of this anarchy it emerged that one teacher, quite improperly, attempted to convene a parents' meeting on her own initiative; and the staff refused<sup>19</sup> to receive managers during working hours. Another member of staff contributed an article about the crisis to the editors of the Black Papers; and finally the Head and some members of staff refused to submit to a lawful inspection of the school by the Authority's Inspectors.

At this stage in our discussion of the crisis, it is perhaps useful to recall the ambiguities of the nature of the responsibilities for the conduct and curriculum of a 'provided school', which stemmed from the 1944 Education Act. This problem clearly troubled Robin Auld<sup>20</sup> who quoted the Education Officer's introduction to

the Green Book, published by the Authority in September 1973, which stated, 'The Head in consultation with the staff controls the day-to-day organisation, conduct and curriculum of the school, but the managers should exercise general oversight and should expect to receive regular reports from the Head on the school's progress, needs, and future plans'. Robin Auld<sup>21</sup> was clearly worried about the possibilities of a loose interpretation of 'oversight', and also by the fact that most managers were 'political' appointees and frequently did not have professional teaching qualifications or proper experience'.

When interviewed<sup>22</sup> some 20 years or so after Tyndale, Sir Ashley Bramall, who was Leader of the Authority at the time of the conflict, stated that the crisis, although it exposed some incompetence by ILEA officers and inspectors, he felt that the media had 'over-hyped' the crisis and that opportunist politicians had made the most of it. The real fault, according to Sir Ashley, rested with the original 1944 Education Act which 'was far too vague'. Sir Ashley was cast in a mould in which elected Members took advice from their officers, which they were free to either accept or reject. He wanted positive advice, but he was quite prepared to disregard this, on what he considered to be practical or political grounds. Thus he did not absolve himself nor his elected Members in the Tyndale experience.

Later in this chapter, we will examine how the ILEA responded to the crisis, in the form of new policies, but first we should look briefly at the views of some educationists on the crisis, before going on to seek what, if any, were the effects of Tyndale on national policies.

Roger Dale<sup>23</sup> writing in 1989, some 10 years after the Tyndale crisis wrote, that 'rather than being the cause the Tyndale affair was merely the occasion of the major changes in the English education system', and he went on to argue that 'what happened at school did not initiate or cause these shifts, whose consequences are still unclear, but whose broad aim quite clearly is to 'restructure and re-direct the education system'. With some justification, Professor Dale saw that the disgruntled leaders of the commercial and industrial world, faced with the economic crisis of the 70s, used the allegedly, poorly educated school leavers as the 'whipping boys', for the relatively low productivity by British workers.

However, Roger Dale was clearly on the side of the teachers, who he contended, lost their professional independence after Tyndale. He was critical of the way the ILEA handled the dispute, but he could have been ideologically 'over the top' in his view, 'that oppressed teachers who were conscious of the wide asymmetries of power in English society, and were trying to redress these in pedagogical practices'.<sup>24</sup> Truth to tell, there was a not insignificant number of cases where the untrammelled power of some heads over the school's curricular arrangements had caused genuine distress for the perfectly sound teachers. At secondary level, many secondary modern schools in the 50s and 60s had jumped at the chance of using public examinations to give a framework to what they saw as a curricular 'mishmash'.

Crispin Jones<sup>25</sup> took an almost neo-Marxist approach to the demise of the ILEA which he saw as the outcome of a long historical struggle of oppositional forces, between central and local government, in the nation's capital city. Jones concentrated on the sociological aspects of the Tyndale dispute in which he saw a significant number of professional, middle-class parents, as the new driving force in school-parent relations. Auld<sup>26</sup> wrote that Terry Ellis, the head teacher, contended that 'trendy middle-class parents were the main parent activists, but he also pointed out that Mrs Dewhurst, a manager of the school, whose children were pupils of Tyndale, contended 'that there was general concern about the school among a large number of parents of very different social backgrounds'.

Professor Ken Jones<sup>27</sup> did not go along with the views of Roger Dale, but stressed Tyndale's 'condensation' of issues of a teacher autonomy, child centred pedagogy and the politicisation of schooling. He also stressed that Tyndale marked the beginning of intensive media coverage of schooling, but he did not appear to stress the public concern over standards.

When we come to assess the impact of the Tyndale affair on central government policy, and in particular on a Conservative government, we are faced by a very complex problem. The weight of evidence seems to be in Roger Dale's favour; that the Tyndale problem was 'merely the occasion of major change in the English education system which followed, and it was not the prime cause of these changes'.

Roger Dale wrote of two common explanations of Tyndale, ‘one from sympathetic liberals, who felt the teachers concerned may have been ‘fine on theory’, but were just not up to the professional demands of such a scheme, and the second theory was that of the ‘cynical radicals’, who contended that professional freedom was in reality a hoax, and that as soon as it was put to the test, then orthodox authority stamps it out.’<sup>28</sup> Of these two explanations, even a cursory reading of the Auld Report highlights the complete lack of professional good sense on the part of Terry Ellis and his colleagues, in attempting to radically change the course of the school so quickly, and it is also clear from Auld, that with regard to the ‘cynical radicals’ contention of the heavy hand of the ILEA, that the Authority was reluctant to resist the school’s freedom in curricular matters, and that it was the general publicity surrounding the school that effectively brought the Authority into play. The teachers did publish their version of the crisis<sup>29</sup> and they felt that they were ‘piggy in the middle’ of the power struggle in which some local politicians were bent on taking powers in education from the ILEA, and putting these in the hands of politicians in Islington borough. They also complained of excessive political intervention by the managers in the running of the school.

A major concern of Robin Auld<sup>30</sup> and his Committee, was over the wider political ambitions to change society, which they saw in the efforts of some teachers, in the content and delivery of the school’s curriculum. What one implies from this is that the democratic process, involving Parliament and law, is the most effective way of altering the society we live in. For example, in the William Tyndale Schools’ crisis there was a deep divide over these policy issues between the staffs of the Infants and Junior schools.

Mrs Thatcher made no mention of William Tyndale in her memoirs<sup>31</sup> but Christopher Knight<sup>32</sup> refers to a speech Mrs Thatcher made to the Annual Conference of the Association of Education Committees on October 28<sup>th</sup> 1970, as Secretary of State (for Education) when she said, ‘We must avoid becoming pre-occupied with systems and structures to the detriment of the actual content of education’. It is true that one of her nightmares was with what she considered be a ‘neutral’ moral stance by teachers, and who failed to impart positive moral and ethical standards in their pupils. She also deplored what she saw as political

indoctrination of pupils that often went back, as she saw it, to trendy teacher training institutions.

Norman Tebbit also singled out the problems of political indoctrination, as part of the ILEA's general ethos, when he replied to a question<sup>33</sup> posed by the writer of this thesis, 'Was the abolition of the ILEA inevitable under the Tories'. 'No', he wrote, 'provided the ILEA had stuck to a balanced education programme and did not indulge in political indoctrination'.

Although there was no significant movement in the Conservative party politics for the abolition of LEAs at the time of Tyndale; the ILEA's perceived weakness in the crisis must have had some late influence on the right-wing of the party, exemplified by Sheila Lawlor,<sup>34</sup> who came to advocate the abolition of all LEAs in the 80s.

Two other highly significant policy goals of the New Right must have received an impetus from Tyndale, and these were the demand for a national curriculum for schools, and the introduction of what Clyde Chitty<sup>35</sup> described as the 'reintroduction of the cherished belief of the Conservatives, selection by the back door, through such devices as opting out, open admissions, city technology colleges, and the introduction of local markets'.

In a discussion on the implications for policy makers in education, most informed commentators on the Tyndale scene stress the significance of the emergence of parent power. Roger Dale<sup>36</sup> in his conclusions to a chapter on the Tyndale problems wrote, 'First I think it made a major contribution to the articulation of parent power to a conservative rather than a radical education programme'. This was true up to a point, as the ILEA had already experienced real parent power when it introduced its consultative procedures in the late 60s and earlier 70s, concerning its proposed introduction of comprehensive schooling. But Tyndale was not necessarily a 'middle class' led parent protest, and there was in effect a fair measure of a 'Wat Tyler' type of protest from working-class parents. Parents of all social backgrounds were appalled by the apparent indiscipline of pupils.

In Robin Auld's<sup>37</sup> summary and conclusions to his report, he reviewed the role and actions of the main parties to the dispute, but he did not allocate a separate section

to the parents of the children in the two schools. This may well have been because parent action was disparate, and was not made through a single institutional body. Parental dissatisfaction with the school came mainly through incidents such as the playground meeting (12.6.74)<sup>38</sup>, which was a sort of brush fire expression of parental discontent, and also the very lively meeting of parents on 13.6.74. A further meeting of parents, teaching staff, representatives of the ILEA and Managers, took place on 9.7.74 which was equally disastrous when several members of staff were criticised for taking ‘unofficial’ strike action over their claim for a higher London Allowance for teachers. Auld<sup>39</sup> pointed out, ‘no real answers were provided to the parental concern over the running of the school’. It is well to remember that there was some support for the school from parents because a counter petition organised by a group of people acting under the name of the William Tyndale Junior Support Campaign, was circulated among NUT Members in neighbouring schools and 40 parents of William Tyndale School also signed the petition.<sup>40</sup>

It could well be argued that the potential parent power in policy making issues was, in fact, the greatest influence of Tyndale on future Conservative policy makers. Mike Baker<sup>41</sup> pointed out that the 1985 Conservative government’s White Paper, *Better Schools*, paid lip-service to the partnership that existed between government, LEAs and the Churches etc. but stressed the needs and aspirations of parents, employers, taxpayers, and ratepayers, but specifically, the White Paper recommended that parents should form the majority on school governing bodies.

If we accept Varma and Mallik’s<sup>42</sup> contention that the ‘emphasis in a case study should be on explanation’, then it would appear that Roger Dale’s persistent emphasis on Tyndale being a small part of a massive ‘centralising process’, would give substance to his claim that at the time of Tyndale, the 1944 Education Act had broken down and bore little resemblance to the scene of ‘provided’ education in the 1970s. Tyndale was significant in that it highlighted this breakdown of the Act, which anyway could probably only have worked with a sort of ‘butskellite’ political accord. But once the political fissures had appeared in educational policy goals, regardless of Tyndale, the revolution was imminent.

Before we go on to look at the ILEA's responses in policy making to Tyndale, it is worth looking at Professor Geoff Whitty's<sup>43</sup> comments on educational research and policy making, made as recently as the year 2000. He wrote 'Much educational research as well as educational policy remains stubbornly one-dimensional and de-contextualised (Ozga 2000) and that sociologists have been particularly critical of work on school effectiveness and school improvement on this score. He went on to quote the Australian sociologist Lawrence Angus, who contended 'research and policy failed to explore the relationship of specific practices to wider social and cultural constructions and political and economic interests'. The ILEA was indeed criticised by the New Right for creating a whole raft of policies that were seen to be structural efforts to improve the quality of life in inner London, and to try to remedy the dead hand of social and economic disadvantage faced by many Londoners. Few teachers with experience in the inner city would fail to see the connection between their efforts to raise standards and political schemes to lessen social and economic disadvantages of the urban environment.

The ILEA's genuine efforts to create a balance of ability among entrants to its comprehensive schools, its policies aimed at reducing the disadvantages of gender and racial discrimination, its generous student grants policies, and on smaller programmes, such as the provision of music lessons and instruments for the less well-off students, have to be seen in this light. Even the 'economic' aspect was tackled by the introduction of its London Compact (derived from the USA (2004) and a likely Conservative policy), which established a working concordat between its schools, and local commerce and industry, prove that it was aware of the sort of criticisms spelled out by Lawrence Angus. In the specific context of William Tyndale, Geoff Whitty<sup>44</sup> claimed 'that Thatcherism in education was partly successful because whole constituencies felt excluded from a social democratic settlement in the post-war era. Indeed, it appealed to them over the heads of the 'bureau professional''. He went on to suggest that policies of devolution would break the power of centralising politicians and their bureaucratic supporters. This situation could well be applied to the parents of children in William Tyndale Junior School, who felt that the conventional modes of their expression of discontent just did not work. This, to an extent was true, although the ILEA as we shall see a little later in this chapter, did respond in a most positive way to these criticisms of a lack of effective consultation with Londoners' own policies procedures.

The William Tyndale experience certainly made ILEA Members more alert to possible crises in schools. As a direct result of Tyndale, Members had regular meetings with Senior Officers of the Authority, which included the Education Officer, Divisional Education Officers, and senior inspectors, at which Members could raise issues concerning particular schools, and they expected the Divisional staff to discuss both existing problems in their schools, and problems they could anticipate.

The primary inspectorate was greatly increased in the aftermath of Tyndale. Every division had a primary school inspector. Research and Statistics Branch were asked to provide detailed 'profiles' of schools, which helped to identify problem schools. By the early 1980s, under Chief Inspector Hargreaves, inspection programmes of ILEA schools became much more systematised.

On the basis of these policy initiatives, it would be foolish to describe the ILEA, as did the New Right, as bureaucratic and resistant to change because it did bring about real policy initiatives.

The ILEA's Inspectorate suffered as a result of Tyndale because the confidence of Members was badly shaken by the experience. Tim Brighouse<sup>45</sup> a former Assistant Education Officer with ILEA, apportioned most of the blame for the escalation of the Tyndale crisis to the inspectorate; but he was unfair in this. The Education Officer, who was at the very summit of administration, was involved in the crisis, and he had been closely involved in discussions with the head of Tyndale School. In short, the whole of the ILEA administration failed in many respects.

So there can be little doubt that the administration, including the inspectorate, paid a high price for the alleged failures of Tyndale. In the eyes of many Conservatives, the inspectorate, both national and local, were seen to be colluding with the use of 'trendy' educational ideas, and were perceived to be far too tolerant of poor educational standards. But this was not a fair picture, the ILEA Inspectorate had a much more powerful input into the administrative machine and by experience was well grounded in the practical realities of inner city education. Roger Dale<sup>46</sup> missed the point when he regarded, with some suspicion, the retention by the ILEA of the



term 'Inspector' as opposed to 'adviser' in most other LEAs. The term 'adviser' implies a lack of real influence, whereas the ILEA favoured a much more positive, and more influential role, in its inspectors. It is true however, that the ILEA inspectors regained a lot of their old influence when the Members appointed David Hargreaves as Chief Inspector in the early 80s. Dr Hargreaves knew from his experience in writing the ILEA's report on its secondary schools, the Hargreaves Report,<sup>47</sup> of the vital need for pastoral support, besides the usual professional help, for teachers and heads in the inner city.

Sally Power<sup>48</sup> looked critically at the New Right's efforts to move away from the system of state-funded and state provided education, that had existed at the time of William Tyndale, and she looked at a system which would get rid of an expensive bureaucracy and would devolve power to schools by giving greater diversity and greater parental choice. She saw this process of 'privatisation' as being in effect 'marketisation', or rather 'quasi marketisation', in view of the fact that parental choice and school autonomy went hand-in-hand with increased public accountability and powerful government regulation. She also quoted some of the proponents of the quasi-market, Moe 1994<sup>49</sup> in the USA, and Pollard (1995) in the UK, who contended that the lot of families from disadvantaged communities would be improved by the free-market, over what had been previously provided. There are cases where specialist schools, new 'faith' schools and CTCs have certainly increased the level of motivation in disadvantaged groups in the inner cities, but as is often pointed out, there will always be a vastly disadvantaged 'residue', under these proposals. Professor Lauder<sup>50</sup> has written of experiences in New Zealand, which give evidence 'that the existence of such escape routes reduces pressure to improve schools in which the majority of working-class children continued to be educated'.

It is possible that by the use of market forces, William Tyndale schools' existence could have been threatened by the unpopularity with parents of the Junior school in particular. But this is unlikely as, (a) the infants school was popular with parents and, (b) at the primary school level, parents like a neighbourhood school. It became apparent to many observers of the Tyndale problem that the ILEA had the responsibility to resolve it.

Tyndale was highly unfortunate for all concerned in that it was unique, and happened in an Authority that had hundreds of highly successful primary schools. It did show up serious inadequacies on the part of its inspectors, administrators and political Members of the ILEA, but even allowing for ambiguities over just who was responsible for what, the growing crisis should have been ‘nipped in the bud’ far sooner. This could have prevented the destruction of the careers of teachers, who in a different environment could have given much to the education service. George Carter<sup>51</sup> head teacher (added Member of Authority), and one of Robin Auld’s team, opined to the writer of this thesis, when interviewed, ‘that senior officers of the ILEA got off more lightly than the District Inspector and the Divisional Officer’. Dr Derek Rushworth<sup>52</sup> the former Head of Holland Park School criticised the ILEA for its attitude to its head teachers, which he alleged ‘undermined their authority’. He saw William Tyndale as destroying the happy harmony that had existed between Members, Officers and Inspectors. He commented that Harvey Hinds, the Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee, was censured in the Auld Report, but ‘that no officers or inspectors were disciplined for their part in Tyndale’. There can be little doubt that, had such measures being taken against the local officers and inspectors in Islington, then these would also have involved the most senior officers of the Authority.

## **Conclusion**

The ‘New Right’ drew on the weaknesses in provided education that were exposed by the crisis, and they had some justification. However, there is much to be said for Roger Dale’s line of reasoning that Tyndale, with regard to policy issues, was a part of profound changes that were taking place in the British educational scene in which power was moving towards central government.

When Kenneth Baker was interviewed<sup>53</sup> he stated that two of his many aims behind the introduction of the National Curriculum were to raise educational standards and to ‘tighten up’ the curriculum, to prevent the sort of excesses that had occurred at Tyndale. But his belief in the need for improved guidelines in the curriculum had preceded Tyndale, and in this sense, Tyndale could be seen as a ‘catalyst’ for his policies. However, it would be fair to say that Tyndale did play a part in these major

policy issues, and the existence of a national curriculum did greatly alter the role of school inspection teams.

Perhaps one of the strongest forces, which we have already commented on, was the emergence of 'parent power' in 'provided' education. The New Right saw parent power as a way to defeat bureaucratic local authorities and to give power to the consumers of education. What is not clear is did the New Right see that articulate, more powerful parents could get far more educational advantage for their children against the less privileged parents? Geoff Whitty wrote,<sup>54</sup> 'there is now considerable empirical evidence that, rather than benefiting the disadvantaged, the emphasis on parental choice and school autonomy in the British reforms has further disadvantaged those unable to compete in the market.'

The ILEA was given little credit by the Thatcher government for the way it responded to the Tyndale crisis. It was in fact in much better shape, in spite of the government's war of attrition against the Authority in the 80s, on its demise, than it had ever been. There was one cloud on the horizon, however, that persisted in the early 80s and that was the none too efficient way the ILEA handled the teachers pay and conditions of work dispute, and this had resonances of Tyndale. Parents were concerned about the impact of the dispute on their children.

However, the main criticism of the New Right that Tyndale was symptomatic of an inefficient, politically inept education authority just does not hold water if we consider the Authority's extraordinary response to the crisis, in which the Authority provided the one main instrument at getting at the truth. The trouble with William Tyndale was that it could give ammunition to a lot of critics of English/Welsh education, and the ILEA in particular. We could name a lack of a coherent curriculum, ill discipline in schools, politically biased teachers and indifferent control of schools by governors and LEAs, but it was, in fact, a catalyst for change. The list of policy and institutional changes made by the ILEA, listed in this chapter, gives some idea of this, as does the 'benefit' of a national curriculum. What we have argued in this chapter is that Tyndale, although unfortunate, was not a mark of obloquy to be levelled at the ILEA, but as part of an, albeit painful, change in the structure and method of public education.

Although government policy comes under scrutiny of Parliament, the ILEA was much closer to its 'consumers' than a central government. In the first place, it was electorally dependent on a much more closely defined electorate; in the case of Tyndale it used an independent Chairman in its Inquiry, when it was under no pressure to do so. All Chairmen of Governors had the right of direct access to the Leader of the Authority, and all major policy developments were preceded by consultative exercises such as the comprehensive schools policy programme in which Members and Officers met with parents in schools.

Tyndale caught the ILEA 'off balance'. There is little doubt that the ambiguities over just where real power resided, did not help the ILEA but even so, it did not respond to the crisis with real expedition. In some ways, Tyndale could be seen as part of the process, which was beginning to emerge, of a great shift of power in maintained education towards central government.

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## Conclusion to Part 2

In this section we have examined the case that the ILEA was a slow and unresponsive bureaucracy by looking at three case studies: those of the Special Needs Service, Adult, Further and Higher education and the William Tyndale Affair. These cases have been chosen to because they test the criteria developed by which an initial judgement could be made in a range of areas and they provide a window on the workings of the bureaucracy. In the case of the Tyndale affair it was chosen because it is recognised that not all worked smoothly within the ILEA bureaucracy but at the same time it also shows how the ILEA could respond rapidly when faults were exposed. While it is difficult to pass definitive judgements about the performance in these three areas it has been the intention to establish a *prima facie* case that the claim that the ILEA was cumbersome and unresponsive as claimed by the New Right cannot be upheld.

In section 3, we examine two further claims: that the ILEA tolerated low educational standards and that it did not provide value for money. These chapters go to the heart of the criticisms that were made of the ILEA because if the criticisms assessed above about the working of the bureaucracy are hard to establish in any definitive way, then where money and exam outcomes are at stake, there is at least the possibility of a greater degree of objectivity.

**Part 3**  
**Did the ILEA Give Value for Money**  
**And**  
**Did it Tolerate Low Educational Standards?**



## Chapter 9

### Educational Standards: Problems and Policies

**‘Most studies of secondary school effects have been criticised for concentrating on too few measures of educational outcomes (usually examination success and attendance), and studies of the junior age group have frequently focused only on children’s attainments in basic skills.’**

**School Matters, The Junior Years  
Mortimore P, et al**

**‘The ILEA which spent more per pupil than any other education authority and achieved some of the worst examination results.’<sup>1</sup>**

**...The Authority (ILEA) became a byword for swollen bureaucracy, high costs, low academic standards and political extremism.’<sup>2</sup>**

The two quotations above, by Mrs Thatcher and Kenneth Baker respectively, were made by two of the most avowed critics of the ILEA. They were also in positions of great power, and the prominence of low academic standards in ILEA schools, in both of their comments, gives significance to this chapter.

These allegations of low attainment in ILEA schools, particularly secondary schools were challenged by the ILEA, which insisted that the results had to be seen in context because many of their schools were working in a complex and demanding major inner city environment.

Our task in this chapter is to examine the ILEA’s performance, in the light of these criticisms, which must take account of the many problems in providing education in the inner cities. The question of raising standards in the inner cities is, we would suggest far more complex than the New Right contends. The ILEA had a good idea of the breadth of the problem and saw the solution in hugely diverse support programmes. Some of these measures included a well developed Education Welfare Service, a generous interpretation of a pupil’s right to have free school meals, community support programmes for specific racial groups and generous help for its students. In fact this community approach was on the lines of Gerald Grace’s<sup>3</sup> approach which condemned many urban education reformers (including school improvers) who have been guilty of ‘producing naïve school centred solutions with no sense of the structural, the political and the historical as constraints.’ Geoff Whitty<sup>4</sup> also pointed out the ‘best way of improving schools in disadvantaged areas

would probably be to transpose some of the socio-economic features of the sorts of areas in which the majority of high performing schools are placed'. However, working under a New Right government that underplayed the significance of socio-economic influences in school under-attainment, then this type of massive urban renewal is unrealistic. But at least, the former ILEA had more resources and access to more support agencies than have the small inner city borough education authorities created by the 1988 Education Reform Bill. Clyde Chitty criticised the Conservative governments for failing to support Professor Halsey's views in connection with his studies of Education Priority Areas, that 'the teacher cannot reconstruct the community unaided ... the needs of the neighbourhood for health, housing, employment and other services will be found to impinge directly on ... teaching tasks. The implication is clear; educational priorities must be integrated into community development.<sup>5</sup> This thinking is much in line with the ILEA's view of inner city pupil under-achievement problems.

In having to approach this huge problem of urban reconstruction, the ILEA took some encouragement from studies such as *Fifteen Thousand Hours*<sup>6</sup> and *School Matters*<sup>7</sup> in which the general problems of inner city life were seen to be the most significant influences on schooling but that some schools which were well-led could 'buck the trend'. In the same vein, as an inspector who worked on the implementation of the Education Priority Areas, although the criteria for assessing a school's right to additional help, under the scheme, were elaborate and well worked out by the Authority, some schools that were well-led and had stable staffing had not the same needs for the 'extra resources'. But in general the Authority was right to give additional resources to schools serving deprived districts.

One of the great strengths of the ILEA was it was able to provide influential organisations that could not possibly be provided by smaller local authorities, because of economies of scale. These included the ILEA's Research and Statistics Branch, specialist subject teacher's centres, a comprehensive central library and a wide range of field centres. In the case of the Research and Statistics Branch, it had the capacity to undertake scholarly research, especially in the inner city environment that could actually influence policy development, both by its officers and its Members.

The ILEA's Education Officer, Sir William Houghton expressed the view to the governors of St. Clement Danes school that a good school, essentially orderly, with a committed teaching staff and possessing a good sense of community involvement need not be obsessed with examination performance.<sup>8</sup> When this was translated into policy, the ILEA under some pressure from the teacher's union, the Inner London Teachers Association (branch of the NUT), did not think it was policy to publish schools' examination results, because it could hinder the development of schools that were struggling in a difficult urban environment. The discussion over whether or not 'weighted' performances, as against 'raw' scores should be published had gone on for some time. The issue was resolved when, under the more left-wing leadership from 1981, it was decided to give the straight examination performance of all ILEA schools.<sup>9</sup> Frances Morrell, the ILEA Leader, wrote, 'During the years that it had been withheld (exam results), parents had been denied information they had a right to know about schools, and the policy making of the Authority was damaged.'<sup>10</sup> In this change of direction over the publication of school's examination results, Ms Morrell may well have been influenced by the New Right's insistence on publishing these results<sup>11</sup> but her decision, as she implies was based on sound educational policy. It is of interest that her predecessor, as Leader, Sir Ashley Bramall, acknowledged in an interview, 'that with hindsight, he might well have agreed during his tenure of office to publish these results'.<sup>12</sup>

In fairness to Frances Morrell she did, according to Stuart Maclure,<sup>13</sup> make 'her great contribution to the articulation of an overriding aim, Quality and Equality, and drove at it with unremitting energy.' The irony is that the quality aspect, if not the equality, was precisely a goal of the New Right. During the critical years of the 1980s, the ILEA faced a very different Secretary of State for Education, when Kenneth Baker took over from Sir Keith Joseph in 1985. Frances Morrell<sup>14</sup> appeared to have some regard for Sir Keith even though there were great differences in policy goals but she had less sympathy for Sir Keith's successor, Kenneth Baker. John Tomlinson saw two camps in Conservative policy making in education when he wrote, 'There were two schools in the Tory Camp, the old Conservatives and the New Radicals. The first group could accept centralisation for the purposes of efficiency, accountability and the removal of power from socialist local governments. The second group, the Radicals, had their eyes on the market, on parental freedom of choice, the crushing of producer domination, and central

control over basic subjects of the curriculum (the rest to be determined by the market). It would seem that the main goals, the first was much more in keeping with those of Sir Keith, whereas the second group would seem more in tune with Kenneth Baker. In neither of these policy aims is there any specific urge to give real support to education initiatives in the deprived inner cities. In fact the nub of the argument between the ILEA and the New Right, was that from the ILEA's point of view, the New Right, in alleging that the ILEA had low standards in its schools, failed utterly to admit the unfairness that existed in the sort of market-led education that could help to promote the wealthier families' interests as against what the poorer, less well informed parents could get. Michael Young<sup>15</sup> pointed out that this not only involved purchasing private education by the wealthy, but included getting into the catchment areas of the superior state schools. The ILEA claimed the whole range of problems, housing, cost of living, some teacher shortages, all had a significant influence on a pupil's performance whereas, the New Right contended these difficulties were a 'smoke screen' to cover the ILEA's professional incompetence and obsession with political doctrine.

In this chapter, we propose to divide our inquiry into the alleged low standards into a primary school section, a secondary school section and a third on Ethnic Minority education, which does not imply low standards, but is an attempt to assess both the problems and strengths of policies, covering inner London's diverse and fluctuating school population.

### **The Primary Schools**

In this section we propose to include some reference to the ILEA sponsored research *School Matters: The Junior Years*<sup>16</sup>, which was sponsored by the ILEA. This research project involved some fifty ILEA primary schools, in various parts of inner London.

A prime complaint made by the New Right against the ILEA was that the Authority was an education spendthrift.<sup>17</sup> There can be no doubt that the ILEA funded its schools generously, probably because it believed they would give better education for pupils, many who came from a deprived background. Table F (1987-88) shows unit costs per pupil in the ILEA (primary) as £1715. This figure may seem high but

compared with the Borough of Brent £1417, which also faced great social and economic problems, the figure is, in our view reasonable, because of the greater range of services (outlined in this chapter) and the higher costs of housing. The boroughs of Newham and Ealing, all with relatively high cost services are about £500 per capita in excess of the ILEA.

Inspectors who come into contact with primary school teachers, especially first appointment teachers and those who have transferred to ILEA service, comment favourably on the generous provision of books and teaching aids by the ILEA. The ILEA was quick to support the initiatives of the Education Priority Area scheme, that provided additional resources and staffing for schools that were assessed to be in socially deprived areas.<sup>18</sup>

In terms of 'professional control', the ILEA traditionally delegated great powers to individual schools, and its scheme of the Alternative Use of Resources (1973), which allowed schools great discretion in spending on either material support, or increased staffing (teaching and ancillary help), added to this freedom. As early as 1971, the ILEA had revised its Instrument of Management to add the head teacher, a teacher manager, and two elected parent governors/managers besides the seven managers appointed by the Authority and five from the borough to its managing/governing bodies.

Most primary school heads in London appeared to see the high mobility of pupils and staff as their greatest problem, certainly before the early 1980s, when unemployment reduced teacher turnover in inner London. Inner London had the advantage of a fair range of supply teachers as the capital city was a venue for many young teachers from overseas, particularly from Australasia.

With regard to standards in school, the ILEA did relatively well, when HMI completed a survey of the ILEA in 1980, they gave the Authority a favourable report.<sup>19</sup> This report drew attention to the sharp disparities of affluence in inner London, to the adverse effects of the loss of inner city manufacturing on job opportunities. The Report mentioned the high percentage of people living in rented accommodation, often in areas of urban decay. It also expressed concern over the high level of single parent families (14.2% in 1986). It was unusual in this type of

report for Inspectors to dwell so much on social and economic problems as they did this report. In terms of ILEA politics, the proposed cut of 4% in the ILEA total budget (1980-81) was challenged within the ILEA Labour party, at a time when unemployment was beginning to take effect.

When we come to look at the actual performance of primary school pupils, the figures for the London Reading Test are encouraging.

### **London Reading Test for 1978 and 1983**

1	London Mean	1978	100.0
		1983	100.8
2	National Mean	1978	100.0
		1983	100.1

ILEA (1983)

The results of the London Reading Test are satisfactory especially with regard to the complex social and ethnic problems faced by the ILEA. Stuart Maclure<sup>20</sup> pointed out that ‘in 1975, birth figures showed that 41% of all children born in London were to mothers who came from outside the UK. The biennial (1981) Language Survey showed 13.9% of pupils had a home language other than English; 19% were in this category in 1985, 23% in 1989 and 25% in 1989, by which time the number of pupils in this category had increased to 70,221.’ One has to bear in mind that inner London, to a marked degree, depended on teachers who were in their first three years of a teaching career, and most had no experience whatsoever of multi-ethnic education. Head teachers benefited from the enthusiasm of these young teachers, particularly in the mid 80s onwards, when ILEA inspectors considered new entrants were on the whole well trained, but the cost of living for many of these young teachers led to their departure, at a time when they had developed into very ‘useful’ teachers.

A real problem for the ILEA was that in spite of the Reading Test statistics, there was a persistent claim by many ILEA secondary head teachers that their new intakes lacked reading and language skills. For example, Dr Rhodes Boyson,<sup>21</sup> the head of Highbury Grove School, who achieved ministerial status in Mrs Thatcher’s

government, stated that in 1971, 43 children of his 11+ intake of 240 children had reading ages below nine years of age, and that this number had increased, one year later. To prove his point, one would need detailed information about the performance of his 'feeder schools', which was not mentioned. It would also have been interesting to have had the performance levels of these children at the end of their third year in the school in 1974.

The ILEA undoubtedly did delegate considerable powers to its schools with regard to the curriculum and the internal organisation of its schools. This was, of course, one of the issues at stake in the William Tyndale school's controversy (Chapter 5). The Authority did not, for example, dogmatize over whether or not streaming should be introduced into its schools. An article in the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) Bulletin<sup>22</sup> would seem to support the ILEA's policy when it went on to say, 'Even as Chris Woodhead, the then Chief Inspector, Ofsted, was proclaiming that setting and streaming were the answer to primary school teaching, the NFER published research showing the positive effects of streaming were often outweighed by the early labelling of children as failures.'

The fact that the ILEA had the capacity to mount major surveys, in both primary and secondary education is an indication of its ability to investigate the performance of its schools. The following paragraph gives some idea of the way surveys at depth could help the ILEA develop policy.

School Matters<sup>23</sup> was a major survey into the effectiveness of some fifty primary schools. It would not be possible to give a detailed account of a most intensive study of these schools contained in a 300 page account. Suffice to say, the survey looked at three questions,

- (a) Are some schools more effective than others, when variations of the intakes of pupils are taken into account? The succinct answer was, 'Yes, schools make a difference.'
- (b) the second question posed was 'Are some schools or classes more effective than others for particular groups of children', the answer was 'no'.

- (c) The third major question was, what were the factors which contributed most to school effectiveness? This poses a huge problem, and the survey attempted to examine the ways in which the most effective schools differ from those which are the least effective. This type of study was valuable to educationists in general, it was a survey that involved the expertise of many, who were not in the employ of the ILEA, but it showed how the ILEA had the strength and commitment to make this intensive study of 50 schools in the ILEA. It is possible to make a good case for having a powerful alternative to central government, as the prime source of policy making, as was the case with the ILEA.

The survey 'School Matters' was published in the same year that the government abolished the ILEA, but no doubt it would be of value to most primary schools, not necessarily those in an inner city setting. With regard to the ILEA's own policy making influences on its schools, in an important paragraph<sup>24</sup> on this theme, one can see that the ILEA had learned much, possibly in part from the William Tyndale experience, and also much about differential funding, from the Education Priority Area policies, when we quote, 'Schools are answerable to inspectors or advisors within the local education authority. Mention has also to be made of the growing influence of the Authority's curriculum guidelines. In addition the Authority could influence the provision of resources for schools through the differential allocation of funding, according to indices of need.'

Were the New Right publicists right in accusing the ILEA of permitting low standards, in this case in its primary schools? What seems to be clear from School Matters is that the New Right seemed to underestimate the enormous pressures on parents, teachers and pupils in inner city schools. It is of note that the HMI Chief Inspector's report on ILEA schools<sup>25</sup> (a) gave the ILEA a generally satisfactory report on the performance of its primary schools but also gave prominence to the effects of a demanding social environment on its schools, which many New Right politicians seemed to underestimate.



## **The Secondary Schools**

One suspects that the ILEA secondary school's performance, with regards to results achieved in public examinations, was the main target of the New Right and not the primary schools.

Tamsyn Imison<sup>26</sup> as a London secondary school head teacher wrote 'The Government (New Right) claimed that the reason for the ILEA's abolition was, central costs, policies on non-educational issues and tolerance of low standards; yet central costs increased ninefold after abolition. The issues on which the government denigrated the ILEA were gender and race. On standards the ILEA was more anxious than most provincial LEA's to address good issues of teaching and learning, but London faced massive problems'. She did not give evidence to support her claims over high costs ensuing from the abolition of the ILEA nor of her assertion that the ILEA cared more for raising standards than did provincial LEA's. But she was right in her assertion that the ILEA did have the raising of standards as a prime policy issue. This was explained by Frances Morrell,<sup>27</sup> a former Leader of the ILEA. There were a number of factors that made teaching to high standards difficult in inner London. Briefly, they were, the inner city problems of social deprivation, the racial complexity of many districts in the ILEA, the attraction, in many parents eyes, of voluntary aided schooling, usually controlled by church bodies (30% of inner London's children attended these schools), where their own governors controlled admissions policies; a long standing reorganisation of ILEA schools on a comprehensive basis, and a sharply falling school population in the 70s and 80s in inner London. Moreover the actual task of teaching seemed to become more demanding from the 60s onwards. The extremely high cost of living for teachers often led to the instability of school staffing.

Professor Peters<sup>28</sup> wrote, 'A teacher can no longer rely on his traditional authority ... if he is to hold his own against vociferous and intelligent parents and against every kind of expert, who is advising him as to what ought to be done about schools and children. A working knowledge of psychology and sociology, as well as of subjects to teach, is becoming essential to a teacher as a knowledge of physiology and anatomy is to a doctor.' In this context one has to see, not always recognised by

the New Right, is that teaching in the inner city puts additional burdens on teachers, because of the complex background of many of the youngsters they teach.

Most inner city inspectors of schools would agree that teaching in an inner city comprehensive school was not so much a question of numbers of teachers available, but more a question of the professional skills of teachers to be able to handle their pupils. The traditional 'shortage areas' such as Mathematics, the Sciences, Design and Technology, and Modern Languages were bound to persist where the pay of teachers was not particularly high, and these specialist teachers, could earn much more in other occupations.

The protracted restructuring of secondary schools in London presented problems. As a specific example of this, Fulham Gilliatt school, a medium sized girl's comprehensive school in Fulham, which had emerged from an amalgamation of two schools (1968), had for two years (1974-76), four teachers of mathematics, but not one of these had a degree in mathematics. A further difficulty faced by the ILEA, was the nature of the job opportunities for its school leavers, where boys in particular, were affected by the loss of opportunities when local industries in inner London became less important. And at the same time, the demands of the post-Fordist, global economies, were beginning to change the whole nature of the education process on the international scene.

The ILEA to its credit mounted a supportive scheme for a major study, *Fifteen Thousand Hours*,<sup>29</sup> in which it provided funds, the support of its Research and Statistics Branch and the involvement of some twenty of its non-selective schools. The goal of the survey was what effects do schools have on children, and this boiled down to a comparison of 12 ILEA secondary schools by collecting data on the attendance of pupils exam results, and behaviour patterns, of some two thousand pupils over their entire secondary school careers. Professor Bruner<sup>30</sup> summed up the importance of this work when he wrote, 'This searching study re-opens the debate about the importance of schools as an educational force and corrects much of the negative impression created by earlier research.'

This work gave the ILEA much needed guidance about how these schools functioned and filled a gap, where 'relatively little is known about the broader

patterns of life in schools and about what kind of environments for learning which they present to their pupils.<sup>31</sup> In this investigative mood, the ILEA then commissioned three major surveys in the 80s of its Special Needs education, Fish Report, primary education, the Thomas Report and secondary education, the Hargreaves Report.<sup>32</sup> All of these studies had the specific aim of bringing new thinking into the ILEA, its administration and its schools.

We then come to the crucial question, even allowing for all the difficult environmental factors facing inner London schools, posed by the New Right, that ILEA schools, in this case secondary schools, were performing badly.

The most obvious approach would be to compare the ILEA's examination performance with other inner city authorities. This was done<sup>33</sup> by Dr Gray of Sheffield University and his colleague, D Jesson. This work did not accept 'raw' exam results but built in compensatory factors of social deprivation in arriving at a 'league table'. In this the ILEA ranked 56 out of 96 LEA's in examination results. This performance was seen as about 'par for the course'.

There was clearly some justification for the ILEA's reluctance, up to 1983, to publish league tables of the examination performance for a variety of reasons, not least the dispiriting influence it could have on teachers in less favoured schools.

The Research and Statistics Branch ILEA Examination Indicators 1979-84 show steady improvement, particularly in the 4 CSE Grades (1-3)

<b>Exam Indicators 1979-84 (%)</b>						
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1984</b>
1 CSE	8.7	8.7	8.8	8.9	9.6	9.5
2 CSE (Grades 1-5)	85.8	87.6	86.8	86.9	88.1	88.1
3 O Levels A-C	49.7	49.5	50.8	51.3	53.3	54.2
4 CSE Grades 1-3	29.0	25.4	34.4	35.4	40.8	42.5
5 A Levels (A-E)	61.4	62.6	63.9	62.9	64.1	64.1
6 1 or more 'A' Levels	40.1	52.1	40.7	52.8	43.3	37.3

League tables are, at the superficial level, fairly easy to comprehend, and have had great influence on parents, especially in the process of selection of schools for their children. They do not necessarily do justice to much education research, the Plowden Report, work by Professor Halsey\*, Dr Gerald Grace\*, not to mention Fifteen Thousand Hours and School Matters, that acknowledge the huge imposition on a child's progress of a difficult urban environment. No league table of a school's performance would, in our view, have significance unless it had some built in factor, allowing for educational and social disadvantages faced by youngsters and teachers, in a particular school. In the case of the ILEA, its efforts to 'share' ability ranges of secondary schools' intakes is a case in point, and its allocation of additional staffing and financial support to schools in a socially deprived environment, is a further example of this principle.

Some league tables can be misleading and one needs to 'read between the lines'. In ILEA Division 1, now the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the Times 11/1/07, published Government league tables of examination performance. In the first place, they indicated that 6 Voluntary Aided schools achieved results (more difficult because the government insisted that the 5 GCSE passes should include English and Maths) that were in line with the normally high performing best independent schools. If we assume that voluntary aided schools, in the days of the ILEA, and now, have their own admissions policies, and that in the days of the ILEA, well over 30% of the yearly intake of secondary schools entered voluntary aided schools, this certainly 'weakened' the intake of the ILEA's county schools. If you add the factors that ILEA schools, in particular, faced the brunt of the general fall in school rolls, in the 70s and 80s, and that five of the six county schools had barely emerged from difficult reorganisations, this surely put the county schools, in the days of the ILEA at a distinct disadvantage. The Times 11/1/07 article then goes on to give a league table indicating local authority performance in public examinations, that could be misleading. For example, it showed the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham well up in the national League Table, 37<sup>th</sup> out of 140 LEA's. In fact, the figures include two of the highest performing independent schools in the country, and three voluntary aided, one grant maintained status, which achieved almost similar results. It is obvious that it does not give a fair picture of the performance of the maintained schools.

\* Halsey A H (1991) Children in Society Vol 7 No. 2 (p125)

\* Grace G (1984) Education in the City (p12) – Routledge & R Paul

Both the New Right and New Labour have found the problem of the under-performing inner city school a difficult nut to crack. Local authority control of schools is out of favour, and there seems to be a little planned development of Academies, Faith schools, Specialist schools, all well funded, often in highly expensive new modern buildings, outside the jurisdiction of the local authority.

When Will Woodward interviewed Kenneth Baker,\* Kenneth Baker claimed that the star performer of his comprehensive 1988 Education Act was the introduction of the National Curriculum. It was this that introduced tests at the ages of 7, 11 and 14, with its key stages. This, accompanied by publishing examination results, was the effective way of raising standards and providing parents with proper information about their children's progress. However, Kenneth Baker was criticised by Mrs Thatcher for introducing a fussy, over-prescriptive National Curriculum, affecting a number of subjects taught, which Baker freely acknowledged in this interview. Kenneth Baker was fully aware that his centralising of the curriculum, and decentralising the budgets ran 'counter to leftish' orthodoxy, but he claimed his reforms remained intact today. However, there are still serious problems of over-testing at three stages and, the problem of under-performing schools in the inner city has not been cracked. As recently as 20.4.08, the Observer claimed that 'A-C' levels in the inner cities had improved but these results were offset by alarming levels of youngsters (20%) leaving school with no qualifications whatsoever. The ILEA would have been in a position to make a contribution to the creation of a better National Curriculum because of its experience in the inner city and its bank of statistical evidence.

It could be argued that the ILEA should have been more determined in establishing closures of failing schools, this was certainly the view of Denis Felsenstein, ILEA Chief Inspector of Schools, a view expressed in September 2004, after he had left the service. This was not an easy process as it involved a major upheaval in neighbouring schools, which could have a destabilising effect on schools that were often under pressure themselves. Parental opposition to the closure of their school could also be a problem.

\* Education Guardian 25.03.08

## **Ethnic Minority Education**

The post-war influx of children from the New Commonwealth posed problems in the 50s and 60s, when there was already existing pressure for places in primary schools. The natural tendency of racial groups to settle in particular districts created certain problems, but ILEA and LCC decided at an early stage, that there would be no 'bussing' policies.

The ILEA, through its Special Needs and Educational Priority Allowance Scheme, endeavoured to pump additional resources into schools that had a high percentage of children with a multi-ethnic background or other identified specific needs. The reasons why different ethnic groups performed rather better than others was complex. But from a practical teaching point of view, pupil mobility was also a major problem.

Looking at the overall pattern of the ILEA policy making processes, there seem to be two important phases. The first, in the early 1970s, following a visit by educationists to New York, which was led by Peter Newsam, Deputy Education Officer ILEA, was when Peter Newsam felt ILEA policies were inadequate in this field, and he instituted a branch of the Inspectorate, Multi-ethnic education; and the second phase, was after Frances Morrell became Leader in 1981, when she called for a much more vigorous programme to help to diminish forms of racial discrimination.

Dr Alan Little, a former head of the Research and Statistics Branch, wrote of the inherent contradictions of restricting immigration and of attempting to eliminate discrimination by government.<sup>34</sup> He saw a failure to provide social policies, responsive to the needs of a true multi-racial society, and a failure to ensure equality of opportunity between racial and ethnic groups, as a national problem. In 1980, in the ILEA, 7% of all live births were to women from Ireland, 23% from the New Commonwealth plus Pakistan and Bangladesh and 12% to mothers from other countries; 40% of all births were to immigrant mothers. Dr Little expected that, as many of the black children were living in areas of some social disadvantage, there would be very high concentrations of them in certain schools. Statistics did not

confirm this; in 1976, 8 out of 10 black children were in schools where black children made up less than one fifth of the total in school.

The following table, compiled by Dr Little, shows how different ethnic groups were functioning at different levels.

**Percentage of pupils, fully educated, placed in the upper quartile, on transfer to secondary schools ILEA 1968**

	<b>English</b>	<b>Maths</b>	<b>Verbal Reasoning</b>
West Indian Origin	9.2	7.4	7.2
Asian Origin	19.3	20.2	21.1
Indigenous	25.0	22.9	19.8

Alan Little came to realise that special policies were needed. He suggested the following:

- 1) The facts of under-performance are there; black children need special programmes.
- 2) There must be early detection and positive intervention is needed.
- 3) There must be an awareness of racial discrimination at all levels. Teaching programmes on racial issues were needed.
- 4) This calls for local initiatives.
- 5) There is a need for more awareness, more knowledge, in cultural matters as a basis for action.
- 6) Positive discrimination is needed.
- 7) Racial disadvantage goes with general social disadvantage, i.e. a new approach to community development is needed.

Alan Little was aware that all these policies, laudable as they were, posed huge problems for over stretched inner city LEAs. It seemed quite clear that to go any distance to achieving these goals, required a massive change in the politics of central government.

In the 1980s, some researchers<sup>35</sup> considered that the differences in examination results attributable to ethnic groups are much smaller than those attributable to the school level. In other words, what school a child goes to makes far more difference than which ethnic group he or she belongs to. Smith D, Tomlinson S (1989) *The School Effect Policy Studies Institute* (p281).

This view was challenged by Nuttall D, Goldstein H (et al)<sup>36</sup> who analysed ILEA public exam results by ethnic groups, and found very different levels of attainment by ethnic groups, lumped together under the heading 'Asian'. They considered this term should not be used. They found that at 'O' Level (5 or more 'O' Levels), Pakistani children achieved 17.7% success, Bangladeshi 4.2% and Indian 17.7% (ILEA 1987). After taking into account differences in verbal reasoning, ability and sex, the performance of students of Pakistani, Indian, Greek or S E Asian, performed better than English students.<sup>37</sup>

This research gives some indication of the capacity of the ILEA to conduct worthwhile research and which would have been difficult for either small LEAs or a government department to carry out.

Christine Mabey,<sup>38</sup> who worked in the ILEA Research and Statistics Branch, completed her PhD thesis on the achievement of black pupils. Her study was to find out why black children had done less well, and just how their level of reading competence correlated with later academic achievement. She also showed the ILEA to advantage in the way it collected statistics on multi-ethnic issues to help guide policy making. She stated<sup>39</sup> that the ILEA was one of only 7 LEAs, out of a total of 104 that kept records of reading attainment, allied to ethnic background. Central government, from 1966 collected statistics from LEAs, concerning their numbers, of immigrants, details of ages and of where the parents were born. The statistics were to provide a basis for funding LEAs (Form 7i), but Mrs Thatcher, as Secretary of State for Education, abolished the process and did not want this information to form any basis of government grant to its LEAs!



Christine Mabey came to the conclusion that pupils in well organised primary schools, that diagnosed reading problems at an early stage, and had good remedial teachers, could well do better when they transferred to secondary schools.

Professor Peter Mortimore, also a former ILEA officer, insisted that one had to show that the potential for achievement did exist. He saw the need for schools to combat a poor psychological self-image.<sup>40</sup> He stressed that children of West Indian parents were twice as likely to be poor readers as those from parents born in the UK (ILEA Literacy Survey 1969 p103), and schools could do much to remedy this situation. His findings accord with Dr Mabey's work on reading competence.

Kysel showed that many black students performed poorly at school but went on to study 'O' Levels at Colleges of FE. The figure for attendance at Colleges of FE by black students was 20% of the total enrolment, with an estimate of black students being 13% of the age group as a whole. It is possible that the more adult atmosphere of the college was more congenial to some black students.<sup>41</sup> When we come to address the working of ILEA's Adult Education system the high number of such students puts pressure on classes, but points to inadequacies on the part of the schools. Christine Mabey in her thesis suggested that it was wrong to subject youngsters to repeated examinations but she asked for one year Foundation Style courses, not in schools, to help remedy the situation.

The disproportionately high percentage of black pupils who were suspended from school in inner London, often for disruptive behaviour, was a major problem. These youngsters, far more boys than girls, were in real danger of falling out of the educational process permanently. Mabey's findings, indicate a partial solution to the problem. If tests showing early failure in basic skills were used to apply well organised remedial measures, it is quite possible that many of these youngsters would not have begun to struggle in their work in the secondary schools. Pupils who were 'switched off' tended to become disruptive. Her statistics of performance in public examinations are included at the end of this chapter.

On balance, the ILEA performed creditably in the field of multi-ethnic education. It researched the problem in a way that central government could not match. The problems presented in multi-ethnic education have to be seen in the need for community support schemes, that were clearly beyond the capacity of the ILEA to provide. Through its Special Needs and Educational Priority areas, the ILEA did give additional help to schools with high percentages of children from the ethnic minorities. The ILEA was ahead of its time in appointing an influential multi-ethnic Inspectorate and advisory teachers. The complexity of the type of provision that is made for dealing with aspects of multi-ethnic education is summed up by Broadfoot<sup>42</sup> 'To understand the differences in assessment practice of countries such as England and France, it is necessary to consider the whole fabric of their respective social orders.' It would also require some knowledge of the pupils' cultural and social background that the ILEA tried to provide in its multi-ethnic services.

### **Summary**

The ILEA had something of a dilemma, the smaller modern special schools often had a family atmosphere in which children from the ethnic minorities prospered, but some schools lacked the necessary properly trained teachers for this type of work. However, many of the parents, understandably, felt their children to be 'isolated' from mainstream education, hence their opposition to Special Needs schools. The problem was not resolved in the ILEA's lifetime.

Any consideration of standards in the ILEA, must also take into account the range of pupil support programmes, the specialist teaching, such as that provided for music instrumental teaching, the generous award of grants to students, and the wide range of 'backup' services it gave to its teachers and lecturers. From a policy making 'angle', the ILEA's capacity and will to research education performance problems was probably its greatest trump card.

## Achievement of Leavers by Sex, Ethnic Group and Year of Final Examination

Source: ILEA Research and Statistics Branch 1982

**Table A**

	<b>White British (Boys)</b>					
	<b>1976</b>	<b>1977</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>
No Graded Result	16.3	1.3	0.1	0.5	6.7	2.8
1 or more CSE 4/5	19.1	3.6	0.4	0.5	-	-
1 or more CSE 2/3 or 'O' D-E	34.8	21.1	3.8	4.1	5.0	8.3
1-4 CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	25.3	49.5	16	19.8	16.7	41.7
5 or more CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	4.4	19.1	11.1	18.5	18.3	13.9
1 or more 'A' Levels	0.1	5.5	68.6	56.1	53.3	33.3
Numbers	5266	1258	1117	222	60	36

**Table B**

	<b>Black Afro-Caribbean (Boys)</b>					
	<b>1976</b>	<b>1977</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>
No Graded Result	16.3	0.4	2.4	-	9.1	5.3
1 or more CSE 4/5	33.4	11.2	4.8	2.5	4.5	5.3
1 or more CSE 2/3 or 'O' D-E	37.0	46.6	19.0	15.0	18.2	10.5
1-4 CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	12.8	35.4	47.7	37.5	22.7	42.1
5 or more CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	0.5	3.6	8.3	10.0	-	-
1 or more 'A' Levels	-	2.7	23.8	35.0	45.5	36.8
Numbers	646	223	84	40	22	19

## Achievement of Leavers by Sex, Ethnic Group and Year of Final Examination

**Table C**

	<b>White British (Girls)</b>					
	<b>1976</b>	<b>1977</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>
No Graded Result	13.5	1.1	0.6	0.5	1.2	1.9
1 or more CSE 4/5	13.9	3.6	0.5	1.0	1.2	1.9
1 or more CSE 2/3 or 'O' D-E	38.8	29.0	4.8	4.9	7.4	7.5
1-4 CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	28.1	48.7	19.0	27.0	29.6	43.4
5 or more CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	5.7	15.4	14.4	13.7	17.3	7.6
1 or more 'A' Levels	<0.1	2.1	60.7	52.8	43.3	37.7
Numbers	4998	1458	1335	204	81	53

In reviewing the examination statistics of white boys and girls, Christine Mabey indicates a general improvement in examination performances. However, if we accept Chris Woodhead's assertion, as a former Chief Inspector, that 'grade inflation' seriously affected public examination results, this could take some gilt off the ILEA's gingerbread.

**Table D**

	<b>Black Afro-Caribbean (Girls)</b>					
	<b>1976</b>	<b>1977</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>
No Graded Result	8.9	2.0	3.3	7.1	2.3	2.7
1 or more CSE 4/5	31.9	12.3	4.3	-	-	2.7
1 or more CSE 2/3 or 'O' D-E	45.8	42.4	24.6	15.2	20.9	21.6
1-4 CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	12.1	39.5	40.8	45.5	37.2	43.2
5 or more CSE 1 or 'O' A-C	1.3	2.3	12.3	10.1	11.6	8.1
1 or more 'A' Levels	-	1.5	14.7	22.2	27.9	21.6
Numbers	461	342	211	99	41	37

**Report No. 3 Schools Sub-Committee 14 March 1985**  
**School Examination Results: 984**

On the basis of these statistics, Christine Mabey\* correctly reported that in external examinations, black pupils' performance was markedly lower than that of white pupils. Significantly, fewer dropped out of school without re-entering for any external examinations but the overall examination achievements were much lower. Roughly six times as many white as Afro-Caribbean pupils, for example, obtained five or more 'O' Level equivalent passes. The findings document precisely the black community's claims about the lack of qualifications achieved by their young people.

Do these rather depressing figures of low achievement by children of Afro-Caribbean background indicate any inadequacies of the ILEA in keeping with the New Right's general attitude to the ILEA? One would suggest, this was a problem, revealed and confirmed by ILEA Research and that the ILEA needed support, in dealing with a problem that could cause serious public dissension.

**Table E**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Examination Indicators 1979-84 (%)</b>					
	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1984</b>
1 CSE 1	8.7	8.7	8.8	8.9	9.6	9.5
2 CSE Grades 1-5	85.8	87.6	86.8	86.9	88.1	88.1
3 O Levels A-C	49.7	49.5	50.8	51.3	53.3	54.2
4 CSE Grades 1-3	29.0	25.4	34.4	35.4	40.8	42.5
5 A Levels A-E	61.4	62.6	63.9	62.9	64.1	64.1
1 or more 'A' Levels	40.1	52.1	40.7	52.8	43.3	37.7

Note: 4 CSE Grades 1-3 show a steady improvement.

\* C Mabey, PhD thesis, quoted in ref. 38 in this chapter.

**Table F: Comparative Unit Costs per Pupil of some LEAs 1987-88 Estimates**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Polys</b>	<b>OFHE</b>	<b>Special</b>
<b>ILEA</b>	<b>1715.00</b>	<b>2635.00</b>	<b>2860.40</b>	<b>2487.50</b>	<b>6782.40</b>
Barking	1217.40	1744.00	2753.10	2542.40	8479.10
Brent	1417.20	2326.40	-	2946.90	9559.60
Bromley	1035.70	1629.50	-	2312.10	10180.20
Croydon	1050.50	1805.60	-	2274.30	8534.60
Ealing	1224.00	1841.60	-	2564.60	7776.80
Haringey*	1147.50	1746.00	-	3202.10	7956.40
Harrow	1111.50	1952.20	-	2053.10	6679.40
Kingston	1081.00	1756.00	2956.60	2332.10	5741.40
Merton	895.50	1393.60	-	2605.90	6899.00
Newham	1218.00	1970.70	-	1981.60	6319.40
Waltham Forrest	1124.70	2198.40	-	1046.90	4719.50
Manchester	1109.50	1953.10	2448.20	2081.70	5687.70
Knowsley	999.10	1670.50	-	1663.70	5249.10
Liverpool	1088.20	1749.20	2739.00	2787.70	4666.10
Sheffield	1204.40	1768.20	2927.60	1822.70	7166.10
Newcastle	1117.10	1771.70	2363.60	2266.90	7144.60
Birmingham	908.50	1475.00	2474.60	1748.90	5176.80
Coventry	1004.40	1654.10	2660.10	1331.80	6003.40
Sandwell	1041.70	1631.50	-	2549.00	5619.90
Wolverhampton	1096.60	1685.40	2463.60	1836.80	10961.90
Bradford	1084.30	1375.90	-	2257.40	7242.40
Kirklees	1021.70	1438.50	2807.30	2106.60	5511.70
Leeds	1005.60	1434.10	2465.70	1548.80	3877.30
Cheshire	962.10	1494.20	-	1922.80	7053.80
Cleveland	975.20	1543.40	3183.80	2128.30	5691.40
Cumbria	983.00	1632.40	-	2551.60	6754.40
Derbyshire	970.00	1513.70	-	2309.10	7275.50
Essex	919.90	1454.30	-	2450.00	5253.00
Hertfordshire	960.60	1528.10	3069.70	1584.60	4564.10
Kent	829.20	1360.70	-	1970.50	3460.40
Staffordshire	951.90	1437.00	2562.20	2062.90	5027.50
Surrey	942.40	1546.20	-	2286.80	5288.50
<b>ILEA</b>	<b>1715.00</b>	<b>2635.20</b>	<b>2860.40</b>	<b>2487.50</b>	<b>6782.40</b>
Outer London	1108.90	1733.80	2854.10	2137.30	6872.20
Met Districts	1003.50	1551.70	2583.60	1910.00	5833.60
English Counties	926.40	1454.90	2602.40	1982.10	5192.10
Welsh Counties	1010.70	1558.90	2450.60	2213.80	5169.90
All LEAs	1008.80	1558.90	2704.40	2052.60	3383.50

\* 1987-88 estimates not available for Haringey, so 1986-87 figures used  
(Source: CIPFA 'Education Statistics 1987-88 Estimates')

**Table G: LEAs with the greatest Additional Education Needs**

	LEA	TYPE	AEN	2
1	Newham	Outer London	135.13	1
2	Haringey	Outer London	126.19	2
3	Brent	Outer London	126.16	3
4	ILEA	Inner London	121.48	4
5	Birmingham	Metropolitan District	118.78	7
6	Manchester	Metropolitan District	112.52	5
7	Wolverhampton	Metropolitan District	112.57	6
8	Ealing	Outer London	111.70	12
9	Bradford	Metropolitan District	106.01	14
10	Knowsley	Metropolitan District	104.32	13
	Average AEN for all English LEAs		66.52	

(Source: DES Statistical Bulletin 13/84)

The DES. Additional Educational Needs, is the sum of variables derived from the degrees of social and educational deprivation in the LEAs listed. The Z scores are arrived at by analysing the number of variables like unemployment, poor housing and single parent families, and then arriving at a basic score, the Z factor. The Z scores correlate well with the AEN table. The fact that social background was considered by the DES at the time to be the most statistically significant explanation of the variation between local authorities in the levels of examination success of school leavers, helps us to see the examination results in the ILEA, in a proper context. On these figures the ILEA's performance was satisfactory. The outer boroughs, Newham, Haringey, Brent did not have the considerable areas of relative prosperity which the ILEA possessed. But the figures show that according to DES criteria, the ILEA performed at least as well as most 'urban' LEAs.

**Table H: The London Reading Test**

The London Reading Test is set towards the end of a child's primary school period. Children from predominantly working class areas do less well on average than those from predominantly middle class areas. A large proportion of boys than of girls find it difficult to learn to read. Children in voluntary schools do better, on average, than children in county schools. In 1978, 11-year old children in London schools read slightly less well on average than children nationally. By 1983, London children read slightly better on average than the 1978 national sample.

**Note:** The test was standardised in 1978 for London, and separately, nationally. In both cases the average (mean) score was expressed as 100, as is shown in Table 9:1 and Table 9:2 below. This is a well-known and useful statistical practice. But the 1978 London children, on average, answered fewer items correctly than did children in the national sample. The 1983 London children, on average, made more correct responses than both the London children and the national sample did in 1978. (There was no testing of a national sample in 1983).

**Table H continued**

**Some results of the London Reading Test for 1978 and 1983, as shown**

1. London mean
 

1978	100
1983	101.8
  
2. National mean
 

1978	100
Equivalent London mean 1983	101.1
  
3. Children scoring less than 35 points are regarded as requiring further study to discover what special help they should have in learning to read.

The percentages of children scoring less than 35 in 1983 were:

Overall	24.3%
Boys	28.3%
Girls	20.4%
Voluntary Schools	18.3%
County Schools	26.9%

4. **Divisional differences**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>% under 35 (needing diagnostic help)</b>
1	103.5	19.3
2	103.5	20.0
3	101.9	23.2
4	98.2	30.7
5	97.7	32.3
6	103.7	18.8
7	102.8	21.4
8	101.4	24.8
9	101.2	24.8
10	102.8	22.2
<b>ILEA</b>	101.8	24.3

These figures are in line with known areas of high social deprivation. Division 9 (Lambeth) could have been expected to show a higher figure. Division 10 (Wandsworth – later Conservative controlled) was relatively high.

5. The mean score for county primary schools was 100.7 and for voluntary school 104.4



6. Mean scores for pupils going on to secondary schools other than named ILEA secondary schools.

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Number</b>
ILEA secondary school	101.2	12.7	18953
Out-county (maintained)	106.6	12.4	696
Non-maintained	116.4	11.1	574
Leaving UK	100.5	15.5	25
Special education	89.2	16.0	17
Not accepted place offered	99.4	13.0	32
Not known	104.1	12.7	64

(Source: ILEA Research and Statistics 1985)  
 (Quoted in the Thomas Report ILEA 1986)

The out county, maintained and non-maintained, with higher mean scores, were fewer than one would have expected.

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## Chapter 10

### Did the ILEA give value for money?

**‘The Authority (ILEA) became a byword for swollen bureaucracy, high costs, low academic standards, and political extremism.’**

**K Baker, The Turbulent Years**

**‘The Royal Borough (Kensington and Chelsea) was very clear it could not demand things from schools unless it provided resources.’**

**Mary Marsh Head Teacher, Holland Park School, March 2000  
(School funding, after the ILEA by a Conservative controlled council)**

The most serious and most persistent criticism of the ILEA by the Conservatives, concerned its allegedly high spending, coupled with poor performance. Mrs Thatcher claimed that ‘the left-wing dominated ILEA, which spent more per pupil than any other local education authority, had achieved some of the worst examination results’.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, her economic advisors had convinced her that the government must put firm restraints on public spending.

The allegation was extremely serious in that it stated an educational service covering a population of 2.3 million people and 300,000 pupils, with 31,500 teachers and 30,000 support staff, was producing a second rate service at a high cost. The ILEA contended that it did in fact provide an efficient service that took cognisance of the widespread needs of a complex, multi-ethnic community and that the whole question of value for money in providing this service, hinged on the crucial question of what was the purpose and nature of responsibilities of an education authority.<sup>2</sup> Underlying most of the ILEA policies, was a redistributive goal in which the greater resources of the wealthier boroughs would help fund the poorer ones.

Given the fundamental difference between government and the ILEA as to what education was about, there was a weakness in the financial structure of the ILEA that made the Authority vulnerable to Conservative criticisms. When we go back to the foundation of the ILEA in 1964 and look at the Finance Sub-Committees’ Order of Reference, 1964, it could be argued that the ILEA was given too much financial latitude. Without going through all the clauses, Item 4 of the Order of Reference contains the very contentious clause: ‘Submission of recommendations to the Committee (the Full Education Committee), the amount which the Authority may

determine is the amount for which the GLC (as it then existed) shall precept rating authorities of the ILEA area, in respect of expenditure by the Authority; and the amount, which the Authority may determine, the GLC shall borrow in respect of expenditure by the Authority’.

This financial autonomy was resented by the inner London boroughs, and one suspects that, opposition by the boroughs to the abolition of the ILEA would have been a good deal stronger, if they had had more say in the financial affairs of the Authority. In general terms, problems over a shortage of finance were not the greatest for ILEA Members, until of course, they experienced harsh financial cut-backs in the 80s. Moreover, it created a too defensive attitude to government in the 80s, when any proposed curtailment in its spending was seen as an attack on the quality of its provision for education. The ILEA laid itself open to criticism when, for example, Dr Derek Rushworth, the then head teacher of Holland Park School, bitterly criticised the ILEA for subscribing to what he considered was a politically contentious body, when it gave the Stockwell and Clapham Law Centre a £30,000 grant in 1984.<sup>3</sup>

Sir Keith Joseph (Secretary of State for Education 1981-86) believed in market related solutions to problems in the economy but he did not see the ‘market’ as a way to help schools. He believed in promoting excellence rather than expanding resources. In his period of office, spending on education as a proportion of national wealth (GDP) fell from 5.7% in 1980-1 to 4.9% in 1985-6, the lowest it had been for a decade.<sup>4</sup> It could be argued therefore, that it was not unreasonable for central government to expect the ILEA to cut back its spending plans. However, Sir Keith’s financial restraints, that also applied to teachers’ pay, built up a head of pressure that was relieved by his successor in office, Kenneth Baker (86-89) who needed a much higher level of public spending to achieve his ‘reforms’. Denis Lawton, for example, pointed out that the schemes for City Colleges of Technology, Assisted Places and the National Curriculum policy and Grant Maintained Schools, hugely increased public expenditure. He claimed that the introduction of the National Curriculum alone would cost an additional £469 million from 1988-92.<sup>5</sup>

If we can revert briefly to the culture of high spending inherent in the financial constitution of the ILEA, William Niskanen’s<sup>6</sup> warning about ‘budget

maximisation' was a reality. It was not so much a problem of an administrator expanding the budget for his/her department to enhance pay and status, but more a problem coming from inertia and a failure to institute change. It should be said that Authority was not over secretive, and regularly used outside commercial agencies (O & M) to review its working practices, but often, costly initiatives lingered on for too long. For example, the schools TV service when set up in 1966/67 cost about £2 million in the Estimates, but this figure increased rapidly as the service developed, and the development of schools' TV Services by the BBC and ITV made the ILEA service largely superfluous. Yet this service had too long a life and the unions were aware of this, but they did not oppose it, as some of their members had jobs in the service.<sup>7</sup> A single example of just how educational policy in the ILEA did not always tie in with spending plans, was in the case of Wolverstone Hall School, Minutes of the Sub-Committee<sup>8</sup> show considerable capital expenditure was sanctioned, when serious doubts were beginning to emerge about the educational viability of the school. It had functioned well over a number of years, almost like a boarding grammar school, but the move to comprehensive intake in the school had created serious management problems. For example, as early as 6<sup>th</sup> May 1969, the Education Officer was authorised by the Policy Co-ordinating Committee to enter into discussions with the Department of Education and Science about the future of the school. At all events a decision about its closure, subject of course to statutory requirements, could have been made much sooner.

In spite of government attacks on the ILEA for a lack of financial prudence, and unease in some of the Labour controlled inner London councils over the costs of the education service, the ILEA seemed to be disinclined to cut its spending. It had to do so in the early 80s because of rate-capping, but in spite of this, the by now more left-wing controlled Authority went on to the attack. Whether or not it was prudent to do so is arguable. The Community Charge was attacked by Frances Morrell because it would put political pressure on local councils to keep the tax low and would 'diminish resources for poorer children'.<sup>9</sup> However, the simple point is that a lack of vigilant accounting does of course draw funds away from more worthwhile causes, and in no sense can be seen to give value for money. The ILEA was indeed sensitive about cutting its finances. It was a major, almost psychological, issue with Labour Members. They knew first hand of the degree of social deprivation in the ILEA and therefore saw cutting funds as an attack on all they stood for. It may well

be that the government was using its powers arrogantly, but at all events the ILEA, bearing in mind that the economy was stagnant, could have taken a more balanced view of its spending plans. Machiavelli<sup>10</sup> saw it as an essential in statecraft for the Ruler to have a reputation for financial prudence; he wrote, 'in our times we have seen nothing great done except by those who are esteemed niggardly; the others have all been ruined.' Without being unduly receptive to hair shirt programmes, most periods of government austerity have been accepted by the public. In the lifetime of the New Labour Government, Gordon Brown, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had a much easier task when he first preached real financial prudence, than he did when he considerably increased public spending and raised public expectations, after the three years of relative austerity.

Apart from the relations with central government, the day-to-day contact with the opposition in committee and in the news media were equally important. The ILEA Finance Sub-Committee was highly influential, with the Leader and his/her Deputy as ex officio members, who normally attended assiduously. In its early days, it had some of the rising stars of the Labour party such as Ken Livingstone and Jack Straw as members. The minutes of the committee show a 'Butskellite accord over the first years of its existence, but by the late 70s and 80s, increasing friction between the parties conformed entirely with the more confrontationist atmosphere of national politics. The minutes, of course, do not indicate the quality of debate in committee, but the increasing use of the phrases, the Minority Party 'Reserved its Position' or 'Opposed the decision' speaks for itself. The protagonists within the ILEA often had important links with senior politicians in the Conservative, Labour, and Social/Liberal-Democrat parties. C Knight<sup>11</sup> wrote of the close links between Robert Vigars, the Leader of the Opposition, ILEA and Norman St John Stevas; who in the late 70s was the Conservative Shadow Education Secretary of State. Vigars enlisted the London press to fight a sustained battle to preserve London grammar schools, which fitted in well with St John Stevas's 'Standards 77' campaign.

School governing bodies nearly always seemed to work more effectively and to give their schools better support when political faction was at a minimum. The same view probably pertains to LEA committees, and the question we need to ask, did the majority party use its power with sensitivity in committee, or was a more

conciliatory role made impossible because of aggressive tactics by the Conservatives? For example, in a detailed proposal, Mrs P Kirwan, a Conservative Member, put forward plans for the Financial Year 1985/86<sup>12</sup> that would have cut all budgets by 5% and involved a moratorium on staff recruitment, and on a school meals' price increase. The cancellation of all new initiatives would, she claimed, have kept the Authority within the legal precept of 77.75p in the pound. The proposal was summarily dismissed by committee. Mrs Kirwan's proposals were of course very much a tactical weapon in opposition, but if survival of the ILEA was paramount, then it is possible a more flexible attitude to the opposition could have had some merit. We are therefore suggesting that some accommodation with the Opposition over retrenchment programmes should have been made. There was the difficulty that many members of the Conservative party, in and out of office, never really appreciated the nature of inner city deprivation in London, but at local level, a number of Members such as Robert Vigars, had a fair knowledge of the problems in London. He was a governor of some greatly disadvantaged schools in North Kensington and was conscientious in performing his duties.

Despite the well established forms of inequality and deprivation in the ILEA, it nevertheless was able to fund its schools well in comparison with other local authorities as the table below shows. The following DES statistics show the ILEA funding of schools in comparison with the outer boroughs and England as a whole.<sup>13</sup>

	<b>Capitation Figures in 1979</b>	
	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>ILEA</b>	£1,915	£2,635.2
Some other Metropolitan Districts	£1,063.5	£1,510
Outer London Boroughs	£1,108	£1,733
England as a whole	£1,104	£1,503

These per capita expenditures show how generously the ILEA provided for its pupils, but we are going on to argue that, given the government's wish to cut local authority spending in the 80s, then the ILEA could have cut the allocation to its



schools. The prospect of cutting per capita expenditure was too emotive an issue to Members of the majority party in the ILEA. To cut schools' capitation would have been difficult, but it was a measure that would have shown considerable savings of the nature that the New Right was demanding. Table F shows how well ILEA schools were funded, even compared with 'deprived' boroughs such as Brent.

Two obvious queries arise from this proposal, the first, would such a policy have been sustainable in the light of the move towards the left by Labour in the ILEA, and secondly, could the Authority have faced the likely opposition from the teachers' professional associations? The ILEA, because of its normally good relations with its teachers, might have carried the day, but it would have been when teacher militancy over pay was at its greatest. The New Right had such a raft of radical policies that were diametrically opposed to those of the ILEA, as an elected socialist body, that would have made a working compromise well nigh impossible. The philosophy of the New Right was so utterly out of joint with all the ILEA stood for, that it gave little hope for genuine compromise.

However, a recent article by J Gibson<sup>14</sup> would seem to give support to the ILEA's view that the government was unreasonable over its spending plans. Mrs Thatcher's concern after the abolition of the ILEA was to ensure that inner Londoners saw improved efficiency of their councils, and lower taxes as a justification for the abolition of the ILEA. Gibson accused her of unadulterated political manipulation in that she ensured through the Standard Spending Assessment (75-80% of the £180 million grant), that her aim was achieved. There was a fly in the ointment, however, in that her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, was in 1989 increasingly concerned about the levels of inflation but he agreed, most reluctantly, to switch resources to inner London. It is a fact that in her memoirs, *The Downing Street Years* (1993), she wrote ... 'the decision to abolish the ILEA seemed likely to reduce community charge bills in London significantly' (p653). This seems to suggest that the ILEA was doomed no matter what financial accommodation it made with government.

In spite of the strength of the argument that the ILEA was an inevitable victim, it did appear that the Authority, through its confrontationalist approach to spending, could well have alienated support. For example, Ann Sofer<sup>15</sup> a former Labour

Member, who later became a Liberal Democrat, showed her concern in committee about the threefold increase in Members' support staff and at the doubling of the Press Office staff. Even when the fight for survival was technically over, the ILEA spent £32,000 in 1990, to conduct a survey of 'public perceptions in inner London with regard to the transfer of education to the London boroughs!'

It is also important to see the financial restrictions imposed on the ILEA as part of the overall strategy for the reform of English education, Arnold Heidenheimer<sup>16</sup> wrote of the clever combination used by the Conservative government in 1988, of having both 'centralising and decentralising tendencies'. He was, of course, referring to the institution of the National Curriculum and also allowing schools to 'opt-out' of local authority control. The conferring of power to individual boards of school governors was, in effect, a sleight of hand because the government, as Pied Piper, could ultimately call the tune. Heidenheimer saw the ILEA as a potentially powerful opponent, and as such, had to go: 'Through this sweeping enlargement of central government power, the Thatcher government sharply modified a long standing Conservative commitment to protect local government powers'. What Heidenheimer does not make clear in this particular article, is just why this overall strategy was used, apart from his view that the New Right saw the ILEA as a potentially powerful opponent. In this sense, it is suggested that Mrs Thatcher's thinking was concerned with economics, and in simple terms if you are a monetarist, potential big spenders in the public sector have to be curbed. The attack on a major institution, such as the ILEA, even if this is part of a greater overall strategy, simply does not end there. There are often unforeseen consequences when a popular institution is put to the sword. Heidenheimer quotes a German observer who noted, 'Such far-reaching dimensions of intimidation and institutional endangerment can cause serious provocation'.<sup>17</sup> It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Londoners have reacted against such measures as the abolition of the GLC and the ILEA, mainly on alleged grounds of being too expensive and inefficient, by taking it out of New Labour, when it attempted to ensure its 'official' mayoral candidate was elected rather than the popular, unofficial candidate, Ken Livingstone.

## Summary – Value for Money?

In this chapter, and in Chapter 9 (Standards), we acknowledge that the level of spending in the provision of the ILEA's education service was high, when we looked at its costs per pupil, and the nature and cost of support staff.<sup>18</sup> In Chapter 9, we related these costs to educational performance records, because the New Right criticism of poor educational standards was usually related to a high level of public expenditure. When we pose the question, did the ILEA give good value for money? then this question hinges on the nature and the quality and range of services that was expected from the ILEA. The ILEA put in a great deal of money for efficient school libraries, for teacher support in multi-media education, for financial assistance for teachers' professional development, which were to help teachers enrich their teaching experience in inner London.. It could be argued that this is not the full story, and that it was just part of a planned policy of creating a better, a fairer and more just society in inner London. There was a strong case for the need to provide such things as excellent schemes for the teaching of music, the support for theatres, museums, even extending to support for national bodies, such as the Field Studies Council, but the Authority could be criticised for supporting socially and politically contentious causes, such as that given in this chapter by Dr Rushworth (Ref 7). The table<sup>19</sup> shows the extent of the 'back-up' services the Authority provided. The New Right wanted an efficient, preferably market orientated service, without the overload of the 'welfarist' schemes of the ILEA, so the problem hinges on the nature of the observer's own political and ideological beliefs.

If one accepts that in a severely socially deprived area, the education service should provide more than that which is claimed as necessary by the New Right, did the ILEA follow the right policies, and was it as mindful as it should have been, in spending public money? The report of the Conservative Education Association 1988, concluded, 'The ILEA's administrative costs, however, are extremely high, even taking account of the unique circumstances of inner London. These could have been reduced, as the Authority's own Springett Report<sup>20</sup> showed'. The ILEA would seem to have had a larger bureaucracy than it should have had; one could also argue for a reduction in the number of Education Welfare Officers (453 in 1988), when boroughs such as Brent and Haringey both with major education problems, could work with 20 each,<sup>21</sup> and when a number of ILEA secondary schools were 'buying

in' the services of their own school welfare officers! The number of inspectors could probably have been cut, but not greatly, in view of the drive to raise standards. It would probably have been unwise to reduce the number of educational psychologists (95) and psychiatric social workers (39), that were provided in similar proportions by the Borough of Brent (10 psychologists and 8 psychiatric social workers).<sup>\*</sup> When the Conservative Education Authority addressed itself to the likely break-up of the ILEA, it warned that re-organisations of local government cost money, and pointed out that the transfer of the London Ambulance Service from the GLC, resulted in a more expensive service, running fewer ambulances. 'London is a vibrant, growing capital city and with housing and services in general, these costs accelerate at an alarming rate. Given a situation of economic growth, it is inevitable that costs in London will increase at a disproportionate level. In recent years, in spite of relatively high levels of social deprivation, London is one of the most expensive cities in the world'.<sup>22</sup>

If the ILEA could have cut its costs, we did write in this chapter of the possibility of a cut in the generous schools' capitation allowances, without it having a deleterious effect on the schools' efficiency, should it have had a duty to do so as a public body, when it knew of the concern over public spending by government? More to the point, would this have helped the ILEA's survival, from a tactical point of view? This is by no means sure, left-wing ILEA Leaders believed it would not have assuaged the Government Minotaur; but this was a short-sighted view. Substantial cuts in expenditure, not merely cosmetic ones, could have been achieved, but it would have been difficult, and given good publicity of the prudent house-keeping measures, it could have helped the ILEA to boost support for its survival.

However, the nagging doubt that pervades so many issues with the ILEA and the New Right was, could any significant act of compliance by the ILEA have had any real effect? Stuart Maclure did not think the ILEA could get out of the financial hole it was in by the middle 80s, and he quoted the new Leader Neil Fletcher, as saying 'any attempted accommodation was hopeless'.<sup>23</sup> But if Sir Ashley had been Leader, some 'edge' would have been taken off the dispute; the confrontationist attitude of the ILEA, did in fact help the cause of the New Right abolitionists.

<sup>\*</sup> Based on the total population of the Borough of Brent compared with the total ILEA population.

However, the firm commitment of the New Right to the market as the key mechanism of economic and social regulation,<sup>24</sup> is an area where the profound differences over value for money between the New Right and ILEA are highlighted.

To get value for money in the education market place, the consumers have to be both well informed and mobile. The ILEA knew that in the inner city, the market would not help the less informed, less mobile and socially disadvantaged parents, and that in spite of some occasional extravagance, such as funding its own TV service, a caring benevolent authority could give better value in education for a very large section of the community. Above all, the funding of the ILEA, made for flexibility, it permitted immediate help to be given in a personal or schools' crisis, and this surely represents value for money.

**Table J – Numbers of Support Staff in the ILEA and (a) London Boroughs and (b) Selected Counties. Figures are for Estimates March 1988**

One of the advantages of a large authority is that it is able to provide a wide range of support services, which increases costs.

LEA	Youth Workers	Inspectors	EWO's	Admin & Support Staff	Education Psychol.	Psychiatric Social Worker
<b>ILEA</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>3478</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>39</b>
Barking	1	14	10	74	7	-
Barnet	6	13	12	151	10	4
Bexley	5	13	9	122	6	-
Brent	13	21	23	182	10	8
Bromley	2	12	10	108	8	-
Croydon	4	17	16	114	10	-
Ealing	7	14	13	206	8	2
Enfield	4	13	14	128	14	4
Haringey	5	17	159	159	8	-
Harrow	7	10	9	88	7	-
Havering	7	18	14	86	7	-
Hillingdon	4	16	12	81	7	5
Hounslow	3	14	9	111	6	-
Kingston	1	8	6	63	3	-
Merton	7	11	6	65	5	2
Newham	7	14	23	910	12	-
Redbridge	4	17	10	89	7	5
Richmond	2	11	6	4 (63)	4	4
Sutton	3	8	9	100	4	-
Waltham Forrest	4	24	23	129	9	-
Outer London	95	299	252	2983	152	37
Hampshire	-	62	79	435	46	-
Kent	20	44	48	483	27	-
Essex	11	66	77	590	35	-
Lancashire	12	52	84	462	39	-
Surrey	15	41	26	321	32	-
Staffordshire	13	40	60	426	28	-
Notts	16	48	55	367	27	9
Birmingham	-	52	93	367	38	17

(Source: CIPFA 'Education Statistics 1987-88 Estimates')  
 Education in London, May 1989. Conservative Education Association

**Table F: Comparative Unit Costs per Pupil of some LEAs 1987-88 Estimates**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Polys</b>	<b>OFHE</b>	<b>Special</b>
Barking	1217.40	1744.00	2753.10	2542.40	8479.10
Brent	1417.20	2326.40	-	2946.90	9559.60
Bromley	1035.70	1629.50	-	2312.10	10180.20
Croydon	1050.50	1805.60	-	2274.30	8534.60
Ealing	1224.00	1841.60	-	2564.60	7776.80
Haringey*	1147.50	1746.00	-	3202.10	7956.40
Harrow	1111.50	1952.20	-	2053.10	6679.40
Kingston	1081.00	1756.00	2956.60	2332.10	5741.40
Merton	895.50	1393.60	-	2605.90	6899.00
Newham	1218.00	1970.70	-	1981.60	6319.40
Waltham Forest	1124.70	2198.40	-	1046.90	4719.50
Manchester	1109.50	1953.10	2448.20	2081.70	5687.70
Knowsley	999.10	1670.50	-	1663.70	5249.10
Liverpool	1088.20	1749.20	2739.00	2787.70	4666.10
Sheffield	1204.40	1768.20	2927.60	1822.70	7166.10
Newcastle	1117.10	1771.70	2363.60	2266.90	7144.60
Birmingham	908.50	1475.00	2474.60	1748.90	5176.80
Coventry	1004.40	1654.10	2660.10	1331.80	6003.40
Sandwell	1041.70	1631.50	-	2549.00	5619.90
Wolverhampton	1096.60	1685.40	2463.60	1836.80	10961.90
Bradford	1084.30	1375.90	-	2257.40	7242.40
Kirklees	1021.70	1438.50	2807.30	2106.60	5511.70
Leeds	1005.60	1434.10	2465.70	1548.80	3877.30
Cheshire	962.10	1494.20	-	1922.80	7053.80
Cleveland	975.20	1543.40	3183.80	2128.30	5691.40
Cumbria	983.00	1632.40	-	2551.60	6754.40
Derbyshire	970.00	1513.70	-	2309.10	7275.50
Essex	919.90	1454.30	-	2450.00	5253.00
Hertfordshire	960.60	1528.10	3069.70	1584.60	4564.10
Kent	829.20	1360.70	-	1970.50	3460.40
Staffordshire	951.90	1437.00	2562.20	2062.90	5027.50
Surrey	942.40	1546.20	-	2286.80	5288.50
<u>ILEA</u>	<u>1715.00</u>	<u>2635.00</u>	<u>2860.40</u>	<u>2487.50</u>	<u>6782.40</u>
Outer London	1108.90	1733.80	2854.10	2137.30	6872.20
Met Districts	1003.50	1551.70	2583.60	1910.00	5833.60
English Counties	926.40	1454.90	2602.40	1982.10	5192.10
Welsh Counties	1010.70	1558.90	2450.60	2213.80	5169.90
All LEAs	1008.80	1558.90	2704.40	2052.60	3383.50

\* 1987-88 estimates not available for Haringey, so 1986-87 figures used

(Source: CIPFA 'Education Statistics 1987-88 Estimates')

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- <sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p53
- <sup>18</sup> **Table F** Comparison costs per pupil of some LEAs (1987-88). Source, CIPFA Educational Statistics
- <sup>19</sup> **Table J** Support Service Staff Numbers of London and other LEAs. Source, CIPFA Statistics 1987-88
- <sup>20</sup> Springett J (et al) **Review of the Administrative Structure ILEA**, March 1985
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## Chapter 11

### Conclusion

**‘Though fallen thyself, never to rise again, live and take comfort; thou hast left behind powers that will work for thee.’**

**To Toussaint L’Overture  
By William Wordsworth**

#### **Situating This Thesis within Urban Policy Scholarship**

This thesis can be located within what Grace (1984) has called an urban critical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> In developing an account of urban studies in relation to education, Grace distinguishes between a policy science which has its roots in the United States and particularly the Chicago school and the development of a critical scholarship. The former is concerned with issues of ‘planning, management and control’ so that ‘planners could intervene to push the system in the chosen direction’<sup>2</sup>. Citing Mills’ 1943 paper on ‘The professional ideology of social pathologists’,<sup>3</sup> Grace has argued that the focus in urban education was on ‘disadvantage’, ‘cultural deprivation’ and compensatory education’.<sup>4</sup> This approach did not place urban studies of education within a critical policy scholarship that took account of the wider ideological, political and social context. Such an approach, also requires seeing urban education within its historical development.

Following Grace, this thesis can be seen as taking a critical policy scholarship approach that sees urban education as comprising the relationships between ideologies, policies and institutions that sought to address the unique set of problems that education has to confront. This critical policy scholarship itself emerged at a time of intense ideological debate which challenged the idea of a policy science that merely sought to manage existing urban educational problems.

An indication of this understated policy science approach to educational policy can be seen in Alan Sked and Chris Cook’s<sup>5</sup> well received post-war political history of Britain in 1979, in which education merited a single line reference in the whole book. While there had been debate about education prompted by leading figures in both the Conservative and Labour parties in the 1970s, nevertheless education was not a major political issue at that time.

All this changed, however, in the 1980s when education became a major policy issue in Mrs Thatcher's Conservative government. Just why this came about is a complex issue; there was general unease about the effectiveness of our national education system in a rising global economy, there was deep resentment of comprehensive education policies, and it could be that a growing awareness of education, as political weapon, dawned on Tory political strategists. Even as recently as December 2006<sup>6</sup> the Economist's Education Correspondent, writing of the Liberal Democratic party of Japan's reassertion of 'Japan centred' policies in education wrote, 'Education is seen as policy distraction' and there could well have been a strong element of this in New Right strategy in the UK.

The New Right thinking developed rapidly in the early 1980s, especially with the influence of the so-called free-market in the delivery of maintained education. The 'market' as a driving force in education was consistently repudiated by the ILEA, hence the collision course between the New Right government and the ILEA.

This thesis has examined the nature and consequences of this 'collision' with the aim of understanding the political processes that led to the abolition of the ILEA. To this end the thesis was divided into three parts. In the first, the question was examined as to whether we can understand the abolition of the ILEA wholly in terms of the rightward shift in ideology in the Conservative party, embracing key ideas from New Right or Neo-liberal doctrine or whether the parallel leftward move in the Labour party both nationally and in London also contributed to the intensification of conflict. The second phase examined some of the key claims, made by various leading figures in the Conservative party with respect to the failing of the ILEA bureaucracy. Was it a cumbersome and moribund organisation as some, like Norman Tebbit and Michael Heseltine claimed? In part three, the charges that the ILEA was expensive and did not give value for money and that it tolerated low educational standards were examined. We summarise our findings on these issues in turn.

## **The Politics of the Abolition of the ILEA**

When Stuart Maclure<sup>7</sup> looked at the abolition of the ILEA, he saw it as a ‘massive act of educational vandalism.’ He saw the end of the ILEA as more to do with paying off political scores and rewarding political friends. In many ways this was true, especially of the few weeks before the abolition clause was somewhat summarily added to 1988 Education Reform Act. But one could argue that the causes for abolition were more profound and that the ILEA as a powerful policy making institution represented a threat to the New Right policy makers. How accurate is Maclure’s judgement?

In this thesis we have considered the key factors both in terms of the politicians that led the charge against the ILEA and their ideological commitments. The politics of both Right and Left were not as clear cut as they might seem and it is therefore important to place the attack on the ILEA in the context of the competing ideologies *within* both parties and the views of those who were particularly influential in bringing about its demise. There are at least two issues for the New Right of the Conservative party that were central to their attack on the ILEA: the concentration of an alternative local source of power that it represented and its own commitment to ‘market solutions’ in education, which the ILEA rejected out of hand.

There were a few voices in the Conservative party who favoured the influence of local education authorities, such as Mark Carlisle (a former Secretary of State for Education), Edward Heath and Tim Raison MP, a former Member of the ILEA, but they had little influence. This meant that those like Margaret Thatcher and Kenneth Baker who led the attack on the power of local authorities such as the ILEA had little opposition. Dimitri Coryton,<sup>8</sup> the then Chairman of the Conservative Association saw a more down to earth source of Mrs Thatcher’s policies when he wrote, ‘She was very much the outsider, she hadn’t gone through a thirty year period of building up colleagues in the House of Commons, she actually drew to her some fairly bizarre and peculiar individuals, people who were, in the case of education, often not really well informed.’ It is also worth recalling that Mrs Thatcher had not had an easy passage when she was Secretary of State for Education in Sir Edward Heath’s Conservative government. The Prime Minister did not share her hostility to local education authorities, nor did he show the same

antagonism to the 'education establishment' within the Department of Education. Mrs Thatcher seemed much more concerned with problems of the nation's failing economy and it was the alleged high spending of local authorities that was her main concern.

In the event, the one nation Toryism that had tolerated incremental change and a pragmatic approach to local bodies such as the ILEA was overturned by the Thatcher project of greater centralisation of power, coupled with a commitment to markets in education. In this project the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, played a key role. The ILEA, as we have seen, was an important policy making body in its own right. In many ways, for example, it was able to show greater consistency in policy formulation than was central government. The vagaries of getting and keeping power were greater for government than the ILEA, where, apart from a brief period of Conservative administration in the late 60s, the ILEA had a confidence that came from sustained electoral support for the Labour party in London. There was of course, 'conflict' inherent in ILEA policy making but it was less than that in central government, even with a large working majority. For example, in the field of comprehensive school education, there was little deviation from this central policy, throughout the ILEA's existence. It was in respect of the power that came with consistency to entrench policies that the New Right found anathema that made it a competitor to the power of Margaret Thatcher's government. This was especially so with respect to the shibboleths of competition and the market that the New Right of the Conservative party were committed to. However, given the sustained onslaught on the ILEA, it is likely that the left-wing ascendancy in the ILEA in the 80s was strengthened because, even to many middle of the road socialists there was little choice.

On the idea of a market in education Professor Ball<sup>9</sup> wrote, 'The market has a paradigmatic status for any form of institutional organisation and provision of goods and services, it involves changes in the meaning and experience of education.' Writing in 1873, John Stuart Mill<sup>10</sup> saw 'the market in education in an entirely different light. The efficacy of the market, beloved of the New Right, nor the advantages that better off parents could squeeze out of the system did not concern him, he was concerned with standards. He wrote, ...I urged the importance of having provision for education, not on the mere demand of the market, that is the

knowledge and discernment of average parents, but calculated to establish and keep up a higher standard of instruction than is likely to be spontaneously demanded by buyers of the article.' With the benefit of hindsight, Mill was probably right, in that there was a tendency of working class parents, up to the 1960s, not to involve themselves in the performance of their schools; but they are more demanding today. However, it would be unfair to cast the New Right as capitalist ideologues, who were unresponsive to the demands and obligations of human society. They obviously believed that competition and self-help could create a more efficient and better functioning society. There were, they contended, serious failings in the welfare society, where over-dependence on the state could in fact detract from the creation of a healthy society. Mrs Thatcher was much maligned for her alleged emphasis on 'individualism' in society but this is not entirely fair. Undoubtedly the mainspring of her thinking was a USA type of capitalist economy, especially as espoused by professors Friedman and Walters, but she also saw in the USA a very community minded society, where the self-help attitude could in fact make the individual a more purposeful member of society.

It was on this basis that she and Kenneth Baker wanted fundamental change to the comprehensive system. And it seems clear that since there was little research evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of educational markets and parental choice, at that time, that the commitment to the educational market was ideological, it was an attempt to make over British society and thus represented a huge gamble.

What then of the response by the ILEA? Did it contribute to the polarisation of educational politics thus making the abolition of the ILEA inevitable?

### **Moving Leftwards: the Politics of Labour and the ILEA**

The critique of education and the welfare state by the New Right was developed against the background of a poorly performing economy. Dennis Kavanagh<sup>11</sup> considered, that 'Conservative critics of the welfare state has been coloured by three broad influences; they were (a) welfare has grown faster than has National Income; they were in essence, 'selectivists' rather than universalists, so concentrating on the needy and thus saving money, (b) the State weakens values of self reliance and, (c) social security, unemployment payments, pensions schemes were too high. In

fairness to the Conservative government, the costs of these services, in a poorly performing economy, had to be faced by both parties. When these costs under Labour, led to cut backs in ILEA spending, these provided a springboard for the left-wing of the Labour party (ILEA) to challenge the leadership. We have seen that under Michael Foot that the Labour party vacated the middle ground and moved to the Left and his move appeared to be mirrored by the ILEA.

It is sometimes forgotten that the ILEA had to function at a time when huge changes were taking place in government policies. It had to adapt from consensus, 'Butskellite' relations in the 60s, to 'confrontation' type of contacts between it and government. Dennis Kavanagh<sup>12</sup> wrote 'In 1983, however, it was clear, to this writer at least, that important changes had taken place in British politics. Compared to 1974, the question of trade union power and runaway inflation were virtually absent. The apparent ungovernability of Britain and the government's lack of authority, belonged to a bygone age. In addition, there had occurred the shift in style and policy of the Conservative party and the continuation of the long term electoral decline of the Labour party.' Moreover, this decline in Labour party influence probably brought about greater internal struggles in the party, that had an effect on the ILEA. But despite friction within the ILEA, the Authority still remained popular with inner Londoners, as the 1987 Parents' Referendum (ILEA) showed. It would seem that many inner Londoners resented the abolition of the GLC in 1986 and saw the end of the ILEA in the same light.

When we come to review the tactics used by ILEA Members when the Authority came under serious threat, it is difficult to pass judgement. Sir Ashley Bramall,<sup>13</sup> it will be recalled, felt that if he had remained Leader of the ILEA, he would have attempted some accommodation with the New Right government, particularly over spending policies. The fact remains that the attack on the ILEA, although it did probe genuine weaknesses, was 'uncharacteristic' of a Conservative government that traditionally had championed the cause of local government, and moreover, the ILEA commanded electoral support, and the support of its teachers and workers.

Although there was a strong feeling within the ILEA Labour party that more 'socialist' policies were required, it could be argued that much of this change in policy was provoked by Mrs Thatcher's New Right government but even so, there

was no really profound change in ILEA's Labour education policies. We have seen that Frances Morrell's<sup>14</sup> position, although characterised as of the far Left would now be considered mainstream in education, with its emphasis on greater information about school performances, more parental involvement in policy making, more determination in closing failing schools, and those with seriously falling rolls, and a better, more scientific monitoring of the performance of ILEA schools. She clearly rejected the two fundamental points of Mrs Thatcher's government, greater centralisation and a faith in markets. However, the New Right was probably in error in assuming that there was no real competition between schools in the pre-New Right days. In fact schools in those days were in close competition with neighbouring schools, and any head teacher was fully aware that an unpopular school, with an indifferent intake could become something of a nightmare to run. The problem from the ILEA's point of view, was that the New Right had no real constructive input into the acute problem of the struggling inner city schools. If the market indicated school closure of a failing school, this ignored the impact of this process on the feelings and sentiments of pupils, parents and the teachers.

What did change under Frances Morrell was the way policy making was undertaken. This brings us to the main criticism of the ILEA bureaucracy that at the highest level, it was probably dominated by Labour philosophy in its policy making. This is understandable in view of (a) a high profile of ILEA leadership and (b) Labour's almost complete monopoly of power. We referred earlier in this thesis to the almost 'political' attitude of ILEA's senior officers, which they shared with ILEA politicians, when presenting comprehensive school policies in the late 60s. On the other hand, it is expected that the bureaucracy would give strong support to the policies proposed by elected leaders, so that a 'non-political' attitude by administrators is a difficult balancing process. William Stubbs,<sup>15</sup> as the last but one Education Officer, had no easy passage with Frances Morrell, as Chairman of the Schools Sub-Committee, and later Leader, and complained that he had never known such extensive control of policy, by Members, as was the case of the ILEA, compared with any other local authority he had worked for. Yet when set alongside her major policies which now look moderate, the effects of the 'political control of the bureaucracy' can be exaggerated.

Norman Tebbit,<sup>16</sup> in particular, saw the ILEA as a body unresponsive to London public opinion, and as a servant of a highly politicised machine. But in its day to day workings the ILEA administration was not necessarily the politically dominated machine that the New Right alleged it was. Its close contact with schools, its strong representation of parents and minority political parties weakened political bias. The teachers and ancillary worker's unions had a very strong input in policy making. For example, the procedure for moving surplus teachers was a product of close cooperation with the teachers' unions.

What is sometimes ignored in discussing the ILEA's bureaucracy is the essentially supportive role it played in the running of the ILEA system. Most schools spoke warmly of the day-to-day help they got from their Divisional Offices. The fluidity of the ILEA system meant that in extremity, heads could have direct access to most senior members of the administration. And schools, through their governing bodies, also had political contacts, which could in effect override any administrative blockage.

While we have seen that the major points of difference between the Conservatives and the ILEA turned on the issues of centralisation and the introduction of educational markets, it seems clear that whatever the rhetoric concerning the move leftwards in the ILEA, in substance it sustained policies that would now be considered part of the centre ground.

However, we also needed to consider the criticisms that the Conservatives made of the ILEA's policies with respect to the Inspectorate, the teacher associations and governors. In all these cases the fundamental objection was in the alleged subservient way the ILEA related to these groups which were often seen as impediments to improving the performance of the schools.

At root, the New Right objection to the ILEA inspectorate was one of ideology and effectiveness. The former considered that the practices of the ILEA inspectorate muddled what they regarded as a crucial distinction between providers, that is teachers and the ILEA service, and those who were appointed to ensure high educational standards for the consumers. The ILEA seemed to benefit from having a powerful inspectorate. The inspectorate was based on a cadre of officers most of



whom had considerable teaching experience. The wide range of subject specialisms, often centred on subjects, as opposed to the general purpose teachers' centres, was a feature of the ILEA and was possible because of the economies of scale that the ILEA could deploy. The inspectorate was a source of policies, such as schools' Internal Assessment procedures and Teachers' Centre programmes, the 'Smile' maths project and many environmental education initiatives. Also the inspectorate was closely involved in the performance of ILEA schools, (particularly after the William Tyndale experience) but what was rejected by the New Right was the necessity of the degree of pastoral support to ILEA heads and teachers, particularly in the demanding inner city environment, and this particular quality was rated highly by the ILEA. There can be little doubt that in an educational system based on a constellation of independent self-governing schools some teachers could be vulnerable to occasionally unfair and unjust treatment by their senior colleagues, in this single school type of administration. The Labour government has established a quango to supervise this problem. The ILEA had this problem covered without any bureaucratic machinery. The inspectors could ensure fair play as external mediators. The ILEA Inspectorate lost power and authority in the aftermath of the William Tyndale crisis, but under Dr Hargreaves, as Chief Inspector, it regained much of its old power and influence. In terms of political checks and balances, it ensured that professional administrators did not gain too much power. The former Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead had small brief for local authorities in education and would do away with them altogether. But his view of the workings of an Ofsted Inspectorate was very different from that of the former ILEA Inspectorate.

Bearing in mind that it was a clear responsibility of the ILEA's Inspectorate to raise educational standards and keep political Members, and senior officers, fully informed about the quality and condition of the Authority's schools, it is difficult to see how this would be done better by the current Ofsted system. Although the New Right wanted a true, dispassionate assessment of schools, and a rigorous inspection procedure, with a minimum of pastoral involvement in the school, this was a completely different conception of the inspectors' role in the ILEA. Some Members of the ILEA were, of course, justly critical of the inspectors' performance in the William Tyndale episode, but on the whole they had confidence in their own inspectors, who shared a sustained responsibility for their schools and were not

involved in a 'hit and run' assessment of schools. The point we are stressing is that inner city schools are in many ways different institutions from county schools and therefore need a more consistent and different type of visit by inspectors. It could be that the ILEA thus had a better conception of the purpose and function of an inspectorate. In the aftermath of William Tyndale, regular meetings of Divisional Inspectors, with their Divisional Educational colleagues were held with senior officers and Members of the ILEA when real accountability for the schools was expected from ILEA Inspectors.

With respect to another target of New Right criticisms, the relationship between the teachers' associations and the ILEA, the ILEA attached great importance to its relations with the major associations of teachers and lecturers. The ILEA had teacher representations on the Education Committee, and it had formal consultative procedures with the main unions. Perhaps more important, were the day-to-day relations between elected officers of the professional associations and paid officers with elected Members of the ILEA and its senior officers. Most major policy initiatives including the organisation and structure of the educational system, were discussed with the professional associations. However, teacher militancy in the 1980s did raise questions about the professionalism of teachers and their role in what was perceived to be a lowering of educational standards. A point reinforced in correspondence with Norman Tebbit.<sup>17</sup> Teachers, and by implication the ILEA, were, therefore seen in the popular press to be more interested in politics than education. What had been an important avenue for co-operation between teachers and the ILEA, became stigmatised. Again, as with the Inspectorate there was more to the New Right objection to the unions than the question of militancy: the co-operation between teacher associations and the ILEA transgressed the distinction strongly held by the New Right, 'New Managerialists', that there should be clear differences in responsibility between managers and workers so, as to enable managers the right to manage effectively.

The William Tyndale experience certainly made ILEA Members more alert to possible crises in schools. As we have already written about this in this chapter, regular meetings with Members and Officers were instituted.

The primary inspectorate was greatly increased in the aftermath of Tyndale. Every division had a primary school inspector. Research and Statistics Branch were asked to provide detailed 'profiles' of schools, which helped to identify problem schools. By the early 1980s, under Chief Inspector Hargreaves, inspection programmes of ILEA schools became much more systematised.

As regards governors, there is often difficulty in defining a proper role for school governors; so much depends upon the personal qualities of the chairman and his/her fellow members, and the degree to which the local authority depends upon their advice. It was apparent that the ILEA devolved maximum powers to their school governors, and welcomed the broadening of their composition particularly with regard to parental and school staff membership of such bodies. We concluded that the governors' role in keeping ILEA professionals on their toes was often too little recognised, but it was an important part of the ILEA's policy making process.

When we turn to the question of whether the ILEA bureaucracy was cumbersome and inefficient, we examined three examples; those of the administration of Special Educational Needs, Adult and Further and Higher Education and the William Tyndale affair. In the introduction to Part 2, we noted that it is very difficult to judge the effectiveness of complex bureaucratic organisations. However, we identified three criteria: (i) context (ii) innovation and (iii) the benefits that arise from having an overall authority in a large conurbation that enabled 'joined up' services to be offered. In the first two cases we argued that on all three criteria an argument could be advanced to suggest that these services were responsive to the complex demands raised by the London context in the 1980s, were innovative and benefited from the kind of joined up policy that was possible by having authority wide services.

The case for preserving the ILEA's Special Needs service is altogether convincing. There was utter folly in breaking up an integrated service that had taken many years to build up successfully. Moreover, the high quality Schools' Psychological service was also broken up, to the detriment of all. The ILEA had been a powerful policy making body in Special Needs and it received especial care by ILEA members – the Fish Report<sup>18</sup> was a good ILEA report on Special Needs Education, that was on a par with the Authority's Hargreaves Secondary Education Report.<sup>19</sup>

In the case of William Tyndale, it can be argued that it became the focal point for a series of latent conflicts about the control of schools. However, the key point to be made in this thesis is how the ILEA responded to the crisis. Here we have noted that most likely as a result of the Tyndale affair the ILEA initiated three changes: ILEA Members had regular meetings with Senior Officers of the Authority, which included the Education Officer, Divisional Education Officers, and senior inspectors, at which Members could raise issues concerning particular schools, and they expected the Divisional staff to discuss both existing problems in their schools, and problems they could anticipate. The primary inspectorate was increased to ensure a closer understanding of developments in schools and to monitor them. And finally, the Research and Statistics Branch were asked to provide detailed 'profiles' of schools, which helped to identify problem schools.

The purpose of the chapter on the ILEA's role in the development of Adult, Further and higher Education was to show how involved in the development of this sector the Authority had been and to demonstrate that when it lost control of the sector it had left it in good condition. The enforced disintegration of Adult Education was seen to be a retrograde step.

Although the chapter on William Tyndale Schools' crisis was treated as a case study and showed how the crisis was a catalyst in bringing about some of the New Right's ideas on education, there was much to be said for the former Leader, Sir Ashley Bramall's view that it did in fact show (a) the ILEA's genuine openness to an independent view of how it had functioned (the Auld Report) and (b) the speed, in terms of policy formulation, with which it reacted to the crisis.

We then turned in Part 3, to examine the questions of whether the ILEA tolerated low educational standards and whether it was profligate in its expenditure.

The allegation that the ILEA condoned lower educational standards in its schools was a recurrent theme of the New Right. This was serious criticism of the ILEA, and of course the ILEA Inspectorate. This criticism was by no means exclusive to the New Right, as early as 1978 James Callaghan,<sup>20</sup> the former Labour Prime Minister, had expressed his concerns in an address at Ruskin College. It is probable

that the ILEA could have done more to raise standards in perhaps a score of its seriously under-performing secondary schools. The sort of initiatives that would probably have got at the root of the problem such as more resolute school closure policies could well have been applied to seriously failing schools, that faced rapidly falling school rolls and had staffing problems. But major problems such as the shortage of specialist teachers and school closure procedures were the prime responsibility of government. In our view, gravely under-performing secondary schools, require close co-operation between government and the LEA. The New Right simply piled on criticism of the ILEA.

Although the ILEA merited some criticism for its failings in this respect, it got little credit for its genuinely worthwhile measures. There is no doubt that the ILEA should have been more positive in school closure policies of under-subscribed, manifestly failing schools, but again, school closures needed the sanction of the DES (which was not always forthcoming) and as a democratically elected body, in its later years, it often had to face fierce anti-closure lobbies concerning the schools. The ILEA got little credit for its highly imaginative primary – secondary transfer schemes, which had as a principal aim, the sharing of ability ranges among schools, including its voluntary aided schools. Nor did it get credit for its many initiatives, including the London Compact, the \*Ibis scheme, major reports on ILEA schools (Hargreaves, Secondary; Thomas, Primary and Fish Report, Special Needs Education), the Junior School's Project (Mortimore Report, 1988) and school's staff self assessment procedures, which it developed in the 80s, when the left-wing of the Labour party took over the Authority. The ILEA saw improved school performance as a key way to tackling racial gender and social disadvantage in general.

It will be recalled that the Sheffield University report on local authority examination performances in the inner cities\*\* <sup>21</sup> place the ILEA about 'par for the course'. But it is clear from the failure of many subsequent New Right and New Labour initiatives to raise standards in inner city schools that the problem is complex. As recently as March 2005, the government admitted that a multi-million scheme to raise inner city school attendance levels had failed utterly which probably shows the

\* Inspectors based in schools

\*\* Gray J, Jesson D (1987) Exam Results and LEA League Tables (Newbury Policy Journal)

limitations of some government inspired initiatives. The New Right also failed to appreciate the successful measures to raise standards, policies that were given absolute priority by the left-wing ILEA administration.<sup>22</sup>

In the previous chapters, we looked closely as to whether or not the ILEA justified the charge that it was an irresponsible spender. The key to this problem was seen to be in the type of service that the Authority sought to provide. The aggregation of smaller borough controlled education authorities has not been a policy success by the New Right and this type of administration has proved to be far more costly than that which was provided by the former ILEA. Both the Conservative Education Association<sup>23</sup> and the National Audit Office<sup>24</sup> stressed just how expensive it is to provide any public service in inner London and seen in this light, the criticism of the ILEA as a big spender is not entirely fair. There was, however, a tendency for the ILEA to spend its way out of a problem; for example, where it just could not recruit teachers it made sure that those teachers who were in its service had generous study grants and a strong back-up of media resource officers and so on, to somehow compensate for the general problems created by the staffing shortage. But this surely was excusable.

The position with regard to public spending policies was further complicated because there would appear to be two distinct periods in the ILEA's history where different policies applied. The first period ran up to 1981, when Sir Ashley Bramall was Leader of the ILEA and finance in general was not such a dominant policy issue, but it became so in 1974 when cuts in spending were proposed and with the rise of the New Right, after 1979. Sir Ashley<sup>25</sup> with his political prescience, was prepared to accept a financial cutback in view of the New Right's pressures on public finance, but with his downfall, much more conflict came into relations between the ILEA and government. Whether or not the ILEA was astute in getting into this head-on dispute with government over spending cuts is a difficult problem to decide. On balance, we favoured some 'accommodation' with government, it raises the question of whether, ultimately, it was possible to appease this government Minotaur!

We have tried in this thesis, to avoid looking back at the ILEA in a kind of nostalgic time warp. The ILEA has to be seen as a democratically elected body, with a

mandate almost as strong as that of central government, that was an original and imaginative policy making body, based on its unique experience of conditions in inner London. Unless we can establish that the ILEA was an efficient administration that gave fair value for money, was not bureaucratic, and was an adaptive policy making body, there is no strong case for its survival.

In this thesis we have argued that the fundamental explanation for the demise of the ILEA concerned the ideological commitments of the New Right with respect to the centralisation of power and the implementation of markets in education. We considered whether the leftward shift in the national Labour party and in the ILEA in particular, exacerbated the conflict with the Conservative government and came to the conclusion, that on balance, it contributed to the anti right-wing rhetoric surrounding the ILEA, but that when its policies were examined they did not seem extreme. We then turned to see whether there was any substance to the criticisms made of the ILEA from the Right with respect to the workings of its bureaucracy and in relation to educational standards and whether it provided value for money. Again, a case can be made that these criticisms had little validity.

However, a sub-theme of this thesis is that the move to a greater centralisation of powers had an air of inevitability about it. What is certain is that had the ILEA survived, its powers and responsibilities would have come under protracted attack from the government, either New Right or New Labour, in that both saw central government as the only worthwhile policy making institution. The key to the ILEA's successful policy making process was in its careful consultative procedures, which government could not rival, and the fact that it did not suffer the same pressures towards 'short termism' as did central government.

There can be little doubt had the ILEA survived it would have faced a long war of attrition. Outright abolition of the ILEA by a Labour government, because of obvious political ties, would have been a more difficult proposition for New Labour. But to live in a constant state of war was no way for a great policy making body to survive. It is possible to look back at the abolition of the ILEA from two main angles: the first, concerns good government in the UK, generally, and the second, centres on our contention that provided education in inner London is better served by having a strong and effective education authority. In the first case, Roger

Dale<sup>26</sup> viewed with alarm the growth of power by the Department of Education when he wrote: 'Between 1974 and 1984 there had been a period of great change in educational administration that the DES had been given unprecedented control over the education service.' Dale also commented on Thatcherite policies as not being anti-statist, in line with traditional Conservative thinking, but being anti-environmentalistic and anti-social democratic. He wrote, 'While the state is to be rolled back, or at least cut back, that is to be done selectively. Thatcherism is very much in favour of selection of allowing the natural differences between people to grow, both as a reward to the talented and successful, the intellectually and morally deserving, and as a spur to the less well endowed, successful or responsible, to make the most of what they have. This spur is signally absent from an unrealistic social democratic welfare state.' This indicated the utter divide between the New Right and the ILEA in the sort of bedrock, that underlay their respective policy formulations. The ILEA was acutely aware that there was a line below which the socially and economically disadvantaged citizens could not rise without some form of public or community help.

The second angle stresses the need for efficiency in inner city education. There are serious limitations in having central government as the main policy making body. For example, Whitehall administrators, and often short term government ministers, could not match the expertise of ILEA (mainly elected) Committee Members.

No government could dispense with some form of local administration in inner London. Our contention is that the New Right government was ill-advised to abolish the ILEA that it was the most effective instrument to administer education in London. The ILEA and GLC used re-distributive powers to transfer resources from the richer London boroughs to the less well off; this is done today by central government that would be better done, in our view, by an elected local body, such as the ILEA. Policy making in the inner cities is highly complex and requires wide understanding of rapidly changing social and educational issues, and in our view central government cannot achieve the skill and understanding in making policy that a body such as the ILEA possessed, as the inheritor of a long tradition of inner-city administration.



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## Postscript

This thesis has been concerned primarily with a study in policy making in the former ILEA. There is logic, therefore, in attempting to assess just how well the succeeding arrangements for provided education have worked out. This is a huge question, affecting the performance of some thirteen borough education authorities in inner London, and this fragmentation process of the ILEA is further complicated by government decentralisation policies, that have devolved considerable powers to schools and colleges. Ruth Lupton and Alice Sullivan<sup>1</sup> wrote ‘London has thousands of educational institutions, including higher education institutions, 36 further education colleges, 401 (LA) local authority maintained schools, 1836 LA maintained primaries, as well as 18 city academies or city technology colleges (CTCs), several hundred independent schools and numerous mother tongue or supplementary schools run by community organisations, yet as Brighouse and Fullick point out in the introduction to this book,<sup>2</sup> ‘the city has no overall strategic education plan. The break up of the ILEA also led to an extreme imbalance in the provision of mixed girls and boys schools in some of the inner London boroughs. For example, Camden has four maintained girls schools and only one boys school. The most extreme gender imbalance in the coeducational sector occurs in Islington, where boys make up 71% of the coeducational secondary school population<sup>3</sup> ... Camden and Hackney have only 40% of boys in state schools at KS4 (age 15) suggesting that boys avoid single sex schools, either by going to schools outside the borough, or going into the private sector.’

Tim Brighouse and Leisha Fullick<sup>4</sup> edited what is probably the most up to date review of education in London, and a recurrent theme in many of the contributions to this work is that the abolition of the ILEA has created serious problems. This is so in the introduction to this work<sup>5</sup> in Chapter 1,<sup>6</sup> Chapter 4,<sup>7</sup> Chapter 11,<sup>8</sup> and in Chapter 12.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless the writer is in full agreement with Tim Brighouse (et al)<sup>10</sup> when he wrote, ‘No one is seriously advocating a reversion to the pre-1990 arrangements. For one thing there is no longer (if ever there was) a logic in the distinction between

inner London and outer London boroughs. Moreover the role of local authorities has now changed significantly in ways few people anticipated 20 years ago.’

As we have seen in this thesis, the New Right governments of Mrs Thatcher and John Major were extremely critical of the educational standards of many ILEA schools. New Labour was even more fervently in favour of raising education standards in the inner cities, but it did much more to relate the question of low standards to poverty and social, and economic deprivation in many inner city families.

Oonagh Hayes,<sup>11</sup> in a perceptive article in *Report*, the magazine of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers committed her colleagues to the support of her association’s Campaign to End Child Poverty. She wrote, ‘Over the last 20 years the face of poverty has changed, with children overtaking older people as the most ‘at risk’ group. In 1997 the Labour government pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020. Yet one cannot help feeling that the ILEA, in its heyday saw, even more clearly than New Labour, the inseparable link between poverty and adverse living conditions, and low performance in some inner city schools. For example when Sir Ashley Bramall was interviewed by the writer,<sup>12</sup> he praised the influence of R H Tawney in his political thinking, and saw the comprehensive school as the best way to getting something approximating to a level playing field of opportunity for all. Alan Ryan<sup>13</sup> wrote of the differences between Bertrand Russell (who was much more elitist in his views of schooling than was Tawney) and Tawney and that, ‘Tawney was always insisting on the absurd loss of talent, which an in egalitarian educational system involves, and looking for ways in which a comprehensive secondary education system would create feelings of neighbourliness and fraternity.’ In fact Sandra Leaton Gray and Geoff Whitty clearly bemoaned the lingering influence of Thatcherite and Blairite legacies of neo-liberal marketisation of education in the nineties and early eighties. But they saw some hope in that, ‘Nevertheless there are some early signs that the new government under Gordon Brown is more willing than the Blair regime to move social justice and social cohesion issues up the agenda ...’<sup>14</sup>

When we come to address briefly the important question we posed at the beginning to this postscript, just how successful have been the post-ILEA educational arrangements in inner London, any improvements in standards and quality in inner London education have to be seen in a completely different approach to ‘standards’ by New Labour, compared with the New Right. The New Right never saw improvement programmes as a sort of partnership between central government and the ILEA; in fact much of central government policy, if it can justify this term, was concerned with the gradual dismantling of the Authority.

In contrast, New Labour had initially, probably underestimated just how intractable were the problems of raising standards in inner city schools and began to commit increased resources to fund policies aimed at this problem, particularly after Labour’s re-election in 2001. In its goal of diversifying the provision of schooling by 2007, there were 335 specialist schools and academies out of a total of 401 secondary schools in London.<sup>15</sup> The speed with which specialist schools and academies were set up posed problems over the economic use of existing building, and there were problems faced by existing schools, particularly where generously funded academies were established, often in new buildings. Moreover, New Labour can be quite hostile to local authority influence in spite of a solid block of local authority supporters in parliament.

When Sara Bubb and Peter Earley<sup>16</sup> looked at problems of the workforce in London they quoted DfES school workforce statistics (2006) which showed ‘that teachers in London have less teaching experience than those in England as a whole: 50% of inner London teachers have less than three year’s service and just over 37% have less than six year’s service (compared with 15% and 29% in England ... While only 3.8% of teachers in England and Wales are unqualified, in London the figure is 10.2%, and in some London boroughs the figure is 17%.<sup>17</sup> They wrote, London suffers the most in terms of teacher shortages and although the number of vacant teacher posts has fallen recently there are about twice as many temporary posts in London than nationally. Even when vacancies are filled, Ofsted has found that staff are significantly less likely to be specialists in the subjects that they teach in London than across the country (HMI 2003). A very similar situation existed in ILEA days!

Smithers and Robinson<sup>18</sup> state that ‘the teaching profession is losing many of its members to unavoidable teacher loss due to retirement, change of profession, issues of salary, promotion and job security etc.’ We would add the high costs of accommodation and transport costs, to this list. The problem of staff turnover and shortages, that troubled the ILEA, have persisted in ‘post-ILEA’ days, but a further cogent cause of teacher turnover in inner London, in keeping with conditions in the major inner cities of England, has been the high demands on teaching skills that inner city schools pose for the teachers. Bubb and Earley<sup>19</sup> quote an Institute of Public Policy Research report for the (then) DfES 2005, a small-scale qualitative study of teachers working in challenging schools in and outside London, refers to ‘push and pull’ factors with regard to what motivates teachers to work in particular schools. They give 12 factors but most of these are concerned with the challenges of behavioural problems with some students, and the degree to which they get help and support in dealing with them.

When we come to the important question of to what degree educational standards have improved in ‘post-ILEA’ days, there are favourable statistics in examination performance by students, to support Labour’s claim to have had the right policies. Tim Brighouse<sup>20</sup> saw the turning point in 2001, ‘when Labour was elected for a second term, when New Labour had become increasingly interested in urban education in general, and London’s schools in particular. The problem at that time was pressing; Adverse reports by Ofsted had led to the out-sourcing of most of the educational functions of Southwark, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Islington, and the setting up of an independent learning trust for Hackney’.<sup>21</sup> Three of these boroughs were former constituent members of the ILEA. Numerous initiatives came about after Labour was re-elected, such as the London Challenge (to transform London secondary schools) and with the appointment of Tim Brighouse, as London Schools Commissioner in 2002. The London results\* are given at the end of this postscript. The National College of School Leadership (2000) was set up to raise the quality of leadership in schools. There also followed a period of intensive development of school academies in London.

Ruth Lupton and Alice Sullivan<sup>22</sup> have noted the improved examination results in London’s schools. They quoted Ofsted results (inspection judgements) (OFSTED 2006) and academic performance. They wrote,<sup>23</sup> ‘In 2005-6 59% of London’s

secondary schools and 64% of primary schools were judged good or better, compared with 49% and 59% respectively of schools nationally. School performance data for 2006 shows that Local Authority managed schools had slightly higher results at GCSE (aged 15) than the national average, with 58.3% of students gaining five GCSE at grades (A-C) compared with 57.5% for England as a whole.’ Nearly all the inner London schools that had particularly low GCSE performance in 2003 had improved by 2006, significantly more than in the country as a whole. The position is not entirely one of unqualified success. Lupton and Sullivan write,<sup>24</sup> ‘There remain substantial differences between schools in inner London. Even in the context of the very significant improvements in performance of inner London schools in recent years, 40% of inner London secondaries were in the bottom quartile of attainment at GCSE in 2005, and only 16% in the top quartile.’ Moreover, these successes have come with greater centralisation in the curriculum and in testing and this has raised questions about whether the results have been produced by training to the test at the expense of the wider education to which the ILEA was committed.

It would seem that the Blair government was becoming aware that the various initiatives to raise standards in inner London needed a degree of co-ordination, hence the appointment of Tim Brighouse as London Schools Commissioner in 2002. He had worked in inner London as an assistant education officer (ILEA) and he makes it quite clear that many of the problems he faced as Commissioner were not helped by the absence of a body such as the ILEA, which he knew to have been a prolific policy making body.<sup>25</sup> He reports on favourable London School Results.<sup>26</sup> The position in London today is, as we indicated at the beginning to this postscript, very different in that the central government is the driving force in policy making in London, and there is a splintering of ‘local’ influences, such as the development of academies and CTC’s, which could well make cohesive policy making more difficult in the future. Sandra Leaton Gray and Geoff Whitty<sup>27</sup> discuss some of the problems, such as student enrolment policies in the academies, where academies may now be acquiring something of a cachet among middle-class parents, thereby edging out the poorer pupils, who were expected to gain more from them. There are therefore significant problems posed by students who fall through the net of the academy development and the persistent problems of the marked under-performance, in terms of attainment, by substantial and significant ethnic

minorities. In our view, no subsequent policy initiatives, and the successes or failures that stem from them, have diminished the need for a powerful, elected body, such as the ILEA, to operate in the London education scene. The crucial point, seems to us, that the London boroughs are not policy making bodies as was the former ILEA.

## London Results – Key Stage 4 (Chapter 3 p126\*)

### London Challenge figures

	<b>1997</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Change 1997 – 2006</b>
<b>5 good GCSEs</b>	London 40.4%	London 58.3%	London 18%
	England 42.5%	England 57.5%	England 15%
<b>5 good GCSEs in English and Maths</b>	London 31.1%	London 45.8%	London 14.7%
	England 35.6%	England 45.3%	England 9.7%
<b>No. of schools Below 25% at GCSE</b>	95	0	
<b>No. of schools Achieving over 70% 5 good GCSEs</b>	36	126 (almost 1 in 3)	+90
<b>No of Teachers</b>	56,800	63,500	6,700
<b>No of support staff</b>	18,980	42,140	23,160

### Comments

- London secondary schools are improving faster than nationally. London is ahead of the national average at 5 A-C at GCSE for third year running, and ahead of the national average including Maths and English.
- Inner London results have improved by 22% since 1997.
- Almost one in three London schools achieved outstanding GCSE results in 2006
- No London borough is now below 41% 5 A-C GCSE. In 1997 two thirds of London boroughs (19) were achieving below this level
- London is narrowing attainment gaps faster than national average (including African, Black Caribbean and FSM Pupils (FSM – Pupils receiving free school meals).

\* In our view, these comparisons should be accompanied by details of government financial commitments to both sectors; London and the rest of England. The ILEA in the 80s worked under a harsh and restricting financial regime, imposed by the New Right.

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ILEA	Education Opportunities for All (Fish Committee Report), 1985	
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ILEA	Children in Need: The Growing Needs of Inner London Schoolchildren RS 994 ILEA, 1985	
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1. 1944 Education Act (The Butler Act)
2. 1980 Education (No 2 Act) Assisted places, parental choice and parent governors
3. 1981 Education Act (special educational needs)
4. 1986 Education (No 2 Act) Enhanced powers for school governors
5. 1986 Abolition of GLC (Provides for the direct election of ILEA)
6. 1988 Education Reform Act (Major restructuring of the system and includes the abolition of the ILEA)

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Phillips D (2003)	University of Bath <b>PhD Thesis</b> – A Conflict of Policy Making
Radford A (2001)	University of London – The Abolition of the ILEA: An Inevitable Victim of New Right Education Policy?

## H. Interviews

(Formal Interviews, based on a request, marked \*)

- 1) \* The Rt. Hon. Lord Baker PC
- 2) \* The Rt. Hon. Dr Sir Rhodes Boyson PC
- 3) \* Professor Peter Mortimore, Institute of Education, London (Director)
- 4) \* Sir Ashley Bramall, former Leader of the ILEA
- 5) \* Sir Peter Newsam, former Education Officer ILEA
- 6) \* Sir William Stubbs, former Education Officer ILEA
- 7) \* David Mallen, former Education Officer ILEA
- 8) \* Anne Sofer, former Chairman of the ILEA, Schools Sub-Committee and former CEO Tower Hamlets
- 9) \* George Carter, Member of the ILEA, Teacher Representative, NUT and ILTA, former Head of Isaac Newton School, ILEA

- 10) \* Ms. Morwen Jenkins, former Head of Hammersmith County School, ILEA
- 11) Trevor Jaggar, former ILEA Chief Inspector (Schools)
- 12) Howell Davies, former Staff Inspector (History), ILEA
- 13) Ted Field, former Head of Hampstead School, ILEA
- 14) Mrs Elizabeth Kerr-Waller, former Headmistress Hammersmith County School for Girls
- 15) Ms Denise Witcombe, former Special School Teacher North Croft (Mal. Ad. School)
- 16) \* John Mackintosh, Head Teacher, London Oratory School, now of GMS Status
- 17) Ken Hooton, (the late), Head Teacher, Christopher Wren School, ILEA
- 18) John Luzio, Member ILEA, Teacher Representative, former Head Teacher Canberra J M School
- 19) Mrs Maggie Burgess, parent of two ILEA pupils and school governor Ellerslie JMI School (ILEA) for 25 years.
- 20) Dermot Conway, former Head of St Edmunds RC School and the London Nautical School and Mary Boon School
- 21) Mrs Meg Conway, Special Needs Teacher, Burlington Danes School (V A ILEA)
- 22) Don Green, former Head of Henry Compton School (ILEA)
- 23) Mr and Mrs R Philips, former pupils at Sloane Grammar School, ILEA, and Holland Park Schools respectively
- 24) Leslie Ryder, Director Learning Resources, ILEA
- 25) \* John Theobald, former Head of St Peter's School, Hammersmith
- 26) Sue Theobald, Special Needs Teacher, Canberra School
- 27) Miss M Rachem, former Head of Fulham Gilliat School
- 28) \* Professor Eric Bolton, former Senior Chief Inspector DofEE
- 29) Eric Peirson (the late) Divisional Officer, ILEA
- 30) P Bradbury, Divisional Education Officer, ILEA, Division 2
- 31) Pat Basing, former Head, Canberra JM School Board
- 32) Mrs C Langley, former Warden, Marchants Hill Rural Centre, ILEA
- 33) Dr Mary Wilson, MBE, (the late), Senior Inspector Special Education, ILEA
- 34) Dr Marie Roe, (the late), Staff Inspector Special Education, ILEA
- 35) Rt. Hon. Lord St John Stevas PC (letter to writer)
- 36) Dr Conrad Graham, Special Schools Inspector Division 1, ILEA
- 37) Tom Dodd, HMI, and former Staff Inspector, ILEA
- 38) Arthur Isles JP, Divisional Inspector, ILEA
- 39) \* Rt. Hon. Lord Carlisle QCPC, former Secretary of State for Education
- 40) Nora Goddard, (the late), Staff Inspector, ILEA

- 41) Don Palmer, Deputy Head St Clement Danes School, later to become Burlington Danes C of E School
- 42) Mary Goss, Staff Inspector (Geography), ILEA
- 43) Dennis Felsenstein, Staff Inspector (Secondary Education), ILEA
- 44) \* Dr Christine Mabey (Birkbeck College), formerly of R & S Branch, ILEA
- 45) Rt. Hon. Lord Tebbit (letter to author)
- 46) Lord St J Stevas (letter to author)
- 47) Steve Bundred, former Member, ILEA. Senior Administrator with Audit Commission when interviewed.