

# **Regulation of Children and Families**

An Evaluation of the Extent to which Regulatory  
Techniques and Effects are Revealed through an  
Analysis of Parliamentary Debates Relating to the  
Provision of Food in State Schools

*'After bread, education is the first need of the people' - Georges Danton*

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction, Context and Methods

#### **Preface: The School as a Site**

Subsequent to the introduction of compulsory schooling in England and Wales in the late nineteenth century, yet prior to the legislative introduction of school meals in 1906, Labour, Liberal and Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs) made reference to ‘the harrowing spectacle’ of children in elementary schools.<sup>1</sup> They noted that ‘children came to school day after day absolutely hungry.’<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, ‘quite half the children were wretchedly neglected, unwashed, dressed in rags, half fed, and with all their little ailments neglected.’<sup>3</sup> The condition of poor children was not the sole concern raised in Parliament, there was the additional fact that their plight made them unable to profit from the education provided for them. MPs alleged that the ‘teachers were set the task of educating the mind while the physical condition of the child was such as to render education an absolute impossibility.’<sup>4</sup> Parliament had been ‘aware for many years that a great mass of sickly and stunted children were hurried into the primary schools who were unfit, both in regard to body and brains, to receive any education whatever.’<sup>5</sup> It was mooted that: ‘When a child was not in a fit condition to receive instruction the little nourishment taken went to the brain, and there was nothing to nourish the muscles, and so the body suffered.’<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1235 (Keir Hardie, Labour).

<sup>2</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1238 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

<sup>3</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1249 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>4</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1235 (Keir Hardie, Labour).

<sup>5</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 552 (Sir William Hart Dyke, Conservative).

<sup>6</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1252 (Dr. Charles Hutchinson, Liberal).

The introduction of compulsory schooling meant that poor children, who had been swept from the streets and into the classroom, were collected together in a manner hitherto unseen. As highlighted in these 1905 parliamentary debates on malnourished children, the institution of the school provided the State with an unprecedented opportunity for surveillance of the bodies and minds of poor children. Statistics gathered from these observations, alongside notions of futurity, perceptions of childhood, and law, were utilised as tools by MPs in debates to effectuate changes in policy to regulate working class children and families, and to justify and legitimise this regulation. Separating children from adults by placing them in the site of the school also facilitated the education of children by teachers for a part of each day, allowing the State to exert influence which would be unfeasible once people were scattered widely within their homes or at work. The school therefore became a site of regulation. An institution where children could be both observed and taught good habits at a young age, separated from their parents and outside of the family home. Analysis of the resulting law and policy relating to school meals and milk highlights this regulation in a particular way.

Thus, although my focus is on school food policy, I begin my analysis by exploring the origins of state education and the introduction of compulsory schooling. It is obvious that without the development of the site of the school as a place of compulsory attendance, the issue of the provision of school meals would not have arisen. Examining food policy alone does not clarify, nor give a full explanation of the reasons which lie behind the legislative introduction of school meals. It is only through an exploration of the origins of legislation addressing state education more

broadly that I will be able to analyse the political and economic factors which later influenced school food policies.

### **Why the Focus on School Food**

School food exemplifies patterns of regulation and provides a framework within which to view changes in social and political policy.<sup>7</sup> In the pages that follow, my focus will be on how and why regulatory techniques revealed through analysis of school food policy alter, remain, or are reworked over time, and the effect any shifts disclose on the process of regulation of children and families between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries.

Food transverses the sphere of the home and the sphere of the school, and subsequently highlights *tensions* between the public and private domains. For example, whereas following the introduction of compulsory schooling, MPs from all parties were agreed that the State and parents were jointly responsible for the schooling of children, debate surrounding school meals divided political thought over whether parents or the State were responsible for the feeding of children. The State gradually increased its involvement within the family unit as school meals were introduced, and later expanded during and following wartime. However, tensions remained, and patterns of regulation were not static. For instance, state involvement in school feeding was reduced during the late twentieth century due to political and

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<sup>7</sup> When I refer to school food this denotes meals and milk, unless a distinction is drawn. When exploring school food policy, I have chosen to concentrate primarily on meals and milk served to children in state funded day school institutions in England and Wales – which began as elementary schools to educate the children of the working classes.

economic shifts. Analysis of school food policy reveals these tensions and different regulatory techniques deployed by the State during each historical period.

School food acts as a *vehicle* – a carrier of policy – to continue the regulation of children and families, through the transmission of norms, from the site of the school into the family home. Drawing on the work of Jacques Donzelot and Michel Foucault, I will argue that children and families were, in the historical periods I examine, both the *object* of regulation, through state defined norms and behaviours taught within the site of the school, and the *agent* of state regulation, through the continued adherence to and replication of these norms inside the home. This allowed the State to continue to indirectly regulate children and families without physically accessing the private sphere of the home.

In each chapter, I will highlight the focus of regulation in three ways – through an analysis of *motivations*, *techniques of argumentation*, and *effects*. These strands are interconnected, as each subsequent section builds upon themes analysed in the previous parts, and advances explanation of the development of school meals and milk and the regulation of children and families as a result.

When analysing the *motivations* behind alterations in policy, unless I direct otherwise, by motivations I mean what apparently motivates the MPs to create, or seek changes to, school food policy. I am interested in why the MPs believe it desirable to consider the regulation of children and families in different ways at different times. Motives may arise because of politics, economics, or broader social changes (and issues arising thereon during debates). Some key themes such as bodies and minds, victims

and threats, and interlocking issues of futurity, health, economics, class, and education are identified from my analysis of the school as a site of regulation in the nineteenth century. These themes will be central to extrapolating and investigating the reasoning behind shifts in regulatory techniques during each period under consideration. Some themes such as futurity are constant, however the context changes and reoccurring themes are developed throughout my analysis of school food policy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For example, during the early part of my analysis, concern for future soldiers to safeguard the empire was prevalent in debates, whereas towards the latter part of my study, this anxiety for the future emerged as economic; to enhance the country's standing against global business competitors, or to preserve state financial resources. The concerns which motivate individual MPs, as well as shared arguments, will be found through an analysis of parliamentary debates, supported by secondary sources.

When the MPs focus on an issue or issues relating to children and families which they believe requires altered regulation, they then utilise various *techniques of argumentation* within the debates, in support or opposition of changes to school food policy. Some of the techniques used by MPs remain constant throughout each period under analysis, but some change; some are reworked from an earlier period and subsequently used in a different way. Techniques are utilised according to the priorities of the State at any given time. The MPs use these various techniques as tools to reinforce and legitimise the regulation of children and families. These tools such as statistics, notions of futurity, and perceptions of childhood, are cemented using law. Legislation on school food is created and subsequently utilised through the

site of the school, resulting in regulation which occurs both within the site itself, before continuing into the family home.

Tensions between the public and private spheres prevalent within the debates will be highlighted to reveal that the *effects* of school food policy changes result in different patterns and forms of regulation throughout the different periods examined. This will be seen through analysis of resultant legislation/policy, as well as statistics to highlight the perceived success or failure of alterations. As each chapter links to the next it will be seen that the effects of one period often become the incentive motivating changes in the next.

## **Theory and Methods**

I will examine primary data in the form of parliamentary debates, legislation, and official government papers, alongside deploying secondary literature during my analysis of education and school food policy between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries.

I will draw on the work of Jacques Donzelot and Michel Foucault, plus analyse the notion of the child's "special status" and perceptions of childhood, to explore how children and families became both objects and agents of state regulation, through the site of the school, by means of the vehicle of school food.

### **1) Jacques Donzelot**

#### **a) Introduction**

There are four key points in Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families* which I draw upon to develop my analysis of education and school food policy in this and subsequent chapters.

Firstly, I will draw upon Donzelot's concepts of "direct surveillance" and "limiting freedom". I will use these two concepts in developing an analysis of both why and how children were placed in the site of the school and, in later chapters, both why and how the bodies and minds of children were surveyed. Secondly, Donzelot's exposition of families as being both "targets" and "agents" of the State at the same time, via the site of the school, and thereby conveying public norms into the private



sphere of the home. Thirdly, Donzelot's notion of "social economy" will be central to my examination of debates leading to the introduction of compulsory schooling and later the implementation of school meals policy. Finally, I wish to explain Donzelot's idea of children seen as threats as this links to the use of perceptions of childhood as a tool when analysing the parliamentary debates surrounding both compulsory schooling and school food policy.

Before detailing Donzelot's work in relation to my analysis, it is necessary to make clear how important the division of class is to his analysis. Donzelot argues that urbanization in the nineteenth century was the catalyst for the requirement of 'establishing direct surveillance' of the lower classes.<sup>8</sup> Donzelot remarks on evidence which gives rise to the living conditions of the poor as weakening 'the moral fiber [sic] of the working classes',<sup>9</sup> and therefore without reform, the circle of their perception of immorality within the lower classes would continue to pass from parent to child. The mechanisms I will describe here served to 'support and systematize the transition, in the working classes, from the "clannish" family to the family reorganized according to the canons of domestic hygiene – the withdrawal to interior space, the rearing and supervision of children.'<sup>10</sup> As I explain in this introductory chapter when examining the child's "special status",<sup>11</sup> the upper classes had a notion of the model child within the domestic family and wished to reform the lower classes so that they too would fit the ideal.

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<sup>8</sup> Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1979) 23.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid* 71.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid* 93.

<sup>11</sup> Chapter 1, (3).

In upper class families they 'drew a sanitary cordon around the child which delimited his sphere of development: inside this perimeter the growth of his body and mind would be ... controlled by means of a discreet observation.'<sup>12</sup> Working class children, on the other hand, had 'excessive freedom - being left to the street - and the techniques employed consisted in limiting this freedom, in shepherding the child back to spaces where he could be more closely watched - the school or the family dwelling.'<sup>13</sup>

Donzelot's concept of direct surveillance is important to my analysis as the site of the school allowed for children to be surveyed en masse in a manner hitherto unseen. It is therefore through the site of the school that the lower classes were regulated by those in control – the upper and middle classes. Donzelot uses class to explain how the poor were both *disciplined* and *persuaded* to adhere to the norms of the bourgeois family ideal. He explores the practice of discipline and persuasion through the concept of tutelage.

## b) Key Concepts

### i) Tutelage

Donzelot uses the notion of philanthropic *moralization*.<sup>14</sup> In social policy terms he argues that moralization is used as the first procedure to order families. This is assistance given to enable the poor to overcome their breakdown of morality. However, any relief giving must 'serve some purpose; it must also contribute to a

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<sup>12</sup> Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1979) 47.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid* 47.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid* 58-70.

rehabilitation of the family.’<sup>15</sup> There is also in developing this, the notion of *normalization*.<sup>16</sup> This is the process of spreading norms for how families should behave through the structures of education and legislation. Both moralization and normalization can be carried through the site of the school. Persuading poor families that their children should go to school meant that the children could be taught good morals and social norms within the site of the school which they could then subsequently relay back to their family. In my argument I see this as the working class family being viewed as an object of regulation – an entity in need of persuasion in order to achieve the desired social aims. Donzelot explains this relationship between families and schooling as ‘one of *enticement*.’<sup>17</sup> I understand this as the manner in which the object – the family – finds their behaviour shaped rather than directly controlled per se. Donzelot expands on this point by stating that:

Should a single system of compulsory education be decreed, then? No, such a proposal seriously clashed with liberal logic. So why not reverse the tactics? Use exemption from payment to attract families that were imbricated in the blocks of dependence and use compulsion against those who lived marginally in the dubious vestiges of the old networks of solidarity.<sup>18</sup>

The mode of enticement Donzelot discusses here regards retaining family autonomy by sending children to school and conforming to the prescribed norms. He explains

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid* 69.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid* 70-82.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid* 90 [*italics as per text*].

<sup>18</sup> *ibid* 76-77.

that working class families should send their 'children to school ... watch over the company they keep, the way they use their time, their movements.'<sup>19</sup> If the families did not do these things they would find their children becoming the responsibility of the State. He further explains that parents were given 'the mission of rearing a future citizen, and if they did not fulfill [sic] their mission in a suitable manner, the state could replace them at any time with a child rearer or educator who offered more guarantees.'<sup>20</sup>

Donzelot argues that: 'Leaning on one another for support, the state norm and philanthropic moralization obliged the family to retain and supervise its children if it did not wish to become an object of surveillance and disciplinary measures in its own right.'<sup>21</sup> The process of surveillance and discipline Donzelot refers to here he talked of as *tutelage*.<sup>22</sup> Tutelage consists of preventative coercive intervention utilised when normalization and moralization fail: Therefore tutelage 'involved the *reduction* of family autonomy'.<sup>23</sup> As mentioned above, compliant families would not need to be compelled or sanctioned; it was only those families from the poorer classes who resisted sending their children to school and did not convey the required norms that would fall into tutelage. Donzelot explains that, 'tutelage means that these families will be stripped of all effective rights and brought into a relation of dependence *vis-à-vis* welfare and educative agents.'<sup>24</sup> Consequently, 'in order to better ensure your autonomy through the observance of norms that guarantee the social usefulness of the

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid* 159.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid* 182.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* 85.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid* 82.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid* 89 [italics as per text].

<sup>24</sup> *ibid* xxi [italics as per text].

members of your family; or else, losing that autonomy, you will fall back into the register of tutelage.<sup>25</sup> This means that adhering to state norms became advantageous to families by making autonomy favourable – an enticement to stay out of tutelage.

## ii) Agency

Both moralization and normalisation rely on the idea of the family unit. More than an object of regulation, the family 'could be made agents for conveying norms of the state into the private sphere.'<sup>26</sup> Akin to Foucault's theory of localised governance,<sup>27</sup> Donzelot argued that, 'the family became the nexus of nerve endings of machinery that was exterior to it.'<sup>28</sup> Therefore 'the modern family is not so much an institution as a *mechanism*.'<sup>29</sup> This form of mechanism reverses governance from the top down, and instead relies on 'the transition from a government *of* families to a government *through* the family.'<sup>30</sup> As argued above, poor families were regulated by having their behaviour shaped rather than directly controlled, and through this process the State can regulate the family, indirectly, through the family.

## iii) Social Economy

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid* 91-92.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid* 58.

<sup>27</sup> Chapter 1, (2) (a).

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1979) 91.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid* 94 [italics as per text].

<sup>30</sup> *ibid* 92 [italics mine].

A model of regulation of the family through the family is the notion of social economy. It is Donzelot's argument that when regulating the poor, the State seeks to 'diminish the social cost of their reproduction and obtain an optimum number of workers at minimum public expense'.<sup>31</sup> This also links back to tutelage as the more effective the poor were as parents, the less the State would have to invest in reformation (tutelage is expensive). In this vein mothers were deemed to rear their children 'not for themselves but for the state.'<sup>32</sup>

#### iv) Threats

One final theme relevant to my analysis is Donzelot's notion of threats. Donzelot explains how the State dealt with 'the question of childhood by combining what might threaten the latter (children in danger) and what might make it threatening (dangerous children) into the same target'.<sup>33</sup> This is an important idea which I will refer to in the next chapter.<sup>34</sup> The image of children as both victims and threats were utilised at the same time within the parliamentary debates leading to the introduction of compulsory schooling.

## 2) Michel Foucault

I will concentrate on two aspects of Michel Foucault's work which are relevant to my analysis of education and school food policy. Firstly, the notion of self governance, concerned with the health and morality of the populace and ideas of normalisation.

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid* 16.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid* 182.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid* 82.

<sup>34</sup> Chapter 2, Part 1 (a).

Secondly, when normalisation has been achieved, maintaining governance of the family. This is concerned with issues of economic futurity and, in particular, the perception of the child as future worker and citizen.

a) Self Governance and Normalisation

Foucault argues that during the nineteenth century the 'political power had assigned itself the task of administering life.'<sup>35</sup> It was therefore 'a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them'.<sup>36</sup> However, rather than top-down forces of law which prohibit certain behaviour, Foucault argues that this period demonstrated the importance of localised power. Whereas in the eighteenth century, control of the body was through punishment and torture, 'from the nineteenth century onward, the body ... was no longer something to be tortured but something to be molded [sic], reformed, corrected, something that must acquire aptitudes, receive a certain number of qualities, become qualified as a body capable of working.'<sup>37</sup> This means that control of the body (and mind) in the nineteenth century was about reforming the moral and physical character of the populace so as to produce efficient and useful members of society.

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<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1998) 139.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid* 136.

<sup>37</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1988: Vol 3* (Faubion J.D (ed), London: Penguin Books, 1994) 82.

The regulation of bodies consisted of 'two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations.'<sup>38</sup> Pole one 'centered [sic] on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls'.<sup>39</sup> Pole two, 'focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that cause these to vary.'<sup>40</sup> Both poles had their supervision 'effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*'.<sup>41</sup> It was through the discipline of bodies and regulation of the populace that power was administered.

This thesis will develop and explore the bipolar model of regulation as it is evidenced in the site of the school, a necessary component in the discipline of the bodies of children, as well as regulation of the population, through the deployment of norms via the school, into the sphere of the family home.

Foucault explains that government is concerned with the 'welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, and so on'.<sup>42</sup> These aims are fulfilled by the Government acting 'directly, through large-

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<sup>38</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1998) 139.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *ibid* [italics as per text].

<sup>42</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1988: Vol 3* (Faubion J.D (ed), London: Penguin Books, 1994) 217.



scale campaigns, or indirectly, through techniques that will make possible, without full awareness of the people,<sup>43</sup> the purpose set out by the State. The populace in this manner are 'the object in the hands of the government, aware, vis-à-vis the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it.'<sup>44</sup> Thus, without always knowing that they are being subjected to control mechanisms, 'The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it.'<sup>45</sup> The site of the school is a good example of this. Through the school children are subjected to a process of normalisation and standardisation which defines both the child and their family as either "normal" or "abnormal". The "abnormal" are then "broken down" and rearranged so as to be deemed as "normal". The standard of "normal" may vary depending on the needs of society at any given time. Normalisation is achieved through surveillance.

Through defining normal and abnormal, behaviour can be regulated. Those who do not adhere to a society's prescribed norms are considered abnormal. The abnormal are then surveyed and regulated by the normal through either exclusion from everyday society or by the restriction of their rights within it. The normal have the power over the abnormal. They can control and regulate bodies and minds through taking away rights and imposing obligations. By the abnormal then adhering to the normal there will be reward by the granting of privileges, for example lesser surveillance and the return of autonomy.

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 138.

This method of power relations means that behaviour could be shaped not solely by punishing abnormal behaviour, but through a system of control and reward. Those who adhere to good (normal) behaviour are rewarded and therefore the people themselves govern their own behaviour rather than directly being prohibited from doing certain things by the State. By educating the populace this way, the people themselves act on and distribute norms throughout society. This means that power is not hierarchical – top down – but instead distributed by and through the populace itself. Using Foucault's explanation of Bentham's panoptical complex, this illustrates that it is not always oppressive hierarchical power which controls the population, but rather a series of techniques utilised in order to give the impression of surveillance being exercised without those being subjected to observation being able to pinpoint an exclusive source. As Foucault states:

The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible.<sup>46</sup>

With regard to schooling, Foucault explains that, 'A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency.'<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, 'the school building was to be a mechanism for

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid* 170-171.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid* 176.

training.’<sup>48</sup> Buildings such as schools (and hospitals, factories, prisons etc.) were constructed:

... to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control – to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, regardless of the institution concerned, Foucault explains that although the aims of prison, hospitals and schools differ, they have in common the effect of training their subjects in good behaviour and self governance. Foucault notes, ‘Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?’<sup>50</sup> The Panoptican method of observation ensures those being surveyed constantly self govern their behaviour as they do not know if, or when, they are being observed. As Foucault states, ‘the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action’.<sup>51</sup> This method of control is therefore in place all of the time through the self disciplining actions of the populace.

#### b) Governance of the Family

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid* 172.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid* 228.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid* 201.

The second aspect of Foucault's work which is relevant to my analysis of education and school food policy is governance of the family. Foucault explains that schools 'must not simply train docile children; it must also make it possible to supervise the parents, to gain information as to their way of life, their resources, their piety, their morals.'<sup>52</sup> Schools in this manner 'constitute minute social observatories that penetrate even to the adults and exercise regular supervision over them.'<sup>53</sup> This means that the site of the school was necessary for the regulation of not only the children within the institution, but it also provided a method, a way of reaching the families and regulating the behaviour of the child's parents.

This system of localised power relations meant that 'New and highly detailed rules serve to codify relations between adults and children.'<sup>54</sup> There was 'a whole series of obligations imposed on parents and children alike: obligations of a physical kind (care, contact, hygiene, cleanliness, attentive proximity) ... to ensure the proper development of the organism.'<sup>55</sup> This links to the idea of normalisation explored above, families were required to achieve a standard of care, health and cleanliness in order to be deemed as normal. Those who fell short of the standard were deemed to be abnormal.

Foucault argues that the family 'is to become a dense, saturated, permanent, continuous physical environment that envelops, maintains, and develops the child's

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid* 211.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1988: Vol 3* (Faubion J.D (ed), London: Penguin Books, 1994) 96.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*.

body.’<sup>56</sup> The purpose and aim of this process was ‘to organize the matrix of the new adult individual ... to produce – under the best possible conditions – a human being who will live to the state of adulthood.’<sup>57</sup> Therefore, ‘health, - and principally the health of children – becomes one of the family’s most demanding objectives’.<sup>58</sup> This links to the notion of the child being viewed as a potential member of adult society who is competent, able, healthy and capable of taking on the role of future worker. In terms of futurity, Foucault notes that:

This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, children and families who adhered to the norms of society were a necessary component for the new industrial culture – the populace was moulded to fit the role of worker who conformed to the requirements of industry. This technique of power relations was:

... present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *ibid* 97.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1998) 140-141.

bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony.<sup>60</sup>

Not only objects of surveillance and regulation, the child and the family are also agents in promoting the norms of 'the healthy, clean, fit body, a purified, cleansed, aerated domestic space ... the family becomes the most constant agent of medicalization.'<sup>61</sup> With this approach, 'the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy'.<sup>62</sup> That again illustrates the importance of indirect methods of control rather than those administered directly from the top down. Hence, 'power is exercised rather than possessed ... an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated.'<sup>63</sup> Thus, 'the family considered as an element internal to population, and as a fundamental instrument in its government.'<sup>64</sup> Consequently the family is both the object of regulation, through the exercise of normalisation and self governance, whilst also being the agent of regulation, further transmitting these norms into the sphere of the home and adhering to the standards prescribed by the State.

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid* 141.

<sup>61</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1988: Vol 3* (Faubion J.D (ed), London: Penguin Books, 1994) 97.

<sup>62</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 26.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid* 26-27.

<sup>64</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1988: Vol 3* (Faubion J.D (ed), London: Penguin Books, 1994) 216.

### 3) Children's "Special Status"

Historically, theories of childhood divide over whether the state of being a child has merely evolved over time or whether it did not occur historically and came into existence as a modern phenomenon.<sup>65</sup> In this thesis, I take the stance that perceptions of childhood are culturally and historically varied.

The legislation on compulsory schooling altered the primary perception of childhood from one set by biology or dependence, to one defined by age. This alteration relied on an adult/child divide because within a set age range, children began to be removed from adulthood by law. By institutionalising children within the social structure of the school – the site for regulation – they became separated from adults by being taken out of the adult world of employment and, between prescribed ages, located within a distinct social space *for* children. When children are in this space their childhoods are in part defined by the educational law and policy decisions that are made by adults on their behalf. As I will explain in the pages that follow, as laws on education and school meals change, so do perceptions of childhood.<sup>66</sup> These altered perceptions of childhood are then utilised by Parliament, affect future policy changes and the circle continues. Children fall within the framework of these templates whilst

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<sup>65</sup> See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), who argues that childhood is a social construct.

<sup>66</sup> The notion of 'childhood' in the context of this thesis infers reference to what it means to be a child and the experiences belonging to children rather than the physical being of any specific child. As Diana Gittens states: 'The concept of 'child' concerns an embodied individual defined as non-adult, while the notion of 'childhood' is a more general and abstract term used to refer to the status ascribed by adults to those who are defined as non-adult.' Diana Gittens, 'The Historical Construction of Childhood' in Mary Jane Kehily (ed), *An Introduction to Childhood Studies* (2nd edn, Maidenhead: OUP, 2009) 37. This comparison to adults is central to childhood theory as one notion is often defined against the other. To know what it means to be an adult is being non-child like and vice versa.

they are within the vacuum of the school within the set age range. Although children might resist what they are told in schools, they do so within the framework where the dominant power force is adult.

I consider how perceptions of childhood were utilised and developed through political and social shifts detailed within the historical literature and parliamentary debates of each period in order to explain the *motivations* and *techniques of argumentation* which highlight the regulation of children and families by the State. Diverse perceptions of childhood emerge from my analysis. I use these notions as a framework to theoretically highlight shifting and developing ideas of childhood and how these are used by Parliament for the purpose of regulation. These distinct perceptions of childhood coexist and interlink in several ways during different historical periods. For example, two primary ideas of childhood emerge from my analysis of parliamentary debates in the next chapter – “worker” child and “vulnerable” child. Within these perceptions of childhood, subdivisions can be observed such as “future” and “current” worker. At times these notions interlink, and childhood can be perceived using several of these ideas during one period. These perceptions can and do shift as changes occur within society. I am not suggesting that children themselves physically inhabit the role of “worker” or “vulnerable” child; purely that I use these ideas to frame an exploration of the complex role of the State in educational provision. To explain these shifts, I examine the role of politics and economics in the implementation of education and food policy and focus on how and why public policy factors affect the relationship between children, their families, and the State.



Particularly at the beginning of school legislation, there is a deep divide between working class children and those from middle and upper class families. When I make reference to children during this period it relates mainly to working class children and typically to those who had little or no schooling prior to the implementation of compulsory education.<sup>67</sup> The shift in the perception of childhood observed during this period focuses primarily on the children who were noticing the biggest change to their lives; the poor children who were taken out of the working world and placed within the institution of the school.<sup>68</sup> As such, the literature I refer to during my analysis of the origins of education legislation is also primarily centred on the situation of poorer working class families. This is due to the fact working class families were both the object and agent of regulation, a point I will expand upon in the pages that follow.

In the subsequent chapter I will show how analysis of parliamentary debates and historical literature leading to the implementation of the Education Act 1870 highlights the primary perception of the child as “current” worker prior to the introduction of mass education.<sup>69</sup> The commencement of a shift to “vulnerable” child

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<sup>67</sup> The terms child and children used throughout my thesis refers to children of compulsory school age. This age range alters depending on the context and period being analysed but I map these changes throughout this and subsequent chapters. The terms child and children are also used in a broad sense, so I will not distinguish between children and adolescents, nor do I distinguish between sexes unless stated. Although much of the early literature analysed predominates boys, compulsory schooling and later school food policy encompassed all children regardless of sex.

<sup>68</sup> My key focus is on the day and later board schools introduced in 1870 rather than institutions which also provide accommodation and thus have an obligation to offer food to attendees. As such I have omitted to mention all types of schooling - there are separate issues surrounding children in boarding schools, industry, orphanages, and workhouses - as these are outside the scope of my project.

<sup>69</sup> I will be analysing the primary perceptions of childhood within society during each period; commenting on both the ideal and the reality. This means that I am analysing the primary perceptions whilst also acknowledging that not all children fit the prescribed moulds, nor do they experience childhood in the same way. Therefore, although I acknowledge the reality of children as “current”

alongside “future” worker is observed through the emergence of child welfare as revealed during analysis of the introduction of regulations for child workers (Factories Acts) and compulsory schooling legislation (Elementary Education Act 1876 and Elementary Education Act 1880).

As such, working class children occupied the role of “current” worker employed predominately in factories. As “current” workers there was no distinction between the adult world and the child world – no obvious separate stage or space of childhood. This caused conflict between how the reformers thought children *ought* to be living and the social reality of how they *were* living.<sup>70</sup> During the mid-nineteenth-century, middle and upper class children were brought up in families where ‘domesticity was a way of life. With the father at work, the mother reigned within the home, surrounded

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workers in *paid* employment, even to the present day, and make comment on this throughout my thesis, I acknowledge but do not expand upon unpaid schoolwork or unpaid domestic work as means of viewing children as workers because this is outside the scope of my thesis. For example, Qvortrup’s notion that ‘mental labour in current society corresponds to manual labour in pre-industrial society.’ Jens Qvortrup, ‘The Development of Childhood: Change and Continuity in Generational Relations’ in Jens Qvortrup (ed), *Structural, Historical, and Comparative Perspectives* (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, 2009) 17, and Hendrick’s assertion that ‘[i]t is not the case that within the classroom labour ceased; rather it was that its nature changed from being essentially physical to being mainly mental.’ Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 64. I am concentrating on **common understandings** of childhood as witnessed in the parliamentary debates and literature of each period and as such when I refer to the concept of “current” worker hereafter in my thesis, this implies children in *paid* employment.

<sup>70</sup> When I use the term reformers I refer to people who advocated mass education for varying reasons. As Colin Heywood states: ‘A very mixed bunch of philanthropists, politicians, working-class radicals, journalists, civil servants, industrialists, factory inspectors and schoolteachers contributed in their various ways to imposing a ‘modern’ conception of childhood.’ Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 2001) 144.

by her offspring.’<sup>71</sup> By contrast, ‘[f]or poor children the innocence of infancy – of not knowing – was soon stripped away by exposure to the realities of their crowded, exploited and often sordid environment. In the world of the poor ... it is hard to see a flicker of childhood innocence.’<sup>72</sup> James Walvin explains that ‘women and children being forced to work was the antithesis of the Victorian ideal of domesticity.’<sup>73</sup> “Worker” child led to unease over ‘the ‘natural order’ of patriarchal domesticity.’<sup>74</sup> This meant the “natural order” of men providing for their families being overturned if it was children who were involved in wage earning. This disruption of the domestic ideal was deemed by the middle and upper classes to negatively affect the very fabric of society at a time of great social change. As Harry Hendrick states:

In accordance with the ideal of domesticity (which included the public and private spheres), everything and everyone was to have its place. Education helped further to order society in this respect: the child was in the school, learning; the male adult was in the workplace, working; and the female adult in the home, mothering.<sup>75</sup>

The reasoning behind this change in the perception of childhood was many and varied, in part due to ‘influences of evangelical opinion concerning human nature, the

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<sup>71</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 14.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid* 15.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid* 14.

<sup>74</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James and Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 41.

<sup>75</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 31.

gathering pace of the bourgeois “domestic ideal” and fears about the social and political behaviour of the mass of labouring men and women.’<sup>76</sup> However, the varied theoretical basis regarding arguments against child labour merged at the point of concern for the child’s nature. Attention was drawn to the child’s “special status” as an object of vulnerability with the potential to be corrupted in mind and mistreated in body. The Romantic notion of childhood innocence ‘was perfectly compatible with the evangelical understanding of childhood for ... industrialism was exploiting children and in the process leading the nation to damnation.’<sup>77</sup> This combined concern about child labour:

... pointed to the child’s special character. Reformers were quick to identify the physical and moral dangers. The former referred to damage to children’s bodies through long hours, debilitating temperatures, polluted atmospheres, and beatings. The moral dangers were perceived chiefly as a lack of education and religious instruction and general precociousness.<sup>78</sup>

This analysis highlights two distinct forms of childhood that were in place during this period; one for upper and middle class children based on innocence, and one for lower

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<sup>76</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James and Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 40.

<sup>77</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 26.

<sup>78</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James and Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 41.

class children based on a lack of the same. Yet the Victorian elite did not recognise multiple childhoods and as such did not deem the poor children to have a childhood at all. This was because they did not identify what those poor children were experiencing *as childhood*. To the middle and upper classes childhood meant innocence, growing up in homes that were ‘places of leisure, rest and learning,’<sup>79</sup> where children should be allowed to be children. Michael Wyness states: ‘Being a child and going through the period of childhood means having no economic and moral responsibilities; it means not having to work.’<sup>80</sup> By only recognising their own notion of childhood as proper, this allowed the middle and upper classes to use the concept of childhood innocence as a tool to manipulate widespread social change. As such, ‘The campaign to reclaim the factory child for civilisation was one of the first steps in what might be described as the creation of a *universal* childhood.’<sup>81</sup>

This highlights that during the nineteenth century reformers perceived childhood to be a distinct state of being from adulthood where children should be separated from the adult world and placed in a special site *for* children. By placing children in the site of the school, reformers were able to influence children apart from the sphere of the family. The object of this measure was to utilise the primary perception of childhood as a separate stage of life, one of innocence, during which young minds can be subjected to positive moral and social education in order to set a precedent for life

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<sup>79</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 15.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 9.

<sup>81</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 26 [italics as per text].

thereafter.<sup>82</sup> Expansion on the importance of the site of the school and how this set the foundations for school food policy will be explored in the following chapter.

This notion of the adult/child divide can imply that childhood is seen as a passage to adulthood rather than an entity in its own right. For example, the perception of the child as “future” worker/citizen emerges in Chapter 2 and is thereafter constantly present throughout my analysis up until the present day. There is consistent reference within the parliamentary debates to the creation of strong worthy adults of the future. Futurity is a key theme and argument prevalent in the debates surrounding both compulsory schooling and school food policy. However, the perception of childhood in terms of futurity is reworked in different forms throughout different periods.

The ‘safety of the empire’ was a dominant factor in the formulation of the child as “future” worker/citizen in the early nineteenth century.<sup>83</sup> This continued for almost one hundred years into the early twentieth century, when following the Boer War children were cited as ‘stewards of this Empire’,<sup>84</sup> including their role as potential future soldiers. National efficiency continued to be a key argument. Following two world wars, education of the “future” worker was necessary for economic reconstruction. It was cited that, “Upon the education of the people of this country the

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<sup>82</sup> See the work of John Locke, who provides an argument for developing reason in the education of children and a notion of the child as a future resource of society. Locke also considers childhood is a state distinct from, and a pre-requisite to, adulthood. Locke J, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education: John Locke on Education* (Gay P (ed), New York: Teachers College Press, 1971); Locke J, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book I* (Nidditch P.H (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). See also Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, (London: Penguin Books, 1979) regarding childhood as a separate state of being with its own distinct conditions and the relationship between the individual and society through education.

<sup>83</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 July 1807, vol 9, cols 854-855.

<sup>84</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, cols 872-873.

fate of this country depends.”<sup>85</sup> So although, ‘demand for juvenile labour and the need for a military presence within the UK and overseas, particularly in commonwealth countries, have changed and declined’,<sup>86</sup> and children were no longer primarily perceived as future soldiers, their education was still based on their potential to enhance the country’s efficiency. These examples highlight how the notion of futurity has remained constant, but the nature of children’s future work has shifted. Educational and school food policy is therefore shaped to fit a given need in society and children and families are regulated to fit these required roles.

In Chapter 5, I introduce a new perception of childhood – “consumer” child.<sup>87</sup> I will firstly introduce “future” consumer child and subsequently “current” consumer child. Both types of “consumer” child regularly interlink and are utilised by Parliament alongside continuing notions of the child as “vulnerable” and “worker” – both current and future – in order to achieve the intended aims of the State. Consumer child emerged from broader concerns relating to cultural change.

Changes in society saw a shift from the working child of the nineteenth century, to the ‘economically “worthless” but emotionally “priceless” child’ of the mid-to-latter part of the twentieth century.<sup>88</sup> Viviana Zelizer notes that, ‘as soon as children ceased to

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<sup>85</sup> Board of Education, White Paper: *Educational Reconstruction* (Cmd 6458, 1943) 1.

<sup>86</sup> Hilary Land, ‘The Crumbling Bridges between Childhood and Adulthood’ in Julia Brannen & Margaret O’Brien (eds), *Children in Families: Research and Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996) 190.

<sup>87</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary entry for consumer is ‘A person who uses up a commodity; a purchaser of goods or services, a customer.’ Oxford English Dictionary <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/39978>> last accessed 1/4/2013. In this sense I am using the term “consumer” child to explain that children are users of goods and buyers of goods.

<sup>88</sup> Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) 3.

be profitable as economic investments, fertility declined and children became expensive consumption goods; their changing price determined their new value.’<sup>89</sup> In the twentieth century people were living longer than they had previously and were having fewer children. Andy Beckett states, ‘The national birth rate peaked in 1964 and then fell every year for the rest of the decade.’<sup>90</sup> Families were becoming smaller and their structures “longer and thinner”;<sup>91</sup> there were less children being born but those who were lived at home for longer. Because parents were having fewer offspring they invested more in them, emotionally and economically. Furthermore, because children were living at home for longer they became dependant on their parents for a greater period of time than they had in previous decades. This was partly because they were spending a greater number of years in education. This meant that children were spending more time in childhood, removed from the world of adults for longer.<sup>92</sup> This gave the State more scope for the regulation of children and families because by keeping children in the site of the school for greater periods, and therefore

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid* 8.

<sup>90</sup> Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009) 15.

<sup>91</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 145.

<sup>92</sup> The amount of time children are now in a period of dependency is a change that Cunningham states happened from the 1970s onwards because ‘Housing and economic difficulties have made it much more difficult to leave home.’ Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 221. He states that whereas ‘In the 1950s and 1960s children made remarkably quick transitions from childhood to adulthood, marrying in their early twenties. Now the transition to adulthood became infinitely protracted.’ Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 220. These arguments are supported by Hilary Land who states that whereas in the 1950s and 1960s children left school at 15 ‘and went straight into full-time employment ... In 1990 over a third of 16-to 18-year-olds were in full-time education ... and under half had full-time jobs.’ Hilary Land, ‘The Crumbling Bridges between Childhood and Adulthood’ in Julia Brannen & Margaret O’Brien (eds), *Children in Families: Research and Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996) 189. These factors all arguably serve to make childhood a more prolonged experience.



increasingly separated from the adult world, it gave further opportunities to observe/survey the bodies and minds of children and teach them prescribed norms.

Following World War I, despite unemployment being high in traditional production, new industries were being set up to manufacture 'electrical goods, cars and aircraft.'<sup>93</sup> It is through the availability of these new consumer goods that, 'Children absorbed the aspirations, desires, and tastes of parents who were adjusting to the growing consumer economy.'<sup>94</sup> People were increasingly 'being viewed by policymakers – and were thinking of themselves – as consumers, as purchasers of goods in the marketplace.'<sup>95</sup> Furthermore it was expressed that, 'children's desires for popular toys or modish clothing were not sinful or frivolous; rather they represented legitimate social needs which must be met if a child was to develop into a healthy adult.'<sup>96</sup> The child's future role as an adult was of prime concern. This shows a link between perceptions of the child as "future" worker/citizen and "consumer".

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<sup>93</sup> The Cabinet Papers 1915-1982

<<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/cabinet-gov/government-whos-who.htm>> last accessed 17/6/2013.

<sup>94</sup> Susan J. Matt, 'Children's Envy and the Emergence of the Modern Consumer Ethic, 1890-1930' (2002) 36, 2 *Journal of Social History* 283, 285. Although referring to children in America, Susan Matt's work on the child consumer is relevant here because she explains the change between the Victorian era which I analyse in later chapters and the new notion of consumer child.

<sup>95</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004) 18.

<sup>96</sup> Susan J. Matt, 'Children's Envy and the Emergence of the Modern Consumer Ethic, 1890-1930' (2002) 36, 2 *Journal of Social History* 283, 296.

The type of consumer child I am referring to at this point is that of “future” consumer because ‘although children were a market, they were not sold to directly.’<sup>97</sup> However, a new type of consumer child was emerging – “current” consumer via their parents spending. Susan Matt notes, ‘In these early days of mass-produced and mass-marketed toys, parents controlled the purse strings, influenced the selection of toys, and thereby exerted some control over both their own and their children's social image and identity.’<sup>98</sup> Thus children at this stage did not have autonomy with regard to spending power. They may have been vicarious consumers in that they could *influence* their parent’s spending but did not have the ultimate means to decide or purchase goods in their own right.<sup>99</sup>

As society became more affluent parents spent more of their disposable income on their children. Thus:

... it is parents (along with grandparents and other family members) who provide the economic resources for the large majority of children’s purchasing and consumption. Most of children’s spending is in fact *parents’* spending: it is parents

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<sup>97</sup> Jyotsna Kapur, ‘Out of Control: Television and the Transformation of Childhood in Late Capitalism’ in Marsha Kinder (ed), *Kids’ Media Culture* (London: Duke University Press, 1999) 125.

<sup>98</sup> Susan J. Matt, ‘Children's Envy and the Emergence of the Modern Consumer Ethic, 1890-1930’ (2002) 36, 2 *Journal of Social History* 283, 285.

<sup>99</sup> The child during this period in history did not have their own money to spend. The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 restricted employment for those children less than 14 years of age. Any part time wages children earned outside these restrictions were still traditionally given to their parents.

who pay, even if it is children who consume or use what they buy.<sup>100</sup>

Alongside children receiving ‘increasingly expensive presents at Christmas and on birthdays’,<sup>101</sup> children also began to obtain money as gifts at birthdays and religious celebrations, and pocket money became popular:

The giving of pocket money (or allowances) is a relatively recent practice, dating back to the mid twentieth century. It takes a variety of forms, ranging from ad hoc payments to formal weekly or monthly allowances, which are received by around two-thirds of children.<sup>102</sup>

Pocket money is sometimes given to children for doing household chores in return for payment from their parents. Sometimes it is given freely by parents with no exchange of obligation on behalf of the child. Therefore, ‘While the spending money of the useful child had been derived from his or her wages, the allowance for economically useless children, regardless of class, came primarily from their parents’ pocketbook.’<sup>103</sup> Whereas in the nineteenth century, when children were predominantly viewed by society as “current” workers, and gave their wages to their parents, children’s pocket money is viewed as the child’s own rather than as money

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<sup>100</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 143 [italics as per text].

<sup>101</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Harlow: Pearson, 2005) 191.

<sup>102</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 150.

<sup>103</sup> Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) 109.

belonging to the family. This meant that in the age of today's consumer society, children, 'have money which they spend on themselves',<sup>104</sup> and 'now have an unprecedented purchasing power of their own'.<sup>105</sup>

Alongside pocket money, it is estimated that, 'at any one time between one-and two-thirds of all school pupils between the age of 14 and 16' are in some form of employment.<sup>106</sup> The implementation of compulsory schooling and restriction of child labour laws, as Michael Lavalette notes, 'was not to stop children working but to restructure their labour market activities in the sphere of 'out of school' work'.<sup>107</sup> This meant 'part-time 'out of school' work, performed before or after school, at weekends or during school holidays'.<sup>108</sup> These jobs could fit in around their education.

Whereas to begin with, those children who worked outside of school hours were 'almost exclusively working-class ... and money earned by children was invariably used to supplement meagre family incomes'.<sup>109</sup> Post World War II, 'full employment, relatively high wages and improved social provision meant that children's earnings

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<sup>104</sup> Richard Layard & Judy Dunn, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London: Penguin, 2009) 53.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid* 56.

<sup>106</sup> Madeleine Leonard, 'Child Work in the UK, 1970-1998' in Michael Lavalette (ed), *A Thing of the Past?: Child Labour in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) 180.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Lavalette, 'Thatcher's Working Children: Contemporary Issues of Child Labour' in Jane Pilcher & Stephen Wagg (eds), *Thatcher's Children?: Politics, Childhood and Society in the 1980s and 1990s* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1996) 179.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid* 175.

<sup>109</sup> Cunningham, forthcoming, cited in Stephen Cunningham, 'The Problem That Doesn't Exist?: Child Labour in Britain, 1918-1970' in Michael Lavalette (ed), *A Thing of the Past? : Child Labour in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) 164.

were less essential to working-class families.’<sup>110</sup> Therefore the money children earned gradually became seen as their own to spend on themselves. As ‘child labour became less associated with hardship ... It became progressively destigmatized ... a key factor in contributing to the eventual emergence of a cross-class child labour force.’<sup>111</sup> Thus, ‘some children may work because of poverty but many child workers come from relatively affluent families’.<sup>112</sup> Therefore children have in the past, and continue to occupy, the role of “current” worker. Nowadays middle class children also inhabit the role that was previously reserved for children from poor families. However, the dominant ideology altered so that children are nowadays widely considered as schoolchildren primarily and any paid work they do is subservient to their education.

Knowing that children have money to spend means that, ‘Marketing now increasingly addresses children directly.’<sup>113</sup> This has been argued as because ‘in a world of too many commodities and too few shoppers, “children become valuable as consumers.”’<sup>114</sup> It has also been suggested that the aim of marketing to children ‘is to initiate them as early as possible into the cult of the brand. In a cut-throat consumer

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Michael Lavalette, ‘Theorizing Children at Work: Family, State and Relations of Production in Historical Context’ in Michael Lavalette (ed), *A Thing of the Past?: Child Labour in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) 51.

<sup>113</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 83.

<sup>114</sup> Pecora, *The Business of Children’s Entertainment*, p.7 cited in Benjamin R. Barber, *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole* (London: W.W. Norton, 2007) 18.

culture, brand awareness and brand loyalty are priceless assets'.<sup>115</sup> Children have value as consumers of the future, consumers vicariously through their parents, and as consumers in their own right. The perception of the child as "current" consumer follows the notion of childhood as a separate state of being concerned with 'all childhoods and all children of all ages, in their own right and not just as a means to an end.'<sup>116</sup> This is a shift from thinking of children solely in terms of futurity, to recognising their place in present society, where 'there is a much stronger sense of children as individuals.'<sup>117</sup>

Marketing aimed directly at children became possible because they can be targeted, largely unsupervised,<sup>118</sup> through the television and nowadays other media such as the internet. Buckingham argues, 'that the private space of the home has been invaded from outside by forms of media and consumerism.'<sup>119</sup> Those trying to sell their products can thus reach children more easily, and more often, than before the advent of mass communication.

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<sup>115</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 232.

<sup>116</sup> Allison James & Adrian James, *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies* (London: Sage, 2008) 2. For consideration of childhood as a multi-disciplinary study, see also Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (London: Routledge, 1996); Allison James & Adrian James, *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997).

<sup>117</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 62.

<sup>118</sup> 'A UK survey in 2005 found that two-thirds of children between two and twelve years old watch TV without supervision.' Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 259.

<sup>119</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 149.

The advertising aimed at children was traditionally toy and food based – ‘relatively low budget affairs.’<sup>120</sup> Although the market for consumer goods aimed at children has greatly increased over recent years, detailed analysis is outside the scope of my thesis. Other than the theory that lies behind the emergence of “consumer” child, it is food-based advertising that is of importance to my work. Sue Palmer notes how marketers ‘devote millions to impressing children that a particular brand of fizzy drink, snack food ... or whatever will make their lives more complete than all the competing brands.’<sup>121</sup> Through mass media, ‘children and young people become a more integral part of a globalised consumer culture.’<sup>122</sup>

Concern regarding children being influenced by advertisers assumes the position, ‘that children were being manipulated into a kind of passive subservience to these market forces.’<sup>123</sup> This follows the same line of argument that ‘The “well-behaved” viewer, who listens quietly, never talks back to the screen, and never changes channels, is learning *what* to think and losing his own grasp on *how* to think.’<sup>124</sup> Children are viewed ‘as essentially innocent and helpless, unable to resist the power of commercial marketing and media ... They are seen as fundamentally passive, vulnerable and

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<sup>120</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 230.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid* 232.

<sup>122</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 62.

<sup>123</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 231.

<sup>124</sup> Douglas Rushkoff, *Children of Chaos: Surviving the End of the World as We Know It* (London: Flamingo, 1997) [italics as per text] 49.

defenceless'.<sup>125</sup> This perception of childhood in terms of vulnerability is often utilised by Parliament in order to support arguments for or opposing policy changes, although the context it is used in alters.

Childhood 'is typically defined here as a pure, Eden-like space ... which is progressively invaded and corrupted by the dread hand of commerce.'<sup>126</sup> Once children had been removed from the world of work, moralists within society did not want them susceptible to consuming mass marketed commodities either. The child consumer just does not fit with Victorian ideals of childhood and 'children's consumption became the focus of much broader fears about social change, moral decline and collapse of the social hierarchy. This led in turn to concerted efforts to regulate children's consumption, and thereby to raise responsible and respectable consumers'.<sup>127</sup> Children became the focal point of wider fears within society about restoring the social status quo, as had occurred with the introduction of compulsory schooling. The notion that 'Consumerism ... is destroying the fundamental values of childhood',<sup>128</sup> continues to be a strong argument and one that relates to developments in education and school meals policy.

Childhood has become an extended period of life, with children in school and at home for longer than their ancestors. Yet conversely, 'for the first time in history most

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<sup>125</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 11.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid* 59.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid* 72.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid* 5.



children are better at many tasks than their parents.’<sup>129</sup> Typically children are ‘more media-savvy’ than adults.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, ‘Parents are often ... on the other side of the ‘digital divide.’’<sup>131</sup> This throws the balance of the adult/child relationship. There is the suggestion that the boundaries between childhood and adulthood ‘have indeed become blurred’.<sup>132</sup> Even the possibility that the concept of childhood no longer exists.<sup>133</sup> The boundaries between adults and children are, within the institutional setting of the school, becoming more defined, yet within the home they are less clear and at times, arguably, being reversed. Children “know more”, have their own money to spend, and are being treated as consumers in their own right. ‘When children’s knowledge outstrips that of adults, it’s hardly surprising that adults become uneasy.’<sup>134</sup> However, these fears only remain prevalent in adult dominated conceptions of childhood. These anxieties, ‘ignore the possibility that there may be a fundamental transformation underway in our cultural perception of childhood.’<sup>135</sup> This means that

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<sup>129</sup> Richard Layard & Judy Dunn, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London: Penguin, 2009) 53.

<sup>130</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 231.

<sup>131</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 259.

<sup>132</sup> David Buckingham, *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000) 74.

<sup>133</sup> See Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

<sup>134</sup> Patricia Holland, ‘I’ve Just Seen a Hole in the Reality Barrier!’: Children, Childishness and the Media in the Ruins of the Twentieth Century’ in Jane Pilcher & Stephen Wagg (eds), *Thatcher’s Children?: Politics, Childhood and Society in the 1980s and 1990s* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1996) 157.

<sup>135</sup> Jyotsna Kapur, ‘Out of Control: Television and the Transformation of Childhood in Late Capitalism’ in Marsha Kinder (ed), *Kids’ Media Culture* (London: Duke University Press, 1999) 123.

childhood is not a stable entity but rather one which adapts to changes in society and alters its form.<sup>136</sup>

Consideration of these varied perceptions of childhood will aid my explanation of how competing ideologies in the political arena become manifested in education and school food policy, and in the pages that follow, I will use these concepts as a framework to explore the shifting patterns of regulation of children and families.

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<sup>136</sup> See Nick Lee, *Childhood and Society: Growing Up in an Age of Uncertainty* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001).

## Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I will examine the origins of compulsory education; specifically focussing on the development of compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century and why it was introduced, centring on the importance of the site of the school in the regulation of children and families. In this chapter I will be analysing parliamentary debates leading to the implementation of the Education Act 1870. I argue that the primary perception of children was as “current” workers prior to the introduction of mass education. The themes of the body and mind of the child are highlighted during analysis of debates. Compulsory schooling was mooted, and techniques utilised by both supporters and opponents include futurity, law, and issues of class. Developing the idea of the child’s “special status” analysed in Chapter 1, the commencement of a shift to the perception of “vulnerable” child is observed through the emergence of child welfare, as revealed during analysis of the introduction of regulations for child workers (Factories Acts) and further compulsory schooling legislation (Elementary Education Act 1876 and Elementary Education Act 1880). The development of the perception of the child as “vulnerable” and resultant legislation culminated in hungry working class children visible within the site of the school.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the effects of compulsory education became the motivations behind the introduction of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906. Visibly hungry children were an issue the State had to address; how it addressed this became the focus of debate. I locate the arguments leading to the implementation of the Act and the wording of the Act itself to assist in explaining the tensions between concern for the emerging “vulnerable” child and “future” worker and opinion in support of providing food in schools, against the political and economic arguments against the

introduction of school meals. Tensions between differing levels of regulation and involvement in the private sphere of the home become clear from analysis of the debates. I will also present the situation during World War I when children became part of the war effort and the primary perception of childhood returned to that of “current” worker, utilised alongside continuing notions of “vulnerable” child and “future” worker. I subsequently examine post-war policy depicting the desire for social change and the influence this had on the regulation of children and families through alteration in school food policy.

In Chapter 4, I will consider the mooted importance of calories and the focus of debates on the bodies of children during the implementation of milk in schools, alongside economic concerns within industry during the 1920-1930s. The effects of alteration in policy saw milk overtake meals as the chief concern of Parliament, until the introduction of nutritional standards, when quality of food became an issue alongside quantity. Following the outbreak of World War II, focus centred on both the bodies *and* minds of children and families and how regulation of these two entities could be achieved through changes in school food legislation. The condition of evacuees was publically noted and visible children again became the focus of debate. With wartime came the centralisation of control over food and the provision of school meals for all children. This saw the regulation of a larger number of children and families than the State had previously had access to through the medium of school meals. There was greater intervention in the private sphere of the home during and following the war, resulting from World War II food strategy and the increasing welfare state. The notion of futurity was an important point mooted within debates as justification for state involvement in the family unit. In the final part of the chapter, I

illustrate how the effect of earlier milk policies became the focus of motivations behind the next. Obesity emerged as a concern within the debates following developments in nutritional science during the 1950s-1960s. Class and the health of children were argued in Parliament leading to nutritional standards introduced in school meals and further regulation of the food consumption of children and families.

In Chapter 5, I primarily explore school food policy during the period from the 1970s-2000s. I argue that a new perception of childhood emerges from analysis of the parliamentary debates of the period – “consumer” child – a perception which highlights the tensions between consumer choice and state regulation. There are clear political party divisions found in the era analysed in this chapter. The notion of “consumer” child was used by Conservative MPs during arguments for changes in school food policy to *lessen* centralised state control and aid the economic situation of the 1970s and 1980s. This resulted in less regulation of children and families. Conversely, Labour MPs used the perception of “consumer” child alongside “vulnerable” child to argue for *increased* state intervention in the lives of children and families, leading to greater regulation in the sphere of school meals.

In my concluding chapter, I will draw together the strands of my argument which show that the issues which were debated during the historical periods analysed at the beginning of the chronological account of school food legislation, appear to be reproduced in current political and social debates. Some motivations, techniques of argumentation and effects change throughout each period under analysis, some remain constant, and some are reworked during different times. Some are used together, some individually, but they each help to highlight how school meals continue to act as

a *vehicle* – a carrier of policy – *through* the site of the school, via children, into the private sphere of the family home. Since the introduction of compulsory schooling, children and families have constantly been regulated by the State, but there have been, and continue to be, different patterns, different forms of regulation occurring during each period in history.

## Chapter 2

### Education Legislation in State Schools in the Nineteenth Century

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. In Part 1 I continue to develop on themes highlighted in the previous chapter and expand on the *motivations* behind the site of the school and *why* it is an important factor in the regulation of children and the family. I explain why children were placed in schools during the nineteenth century and the reasoning which led to the introduction of compulsory schooling. Analysis of parliamentary debates during this period highlight the continuing key themes of the child's *mind* and *body* and also anxiety over the minds and bodies within the working class family. I will develop the idea of the child's "special status" and how it was argued that the amount of crime in society could be reduced through mass education of the lower orders. Children are conceptualised as both victims and threats during analysis of the debates in this section which also raises ideas of *class*; the children under debate are from the poorer classes of society.

These themes continue and are explored further in Part 2 where I consider *techniques of argumentation* to explore *how* children were placed in the site of the school. I consider the tools used by Parliament in order to advance compulsory schooling - namely perceptions of childhood, the notion of futurity, law and class. Here it is possible to make use of the tensions which divided Parliament to thoroughly explore how the tools were employed. I examine the development of the child's vulnerable status and how Parliament utilised this perception of childhood to advance the aim of a national system of education. I analyse how they did this through the use of notions

of futurity, statistics, law, economic arguments, and how class relates to the debates. The themes of bodies and minds continue in this section and further issues are developed including a focus on *health*, *education* and *morality*. These themes and issues intertwine and carry each other along. They are utilised by Parliament in support of each other and are used together to produce the desired outcome of universal education.

Part 3 builds on the previous sections to explain the *effects* of policy changes on children and families once children are placed in the site of the school. I consider the effect of *surveillance* and *discipline* on children and families regulated through the site of the school. The themes and issues set out in this chapter lay the foundations for subsequent analysis of school food policy.



## PART 1

### 1) Motivations

#### a) Threats

During the mid-nineteenth century, it was noted in Parliament that, ‘a fearful deterioration of the moral and physical condition of our working population is rapidly taking place.’<sup>137</sup> Throughout this period there was widespread concern regarding an increasing urban population as a result of industrialisation. The vast numbers of working classes congregating in towns and cities brought poverty to light in a new way. Poor children became a particular object of concern because they were *visible*; they spent much of their time roaming the streets of the urban areas. I will revisit this issue in subsequent chapters because visible children are a reoccurring problem for the Government; when children are visible they become a problem for the State which MPs debate how best to address. Regarding the mid-nineteenth century visible child, Hendrick explains:

The street was usually condemned as the place for ‘hanging around’ or ‘wandering about’, both of which were deemed to be suspicious activities, if only because they were said to encourage loud and vulgar behaviour, the widespread use of foul language, smoking, and gambling, and generally acting in a ‘wild’ manner.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Hansard HC Deb 7 June 1842, vol 63, col 1338 (Mr Wood, Sub-Commissioner).

<sup>138</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 129.

In his analysis of working class children in the nineteenth century, Eric Hopkins explains that 'children were everywhere to be seen in urban areas.'<sup>139</sup> Using London as an example, he notes that, 'Everywhere then in London, day and night, there were swarms of ragged children. The visitor to the capital could not fail to be aware of these children.'<sup>140</sup> Therefore, the "swarms" of poor children were drawing the attention of the middle and upper classes to their manner and their potential to unsettle the existing social structure.<sup>141</sup> Considering the social aspects of the era, Lilian McCoy expands on these points and states that: 'The urban working classes became the focus of these middle-class fears ... Poor children, in particular, were the focus of this moral panic, not just in terms of their behaviour, but in terms of their future potential for social and political revolution.'<sup>142</sup> This is where the idea of poor children and working class families as *threats* began to formulate. Using Donzelot's notion of childhood threats here as an explanatory framework, it is clear that reformers were concerned with children growing up and recreating these characteristics as adults, and their potential to threaten the social order; alongside the threatening aspect of their current behaviour (dangerous children). Both of these factors were a worry to reformers regarding safeguarding present and future status quo within society.

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<sup>139</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 192.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid* 194.

<sup>141</sup> Although the children who settled in the urban areas were the ones the educational reformers predominantly focused on because they were the most visible, 'The educational opinions in agricultural and industrial areas had much in common.' E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 55. As such, while most of the data used in this chapter relates to working class urban children, the policies that emerged from the educational reform of the nineteenth century would encompass rural children too.

<sup>142</sup> Lilian McCoy, 'Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood' in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 99.

Furthermore, alongside developing ideas surrounding the child's "special status" as detailed in the previous chapter,<sup>143</sup> there was also consideration with regard to children under threat (children in danger). This was due to their moral and physical characteristics which had been brought to the attention of the public (visible children).

In order to achieve the aim of educating the children of the poor within the site of the school, 'Middle-class observers looking at working-class behaviour from the outside could only describe what they saw, what they thought were the beliefs of the working classes, and what they wanted to believe about them.'<sup>144</sup> Thus they created an idea of the working classes from, among other things, the representation of street children. This representation of idle vagrant children was not a new one; it had been noted as early as the sixteenth century that children were blamed for 'lawlessness and mischief.'<sup>145</sup> However in previous centuries measures taken to solve the issue of poor children on the streets had little effect. The reformers of the nineteenth century used the notion of children bred from families with poor moral values to be threats to the stability of society to achieve their aim of creating a nationalised childhood and with it, what they believed to be, a better, stabilised society. Therefore the 'middle-class reformers were eager to educate urban youth in what they regarded as superior values because they themselves believed in these values; their own intellectual, spiritual, and

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<sup>143</sup> Chapter 1, (3).

<sup>144</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 38.

<sup>145</sup> Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. I (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 99.

material success seemed to be proof of the benefits of virtue.’<sup>146</sup> This gave them justification to support their ideal. At the same time, in Parliament it was noticed:

... that the more the people were enlightened, the less would be the amount of crime among them: by the great and notorious diminution of crime which took place where education was most in progress—and particularly of crimes connected with violence, especially where the population had been rapidly increasing.’<sup>147</sup>

A link was made between crime and education and supported by the statistic, ‘it appeared from the gaol reports, that more than one-third of all the prisoners in the gaols of England could not even read.’<sup>148</sup> This gave Parliament evidence to sustain and justify an argument for the education of the working classes.

Thus firstly, it was argued that educating the populace would diminish the amount of crime in society, and secondly, if education had the potential to instil ‘moral and religious feelings into the minds of the people—especially of the young, they had a better hope of improving their civil condition.’<sup>149</sup> As noted during analysis of children’s “special status”, if working class children were exposed to positive

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<sup>146</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 148-149.

<sup>147</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 March 1833, vol 16, col 637 (Henry Peter Brougham, The Lord Chancellor, Whig).

<sup>148</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 944 (William Smith O'Brien, Conservative Irish Nationalist).

<sup>149</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 March 1833, vol 16, cols 637-638 (Henry Peter Brougham, The Lord Chancellor, Whig).

influences at a young age there was a greater chance that good habits could be taught or corrected for the future. Hence, education in the site of the school was considered as a way to assert a 'stabilising influence over the working classes.'<sup>150</sup>

This was not a new concept. Voluntary Sunday Schools with a religious basis were originally founded in the late eighteenth century, for 'rescuing the very poor child from vice and ungodliness by instructing him in a curriculum based on the Bible and the catechism.'<sup>151</sup> Corresponding to Donzelot's notion of moralization within the site of the school, it was hoped this would 'get the children off the streets'<sup>152</sup> and instruct them in the importance of 'punctuality, cleanliness, humility, order, industry and thrift.'<sup>153</sup>

To manipulate the shift to an improved society, the reformers believed that by removing the child from their destructive environment on the streets and in the home, and placing them in the sanctuary of the school, they could reform their characters, nurture a better person into adulthood, and thus stop the vicious circle from continuing. So, 'by blaming the poor for their poverty (and much else besides) the educationalist was enabled to believe that his was a humane, an adequate and an

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<sup>150</sup> J.M Goldstrom, *Education: Elementary Education 1780-1900* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972) 9.

<sup>151</sup> Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century* Vol. I (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 296.

<sup>152</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1964) 2.

<sup>153</sup> Anne Digby and Peter Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Macmillan, 1981) 24.

essentially Christian response to potentially removable evils.<sup>154</sup> In his analysis of educational policy and social control during the early Victorian era, Richard Johnson explains that:

The suggestion is that the early Victorian obsession with the education of the poor is best understood as a concern about authority, about power, about the assertion (or the re-assertion?) of control. This concern was expressed in an enormously ambitious attempt to determine, through the capture of educational means, the patterns of thought, sentiment and behaviour of the working class. Supervised by its trusty teacher, surrounded by its playground wall, the school was to raise a new race of working people – respectful, cheerful, hard-working, loyal, pacific and religious.<sup>155</sup>

However, Hendrick notes that:

The fact that it was a minority of children who were delinquent in some way or another was irrelevant to the basic restructuring of what a proper childhood should be. The notion of this childhood was as much concerned with images and establishing norms as with real rates of delinquency. For the reformers, precocity (and the perceived independence of spirit that accompanied it) and effective schooling were irreconcilable.

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<sup>154</sup> Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 105.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid* 119.

The reconstruction of the 'factory child' through the prism of dependency and ignorance, was a necessary precursor to mass education in that it helped to prepare public opinion for shifts in the child's identity: from wage-earner to school-pupil; for a reduction in income of working-class families, as a result of loss of children's earnings; and for the introduction of the State into the parent-child relationship.<sup>156</sup>

There are many important points within the above quotation. Reformers wished to impress a notion of what they thought "a proper childhood should be" upon working class families. This was, as Hendrick suggests, about "establishing norms"; regulating behaviour through defining what is considered as normal, against what is deemed as abnormal. Here the definition of a "normal" childhood was defined by the middle and upper class reformers. Norms are considered vital within the sphere of education and implementing this structure would form the basis of school life thereafter. Children within the institution of the school are measured against norms of behaviour, development, and achievement. Institutions of this type only work if the people located within the structure conform, as deviancy cannot be tolerated if the institution is to run smoothly. This would be achieved by removing children from the workplace and re-structuring the notion of childhood through the classroom so that 'Children gradually ceased to be workers and became instead schoolboys and girls.'<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 45-46.

<sup>157</sup> Linda A. Pollock, 'Foreword' in Marilyn R. Brown (ed), *Picturing Children: Constructions of Childhood Between Rousseau and Freud* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) xvii.

The Sunday school movement had little effect on street crime and attendance in these schools was low. During the mid-nineteenth century, measures were taken to increase the availability of education for the young working classes by 'the establishment of day schools for poor children.'<sup>158</sup> There were Dame schools, run by the lower classes for their own children, but these schools were not popular among the reformers, as Lord Anthony Ashley-Cooper explained:

A vast proportion of these schools are what are called "dame schools;" and what these are in truth, may be known by the surveyor's report, who says of them, "moral and religious instruction forms no part of the system in dame-schools. A mistress in one of this class of schools on being asked whether she gave moral instruction to her scholars, replied, 'No, I can't afford it at 3d. a-week.' Several did not know the meaning of the question. Very few appeared to think it was a part of their duty."—This, then, being the number of the schools for educating the young, and the character of the education imparted to them, I may now be allowed to state what are the means for the practice of vice.<sup>159</sup>

Here it is made clear that an objective of schooling the working classes was to reform their moral character with religious instruction. Therefore, there needed to be a shift

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<sup>158</sup> J.M Goldstrom, *Education: Elementary Education 1780-1900* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972) 9.

<sup>159</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 February 1843, vol 67, col 52 (Lord Anthony Ashley-Cooper). Ashley-Cooper became President of the Ragged School Union in 1844, a voluntary movement led by social reformers, educators, and philanthropists.



away from working class led schools, and a greater push for State led institutions and voluntary schools with religious teaching (similar to Sunday Schools).

In order to gain momentum with their idea of mass social change, the reformers had to further stir public opinion. Johnson comments of the reformers, 'their denunciation of working-class decadence was a critical link in the diagnosis of the educational policy-makers. It provided them with their most powerful propagandizing argument within their own class.'<sup>160</sup> It is important to note here that reformers were trying to gain support from within their own upper and middle class communities, not the poorer classes who would be most affected by the move to widespread education. Education was mooted as the way forward because it 'would prevent the 'dangerous classes' from continually reproducing their malevolent characteristics.'<sup>161</sup> Here again poor families were viewed as *threats* to society. Thomas Barnes MP stated in 1856: 'Vice and immorality, bad habits and vicious tastes, everywhere prevailed, and anything which would refine the tastes, raise the morals, and remove the ignorance of the people was most desirable.'<sup>162</sup> This quotation can be further supported by Johnson who explains, 'it is clear that the condition of the poor came almost to *mean* the condition of their education. As one Birmingham Justice of the Peace put it: "I have

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<sup>160</sup> Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 104.

<sup>161</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 45.

<sup>162</sup> Hansard HC Deb 12 June 1856, vol 142, col 1359 (Thomas Barnes).

no other conception of any other means of forcing civilisation downwards in society, except by education".<sup>163</sup>

This notion of enforcing civilisation downwards is interesting as later debate, which I analyse in Part 2 of this chapter,<sup>164</sup> argues that forcing change on the lower classes would not be successful. This was one of the arguments mooted against compulsion with regards to schooling. However, it was acknowledged that 'education is of no use if it does not produce reformation ... and save men from falling into bad and debasing habits.'<sup>165</sup> Therefore, the education had to take place within the structure of the school – the site of regulation – because parents had to be substituted by teachers in order for the instruction to be effective and the pattern of behaviour to be changed. As Johnson notes, 'Pauperism could be seen as a sort of moral contamination transmitted through the parent.'<sup>166</sup> Therefore, by placing children in schools, the teacher would be 'the primary agent of "civilisation".'<sup>167</sup> Teachers would help to replace the working class ideals enshrined within the poorer children's home life with the upper/middle class ideal of domesticity. In doing so the reformers could create their ideal perception of childhood. Hendrick asserts that central to the restructuring 'lay the desire of reformers to make children 'unlearn' what they knew and to substitute a new conception of childhood, derived from middle-class domesticity.'<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 97, citing *Minutes*, 1845, i, p. 266, note 2. [italics as per text].

<sup>164</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (c) (i).

<sup>165</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 May 1855, vol 137, col 2135 (JW Henley, Conservative).

<sup>166</sup> Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 111, referring to 'Report on the Training of Pauper Children', Poor Law Commission Fourth Annual Report, Parl. Pap. 1838, xxviii, esp. pp. 393-4.

<sup>167</sup> *ibid* 113.

<sup>168</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 28.

Thus in order to “unlearn” working class values and habits, the children needed to be removed from their home environments and placed within the sanctity of the school – the site where regulation could formulate.

## PART 2

### 2) Techniques of Argumentation

The parliamentary debates I am focusing on here are concerned with:

- 1) Regulation of the *minds* of children and families through the introduction of a national system of compulsory schooling, following concern regarding lack of morality and widespread ignorance in the lower classes. The regulation of the minds of working class families took place through a reduction in parental responsibility and declining parental choice regarding their children's education.
  - 2) Regulation of the *bodies* of children and families through debate on the reduction of the hours children could work in factories, following concern raised about the conditions they were working in and the effect this had on their bodies. The regulation of families also occurred through obligations imposed on parents made possible through the use of increased surveillance and statistics.
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The debates which took place during the first half of the nineteenth century centred on the need for widespread education in schools *and* a reduction in children's working hours in terms of futurity and protection from threats. These debates and resultant legislation paved the way to widely develop schools which became the site of regulation in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Distinct tools are employed for achieving the desired aims; the utilisation of different perceptions of childhood, at times interlinked; the theme of futurity utilised within debates; the use of surveillance

and statistics; and the use of law which is both used as a tool in its own right and also cements the other tools together.

#### a) The Use of Law

In the debates during the first half of the nineteenth century, there was disagreement about the use of law in the schooling of children. Voluntary societies were undertaking the role of educating the children of the poor and government interference was not always considered a positive measure. However, there were concerns that the voluntary movement alone could not meet demand due to its 'fluctuating and fleeting' nature.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, parents were not readily sending their children to school and therefore law to achieve compulsion was mooted as essential. The MPs sometimes had different aims and argued from different perspectives. However, at times they had the same aim; yet expressed different methods for achieving this.

Under debate was the issue of national education for the instruction of children of the poor. Independent MP William Smith argued in favour of using law as a tool in the education of children during debate of the Parochial Schools Bill in 1807. He stated, 'it might perhaps be expedient at least to make it take the shape and form of a law, as they were all agreed as to the necessity of instructing the poor.'<sup>170</sup> Spencer Perceval, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, argued against a use of law which could potentially eradicate the voluntary school movement:

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<sup>169</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 March 1833, vol 16, col 635 (Henry Peter Brougham, The Lord Chancellor, Whig).

<sup>170</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 July 1807, vol 9, col 854 (William Smith, Independent).

It was the wish, unquestionably, of every one in the house to render the lower classes of the community better and happier. ... He feared a general legislative establishment would injure and destroy the voluntary establishments for public education now existing.<sup>171</sup>

Here Perceval is taking a non-interventionist approach to the issue at hand. He wants to help the lower classes but is concerned that the use of law will result in the end of voluntary aid. By wishing to “render the lower classes of the community better and happier,” Perceval is also taking a utilitarian approach to the argument.<sup>172</sup> Other MPs followed his suit in later years, often approaching the issue from different perspectives, but with the united desire to help the poor. The Whig Sir George Grey argued that compulsory schooling would ‘extend the blessings of education to all classes of the community.’<sup>173</sup> The aim was to secure for the masses that which the upper and emerging middle classes already enjoyed. The Conservative Irish Nationalist William Smith O'Brien also took a similar approach to the argument for compulsory schooling by stating, ‘his first duty would be to mature a plan for placing within the reach of every poor family in the kingdom the means of obtaining, at a small expense, a good elementary education.’<sup>174</sup> He expanded:

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<sup>171</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 804 (Spencer Perceval, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Tory).

<sup>172</sup> My use of the term utilitarian is that the MPs approached their arguments in the interests of utility, maximizing happiness and reducing the suffering of the poor wherever possible, with the intention of securing national efficiency.

<sup>173</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 948 (Sir George Grey, Whig).

<sup>174</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 946 (William Smith O'Brien, Conservative Irish Nationalist).

It might now be taken as conceded, that, after the protection of life and property, no higher duty could rest upon the State than to take measures for enlightening the people at large, and to place within the reach of each individual that sort of education which is best calculated to fit him for the station in which he is destined to move. Yet, till very lately, no effort had been made on the part of the State to provide for the instruction of the people. Everything had been left to the voluntary efforts of individuals.<sup>175</sup>

Here O'Brien makes clear his utilitarian stance on the subject by ranking education alongside life and property. He explains that the lower orders should be educated "for the station in which he is destined to move" highlighting that education during this period in history was not to better oneself but to learn the trade or craft intended of each class. O'Brien is clear that a duty rested with the State in schooling the poorer classes, it was not purely a matter for charity.

Concerning the use of law with regard to compulsory schooling, as with Perceval above, Independent MP William Wilberforce also argued against the use of law in totality:

The necessity of instruction among the lower classes ... was strikingly obvious; ... on the instructing and enlightening of the people depended the very safety of the empire itself. Still, although general instruction might be very practicable, he was

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<sup>175</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 943 (William Smith O'Brien, Conservative Irish Nationalist).

not quite prepared to agree to the sending out a parliamentary edict for that purpose. He thought that sufficient pains had not been taken to avail ourselves of the voluntary institutions for the education of the poor, and was of opinion, that it would be a great improvement to the measure, were it only to operate where those institutions were deficient.<sup>176</sup>

Here Wilberforce uses futurity in his argument by citing that the safety of the Empire depends on instructing the children of the poor. This theme is prominent throughout the debates analysed in this thesis. Wilberforce also takes a non-interventionist stance wherever possible by arguing that the use of law is a question of degree, rather than all schooling being regulated by the legislature or none. Wilberforce argues that law should be used to “fill the gaps” where the voluntary system fails. Samuel Whitbread expanded on this point, ‘It was said, it would do away [with] charities. It would do no such thing. His aim was, to provide schools and school-masters where they were wanted; where they were not, the magistrates would have the power to suspend the operation of the law.’<sup>177</sup> Whitbread is arguing for localised rather than central control, with local magistrates able to oversee the use of law. Earl Vane, The Marquess of Londonderry, argued that the best route forward was:

... doing what was best for the children, and what at the same time would least interfere with the management of mines. His noble Friend proposed that the children should have at least the alternate day for the purposes of instruction and recreation, in

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<sup>176</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 July 1807, vol 9, cols 854-855 (William Wilberforce, Independent).

<sup>177</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 803 (Samuel Whitbread, Tory) [bracketed wording mine].



order that they might hereafter be good men and useful members of society.<sup>178</sup>

Here futurity is utilised again to advance the argument for the use of law in the creation of useful future citizens. However, conversely, Earl Vane also adheres to a non-interventionist approach wherever possible regarding the mining industry. This apprehension over legal intervention is not concerned with the end of charitable aid as noted above, but more to do with anxiety over interference with the free market.

The Earl of Radnor also opposed the use of law, 'because he objected to interferences with the market of labour, or attempting to enforce morality by act of Parliament.'<sup>179</sup>

He expanded on this point:

The parties promoting the bill ought to reflect, that in their endeavours to do good it was possible they might cause mischief; for if it passed into a law, great numbers of persons must be thrown out of employment, and the old and helpless, who were dependent upon them for support, would be left destitute.<sup>180</sup>

The Earl of Radnor argued that it was not the place of law to regulate a free market, nor to set standards of morality. He used the notion of threats to explain that the poor people Parliament were trying to help would actually be worse off if legislation were

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<sup>178</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 July 1842, vol 65, cols 109-110 (Earl Vane, The Marquess of Londonderry).

<sup>179</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 July 1842, vol 65, col 113 (Earl of Radnor). (Capital letter "A" omitted in Hansard).

<sup>180</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 July 1842, vol 65, col 114 (Earl of Radnor).

passed as they would lose their jobs as a result. In response to Radnor's argument, the Bishop of Gloucester stated:

The Bishop of Gloucester would not have risen, if a noble Earl on the other side (the Earl of Radnor) had not advanced the monstrous proposition, that it was not the duty of the Legislature to enforce moral duties, which, he said, should be left to the religious pastor. Now, he apprehended that, as Christian legislators, it was the most important of their duties to enforce morality by legislation, as far as legislation could with propriety be carried to prevent crime and immorality. The chief object of legislation was not so much to punish crimes as to prevent them; and nothing they could do for this purpose could be more efficacious than to provide for the people that moral and religious education by which they best could better their condition.<sup>181</sup>

The Bishop of Gloucester dismissed the argument that it is not the State's role to enforce moral values through law. He believed it to be the role of legislators to prevent crime and immorality. It therefore followed that in preventing crimes, moral values would be enshrined in law. The Bishop's argument explores the idea that, through education, the poor could be prevented from committing crimes and therefore there would be no need to punish them.

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<sup>181</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 July 1842, vol 65, col 122 (The Bishop of Gloucester).

There were two principle *threats* explored in these debates that the law could help to alleviate – the burden on the State from a useless individual; the concern being economic, and lack of morality within the lower orders; concern here being for the minds of children.

#### b) Economic

Monetary concerns as to futurity were explained by William Roscoe:

[Roscoe] thought the improvement of the lower classes an object highly desirable as nothing could be more disgraceful than to leave them in a state of ignorance. The only distinction between this country and a savage nation arose out of knowledge, and of course the diffusion of that blessing must operate to advance our superiority. ... For the uneducated man, having nothing but his bodily strength to depend upon, became of necessity a burthen upon the parish when that strength was gone; whereas the man of education, in consequence of the wider range which his mind naturally took, could find other resources to maintain himself when he could derive no support from his mere animal powers. Thus he conceived that education must tend to diminish the amount of the poor's-rate.<sup>182</sup>

Roscoe takes a utilitarian approach to his argument by explaining that improvement of the poor was a highly desirable objective. Schooling of the lower classes could achieve the purpose of advancing the superiority of the nation through relief of the

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<sup>182</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol 9, col 541 (William Roscoe) [bracketed wording mine].

economic burden of individuals who relied only on their physical strength, and who were of no use to society once this was lost. This argument links *economic* anxiety with the theme of *futurity* – the burden on the State in the future once physical strength was lost.

Arguments for the introduction of a national system of education insisted that there was an issue with the country being left behind as other nations became more industrial, in part due to having a widespread system of elementary education. In mid-nineteenth century England elementary education ‘provision remained patchy, unevenly spread and highly variable in quality.’<sup>183</sup> In her analysis of the role of the Church and the State in education, Marjorie Cruickshank states that:

Britain was rapidly losing her industrial leadership and was in grave danger of being driven from the world’s markets ... Germany and the United States, the most powerful of British rivals, had acted in the belief that commercial and industrial success was founded on educational efficiency.<sup>184</sup>

Also making the same connection, James Murphy observes that, ‘Competition from abroad in commerce and industry was becoming ever more keen, yet there did not exist in England and Wales a basis for producing a generally literate labour force.’<sup>185</sup> Thus as the developed world was becoming more industrialised, and producing an educated workforce for this purpose, England remained a society whose children were

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<sup>183</sup> Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: The Historical Association, 1971) 18.

<sup>184</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1964) 69.

<sup>185</sup> James Murphy, *The Education Act 1870* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972) 28.

less in demand for child labour but who had little opportunity to attend an educational establishment.

At the opposite end of the argument there was concern regarding the demands on the economy at present. John Simeon 'was decidedly against the bill, as going to inflict a compulsory education on the country at a most incalculable expence [sic].'<sup>186</sup> This stance was supported by William Davies Giddy, 'If the bill were to pass into a law, it would go to bur-then the country with a most enormous and incalculable expence [sic].'<sup>187</sup> This argument links to Donzelot's notion of social economy, that it was the aim of the State to produce the best quality workers with minimum government expenditure.

### c) The Minds of Children

Schooling was mooted by the reformer and Whig MP Henry Erskine as being necessary to secure 'the morality, the happiness, and good order of the people of this country.'<sup>188</sup> Again this is a utilitarian stance. This viewpoint was supported by fellow Whig MPs Stephen Lushington and Lord Milton. Lushington noted that, 'In every country where the poor were well instructed, they formed the better subjects in every point of view.'<sup>189</sup> Milton expanded, 'There must be a lower order of people who must perform the manual labour of country; and the better informed they were, the better they would be in every respect.'<sup>190</sup> Here the notion of futurity is highlighted through securing the future of the country. There is also a clear notion of the lower classes

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<sup>186</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 801 (John Simeon).

<sup>187</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 798 (William Davies Giddy).

<sup>188</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol 9, col 542 (Henry Erskine, Whig).

<sup>189</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 801 (Stephen Lushington, Whig).

<sup>190</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 801 (Lord Milton, Charles Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, Whig).

being regulated to fit the mould of upper class values. The arguments here state that if the lower orders are happy they will be better workers for their rich masters in the present and the future. How the poor could be trained to fit the mould could be achieved through schooling:

Children, if left alone, would educate themselves. But he who educated himself generally had a fool for his master. He did not think it possible that education could give sentiments above the condition of the individuals. Education would give habits of industry and attention. He wished for more than two years of instruction; but even in this short period the children, though they should forget all their learning, would have collected many beneficial habits of an indelible nature; habits of submission and respect for their superiors; habits of cleanliness and exertion, and the fear of punishment. He thought the measure should be carried into effect without delay.<sup>191</sup>

From this quotation two points need to be highlighted. Firstly, that schooling would discipline the minds of poor children so that they learnt to be obedient future workers, utilising the notion of futurity. Secondly, within the site of the school, children could be taught habits which they would in turn take back into the family home, and self governance within the family would then ensue. Families would then act as *agents* for the State, both adhering to and transmitting normalisation from within the populace. This highlights that the site of the school was vital to achieving social change. Children needed to be separated from the adult world in order to be taught new habits and values.

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<sup>191</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol 9, cols 543-544 (Richard Sharpe, Whig).

Against the opinion that schooling would be beneficial to the poor and society in general, was the argument that the lower orders might revolt against their situation.

William Davies Giddy argued that by:

... giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would, in effect, be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching then subordination, it would render them factious and refractory, as was evident the in the manufacturing counties it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors and, in a few years, the result would be, that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrates with much more vigorous laws than were now in force.<sup>192</sup>

Giddy 'objected to the Poor Laws *in toto*, because they taxed virtue to help vice.'<sup>193</sup>

For some within the elite classes there was concern that if the lower classes were educated they might potentially be empowered to induce social change of their own, rather than to know their place within a society established on upper and middle class ideals. MPs such as Giddy 'saw such education as dangerous and a threat to the social

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<sup>192</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 798 (William Davies Giddy).

<sup>193</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 11 [italics as per text].

order itself ... Education may be 'dangerous' if it makes people think.'<sup>194</sup> This viewpoint was supported by George Rose:

Now, the advantages to be derived to the minds and morals of children in that class of life, from two years of education at that early part of life, did not appear to him so very considerable ... and to carry the system of education to the labouring poor still higher, would, he feared, tend rather to raise their minds above their lot in life, and by no means strengthen their attachments to those laborious pursuits, by which they were to earn a livelihood; pursuits to which, at present, there existed; throughout the poor of this country, a very strong reluctance. If, therefore, care was not taken to blend with their education early habits of industry, he feared that schooling would rather injure than serve them, in the result.<sup>195</sup>

This quotation also highlights the desire at this stage to mix education with industry in order to persuade the lower classes to receive schooling. If the poor people were to readily receive education, then they needed to see that it would benefit their work in industry.

In 1862 Robert Lowe, Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education, had attempted to quell the concern that educating the working classes 'would render

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<sup>194</sup> Lilian McCoy, 'Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood' in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 99.

<sup>195</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol 9, cols 539-540 (George Rose).



them insolent to their superiors',<sup>196</sup> and that 'an educated populace might turn to subversion, refuse to obey superiors, or desert their menial tasks',<sup>197</sup> by explaining:

We do not profess to give these children an education that will raise them above their station and business in life; that is not our object, but to give them an education that may fit them for that business. We are bound to take a clear and definite view of the position of the class that is to receive instruction; and, having obtained that view, we are bound to make up our minds as to how much instruction that class requires, and is capable of receiving.<sup>198</sup>

E.E Rich explains that the elite fear of educating the lower classes was due to the French revolution and 'belief in a fixed social order.'<sup>199</sup> However this fear of mass uprising had proved unfounded in foreign countries such as Germany and the United States of America which had an established system of education and were leading the industrial market as noted above.<sup>200</sup> Therefore, 'England's manufacturing supremacy seemed to be challenged by other nations whose technical schools were said to be better, and the political stability of the country seemed to depend more and more on the education of the masses.'<sup>201</sup> As such, it became 'clear to many that the future of

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<sup>196</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 June 1807, vol 9, col 798 (William Davies Giddy).

<sup>197</sup> James Murphy, *The Education Act 1870* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972) 9.

<sup>198</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 February 1862, vol 165, col 238 (Robert Lowe, Liberal).

<sup>199</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 11.

<sup>200</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (b).

<sup>201</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 75.

the nation was ultimately served best, not by making children work, but by educating them.<sup>202</sup>

The standpoint of both those pro-and-anti-education was to maintain a social status quo and reinforce existing class hierarchies. Those pro-education thought that left to their own devices the lower classes might revolt, and those anti-education had the same fears but thought that too much knowledge rather than too little would lead to rebellion. This is a further example of how the MPs formulate their arguments from different perspectives yet wish to achieve similar aims.

#### i) Persuasion

Obtaining support in Parliament from those in their own class for the education movement was one task. The feat of gaining working class support for the education ideal, and consequently improving child attendance in schools, was another. As Tory MP Isaac Hawkins Browne notes, 'it was certainly the duty of parliament to provide regulations to instruct the poor; but to get them to receive it, was a very different thing.'<sup>203</sup> Hopkins supports this view and notes that the voluntary Sunday school movement had not been welcomed by the poorer classes and 'the number of working-class parents who were either indifferent or positively hostile to education at the mid-century was probably still quite large ... education was simply not thought to be of

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<sup>202</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 77.

<sup>203</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 July 1807, vol 9, col 854 (Isaac Hawkins Browne, Tory).

much concern to ordinary working folk.’<sup>204</sup> In 1855, whilst debating Education (No 2 Bill), Conservative MP J. W Henley recognised the indifference of working class parents and noted that it was no surprise as the middle classes had only recently changed their view of education:

I am afraid that the indifference of the parents arises from a feeling that, it is not surprising to me, should have lingered among our humbler brethren for a much longer time than among the educated classes; for it is not many years ago that even in educated society there was not such universal agreement as to the benefits of education as you find now, and it is almost cruel to reflect, as has been done in many works relating to the subject of education, upon the indifference of the parents to send their children to school, when doubts as to the benefits to be derived from it have so recently existed in the minds of the educated classes themselves. From whatever cause the indifference of the people arises, the Bill provides no mode by which the attendance of the children can be made compulsory; and thus in respect to the indifference of parents, the number of children who will stay away from school will continue the same as at present.<sup>205</sup>

The reason for parental apprehension to schooling can in part be explained by the fact that education appeared to be viewed differently in the nineteenth century from how it

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<sup>204</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 142.

<sup>205</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 May 1855, vol 137, col 2122 (JW Henley, Conservative).

is today. Whereas nowadays education is deemed as a means of enhancing a child's prospects in life, the purpose of schooling in the nineteenth century was for children to aim for the same standard of education as was attained by their parents. Children were educated to fulfil a pre-prescribed purpose in life determined by their class. Prior to 1870 it was the child's parents who determined what this role would be rather than the State and the intention for parents was to secure an education for their children 'which they can themselves appreciate.'<sup>206</sup> What they, as parents, understood as suitable education to secure their child's future as a self sufficient working adult. This would most probably mean following in their parent's footsteps and continuing to work at a comparable social level. In his analysis of childhood during the nineteenth century, Walvin notes that, 'Education differed between the classes – and the sexes. Learning for the lower orders or for mechanics was not designed to provide admission to superior social worlds. Boys and girls were taught to know their place within the social order.'<sup>207</sup>

Lionel Rose also states that in schools, 'Children were not only taught their place as children, but were also taught their future proper place as adults.'<sup>208</sup> This gives the impression of futurity. Children were to be educated as deemed fit for their purpose in life. Upper class children should be taught upper class values, poorer children should ideally be educated to learn a trade and be able to support themselves in adulthood. As Linda Pollock expands:

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<sup>206</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 31.

<sup>207</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 115.

<sup>208</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 134.

Education did not exist to liberate minds but to preserve the gender and social distinctions of society. As public schools aimed to mould the character of middle-class boys and prepare them for success in professional and public life, so middle class girls were educated to be potential wives and mothers ... if schooling was to be an instrument of conformity, this meant that the type of education supplied had to be carefully regulated. The working classes who attended the state-run schools were plunged into a different cultural world in which the teachers' explicit agenda was to reform their behaviour: to, in fact, inoculate them against such perceived working-class vices as idleness and debauchery. In the main it was designed to condition the poor for their humble positions in life as servants and labourers.<sup>209</sup>

Hopkins notes that, 'working-class children were to be given just enough education to make them useful to their employers and others, and to know their subordinate position in society.'<sup>210</sup> In Parliament, Henley confirmed, 'it must not be forgotten that the children to be educated are, generally speaking, the offspring of parents who have had little, if any, education, and it would be a dangerous experiment to attempt suddenly to raise children to a great elevation above their parents in this respect.'<sup>211</sup> Walvin also suggests that, 'one of the main tasks of the pre-1870 schools was to teach

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<sup>209</sup> Linda A. Pollock, 'Foreword' in Marilyn R. Brown (ed), *Picturing Children: Constructions of Childhood Between Rousseau and Freud* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) xviii.

<sup>210</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 141.

<sup>211</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 May 1855, vol 137, col 2149 (JW Henley, Conservative).

the poor and working-class children to obey. The early industrial system was frequently criticized because children were removed from school and so were unable to learn social and domestic virtues.<sup>212</sup> This is an expansion of the ideas that were behind the evolution of the Sunday school movement; that education could teach working class children skills which would be of value to employers and society as a whole. Johnson explains that, 'the teacher should be equipped to be a "second" or even a "substitute" parent, and ... the school should resemble "the harmony of a well-regulated family"; it should be a sort of extended household; the teacher should perform the "civilising" role of the idealized parent.'<sup>213</sup> This idea of creating a substitute household reiterates that the concept of the family was central to the Victorian domestic ideal, so long as that family – real or substitute – displayed upper and middle class values.

Thomas Barnes MP reiterated in 1856 that, 'the monster difficulty which stood in the way of the spread of education among the children of this country was the indifference of the parents whether their children were educated or not.'<sup>214</sup> As such there needed to be a different approach to changing the opinion of the masses towards education if the ideal of a widespread educated populace was to be embraced. It was mooted in Parliament years earlier that there needed to be 'mixing habits of industry with education; for in many places there was a disinclination in the lower orders to

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<sup>212</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 104.

<sup>213</sup> Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 112.

<sup>214</sup> Hansard HC Deb 12 June 1856, vol 142, col 1360 (Thomas Barnes).

send their children to school merely for education.<sup>215</sup> William Davies Giddy argued for combining schooling with industry as a tool of persuasion. Giddy:

... thought it was easy to persuade parents, that it was to their advantage that their children should be brought up in the habits of industry. He thought that education would not be the better for being made compulsory; it was better that it should be voluntarily, and not be forced; that "it should descend like the gentle dew of Heaven," and be received as a general blessing. He did not think it would be easy to induce parents to consent to any forced system of education for their children.<sup>216</sup>

Here Giddy voices concern for compulsion and instead favours persuasion through providing a type of education that poor families could comprehend and therefore appreciate. As Hopkins explains, it was 'hard to know how to convince uneducated parents of the value of education when a certain amount of education was needed to appreciate its advantages.'<sup>217</sup> Educationalist Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth suggested that: 'The onus clearly lay with the parent just as the onus of school provision lay with philanthropic elites. They were to be offered a greatly improved education for their children suited to their real needs and status in life, and, in time ... they would come to appreciate it.'<sup>218</sup> However Rich states, 'until education became compulsory and

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<sup>215</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 July 1807, vol 9, cols 857-858 (George Rose).

<sup>216</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1807, vol 9, col 543 (William Davies Giddy).

<sup>217</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 142.

<sup>218</sup> Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Four Periods of Public Education* (London, 1862), pp. 490-I. cited in Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England' (1970) 49 *Past & Present* 96, 109-110.

free, irregular attendance was always a problem.<sup>219</sup> Accordingly Giddy and Kay-Shuttleworth's wish of voluntary appreciation through combining education with industry was not to be realised.

Expanding on the point of persuasion in the 1840s, William Ewart:

... confessed he was not one of those who wished, or thought it necessary, to force education compulsorily upon the people. It was impolitic and needless to enact coercive laws, or send children to school under the tutelary guard of a policeman. He believed, that the desideratum was, to infuse into the minds of the people an habitual respect for education.<sup>220</sup>

This quotation relates to Foucault's argument for self governance. Ewart is saying here that coercion was not the way to control the populace; rather the working classes should be taught the habit of education, so it became normal for them to wish for their children to attend school. This is a non-interventionist approach where control is not achieved through hierarchical coercion and punishment, but through educating the populace to achieve normalisation. Taking a liberal approach, Ewart explains that, 'The State should assist without undue interference, and superintend without undue control.'<sup>221</sup> As previously analysed above,<sup>222</sup> corresponding to Wilberforce's stance that law should "fill in the gaps", Ewart is arguing that if the working classes achieved respect for education through persuasion, law for compulsory school attendance would not be necessary in the great majority of cases. Ewart expands:

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<sup>219</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 23.

<sup>220</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 941 (William Ewart, Radical).

<sup>221</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 942 (William Ewart, Radical).

<sup>222</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (a).



"Educate your people; be not satisfied with giving them, through your criminal laws, a horror of the punishment; give them, through the agency of education, a horror of the crime."

This was, in his opinion, the great object of their legislative mission. In fulfilling it, he maintained, that they fulfilled not only their highest intellectual, but their highest moral and religious duty.<sup>223</sup>

Again, here the argument is for the use of law, but about using it as unobtrusively as possible as a tool of persuasion. The idea is to achieve control through normalisation via education, rather than punishments delivered from the top down. If the poor were educated against crime there would be no need to punish as crimes would not be committed.

## ii) Compulsion

To expand on these points, an interesting debate took place in Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1833. Liberal MP John Roebuck clearly stated the aims of schooling the poor and the means that could be used to alleviate the social condition of the time. Roebuck explained that, 'we must do by influencing gradually the will of others.'<sup>224</sup> This sentence shows that the intended aims of reform had to be introduced to the poorer classes slowly so that they took to the plans without revolt. Roebuck explained that schooling was not just about imparting knowledge:

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<sup>223</sup> Hansard HC Deb 6 April 1841, vol 57, col 942 (William Ewart, Radical).

<sup>224</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 141 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

... but it means also the so training or fashioning the intellectual and moral qualities of the individual, that he may be able and willing to acquire knowledge, and to turn it to its right use. It means the so framing the mind of the individual, that he may become a useful and virtuous member of society in the various relations of life. It means making him a good child, a good parent, a good neighbour, a good citizen, in short, a good man.<sup>225</sup>

This quotation highlights the notion of futurity. Schooling the children of the lower classes was a long-term solution which meant that as adults they would be useful to society.

The next two quotations lay the foundations for the argument that although schooling can sow the seeds of education, the people themselves need to learn how to control themselves and alter their condition, analogous to Foucault's notion of self governance and Donzelot's concept of agency through the family. This is a key point regarding State ideas passing through the site of the school and permeating the sphere of the home and family via the children:

Of the evils which men suffer, it is true, some portion, ay, and an important portion, may be controlled by a government; but there is a still larger, far more important portion, which depends solely on the people themselves. Now, one of the first, one of the most important results from a proper education of

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<sup>225</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 142 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

the people, would be a thorough understanding on their part of the circumstances on which their happiness depended, and of the powers by which those circumstances were controlled. They would learn what a government could, and what a government could not do to relieve their distresses—they would learn what depended on themselves, what on others—what evils resulted from evil authority, what from popular ignorance and popular vice. Of all the knowledge that can be conferred on a people, this is the most essential; let them once understand thoroughly their social condition, and we shall have no more unmeaning discontents.<sup>226</sup>

Roebuck is explaining in the above quotation that the site of the school becomes the place to avoid punishment as the populace learn to depend on themselves rather than on the State. Governance in the manner is through self discipline. This is localised and reproduced within and through the family. Once people understand what is required of them (normalisation), they will no longer need the coercive power of centralised systems of punishment. Roebuck continued:

Although I be one who believe that no good Government can be attained without the concurrence of the people—to speak in still plainer terms—that the people will never be well governed until they govern themselves ... The people at present are far too ignorant to render themselves happy, even though they should possess supreme power to-morrow. Of the many evils

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<sup>226</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 143 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

even which they now suffer, the larger part arises from their own ignorance, and not immediately from the Government.<sup>227</sup>

Roebuck here re-iterates how he thinks the lower classes should be taught to govern themselves. Education within the site of the school is a necessary component to the lower classes achieving self governance, and through this, Roebuck believes, happiness. In the following quotation Roebuck explains Foucault's notion of government being to promote good rather than to correct and punish evil:

If we consider it the business of Government not merely to prevent evil, but also, by the concentrated force of the social system, directly to promote good—to increase, by all the means which its powers confer on it, the happiness and well-being of its subjects—then the mode in which the people are educated ought to be one of its first and most important objects of consideration.<sup>228</sup>

This, he explained, should be achieved by compulsion. Roebuck argued that he would, 'make the education of the children no longer dependent on the mere will of the parents or guardians. I would make it a matter of necessity—in other words, would pass a law, making it an offence to keep a child from school between certain years of age.'<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 145 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

<sup>228</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 148 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

<sup>229</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 152 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

This is an important quotation as it moots the end of parental choice in the schooling of children. The move towards compulsory education legislation was a new phenomenon in that it took the decision of whether children should attend school away from parents. This is a key example of regulation, not only of children, but also of families as compulsion required an obligation placed on parents with sanctions for non-compliance. This is where the public domain of the State encroached upon the private domain of the family. Roebuck explained that law could be used as a tool so that:

If the parents be able to give, and actually do give their children elsewhere sufficient education, then they should not be compelled to send them to the national school. If, however, they should be unable or unwilling to give them such instruction, then the State should step in and supply this want, by compelling the parent to send the child to the school of the State.<sup>230</sup>

This method of regulation is comparable to Donzelot's concept of enticement because if families voluntarily sent their children to school, they would be rewarded by keeping their autonomy. However, if parents failed in their duty, they would lose their rights and have the State step in the role as parent. The enticement for families to adhere to the prescribed norms of education was prevention of state intervention. Actual physical compulsion was deemed to be a last resort:

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<sup>230</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 153 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

It must be recollected that the power of the parent over the child is a fiduciary power—a power surrounded by various obligations both to the child and to the public. The chief of these is to educate the child in such a way that he be a virtuous citizen. If the parent neglect this duty, the State ought to, and in the case of the rich, does, step in and see that the duty thus neglected shall be performed.<sup>231</sup>

In the above quotation Roebuck notes that parents not only have a duty towards their child, they have a duty to society too. If families failed in either duty the State had the right to intervene. It is interesting that Roebuck notes that this also happened with rich families. However, it could be assumed from the debates and literature examined in this chapter that the vast majority of rich parents already adhered to society's definition of "normal" as it was created by them, so that the poorer classes could live the lives already enjoyed by their rich counterparts.

The introduction of compulsory education in the nineteenth century, proposed that childhood was to be nationalised because the idea of compulsory schooling, in theory, dispelled boundaries relating to class, wealth, sex, and geography. As Hendrick states, 'The significance of the classroom, and the entire ideological apparatus of education, lay partly in what was coming to be seen as the proper physical segregation of children from adults, and in its demand for 'a truly *national* childhood''<sup>232</sup> The idea of compulsory education in theory encompassed children of *all* social classes to

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<sup>231</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 153 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

<sup>232</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 12 [italics as per text].

attend school within the prescribed age range. Regarding the new schools that were opened once the State intervened in education, Viscount Sandon said that, 'the schools were not intended only for pauper children, but for any class of children who were not able or willing to go to other schools.'<sup>233</sup> However, in contrast, Walvin states, 'It was understandable that the new Board schools established after the Act of 1870 should follow the patterns already established by the earlier voluntary schools. They were, after all, designed uniquely for working-class children.'<sup>234</sup> If it can be debated that the schools that were provided by the State post-1870 were built with poor children in mind, they were eventually frequented by them.

In practice it was the lower classes whose lives were altered by the introduction of compulsory schooling as upper and emerging middle class families already educated their children. Therefore, in promoting the idea of a national childhood, it would be the children of the poor whose childhoods would have to shift to fit the mould. The upper and middle class children already inhabited the ideal mooted by the reformers.

Considering that these proposals would be met with resistance as an oppression to parental freedom, Roebuck argued that, 'Freedom in itself is not a good thing—it is only good when it leads to good—if it lead to evil, it must be, it is every day, restrained by the most stringent and coercing bonds.'<sup>235</sup> Interestingly, Roebuck noted that, 'The children of the poor man would receive instruction and incur no obligation but to the State—no painful feeling of degradation would attach to it; whereas now a

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<sup>233</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 July 1875, vol 225, col 811 (Viscount Sandon, Conservative).

<sup>234</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 104.

<sup>235</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 154 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

stigma is affixed to every one who receives gratuitous instruction.’<sup>236</sup> This quotation explores the notion of children being the property of the State. They will grow up to be good workers/citizens so as to repay their debt to the State for the schooling they have received.

Regarding the surveillance of poor children, Roebuck explained that, ‘with the careful watching of their moral character, and the communicating a general knowledge of our Government and other institutions, with such portions of political economy as regarded their condition, would be the object of the schools’.<sup>237</sup> He concludes that, ‘Such schools would be of immense service, preventing idle habits, and low and debauching pleasures from arising among the youths in the towns.’<sup>238</sup> These quotations explain why the site of the school was a necessary component in the regulation of children and families. Roebuck mentions the gathering of statistics, which could only occur if the children were placed together, apart from adults, within the institution of the school. Within the site they could be observed and surveyed, and statistics gathered. Therefore, not only would schools serve the purpose of reformation amongst the working classes, they would also provide the State with an opportunity of surveillance of the lower classes hitherto unseen.

With relevance to compulsory education, and to support my analysis of the Roebuck debates above, I have considered the work of David Archard. In his book ‘Children, Family and the State’, Archard explores the interaction between the public and private spheres with relation to schools and family. Archard explains that, ‘The distinction

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<sup>236</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 150 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

<sup>237</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 161 (John Roebuck, Liberal).

<sup>238</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 July 1833, vol 20, col 161 (John Roebuck, Liberal).



between public and private is a disputed one. Furthermore, the line that separates them is shifting and not always clearly defined.<sup>239</sup> For example, ‘Whereas in premodern times the family was a public institution, in the modern era it is very much situated within the partially concealed and non-political domain of the private.’<sup>240</sup> However, the modern private sphere of the family is not entirely immune from the outside interference of the public sphere of the State. The introduction of compulsory schooling meant that the decision as to whether children received education shifted from parents to the State. The interest that the State vests in the education of children is based on futurity. Archard explains that:

The relevance of children to the state’s reproductive role is obvious. At its simplest, children are the society’s future citizens, workers, army, lawyers and politicians. A state aiming to secure the conditions of its future existence, and that of the society over which it has jurisdiction, must be concerned with children and their upbringing.<sup>241</sup>

A State ‘also needs its young to grow up to be citizens – that is, to be able to play their part in the democratic governance of their own society.’<sup>242</sup> The idea of future citizen, along with the notion of future worker is central to the debate leading to compulsory schooling. It is these vested interests that led the State to encroach upon the private sphere of the family. In doing so, as I will explain, it altered the lives of both children and parents:

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<sup>239</sup> David William Archard, *Children, Family and the State* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) 123.

<sup>240</sup> *ibid* 69.

<sup>241</sup> *ibid* 122.

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*.

When education is compulsory, the compulsion is exercised not simply against the child, but also against the child's parents. It is parents who must ensure that their child attends an appropriate school or, failing that, provide the child with an education at home equivalent to that which she would have received in school.<sup>243</sup>

However, Archard suggests that it is crucial 'that the state works with and through families to secure its desired ends: it does not set itself up in opposition to the family, competing with it to bring up children in the appropriate way.'<sup>244</sup> It is arguable upon further analysis of the origins of compulsory education, as subsequently discussed in this chapter, that the State did indeed compete with working class families to introduce mass education, and secured "its desired ends" through legislation rather than working with the poorer classes. However, when considering the work of Foucault and Donzelot here it is a more convincing argument that, through agency, the State works both *with* and *through* families transmitting norms into the heart of the populace via the site of the school.

#### d) The Bodies of Children

Similar arguments arose regarding the use of law in the regulation of the bodies of children. However, in these debates there is the addition of creating and utilising the perception of children as vulnerable and in need of protection.

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<sup>243</sup> *ibid* 129.

<sup>244</sup> *ibid* 123.

### i) Arguments FOR the Use of Law: Images of Children

In the parliamentary debates regarding factories, chimney sweeps and mines, child workers are described as, 'poor creatures',<sup>245</sup> 'unfortunate children',<sup>246</sup> 'wretched little beings',<sup>247</sup> 'unhappy children',<sup>248</sup> 'young and helpless children',<sup>249</sup> 'helpless beings',<sup>250</sup> and 'innocent victims'.<sup>251</sup>

Henry Bennet stated in a debate regarding the Chimney Sweepers Regulation Bill 1819 that, 'It was not necessary for him to detail the miseries to which these poor children were exposed; they met the eye of every man in his daily walks.'<sup>252</sup> Michael Sadler noted that, 'every man of humanity must have intense feelings of compassion when the sufferings and miseries of helpless children were detailed.'<sup>253</sup> It was these images of vulnerability, coupled with the argument that anyone with an ounce of compassion must notice that the children were in need of help, that were used to advance the argument that the State should protect the vulnerable children. The MPs were bringing the public into their debates by stating that the state of the poor children "met the eye of every man" and "every man of humanity". Sadler explained, 'The prayer of the petition was, that the House would consider those who were unable to

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<sup>245</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 July 1842, vol 65, col 110 (Earl Vane, The Marquess of Londonderry).

<sup>246</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 104 (Michael Sadler, Tory Radical).

<sup>247</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1825, vol 13, col 647 (Sir Francis Burdett).

<sup>248</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 105 (George Schonswar).

<sup>249</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 105 (Joseph Hume, Tory Radical).

<sup>250</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1825, vol 13, col 648 (Dr. Stephen Lushington, Whig).

<sup>251</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1825, vol 13, col 648 (Dr. Stephen Lushington, Whig).

<sup>252</sup> Hansard HC Deb 11 February 1819, vol 39, col 426 (Henry Bennet).

<sup>253</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 107 (Michael Sadler, Tory Radical).

help themselves, and whose parents, from the prevalent distress, were also unable to protect them.’<sup>254</sup>

This argument legitimised State intervention in the protection of the poor children working in pitiable conditions as it was noted that neither the children, nor their parents, were in a position to solve the problem. This point was re-iterated many times: ‘the House were bound to protect these poor children from the effects of the system, against which they could not protect themselves’,<sup>255</sup> ‘the duty of the House to protect those who were unable to help themselves’,<sup>256</sup> ‘it was not inconsistent with our constitution to legislate for the protection of children’,<sup>257</sup> ‘nor could he conceive a more desirable occupation for the Legislature than for it to interfere between these infants and their masters, and shield them from the oppression to which they were now subjected’,<sup>258</sup> ‘There were many poor children in every part of the kingdom whom there was no way of protecting but by act of parliament.’<sup>259</sup> ‘If the employment of such children was productive of evil, that was a good ground for the interference of the legislature.’<sup>260</sup> Regarding the regulation of cotton factories, Lord Kenyon argued, ‘no relief was to be found in any of the provisions of the common law, and therefore it became necessary to resort to a special legislative measure.’<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 104 (Michael Sadler, Tory Radical).

<sup>255</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 March 1833, vol 16, col 641 (George Robinson).

<sup>256</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 105 (Joseph Hume, Tory Radical).

<sup>257</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 February 1818, vol 37, col 265 (Sir Robert Peel).

<sup>258</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 105 (George Schonswar).

<sup>259</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 February 1818, vol 37, cols 581-582 (Sir Robert Peel, Tory).

<sup>260</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 February 1818, vol 37, col 267 (George Philips).

<sup>261</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 June 1819, vol 40, col 1131 (Lord Kenyon).

The physical dangers of child labour are noted – the child's body being deemed as prone to damage through the tough working conditions endured by children. There was also concern for the moral dangers of not being in education and circulating in a, so regarded, inappropriate adult world. Reformers built on the idea of the child being vulnerable and in need of protection to develop legislative restriction on child labour, and later to introduce law to compel schooling. They utilised the notion that 'wage-earning children were not 'proper' children and, therefore, had to be made 'innocent' of such adult behaviour, and the school was the institutional means of achieving this end.'<sup>262</sup> This created the idea of childhood ignorance that required 'a *particular* form of discipline',<sup>263</sup> which could only be found by separating adults and children and placing children within their own special structure of the school – the site of regulation.

This idea builds on the notion of separating children and adults through highlighting the need for childhood innocence to be protected from adult corruption by locating children within a distinct social space *for* children. This perception of childhood was based on a notion of futurity as the separate social structure of the school saw 'the value of children as investments for the future,'<sup>264</sup> and ensured 'economic competitiveness, and a stable democratic order.'<sup>265</sup> This focused the shift of the primary perception of childhood from "current" worker, to an interlinked concept of

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<sup>262</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 46.

<sup>263</sup> *ibid* [italics as per text].

<sup>264</sup> *ibid* 35.

<sup>265</sup> *ibid* 46.

the child being viewed as “vulnerable”, coupled with the notion of “future” worker/citizen. By institutionalising children within the social structure of the school, the definition of childhood takes on a reshaped form as a result of underlying political ideologies. As Archard states, ‘After the Romantics the celebration of childhood innocence deteriorated through the Victorian era into mere sentimentality. The child’s innocence, frailty and vulnerability were exploited in order to expose and highlight the particular inhumanities of nineteenth-century society.’<sup>266</sup> The children being on the streets meant they themselves, by their dress and manner, provided a vehicle to construct this image of childhood. However, their condition was as a consequence of their parents’ economic situation. Therefore, the street children did not *actively* construct the notion of savage child or vulnerable child. In this respect it was the upper and middle class reformers who re-created these perceptions of childhood to use as a tool with the aim of manifesting social change.

Although, as I will proceed to explain, many MPs argued against law being used to interfere between the factory owners (usually referred to as masters) and their workers, children were considered as different due to their age and lack of ability to protect themselves. In this manner, it was considered the duty of the State to step forward in their behalf. Once again, MPs approached their arguments from differing perspectives. Lord Kenyon stated:

The children could not be considered as free labourers; for at the early age at which they entered the factories, they could not be their own masters, nor yet could they be protected by the principles of the common law, against the severity of their misters [sic], on account of the similarity- between their

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<sup>266</sup> David Archard, *Children: Rights & Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: Routledge, 2004) 47-48.

situation and that of free labourers, in their not being bound for any definite period. Nothing but a legislative enactment could afford them any effectual protection.<sup>267</sup>

Kenyon explains that legislation was the sole solution as children were not deemed to be free labourers in their own right and therefore found no relief from their situation at common law. Kenyon also argues in terms of futurity, 'the ill state of health of these children, arising from the number of hours they were kept at work in the manner described, imperiously called for legislative interference to prevent that waste of human life which such a system produced.'<sup>268</sup> Similar arguments were also mooted by Tory MP Sir Robert Peel. Peel noted, 'the hours which children laboured in the factories were too great for human in-durance ... the long hours of labour were prejudicial to the health of children.'<sup>269</sup> He continued:

He knew there were also some who opposed any regulation of the subject, as a matter unfit for legislation ... It was objected with a show of plausibility, that it was improper to interfere with free labour; but from the age of the children, and from the situation of the factories, their labour could hardly be said to be free. The masters of the cotton [sic] mills fixed the same hours of labour for all the persons employed, and a child could not say, that he would not work nine hours; he must work the ordinary number of hours, or not at all. He was satisfied that a number of mills were well managed, but he repeated, that it

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<sup>267</sup> Hansard HL Deb 25 February 1819, vol 39, col 653 (Lord Kenyon).

<sup>268</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 June 1819, vol 40, col 1131 (Lord Kenyon).

<sup>269</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 February 1818, vol 37, col 587 (Sir Robert Peel, Tory).

was for those which were improperly managed, that legislation was meant.<sup>270</sup>

To further counteract debate against legislation which revolved around the desire to protect free labour, comparison was made to slavery:

The children were not free agents, and required the protection of the legislature as much as the slaves of the West-Indies, for whom regulations had been made, not only as to what work they should do, but what allowance of food they should receive. The fears of those who were alarmed lest the cotton trade should be destroyed by these regulations, ought not to weigh against the common rights of humanity.<sup>271</sup>

Although Sir Francis Burdett agreed 'that no legislative interference ought to take place in merely commercial transactions; and that the sale of labour by the workman, and the purchase of it by the master, should be left wholly to their own operation.'<sup>272</sup> Burdett drew a distinction between children and adult workers by using slavery as an example:

It could not upon any grounds be contended, that these helpless children should be sacrificed to the avarice and cupidity of their unfeeling parents, and of those by whom their labour was purchased. Those parents, whatever their right might be to receive the profits of their children's labour, had no right to sell them. We heard of slavery abroad; but, good God! had we ever

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<sup>270</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 February 1818, vol 37, col 586 (Sir Robert Peel, Tory).

<sup>271</sup> Hansard HC Deb 31 May 1825, vol 13, cols 1010-1011 (Mr. Gordon).

<sup>272</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1825, vol 13, col 647 (Sir Francis Burdett).



heard of any such instance of overworking, as had been published with respect to the labour of the children in the cotton manufactories? ... It was shocking to humanity; and it became still more odious, when it was considered that these children, if they chanced to be overpowered by sleep, were beaten by the spinners until they awoke and resumed their labours. If these representations were true—and they remained as uncontradicted—it was impossible to imagine any case which called more loudly for the interference of the legislature.<sup>273</sup>

Likening children being sold by their parents to slaves being sold abroad used imagery as an argument for the introduction of protective legislation. This concern centred on the idea that whereas adults allegedly made choices regarding work, children employed within the factories ‘were not equal participants in the making of a contract and ... therefore, it followed that child labour was different in kind from adult labour,’<sup>274</sup> which led to ‘the comparison of child wage-earners to slaves.’<sup>275</sup>

During the Industrial Revolution, the romantic notion of childhood innocence had been lost on poor children as, ‘the demand for free labour and the destruction of the old ‘moral economy’ – pushed adult-child relations in the opposite direction to that

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<sup>273</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1825, vol 13, cols 647-648 (Sir Francis Burdett).

<sup>274</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 41.

<sup>275</sup> *ibid.*

promised by Romantic aspirations.’<sup>276</sup> Therefore, the ideal suggested within Parliament was not present in the lives of the working classes until alteration in public thinking helped to shift notions of the child from “current” worker to that of “vulnerable” child. In support of my analysis of the debates above I cite Hendrick who charts this change in attitude and notes that ‘factory children in general came to be regarded as victims, as ‘slaves’, as innocents forced into ‘unnatural’ employment and denied their ‘childhood’.<sup>277</sup>

## ii) Arguments AGAINST the Use of Law

However, as had occurred with the arguments concerning the minds of children, once again there was resistance to using law in totality to protect the children. These arguments were based on many aspects, such as it was not the role of Parliament to interfere in the free market and that law would not remedy the evil present in society. In debate regarding the Chimney Sweepers Regulation Bill 1819, The Earl of Lauderdale argued:

... it was not fit for the legislature to lay down rules of humanity to individuals; because, by doing so, the very principles of humanity would be rooted up: for greater cruelties would then be practised, than any which the bill went to provide against. It was impossible, without great injustice and public inconvenience, for their lordships to legislate on subjects of this kind. It was somewhat of the same nature with the bill for regulating the labour of children in cotton factories; and with the poor laws. These latter originated in a mistaken

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<sup>276</sup> *ibid* 38.

<sup>277</sup> *ibid* 39.

spirit of humanity, the attempt to enforce which by law, had produced effects the very opposite of those which were intended; together with all that complicated mass of evil, which was now felt in every part of England. If the legislature attempted to lay down a moral code for the people, there was always a danger that every feeling of benevolence would be extirpated, it was like making a law to regulate the mode in which a painter was to execute his work. The painter might conform to the law, but his taste would be destroyed. For these reasons, he should oppose the bill.<sup>278</sup>

Here the argument is that not only is it not the role of law to lay down rules regarding how children are treated in work, law may also have the opposite effect to the remedy it was aiming to create. It was argued by Kirkman Finlay during a debate of the Cotton Factories Bill 1818 that law would be useless in remedying the evil so prevalent in society:

The evil was inherent in the very nature of manufactories, and in the present state of society, and unless these could be altered, it would be useless to make any legislative regulations to remedy the evil which arose out of them. Let those who possessed manufactories endeavour to improve the condition of those who they employed. They possessed the means of doing so under many circumstances; but the House was mistaken if

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<sup>278</sup> Hansard HL Deb 24 May 1819, vol 40, cols 669-670 (The Earl of Lauderdale).

they imagined that the evil could be remedied by mere legislative measures.<sup>279</sup>

There was also concern that the role of regulation was a matter for parents, not the State. Regarding a debate of the Cotton Factories Regulation Bill 1819, The Earl of Rosslyn stated:

... parents were the natural guardians of the health and prosperity of their own children, and that the legislature ought to be slow to interfere with free labour, the regulation of which would be best provided for by leaving it to the individuals immediately concerned.<sup>280</sup>

This non-interventionist approach took the stance that it was the role of parents rather than the State to protect children. This argument was also raised in a similar debate by John Curwen, 'Had they not their natural protectors, their parents? He objected to a measure which would go to point out to the parents what were the hours in which their children should be employed.'<sup>281</sup>

In another debate taking the non-interventionist liberal approach to legislation, Tory Radical Joseph Hume stated, 'it was essential to the welfare of the country at large, that as little legislative interference as possible should take place between masters and servants.'<sup>282</sup> This argument is not against the use of law at all, but of its use for the regulation in the free market. This point is explained further by the Earl of Wicklow and The Duke of Beaufort in a debate regarding the Chimney Sweepers Bill 1840.

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<sup>279</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 April 1818, vol 37, col 1262 (Kirkman Finlay).

<sup>280</sup> Hansard HL Deb 14 June 1819, vol 40, col 1131 (The Earl of Rosslyn).

<sup>281</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 February 1818, vol 37, col 266 (John Curwen).

<sup>282</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1832, vol 10, col 105 (Joseph Hume, Tory Radical).

The Earl of Wicklow believed that regulation through law, 'would endanger a vast number of edifices in this country.'<sup>283</sup> The Earl explained, 'With regard to the severity and hardship with which these poor children were treated, that surely might be made the subject of regulation.'<sup>284</sup> Furthermore, The Duke of Beaufort 'felt the difficulty of taking a course which was apparently opposed to the dictates of humanity, but at the same time he could not but think that if this bill were now to pass into a law, it would be very injurious to property in the country.'<sup>285</sup> This shows that concern was not always with using law to protect the children; it was using law to regulate the property owners and business proprietors. This highlights the class divide, that alongside utilitarian arguments for the creation of a happy, educated populace which would benefit all classes, there were some MPs who had greater concern for their own class and the protection of property over people. This is another example of MPs approaching their arguments from differing perspectives.

During the period of industrial growth there appeared to be a conflict of issues and solutions. Dorothy Zietz, exploring the development of child welfare in England explains that children were viewed as a valuable source of labour to families who were 'so poor that they needed the earnings of their children.'<sup>286</sup> Linda Pollock also contends that, 'The parents were all desperately unhappy about the situation their children were in, but could do nothing about it. Although the parents disliked their children working, the social system at that time allowed them no choice. Poor relief

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<sup>283</sup> Hansard HL Deb 6 July 1840, vol 55, col 436 (The Earl of Wicklow).

<sup>284</sup> Hansard HL Deb 6 July 1840, vol 55, cols 436-437 (The Earl of Wicklow).

<sup>285</sup> Hansard HL Deb 6 July 1840, vol 55, col 437 (The Duke of Beaufort).

<sup>286</sup> Dorothy Zietz, *Child Welfare: Services and Perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: John Wiley & Sons, 1969) 23.

was usually refused to a family if it contained children capable of working.’<sup>287</sup> Most working class children went out to work from a young age and this would have been welcomed by factory owners who were willing to employ them for their own financial gain. As highlighted in the above parliamentary debates, indeed, although the upper and middle class reformers wished to extend the provision of education, ‘the dominant view in parliament among both the Tories (representing the aristocracy and landowners) and the Whigs (representing the middle classes and industrialists) was strongly *laissez-faire*.’<sup>288</sup>

However appealing the economic benefits of child labour, it was the documented use of statistics, coupled with the perception of childhood vulnerability, that meant that, ‘many contemporaries were appalled, not only by the scale and intensity of the exploitation of young wage earners, but also by what was seen as their brutalization.’<sup>289</sup> Furthermore, ‘[j]ust as much of the alleged cruelty in the factories was but a reflection of the brutality of life outside them, so also were the moral standards which are often said to have debased the morals of factory children.’<sup>290</sup> The reality that beset working class children did not match the ideology of how childhood should be according to the Victorian middle and upper classes:

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<sup>287</sup> Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 63.

<sup>288</sup> Lilian McCoy, ‘Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood’ in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 109 [italics as per text].

<sup>289</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 39-40.

<sup>290</sup> Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society: From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948*, Vol. II (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) 410.

In opposition to *laissez-faire* capitalism, there was of course the Romantic image of childhood which opposed the unremitting debasement of children through long hours, unhealthy conditions, corporal punishment and sexual harassment ... Similarly, the evangelical attitude to children, though in conflict with the Romantic, also opposed their economic activity.<sup>291</sup>

This notion of protection would eventually prevail over arguments against introducing a system of compulsory schooling. This would result in children being excluded from the adult world by being segregated within the institution of the school - although at this point in time mass education in practice was still a few years away. The school was a necessary site as it was important that children were separated from adults and taught prescribed social norms rather than being encouraged as to individual thought. As Walvin expands, there was a gradual alteration of public thinking away from seeing children 'simply as miniature adults to seeing them as a distinctive group in need of particular treatment and care.'<sup>292</sup> Hendrick also states that between:

1780 and 1840s, a new construction of childhood was put together ... so that at the end of the period the wage-earning child was no longer considered the norm. Instead childhood was now seen as constituting a separate and distinct set of

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<sup>291</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 25 [italics as per text].

<sup>292</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 194.

characteristics requiring protection and fostering through school education.<sup>293</sup>

All of the aforementioned anxieties regarding urban poor children led to a succession of changes in the law during the mid-nineteenth century which saw younger children being regulated to limit the number of hours that they could work.<sup>294</sup> For example, legislation was passed in 1833 which prohibited the employment of children under 9 years of age in any factory or mill with the exception of those manufacturing silk.<sup>295</sup> The Act also restricted the working week of those aged under 13 years to 10 hours per day and those aged under 18 years to 12 hours a day and 69 hours per week.<sup>296</sup> The Regulation of Factories Act 1834 also limited the hours that the children under the age of 13 years could work in silk mills to 10 hours a day, everyday of the week.<sup>297</sup> In 1842 legislation was enacted to prohibit women and girls working in Mines and Collieries.<sup>298</sup> The Act also deemed that 'it shall not be lawful for any Owner of any Mine or Colliery to employ any Male Person under the Age of Ten Years within any Mine or Colliery.'<sup>299</sup> The Factories Act 1844 reduced the age of child employment so that 'no Child under Eight Years of Age shall be employed in any Factory.'<sup>300</sup> The

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<sup>293</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 39.

<sup>294</sup> However, as previously mentioned, rural children were not as visible as urban children and they did not receive protection under legislation until 1867 when the Agricultural Gangs Act was enacted to prohibit the employment of children under the age of 8 in any agricultural gangs.

<sup>295</sup> Labour of Children etc. in Factories Act 1833, s VII.

<sup>296</sup> Labour of Children etc. in Factories Act 1833, s VIII and s II.

<sup>297</sup> The Regulation of Factories Act 1834, s II.

<sup>298</sup> Mines and Collieries Act 1842, s I.

<sup>299</sup> Mines and Collieries Act 1842, s II.

<sup>300</sup> Factories Act 1844, s XXIX.



Factories Act 1847 further restricted the working hours of children under 18 years old employed in mills and factories to ‘Ten Hours in any One Day nor more than Fifty-eight Hours in any One Week’.<sup>301</sup>

Although regarding children’s employment, these debates are important to my analysis as reducing the number of hours that children worked paved the way for the move towards compulsory schooling. Concern with the body of the child is also a theme that will be re-worked in the debates surrounding the introduction of school meals.<sup>302</sup>

#### e) The Elementary Education Bill 1870

Following the legislative restrictions regarding child employment, arguments for the introduction of compulsory schooling remained subdued for a number of years. There was The Report of the Newcastle Commission which followed an inquiry into whether or not any ‘extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people’,<sup>303</sup> was required which was ‘signed on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1861, [and contained] a great array of statistics’.<sup>304</sup> However, it was following the implementation of the Representation of the People Act 1867 that the pace of debate regarding compulsory schooling gathered momentum. The 1867 Act was to ‘improve

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<sup>301</sup> Factories Act 1847, s II.

<sup>302</sup> Chapter 3.

<sup>303</sup> Hansard HC Deb 11 February 1858, vol 148, col 1185 (Sir John Pakington, Conservative).

<sup>304</sup> John William Adamson, *English Education 1789-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) 203 [bracketed wording mine].

the representation of the people in Parliament',<sup>305</sup> and 'to distribute it in a more efficient manner.'<sup>306</sup> Although entitlement remained qualified by property, the Act enfranchised many working class men. Referring back to the arguments earlier in this chapter,<sup>307</sup> with increased voting rights there was renewed concern over the education of the working classes.

Renewed unease regarding the poor was also partly due to the fact that since labour restrictions came into force there were many children who were neither at work, nor at school, and merely roaming the streets. As such they were *visible*. Hugh Cunningham explains that, 'Too many children were neither at school nor in employment. There was more than a residue of that old fear, going back to Tudor times, of idle children.'<sup>308</sup> Thus concern was not just for the children that were working, but also increasingly for those that were not. There was a perceived notion that, 'these children of the street were alien beings, far removed not only from civilization, but, more important, from any likeness to children as they existed in the middle-class world.'<sup>309</sup> As Hopkins notes, 'Many of the children on the streets led wild and undisciplined lives.'<sup>310</sup> Walvin expands:

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<sup>305</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 March 1867, vol 185, col 1268 (Benjamin Disraeli, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Conservative).

<sup>306</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 March 1867, vol 185, col 1268 (Benjamin Disraeli, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Conservative).

<sup>307</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (c).

<sup>308</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 171.

<sup>309</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 122.

<sup>310</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 194.

It was hard for middle-class observers even to regard children of the poor *as children*; dirty, hungry children looked older than their years, and their childhood was often unrecognizable under layers of rags and coating of dirt. Their faces showed signs of ill-nourishment, hard work and lack of sleep.<sup>311</sup>

This created a public image of 'street children as savages,'<sup>312</sup> who had lost 'the essence of childhood.'<sup>313</sup> Thus, in order to reclaim the domestic ideal, 'the savage had become someone who needed to be rescued, saved and civilized.'<sup>314</sup> As noted in Part 1 of this chapter concerning the motivation behind why children were placed within the site of school,<sup>315</sup> juvenile delinquency was highlighted by reformers concerned 'about the nature of the social order',<sup>316</sup> and 'the chaos and immorality that appeared to be widespread.'<sup>317</sup> As such, the fear of social unrest visible through poor children roaming the streets meant that the State became concerned once again to improve their moral standing. Visible children became a problem for the State and one it had to remedy.

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<sup>311</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 15 [italics as per text].

<sup>312</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 97.

<sup>313</sup> *ibid* 111.

<sup>314</sup> *ibid* 97.

<sup>315</sup> Chapter 2, Part 1 (a).

<sup>316</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 44.

<sup>317</sup> *ibid* 45.

When the Elementary Education Bill was debated in Parliament on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870, Liberal MP William Edward Forster explained that:

Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity ... if we leave our work-folk any longer unskilled ... they will become overmatched in the competition of the world ... Upon this speedy provision of education depends also our national power.<sup>318</sup>

This speech highlights in a few sentences that there was a deep underlying pretence that the education of children was to enhance the country's social and economic standing. Society was changing and there was demand for a more educated workforce, albeit a selectively educated one for the needs of the nation. This highlights a shift from the child being viewed as "current" worker to one seen as "future" worker.

Forster stated whilst introducing the Bill that, 'want of education – that ignorance is weakness, and that weakness in this hard struggling world generally brings misfortune – often leads to vice.'<sup>319</sup> The anxiety which had led earlier debate was still rife and, as mentioned above, there was desire to remove children from the streets and place them in education as the poor and uneducated in society were blamed for crime and disorder. In his analysis of the impact the Education Act of 1870 had on the working classes, J.S Hurt explains that, 'One of the main purposes of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 was to bring the social and the educational outcasts of the

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<sup>318</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, col 465 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

<sup>319</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, col 466 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

nation into the schools.’<sup>320</sup> He continues by saying that, ‘Skilled men were law-abiding respectable parents who already sent their children to school and kept them out of mischief without the intervention of any outside coercive agency interfering in their daily lives.’<sup>321</sup> Thus the argument follows that a system of compulsory education would lead to the improvement of morality and conduct within the lower classes and therefore a reduction in crime.

Therefore, although education would help reverse the “ignorance” that Forster alleged encouraged vice, ‘much of the value of a national education lay outside its ability to educate ... To have all the nation’s children in the classrooms during much of the working day, throughout a substantial part of the year, fulfilled a number of important social roles.’<sup>322</sup> These roles included removing children from the streets, freeing up employment opportunities for adults, and ensuring society’s supply of skilled future workers. Thus, following the notion of the failed *voluntary* school movement that moral education creates good citizens; *compelling* poor children to attend school would in turn yield respectable members of society. Once again there were two pressing issues that could potentially be solved by one solution. Issue one being a lack of appropriately skilled future workers. Issue two being visible poor children on the streets. The solution: safeguarding children’s moral and social futures through

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<sup>320</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 59.

<sup>321</sup> *ibid* 62.

<sup>322</sup> James Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) 122.

education within the site of the school. This in turn safeguards the future of the nation.<sup>323</sup>

At this point *parents* still had responsibility for making decisions regarding their children's schooling and it was *parents* who had the choice of whether to send their children to school or not. Hurt explains that before the Act, 'the voluntary system was a voluntary one for both principle parties.'<sup>324</sup> Benevolent individuals were not compelled to set up educational establishments nor were parents obliged to send their children to any of the schools which had been founded. It was not until the 1870 Act was passed that parents 'lost this freedom of choice.'<sup>325</sup> The origin of mass compulsory education was coupled with a shift from sole parental control of the education of their children, to one which was increasingly shared with the State. Hurt views the introduction of compulsory schooling as something which the poorest members of the working classes perceived as an intrusion into the family unit. He asserts that by removing the voluntary aspect of education, the 'state had interfered with the pattern of family life by coming between parent and child, reducing family

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<sup>323</sup> By the late nineteenth century debate was not so much concerned with whether a national system of education *should* be introduced but whether such education should be secular or non-secular. William Forster made clear that 'an enormous majority of the parents of this country prefer that there should be a Christian training for their children – that they should be taught to read the Bible.' Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199 cols 457-458 (William Edward Forster, Liberal). This position does not follow the reasoning behind *why* schools were introduced to begin with. It was allegedly poor families' lack of religious and moral standing which led them to a life of crime and street roaming. It was partly because the voluntary Sunday school movement and charitable day schooling which followed had not solved the problem of child crime which led to the Bill which Forster was debating. Therefore, it seems unlikely, with religious instruction being one of the reasons why parents had avoided sending their children to voluntary schools, that would now be their education of choice.

<sup>324</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 25.

<sup>325</sup> *ibid.*

income, and imposing new patterns of behaviour on both parent and child.<sup>326</sup> Hurt also argues that parents, 'showed little regard for the socialisation function of the school, the "regulation of the thoughts and habits of the children" to conform to contemporary middle-class norms.'<sup>327</sup> However, it seems that parents were very aware and against this form of regulation; hence their misgivings of the development of the voluntary school movement and the type of education that was offered (schooling at this time was similar to that of Sunday schools and centred on religious teaching). This is supported by the fact that working class children did not regularly attend any school partly due to 'poverty and dependence on child earnings, but importance also was working-class consumer-resistance to the kind of education that was proffered.'<sup>328</sup>

Within Parliament at the same time as the discussion on the involvement of religion in education was taking place, there was also debate about the extent to which the State should involve itself with the schooling of children. There was deep concern from all parties that the State should not involve itself in matters of education for varying reasons. McCoy states that, 'Many saw schooling as a *private* matter for parents.'<sup>329</sup> Rich also notes that, 'State education, it was argued, limited the freedom of parents and demoralised them by denying their rights and taking over their responsibilities.'<sup>330</sup> Murphy asserts that there was a belief 'that state intervention in the field of education

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<sup>326</sup> *ibid* 3.

<sup>327</sup> *ibid* 31, citing Findings of the Newcastle Report, P.P. 1861, XXI, C.

<sup>328</sup> Anne Digby and Peter Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Macmillan, 1981) 31.

<sup>329</sup> Lilian McCoy, 'Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood' in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 108 [italics as per text].

<sup>330</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 33.

might lead to tyranny and repression.<sup>331</sup> There was also concern that state involvement in education may 'discourage voluntary charitable activity.'<sup>332</sup> However the voluntary system was '[e]xhausted financially' so something needed to be done if Britain was to maintain its position with international competitors.<sup>333</sup>

There was a twofold problem with ending all voluntary education and replacing it with solely state controlled schools; religious and political objection as stated above, and the enormous sum of money that would be needed to establish a new system of schooling. The scheme that William Forster proposed allowed *some* State control and economic assistance without completely ending the voluntary system. This was, in theory, beneficial to all parties and had been mooted years earlier in Parliament by reformers such as Wilberforce wishing to "fill the gaps" in voluntary provision with State aid.<sup>334</sup> In his analysis of the 1870 Act Rich explains that the Act 'aimed at social improvement and not the provision of state systems. It was the rising cost of education, plus the long pockets of the ratepayers, which ultimately led to the decline of the Voluntary Schools and the growth of state control.'<sup>335</sup> Increasing state interference was thus also owing to growing economic difficulties and changing public perceptions of education as can be revealed through analysing the parliamentary debates at the time. Forster clarified the position by stating that the:

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<sup>331</sup> James Murphy, *The Education Act 1870* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972) 9.

<sup>332</sup> *ibid* 10.

<sup>333</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1964) 69.

<sup>334</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (a).

<sup>335</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 10.



... object is to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps, sparing the public money where it can be done without, procuring as much as we can the assistance of the parents, and welcoming as much as we rightly can the co-operation and aid of those benevolent men who desire to assist their neighbours.<sup>336</sup>

William Forster did not propose a system of free education for all for fear that the 'cost would be such as really might well alarm my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.'<sup>337</sup> In a statement that emphasised the overriding economic objective Forster explained that:

I hope the country would be ready to incur that cost if necessary; but I think it would be not only unnecessary, but mischievous. Why should we relieve the parent from all payments for the education of his child? We come in and help the parents in all possible ways; but, generally speaking, the enormous majority of them are able, and will continue to be able, to pay these fees.<sup>338</sup>

He also made clear that, 'we must not forget the duty of the parents.'<sup>339</sup> If a national scheme of education was introduced then parents contributing to their children's schooling through the payment of fees would ensure that families were fulfilling their

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<sup>336</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, cols 443-444 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

<sup>337</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, col 454 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

<sup>338</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, cols 454-455 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

<sup>339</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 February 1870, vol 199, col 443 (William Edward Forster, Liberal).

duties whilst also preserving State funds. These quotations highlight that the idea was for parents to *share* responsibility for their children with the State. However, this would impose an obligation on families and meant they could be regulated by the State and face sanctions if they did not adhere to the new law.

Economics and the deeply ingrained belief of parental responsibility were very much detailed in the reasoning behind the workings of the 1870 Act. These two themes of economics and preservation of parental duties dominate education legislation throughout the period explored in this chapter. The preservation of parental responsibility appears to justify state intervention. State support was necessary economically and politically and it seemed that it was not justified to take assistance without accepting *some* intervention. The wording of the 1870 Act kept state interference relatively low but as education legislation developed over later years, expanding compulsion to attend and the need for increased economic support, it meant that, although a gradual process, it was one which would ensure that in the future, children would be compelled to be educated on an unprecedented scale.

## PART 3

### 3) Effects

#### a) Law – Obligations and Responsibilities

The introduction of the Elementary Education Act 1870 (also known as Forster's Act) under a Liberal Government was intended to supplement the voluntary school system, where necessary, and give local school boards in England and Wales the power to introduce byelaws making school attendance compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 13.<sup>340</sup> All children were required to be schooled and 'The Education Act of 1870 made no distinction between boys and girls, both being equally required to attend school.'<sup>341</sup> As detailed above, the Act came into being in part due to an increase in child welfare concerns, coupled with the failure of voluntary schools to successfully cope with removing children from the streets and educating them. As such, 'school boards built and opened schools in the poorest areas first.'<sup>342</sup> Under the 1870 Act individual school boards could, if they so wished, employ attendance enforcement officers to make sure the compulsory attendance byelaws were being adhered to. 'This produced compulsion in patches',<sup>343</sup> and Hurt notes that, 'In 1876 less than half of the population of England and Wales, 46 per cent, lived in areas in

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<sup>340</sup> Elementary Education Act 1870, s 74.

<sup>341</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 143.

<sup>342</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 59.

<sup>343</sup> Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: The Historical Association, 1971) 34.

which school attendance was at least nominally compulsory.<sup>344</sup> Thus under the Act compulsory schooling was not enforced nationwide.

Regarding payment of school fees, provision was made so that individual poverty stricken children could have their education subsidised or free in local public elementary schools subject to the particular opinion of each school board.<sup>345</sup> In circumstances where it is considered 'expedient for the interests of education' entire schools may be provided for communities suffering from poverty with no fees payable.<sup>346</sup> Although this was not commonplace and education in newly set up board schools did not become free to most children until the Elementary Education Act 1891 came into force. This apprehension was owing to concern of preserving parental responsibility as seen in the debates above. As Cunningham states:

Compulsion seemed to many working-class parents like an intrusion into matters that were for the family. For 20 years, until 1891, parents had to pay for the privilege of compulsorily sending their children to school. It seemed a double whammy: paying for school and losing the income that might have come from the child's wages.<sup>347</sup>

This is where it can clearly be seen that the State (public) encroached on the home (private) and established 'a redefinition of the boundary between the public and the

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<sup>344</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 189.

<sup>345</sup> Elementary Education Act 1870, s 25.

<sup>346</sup> Elementary Education Act 1870, s 26.

<sup>347</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 172.

private.’<sup>348</sup> In doing so it produced various changes for working class families. Firstly, ‘The introduction of compulsory school from the 1870s consolidated the distinctiveness of childhood.’<sup>349</sup> As Nick Lee notes, ‘Children’s special status as sites of investment meant that they needed to be regulated and closely supervised, not only for their own sake, but also for reasons of state.’<sup>350</sup> This was because the interest that the State vests in the education of children is based on futurity and this justified government intervention in the private sphere of the home. ‘As the young become the focus of investment, so it came to seem appropriate and legitimate to attempt to control and manage their lives and experiences, so that they would become useful as adults.’<sup>351</sup> This links to my perceptions of “future” worker and “vulnerable” child. Both concepts were utilised at the same time during enactment of the 1870 Act.

Another change within working class families can be seen in the compulsion against parents to send their children to school as briefly noted during analysis of the work of Archard earlier in this chapter.<sup>352</sup> Up until this point the education of children was at the discretion of their parents. Now if children lived within the areas where the byelaws were implemented, they were compelled to go to school so the ‘compulsory bye-laws infringed the liberty of the parent.’<sup>353</sup> As McCoy notes, ‘The legislation transferred authority from parents to the state and in doing so redefined the

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<sup>348</sup> Lilian McCoy, ‘Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood’ in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 120.

<sup>349</sup> Anna Davin, ‘What is a child?’ in Anthony Fletcher and Stephen Hussey (eds), *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) 16.

<sup>350</sup> Nick Lee, *Childhood and Society: Growing Up in an Age of Uncertainty* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001) 30.

<sup>351</sup> *ibid* 36.

<sup>352</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (c) (ii).

<sup>353</sup> E.E Rich, *The Education Act 1870: A Study of Public Opinion* (London: Longmans, 1970) 107.

relationship between the state and the family.<sup>354</sup> It was through this redefined relationship that the State would gradually involve itself to a greater degree within the family unit. I will return to this issue in later chapters when considering State control of child health and food provision. The role of teachers in the site of the school, was to act as substitute parents so, 'Schools acted *in loco parentis*.'<sup>355</sup> The 1870 Act legitimised the public sphere of the State involving itself within the private sphere of the family.

Thus owing to the 1870 Act, 'Rather than being made to fit around work, school was now expected to have priority.'<sup>356</sup> However, in practice schooling was still sporadic as it was down to individual local school boards to decide whether to introduce compulsory education in their area and if they did so, whether or not to then employ attendance officers to ensure that the law was being followed. In Parliament it was noted that the poorer classes, 'who were closely affected by the action of the law, and who, at the present moment, were sullenly and silently submissive to its provisions.'<sup>357</sup> If the school boards wished to introduce byelaws and attendance officers this gave the State the right to encroach upon the private sphere of the home. This action was justified by Conservative MP Viscount Sandon, 'that some such powers were necessary in dealing with the population of our large cities and in grappling with the ignorance and the misery of the lowest classes their [sic]. Every other means had been tried and every other means had failed.'<sup>358</sup> Sandon thought

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<sup>354</sup> Lilian McCoy, 'Education for Labour: Social Problems of Nationhood' in Gail Lewis (ed), *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 120.

<sup>355</sup> *ibid* [italics as per text].

<sup>356</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 172.

<sup>357</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 July 1875, vol 225, col 801 (Lord Eslington).

<sup>358</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 July 1875, vol 225, col 810 (Viscount Sandon, Conservative).

that, 'it a very wise expenditure of public money to set up these great buildings, to get as good teachers as possible, and to give the most thorough education they could both in the interests of the children and of the country.'<sup>359</sup> This statement is a further sign that the notion of futurity was entrenched within the legislation.

Six years later legislation went further, when the enactment of the Elementary Education Act 1876 (also known as Sandon's Act) under a Conservative Government, required that parents had an obligation to ensure that their children aged between 5 and 14 years old were educated in reading, writing and arithmetic.<sup>360</sup> There were penalties put in place if parents failed in this responsibility. This meant that if working class families did not conform, they would be subject to sanctions. Children were required to be educated to a proficient standard and then obtained a certificate. Without this certificate they were met with restrictions on working. This process is similar to Donzelot's notion of tutelage because surveillance, in the form of certification, and discipline, in the form of penalties and restrictions, were used together to ensure families adhered to the legislation. The public sphere of the State was regulating the private sphere of the home, by imposing obligations on families, and issuing sanctions for non-compliance.

Generally children under the age of 10 could not be employed regardless of their proficiency and there were financial penalties to any employer who broke this rule.<sup>361</sup> However Hurt states, 'in 1879 there were still 6,000,000 people, nearly all of whom

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<sup>359</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 July 1875, vol 225, col 811 (Viscount Sandon, Conservative).

<sup>360</sup> Elementary Education Act 1876, s 4.

<sup>361</sup> Elementary Education Act 1876, s 5 and s 6.

were living in rural areas, outside the bye-law system.’<sup>362</sup> As such, four years later the Elementary Education Act 1880 (also known as Mundella’s Act) enacted under a Liberal Government, reviewed the position of school attendance further and tightened the previously discretionary byelaws, henceforth making schooling in England and Wales compulsory under law for all children between the ages of 5 and 10. These two Acts are examples of increasing anxiety for child welfare seen through the further restriction of child labour and the stricter laws required to compel children to attend schools. Parental responsibility is maintained through the requirement that the obligation fell on parents to ensure that their children were suitably educated. However, Hurt notes that the number of prosecutions for non-attendance at school reached ‘a peak of nearly 100,000 in 1883 (97,274).’<sup>363</sup> Regular attendance was thus still not a reality among all children even following the 1880 Act. Therefore, the ideal of a nationalised childhood was beginning to take shape but only partially realised at this stage. As Cunningham asserts, ‘The imposition of compulsory schooling has to be seen as a 20-or 30-year period in which parents and children gradually became accustomed to what contemporaries called ‘the habit of schooling.’<sup>364</sup>

#### b) Surveillance and Discipline

The site of the school provided an opportunity for the State to survey children en masse outside of the family home. Conservative MP Sir John Gorst, a former Vice-

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<sup>362</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 189.

<sup>363</sup> *ibid* 203.

<sup>364</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 172.



President of the Committee on Education and ardent reformer of education of the poor, stated:

School-time is the period at which the people's health can be most easily and most effectively dealt with by public authority. There is then an opportunity of ascertaining and watching the condition of children from day-to-day, and bringing influences to bear to improve their health which is impossible at any other time of life.<sup>365</sup>

The site of the school allowed for the State to bear influences on the children of the poor and teach them good hygiene and moral standards which would hopefully lead to both their health improvement, plus that of their current and future families. Liberal Unionist Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, explained that, 'As to the future, the Board were endeavouring to organise teaching in regard to the ordinary habits of life which might induce the parent of the future to deal more sensibly with his children than the parents of the past had done.'<sup>366</sup> With the reference to future families Anson is combining the issues of *futurity* with that of *health, morality* and *education*. This teaching of good habits to poor children would be made possible by removing the children from their homes and placing them all together in the school. Within the site of the school children could be educated by teachers for a part of each day and therefore were no longer merely influenced by their parents – parents the State often considered unfit for the role of raising future

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<sup>365</sup> Sir John E. Gorst, *The Children of the Nation: How Their Health and Vigour Should Be Promoted By the State* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906) 50.

<sup>366</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 565 (Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Liberal Unionist).

citizens unaided. This was an opportunity for the State to exert influence in a manner unfeasible once people were scattered widely in the world of work. It also meant that habits could be taught or corrected at an early age which would give maximum effect to the State's aim of regulating children and the family both present and future.

Deborah Dwork's analysis of child welfare supports this view as she argues that schools, 'provided a specific site where the state's public health arm could reach them [children] without physically invading the privacy of the home.'<sup>367</sup> The State was provided with an opening into the child's world, as Dwork notes, without the State *physically* encroaching on the private sphere of the home. Then through the children, as agents, the State's influence would be transferred into the privacy of the home, thus regulating the children and their families without a public official physically setting foot into the homes of the lower classes. The site of the school also gave a new-found opportunity, as Gorst states in the above quotation, to *watch* children and measure the extent of poverty and deterioration within the lower classes. Gorst suggested a policy whereby:

... a record should be kept in the schools; that a certain register should be kept and that the children should be measured and weighed. That was a thing which could be done without legislation, and a thing which in ten years would give a record by which we could tell whether the people were deteriorating or not.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 168 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>368</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1245 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

This notion of schoolchild surveillance was supported by Labour MP Thomas Shaw:

Once the doctors were admitted into the schools we should get statistics in the way of measurements of height and weight, and in particular we would get the dimensions of brain and other statistics, which would form the foundation for all legitimate and proper action on the part of the local authorities ... a great deal depended on a good schedule filled in from time to time with particulars which would afford material for comparative statistics on which we could build up a case as to underfed children.<sup>369</sup>

This quotation by Shaw is important as it highlights how surveillance and statistics were utilised to champion the cause of malnourished children. Not only did the site of the school provide the State with data, this data would be used as evidence to better the condition of the poor children and their families.

Gorst acknowledged that, 'There, were a good many statistics already.'<sup>370</sup> A point reiterated by Shaw who noted, 'He had studied the Blue-books, and he ventured to say he was within the mark in declaring that in the working classes of this country there were underfed children in the proportion of from 16 to 20 per cent of the entire attendance in the schools.'<sup>371</sup> Therefore although some statistics were available, the policy of surveying and recording measurements of the bodies and

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<sup>369</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1269 (Thomas Shaw, Labour).

<sup>370</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1245 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>371</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, cols 1269-1270 (Thomas Shaw, Labour).

minds of schoolchildren would provide the State with a different approach to the gathering of information about the condition and circumstances of the poor. Due to the fact that the poor children were collected together in the site of the school, it provided the State with the opportunity to gather accurate data from participants who were confined within the setting of an institution during set times, on set days, for a set number of years. This would become a useful tool for future policy debates.

Cunningham supports this argument and notes that schools, ‘provided a site where the state could measure the effects on children of poverty and urban dwelling.’<sup>372</sup> Furthermore, ‘From the state’s point of view, compulsory schooling provided opportunities for surveillance beyond anything that could be hoped for in the home.’<sup>373</sup> Rose also supports the view that schools served ‘as invaluable social prisms, focusing all the manifestations of child deprivation in a way that the authorities could not ignore if education was to have any benefit for the child.’<sup>374</sup> This is an important point to note, the school meals debate did not start out as simply concern for children’s health – it focussed on children’s education – the ability to learn diminished if the children were hungry. This helps to explain how and why legislation on school meals was enacted in the early part of the twentieth

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<sup>372</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 188.

<sup>373</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Harlow: Pearson, 2005) 160.

<sup>374</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 150.

century. The arguments posed for feeding schoolchildren mainly centred on 'the futility of trying to educate hungry children.'<sup>375</sup>

'The school room was organized for surveillance and discipline',<sup>376</sup> and as Cunningham states, 'Under a system of compulsory schooling teachers were increasingly aware that some children were quite unable to benefit from the education offered because of inadequate nutrition.'<sup>377</sup> It soon became apparent that many poorer children, who now had no choice but to attend lessons, were not able to concentrate on their schooling due to hunger as, 'when the body was half-starved the mind could not work well.'<sup>378</sup>

Removing children from the streets had solved one of society's problems -- the threat of idle children - but had in turn highlighted another -- the threat of hungry children.<sup>379</sup> Taking children out of the working environment and sending them to school undoubtedly caused financial hardship, at least in the short term, to poorer families used to having the wages their children provided. As Hurt notes, 'What to one social group had appeared to be remedial legislation had added a burden to another.'<sup>380</sup> The

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<sup>375</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 169.

<sup>376</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 114.

<sup>377</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 204.

<sup>378</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 782 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>379</sup> The effects of policy changes analysed in this chapter would become an incentive motivating changes analysed in the following chapter -- see Chapter 3, Part 1 (a).

<sup>380</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 213.

upper/middle class ideal of compulsory schooling had in turn put additional pressure on working class families.

Hurt explains that, 'Immediately after 1870 the presence of underfed – the contemporary euphemism for near-starving – children in the classroom made perceptive commentators realize that it was not enough to just sweep the street arabs from the courts and rookeries into the classroom.'<sup>381</sup> These poor children were 'ragged, without boots or shoes, unkempt, dirty, verminous and undernourished.'<sup>382</sup> Indeed, 'The very fact that a whole generation of children were being collected together in the schools brought poverty and its consequences to light in a new way.'<sup>383</sup> Furthermore, the school leaving age was gradually raised. In 1893 the age was raised to 11, then in 1899 it was raised to 12.<sup>384</sup> This moved more children from the world of work into the schools. Now under surveillance within the site of the school it was mooted in Parliament that if the State wished to educate children then it also had a duty to feed them whilst they were there. These debates will be analysed in the following chapter when I will consider how school food carries the issues detailed in this chapter in a particular way and bridges the gap between concern for the bodies and minds of the poor.

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<sup>381</sup> *ibid* 103.

<sup>382</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 240-241.

<sup>383</sup> Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965) 122.

<sup>384</sup> Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act 1893; Elementary Education (School Attendance Act (1893) Amendment Act.

## Conclusion

During analysis of the introduction of compulsory education in England, various key points have emerged that show how the perception of childhood altered during the nineteenth century, and how this was utilised to achieve regulation of children and families. This regulation became possible due to immense changes within society brought forth by Industrialisation. It is clear that, as Hendrick states, 'in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the school played a pivotal role in the making of a new kind of childhood.'<sup>385</sup> Jenks also notes, 'The modern image of the child is one that is clear, visible and in need of containment.'<sup>386</sup> Childhood became located within the separate social structure of the school which provided a site for middle and upper class notions of childhood to be implemented as a means of social control. Compulsory schooling allowed a shift towards the middle and upper class Victorian ideal of a national childhood transcending boundaries of class and locality. This universal ideal of childhood was age set through legislation. Thus, 'by compulsorily keeping children within the classroom, schooling lengthened the years of 'childhood', while simultaneously reinforcing notions of the characteristics that were said to constitute *proper* childhood, namely ignorance, innocence and dependence.'<sup>387</sup> Furthermore, by compelling children to attend school the State encroached on the private space of the family. This was not such a substantial change for middle and

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<sup>385</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 46.

<sup>386</sup> Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (London: Routledge, 1996) 68.

<sup>387</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 64 [italics as per text].

upper class families as these already educated their children. However, it altered the lives of working class families immensely.

At the beginning of this chapter I explored middle and upper class anxiety focussed on children of the urban poor, whose representations were used as a vehicle to implement widespread social change. From analysis of the literature and parliamentary debates of this period, it was seen that the significant concerns of the time were national efficiency and social control. Sunday schools, and later day schools, were introduced to remove poor children from the streets and educate them in social skills within a religious framework. When voluntary schooling was found to have little effect on either attendance in schools, or the diminution of children on the streets, focus shifted to child labour, and legislation was enacted to reduce the age and hours that children could work in factories and mines. This began to alter the primary perception of childhood from “current” worker to “vulnerable” child. However, in reality, poor children were still working around the legislation.

Education reformers then further manipulated the idea of childhood to that of dependency, via delinquency, using education through law as the tool in achieving their aim. “Just enough education” was mooted as the key to teaching working class children what the elite classes deemed they should know to make them useful and reinforce their place within society. Thus, ‘Under the impact of intense urbanization, children became a natural resource to be molded by the schools and fed into the industrial machine.’<sup>388</sup> The education required had to be compulsory as voluntary schooling had not been successful in achieving the reformers’ aims. Compulsory

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<sup>388</sup> Ivan D. Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1971) 66.



education was believed to be of greater importance in the latter part of the nineteenth century as there was fear of the country being left behind international counterparts. Futurity became a key theme in debates. Compulsory schooling would therefore enhance England's social and economic standing and the perception of childhood shifted to that of "future" worker. However, the introduction of compulsory schooling altered the pattern of working class family life as the State encroached upon the private sphere of the family. It took away the right of choice from parents and replaced it with an obligation on families (parents and children) to ensure that children went to school. However, as Cunningham notes:

By the early twentieth century both parents and children knew that schooling was compulsory, and that any prolonged resistance would lead to an appearance in court. Most accepted this situation without questioning. But in working-class families everyone knew instinctively that children's earnings were crucial to the family budget. If some Victorians came to believe that children should grow up happy, carefree and dependent, for the majority of children at that time that ideal was only a very partial reality.<sup>389</sup>

As explained throughout the chapter, there was more than one perception of childhood in existence at the same time during the period I have analysed. However, the Victorian elite did not recognise the childhoods that poor children were experiencing and merely wished to assert their vision of what they deemed to be a proper childhood upon *all* children – thus in theory creating a universal or national childhood.

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<sup>389</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 175.

This ideal childhood was based upon innocence and dependency and '[t]he quality of 'naturalness' was essential to the making of what was consciously intended to be an all-embracing paradigm.'<sup>390</sup> This was where the notion of widespread schooling came into being. The working classes were considered not to possess the innocent qualities required to achieve social cohesion, hence the poor children had to be schooled to learn these virtues and upper/middle class values. The Victorian ideal was therefore to create a natural and national childhood; and compulsory schooling, 'By virtue of its legal authority, and on a daily basis through teachers and school attendance offices, it was able to impose its vision upon pupils.'<sup>391</sup> The structure of the school relies on the notion of adult/child segregation and the selective drip-fed learning through the teacher/pupil relationship so that children are moulded by adults for their future roles within society. Used as a site for control of the masses, the reformers utilised the structure of the school, and the dependent status that it gave children, to achieve widespread social change. The reformers believed that shaping the working class child to a prescribed set of upper/middle class characteristics would achieve social control and ensure the future prosperity of the nation. Thus, 'Childhood as a stage of life qualitatively different from adulthood has spread from the upper classes to the masses.'<sup>392</sup> As Hendrick notes, 'This construction was intended to directly involve *all* children and was meant to be as inescapable as it was visible, for in denoting them as

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<sup>390</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 12.

<sup>391</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 46.

<sup>392</sup> Ian Lister, 'Deschooling Revisited' in Ivan Illich, *After Deschooling, What?* (London: Writers and Readers, 1976) 13.

‘pupils’, the school was a constant and omnipotent reminder of who they were.’<sup>393</sup> By removing children from the adult world in this way ‘the child is an adult in waiting and therefore not part of the social world that counts.’<sup>394</sup> Once within the site of the school, poor children were observed and surveyed. It was this mass surveillance that brought their poor condition to the attention of the public, and ultimately to Parliament. Referring to children as pupils or schoolchildren and segregating them from adults in the site of the school brought them into greater public focus than ever before. This highlighted the extent of child poverty to the nation. Many working class children were found to be malnourished. However, whilst the 1870, 1876 and 1880 Education Acts made education mandatory, there was no provision for food.

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<sup>393</sup> Harry Hendrick, ‘Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present’ in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 47 [italics as per text].

<sup>394</sup> Michael G. Wyness, *Contesting Childhood* (London: Falmer Press, 2000) 24.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Filling the Gaps: School Meals and the “Vulnerable” Child in the Early Twentieth Century**

#### **Introduction**

School meal provision provided the State with a vehicle for what developed as continued regulation of poor children and their families. I begin by drawing out the reasoning which led to the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906 and considering how perceptions of childhood are constructed and developed within the parliamentary debates of this period and utilised alongside ideas of futurity and law.

In Part 2, I will undertake an analysis of debates leading to the introduction of the Act and the wording of the Act itself. This will assist in explaining the conflict between concern for child welfare and opinion in support of providing food in schools, in contrast to the political and economic arguments against the introduction of school meals. Perceptions of childhood will be developed and again used as a framework to theoretically highlight the complex role of the State in educational provision. The perception of “vulnerable” child is further traced throughout this chapter amid conflicting arguments concerning state and parental responsibility for children. This depiction of children is strong and interlinks with both notions of “worker” child from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. Although child labour had largely been restricted, there remained a number of children in paid employment (“current” worker); moreover, the notion of “future” worker can be seen during analysis of debates following the Boer War.

The concluding part of this chapter focuses on World War I and post-war policy. Here a developed notion of “current” worker exists and is utilised as a tool alongside the perception of “vulnerable” child, the use law, and ideas of futurity during analysis of parliamentary debates leading to the Education Bill of 1917 and Education Acts 1918 and 1921.

## PART 1

### 1) Motivations

#### a) Compulsory Education and the Hungry Child

The legislative introduction of school food identified a defining moment in both the nature of education legislation and perceptions of the schoolchild. As discussed in the previous chapter, with the implementation of compulsory education there was a desire to develop the poor child's mind; its moral and social character. By placing working class children in schools, teachers could reform bad habits and mould each child to become a socially useful adult. The mooted in Parliament of feeding the schoolchild was of importance as it shifted focus from solely the mind, to both mind *and* body. In support of this argument I cite a quotation from Hendrick, who whilst exploring the history of children in English society, investigates this shift through analysis of the work of medical sociologist David Armstrong. Hendrick pinpoints that:

... towards the end of the nineteenth century, the technology of social hygiene ... invented the child as an object of medical interest. He draws attention to the *body* of the child, which became a focus of doctors' attention. This was partly through school medical inspection ... and partly as a result of a general concern for the child's physical welfare as manifested by the selective school meals programme, which was administered by the LEAs from 1906.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 13.

Schoolchildren became a distinctly separate part of an emerging welfare system due to growing concerns about their *physical* wellbeing. The *body* of the child had been of concern to reformers during the implementation of the various Factory Acts of the nineteenth century, but this concern became buried during the execution of compulsory schooling which was concerned with the education of the child's *mind*. Now renewed concern for the body of the child was unearthed and then linked to the mind; children could not learn effectively if they were hungry. An altered perception of childhood became apparent; a developed notion of the "vulnerable" child which had been utilised in the nineteenth century during the origins of compulsory schooling. The restructured perception of "vulnerable" child detailed in this chapter encompassed both body *and* mind.

As analysed in the final part of the previous chapter,<sup>396</sup> due to the classroom being a site of surveillance, by placing poor children together within the site of the school they became visible on a scale hitherto unseen. The state of the poor children was such to cause anxiety in Parliament and debate and reports regarding the health of schoolchildren ensued.

In a report to the Department of Education regarding *Overpressure of Work in Public Elementary Schools* published in 1884, psychiatrist Dr. James Crichton-Browne alleged that, 'much dullness at school was due to hunger...poverty-stricken mothers, such as charwomen and flower-sellers, would turn up on the premises during school hours, bringing morsels they had been able to buy with their meagre earnings that

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<sup>396</sup> Chapter 2, Part 3 (b).

day.<sup>397</sup> Commenting on the report the Education Department's Chief Inspector, J.G. Fitch added that schools were established "for the purpose of instruction, and not for the purpose of dispensing new milk."<sup>398</sup> Food was therefore not in abundance at home nor available as of right at school. 'In 1895, a majority report of the Special Committee on Underfed Children (established by the London School Board) concluded that feeding was necessary, but the Board rejected this finding'.<sup>399</sup> J.S. Hurt, referring to the 1870 Act and Danton's quote at the commencement of this thesis, acknowledges that 'thousands of schoolchildren found that Forster's Act gave them education but no bread.'<sup>400</sup>

In the absence of legislative intervention regarding school meals, 'The school boards themselves had no power to provide dinners';<sup>401</sup> it became a school-based matter to feed the students, improving their concentration and thus making their education a worthwhile affair. Food either had to be supplied by families who could afford it or in the cases of very poor children, by voluntary establishments. For example, 'the Destitute Children's Dinner Society began work in February 1864 and had opened 58 dining rooms by 1870. During the winter it provided meals, usually hot meat, once or twice a week.'<sup>402</sup> This was 'when the need for a hot meal was greatest.'<sup>403</sup> The

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<sup>397</sup> PP (1884), vol. 61. cited in Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 147.

<sup>398</sup> PP (1884), vol. 61. cited in J.S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 108.

<sup>399</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 105.

<sup>400</sup> J.S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 101.

<sup>401</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 151.

<sup>402</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debate* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003) 67.



Society and other penny dinner organisations such as the Charity Organisation Society tried to charge 1d towards food as 'it was felt that this preserved family responsibility.'<sup>404</sup> Preserving parental responsibility was considered an important factor, as had been the case during debate regarding compulsory schooling. It kept an element of non-intervention wherever possible. The provision of food in these cases was unregulated and it was left to the benevolence of individuals to help children in need. However, even with this voluntary aid, figures quoted following a survey in 1889 'showed that overall nearly 13 per cent of pupils were underfed, whilst charities could reach only half of them.'<sup>405</sup> In 1896 it was 'claimed that as many as 80,000 children attended London schools every morning without breakfast-hundreds of thousands of children in the country as a whole lacked sufficient food to enable them to profit from their education.'<sup>406</sup> As noted, most available data is for cities as 'School feeding agencies were mainly urban institutions'.<sup>407</sup> Thus the rural child, 'found that the school normally offered him no more than cold water.'<sup>408</sup>

The charities aiding malnourished children caught the attention of Parliament where it was recognised that, 'A large number of children ... who attended the elementary

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<sup>403</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 154.

<sup>404</sup> John Burnett, 'The rise and decline of school meals in Britain, 1860-1990' in John Burnett & Derek J. Oddy (eds), *The Origins and Development of Food Policies in Europe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994) 59.

<sup>405</sup> Bosanquet (1914) cited in Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 154.

<sup>406</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> T.U.C. Report, 1896, 48 in Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965) 134.

<sup>407</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 105.

<sup>408</sup> *ibid.*

schools were provided with food by voluntary charitable organisations, but that was not sufficient.<sup>409</sup> In a similar manner as had occurred with the voluntary education of poor children, the efforts of the voluntary agencies were 'spasmodic and proved totally inadequate to cope with the evil.'<sup>410</sup> The charitable efforts alone could not meet the demand of the many malnourished children in schools and 'The real trouble with the voluntary societies was that their funds were entirely uncertain. It was impossible to raise them steadily enough to plan ahead.'<sup>411</sup> Thus there were two problems; the sheer number of necessitous children and the sporadic goodwill for the raising of funds. In her analysis of the history of school feeding, Louise Stevens Bryant notes that, 'people seemed willing enough to give at Christmas, or when the weather was very bad, but they did not seem able to grasp the fact that the children's hunger was not an affair of the weather, or even of the time of year.'<sup>412</sup> Organisations such as the London School Dinner Association were praised by Sir John Gorst for having 'done an enormous amount of good work,'<sup>413</sup> but despite this, 'there were still a considerable number of children in the schools so hungry that they were unable to do the work of the schools.'<sup>414</sup> Gorst noted that, '12 per cent of the total number of children attending the schools of the London School Board were suffering from insufficient nutrition.'<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 52 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>410</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, ltd., 1914) 2.

<sup>411</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1913) 38.

<sup>412</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>413</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 March 1904, vol 132, cols 905-906 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>414</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 March 1904, vol 132, col 906 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>415</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 March 1904, vol 132, col 905 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

As argued in the previous chapter,<sup>416</sup> statistics gathered during surveillance within the site of the school evidenced the numbers of poor children. These statistics were used as support by MPs in all parties to convince sceptics of the need for providing food for malnourished children in schools. For example, Liberal MP Dr. Macnamara reported for the Government on the conditions he had found children in at one poor school of 300 boys:

About thirty of them did not go home at all during the dinner hour because there was nothing to go home to; and about sixty brought to school a paper parcel containing a rough crust of bread and perhaps a raw onion, or some bread and margarine, or similar food. These two figures accounted for nearly one-third of the boys, and the case was typical of all slum areas in our big cities at the present time.<sup>417</sup>

Dr. Macnamara determined the problems as a question of feeding, 'the want of food, then the irregularity of the food, and, thirdly, its unsuitability' with breakfast for the children consisting of 'bread and margarine, and their dinner was only what could be obtained at a fried fish shop for a penny.'<sup>418</sup> He stated quite simply – 'No child in this country ought to be hungry.'<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Chapter 2, Part 3 (b).

<sup>417</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 871 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

<sup>418</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 872 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

<sup>419</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 872 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

There was also an issue that the methods used to determine which children needed free or subsidised meals varied enormously between regions and also individual schools. In some areas children were assessed by the voluntary organisations providing the food, whilst in others the child's teacher would decide on eligibility.<sup>420</sup> With no clear legislative guidelines on food provision it seemed to be luck rather than anything more scientific that decided the fate of the hungry children. From the execution of the Elementary Education Act 1880 the State arguably washed its hands of responsibility for the dietary needs of children for a further 26 years.

#### b) Physical Deterioration

Alongside the masses of malnourished children now on display and under surveillance in the schoolrooms, other reasoning behind the 1906 legislation followed an inquiry dated 1904 'concerning the deterioration of certain classes of the population as shown by the large percentage of rejections for physical causes of recruits for the Army.'<sup>421</sup> This was highlighted due to criticism over the fitness levels of fighters before and during the Boer War when it was reported that, 'up to 40 per cent of those who were willing to join the army were unfit to serve.'<sup>422</sup> The Physical Deterioration Committee found that, 'the health of large sections of the urban population was being

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<sup>420</sup> For more information see Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 150-151.

<sup>421</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 March 1904, vol 131, col 725 (Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Liberal Unionist) referring to the report by the Interdepartmental Committee Inquiry into Physical Deterioration.

<sup>422</sup> Bernard Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State: Society, State and Social Welfare in England and Wales, 1800-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 156.

undermined by poverty, ignorance and neglect.<sup>423</sup> Here again, statistics were being used as a tool to advance concern in Parliament regarding the health of the lower classes and the effect of this on Britain's efficiency as a nation. In support of this argument, Bernard Harris attributes the anxiety which lead to the inquiry and previous introduction of compulsory schooling legislation as:

... growing fears about the threat to Britain's 'national efficiency'. These fears developed steadily throughout the second half of the nineteenth century (and were undoubtedly a major factor in the decision to pass the Elementary Education Act of 1870), but they gathered fresh impetus following the outbreak of the Boer War ... it encouraged policy-makers to look more closely at the social and economic policies which were being implemented by Britain's international competitors, and to identify those policies which might enhance the country's economic and military competitiveness.<sup>424</sup>

As previously discussed in Chapter 2,<sup>425</sup> there was clearly concern in the late nineteenth century that Britain was in danger of losing its status as a strong military force and powerful nation. Debate prior to the introduction of the Elementary Education Act 1870 insisted that there was an issue with Britain not competing successfully when measured against foreign counterparts as other nations became more industrial due in part to having a system of elementary education. This

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<sup>423</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2 (a).

argument led to a national system of education but, as analysed above, did not address the issue of malnourished children.

However, following the Boer War the fears gathered momentum as 'it raised essential doubts as to the longevity of Great Britain as an Empire.'<sup>426</sup> This was coupled with 'alarming reports of a declining birth rate'.<sup>427</sup> Statistics showed that families were becoming smaller. Lawson and Silver support this view by explaining that, 'By the turn of the century average family size had begun to drop substantially (from an average of 6.1 children in the 1860s it had fallen to 4.1 in the 1890s and to 2.6 in the 1910s).'<sup>428</sup> This meant that firstly, there were fewer children to become adults and secondly, of those who did reach adulthood, many were deemed to be in poor physical health with dubious moral characters and therefore not able to be effective members of society. It follows that, 'If fewer children were being born, then it was necessary for the state to be more concerned about their physical, mental and moral quality.'<sup>429</sup> In other words, it was in the State's best interest to ensure that the children it was educating to become "future" workers (and potential future soldiers) were in a sufficient physical and mental condition 'to ensure Britain's global pre-eminence.'<sup>430</sup> Dwork notes that, 'By the end of the Boer War in 1902 England's relations with Germany were rapidly deteriorating, and while the Empire could overcome a

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<sup>426</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 167.

<sup>427</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>428</sup> John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973) 366.

<sup>429</sup> R. Dingwall, J.M. Eekelaar and T. Murray, 'Childhood as a Social Problem: A Survey of the History of Legal Regulation' (1984) Vol II, (2), *Journal of Law & Society* 207, 222.

<sup>430</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 167.

humiliation in South Africa, it could not survive a defeat in Europe.’<sup>431</sup> Thus at the turn of the century, ‘A healthy working-class child was precious in a way he had not been before.’<sup>432</sup> This valuable resource would sequentially lead to an alteration of the concept of “vulnerable” child, introduced in the previous chapter and developed here, as protective and preventative legislation relating to children was introduced.

In 1904 the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration:

... unanimously recommended ... to make provision, under such regulations and conditions as they [local education authorities] may decide, for ensuring that all the children at any public elementary school in their area shall receive proper nourishment before being subjected to mental or physical instruction, and for recovering the cost, where expedient, from the parents or guardians...<sup>433</sup>

The findings of the 1904 Physical Deterioration Committee were followed by those of the Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children Committee in 1905 whose purpose it was to inquire into medical inspection and:

... the relief given by various voluntary agencies for the provision of meals for children at public elementary schools,

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<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> Bentley B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain: The Origins of the Welfare State* (London: Michael Joseph, 1966) 120.

<sup>433</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 531 (John Bamford Slack, Liberal) [bracketed wording mine].

and to report whether relief of this character could be better organized, without any charge upon public funds, both generally and with special regard to children who, though not defective, are from malnutrition below the normal standard.<sup>434</sup>

The Committee's aim was 'to see how far the matter could be met by administration without resort to legislation.'<sup>435</sup> This is another example of maintaining a non-interventionist approach if possible. The Committee recommended that there could be better organisation of existing agencies providing food, as infrequency was a problem. They reported that:

Any organization for feeding school children should be of a permanent character ... Provision should be made for enabling meals to be given, where necessary, throughout the year ... Where meals are provided it is desirable that they should be obtainable at least as often as every school day ... The object of the agency should be to feed the most destitute children regularly, rather than a larger number irregularly.<sup>436</sup>

The Committee were clear however that the voluntary organisations should continue to feed the children. The problem was, as mentioned above, charity alone was not

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<sup>434</sup> Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools 'Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children' (1905) 2 (2343) British Medical Journal 1409, 1409.

<sup>435</sup> Hansard HL Deb 20 July 1905, vol 149, col 1336 (The Marquess of Londonderry, President of the Board of Education, Conservative).

<sup>436</sup> Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools 'Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children' (1905) 2 (2343) British Medical Journal 1409, 1409.



able to reach all the malnourished children in need of school meals. Therefore, measures were contemplated in Parliament to safeguard the welfare of children – the next generation to lead the nation. In a similar approach to the debate surrounding the need for compulsory education in the latter part of the nineteenth century, this analysis illustrates that children were perceived as “future” workers (and potential future soldiers) at this time and they should be protected to preserve the supremacy of the nation. This was alongside the utilisation of the perception of the “vulnerable” child in need of safeguarding for both the present and the future.

Gorst was anxious that, ‘This chronic malnutrition of great masses of children, is by far the most serious and most urgent matter in connection with public health with which the community at the present moment has to deal with.’<sup>437</sup> He did not wish for all children to receive free school meals as, ‘It would certainly undermine parental responsibility, and would take the children still more than now out of the hands of their parents, and make them still more than now children of the State.’<sup>438</sup> Here Gorst highlights the fear that it was not the duty of the State to act in lieu of a child’s parents. As had occurred with debate surrounding compulsory schooling, with families being regulated by the State through their loss of parental responsibility regarding whether their children should be educated or not, additional regulation regarding food would increase the State’s role in the lives of families and further erode parental responsibility. However, Gorst believed that hungry children should be fed and those parents who could pay should, and the children of those who could not

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<sup>437</sup> Sir John E. Gorst, *The Children of the Nation: How Their Health and Vigour Should Be Promoted By the State* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906) 67-68.

<sup>438</sup> *ibid* 75.

pay should be given free food provided by the State.<sup>439</sup> To Gorst, ‘the duty of bringing up children rests in the first instance with their parents; but it does not stop there; the State has duties also.’<sup>440</sup> This was Gorst’s solution – for the State and parents to *share* the responsibility for children. In his book ‘Children of the Nation’ Gorst explained that:

... adequate measures should be at once taken to secure (1) that school children shall be properly fed by those parents who have the means of feeding them; (2) that the public authority should perform its duty in making provision for the feeding of those children whose parents do not or cannot perform their legal obligation.<sup>441</sup>

This quotation highlights a connection between Gorst’s sharing of responsibility for children and Donzelot’s idea of tutelage. Donzelot explained that if parents did not adhere to the required standard of child care they would relinquish their rights and autonomy. Gorst also used this notion of loss of parental responsibility by stating in the above quotation “those children whose parents do not or cannot perform their legal obligation” would be looked after by the State.

To advance his argument, Gorst considered ‘the causes of the deterioration of the health of the children in the schools ... they were want of fresh air, want of proper

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<sup>439</sup> Gorst was quite an independent thinking MP. He was an advocate for the poorer class, particularly with regard to education and the welfare of children. It is worth noting here that Gorst stood as an Independent Free Trader in 1906 and stood as a Liberal in 1910.

<sup>440</sup> Sir John E. Gorst, *The Children of the Nation: How Their Health and Vigour Should Be Promoted By the State* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906) 1.

<sup>441</sup> *ibid* 79.

food, want of proper treatment, and want of medical inspection.’<sup>442</sup> His concern for want of fresh air was mirrored by ‘widespread agreement that ... city children ... still needed to be brought in touch with the countryside, with nature.’<sup>443</sup> Cunningham notes that, ‘enthusiasts tried to bring something of the countryside into the classroom or to turn small areas of urban waste into gardens’,<sup>444</sup> so that children should be brought up as close to nature as possible. This concern in the early twentieth century was arguably due to the now widespread Victorian idea of childhood being a time of innocence and dependence when the child could be easily moulded. As Gorst stated above, ‘School-time is the period at which the people’s health can be most easily and most effectively dealt with by public authority.’<sup>445</sup> Therefore if children were to grow up to be healthy adults in body and mind, they needed food and fresh air while they were young. This is also another example of the body/mind link that was being made at this time and the utilisation of perceptions of childhood to advance social change.

Gorst was also concerned that government departments were not acting together, nor swiftly enough, to alleviate the issue of malnourished children. He noted that, ‘this was a matter not for the Board of Education only, but for the whole Government.’<sup>446</sup> However, the ‘Board of Education appeared to be the only Department which had moved on the matter,’<sup>447</sup> and even they, according to Gorst, had taken a long time deciding on any further inquiries required following the findings of the Physical

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<sup>442</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 March 1904, vol 132, col 906 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>443</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 185.

<sup>444</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> Sir John E. Gorst, *The Children of the Nation: How Their Health and Vigour Should Be Promoted By the State* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906) 50.

<sup>446</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 873 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>447</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 873 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

Deterioration Committee. He stated that the ‘time for inquiry was past; the time for action had come.’<sup>448</sup> This quotation highlights the divisions within Parliament. Not only involving party and individual opinion on how best to deal with the situation, but also between distinct government departments over where the responsibility for feeding malnourished children fell. Yet, at times, the Government was also united. As already highlighted from the parliamentary debates and secondary literature, ‘The establishment of a school meals service thus brought together an unlikely alliance of Labour politicians, medical experts, educationalists, Liberal reformers, and Tory democrats, each working to a somewhat different agenda.’<sup>449</sup> This division of responsibility versus unity can be traced throughout this and subsequent chapters and is highlighted through multi-department reports and debates. Most MPs felt that necessitous school children should be fed, ‘The question was who should pay for the feeding of these children, and upon whom should the burden fall?’<sup>450</sup> Quite simply, ‘The one outstanding point of difference seemed to be whether this matter should be dealt with by private charity or become a public obligation.’<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 873 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>449</sup> G.R Searle, *A New England: Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 370.

<sup>450</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1254 (Colonel Lockwood, Conservative).

<sup>451</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 548 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

## PART 2

### 2) Techniques of Argumentation

#### a) Arguments AGAINST school meals

At the heart of the argument against school meals legislation was the reluctance of the State to provide food for children for economic reasons and due to concern that 'the supply of the necessary food at school by the State impinged upon the great principle of parental responsibility.'<sup>452</sup> The case for individual responsibility was particularly emphasised by the Conservatives who appeared not so much against the principle of school meals themselves, but acknowledged concerns that interference in parental responsibility may lead to parents relying on their children being fed by charity or the State. These arguments correlate to those raised during analysis of the origins of compulsory education in Chapter 2. It was not considered the Government's place to feed children as doing so undermined the family unit. By analysing the debates, the image of the child as "vulnerable" can be seen alongside the notion that children were the responsibility of their parents.

There was fear that, 'To take away from the parents the duty of supplying meals for their children, and to break up family life by inducing the children to have their meals regularly at school, might have disastrous results socially.'<sup>453</sup> There would no longer be a requirement for people to eat together as a family if children had already had their meal at school. Conservative MP Sir George Bartley argued that providing

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<sup>452</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 782 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>453</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, col 876 (Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Liberal Unionist).

school meals 'would be undermining the very basis of the structure of society and sewing the seed for the absolute destruction of the whole social fabric. The parents were without doubt responsible for the feeding of their children.'<sup>454</sup> The general consensus was that 'parents should, if possible, pay for the feeding of their children.'<sup>455</sup> However even though most parents would be obliged to contribute to their children's school meals the idea of providing food was still met with resistance. Issues regarding free meals for poorer children were also raised by Conservative MP Sir Frederick Banbury as to why parents who worked hard to provide for their own children should pay to feed the children of others who did not. He argued that:

Surely it was not true philanthropy to say to a young man ...  
that he might have ten or twelve children and take no trouble to  
work for them, and then that somebody else who was married  
himself, and had done his best to provide his own children,  
should be called upon to contribute towards the maintenance of  
the children of other people.<sup>456</sup>

If money acquired through taxation is used to fund any aspect of education then people who work but have no children, or work to support their own children, will be paying towards the education of *all* children, including those from non-working families. MPs were aware 'they did not want to tax the well-doing poor for the sins of others.'<sup>457</sup> By using the word "sins" here, the lack of morality of the poor is again utilised to advance an argument. The concern was also that if this stance had been

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<sup>454</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 543 (Sir George Bartley, Conservative).

<sup>455</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1254 (Colonel Lockwood, Conservative).

<sup>456</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 546 (Sir Frederick Banbury, Conservative).

<sup>457</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1258 (Alexander Findlay, Liberal).

adopted it would not help the children, nor allow for finding the reason behind the malnutrition, such as parental unemployment or illness perhaps rather than laziness or drunkenness. The case against state feeding continued with anxiety over where free aid would eventually cease because 'good clothing was quite as necessary for the physical development of children as good food. Was it going to be held that they were not only to educate and feed but also to clothe the children?'<sup>458</sup> This Conservative resistance was coupled by the apprehension of Liberal Unionist Sir William Anson, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, that it was a 'dangerous doctrine that free meals were a necessary concomitant of education.'<sup>459</sup>

There was also anxiety that the real problem lay not in children being underfed but poorly fed. Liability for the malnourished child was placed with the families of the children as 'the bulk of the people did not know what was suitable food for their children',<sup>460</sup> and that eating 'jam, ready-baked bread, and tinned foods; the new convenience foods of an urban society',<sup>461</sup> meant that children were suffering as much from 'bad feeding' as 'underfeeding' as a 'result of parental ignorance and indifference rather than of poverty.'<sup>462</sup> Here again the urban working classes were under scrutiny and chastised for not adhering to the prevailing middle/upper class ideal. An Inter-Departmental report from 1906 also 'concluded that the real solution

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<sup>458</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 547 (Sir Frederick Banbury, Conservative).

<sup>459</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 560 (Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Liberal Unionist).

<sup>460</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 785 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>461</sup> 'Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration' P.P. 1904, XXXII p40, Qs 942-5 cited in J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 114.

<sup>462</sup> *ibid.*

lay in the education of working-class mothers.<sup>463</sup> This condemnation of working class mothers mirrors the tension between the public and private spheres previously analysed in Chapter 2, with the responsibilities associated with the private (home) becoming a concern of the public (state). The report highlighted the criticism not only of children not being fed at all, but those who were being fed were eating food which had little nutritional value consisting of 'cheap and poor-quality fries from the fish and chip shops, bread and margarine, and rotten fruit.'<sup>464</sup> However, given the option, parents 'would prefer to pay for a good meal provided at school rather than provide money for the child to spend at the fried fish shop.'<sup>465</sup> Here the tension between concern for the "vulnerable" child and apprehension over parental responsibility is clear and highlights the difficulty Parliament found in the merging of public concern and the private sphere of the home. Although the malnourishment of children was acknowledged, anxiety that individuals should not learn to rely on the State was paramount due to the potential escalation in required assistance. There was also the issue that school meals would not treat the real causes of the social problem.

#### b) Arguments FOR school meals

Conflicting debate focused on the cruelty inflicted on children being made to attend compulsory education whilst hungry; the counter-production of this at government

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<sup>463</sup> 'Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on medical inspection and feeding of children attending public elementary schools' Cd. 2779, 2784, 1906 cited in John Welshman, 'School Meals and Milk in England and Wales 1906-45' (1997) 41 *Medical History* 6, 7.

<sup>464</sup> Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904), evidence of A. Eichholz at Q435 cited in Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 154-155.

<sup>465</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 785 (Claude Hay, Conservative).



expense; and wider issues connected with the fear that uneducated, malnourished children would not be able to create a strong useful workforce in the future. These arguments also highlight the use of the perception of “vulnerable” child but additionally requiring some form of state protection so as to become competent “future” workers.

The contention surrounding individual responsibility over community welfare was rebutted with a claim that the hungry children ‘had a right to be fed at public expense and immediately, quite irrespective of the character of their parents, as soon as their destitute condition was known.’<sup>466</sup> Gorst stated, ‘there was an enormous waste of the public provision for education in consequence of this want of feeding of the children; and that it was extremely cruel to attempt to force education on children who were insufficiently fed.’<sup>467</sup> By return, the notion that individuals were solely responsible for their own families was also counteracted as a short-sighted viewpoint by the idea that the wider picture should be considered – children as a whole were the next generation of workers who would provide for society. Concern for the “vulnerable” hungry child is interwoven within debates depicting the child as “future” worker. It was argued by Conservative MP Claude Hay that the State ‘could not leave the child unfed or underfed whilst they were discussing parental responsibility, for the child would neither grow up healthy nor do justice to the education they forced upon it at great public expense.’<sup>468</sup> Hay stated:

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<sup>466</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 557 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>467</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 52 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>468</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 784 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

Immediate steps should be taken to feed the children, because ... if the children were left as they were now, regarding it as a cold-blooded commercial speculation, the money spent upon their education would be wasted, the result being great dissatisfaction on the part of the ratepayers, while the children would grow to incompetent citizens.<sup>469</sup>

Here the notion of futurity is utilised within the argument for the feeding of children in schools. Without food being supplied, children would not be able to profit from the education provided for them at public expense and would then grow up to become inefficient adult citizens. Both points highlight economic anxiety – wasted money on education at present, and further strain on the economy in the future through an incompetent adult populace. This point was also mooted by Gorst who stated that a child was a valuable “national asset” ... its welfare and healthy development is of far more importance to the State than the moral reformation of a worthless parent.<sup>470</sup> Gorst noted that, ‘every child should be so brought up as to grow into a healthy man or woman fit to be a strength, and not a burden, to the nation.’<sup>471</sup> Here concern is not merely for producing future workers, but also adults who may potentially encumber the country. Hay and Gorst’s comments link to Donzelot’s notion of social economy: The State needed to produce the most effective citizens with the least amount of economic investment possible.

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<sup>469</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 541 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>470</sup> Sir John E. Gorst, *The Children of the Nation: How Their Health and Vigour Should Be Promoted By the State* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906) 72.

<sup>471</sup> *ibid* 7.

In support of this argument Labour MP William Crooks also explained, ‘if they did not do this for the children when they were young they would have to pay for it when they were older and became useless members of society.’<sup>472</sup> Labour MP William Wilson went further to state that the present system of education without food was, ‘manufacturing undesirables’.<sup>473</sup> Wilson ‘was convinced that the presence of a large number of inmates of lunatic asylums and epileptic homes could be traced to the fact that in their early days they were underfed. No one would deny, too, that underfeeding had a tendency to create disease. He was sure that their being underfed was a direct incentive to crime on the part of children.’<sup>474</sup> Here we see the delinquent child again (threat), previously utilised as an argument during debate regarding compulsory schooling.<sup>475</sup>

Crooks noted that every child deserved the opportunity to fulfil their position in life, in a society where some professions were “almost” as valuable as others:

Every child should have a square opportunity of gaining the position he was fitted to fill. A good milliner or dressmaker was almost as valuable to the nation as even a learned professor of Oxford or Cambridge. They were useful to the whole community, and certainly they helped to create the wealth of the nation.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 84 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>473</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, col 1391 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

<sup>474</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, col 1392 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

<sup>475</sup> Chapter 2, Part 1 (a).

<sup>476</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 82 (William Crooks, Labour).

Wilson also stated, 'No one would deny, that if a child went to school with a full stomach it was in a better condition to receive instruction, and would be more fitted to take its place in life.'<sup>477</sup> In order to achieve their place in life the children would have to be nourished so 'when the children were compelled to go to school they should be fed to enable them to get some benefit from their education.'<sup>478</sup> Thus, 'the feeding at school of the necessitous child was a corollary of compulsory education.'<sup>479</sup> Dr. Macnamara explained that spending a small amount of extra money on food would in the long-term reap superior results than the current situation of watching money being wasted on trying to educate hungry children who were unfit to benefit from it. He did not see this as 'a scheme for undermining parental responsibility at all; it was a scheme for developing parental responsibility, and for securing to the children who would ultimately be the stewards of this Empire ... one square meal a day.'<sup>480</sup> Furthermore, providing school meals was seen by Liberal MP John Bamford Slack as an incentive for school attendance because, 'where meals were provided in connection with the school, children attended much more regularly.'<sup>481</sup>

There are three points to highlight here. Firstly, the idea that providing children with school meals would develop parental responsibility. Macnamara is saying that by providing malnourished children with school meals it would in turn teach parents normalisation – the correct standard of health and care required of them, which they would then be able to fulfil of their own accord. This is a way of transmitting norms via the public sphere of the school, into the private sphere of the family home.

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<sup>477</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, cols 1391-1392 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

<sup>478</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 84 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>479</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 784 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>480</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1905, vol 143, cols 872-873 (Dr. Macnamara, Liberal).

<sup>481</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 538 (John Bamford Slack, Liberal).

Secondly, the notion of futurity, that children should be fed to safeguard the Empire. Thirdly, the idea of enticement highlighted in my analysis of Donzelot's work in Chapter 1.<sup>482</sup> As Bamford Slack notes above, by providing meals at school, children would be encouraged to attend regularly, and parents would be more likely to send their children to school. School meals would serve as an enticement for families to educate their children at school. This would aid both bodies and minds. Thus, the result was twofold, well fed healthy children (body), who would then be able to profit from their education (mind).

Accordingly, the argument for feeding children at school was that, 'the State which confined children for a certain number of hours daily was responsible to see that they were fed.'<sup>483</sup> The site of the school here is key, by confining children within the site the State was under an obligation to ensure they were fed whilst there. This would make the education system an effective tool for the manufacture of a valuable future workforce because 'a healthy educated man or woman was the most valuable asset the State could possess.'<sup>484</sup> In other words, 'the children must be saved by the State for the State'.<sup>485</sup> The argument for intervention was strong – if the State insisted on stopping children working and enforcing compulsory education in order to secure an educated future workforce, then the obligation to feed them must also fall on the State so as to ensure these children were not left in a worse condition than had they been allowed to continue in employment. If children could not attain the desired level of

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<sup>482</sup> Chapter 1, (1) (b) (i).

<sup>483</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1270 (Thomas Shaw, Labour).

<sup>484</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 April 1904, vol 133, col 789 (Claude Hay, Conservative).

<sup>485</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1905, vol 143, col 1261 (Sir Walter Foster, Liberal).

educational proficiency due to being too hungry to concentrate in class this would have been false economy in the long term.

Childhood here is viewed as a journey to adulthood, 'if they starved people in their childhood the next effect was they grew up with weakened will and loss of self-respect.'<sup>486</sup> As future adults they would therefore be ineffective and a burden rather than an asset to the country. This adheres to the notion that it is necessary to take care when moulding children as what happens to them in childhood sets the tone for adulthood. This argument is based on futurity, as Archard echoes, 'A state needs its future citizens to be physically healthy if they are to enter the workplace as capable, productive individuals.'<sup>487</sup> Not feeding hungry children in schools would therefore have an impact in the long-term but there was also the economic issue that money was being wasted in the present as, 'all the vast machinery of a school system is unavailable for want of a little essential oil, food.'<sup>488</sup> If children were not profiting from the education provided for them at great expense because they were hungry, this money was being wasted.

Exploring the tensions in parliamentary debates regarding arguments for and against school meals provides a useful framework for consideration of the division between the public and private spheres. The opposition to state provision of school food parallels wider concern of the conflict between the public interest of education (a state matter) and the domestic interest of providing food for children (a family matter). The implementation of the 1906 Act saw the merging of public and private, with the

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<sup>486</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 555 (Keir Hardie, Labour).

<sup>487</sup> David William Archard, *Children, Family and the State* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) 122.

<sup>488</sup> S.D Fuller, 'Penny Dinners' (1885) 48 *The Contemporary Review*, British Periodicals 424, 427.

State infringing on the domestic duties within the home (or indeed, if viewed from an economic position, the home encroached upon the funds of the State). This theme has caused tension throughout my research and does not just apply to debate of the 1906 Act. It was analysed during Chapter 2, and in later chapters I consider the continued opposition of allowing physical space within the school for dining, an example of a private concern inhabiting a public space;<sup>489</sup> the introduction of nutritional standards in school meals, public involvement in a private issue;<sup>490</sup> and, more recently, state guidance on the content of children's school lunchboxes,<sup>491</sup> again an example of public involvement in the private sphere.<sup>492</sup>

### c) The Solution

To bridge the divide between public and private it was suggested by Crooks in 1905 that, 'the education authorities should be allowed to co-operate with the existing charitable agencies to fill the gap',<sup>493</sup> so that necessitous children would be able to benefit from their schooling. This argument is similar to that which was mooted when compulsory schooling legislation was being debated – that charity should continue but with state assistance. As previously mentioned, the charities alone could not cope with the demands of the vast numbers of children now in schools so alternative solutions needed to be addressed with minimum state interference and the preservation of parental responsibility.

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<sup>489</sup> Chapter 4, Part 2 (3) (a).

<sup>490</sup> Chapter 4, Part 3 (1) (a).

<sup>491</sup> Including wider child and family feeding initiatives such as Change 4 Life.

<sup>492</sup> Chapter 5, Part 3 (3) (a).

<sup>493</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 June 1905, vol 147, col 532 (William Crooks, Labour).

The issue of the different causes of malnourished children was considered so as to find a solution that satisfied all parties. The neglectful parent mentioned above during analysis of arguments against school meals was also highlighted by School Medical Officers in a report published in 1906, who noted that malnourished children were, “not the children of poor people, but the children of people who live on beer chiefly as their diet,”<sup>494</sup> and that “when children come to school without breakfast it is laziness rather than cruelty or lack of food, as a rule.”<sup>495</sup> Unsatisfactory parenting had been acknowledged by Conservative MP Sir W. Hart Dyke who proposed a different scheme for those parents who were poor and those who were neglectful. There were arguably many reasons why children were undernourished – because they came from poor families, or their parents were neglectful, or their parents were uneducated in diet, or a combination of factors. His apprehension was that, ‘where the public purse was concerned, care should be taken to differentiate as between parent and parent. There should be different treatment for the frugal parent, and the man who, earning good wages, spent three-fourths of it in drink.’<sup>496</sup> This argument was contested by Crooks who claimed that, ‘by refusing to feed the children, we were punishing the children, and not the bad fathers and mothers.’<sup>497</sup> This line of reasoning meant that children themselves were to be considered a priority when debating the new legislation.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> ‘Report on Medical Inspection of Children’ P.P. 1906, XLVII, Qs 965, 5107, 5128 cited in J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 113.

<sup>495</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 85 (Sir William Hart Dyke, Conservative).

<sup>497</sup> Hansard HC Deb 28 March 1904, vol 132, col 908 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>498</sup> The theme of malnourished children due to neglectful parenting continues throughout my research. The notion of ‘bad feeding’ is as prevalent a topic today as in the early twentieth century and I will return to this debate for further analysis in later chapters.



Consideration was given to providing underfed children with special education and feeding, quite separate to that received by the other children, so as to compensate for the schooling they had not benefited from due to their malnourishment.<sup>499</sup> This was contested by Crooks as it 'would be to put a badge upon them; and children, be they ever so poor, had some sort of natural pride.'<sup>500</sup> He suggested that all children could be fed two meals a day 'at very little expense.'<sup>501</sup> This was challenged by Gorst as unworkable and it was reiterated that only children whose parents were unable to pay should be provided with free food and legislation needed to be passed to ensure that Local Education Authorities could spend money on school meals.<sup>502</sup> Repeating previous debate on the reasoning behind the need for legislation to nurture healthy children it was affirmed by Gorst that:

... a short and simple Act giving this power to the local authorities would be beneficial to the Empire. How could they carry on this great Empire, if they allowed causes of this kind which affected the physical condition of the people to continue to operate, and thus prevent their having soldiers and sailors fit to serve for the protection of the Empire?<sup>503</sup>

This gives further indication of the wider issues which led to the passing of the 1906 Act - namely anxiety over national efficiency. As had occurred during the

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<sup>499</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 18 April 1905, vol 145, col 565 (Sir William Anson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Liberal Unionist).

<sup>500</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 83 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>501</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1904, vol 140, col 83 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>502</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 14 February 1905, vol 141, cols 144-145 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

<sup>503</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 February 1905, vol 141, col 145 (Sir John Gorst, Conservative).

introduction of compulsorily schooling, 'politicians and medical officers of health looked to foreign (and particularly French) examples for help in designing English public welfare schemes.'<sup>504</sup> International school meal arrangements 'provided an inspiration ... [and] also an impetus for action.'<sup>505</sup> There was fear that France 'could become an increasingly formidable competitor.'<sup>506</sup> Children, at this stage viewed as vulnerable and in need of protection from the adult world of work and neglectful parents, were nonetheless perceived in light of being the labour force of the future. This again highlights how the perception of the "vulnerable" child is interwoven with the notion of the child depicted as "future" worker for the good of society and the two concepts were used together as tools in the regulation of children and families.

#### d) The Education (Provision of Meals) Bill 1906

The Education (Provision of Meals) Bill was first introduced by Labour MP William Wilson on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1906; "'To amend the Education Acts, 1902 and 1903"'<sup>507</sup> After all of the debates that had preceded it, 'the Bill introduced a new principle in social legislation-it implied acceptance by the community of responsibility for poverty.'<sup>508</sup> Unlike with the introduction of compulsory schooling, the public did not need the same amount of persuasion. The British Medical Journal had noted that "the question of underfed school children have stirred up the public, and drawn from

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<sup>504</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 174.

<sup>505</sup> *ibid* [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>506</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>507</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 February 1906, vol 152, col 525 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

<sup>508</sup> Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965) 282.

individuals interested and indignant a shower of letters and articles.”<sup>509</sup> Labour MP John Taylor agreed that, ‘every child born into the nation imposed on the nation a responsibility, and that that responsibility should be duly regarded.’<sup>510</sup> Wilson reiterated that children were seen as ‘future citizens’.<sup>511</sup>

... that the children of a nation were its best assets. That being so, let those assets be made as valuable as possible. Charity was not a reliable source from which to provide meals for children, and therefore he asked the Government to accept the Bill to provide underfed school children with at least one good meal a day. If this was done he felt sure the nation would appreciate it.<sup>512</sup>

Here the notion of futurity is being utilised in support of the Bill by use of the words “future citizens” and “best/valuable assets”. When the Bill reached the House of Lords it was noted by Lord Grimthorpe that:

The objections that are brought against this measure can be summed up under three heads: (1) that it diminishes the responsibility of parents; (2) that it will dry up the springs of charity; and (3) that it will throw an extra burden on the rates. I

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<sup>509</sup> ‘The Problem of Feeding School Children’, *BMJ*, 1 October 1904, p.850 cited in Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 173.

<sup>510</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, cols 1427-1428 (John Taylor, Labour).

<sup>511</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, col 1392 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

<sup>512</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1906, vol 152, col 1392 (William Tyson Wilson, Labour).

think that in this matter we have to consider not the parents but the children. The children are the paramount consideration.<sup>513</sup>

The Earl of Meath reiterated, 'We feel that it is a question of quite first-class national importance that the children of the country should be properly fed, and we feel that the country cannot maintain its position unless we get in the future generations of strong and stalwart men and women.'<sup>514</sup> The Earl of Crewe then expanded:

You have to look at the question from the point of view of the very poor parents. Some parents if they could do what they liked would not send their children to school at all, but would keep them at home to earn a few pence. That, at present, you forbid the parent to do. We have lately heard a great deal about the rights of parents, but at this stage Parliament interferes and says that the child would be better off at school, although the parent thinks the child would be better occupied earning a few pence instead of learning a number of things which the parent believes will be perfectly useless. You interfere with parental discretion to that extent, and it seems to me reasonable that you should not be absolutely rigorous about these very poor parents returning every fraction of the cost of the meal.<sup>515</sup>

Analysis of the debate in the House of Lords shows that children were the paramount consideration when examining the Bill because they were the nation's future citizens.

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<sup>513</sup> Hansard HL Deb 20 November 1906, vol 167, cols 1636-1637 (Lord Grimthorpe, Conservative).

<sup>514</sup> Hansard HL Deb 20 November 1906, vol 167, col 1639 (The Earl of Meath, Conservative).

<sup>515</sup> Hansard HL Deb 20 November 1906, vol 167, col 1654 (The Earl of Crewe, Liberal).

The Earl of Crewe also considered the public sphere invading the private sphere; that parents were now obliged to send their children to school and the State should therefore act responsibly in regard to the duty to feed hungry children. There is clear interlinking of perceptions of childhood (“vulnerable” child and “future” worker/citizen), ideas of futurity and the use of law as tools being brought together in support of the Bill.

e) The 1906 Act

The Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906 received Royal Assent on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1906. Enacted under a Liberal Government led by Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Act allowed Local Education Authorities in England and Wales – which had been established under the Education Act 1902 when school boards were abolished – to provide meals for children attending public elementary schools in their area.<sup>516</sup> However this was not compulsory and only set out a provision that food *could* rather than *should* be offered to children at the expense of the child’s parent or free in limited cases paid for out of public funds by money raised from rates. Adhering to the argument that hunger stopped children from performing well at school, the statute provided that children ‘unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for them,’<sup>517</sup> but who could not afford to pay, may have access to free school food subject to a state set monetary maximum.

The method for deciding on which children were deemed to be necessitous was either by means test or medical test. There was concern for children whose parents *could*

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<sup>516</sup> Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906, s 1.

<sup>517</sup> Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906, s 3.

pay for meals but did not due to reasons such as neglect. These children would slip through the net and remain hungry under the means test. The means test would also miss children whose parents *could not* afford to pay for meals but who were embarrassed or too proud to apply for financial aid. To support this M.E. Bulkley states:

The selection may be based either on the physical condition of the child or on the economic circumstances of the family. The majority of the children selected will, of course, be the same whichever method is adopted, since the child will generally be found to be under-nourished if the family income is inadequate, and vice versa; but there are some children who, although the family income is comparatively good, are yet, for some cause or other, underfed, and these will be excluded if the "poverty test" is the only criterion used.<sup>518</sup>

However, the medical test was not foolproof either. Firstly, needy children would have to suffer until physical signs of malnourishment were visible and 'underfeeding might be prolonged for a considerable time before its effects were apparent.'<sup>519</sup> Secondly, in practice 'though a few children are given school meals because they are found by the School Doctor to be ill-nourished,'<sup>520</sup> the general custom of deciding which children should receive free meals was inconsistent, with teachers and attendance officers determining who was deemed to be suffering from malnutrition. Where the medical test was used, it was therefore not often by a qualified medical

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<sup>518</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 59-60.

<sup>519</sup> *ibid* 221.

<sup>520</sup> *ibid* 219.

practitioner. Medical selection by the School Doctor was implemented 'only to a very limited extent and always in subordination to the system of selection based on the "poverty test."' <sup>521</sup> Thus in practice the means test was favoured and continued widely. There was, 'between town and town, and even as between school and school in the same town, a great want of uniformity in selecting the children to be fed.' <sup>522</sup> As the legislation was permissive food was not offered at every school throughout the country, and where it was, the selection of necessitous children was not consistent. As had occurred when compulsory schooling was first introduced; the law was not applied in a standardised manner nationwide.

Following the implementation of the 1906 Act, the subsequent year medical inspection was introduced for school children in a further effort to regulate the bodies of poor children. The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act 1907, as per school meals, introduced the school medical service on a permissive basis. The 1907 Act 'ambitiously aiming to eliminate the 'three Ds': disease, defects, and dirtiness'. <sup>523</sup> Medical inspection in schools was at first 'concerned only with inspection, and treatment could not be provided until 1914, inspection and treatment being made a statutory duty in 1921.' <sup>524</sup> However, there was little attempt 'to link up the provision of meals with the school medical service', <sup>525</sup> due to the favoured means test discussed above. This legislation was followed by the Children's Act 1908 which brought

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<sup>521</sup> *ibid* 221.

<sup>522</sup> *ibid* 75.

<sup>523</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994) 13-14.

<sup>524</sup> David Wardle, *The Rise of the Schooled Society: The History of Formal Schooling in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) 23.

<sup>525</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 127.

together earlier laws and dealt with parental neglect and juvenile offenders, establishing 'separate juvenile courts from which adults not concerned with the hearing were excluded.'<sup>526</sup> Regarding child offenders, Pat Thane notes, 'since the mid-nineteenth century, minors under sixteen had been progressively withdrawn from adult forms of trial and punishment.'<sup>527</sup> This alteration in the law provides a further opportunity to observe how the period of childhood was viewed as an increasingly separate stage of life to adulthood. Consequently children, who were now firmly fixed in the dependant Victorian upper/middle class ideal explored in Chapter 2, were provided with separate institutions where they could be surveyed and observed in sites distinct from adults. The statistics gained from such surveillance was then utilised in arguments for and against changes in social policy as highlighted during my analysis of parliamentary debates thus far.

In support of this view and in considering the 1908 Act, Anna Davin states, 'The new provisions consolidated and fixed the reality of dependence underlying the current rhetoric of joyous and carefree childhood. It was for adults to define and organize childhood, and children ... were to be dependent and without autonomy.'<sup>528</sup> Thane expands on this and explains, 'The Act of 1908 was an important step in the extension of the state's responsibility for children'.<sup>529</sup> Parliament was arguably 'No longer so concerned about state invasions of the home',<sup>530</sup> as had been debated at length during the implementation of compulsory schooling and to some extent during debate over

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<sup>526</sup> Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (London: Longman, 1982) 78.

<sup>527</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>528</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 212.

<sup>529</sup> Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (London: Longman, 1982) 79.

<sup>530</sup> G.R Searle, *A New England: Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 383.



the 1906 Act. With special “child only” institutions being formed, and protection by the State from neglect, children were being increasingly separated from the adult world and recognised as having different needs from adults. ‘In total the Liberals’ child welfare legislation could be described as a ‘Children’s Charter’,<sup>531</sup> however, ‘The rights it gave them were the rights of those without power, all passive-rights to protection and support, rights not to be abused or exploited.’<sup>532</sup> Therefore, the laws of 1906, 1907 and 1908 did not give children any authority, only protection.<sup>533</sup>

The increasingly protective nature of the legislation highlights that, ‘The State was acting on behalf of children, who were at once society’s most defenceless class and most valuable resource.’<sup>534</sup> The protective rights children were given, ‘was in harmony with the larger purposes of the state in securing the reproduction of a society capable of competing in the harsh conditions of the twentieth century.’<sup>535</sup> Simply, ‘Child-saving aimed both to provide the child with what was thought of as a childhood, and to ensure the future of society. The two aims were thought to be entirely consonant with one another.’<sup>536</sup> The manifestation of the notion of childhood

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<sup>531</sup> Nick Frost & Mike Stein, *The Politics of Child Welfare: Inequality, Power and Change* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) 30.

<sup>532</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 212.

<sup>533</sup> During the early twentieth century children were not the only beneficiaries of legislative reform. In 1908 old age pensions were introduced, there was the 1909 “People’s Budget” and in 1911 National Insurance Act was passed. The wider welfare reforms are noted here but expansion is outside the scope of my thesis and as such I have chosen to concentrate on welfare reforms that relate directly and solely to children as this relates to the argument advanced in this chapter.

<sup>534</sup> Bentley B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain: The Origins of the Welfare State* (London: Michael Joseph, 1966) 157.

<sup>535</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Harlow: Pearson, 2005) 163.

<sup>536</sup> *ibid.*

dependence which triggered the introduction of compulsory education analysed in Chapter 2, coupled with the idea of futurity, meant that childhood had become known primarily as a time of innocence, a period in the life course which needed adult protection. The site of the school encouraged the notion of vulnerability, the child in need of protection, due to children being placed in a spotlight that highlighted the poor condition of many. Therefore, legislation was created and utilised to both fit and reinforce this notion of childhood. In other words, the site of the school, alongside the utilisation of tools – perceptions of childhood, futurity, and law – reinforced and legitimised the State's access into the sphere of the home and henceforth the regulation of poor families.

Hendrick states that this 'meant that through their everyday involvement in children's lives, welfare bureaucracies of national and local government, and of philanthropy, imposed what, to all intents and purposes were, certain class dominated, and 'expert' formulated, concepts of childhood on the general population.'<sup>537</sup> As Davin notes, 'Adults at most times therefore have had the power ... to set the terms of childhood according to their priorities in the present and for the future.'<sup>538</sup> James and James also reiterate this point, 'As our understandings of childhood and what it means to be a child change in response to political, social or economic developments, so it is likely that the parameters that adults use to define risk, vulnerability and protection will also

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<sup>537</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present' in Allison James & Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997) 50.

<sup>538</sup> Anna Davin, 'What is a Child?' in Anthony Fletcher and Stephen Hussey (eds), *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) 19.

change.’<sup>539</sup> During the early twentieth century the priorities and understanding of vulnerability were based very much on national efficiency; creating strong, healthy, useful citizens.

Those adults who defined what constituted a proper childhood in the early twentieth century were, as had happened with the introduction of compulsory schooling, the middle and upper classes. As such, the families who came into conflict with the State were the poor and working classes. This could clearly be seen in Chapter 2,<sup>540</sup> where enforced attendance not only affected the lives of working class children, but also their parents, who were fined for not ensuring their children went to school. In support of this view, Davin notes:

Compulsory school and protective legislation imposed the ‘proper’ experience of childhood – school, economic dependence and submission to adult (and class) authority – and steadily prolonged its duration. And where children did not fit the new requirements (school attendance, full economic dependence, subordination to adults, keeping up with rising standards of physical and mental fitness and of appearance) the parents could be labelled as inadequate or bad, and might even have to hand over responsibility for their children to the state.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Allison James & Adrian James, *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies* (London: Sage, 2008) 140-141.

<sup>540</sup> Chapter 2, Part 3 (a).

<sup>541</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 208.

This quotation compares to Donzelot's notion of tutelage because it highlights the use of surveillance and discipline. If the child under observation in the site of the school did not measure up to the prescribed standard they were labelled as abnormal, and the parents of a child deemed abnormal were in danger of losing parental responsibility to the State. The State increasingly encroached on the private sphere of the family.

In this chapter I have analysed how the health of poor children was noted after they were brought to the attention of the public en masse in schools. In the 1905 Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools 'Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children' mentioned above it was stated of malnourished children that they were "below the normal standard."<sup>542</sup> This "normal" standard was that of an upper/middle-class well nourished child brought up in domestic harmony. As I shall expand upon in later chapters, by establishing norms of health and behaviour the State measured each child against these set standards and if the child did not fit the mould their parents would be liable to penalties. The requirements of a "proper" childhood meant that within the home each child had to be "made normal", that is to say properly dressed, bathed and groomed in order to be deemed acceptable within the school structure. Citing Davin in support of this argument:

Thus the new definitions and reality of childhood and of state responsibility had wide repercussions. They set new standards of childhood, of parenthood and indeed adulthood ... Children

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<sup>542</sup> Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools 'Medical Inspection and Feeding of School Children' (1905) 2 (2343) British Medical Journal 1409, 1409.

who fell below the standards (often on arbitrary and flimsy grounds) could then be defined as defective.<sup>543</sup>

As compulsory schooling progressed, and educational achievement methods were introduced, children would also have to reach specified learning targets at specific ages; if they did not attain these, the children, and their parents, were deemed to have “failed”. If children are said to be all that adults are not, then if they do not follow the path of initiation to adulthood they will be classed as “abnormal”.

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<sup>543</sup> Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996) 214.

## PART 3

### 3) Effects

#### a) School Food

Not only were school meals introduced to combat child malnutrition; the idea also centred on teaching children proper upper/middle class manners and good behaviour for their role as future citizens. It was suggested that, 'If schoolchildren rarely sat down to meals at home—much less meals with tablecloths, cutlery, and the art of polite conversation— they would learn the intimate arts of civility through the school meal.'<sup>544</sup> This argument is similar to the reasoning behind compulsory schooling, that respectable behaviour could be taught in the site of the school.

However, in practice this was not an easy feat. In 1910, in a Report on the Working of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act it was noted that, "no attempt to teach orderly eating was made; there was a certain amount of actual disorderly conduct, throwing bits of food at each other and so forth."<sup>545</sup> This was attributed in part to the lack of specific food accommodation and eating utensils in schools. 'The food is often served on the desks, an uncomfortable arrangement and one which renders it very difficult to teach the children to eat nicely.'<sup>546</sup> In London, 'In 1908, for instance,

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<sup>544</sup> James Vernon 'The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain' (2005) 110, (3) *The American Historical Review* 693, 711.

<sup>545</sup> Report on the Working of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act for the year ended March 31, 1910, pp. 8, 9. cited in M.E. Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 84.

<sup>546</sup> *ibid* 85.

it was reported that at thirty schools, where 3,090 children were fed, plates and mugs were not provided.<sup>547</sup> It was also noted that:

... when mugs are provided there is often only one to every two or three children, perhaps to every five or six! At one centre that we visited, though the girls were allowed mugs, the boys were not trusted, and mugs of water were placed on a side table for their indiscriminate use after the meal.<sup>548</sup>

However, using statistics as evidence, it was noted that by '1914 more than half of the 137 local authorities providing school meals had drafted regulations to secure "habits of orderliness and decorous behaviour,"'<sup>549</sup> and Bulkley also notes in 1914 that, 'Some sort of order has been evolved out of this chaos.'<sup>550</sup>

There was no uniformity in the type of meal given to children. There was no distinction between solid and liquid foods and no issue at this point regarding nutritional content. Some LEAs chose to give breakfast, some lunch and some both. Bulkley states, 'Ordinarily one meal a day is provided ... The practice varies in each school. In some schools breakfast is never given, or given only in very rare cases. In

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<sup>547</sup> *ibid* 156.

<sup>548</sup> *ibid* 162.

<sup>549</sup> Hecht, *Rearing an Imperial Race*, 398; Board of Education, "Memorandum on Methods of Providing Meals for Children in Connection with Public Elementary Schools and on Dietaries Suitable for the Present Circumstances," Circular 856, 15 August 1914, 6, Labour History Museum, WNC.26/1/1/1. cited in James Vernon 'The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain' (2005) 110, (3) *The American Historical Review* 693, 712.

<sup>550</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, ltd., 1914) 199.

others breakfasts as well as dinners are given to the most necessitous children.’<sup>551</sup>

The line of reasoning in favour of breakfast was:

It is argued that when no breakfast is forthcoming at home the interval between the meal the previous evening and the midday dinner is too long, and that it is cruel to expect the child to attend morning school, when the heaviest work of the day is done, without a meal, especially in the cold winter months.<sup>552</sup>

However, ‘The arguments seem to us overwhelmingly in favour of dinner.’<sup>553</sup> This meant a meal at midday which was deemed to be a ‘better meal since it contains a greater quantity of the elements which are lacking in the ordinary home dietary of the child.’<sup>554</sup> The elements considered as lacking during this period in history differed to those deemed as deficient in later years. As I will return to this point in subsequent chapters I will now consider the food provided as this will aid my analysis further on.

Nan Berger, exploring the history (and later decline) of school meals, comments on the type of food children were offered at school following the implementation of the 1906 Act, as being ‘[p]otatoes, bread, soup, dumplings and sometimes milk.’<sup>555</sup> From my research I have uncovered some menus in M.E. Bulkley’s *The Feeding of School Children*. These examples show that where breakfast was provided, ‘Generally cocoa

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<sup>551</sup> *ibid* 159.

<sup>552</sup> *ibid* 76.

<sup>553</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>554</sup> *ibid* 78.

<sup>555</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 14.



or coffee is given, with bread and butter, margarine, dripping, jam or syrup.<sup>556</sup> For lunch, various soups and stews, fish/meat and potato pie or shepherd's pie, stewed fruit and rice pudding were given to children on fixed repeated menus.<sup>557</sup> Lionel Rose explains that schools were not equipped to feed children and the general daily meal of soup was 'prepared in a central depot...brought to the schools in milk churns; or the children would go to some makeshift centre.'<sup>558</sup> Hence why soup was the basis of most dinners – it was 'easy to prepare ... easily divisible into equal portions. Its consumption did not require the use of any cutlery if drunk straight from the bowl.'<sup>559</sup> As there was no absolute requirement to feed children under the Act there were also no provisions made to supply separate dining facilities. Sometimes children were fed in their classrooms, sometimes in the feeding centres. As explained above, there was also often a lack of utensils. The aim of school meals was purely to feed children with cost effective filling foods, whilst also teaching them social skills.

The reasoning behind malnutrition of the lower classes was claimed to be lack of parental finance, poor nutritional education, coupled with poverty in some cases as specified in the parliamentary debates of the early twentieth century and reinforced by the secondary literature above. Child malnutrition was relieved or partially relieved in cases where free school meals were available to the poorest children. It was held that, 'the verdict as to the beneficial results of school meals is almost unanimous ... Often

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<sup>556</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 82.

<sup>557</sup> For full menus see M.E. Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) Appendix I, 231-236.

<sup>558</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 157.

<sup>559</sup> J.S Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 106.

children who are dull and listless are found, after a course of regular meals, to become full of life and spirits.'<sup>560</sup> Furthermore, 'The teachers reported a corresponding improvement in the lessons.'<sup>561</sup> In a Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education it was noted that, 'In 1911-1912, out of 322 Local Education Authorities in England and Wales, 131 were returned as making some provision for the feeding of school children'<sup>562</sup> Of these, 'By 1911 more than 200,000 poor children were benefitting from free meals of one sort or another.'<sup>563</sup> Then 'In 1913-14 about 10 per cent of England and Wales's 6 million schoolchildren were being publicly fed'.<sup>564</sup> Despite the uptake of meals, provision for school food altered following the outbreak of war.

#### b) World War I and Post-War Policy

There was a further shift in the perception of childhood during and following World War I and this was utilised as a tool in parliamentary debates. Together with the continuation of the notion of "vulnerable" child, there was also the concept of the child as "current" worker – employed to aid the war effort.<sup>565</sup> The connections

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<sup>560</sup> M.E. Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 195.

<sup>561</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1913) 51.

<sup>562</sup> Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1911, pp. 320-322, 329 cited in M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 54.

<sup>563</sup> J.C Drummond & Anne Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food: A History of Five Centuries of English Diet* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957) 409.

<sup>564</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 158.

<sup>565</sup> This was a different construction to child "worker" so common prior to the introduction of compulsory education as then the *reality* existed but the upper/middle classes did not acknowledge

between these perceptions of childhood were brought forth by a need to work, coupled with a perceived right to post-war compensation – something that would once again change the face of education policy. This is illustrated through analysis of the Education Bill of 1917 and Education Acts 1918 and 1921.

Marjorie Cruickshank notes that, ‘educational planning and advance in this country have coincided with major wars.’<sup>566</sup> This is certainly a true observation when applied to school food provision.<sup>567</sup> During wartime it appears that there is a greater merging of the public and private spheres with the State taking significant interest (and control) over the *physical* wellbeing (the body) of the children of the nation. Independent Labour MP Frederick William Jowett introduced the Education (Provision of Meals) Act Amendment Bill 1912 ‘to empower the education authority to continue the school meals through the holidays and on Sundays, even if the school be closed’,<sup>568</sup> but it failed to pass. However, ‘The outbreak of war raised fears of a general economic crisis, and the government moved quickly to ensure that school children would be fed.’<sup>569</sup> Concurring with the outbreak of World War I, things improved for actual food availability when the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1914, enacted under a

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worker children due to the conflict with their domestic ideal of childhood as explained in Chapter 2. “Current worker” in wartime however was deemed to be essential for the nation.

<sup>566</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1964) 113.

<sup>567</sup> There are also parallels with the establishment of formal sex education in schools. The onslaught of the two World Wars saw the advancement of sex education from being taught in the context of hygiene through to more specific education on sexually transmitted infections. This was caused by an increase in war time venereal disease and the subsequent ‘moral panic about young people’s sexuality in time of war.’ Jane Pilcher, ‘School Sex Education: Policy and Practice in England 1870 to 2000’ (2005) 5 (2) *Sex Education* 153, 159.

<sup>568</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 March 1912, vol 35, col 1114 (Frederick William Jowett, Independent Labour).

<sup>569</sup> Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898-1918* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987) 213.

Liberal Government, extended the powers of Local Education Authorities to provide meals for undernourished elementary school children; without having to first gain approval from the Board of Education, extended the provision of Local Authority spending on school meals, and also bestowed the opportunity for the Act to apply 'both on days when the school meets and on other days.'<sup>570</sup> The passing of the Act was 'to make good an omission in the Provision of Meals Act, 1906 ... the failure to allow education authorities to provide meals on days on which the schools are not open, during holidays and on Sundays.'<sup>571</sup> The reasoning behind the need for feeding children outside of allotted school time was explained by Jowett as due to experiments which had shown:

[T]hat during the time that the children were on holiday, instead of receiving benefit they became actually physically less fit because they were not having the school meals ... the holidays, owing to the suspension of the feeding of the children, actually resulted in the deterioration of the children.<sup>572</sup>

Thus, 'The discontinuance of the school meals during the holidays has been shown to undo much of the benefit derived during term-time, and it entails unnecessary suffering on the children.'<sup>573</sup> The logic resulting from this argument was simply that, 'It cannot be said that the parents suddenly become wealthier or are in a better position to feed their children when a school holiday comes on. The parents are poor

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<sup>570</sup> Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1914, s 3.

<sup>571</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 April 1913, vol 51, col 1970 (Frederick William Jowett, Independent Labour).

<sup>572</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 March 1912, vol 35, col 1113 (Frederick William Jowett, Independent Labour).

<sup>573</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 128.

all the time',<sup>574</sup> and '[i]t is absurd that children should be fed when they are at school and not fed during the few days' interval between one period of school time and another.'<sup>575</sup> If the children were fed at school due to malnourishment during term time, it follows that when they were not being fed school meals during the holidays their malnourishment would worsen. The experiments, 'showed that the single factor of good food could do much even while other conditions hostile to healthy development remained unchanged.'<sup>576</sup> This is a further example of concern for the body of the "vulnerable" child and again a link between a private (home) matter becoming a concern of the public sphere (state) and increasing government encroachment on home life, to feed children even when they are not in school. Statistics quoted by Jowett maintained that:

[T]here are probably at least 120,000 school children living in families where the income is so small as not to afford the members of those families as much as 3s. per head per week for sustenance, clothing, and all the necessary expenses of living, including rent.<sup>577</sup>

These compelling arguments explaining why children should receive school meals outside of actual school hours were met with resistance by Crooks who claimed that,

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<sup>574</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 March 1912, vol 35, col 1113 (Frederick William Jowett, Independent Labour).

<sup>575</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 November 1912, vol 44, col 83 (Joseph Albert Pease, President of the Board of Education, Liberal).

<sup>576</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1913) 54.

<sup>577</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 November 1912, vol 44, col 82 (Frederick William Jowett, Independent Labour).

'bad food would do more injury to the child than no food at all.'<sup>578</sup> Then President of the Board of Education Liberal MP Joseph Albert Pease was also concerned that, 'A square meal may be wasteful and harmful if the right cause of malnutrition has not been previously ascertained by a doctor.'<sup>579</sup> This relates to corresponding arguments during the debates which centred on the notion that malnutrition is not 'due merely to lack of food. It is due to a large number of other causes ... lack of clothes ... insanitary surroundings ... the habits of the people ... lack of sleep ... wasting diseases, to lack of food, and frequency to irregular meals and unsuitable food.'<sup>580</sup> Not having enough food was perhaps one factor, coupled with inadequate food knowledge and poor living conditions.<sup>581</sup>

Concern also remained, as with the debate over the 1906 Act, that feeding the children would take away parental responsibility and discourage parents to look after their children because, 'if you supply meals for the children the father will get drunk with the money that should have brought that meal.'<sup>582</sup> These anxieties were raised alongside consideration of the wider issue that, 'we have no right to punish the child

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<sup>578</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 November 1912, vol 44, col 85 (William Crooks, Labour).

<sup>579</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1914, vol 60, col 741 (Joseph Albert Pease, President of the Board of Education, Liberal).

<sup>580</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1914, vol 60, cols 740-741 (Joseph Albert Pease, President of the Board of Education, Liberal).

<sup>581</sup> As discussed previously, most data available during the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries suggest that malnourishment was more an urban concern than a rural one. This may in part be due to the fact that most studies took place in cities and the vast numbers of children gathered in smaller spaces and on display to the public (visible children). Parliamentary debates and literature published around this period also suggests a divide between urban and rural living (see also Chapter 2). 'The provision of meals for school children is ... merely an attempt to mitigate some of the evil effects of industrial disorganisation.' M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 219.

<sup>582</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 November 1912, vol 44, col 85 (William Crooks, Labour).

for the sins of the parent. Feed the child first, because he is an asset of the nation, and punish the parent afterwards.’<sup>583</sup> However this does indicate that the concern of the State is the child perceived as “future” worker and that the purpose of school meals was for the good of the individual child *and* for the good of society as a whole. It was said that, ‘The expenditure on the provision of school meals would, indeed, be nationally a most profitable investment; it would be amply justified by the improved physique of the rising generation and by the consequent increase in their efficiency.’<sup>584</sup> Conservative MP George Courthope also stated that there was:

... enormous importance not only to the individual but to the country as a whole that there should be sufficient and suitable food for the children who are attending school, and that in the absence of suitable and sufficient food education is probably wasted, and that much of the future depends largely upon the question as to whether the children are properly fed.<sup>585</sup>

In this quotation it is clear that, as with debate preceding the 1906 Act, there was anxiety that ‘future inefficiency due to underfeeding in childhood must be prevented’.<sup>586</sup> Concern was again raised about the health of children as adults, not merely as “future” workers, but also as a potential burden to the country. This issue

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<sup>583</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 November 1912, vol 44, col 85 (William Crooks, Labour). It is interesting that concern over the responsibility of parents comes from a Labour MP as the majority of parental responsibility arguments came from Conservative MPs. This is an example of how strict political party divides are not as obvious in the early debates but can be seen more clearly in later analysis (see Chapter 5).

<sup>584</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 227.

<sup>585</sup> Hansard HC Deb 27 March 1914, vol 60, col 733 (George Courthope, Conservative).

<sup>586</sup> M.E Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 228.

was noted above during analysis of the 1906 Act and I will return to it further in later chapters as it is an argument that is also a modern day concern. Bulkley, quoting the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, notes that:

"Every step . . . in the direction of making and keeping the children healthy is a step towards diminishing the prevalence and lightening the burden of disease for the adult, and a relatively small rise in the standard of child health may represent a proportionately large gain in the physical health, capacity, and energy of the people as a whole."<sup>587</sup>

The two strand argument for the feeding of children at this point were both based on futurity; healthy adults who would be efficient "future" workers and who would not be a burden on society.

The Education Bill 1917 was introduced under a Liberal and Conservative Coalition Government following anxiety over the welfare of British children during the war. As men were sent to war and women took over their jobs in industry and on the land, parents were not at home as they had been prior to the outbreak of war. The children themselves also became part of the war effort through an increased requirement for child labour which 'was widely used.'<sup>588</sup> In 1901 an Inter-Departmental Committee on the Employment of School Children reported that children were employed 'as street sellers, in shops, on milk delivery and other jobs, and calculated that 300,000

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<sup>587</sup> Report of Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1910. p. I, cited in M.E. Bulkley, *The Feeding of School Children* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914) 219.

<sup>588</sup> Harry Hendrick, 'Child Labour, Medical Capital, and the School Medical Service, c.1890-1918' in Roger Cooter (ed), *In the Name of the Child* (London: Routledge, 1992) 60.



schoolchildren were so engaged.’<sup>589</sup> Cunningham also notes that, ‘On the eve of the First World War it was estimated that in the United Kingdom there were over half a million children under fourteen in employment, most of them schoolchildren who had part-time jobs, typically as messengers or delivers of newspapers.’<sup>590</sup> Therefore in reality many children had, prior to the outbreak of war, occupied the notion of “current” worker outside of school hours, alongside “future” worker and “vulnerable” child created for them within the school environment. However, although this perception of childhood was not recognised by the upper/middle classes, the notion of the child as “current” worker during the war *was* recognised by all classes of society and utilised because it benefited the nation. At this time the perception of “current” worker developed alongside continuation of the notion of the “vulnerable” child. The perception of vulnerability was maintained because, as Lawrence Andrews in his analysis of the 1918 Act explains, ‘numerous children suffered from a want of proper care and discipline.’<sup>591</sup> Therefore following the war, when no longer required to aid the country, “current” worker was once again sidelined to reality rather than the ideal, with Parliament mooting to raise the school leaving age and once again return children to their proper environment – schools.

Once again, the children themselves were not the sole motivation behind the proposed legislation. President of the Board of Education H.A.L Fisher described the

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<sup>589</sup> Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965) 291.

<sup>590</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Harlow: Pearson, 2005) 181.

<sup>591</sup> Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 14.

educational reform as, 'essential for the strength and welfare of the nation.'<sup>592</sup> Fisher explained that the 1917 Bill was 'prompted by deficiencies which have been revealed by the War; it is framed to repair the intellectual wastage which has been caused by the War.'<sup>593</sup> Here futurity is the reasoning behind needing further education legislation. A clear example of the intertwined notions of "vulnerable" child, "current" and "future" worker is also illustrated through analysis of a memorandum and speech given by Fisher. He praised the children of the war effort and proposed that some measure needed to be implemented to repay the children for all that they had forfeited during the conflict:

In the three years of war some 600,000 children have been withdrawn prematurely from school and become immersed in industry. They are working on munitions, in the fields, and in the mines. In a thousand different ways these children are contributing to our success in the War ... these children are incurring a real sacrifice ... I ask the House to consider whether the nation has not incurred a special responsibility towards these children ... There can only be one answer – that some special means must be found, either by administrative action or

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<sup>592</sup> H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, WCP-O, GT 757, 1917, Memorandum on the Education Bill 1917 cited in Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 22.

<sup>593</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, cols 795-796 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

otherwise, whereby this responsibility may be adequately discharged.<sup>594</sup>

In the above quotation it can be seen that Fisher uses law, futurity and perceptions of childhood, together within the argument as tools to cement changes. Repayment from the nation to the children was anticipated to partly take the form of 'the abolition of fees in elementary schools; the raising of the school-leaving age ... [and introducing] medical inspection and treatment of children' to schools maintained by Local Authorities.<sup>595</sup> Fisher acknowledged the 'close connection between educational and physical efficiency.'<sup>596</sup> In a speech similar to those posited during the debates which led to the 1906 Act, he noted that some children were not receiving full benefit from the education afforded to them and that:

... the value of our educational system is impaired by the low physical conditions of a vast number of the children, and how imperative is the necessity of raising the general standard of physical health among the children of the poor, if a great part of the money spent on our educational system is not to be wasted.<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, col 798 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

<sup>595</sup> Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 24 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>596</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, col 799 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

<sup>597</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, col 799 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

Again, futurity is used to argue for changes within law. The proposal of a system of education which afforded free schooling, the provision of meals, medical inspection *and* treatment for children was envisaged at a time of great social change. In light of the suffering the nation had endured during the war; there was talk of people wanting a “better life” created for when the war was over and not just a return to the conditions that had preceded it.<sup>598</sup> There was a ‘vision of a brighter tomorrow for the nation’s youth’.<sup>599</sup> In a similar approach to the reasoning behind the implementation of the 1918 Act being a reward for the hardship children faced during the war, a Ministry of Reconstruction was established ‘to draw up programmes for post-war ‘social amelioration’ and economic improvement.’<sup>600</sup> Thus although children were the subject of a proposed new law in their own right, the nation as a whole was also set to benefit from planned economic and social development such as improved housing. As such, many factors led to the educational reforms of 1917/1918 but they can be attributed in part to changing social attitudes, alongside the utilisation of developing perceptions of “vulnerable” and “worker” child and notions of futurity.

Despite initial working class reluctance to embrace compulsory schooling and an increase in state control over education as illustrated in Chapter 2, the demand for post-war social change came as much from the working classes themselves as the legislature. In Parliament, Fisher stated that there was an ‘increased feeling of social

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<sup>598</sup> See Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 15 for further explanation of “reconstruction”.

<sup>599</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 30.

<sup>600</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 45.

solidarity which has been created by the War.'<sup>601</sup> Discussing the emergence of state welfare G.C. Peden explains that:

While the concept of social control alerts one to the fact that welfare services are not solely for the benefit of the recipients, it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that many welfare services are desired by the recipients ... there is no reason to suppose that poor people were anything but grateful for any amelioration of their hard lives.<sup>602</sup>

There were changes in the way people approached schooling which led to 'a new way of thinking about education,'<sup>603</sup> not just as a means to gaining employment. Further to Marjorie Cruickshank's earlier observation that educational advancement in Britain follows the outbreak of war, she explains that 'the challenge of war provided the urge and vitality to plan for the future.'<sup>604</sup> However the 1917 Education Bill was opposed by many sources, not least the Local Education Authorities who did not agree with the 'collective tendencies' proposed by the increasingly authoritative role of the Board of Education.<sup>605</sup> The Bill was withdrawn and reintroduced in early 1918 with very similar proposals but with amendments which provoked less controversy. There was even commendation from the medical profession who 'welcomed the improvements

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<sup>601</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, cols 799-800 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

<sup>602</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 9.

<sup>603</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 August 1917, vol 97, col 800 (H.A.L Fisher, President of the Board of Education, Independent).

<sup>604</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1964) 113.

<sup>605</sup> Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 27.

which the Act made possible in the education and physical welfare (and therefore in the efficiency and happiness) of the population.’<sup>606</sup>

When the Education Act 1918 became law in August 1918 under a Liberal and Conservative Coalition Government it abolished all fees for learning in state maintained elementary schools. Although education was now free, school meals where available (as per the 1906 Act) or medical treatment (as per the Local Education Authorities (Medical Treatment) Act 1909) still required payment except in necessitous circumstances.<sup>607</sup> As Richard Rose and Peter Falconer state when considering public policy on school meals, ‘Unlike classroom education, which is free to all, school meals are free for some but not for others.’<sup>608</sup> Under the 1918 Act further restrictions were placed on the employment of children and the age of attendance was raised to between 5 and 14 years.<sup>609</sup> Richard Flacks, whilst exploring the idea of youth culture, pinpoints why children were now spending an increasing number of years in education:

The proportion of young in school and the length of time they are expected to remain there are greatly increased as industrial society evolves because this type of society requires that its members have an unprecedented degree of flexibility and mobility. The process of creating new types of work and

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<sup>606</sup> British Medical Journal, 7 September 1918, 259-60 cited in Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 58.

<sup>607</sup> Education Act 1918 s 26 (1).

<sup>608</sup> Richard Rose & Peter Falconer, ‘Individual Taste or Collective Decision? Public Policy on School Meals’ (1992) 21, (3) *Journal of Social Policy* 349, 350.

<sup>609</sup> Education Act 1918, s 8 (1).

phasing out old lines is continuous; the need for universal discipline, literacy, specialized training, and meritocratic competition steadily widens.<sup>610</sup>

This argument coheres with earlier statements that point to the socialisation of children for the current need of the economy. It also once again illustrates the perception of the child as “future” worker – educated for the needs of each given society. Cunningham also states that, ‘School, not the workplace, was the proper place for children to be when they were not at home. Many saw the end of schooling as the end of childhood. As governments have raised the school-leaving age, childhood has been progressively prolonged.’<sup>611</sup> Following the war, there was a shift back to placing the child within the institution of the school where the ideal notion of childhood could be maintained.

The position regarding malnourished children was detailed in a 1918 Command Paper ‘Report of the Working Classes Cost of Living Committee.’<sup>612</sup> The committee noted an alleged decline in necessitous children attributed to the availability of meals at school, coupled with more food at home owing to an uptake of child employment and higher wages during the war. It was noted that in London, ‘the percentage of children found in a poorly nourished condition is considerably less than half the percentage in 1913.’<sup>613</sup> There was also ‘similar improvement ... shown by the figures furnished by

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<sup>610</sup> Richard Flacks, *Youth and Social Change* (Chicago: Markham, 1971) 11.

<sup>611</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Harlow: Pearson, 2005) 181-182.

<sup>612</sup> *Report of the Working Classes Cost of Living Committee* (Cd. 8980, 1918).

<sup>613</sup> *ibid* para 51.

Birmingham, Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow and Nottingham.’<sup>614</sup> This fuelled the report that children were being well fed and as such, providing free food for the hungry child was becoming less essential nationwide and in some areas, it was considered ‘hardly necessary to provide meals at all.’<sup>615</sup>

The report is dated October 1918; after rationing had been introduced in early 1918,<sup>616</sup> yet before it was phased out during 1919-1921, and is a viewpoint which was not endorsed during the speech made by Fisher in Parliament one year earlier in August 1917 concerning the physical condition of children at that time. It was noted by J.M. Winter that, ‘food prices rose by 110 per cent between 1914 and 1918.’<sup>617</sup> British ‘flour mills, milk distribution and livestock markets were placed under direct public control’.<sup>618</sup> Measures were increased so that, ‘By the end of the war the Ministry of Food was responsible in one way or another for over 85 per cent of the nation’s food supplies.’<sup>619</sup> Furthermore, Nan Berger states, ‘Provision of meals declined from around 400,000 at the outbreak of the First World War to 43,000 at the end.’<sup>620</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>615</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>616</sup> There were war-time food shortages which led to rationing – a direct consequence of Britain being an island and imports being blocked ‘when Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare.’ G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 35.

<sup>617</sup> J.M Winter ‘The Impact of the First World War on Civilian Health in Britain’ (1977) 30 (3) *The Economic History Review* 487, 500.

<sup>618</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 36.

<sup>619</sup> J Harris (1982) ‘Bureaucrats and Businessmen in British Food Control, 1916-19’ in K Burk (ed), *War and the State* cited in G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 37.

<sup>620</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 15-16.



Therefore, these figures suggest that malnourishment among working class children was still prevalent at the end of the war.

It would however ensue that Britain enjoyed a temporary period of economic prosperity following the end of the war during the phase of social change and the growth in welfare legislation. Yet despite the plan for enduring post-war prosperity this vision was ephemeral when the period of economic growth was quickly followed by the Great Depression. This was caused by 'strikes, an influenza epidemic, a critical housing shortage, rapidly rising prices, [and] multiplying unemployment.'<sup>621</sup> Savings in public spending in 1922 ensured education would have its expenditure cut 'to the extent of about £6 million.'<sup>622</sup> Therefore, much of the school expansion set out in the 1918 Act was, for the time being, suspended due to lack of finance.

The previous year saw the introduction of the Education Act 1921 under a Liberal and Conservative Coalition Government.<sup>623</sup> Part VII of the Act deals with the health and wellbeing of scholars. It is here where provision was made for the feeding of schoolchildren. Local Education Authorities were given the power to work with school canteen committees to provide children with proper eating facilities and provision of food.<sup>624</sup> However, 'The question whether meals shall be provided under

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<sup>621</sup> Lawrence Andrews, *The Education Act, 1918* (London: Routledge, 1976) 62 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>622</sup> *ibid* 63.

<sup>623</sup> The 1921 Act reiterated the duty that obligated parents to ensure their children, aged between 5 and 14 years, were schooled in reading, writing and arithmetic (Education Act 1921, s 42). The State was given increased power to intervene as if any child did not regularly attend school, without good reason, the Act gave Local Education Authorities the right to apply to the court for a school attendance order which would compel the said child to attend classes (Education Act 1921, s 44).

<sup>624</sup> Education Act 1921, s 82.

that Act is one for the decision of the Local Education Authority.<sup>625</sup> Thus the position regarding school meals was discretionary.<sup>626</sup> If provided, the cost of the actual food was still to be recovered from parents at a rate determined by the Local Education Authority. This illustrates the position seen throughout this chapter of the importance of preserving parental responsibility with regard to meals. The rate could also include reasonable expenses incurred by the Authority, so food was evidently not available to parents at cost price.<sup>627</sup> Provision was available for children who were 'unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for them,'<sup>628</sup> to meet the cost of food where payment was not available from the child's parents. There is no explicit explanation as to whether this fee waiver was down to poverty or otherwise but it may be interpreted that food payment recovery through parents was at the discretion of the Local Education Authority and retrieval was mandatory unless the Authority was 'satisfied that the parent is unable by reason of circumstances other than his own default to pay the amount'.<sup>629</sup> There was little documented change in social policy with the enactment of the 1921 Act. Parental responsibility is still a central theme with the obligation to ensure their child's schooling and the payment of school meal fees.<sup>630</sup> However, the State was granted increased power to intervene if parents failed in their duty,<sup>631</sup> expanding the role of the public sphere in the private domain of the home. By allowing the State greater

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<sup>625</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 February 1923, vol 160, col 1290W (Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, President of the Board of Education, Conservative).

<sup>626</sup> It is important that in the Act the decentralisation of power to localised discretion is noted. I revisit this tension (also mentioned above during debate of the 1917 Education Bill) between centralised and localised control in later chapters.

<sup>627</sup> Education Act 1921, s 83.

<sup>628</sup> Education Act 1921, s 84.

<sup>629</sup> Education Act 1921, s 83 (1).

<sup>630</sup> Education Act 1921, s 42.

<sup>631</sup> Education Act 1921, s 44.

powers to aid children in need, this legitimised the Government's regulation of working class families.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the motivations and techniques of argumentation which led to the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906 were deeply rooted in concern for the perceived “vulnerable” child following increased regulation of child labour and the introduction of compulsory education. This perception of childhood was utilised as a tool to bring about a shift in education policy. Concern for child welfare and opinion in support of providing food in schools was measured against the political and economic arguments against the introduction of school meals. It was argued that money was being wasted as ‘Half-starved children in a wretched physical condition could hardly be expected to learn much.’<sup>632</sup> Furthermore, it was stated, ‘How could the Edwardian State institutions maintain economic efficiency at home and domination of the Empire when faced with such deterioration amongst the nation’s children?’<sup>633</sup> Growing political unease regarding the physical state of children in schools, apprehension over their lack of potential as working adults, and the utilisation of notions of futurity led to further development of the child viewed as “future” worker and this in turn led to the implementation of the 1906 Act. Achieving the fine balance between state support and parental responsibility continued to be debated in Parliament.

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<sup>632</sup> Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994) 241.

<sup>633</sup> Nick Frost & Mike Stein, *The Politics of Child Welfare: Inequality, Power and Change* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) 31.

Following the 1906 Act, further legislation was passed which saw that ‘the children of the poor were also the children of the nation and of the state; as such they were an investment, a valuable asset. Parents, because of their poverty or inadequacy, might need to share their responsibilities with the state.’<sup>634</sup> This meant that the public sphere encroached further within the private sphere of the home. This can also be seen following the passing of the 1914 Act, where Cunningham argues that the public sphere of the State had ‘successfully staked its claim to take a part in what opponents saw as one of the central functions of the family.’<sup>635</sup>

Some key concerns which emerged in Chapter 2 were continued and developed in this chapter. These were social control and national efficiency. The notion of the civilising benefits of school meals was introduced. Furthermore, following the implementation of welfare legislation, it could be argued that, ‘Children needed protection not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the state itself.’<sup>636</sup> Here again futurity was an important element in debates cemented through the use of law.

During World War I and post-war policy the notion of “current” worker re-emerged alongside the perception of “vulnerable” child. The close connection between the two ideas of childhood brought forth a perceived child right to post-war compensation, partly in the form of abolishing state maintained elementary school fees and also by raising the school leaving age – arguably prolonging childhood by keeping children away from the adult world of work for longer. This also illustrated the perception of

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<sup>634</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 217.

<sup>635</sup> *ibid* 207.

<sup>636</sup> *ibid* 217.

the child as “future” worker -- educated for the needs of each given society. The depiction of each notion of childhood is clearly intertwined, although during this period in history the perception of “vulnerable” child remained constant, as did the notion of futurity, through different political discourses.

## Chapter Four

### The Mid-Twentieth Century: Crisis in the Milk Industry, War & the “Fat Boy”

#### Introduction

As in previous chapters, I will be examining the tensions which surfaced between MPs during an analysis of mid-twentieth century parliamentary debates, and the tools and techniques employed in the regulation of children and families throughout the period under consideration. There are new points to be introduced and developed in this period – advances in nutritional knowledge which changed the reasoning behind feeding in schools; greater state intervention in the lives of families during and following World War II with the rise of the welfare state; and a new emerging concern - obesity.

I split these three new points of analysis into three separate parts within the chapter. However, in an alteration from the structure of the previous chapters, the *motivations* behind the debates and changes of policy; the *techniques of argumentation*; and the *effects* will all be considered in each separate section. This is because the motivations, techniques, and effects in each section of this chapter alter and require analysis distinct from one another. However, although distinct in their focus they are also linked in their foundation because motivations and effects from one period find themselves rooted in later policy debate. By this I mean that the effect of one policy often becomes the motivation behind the next.

Firstly, I will explore the advancements in food knowledge in the 1920s and 1930s that, combined with economic factors, initially resulted in the implementation of the *Milk in Schools Scheme*. This was a shift in differentiating between different types of food (solid and liquid). The use of surveillance, statistics and the notion of futurity utilised as tools subsequently brought forth nutritional standards for school meals. Alongside quantity, the *quality* of food also became important. This stance set the foundations for food policy which would be implemented during World War II.

Secondly, following the outbreak of war in 1939, the condition of poor children was brought to the nation's attention on a scale unseen since the introduction of compulsory schooling in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The main part of this chapter considers the parliamentary debates and school food legislation that followed which highlight *how* and *why* concern for the bodies and minds of children were brought together through school meals policy during and following the war years. Intervention in the private sphere of the home and consequently the regulation of children and families was on a larger scale than previously as policy encompassed *all* children, not solely those deemed as necessitous.

The final part of this chapter begins by analysing how wider welfare policy mirrored the focus of food policy following the war. This section then returns to the subject of nutritional standards and the emergence of a new concern – obesity. When considering the regulation of schoolchildren in this part of the chapter, it can be seen that the Government focused on the *body* of the child and in doing so the amalgamation of bodies and minds began to lose its bond once again. In this part of the chapter my analysis focuses on how the *motivations* to fill bodies with calories

(witnessed during the implementation of milk policy analysed in Part 1) and the resultant *effects*, years later developed into the *motivations* and subsequent *effects* of a new era, namely regarding obesity, which consequently led to children and families receiving further regulation as a result.



## PART 1

### Availability of School Milk

As discussed in the preceding chapter, following the implementation of the Education Act 1921, provision of school meals was still discretionary. Also, as noted previously, 'the financial retrenchment of the early 1920s hit the provision of school meals'.<sup>637</sup> Richard Rose and Peter Falconer state that, 'Until the outbreak of the Second World War only a quarter of a million school meals were provided daily even though about six million children were in school.'<sup>638</sup> John Stevenson also notes that:

As late as the 1930s only one school in ten had a canteen or dining-room, while the availability of free school meals was determined by the financial position of individual authorities and, to some extent at least, by their political complexion. In many areas, virtually no provision was made to assist poorer children to make the best of education by ensuring that they were sufficiently well-fed and healthy to attend their lessons.<sup>639</sup>

Thus, 'The brave new world of engineered civility within the school dining hall was being only falteringly delivered.'<sup>640</sup> However, although school meal availability was not widespread, from the 1920s onwards the provision of milk was gaining popularity

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<sup>637</sup> John Welshman, 'School Meals and Milk in England and Wales 1906-45' (1997) 41 *Medical History* 6, 11-12.

<sup>638</sup> Richard Rose & Peter Falconer, 'Individual Taste or Collective Decision? Public Policy on School Meals' (1992) 21, 3 *Journal of Social Policy* 349, 351.

<sup>639</sup> John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-45* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) 258.

<sup>640</sup> James Vernon 'The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain' (2005) 110 (3) *The American Historical Review* 693, 715.

in schools. In this section I will explain that this popularity was the effect of a crisis within the English milk industry and accompanying economic concerns. The site of the school became the arena within which to solve two predicaments – the regulation of the bodies of children and aiding an industry in crisis. This highlights a convergence of interests; health and economics.

### **1) Motivations**

In 1921 a scheme was proposed by the Ministry of Health ‘for “the study of the effects produced in the growth and nutrition of underdeveloped children by the addition of milk to a standard diet.”’<sup>641</sup> The statistics gained from this observation of children and subsequent studies would be used to advance arguments for widespread provision of milk in schools. In Parliament it was mooted that there was ‘necessity for increased consumption of milk, especially by children.’<sup>642</sup> Milk was deemed as necessary due to the benefits it had on the *bodies* of children. Although an emphasis was placed on malnourished children, milk was deemed advantageous to *all* children. Following milk-feeding experiments in Birmingham, Conservative MP Percy Hurd stated that the results showed, ‘the physiological value of fresh milk as an article of diet, and particularly the effect on children suffering from malnutrition of the addition to their dietary of a pint of fresh milk daily’.<sup>643</sup> In discussing the physiological value Hurd is highlighting the positive effects of milk on the child’s body. Fellow Conservative MP Frederick Banbury stated, ‘that you ought to combat disease in

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<sup>641</sup> NA, FD 1/3790, “Nutritive Value of Milk” (Corry Mann), i. cited in Peter Atkins, ‘School Milk in Britain, 1900–1934’ (2007) 19 (4) *The Journal of Policy History* 395, 405.

<sup>642</sup> Hansard HC Deb 5 April 1921, vol 140, col 609W (Sir John. Bethell, Liberal).

<sup>643</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 July 1923, vol 166, col 2294 (Percy Hurd, Conservative).

children by providing them with milk, food and clothing.’<sup>644</sup> Therefore, alongside sufficient food, which had been hailed as important during debate analysed in the previous chapter, milk was now cited as equally necessary in combating malnutrition and disease which affected the *bodies* of children.

Subsequently, in 1924, Local Education Authorities were permitted to provide schoolchildren with free milk. As with both schooling and the introduction of provision of food in schools, the introduction of school milk began on a permissive basis. Children were having their bodies surveyed and regulated within the site of the school where health experiments took place. Results published in 1926 further highlighted the positive benefits of milk consumption and in Parliament Conservative MP Brigadier-General Douglas Clifton Brown used the tool of statistics to note, ‘the beneficent qualities of English milk supplied to the children of this country’.<sup>645</sup> It should be noted here that English milk was being championed to ‘discourage the importation of this foreign skimmed condensed milk’.<sup>646</sup> This was because, alongside any proposed health benefits gained from children drinking milk, there was also a crisis occurring within the British milk industry. In Parliament the link was made by Liberal MP Lieut-Colonel Sir Edward Grigg between providing milk to children and crisis within the industry when he stated that ‘provision of milk for school children is one of the ways by which the milk industry will be put on a thoroughly sound basis’.<sup>647</sup> Therefore it can be seen from analysing the debates here that concern

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<sup>644</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 April 1921, vol 140, col 1198 (Frederick Banbury, Conservative).

<sup>645</sup> Hansard HC Deb 19 May 1927, vol 206, col 1352 (Brigadier-General Douglas Clifton Brown, Conservative).

<sup>646</sup> Hansard HC Deb 19 May 1927, vol 206, col 1352 (Brigadier-General Douglas Clifton Brown, Conservative).

<sup>647</sup> Hansard HC Deb 31 May 1934, vol 290, col 399 (Lieut-Colonel Sir Edward Grigg, Liberal).

regarding the bodily health of children and economics were both motivations behind providing milk in schools.

## **2) Techniques of Argumentation**

During this period calories were cited as important to maintaining the wellbeing of children. Liberal MP Charles McCurdy stated that ‘milk, especially in its sweetened form, is a most important item in the diet of infants and young children’.<sup>648</sup> This view was supported by Labour MP William Cove who argued, ‘What these children need is a round square meal. [Laughter]. At any rate, a square meal that will make them round.’<sup>649</sup> It was thought that both milk and meals needed to be high in calories in order to help children to put on weight if Britain were to ‘raise an AI physical nation [who had] ... healthy bodies’.<sup>650</sup> This is an interesting point as malnourishment was cited as children being considered too thin in the 1920s. As highlighted above, a “round” child was regarded as having a healthy body. In addition to milk, the introduction of tuckshops within schools was welcomed by Labour MP Dr. Haden Guest as ‘an excellent institution ... The tuck shop – a place where a child can go and get extra food – is really a necessity of child growth.’<sup>651</sup> This addition to school food was hailed as an opportunity for children to add to their daily food intake; to eat more than was strictly necessary to aid their learning but that which was believed would enhance their growth. ‘In practice every child requires ... a surplus of food, that is to say, every child ought to be able to get a little more food than, if you like, is really

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<sup>648</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 March 1920, vol 126, col 2218W (Charles McCurdy, Liberal).

<sup>649</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1928, vol 217, col 1139 (William Cove, Labour) [bracketed word as per text].

<sup>650</sup> Hansard HC Deb 16 May 1928, vol 217, col 1139 (William Cove, Labour) [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>651</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 July 1924, vol 176, col 1233 (Dr. Haden Guest, Labour).

good for it.’<sup>652</sup> Although welcomed as a positive measure in 1924, the issue of excess food and tuckshops (later vending machines) would, years later, be debated once again in Parliament – this time with less positive connotations.<sup>653</sup>

The alleged health benefits derived from increased calories were used to legitimise the introduction of milk in schools. The “round” child was mooted to the nation as the norm. This was a class preconception. Because the bodies of working-class children were those being observed, if they did not adhere to the prescribed middle/upper class size norms of sufficient height and weight, they were deemed to be malnourished. Thin children were classed as abnormal and in need of greater nourishment. Surveillance and intervention by the State was justified because children who did not adhere to the prescribed norms needed government help to become healthy. Milk was the given provision. This shows that the policies which lead to the regulation of children and families, through the site of the school, are malleable enough to link to different vehicles; both milk and meals. Statistics gathered from studies into milk consumption were utilised as an argument for the provision of milk to schoolchildren. This was used alongside Cove’s stance of raising an A1 physical nation. State intervention was argued as necessary for the future prosperity of the nation. Atkins explains:

If the parents could not be relied on to provide an adequate diet for their children, then intervention was said to be justified in the setting of the school or the clinic, and the logic was one of an investment in the nation’s human resources. Related to this

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<sup>652</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 July 1924, vol 176, col 1233 (Dr. Haden Guest, Labour).

<sup>653</sup> See Chapter 5, Part 2 (2) (b) (i).

were concerns about the impact of poor diet on the fertility and physical vigor of the nation.<sup>654</sup>

It can be seen that the perception of children as “future” workers/citizens was a key argument. Both statistics and futurity were joined by the tool of law.

In 1933 the Milk Marketing Board was established, and the *Milk in Schools Scheme* launched with the objective of providing milk free of charge to malnourished children and subsidised for all others. The reason behind the founding of the Milk Marketing Board was further explained by Conservative MP Major Walter Elliot, Minister of Agriculture:

The Government’s policy in regard to the milk industry is to encourage organisation and other progressive movements within the industry and to take such steps as are practicable to facilitate them by bringing about a sounder situation on the market for milk products as a whole.<sup>655</sup>

Again, the economic motivations behind the change in policy were reiterated. Parliament also passed the Milk Act 1934 which allowed for government money to be spent on improving the quality and marketability of milk products. In discussing the Milk Act in 1936, Lord Eltisley noted its purpose as being, ‘to rescue and preserve the

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<sup>654</sup> Peter Atkins, ‘School Milk in Britain, 1900–1934’ (2007) 19 (4) *The Journal of Policy History* 395, 399.

<sup>655</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 May 1933, vol 277, col 496 (Major Walter Elliot, Minister of Agriculture, Conservative).

general milk industry from the chaos and disaster that threaten it.’<sup>656</sup> It is therefore highlighted that as well as nourishing hungry children, the founding of the Milk Marketing Board, and subsequent Act, ‘was framed with this crisis in the dairy industry in mind.’<sup>657</sup> The milk crisis was partly caused by an increase in dairy trading within the Commonwealth which led to a national decline in the commercial viability of British milk. According to Conservative MP Lieut.-Colonel Heneage, ‘foreign countries do not want our exports to anything like the extent that they did. They are themselves becoming more self-supporting.’<sup>658</sup> As well as export decline there was also an issue with Britain importing goods from abroad that were readily available on home soil. Therefore, the Government took measures to:

... cut off the imports of foreign condensed milk ... at the same time we were building up a condensed milk industry at home. I do not think that we shall gain the maximum advantage by exchanging tins of condensed milk manufactured in this country for tins of condensed milk manufactured abroad.<sup>659</sup>

The main objective of the proposals, as cited by Labour MP David Grenfell, was to hope that ‘prosperity will soon come to the milk industry’ and he felt that ‘the utmost concentration should be upon the consumption of fresh milk.’<sup>660</sup> Thus, as Peter Atkins states, ‘School milk had entered the realm of high politics as a pawn in a game

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<sup>656</sup> Hansard HL Deb 10 March 1936, vol 99, col 949 (Sir George Newton, Lord Eltisley, Conservative).

<sup>657</sup> Peter Atkins, ‘Fattening Children or Fattening Farmers? School Milk in Britain, 1921-1941’ (2005) 58 *The Economic History Review* 57, 67.

<sup>658</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 July 1934, vol 292, col 117 (Lieut.-Colonel Heneage, Conservative).

<sup>659</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 July 1934, vol 292, col 51 (David Grenfell, Labour).

<sup>660</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 July 1934, vol 292, col 51 (David Grenfell, Labour).

with stakes much higher than had ever been envisaged at the outset in 1906.<sup>661</sup> From analysing the parliamentary debates of this period it is clear that the Government's agenda was twofold: To increase consumption of milk due to its argued health benefits, and to stabilise the milk industry. This combined the issues of health and economics. The Government justified regulating children and families through milk provision by utilising the tools of statistics, futurity, and law.

### 3) Effects

More than fifteen years following the first milk in schools study, experiments were still taking place in the 1930s to gather statistics on the benefits of children drinking milk. Conservative MP Viscountess Astor recalled:

... a controlled experiment on 8,000 elementary schoolchildren, conducted over a period of one year, proved that children who receive a ration of one-third of a pint of milk in addition to their normal diet show a greater increase in weight and height than children who do not receive this milk ration.<sup>662</sup>

The use of the words "controlled experiment" here highlights the necessity of the studies taking place within the site of the school. The regulation of children within the site of the school was important to assess which children drank milk against those that did not. This could not be assessed as accurately if milk was given at home.

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<sup>661</sup> Peter Atkins, 'School Milk in Britain, 1900–1934' (2007) 19 (4) *The Journal of Policy History* 395, 419.

<sup>662</sup> Hansard HC Deb 5 May 1938, vol 335, col 1017 (Nancy Witcher Langhorne, Viscountess Astor, Conservative).



The efforts made were cited in Parliament over the course of the 1930s. In 1930 the President of the Board of Education Sir C. Trevelyan stated that the National Milk Publicity Council scheme was, 'in operation in 82 areas, with the general approval and encouragement of the local education authorities concerned. A number of other authorities are providing milk meals under their arrangements for the provision of meals.'<sup>663</sup> The scheme to create milk-clubs was voluntary within schools and derived directly from the milk distributors. In 1931 it was stated, 'that the National Milk Publicity Council's scheme extends to upwards of 600,000 school children, or approximately 13 per cent. of the school population.'<sup>664</sup> A year later statistics were provided for both Local Education Authorities and National Milk Publicity Council schemes:

During the week ending the 23rd January last, 81 local education authorities in England and Wales were providing milk for school children under Sections 82 to 85 of the Education Act, 1921. My right hon. Friend understands from the National Milk Publicity Council that about 890,000 children are receiving milk under their schemes.<sup>665</sup>

In only one year an increase in the number of children being given milk in schools could be seen both under Local Education Authorities and under the National Milk

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<sup>663</sup> Hansard HC Deb 1 May 1930, vol 238, col 359 (Sir C. Trevelyan, President of the Board of Education, Labour).

<sup>664</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 May 1931, vol 252, col 1349 (Hastings Lees-Smith, President of the Board of Education, Labour).

<sup>665</sup> Hansard HC Deb 9 February 1932, vol 261, col 668 (Herwald Ramsbotham, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Conservative).

Publicity Council scheme. These figures are also supported by Bernard Harris who states that:

By the early-1930s, approximately 90,000 elementary-school children were receiving free milk under the Provision of Meals Acts, and around 800,000 were paying a penny a bottle under a scheme initiated by the National Milk Publicity Council in 1923.<sup>666</sup>

With the implementation of the government led Milk in Schools scheme the industry run National Milk Publicity Council ceased. By 31st March 1938 it was noted in Parliament that there were '5,035,506 children on the registers of the public elementary schools in England and Wales; of these 2,235,278 were receiving milk on payment at the reduced rate under the milk-in-schools scheme and 457,062 were receiving free milk.'<sup>667</sup> One year later Labour MP Kenneth Lindsay expanded on this point:

Ten years ago there were 82,000 children receiving free meals or milk. Last year there were 151,000 receiving free meals and 560,000 receiving free milk. I come to the second point about the number of authorities that are doing it. Ten years ago there were 132 authorities exercising any powers at all; to-day there are 270. That is double. There are 315 altogether, and 270 out of the 315 are exercising powers for the provision of milk or

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<sup>666</sup> Bernard Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State: Society, State and Social Welfare in England and Wales, 1800-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 215.

<sup>667</sup> Hansard HC Deb 8 December 1938, vol 342, col 1379W (Kenneth Lindsay, Labour).

meals.<sup>668</sup>

From this quotation it is clear that a greater number of Local Education Authorities were providing milk rather than solid meals to children deemed as necessitous. In a later debate Lindsay reiterated that of the Local Education Authorities providing for malnourished children, '127 provide milk only'.<sup>669</sup> This meant that although solid school meal provision was still patchy, a greater number of children had access to milk in schools. Atkins attributes many Local Education Authorities choosing to provide children with milk over solid food as, 'growing faith in the nutritional and health-giving qualities of milk is part of the explanation for this shift, coupled with lower overheads for the authorities.'<sup>670</sup> This stance highlights the combined issues of the health of children with economic concerns being behind the change in policy.

One issue was that free food and milk was not available as of right, another was that where it was offered uptake was not high. Although the figures cited in Parliament above regarding milk provision seem relatively healthy, when viewed as percentages they are actually rather low. During the period of 1938-1939, although a large proportion of Local Education Authorities were providing milk and meals in accordance with the 1921 Act, 'only 11.2 per cent of schoolchildren got free milk, 1.2 per cent got free meals, and 2.8 per cent got free meal and milk.'<sup>671</sup> This may have been in part due to availability, the criteria that children had to fulfil as detailed

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<sup>668</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1939, vol 345, col 1588 (Kenneth Lindsay, Labour).

<sup>669</sup> Hansard HC Deb 20 July 1939, vol 350, col 760W (Kenneth Lindsay, Labour).

<sup>670</sup> Peter Atkins, 'The Milk in Schools Scheme, 1934-45: 'Nationalization' and Resistance' (2005) 34 (1) *History of Education* 1, 5-6.

<sup>671</sup> 'Health of the School Child', 1938, London, HMSO, 1940, pp. 21-2 as quoted in John Welshman, 'School Meals and Milk in England and Wales 1906-45' (1997) 41 *Medical History* 6, 24.

below, or possibly the stigma attached to being from a poor family or highlighted directly as a hungry child.<sup>672</sup>

Barbara Drake, exploring possible reasoning behind the low uptake of free meals, states it was feared that, ‘many parents, through ignorance, a sense of false shame or – a very potent factor – because they fear that the cost of the food will be deducted against their public assistance allowance, do not apply for school meals.’<sup>673</sup> A method of combating this problem was cited by Drake as giving school meals to all children as ‘universal free meals does not destroy parental responsibility, but only *communalises* it.’<sup>674</sup> In this quotation Drake makes a similar argument to those mooted during the parliamentary debates analysed in the previous chapter. Universal school meals would not demolish parental responsibility but instead build responsibility for children into society. If children were to be educated for the good of society then it was the duty of society to feed *all* children, regardless of their bodily condition or parental economic status. This stance utilises the tool of futurity and legitimises state intervention within the family unit. There was concern not only that malnourished children would grow up to be unproductive workers, but also that they would be a drain on health resources if they got ill as adults due to poor nutrition as children. Drake notes that:

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<sup>672</sup> There is a separate issue regarding the stigma surrounding free school meals which is highlighted throughout the literature I refer to in this and other chapters. I have chosen not to expand on this at length however as it does not help to advance my explanation of the social, political, and economic reasons behind shifts in school meal legislation and policy.

<sup>673</sup> Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 12.

<sup>674</sup> *ibid* 15 [italics as per text].

...sooner or later, in one way or another, it is the State which must pay for underfeeding its children. If a child grows up underfed, the chances are heavy that it grows up a weakling and inefficient worker, or falls the victim of disease. What we save to-day on food, we are likely to spend many times over to-morrow on medical treatment and special schools, on sickness benefit and hospitals, on poor relief and charities, to say nothing of the lowered efficiency of the workers and the loss of working days.<sup>675</sup>

Here it is clear that children are perceived as “future” workers/citizens. Not only did provision of meals help to maintain healthy children, they also ensured a fit future workforce. This contention was coupled with the argument that mass feeding in schools, ‘provided under proper discipline in humane surroundings has, indeed, a civilising effect upon the children, who learn what a dinner ought to be and, when they grow up, make all the better fathers and mothers in consequence.’<sup>676</sup> Utilising the tool of surveillance, the behaviour of children could be watched whilst school feeding took place, and any “abnormal” behaviour could be replaced with that deemed as “normal”. Children would be objects of regulation, learning norms of behaviour within the site of the school. Using the notion of the family as agents, alongside futurity, children would then transfer, reproduce, and adhere to these State defined norms inside the home, both now, within their current family unit, and with their

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<sup>675</sup> *ibid* 16.

<sup>676</sup> *ibid*. Although here regulation manifests itself through the medium of school meals, the same argument for teaching children discipline can be traced back to the original motivation behind the Sunday school movement. Teaching manners through school meals was also previously mooted earlier in the twentieth century – Chapter 3, Part 3 (a).

future families when they themselves become parents. This would allow the public sphere of the State to continue to regulate the behaviour of working class families indirectly within the private domain of the home.

#### 4) Eligibility

The availability of milk was deemed to be beneficial to children. However, the issue of hunger affecting the schooling of underprivileged children was still a concern. During the financial crisis of 1931, in an attempt to save money, children could only receive free school meals and/or milk if 'they were both 'necessitous' and 'undernourished' (it had previously been assumed that meals might be given to those who were either in poverty *or* malnourished).'<sup>677</sup> This alteration in policy was justified due to a change in the country's finances. Therefore, fewer children than before were receiving free food and/or drink at school. A School Medical Officer stated:

"You must stop having free meals. You do not need them yet. When you have starved sufficiently to show signs of actual malnutrition, "however slight", come back for meals. Then you may have meals until malnutrition is cured, but only until then. After that you must have another period of trial starvation."<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>677</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 135 [italics as per text].

<sup>678</sup> SMO for Smethwick cited in Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 135.

To make matters more complicated, by 1934 the defining of poor children as eligible for free milk and food was no longer means tested and now subject to the opinion of individual school medical officers. The *body* of the child was to be observed on a larger scale as this was now to be the only method of deciding which children would get free school meals and/or milk. This interventionist approach gave the public sphere of the State legitimisation for greater invasion within the private sphere of the home. This resulted in further regulation of children and families as bodies were assessed rather than incomes which physically affected the child. Children who failed the medical test were those deemed as physically abnormal, this would put the family into the band for free school meals. If parents were deemed unable to feed their children, the State would step in to feed the children instead. The medical selection method was introduced as a fairer way of assessing a child's needs than considering parental wealth, but the system was criticised as flawed due to there being "no absolute standard" by which to identify hungry children,<sup>679</sup> and the decision being down to the said medical officer classifying each child on a predetermined 'scale that ranged from "good," "normal," "below normal," to "bad."' <sup>680</sup> When faced with a large group of children to assess, a doctor may 'confuse the *average* with the *normal*, so that the doctor's standard varies with a rise or fall in the proportion of ill-nourished children.'<sup>681</sup> Furthermore, the definition of malnutrition itself was not concrete. Section 3 of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906 stated that children 'unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for

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<sup>679</sup> James Vernon 'The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain' (2005) 110 (3) *The American Historical Review*, 693, 708.

<sup>680</sup> *ibid* 709.

<sup>681</sup> Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 10 [italics as per text].

them’,<sup>682</sup> whose parents were unable to pay, may have access to free school food. Unable to take full advantage of education due to lack of food is somewhat flexible and this meant that school medical officers from different schools were using different criteria to measure malnourishment, so the method of selection varied from area to area.

Debate also centred on the fact that, ‘routine medical examination takes place three times in a school child’s life – at 5 years of age, at 8 years of age, and at 12 years of age. Thus four years elapse between the second and third of these routine inspections. How can malnutrition be tested in that way?’<sup>683</sup> Tensions can be seen during the debates taking place in Parliament. Independent MP Eleanor Rathbone, who was against medical inspection as a form of assessment, cited a Medical Officer of Health as stating that: “‘We cannot register malnutrition like we can register birth or death. It is not an event but a process.’”<sup>684</sup> An unworkable solution advocated by Rathbone was medical inspection taking place ‘every year at least, and possibly every term.’<sup>685</sup> This would mean poor children would be under even greater surveillance and observation. As this would obviously cost more money to administer, the reintroduction of a means test to determine needy children was suggested as being a more just option. Rathbone argued that, ‘if the income scale was being worked out for the country and every child that came below it was given the privilege of free

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<sup>682</sup> Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906, s 3.

<sup>683</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, col 1058 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).

<sup>684</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, col 1059 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).

<sup>685</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, col 1059 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).



meals, that there would not be a single underfed child except where the under-feeding was the parents' fault, and then pressure could be brought to bear through the law.'<sup>686</sup> Labour MP Rhys Davies, who was also against medical inspection as a form of assessment, suggested that it was 'better to prevent children becoming ill rather than to deal with them after they are ill.'<sup>687</sup> This prevention rather than cure approach would have ensured that, on entering the school system, children who needed to be fed would have been, without waiting to be diagnosed as malnourished.

Although no system is without its faults, it seems that the earlier means test arrangement of highlighting poorer children in need was arguably fairer to all concerned, due to impartial prescribed criteria. With no set standard or guidelines to follow, the medical officer in one school may classify a child as hungry, when an officer in another school may not. Personal opinion alone is arguably not the most just and equal form of selection. However, evidently there are some conditions which could only be diagnosed by medical inspection, and this would have been lost if the assessment was income based. Counterargument in favour of medical inspection to determine necessitous children was put forward by Conservative MP Herwald Ramsbotham, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, who claimed that when medical officers assess children:

...showing signs of malnourishment or under-nourishment, it is not always due so much to poverty in the home as to the improper and inadequate diet that is supplied to them, though it

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<sup>686</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, col 1061 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).

<sup>687</sup> Hansard HC Deb 15 November 1934, vol 293, col 2125 (Rhys Davies, Labour).

is true that it may occur when the income of the home is not large enough to get many of the provisions that they should have ... taking the diet of all the classes of the community, too much in the way of cereals is consumed, and too little in the way of green vegetables ... a great deal could be done to diminish the evil of under-nourishment by better lessons in hygiene and cookery, and by better knowledge in the homes of the country as to what is the right diet, giving the proper supplies of vitamins and so forth.<sup>688</sup>

This quotation evidences, if this stance were followed, there was to be indirect invention within the private sphere of the home. The concept of agency is highlighted here as it is clear that Ramsbottom is suggesting that the site of the school would be the place for teaching hygiene and cookery and these norms would then be transferred, via the child, into the family home. The State would indirectly regulate families by promoting the desired norms of the “right diet” and using the site of the school and children as agents, transmit and reproduce norms within the family unit.

Further, the argument within the above quotation is interesting in as it is one of very few which stated there was not a class issue to poor nutritional behaviour. This focused on the fact that perhaps education was the key to why it appears that families did not understand (or have the opportunity to learn) good nutritional skills. Against this contention my previous research details that poorer families could not afford fresh vegetables and relied on cheaper food sources, whilst upper and middle classes were

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<sup>688</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, cols 1072-1073 (Herwald Ramsbotham, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Conservative).

more able to afford and maintain a better standard of nutrition. This was also mentioned by Grenfell during the same debate noted above, 'that green vegetables are much more expensive than cereals, and cannot be purchased by town dwellers who receive but small wages.'<sup>689</sup> It is the working classes who are not deemed to be adhering to the predetermined middle and upper class norms due to their perceived malnutrition because they were eating the "wrong" types of food. Thus, if this stance was followed, working class families would be those who were under greater regulation.

The argument that malnutrition and poor physical states were attributed to lack of nutrition and cookery knowledge were supported by Medical Officers in schools who noted that, "the real cause appeared to be improper feeding, there was a sufficiency of food of a kind, but of the wrong type ... The few that are under-fed do not suffer from lack of quantity but of quality of food, and this is not because of poverty."<sup>690</sup> The Chief Medical Officer commented that, "All the defects ... which may exist in diets in common use can be readily corrected by the addition of milk and green vegetables."<sup>691</sup> The words used within these quotations: "improper feeding", "wrong type", "lack of quality" and "readily corrected" imply that those families in need of regulation were deemed as abnormal and required correction to adhere to the prescribed norms. As noted above, this could be achieved through cookery and hygiene lessons taking place within the site of the school and the norms learnt here

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<sup>689</sup> Hansard HC Deb 17 July 1934, vol 292, col 1073 (David Grenfell, Labour).

<sup>690</sup> Hansard HC Deb 30 May 1934, vol 290, col 193 (Herwald Ramsbotham, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Conservative) quoting Medical Officers.

<sup>691</sup> Health of the School Child 1931 p.88 cited in Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 6.

could be transferred, via the child, into the family home where they could be reproduced.

As had been mooted during the milk in schools debates, local produce was deemed to be the best source of nutrition as it was better quality and cheaper to buy than imports.<sup>692</sup> The Chief Medical Officer disagreed with the lack of class barrier mentioned above and noted that, “the amount and quality of food are likely to vary with changes in the economic status of individuals, and the danger to the health of children resulting from reduction of income is to be sought for mainly in this sphere.”<sup>693</sup> Here the notion of quality over quantity is highlighted which sees an alteration in the reasoning behind *why* children are malnourished. This would consequently lead to a change in the requirements of school meals discussed later in this chapter.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>692</sup> For further analysis see Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 19-20.

<sup>693</sup> Health of the School Child 1931 p.88 cited in Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 8.

<sup>694</sup> Chapter 4, Part 2 (3) (d).

## PART 2

### World War II

“An army of children, clutching tiny bags, came out of the dark and pricked a nation’s conscience.”<sup>695</sup>

In this section I will highlight how the outbreak of war gave the State motivation and techniques of argumentation for greater regulation of working class children and their families through the necessity of rationing. The effects of this regulation will be analysed in the latter part of the section.

Between 1935 and 1945 there was a National/Conservative Government in power. It should be borne in mind that during the 1930s, the notion of a welfare state was somewhat different from that available today. Although the “malnourished child” was determined by medical inspection, if their parents were in need of state help then they would have had to either prove that they had contributed to national insurance, or undergone a means test.<sup>696</sup> The welfare available was ‘intended to be a minimum which could be supplemented by self-help.’<sup>697</sup> The Conservative “self help” philosophy underpins much of education legislation, especially where food provision is concerned. As explained previously, Conservative MPs in particular favour the presumption of preserving parental responsibility. The aid that was available in the 1930s apparently did little to relieve child poverty. G.C. Peden explains that in

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<sup>695</sup> Ben Wicks, *No Time to Wave Goodbye*, London: Bloomsbury, 1988: xi cited in Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 199.

<sup>696</sup> See G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 111.

<sup>697</sup> *ibid* 112.

Birmingham, '14 per cent of families and 30 per cent of children in the city had inadequate diets. Matters were undoubtedly worse in less prosperous communities.'<sup>698</sup> This, coupled with a reduction in the birth rate, led to renewed concerns about Britain's 'standing as a great power.'<sup>699</sup> The Government did little to address these concerns at this time.

## 1) Motivations

### a) Evacuation

During the Second World War the 'unsatisfactory' condition of working class children evacuated from urban centres to the country,<sup>700</sup> 'shocked public opinion and moved government to take "positive steps." Cheap or free school meals and milk were made available to all children and not, as hitherto, only to the "necessitous".'<sup>701</sup> However, although *all* children eventually benefited from these "positive steps", policy alteration was motivated by the poor. The shift in food provision occurred because poor children were more *visible* during wartime and could be surveyed and observed by not only officials, but also by the general public. When children are visible they become a greater issue for the State to address. This gave the State motivation to alter school food policy. It follows from this that closer regulation of poor children and their families ensued; as I will go on to explain.

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<sup>698</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>700</sup> Hansard HC Deb 7 March 1940, vol 358, col 576 (John Morgan, Labour).

<sup>701</sup> R. Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, HMSO (1950) pp.506-17 cited in G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 129.

Regarding child visibility Cunningham states that, 'with evacuation we are transported back into a world in which the children of the poor stand out by their differences to other children.'<sup>702</sup> As had been the case prior to the introduction of compulsory schooling, poor children were brought to the attention of the public. They were highlighted once again as being "different" to upper and middle class children. The same language that had been used in the nineteenth century was being used again. 'It became plain that many children had not been able to enjoy a proper childhood.'<sup>703</sup> That is a "proper" upper/middle class childhood. The poor children were viewed as "sub-human savages", knowing only 'the law of the jungle' and there was once again concern in London of children 'running about idle all day', and the Minister of Health expressed his concern about 'street Arabs.'<sup>704</sup> Here we see similar arguments as had been mooted during the late nineteenth century – that children should be in the 'disciplined environments of the home and the school, avoiding the dangerous intermediary between the two, the street.'<sup>705</sup> Again it is clear that the reality of poor children's lives was very different to the upper/middle class ideal of childhood. Therefore, the children of the poor were not deemed by the upper/middle classes to have a childhood at all.

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<sup>702</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 222.

<sup>703</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> T.L Crosby, *The Impact of Civilian Evacuation in the Second World War* (London, 1986), pp.35, 89-90 cited in Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 222.

<sup>705</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 231.

## 2) Techniques of Argumentation

The body *and* mind of the evacuees were of equal concern. The perception of poor children as threats was used as a tool of argument in favour of widespread school feeding. In Parliament, Conservative MP Captain Thornton-Kemsley noted that when the evacuated children arrived at their billets, they were, 'mostly in a very filthy and verminous condition and that many were very inadequately clad. Their habits were indescribable ... carpets, mattresses and bedding had had to be completely destroyed owing to the primitive habits of these evacuees.'<sup>706</sup> In this quotation the words "condition" and "habits" highlight that both the body (conditions) and mind (habits) of the evacuees were deemed as "abnormal". Hendrick explains that, 'urban children were alleged to be bodily verminous and mentally unstable. Such children, it was thought, had been lurking in the slums for generations, doing untold harm and, therefore, reform was urgently needed.'<sup>707</sup> Alongside the physically poor condition of the children, 'some 15,000-20,000 evacuees were classed as 'unbilletable' owing to temperamental and behavioural problems.'<sup>708</sup> Both the bodies and minds of the poor children are cited together as problematic. Donzelot's notion of children being both under threat (children in danger) and threatening (dangerous children) is brought to light here. On one hand the condition of the evacuees shows that they were deemed to be threatening to people whose homes they inhabited, and arguably a danger to wider society, both at present and in the future if their condition was not correctly managed.

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<sup>706</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 September 1939, vol 351, col 818 (Captain Thornton-Kemsley, Conservative/National Liberal).

<sup>707</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 131.

<sup>708</sup> *ibid* 5-6.



On the other hand, there was the threat that the evacuees were in danger themselves due to their poor mental and physical condition.

Once more parental inadequacies were to blame for the state of the poor children, as Rose notes, 'the appalling standards of inner-city children billeted out as evacuees brought to light the inadequacies of their mothers'.<sup>709</sup> The private sphere of the home became visible to the public sphere of the State. Blaming the poor for their own condition was not new. Similar culpability was mooted when compulsory schooling was first introduced as analysed in Chapter 2. However, failure on the part of the State was also brought to light. The condition of the evacuees highlighted 'the extent to which inter-war housing schemes had failed to eradicate the slums and related problems'.<sup>710</sup> Furthermore, the school medical service and provision of food in schools had evidently not made a visible impression on the health of the poor children. The conditions of the poor which had been a cause of public concern in the nineteenth century were evidently still a reality in the 1930s/1940s. Hendrick notes that, 'evacuation illuminated conditions common among the poor for generations, but which had been obscured in the dark shadows'.<sup>711</sup> The poor evacuees and their families were not deemed to be adhering to the physical and mental upper/middle class norms.

There were also reported issues with the evacuees not eating when they arrived at their foster homes. With regard to food, Liberal MP Clement Davies stated:

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<sup>709</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991) 144.

<sup>710</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989* (London: Routledge, 1994) 197.

<sup>711</sup> *ibid.*

... when they arrived, the children refused to eat; they were not accustomed to it. Apparently, they were accustomed to tinned foods, or it might be fish and chips, and when they were given soups, lamb, potatoes and beans, they refused them. Some of the mites thought that the beans were little black potatoes, seeing them for the first time, and they rejected them as something which they ought not to eat.<sup>712</sup>

The food offered to the poor evacuees mirrored that which was served in schools:

Clearly, especially before the expansion of the service in the 1940s, those in charge of school meals lived at a considerable social distance from those who ate them. The meals they provided—a relentless cycle of soups, stews, or meat scraps and two overcooked vegetables, followed by a generally stodgy pudding—bore a stronger resemblance to the typical diet of the lower middle class than to that of the laboring poor, for whom bread remained the staple of every meal, and meat appeared only on weekends.<sup>713</sup>

Collision between the upper/middle class ideal and working class reality became apparent on many levels during evacuation. The poor children did not look, nor behave, as upper/middle class adults expected them to. They did not eat the same foods. Furthermore, as had been mooted by Sir John Gorst in 1904, it was reinforced that children need to spend time with nature to enjoy a “proper” childhood. In 1939

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<sup>712</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 September 1939, vol 351, cols 842-843 (Clement Davies, Liberal).

<sup>713</sup> James Vernon ‘The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain’ (2005) 110 (3) *The American Historical Review* 693, 720.

the connection between childhood and nature was mooted by Labour MP Dr. Haden Guest: 'The children of the nation are its most important asset and we have an unprecedented opportunity now of dealing with those children under country conditions, where they can grow strong and well.'<sup>714</sup> Here there is the continuation of the perception of childhood freedom which equates to an upbringing in the country. Citing children as the "most important asset" of the nation utilises the tool of futurity alongside the perception of childhood innocence – the child raised at one with nature in order to nurture the future worker of the country. City children were deemed as being in need of "country conditions" in order to grow up to be useful to the nation as adults. As Cunningham notes, 'At one extreme is the search for order and discipline among children, at the other a burning desire to free and rescue them from intolerable outrages on childhood, whether at work or on the streets.'<sup>715</sup> By analysing the parliamentary debates during the wartime period, we see a link between the need to mould the poor child to the upper/middle class ideal of childhood - through allowing them regulated freedom (country living); whilst also teaching them discipline within the site of the school - so that they learnt middle and upper class social norms.

Alongside concern for the poor condition of evacuees, it was argued that wider provision of school meals would 'relieve the housekeeping burden on the billeting foster-mother.'<sup>716</sup> Furthermore, 'A midday school meal ... also made it easier for women with children to work.'<sup>717</sup> Due to food rationing and mothers being employed

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<sup>714</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 September 1939, vol 351, col 831 (Dr. Haden Guest, Labour).

<sup>715</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 232.

<sup>716</sup> Barbara Drake, *Community Feeding in Wartime* (London: Victor Gollancz and The Fabian Society, 1942) 5.

<sup>717</sup> Richard Rose & Peter Falconer, 'Individual Taste or Collective Decision? Public Policy on School Meals' (1992) 21, 3 *Journal of Social Policy* 349, 351.

in the war effort, school meals could serve a purpose of feeding hungry children for their physical as well as their mental sakes. This was a radical change from previous law and policy which had cited the need for the provision of school meals to be so that malnourished children could benefit from their education. Here we see the nation concerned for the *bodies* and *minds* of all children – not merely the half starved. By encompassing all children this gave the State legitimisation for greater invention, greater regulation, and greater control. On one hand this meant that many of the poor children who would not have received school meals prior to the war would now be fed. There was wider comprehension that distinguishing necessitous children did not have the desired effect of helping all those who were needy. On the other hand, more children would be captured within the school feeding programme and therefore justified as being under surveillance. By feeding additional children the State had wider scope for regulating the nutritional consumption of more families and observing their children as a result. Surveillance, perceptions of childhood and the notion of futurity were utilised as tools for legitimising increasing regulation of the family. The political pendulum swung away from medical inspection back in favour of a means tested method by which to determine the children who were in need of free school meals. However, even those outside of this remit would now be catered for. The overall policy in war-time was to provide subsidised or free school meals and milk that were appetising and nutritious for all children.

#### a) Centralised Control

Following the outbreak of war in 1939, the Government began to take centralised control of public access to certain foods as part of a wider programme for war-time.

‘The Ministry of Food took over the operation of the MISS [Milk in Schools Scheme] in 1940.’<sup>718</sup> The Ministry also:

... established a communal meals division and increasingly school meals were viewed as part of an integrated policy on nutrition ... by July 1941, Board of Education officials were beginning to envisage universal school meals as a permanent feature of the education system.<sup>719</sup>

A universal school meals policy meant that mass regulation could be made possible with all children being catered for by the State. In 1941 the Board of Education published nutritional guidelines for Local Education Authorities which detailed that school meals should provide children with most of the calories, protein, and fat that they required daily. Conservative MP Richard Austen Butler, President of the Board of Education, explained there was a ‘wish to see that a high standard of nutrition among school children is secured and maintained under war-time conditions. An active campaign ... resulted in doubling the number of children receiving mid-day meals daily.’<sup>720</sup> This was due to rationing and the anticipated absence of gaining the recommended nutrients from meals at home. Nan Berger notes that, ‘During the war-time rationing the standard of school meals was kept up ... the school meals programme, not yet a service, got extra rations of meat, fats, milk and preferential

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<sup>718</sup> Peter Atkins, ‘The Milk in Schools Scheme, 1934-45: ‘Nationalization’ and Resistance’ (2005) 34 (1) *History of Education*, 1, 19 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>719</sup> John Welshman, ‘Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War: Myth and Reality’ (1998) 9 (1) *Twentieth Century British History*, 28, 47.

<sup>720</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 October 1941, vol 374, col 1630 (Richard Austen Butler, President of the Board of Education, Conservative).

buying of unrationed items such as fruit and fish.’<sup>721</sup> Furthermore, milk was available free of charge for necessitous children paid for by the Exchequer.<sup>722</sup>

### 3) Effects

#### a) Kitchens and Dining Halls

The State needed to ensure that the schools children were sent to upon evacuation were equipped to deal with increased feeding demands. At this time the meals were being ‘carried in trays into classrooms and ... served in crowded halls.’<sup>723</sup> Children who were eligible for free food used to have different meals from paying pupils and these were often served off site. The expansion of food provision in schools and lack of facilities led to the creation of onsite kitchens, canteens, and dining halls. Central kitchens were built ‘to supply the many schools where no facilities for cooking were available’.<sup>724</sup> The high increase in not only food availability, but also provision of eating facilities, was hailed as ‘the foundation of a real nutritional policy.’<sup>725</sup> Conservative MP Richard Austen Butler explained:

In future the school day will not be interrupted by those going home for the mid-day meal. There will be none sitting in

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<sup>721</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 48-49.

<sup>722</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 21 October 1941, vol 374, col 1631 (Richard Austen Butler, President of the Board of Education, Conservative).

<sup>723</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1115 (Richard Austen Butler, Conservative).

<sup>724</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 17.

<sup>725</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1116 (Richard Austen Butler, Conservative).

corners, eating their damp and crumpled sandwiches. No longer will some pay pennies, while others do not ... the canteen arrangements will make school life more lively and children most robust.<sup>726</sup>

The shift here meant not only that more children would be catered for but that they would be treated equally – having onsite meal facilities available during the school day regardless of whether they paid for their food or were given free meals. This highlights that the aim for mass regulation of the feeding of schoolchildren was being realised.

However, during wartime there was merging of school canteens with community feeding centres which led to criticism that, ‘The children’s needs are said to be sacrificed to those of adults’.<sup>727</sup> Akin to the situation where children were required to work during World War I to aid the war effort, here again we can see the boundaries between the world of children and the world of adults becoming unclear. Drake explains that, ‘The children are, as far as possible, accommodated in separate rooms, or sit at separate tables.’<sup>728</sup> So there was still acknowledgement of children’s difference from adults, yet recognition that during wartime the boundaries between adults and children are sometimes blurred. As the State became more involved in the private sphere of the family there was a shift away from local governance. Nan Berger states that:

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<sup>726</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1116 (Richard Austen Butler, Conservative).

<sup>727</sup> Barbara Drake, *Community Feeding in Wartime* (London: Victor Gollancz and The Fabian Society, 1942) 7.

<sup>728</sup> *ibid* 8.

‘As the war progressed the government became more and more involved in the organisation of school meals, linking it with plans for feeding in a war emergency. The local authorities took less part in the control of school meals and gradually the service became a national, not a local one.’<sup>729</sup>

The objectives of central control of school feeding were twofold. Firstly, it was deemed necessary to aid the war effort. Communities were expected to pull together in a time of crisis as can be witnessed through combining school canteens with community feeding centres. Secondly, by the State taking control of school meals it could ease the burden on families, particularly those fostering evacuees as noted above. This gave the State greater scope for regulating the eating habits of children directly, in a top down approach. However, the norms taught by feeding within the canteens would still be created and dispersed locally, via the site of the school, into the family home in a less hierarchical manner.

#### b) Legislation

The motivations and techniques of argumentation behind altering education and school food policy were secured by the tool of law. As had occurred during the First World War, education was once again brought to the attention of the country and Government intentions for after the war were outlined. In the Green Book private memorandum *Education After the War* dated 1941, the Government stated that post-war they foresaw:

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<sup>729</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 108.



“... establishing a state of society where the advantages and privileges, which had been enjoyed only by the few, should be far more widely shared ... [there was] an urgent need, in the interests of the industrial and commercial prosperity of the country, to secure an improved system of technical and commercial training.”<sup>730</sup>

This quotation centres on two premises: The first, that ‘the nature of a child’s education should be determined by his capacity and promise and not by the financial circumstances of his parent.’<sup>731</sup> This meant that education should be made available to children with ability as the standard rather than their class. As previously mooted during post World War I reform, there was hope that people would experience a “better life” than they had previously with greater opportunities provided for the lower classes. The reforms aimed ‘to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life.’<sup>732</sup> The second premise follows the reasoning observed during First World War education policy, that the outbreak of war encourages solidarity but also raises concern over the state of national efficiency when judged alongside foreign counterparts. The quotation highlighted at the outset of the 1943 White Paper Educational Reconstruction states, “Upon the education of the people of this country

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<sup>730</sup> Education After the War 1941 in N. Middleton and S. Weitzman, *A Place for Everyone* (1976) pp. 391, 407-8 cited in G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 133 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>731</sup> Board of Education, White Paper: *Educational Reconstruction* (Cmd 6458, 1943) para 20.

<sup>732</sup> *ibid* para 1.

the fate of this country depends.”<sup>733</sup> The notion of futurity was central to educational reform.

Changes were cemented by the implementation of the Education Act 1944 which was enacted under a Coalition Government led by Winston Churchill and replaced most previous education legislation. Under the Act it was a parent’s duty to ensure their children aged between 5 and 15 years received full time education.<sup>734</sup> This raised the school leaving age by one year. Education became free in state maintained schools.<sup>735</sup> A three tier system was introduced, ‘to be known as primary education, statutory secondary education, and further education’.<sup>736</sup> This was aimed at allowing working class children access to higher levels of education as mooted in Parliament above.<sup>737</sup>

It was the responsibility of Local Education Authorities, ‘to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.’<sup>738</sup> Here the welfare of the whole child – body and mind – seemed to be the focus within the Act but for the good of society. In addition, there was a duty placed on Local Education Authorities to provide for medical inspection and treatment,<sup>739</sup> plus also to make available recreational and physical training

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<sup>733</sup> *ibid* page 1.

<sup>734</sup> Education Act 1944, s 35 and s 36.

<sup>735</sup> Education Act 1944, s 61.

<sup>736</sup> Education Act 1944, s 7.

<sup>737</sup> Until this point whenever I have made reference to state schooling I have been referring to Elementary schools. Hereafter, where necessary, a distinction will be made between Primary and Secondary schools which became the sites of regulation for children of compulsory school age.

<sup>738</sup> Education Act 1944, s 7.

<sup>739</sup> Education Act 1944, s 48.

facilities such as playgrounds and playing fields.<sup>740</sup> Food provision is set out in section 49 and puts forth a duty for Local Education Authorities to provide school meals and milk for pupils in maintained schools either free, subject to means testing, or paid for by parents. The provisions of the 1944 Act 'could be seen as an extension of the rights of childhood.'<sup>741</sup> Arguably by keeping children within the sphere of the school for an extra year it also prolonged the state of childhood because they were separated from the adult world for longer.

Raising the leaving age by a year also imposed further duties and obligations on both parents and children to ensure children were in school for a greater period of time. Indeed, the White Paper stated that, 'The parent's duty will no longer be confined to causing his child to be efficiently instructed in the three R's; his duty will be to cause his child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age and aptitudes.'<sup>742</sup> This highlights that the Government maintained that both the State and the family had responsibilities towards the child. Through sharing responsibilities, the State regulated children and families by firstly, obligating parents to ensure that their children were educated for longer, and secondly, by reinforcing norms and perceived standards. If children fell below the ideal standard, the State would intervene. For example, under Section 48 of the Act, medical inspection and treatment became the duty of Local Education Authorities. Utilising the tool of surveillance, children were observed by the State and, if deemed "abnormal", the State would treat them.

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<sup>740</sup> Education Act 1944, s 53.

<sup>741</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 224.

<sup>742</sup> Board of Education, White Paper: *Educational Reconstruction* (Cmd 6458, 1943) para 24.

Families were obligated to adhere to the prescribed norms to keep their children away from direct state intervention.

c) “Free For All”

In 1944 there was debate in Parliament to make milk and meals free to all children so as to raise the nutritional standards of the country. It was argued by Labour MP Mr. John Parker that:

The growth of the school meals service has led to a great raising of the nutritional standards of school children, not only because the children have been fed at school, but because parents have copied the school in providing foods which children have grown to like at school ... if you have school meals ... for all children ... you will get a healthier population as a whole, while, as a result, the children will benefit far more from the education given them.<sup>743</sup>

Here Parker shows that previous motivation for a healthier population had had the desired effect. In the above quotation it is highlighted that the norms created within the site of the school were being transferred by children, into the family unit, and reproduced within the home. By stating that “parents have copied the school” Parker is explaining that school meals acted as a medium to improve the health of children and families. Parker’s argument also highlights that during this period there was concern for both *body* and *mind* by using the statements: “healthier population”

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<sup>743</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1944, vol 398, col 1150 (John Parker, Labour).

(body), and “children will benefit far more” from their education (mind). This follows the notion of futurity – children as future workers/citizens – if they can benefit from their education, and are healthy, they will be effective workers as adults.

Parker’s argument for expanding school food provision would provide the State with greater scope for regulation of more families in the same manner. Expansion was supported by Labour MP Dr. Haden Guest who explained that by giving malnourished children free food there creates ‘two classes of children – those who pay for their meals and those who do not.’ Thus, ‘we ought to parallel free education with free meals at school.’<sup>744</sup> The subject of singling out poor children from their peers was this time cited as reason for giving free meals to all. This was further clarified by Labour MP Arthur Woodburn’s reasoning that under the current means testing system, ‘children who ought to have the meals will not take them because they do not want to humiliate themselves ... Children are cruel to children and if any child is necessitous, other children do not mind reminding it of the fact in the playground ... Johnny would say to Tommy, in the playground, “You have free meals.”’<sup>745</sup> Another argument from Eleanor Rathbone, who was in favour of the principle of school meals, was that providing school meals and milk would be ‘slow in coming into operation; ... very costly ... will meet less than half the food needs of the child.’<sup>746</sup> Rathbone instead mooted a children’s allowance being paid to mothers.<sup>747</sup> This stance was

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<sup>744</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1944, vol 398, col 1152 (Dr. Haden Guest, Labour).

<sup>745</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1944, vol 398, col 1156 (Arthur Woodburn, Labour).

<sup>746</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, cols 1172-1173 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).

<sup>747</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, cols 1171-1174 (Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for English Universities).

linked to poverty being somewhat dependant on family size.<sup>748</sup> As shown during my analysis of these debates, the MPs argued from different perspectives, they had different agendas, and consequently mooted different solutions.

Whereas arguments in favour of free school meals for all children came from predominantly Labour MPs, arguments against universal free school food came from the Conservatives. Arthur Colegate stated, 'do not let it go forth that the majority of parents do not feed their children adequately'.<sup>749</sup> By taking the stance that all children required free food regardless of poverty was to assume that all parents did not, rather than could not, feed their own children. Captain Edward Cobb also mooted that universal free school meals would 'remove the responsibilities of parents'.<sup>750</sup> This argument had also been utilised during debates when school meals were first introduced.<sup>751</sup>

Making use of statistics, figures detailing the number of children receiving school meals were cited by Conservative MP Richard Austen Butler in 1944 as having 'risen in the last three years from 300,000 to 1,600,000',<sup>752</sup> and milk had 'despite the difficulties of the war, been provided in 27,000 out of 28,000 schools'.<sup>753</sup> The Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education stated that, 'The past ten years have seen not only a great increase in the number of children taking meals at school, but the

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<sup>748</sup> See G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 112.

<sup>749</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1944, vol 398, col 1155 (Arthur Colegate, Conservative).

<sup>750</sup> Hansard HC Deb 23 March 1944, vol 398, col 1155 (Captain Edward Cobb, Conservative).

<sup>751</sup> Chapter 3, Part 2 (2) (a).

<sup>752</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1114 (Richard Austen Butler, Conservative).

<sup>753</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1115 (Richard Austen Butler, Conservative).

development of the service out of all recognition. Between 1939 and 1949 the school meals service multiplied roughly seventeen times.<sup>754</sup> These statistics highlight that the *motivations* behind the expansion of the provision of school food had produced the required *effect*. More children were being fed by the State and more families were being exposed to the desired norms. Nan Berger notes that, 'By 1948 there was such great pressure on school kitchens because so many families were sending their children to school for dinner ... The continuation of rationing had something to do with the demand because when rationing finished in 1954 the demand decreased.'<sup>755</sup> However, school meals had become part of children's daily lives, the aim mooted during my analysis of debates earlier in this section of the chapter.<sup>756</sup> Berger develops this point:

With the formalisation of the school meals service under the 1944 Education Act, the service was envisaged as a national one, with national standards, national rates of pay and national meal prices. The Act confirmed the school meals service as an integral part of the educational day.<sup>757</sup>

John Burnett expands further by arguing that, 'the whole concept of school meals shifted from a mainly free service to a small number of very poor children towards a universal provision for all children in school, the great majority of whom would pay a

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<sup>754</sup> Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *The Health of the School Child for the Years 1948 and 1949* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1952) 12.

<sup>755</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 65.

<sup>756</sup> Chapter 4, Part 2 (2).

<sup>757</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 28.

nominal amount for a heavily subsidised midday meal.’<sup>758</sup> This saw an alteration in the way school food was viewed as noted above. Instead of school food being reserved for the hungry malnourished child, it became a service available for *all* children. There was a general philosophy that, ‘It is better to go to a school and have a hot meal than just to take an old, crumbling sandwich’.<sup>759</sup> The effect of this stance was that a greater number of children were having their food intake regulated. Wartime school food policy not only consolidated concern over bodies and minds; it also attempted to alleviate the condition of the working classes at large, rather than solely families deemed as within poverty as had been the case prior to the outbreak of World War II. This was for the benefit of lower class families themselves, and also for society as a whole, as future adults would be healthy capable citizens and would not be a drain on resources.

#### d) Nutrition

In 1945 the Provision of Milk and Meals Regulations detailed that the food provided on school days should be a midday meal and pupils should receive at least one third of a pint of milk daily. If school meals were paid for by parents, they must be available at cost price for food and one halfpenny for milk. The meals had to be nutritional and ‘adequate in quantity and quality ... well prepared and cooked, and shall be served decently and in good condition.’<sup>760</sup> Here both quantity and *quality* is noted. This was a shift from pre-war policy where quantity was the only standard advocated so as

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<sup>758</sup>John Burnett, ‘The Rise and Decline of School Meals in Britain, 1860-1990’ in John Burnett & Derek J. Oddy (eds), *The Origins and Development of Food Policies in Europe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994) 65.

<sup>759</sup> Hansard HC Deb 3 November 1944, vol 404, col 1158 (Kenneth Lindsay, National Labour).

<sup>760</sup> Provision of Milk and Meals Regulations 1945, SI 698, s 8 (1).



to increase children's calorie consumption. There had been developments in nutritional science and 'Vitamins replaced calories as the basis for good nutrition'.<sup>761</sup> This change in policy was therefore due to an increase in nutritional knowledge and the role this plays in public health which altered the focus of Parliament.

The teaching of nutrition in schools was advocated by Labour MP Ellen Cecily Wilkinson, Minister of Education, for children receiving secondary education, 'particularly through such subjects as housecraft, hygiene and other branches of science. Younger children will learn valuable practical lessons through the school meals and milk service.'<sup>762</sup> Again this appeared to consider the whole child and teaching schoolchildren skills required for their future adulthood. This combines the notion of futurity with the creation of norms. Within the site of the school children would learn skills (norms) which they would take into the home and recreate within the family.

In an interventionist measure to promote the health of schoolchildren, on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1946, under a Labour Government, school milk was made available free of charge for all pupils.<sup>763</sup> Labour MP Percy Henry Collick, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, explained that this strategy was implemented because, 'in the absence and shortage of meat it was desirable to divert the utmost quantity of liquid

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<sup>761</sup> L. Margaret Barnett, *British Food Policy During the First World War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985) 217.

<sup>762</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 November 1945, vol 416, col 742W (Ellen Cecily Wilkinson, Minister of Education, Labour).

<sup>763</sup> Provision of Free Milk Regulations 1946, SI 1293.

milk to school children.’<sup>764</sup> Although milk was a scarce resource during the war, for the reasons mentioned by Collick, there had been ‘the deliberate policy of the Government to divert increasing quantities of milk to schools.’<sup>765</sup> A Family allowance was also paid at a rate of ‘5s. per child for second and further children.’<sup>766</sup> It was set at this low rate due to the assumption that, ‘free school meals and milk would make up the difference.’<sup>767</sup> This highlights the inclination towards state rather than parental controlled regulation of child feeding, with the Government taking responsibility for the food provided for children during school time. By deliberately keeping the allowance rate low, the Government aimed to persuade families to let their children partake in school meals where the content of the meal was controlled by the State. Money was utilised as a tool of influence. By regulating the amount of money paid to families, the State was indirectly controlling the decisions families could make regarding their children’s feeding.

Post 1944, when food began being served in house, school cooks (on Local Educational Authorities’ advice) had some say over the school dinner menu. Children and parents had no choice as to content, all meals were equal in quality and quantity, and children sat together at tables. This established school meals as not only food based for aiding concentration in class (mind) as had occurred during the implementation of school meals in 1906; nor solely for the benefit of a child’s

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<sup>764</sup> Hansard HC Deb 25 February 1946, vol 419, col 1674 (Percy Henry Collick, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Labour).

<sup>765</sup> Hansard HC Deb 25 February 1946, vol 419, col 1674 (Percy Henry Collick, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Labour).

<sup>766</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 146.

<sup>767</sup> *ibid.*

physical health (body) as had been the aim of the provision of milk in schools; Wartime and post war provision was concerned with the child as a whole – physically and mentally. It follows that with the *whole child* being the focus of school meals policy and *all* children being encompassed by the new arrangements, that there was greater regulation of children and families as a result.

## PART 3

### Wider Considerations – Futurity and Class

Post-war education policy mirrored school food provision by continuing to aim at benefiting both the *body* and *mind* of the child. The Ministry of Education noted that at the heart of philosophy underpinning policy at this time was, “the development of the whole child.”<sup>768</sup> The themes of health and wellbeing also manifested themselves outside the site of the school and were distributed more widely. Pursuant to the Education Act 1944, the Family Allowances Act was passed in 1946, and this was followed by the ‘Children Act 1948 and the formation of the Children’s Service. This legislation created the Children’s Departments which were to be organisationally separate from the other departments.’<sup>769</sup> The passing of child focussed Acts highlighted ‘the importance of childhood in the making of the welfare state.’<sup>770</sup> Alongside welfare measures that were designed to benefit the whole of society, such as the formation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948, children were recognised as having separate needs from adults and were being catered for in their own right. Building on feelings of post-war social solidarity, the Government passed ‘welfare policies which reflected a more liberal and humane approach,’<sup>771</sup> so as not to return to the pre-war social conditions which had been highlighted by evacuation during the war.

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<sup>768</sup> Ministry of Education (1947) *The New Secondary Education*. London: HMSO. 31, 22 cited in Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) 26.

<sup>769</sup> Nick Frost & Mike Stein, *The Politics of Child Welfare: Inequality, Power and Change* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) 33.

<sup>770</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Books, 2006) 197.

<sup>771</sup> Nick Frost & Mike Stein, *The Politics of Child Welfare: Inequality, Power and Change* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) 33.

However, these measures gave the State more opportunities for regulation. If children received separate services to adults, this gave the State occasion to collect statistics from children alone, then utilise the information gathered to alter policy to regulate families further. Surveillance and statistics could be utilised as tools to legitimise public intervention in the family unit. Additionally, as the site of the school was not the only medium available for the regulation of children and families, the State could intervene via different sites and vehicles. For example, health visitors, as agents for the State, could access families directly within the sphere of the home, transmitting norms of health and education. This gave greater scope for increasing involvement within the family unit.

It could be said that despite the aim of a three tier system of education being implemented so that a child's education should be based on ability and aptitude rather than parental wealth, as explained during analysis of the 'Educational Reconstruction' White Paper above,<sup>772</sup> working class children were still attending inferior educational establishments to their middle class counterparts. Indeed, the White Paper stated that due to the 'various talents' children are gifted.<sup>773</sup>

The new educational opportunities must not, therefore, be of a single pattern. Schools and courses must be available to suit the needs and aptitudes of different types of pupil or student. It is

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<sup>772</sup> Chapter 4, Part 2 (3) (b).

<sup>773</sup> Board of Education, White Paper: *Educational Reconstruction* (Cmd 6458, 1943) para 1.

just as important to achieve diversity as it is to ensure equality  
of educational opportunity.<sup>774</sup>

Using the notion of futurity and the perception of the child as “future” worker/citizen, the White Paper highlights that the three tier system was actually a tool utilised to justify placing children in the best location to achieve their destined outcomes in life. As I highlighted during analysis of schooling in the nineteenth century,<sup>775</sup> children were educated to fulfil a pre-determined role in adulthood, decided by their class. This was still occurring in the 1940s.

Taking this stance Sally Tomlinson argues that, ‘the 1944 Act largely benefitted middle class children, along with a small number of selected working class children.’<sup>776</sup> Children were still largely kept in their place determined by their class. This was because of the separation of secondary education into grammar schools and secondary moderns. ‘Those students who did demonstrate marked technical ability could develop it in the academic context of the grammar school. Those whose technical aptitude was of a more immediately practical kind would be better off in the craft classes of the secondary modern.’<sup>777</sup> Tomlinson notes that, ‘from 1946 some 80 per cent of mainly working class children were placed in secondary modern schools with inferior resources and less well qualified staff.’<sup>778</sup> Thus, ‘the culture of

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<sup>774</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2.

<sup>776</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 3.

<sup>777</sup> Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) 49.

<sup>778</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 12.

secondary education served to consolidate and reproduce class differences.<sup>779</sup> This was further emphasised by the grammar school curriculum being ‘based on the subjects laid down by the 1904 Board of Regulations, which derived from the nineteenth century public schools curriculum.’<sup>780</sup> Whereas the curriculum in secondary modern schools, ‘was oriented to practical and craft subjects.’<sup>781</sup> To further reinforce the child’s role as “future” worker, British society required ‘an adequate supply of trained manpower’,<sup>782</sup> and ‘The post-war government was concerned to provide the workforce desperately needed for economic reconstruction and it made economic sense to hurry as many working class young people through their education and into waiting jobs at 15 as possible.’<sup>783</sup> This stance is based upon the notion of futurity utilised alongside an argument for necessity to justify policy implemented during this period.

With Labour back in power (1945–1951) Peden argues that there was no plan to give immediate control of the economy back to the people following the war because, ‘Labour believed that a planned economy would work better than a market economy.’<sup>784</sup> This meant that the State kept direct regulation and control over citizens. Alongside this, the Labour Government began to nationalise industry

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<sup>779</sup> Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) 59.

<sup>780</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 13.

<sup>781</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>782</sup> John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973) 428.

<sup>783</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 12.

<sup>784</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 138.

including The Bank of England, coal, railways, electricity, gas, and steel.<sup>785</sup> Measures were also taken to move the idea of a welfare state forward in order to combat post-war unease about the economy whilst feelings of community solidarity were still high. As noted above, in education there were plans to improve schools and create 'equality of opportunity.'<sup>786</sup> However, following the war there was not a great deal of money available for public expenditure. To boost the economy, finance was generated through national insurance contributions, high taxes and local rates. Therefore, Peden contends that 'Labour's welfare state could thus be seen as largely working-class self-help organised by the state.'<sup>787</sup> In a similar manner to Foucault's notion of self discipline, the working classes were funding their own welfare at a local level directed by the State. It would evidently take time for the economy to recover and for improvements to be made within education and this could only be done 'if the majority of the electorate continued to favour social service expenditure.'<sup>788</sup> As mentioned during analysis of policy after World War I,<sup>789</sup> the working classes generally appeared in favour of any welfare strategy which would aid them. Nonetheless, as standards of living began to increase after the war, so did expectations of what the State should provide in terms of welfare benefit.

As explained previously, until this point any welfare available was a bare minimum to aid those poorest in society so that they had the opportunity to be fed, coupled with clothing, and housing to survive. However, changes in social opinions now saw a shift in thinking from conditions of absolute poverty to relative poverty. Poverty as

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<sup>785</sup> See *ibid* 140.

<sup>786</sup> *ibid* 150.

<sup>787</sup> *ibid* 151.

<sup>788</sup> *ibid* 152.

<sup>789</sup> Chapter 3, Part 3 (b).



perceived in previous decades, although still seen in a few families, 'had been greatly reduced by 1951, thanks to full employment and to the welfare state.'<sup>790</sup> Lawson and Silver also state that, 'Full employment, social security and economic growth had all contributed to generally higher standards, in what became labelled at the end of the 1950s "the affluent society"'. It was also to an increasing extent a consumer society, at all levels.'<sup>791</sup> Absolute poverty was gradually being replaced by a new dilemma facing poor people – feeling that they had to provide more for their families and keep up to date with social trends in an increasingly affluent society. Hence, 'goods and amenities formerly seen as 'luxuries' have now come to be regarded as necessities'.<sup>792</sup> Perhaps best described as material rather than physical poverty, many poor people were no longer going hungry for want of food but being materially starved of the ability to buy the latest designer gadget. In an increasingly consumer driven society needs were being replaced by wants:

It was natural that working-class people should aspire to own a car, a refrigerator, a television or a washing machine, and the fact that the state provided free or subsidised services for health, education and housing released private spending power for the purchase of consumer durables.<sup>793</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 186-187.

<sup>791</sup> John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1973) 426-427.

<sup>792</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 147.

<sup>793</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 186.

However, taxation at this time did not often leave low wage earners enough money to buy their “necessitous luxuries.” To rectify the post-war economic condition, taxes were kept high, and ‘inflation brought more and more people with relatively low incomes above the tax threshold.’<sup>794</sup>

When the Conservatives came to power in 1951 they pledged to improve education. The economy had improved into the 1950s and more money was being spent on schooling. This was allegedly due, ‘partly from national policies on education and ... partly the inevitable result of demographic change, since there were more children.’<sup>795</sup> There had not only been a rise in the number of children being born due to the post-war “baby boom,” but by raising the school leaving age to 15 years there was now an extra year of schooling to fund. For the Conservative Government, ‘the most urgent problem in education since the war had been to provide for the huge rise in the school roll. Between 1955 and 1960 the Party had sought to provide at least another million new school places, mostly in secondary schools.’<sup>796</sup> The motivation behind improving education was more children requiring access to the site of school, where they could be regulated through the teaching of norms, which they would subsequently transfer into the family home both present and future.

In the 1960s the belief ‘that modern economies needed more and better educated people, was beginning to shape policy and practice.’<sup>797</sup> This idea was based on

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<sup>794</sup> *ibid* 191.

<sup>795</sup> *ibid* 179.

<sup>796</sup> Christopher Knight, *The Making of Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain 1950-1986* (London: The Falmer Press, 1990) 17.

<sup>797</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 16-17.

futurity. Tomlinson notes that, 'governments around the world were beginning to recognize the need for expanded education systems ... The Conservative Government of the early 1960s recognized that educating more young people to higher levels was an economic necessity.'<sup>798</sup> This was another motive behind improving education. Children were still being seen as future workers in the 1960s: 'economic pressure on education grew as economic decline set in, and it [the State] was under increasing pressure to justify its potential contribution to national economic development through the identification and preparation of skilled personnel.'<sup>799</sup> The demands of the British employer:

... grow every year for better educated entrants to all occupations. He is discovering, that industry needs more than a few top-level experts; these men require to be supported by technicians and sub-professional grades in far greater numbers, than we have to-day. As the President of the Board of Trade will confirm, the prospect of entry into the Common Market has much accelerated the demand for better education at the technical level, which is itself dependent on better education in the schools. If then we slow down the rate of educational advance, we shall be going counter to one of the clearest and loudest demands of British industry.<sup>800</sup>

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<sup>798</sup> *ibid* 15.

<sup>799</sup> Roger Dale, *The State and Education Policy* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989) 103 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>800</sup> Cabinet Memorandum, Education Policy, Memorandum by the Minister of Education, 4 January 1962, C. (62) 5, para 4.

Comprehensive schooling became national policy in 1965 under Harold Wilson's Labour Government,<sup>801</sup> along with an ideology to pave the way for 'greater equality in the sense that it would now be possible for large numbers of working-class children to move into "white collar" occupations or proceed to higher education.'<sup>802</sup> Despite the 1944 philosophy of education for all, followed by the notion of a comprehensive system which saw 'a wider mix of social classes' within the schools,<sup>803</sup> there maintained the issue previously noted that middle class parents were opting for "better" schools for their children's education. Therefore:

... since many middle-class parents were willing to pay premium prices for houses in the catchment areas of 'good' comprehensives (usually ex-grammar schools), it is not clear that comprehensives really did very much to bring the social classes together.<sup>804</sup>

Here it is clear that there is a link between occupational changes within society and increased demand for education. The demand came from industry and influenced politics. Politics in turn reinforced a perception of childhood by reaffirming the child's role as "future" worker which was utilised in debates over alteration of educational policy. Arguably the "future" worker role, despite Labour's attempts at equality of opportunity, was still predetermined by the child's class.

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<sup>801</sup> Circular 10/65 (Labour).

<sup>802</sup> Clyde Chitty, *Education Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 11.

<sup>803</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 185.

<sup>804</sup> *ibid.*

## 1) Motivations

### a) Nutritional Standards and Obesity

In this part of the chapter, I analyse how the *effect* of previous policy became the *motivation* for the next. The effect of policy which had recommended and provided children with extra calories as examined in Part 1 of this chapter,<sup>805</sup> forms the basis of arguments focussing on childhood obesity. This highlights how motivations and effects from one period find themselves rooted in later policy debate.

Regarding food provision, the debate now surrounded the nutritional content of school meals – that which the Government said was healthy. The advantage of increasing English grown fruit in schools was highlighted in Parliament in 1953. It was stated by Conservative MP Florence Horsbrugh, Minister of Education, that '[l]ocal education authorities are aware of the value of fresh fruit as part of the school dinner, and ... most of the fruit they buy is home grown.'<sup>806</sup> This is an interesting point due to the arguments for the health and environmental benefits of locally grown fresh produce in the present day. Evidently this appears to be another example of arguments being as relevant to the school food debate today as they were many years ago. In 1955 nutritional advice to schools was amended 'in the light of experience and increased information about the nutrition of children,'<sup>807</sup> however concern still focused on children receiving an unsuitable diet. Due to further advances in nutritional science,

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<sup>805</sup> See Chapter 4, Part 1.

<sup>806</sup> Hansard HC Deb 26 March 1953, vol 513, cols 86-87W (Florence Horsbrugh, Minister of Education, Conservative).

<sup>807</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 49.

coupled with greater child surveillance both during and following the war, there was a greater supply of information available to campaigners to aid arguments for closer regulation of working class diets. It was noted by the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education that children's "breakfasts are normally bread and tea, and the dinner nothing but what a copper can purchase at the local fried fish shops where the most inferior kinds of fish are fried in reeking cotton-seed oil, and this often supplemented by rotten fruit collected beneath costers' barrows."<sup>808</sup> Here it is clear that through using words such as "nothing but", "inferior" and "rotten" the Chief Medical Officer was implying that working class diets still did not adhere to middle class norms.

Following the formation of the NHS, increasing the mediums available for child observation, it began to emerge in the 1950s that "fat" children were becoming a rising problem. Not cited as obese at this point, the issues raised would become more prevalent during the next few decades and I will expand upon and develop analysis of these concerns in the subsequent chapter.<sup>809</sup> In a report dated 1954, Dr. E. Hughes, a Principal School Medical Officer, noted that, "Strangely enough, the difficult nutritional problem besetting the school medical officer to-day is often that of 'the fat

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<sup>808</sup> Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *Health of the School Child 1956 and 1957* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office) 11.

<sup>809</sup> Although drawing upon material from the present day, it has relevance during the period under consideration here. When I consider obesity in this, and the subsequent chapter, I refer to the definition provided by the House of Commons Health Committee in 2004. 'According to the Faculty of Public Health, obesity is "an excess of body fat frequently resulting in a significant impairment of health and longevity."<sup>809</sup> House of Commons Health Committee, *Third Report of Session 2003–04 on Obesity*, Volume 1, (HC 23-I, London, 2004) Ev 46, para 24, 11.

boy””<sup>810</sup> Here attention is firmly drawn to the *body* of the child. It is not cited that being “fat” hinders the child’s ability to learn. Instead, solely the size of his body is referred to. How to treat childhood fatness was declared as hazardous due to varying causes and possible problems with uncooperative parents. Parents again were being blamed for their own condition and also deemed as being problematic in the norm training of children. Thus, “the fat boy often leaves school with his defect uncured and with no concept of the improvements in his daily well-being that a significant weight reduction would confer.”<sup>811</sup> This gives an indication that concerns regarding the welfare of children were changing in detail, although the wider issue of poor nutrition remained.

Figures for 1960 suggested that, ‘52 per cent of the children attending maintained schools took school dinners, and 93 per cent of those in primary, and 66 per cent of those in secondary, schools had one-third of a pint of school milk.’<sup>812</sup> It was reported that families were better off financially and that ‘malnutrition in school children is no longer a problem.’<sup>813</sup> Malnutrition in the report means undernourished children who were below the “normal” weight standard. During this period, concern shifted to increasing numbers of overweight children (now cited as obese) although it was claimed that, ‘there is no evidence that school milk or school meals cause obesity.’<sup>814</sup> Therefore the finger of blame regarding cause was pointed instead at ‘such factors as

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<sup>810</sup> Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *Health of the School Child 1954 and 1955* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office) 24.

<sup>811</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>812</sup> Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *Health of the School Child 1960 and 1961* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office) 13.

<sup>813</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>814</sup> *ibid* 12.

the diet at home, the amounts of confectionary consumed, and the amount of exercise taken.<sup>815</sup> Whereas calories had been declared by the State as important in maintaining the health of children prior to the war, and “round” children advocated as healthy, advances in nutrition meant that “round” children were now deemed as unhealthy. This highlights how the *effect* of earlier policy became rooted in the *motivation* behind the next. The State did not take the lions share of the blame for helping to create the “fat boy”; it was asserted that his condition was due to poor parental feeding rather than owing to previous government advice/guidance or the content of school meals. However, the State took responsibility for children where parents were said to have failed. Therefore, although obesity was not declared by the Government as the fault of the public sphere, it became the State’s problem to rectify. Consequently, there were still aspects of daily life causing undernourishment in children, but the term malnutrition was shifting and would begin to mean being *overweight* rather than *underweight*. Within schools, anxiety regarding the “fat boy” emerged rather than the underfed child previously of concern.

The Principal School Medical Officer for Bristol reported in 1960 that a number of children were going to school without breakfast.<sup>816</sup> The reasons cited were:

... family rising from bed too late; mothers going out to work  
not allowing themselves sufficient time to prepare or cook a  
proper breakfast; lack of knowledge of food values due, in part,  
to the influence of misleading advertisements. Poverty was

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<sup>815</sup> *ibid* 12-13.

<sup>816</sup> See Annual Report of the Principal School Medical Officer, Bristol, 1960 quoted in Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *Health of the School Child 1960 and 1961* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office) 13.



“not thought to play a significant part in the decline, rather the reverse, for higher incomes seem to account for more being put on biscuits which replaced other foods of greater nutritional value”.<sup>817</sup>

Concern began to surface that people were living under different circumstances than they had formerly. Family patterns were changing, and lifestyles were becoming more focused on consumer goods. Both parents were working to afford said way of life, and families began eating a greater amount of convenience foods.<sup>818</sup> An interesting point to note from the above quotation made by the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education is that “Poverty was not thought to be significant” in children arriving at school without breakfast. Although families were blamed for the condition of their children, it was not solely working class families who were cited as suffering from poor feeding. Indeed, the Chief Medical Officer states that families earning higher wages were more likely to suffer from lack of nutrition.

Anxiety raised in the mid 1950s was that the “fat boy” would become obese in adulthood. Still a concern in the present day, this is because, ‘overweight or obese children become overweight or obese adults; overweight and obese adults are more likely to bring up overweight or obese children.’<sup>819</sup> This negatively affects a child’s role as a future adult as ‘Obesity is associated with many health problems including coronary heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, osteoarthritis, back pain and

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<sup>817</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>818</sup> See Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 32.

<sup>819</sup> House of Commons Health Committee, *Third Report of Session 2003–04 on Obesity*, Volume 1, (HC 23-I, London, 2004) para 3.

psychological damage. The strong association between obesity and cancer has only recently come to light.’<sup>820</sup> If children grow up to be obese adults they will be a drain on the resources of the State, namely by taking funds out of the NHS. Also, if adults are unwell they may be unable to work. This affects the child’s role as “future” worker. This perception also interrelates to that of “vulnerable” child. Children needed further protection during this period, in part due to health concerns drawn from changes in family lifestyles.

## **2) Techniques of Argumentation**

In addressing the problems highlighted in the mid-twentieth century, Parliament decided to concentrate on targeting large families. Against the contention that poverty was not the cause of a poor diet, Labour MP Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education and Science, noted ‘there is still strong evidence of perhaps unexpected remaining malnutrition and poverty, particularly among large families.’<sup>821</sup> Labour MP Dr John Dunwoody supported this argument by stating:

We also have the problem of the large families, which are nearly always associated with low incomes. Much thought has been given to this group of the community in recent times. The very real poverty which exists in this group has resulted in recent years in our seeing for the first time for nearly a generation a recurrence of some of the nutritional diseases which previously we doctors had only read about in our

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<sup>820</sup> *ibid* summary.

<sup>821</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 March 1967, vol 742, col 686 (Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Labour).

textbooks. Reports of conditions such as rickets have come from some of our industrial areas from the hard core of near-problem families, very large families, often on low incomes.<sup>822</sup>

This quotation highlights the link between health concerns, poor nutrition, and poverty. A suggested way of tackling this problem was to educate mothers in nutrition. This would mean greater visible State intervention if this was done directly – Government to mother. Labour MP Dr David Owen used statistics as a tool to advance his argument as he explained that due to ‘the appalling statistics of nutritional standards’,<sup>823</sup> he thought that ‘we must place very much more emphasis on nutrition and on educating mothers about what foods are important and what constitutes a really adequate diet.’<sup>824</sup> Conservative Lord Newton also noted that it was ‘mothers who need guidance in mothercraft [and] nutrition’.<sup>825</sup> By connecting the two points made above that 1) poverty was linked to health problems caused by poor nutrition; and 2) by advancing arguments for the education of mothers, this suggested that it would be working class mothers who required nutritional education and it would consequently be working class families who would be regulated by the State in receiving such education.

Rather than educating working class mothers directly, indirect regulation occurred via the medium of school meals. Once again families would become the agents of nutritional norms that children would learn within the site of the school and their

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<sup>822</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 November 1967, vol 754, col 1650 (Dr John Dunwoody, Labour).

<sup>823</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 December 1966, vol 738, col 1452 (Dr David Owen, Labour).

<sup>824</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 December 1966, vol 738, col 1452 (Dr David Owen, Labour).

<sup>825</sup> Hansard HL Deb 7 March 1963, vol 247, col 609 (Lord Newton, Hon. Peter Legh, Conservative) [bracketed wording mine].

mothers could recreate within the family home. Furthermore, by targeting children it would ensure that tomorrow's parents would be adequately educated with regards to the "correct" type of foods which means futurity was central to the regulation. In 1965 a report was published by the Department of Education and Science entitled the *Nutritional Standard of the School Dinner*. Here it was stated that the content of school meals included 'roast lamb, beef and pork. Stewed beef, lamb, pork or veal were also on the menu as well as bacon and ham, liver, sausages, tinned meat, eggs [sic] cheese and fish.'<sup>826</sup> These foods were deemed as being nutritionally sound; additionally 'advice on nutritional standards, last revised in 1966, draws attention to the importance in the diet of fresh fruit and green vegetables.'<sup>827</sup> Labour MP Shirley Williams expanded that Local Education Authorities were making 'every effort to ensure the maintenance of adequate levels of ... vitamins.'<sup>828</sup> These were the food norms that the State would teach children within the school, which would then be transferred and reproduced within the home.

### 3) Effects

The effects of the new policy were stated in Parliament where it was noted by Labour MP Edward Redhead that, 'The quantity of fresh fruit in school dinners has been substantially increased this term with the introduction of new nutritional standards. The choice of fruit provided rests with the local education authority.'<sup>829</sup> This meant that different children received different foodstuffs, but quantity increased throughout

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<sup>826</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 49.

<sup>827</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1967, vol 745, col 213W (Shirley Williams, Labour).

<sup>828</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 April 1967, vol 745, col 213W (Shirley Williams, Labour).

<sup>829</sup> Hansard HC Deb 26 May 1966, vol 729, col 128W (Edward Redhead, Labour).

schools. Thus, by analysing the debates above, it seems children were being relatively well catered for nutritionally whilst on school premises. Furthermore, uptake of school meals 'reached its peak in 1966, when 70% of children in state schools were eating a school meal.'<sup>830</sup> Although concern had been raised regarding childhood obesity, the State ensured that on its part, children were being well fed whilst they were on school premises. Reaching a peak of 70 per cent uptake in 1966 meant that the public sphere could use these statistics in arguing that obesity was a problem created within the private sphere of the home.

## Conclusion

The issues analysed in this chapter highlight that school meals policy altered from a facility seen as providing essential fuel to aid a child's ability to learn, where the main concern was for the child's *mind*, to concern surrounding the child's *body*, during debate of the motivations and justifications of implementing widespread milk provision in schools. The focus changed to achieving sound *bodies* and *minds* during and post World War II where the whole child was of concern. The final part of this chapter highlights how towards the end of the period under analysis the bond between the *mind* and *body* was less of a concern when obesity fears focused on the *body* of the child as the primary anxiety. The *motivations* and *effects* of policy changes are at times linked as can be seen through analysis of debates during the 1920s when "round" bodies were deemed as the normal required standard to be achieved and later in the 1950s when the same was suggested as abnormal.

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<sup>830</sup> Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 10.

During analysis of the *techniques of argumentation* behind each policy change, the tools utilised by Parliament to regulate children and families alter yet are at the same time constant. By this I mean that the tools used are *reworked* during each period under consideration. Futurity continued to be cited as reasons behind alteration in policy, alongside economic concerns. Whereas in the previous chapter the notion of futurity began with aiming for children to become good future workers for the maintenance of the nation following the poor condition of recruits during the Boer War; although Post-World War II policy was in part motivated by reconstruction and in part about the building of the welfare state, the notion of “future” worker remained. As knowledge of nutrition increased, both bodies and minds could be nourished due to the implementation of nutritional standards. Once again, the notion of futurity was central to educational reform.

During analysis of the introduction of widespread milk provision, the motivations for policy were cited as both economic and regarding the health of the body of the child. The regulation of children and families through the implementation of provision of milk in schools was justified as rescuing the milk industry and aiding children to receive extra calories in order to make them “round”. The effects of this policy would, years later, become rooted in the motivations behind nutritional standards in schools.

There was large scale direct state intervention into the lives of families during and following World War II. As had occurred before the introduction of compulsory schooling in the latter part of the nineteenth century, during evacuation following the outbreak of war, visible children gave the Government legitimisation to encroach on

the private sphere of the family through the provision of school meals made available for *all* children. During evacuation, the condition of poor children was brought to the nation's attention on a large scale. Visible children became a problem that the State had to deal with. This led to legislation which changed the face of education and school food policy. Firstly, school meal provision implemented during wartime encompassed concern for both the *body* and *mind* of the child. Secondly, instead of only necessitous children receiving school food provision, the Education Act 1944 placed a duty on Local Education Authorities to provide school meals and milk for pupils in maintained schools either free, subject to means testing, or paid for by parents. This followed a shift in concern over the health and wellbeing of *all* children which emerged during the war. As such, by focusing on bodies and minds, plus policy extending to all children, the State was able to regulate the food provision of many more children than they could prior to the war.

The 1944 Act also placed further obligations and duties on children and families. The school leaving age was raised which meant that children spent longer in the site of the school and parents had further duties imposed on them towards ensuring their child's education. In this chapter, I examined changes in social policy during and following the war, predominantly focusing on the political and economic reasons behind alterations in education and school meal legislation, and how these changes affected the regulation of the children and families who were subject to them. The emergence of the regulated schoolchild can be followed as a distinctly separate part of the rising welfare state.

The final section of this chapter linked the *effects* of earlier policy to introduce extra calories to children's diets with the *motivations* behind alteration in nutritional policy in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, concern centred on the rise in obese children and how obesity could be reduced by school food being of sound nutritional quality. Regulation of children and families occurred through the implementation of nutritional guidelines and more nutritious food being served in schools. The child acted as an agent and school food the vehicle for transmitting norms from the site of the school into the family home. Further analysis on nutrition in school meals will be analysed in the subsequent chapter.



## Chapter Five

### Consumer Child: School Meals and Milk during the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Centuries

#### Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, I briefly introduce the notion of “consumer” child within the school environment and how this perception of childhood operates within the site of the school and with relation to school meals. I introduce the new perception here to aid explanation of its use as a *technique of argumentation* in the second and third parts of the chapter.

In the second part, I primarily consider Conservative education and school meals policies of the late twentieth century and how these affected the regulation of children and families. The *motivations* analysed here are economic and concerned with lessening centralised state control. Although children and families are still regulated by the State during this period under analysis, there is less intervention in matters the Conservatives deemed to be within the private sphere. Tensions emerge when examining the *techniques of argumentation* employed during the debates between the perception of “consumer” child and the regulation of children and families. Clear divisions can be seen between Labour MPs and Conservative MPs during analysis of parliamentary debates regarding the feeding of school children and how the MPs belonging to different political parties think children and families should be regulated.

In the third part, I primarily focus on New Labour’s education and school meals policies of the early twenty-first century. The *effects* of Conservative policies to

*lessen* centralised state control are seen within *motivations* behind Labour policies to *increase* state intervention in the lives of children and families. Tensions again emerge between the perception of “consumer” child and the regulation of children and families as highlighted during analysis of the parliamentary debates of this period. Techniques utilised during arguments centre upon the perception of the “vulnerable” child and “future” worker child in order to bring forth greater regulation both with regards to education and school meals.

## PART 1

### Consumer Child at School

“Consumer” child located within the school environment is not quite the same as consumer child outside of it. This is because when they are in the site of the school children are regulated within an adult dominate space. As analysed in previous chapters, one of the aims of the site of the school was to recreate norms so that, ‘Young people when they left school were to be equipped with *relevance* (attitudes, skills and work habits) to live fulfilling lives as adults, citizens, as members of families and at work.’<sup>831</sup> This was achieved because:

[S]chools were invariably hierarchical organizations with dominant teachers exercising control over subordinate pupils, so also were industrial and commercial organisations with dominant managers expecting obedience from subordinate workers. There was therefore a close “parallel” or “correspondence” between the social relations of schooling and those in the “world of work”.<sup>832</sup>

As explored during analysis of the introduction of compulsory schooling in Chapter 2, children are taught to be passive and submissive to adults within the site of the school. As Wyness expands, the school ‘formalises and fixes children’s positions within the

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<sup>831</sup> Christopher Knight, *The Making of Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain 1950-1986* (London: The Falmer Press, 1990) 171 [italics as per text].

<sup>832</sup> Clyde Chitty, *Education Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13.

social hierarchy.’<sup>833</sup> Because children are required to be in a subordinate position, adults do not allow them to make free choices as this would upset the hierarchy – children would have greater influence if they had more choice. Within the site of the school, children are only able to make choices that adults regulate. Therefore, there is not the scope for children to act as absolute consumers regarding their education because their status as subordinate to adults remains fixed.

Officially children have little or no say with regard to which school they attend, nor the content and structure of the curriculum taught.<sup>834</sup> It is ‘for responsible adults to set educational agendas at national local levels ... historically children have had little say in school matters.’<sup>835</sup> This position can clearly be seen within the parliamentary debates and official education policy previously analysed. Futurity was an important tool utilised within the debates as children were perceived as “future” workers/citizens. Therefore, to produce valuable adults of the future, schooling needs to be standardised and children kept as passive participants to their regulation in

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<sup>833</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 142.

<sup>834</sup> Although I acknowledge arguments such as Lee’s that, ‘The introduction of ICT in schools is instrumental in changing the purposes of education ... from the conversion of incomplete becomings into completed being and towards activation of ‘becomings without end’. Nick Lee, *Childhood and Society: Growing Up in an Age of Uncertainty* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001) 84. I am concentrating my analysis on the role of the consumer child within schools and therefore I am concerned with children’s lack of ability to determine the nature and content of their schooling rather than how they respond in lessons that have been determined for them by adults. By this I mean that ICT (Information and Communications Technology) was introduced in school by adults who determine what children will learn. Therefore, detailed analysis of Lee’s position is outside the scope of my research into the consumer child within schools.

<sup>835</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 150.

education.<sup>836</sup> Although children are *agents* of regulation, they are also *objects* of regulation and consumerism in education was generally afforded to parents rather than the children themselves. There is no room for the “consumer” child who would be acting as an active participant in their education. As Harris notes, ‘children lack the independent rights to participate as education consumers.’<sup>837</sup>

The position however is different with regard to school meals. Whether the Government and its respective policies vis-à-vis food in schools view “consumer” child as a positive or negative notion depends upon party politics and the economic climate at the given time. For example, under Conservative governments during the late twentieth century, the perception of “consumer” child was more readily expanded and embraced due to the notion of individual choice and personal responsibility, coupled with economic savings. This non-interventionist approach is based on similar arguments to those advanced in previous chapters of preserving parental responsibility. Conservative MPs utilised the perception of “consumer” child to advance arguments for less state intervention in school meals. Under Labour governments of the early twenty-first century, the paternal stance was more readily engaged and “consumer” child found itself under greater regulation. Tensions

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<sup>836</sup> Although children are not in general officially involved in decisions regarding choice of school, lesson content etc. there are schools such as Summerhill where children are involved in aspects of their education. Wyness also notes that, ‘the trend in primary schooling in the 1970s and 1980s was for education to be more ‘child-centred’.’ Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 146. However, for the majority of children, the dominant position is that schoolchildren ‘have little or no means to make themselves heard in relation to the curriculum, the conduct of teachers and school policy.’ Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 153.

<sup>837</sup> Neville Harris, *Law and Education: Regulation, Consumerism and the Education System* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1993) 21.

between perceptions of “vulnerable” child and “consumer” child can be seen through analysis of school meals policy throughout the period I am analysing here. On one hand children are defined as consumers, on the other they are vulnerable in need of protection, due to different governments utilising diverse notions of childhood to achieve their intended aims. In previous debates there were not such clear political party divisions as can be seen in this chapter.

The first time that the perception of “consumer” child emerged within an argument in parliamentary debates was during the implementation of milk in schools policy in the 1930s. Conservative MP William Morrison stated that, ‘The milk-in-schools scheme was initiated with a view to encouraging the milk drinking habit in children.’<sup>838</sup> This quotation highlights the perception of the child as a “future” consumer who will get into the habit of drinking milk and buy it as an adult. Liberal MP Herbert Holdsworth expanded on this point by suggesting:

... that the best way of advertising milk is to create in the children an appetite for milk. There may be something to be said for spending money on publicity and advertising, but just as the advertising of all other beverages has succeeded by creating an appetite for them we think the best means of increasing the consumption of milk is to get children used from an early age to drinking milk.<sup>839</sup>

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<sup>838</sup> Hansard HC Deb 21 February 1938, vol 332, col 26 (William Morrison, Conservative).

<sup>839</sup> Hansard HC Deb 19 June 1934, vol 291, col 338 (Herbert Holdsworth, Liberal).

Holdsworth uses the words “create in the children an appetite for milk” and “get children used from an early age to drinking milk” which highlights that children were being prepared to be purchasers of milk as adults. The idea was that by introducing them to milk at a young age they would grow to like it, and consequently buy it when they were older. In support of this stance Peter Atkins notes, ‘In schools there was a new generation of consumers, who were in no position to refuse their milk on the grounds of quality and who might be persuaded to form a milk-drinking habit for the future.’<sup>840</sup> Atkins’ use of consumer refers to consumers of the future. Akin to “future” worker child introduced in earlier chapters, here we see the introduction of “future” consumer child. The argument of futurity is the same, but the context has changed.

In the era of the 1930s and 1940s, alongside creating an appetite for milk, a further argument was being advanced – training the “future” consumer of the benefits of a suitable diet. As had been the case for teaching poorer children respectable mealtime manners and etiquette,<sup>841</sup> the site of the school was also a necessary component in teaching children to become future consumers of good food. It was mooted that:

...we want to rear a generation of adaptable and rational consumers of food, of people that is to say, who have both learned what foods compose a wholesome diet, and have been conditioned by early experience to desire those foods in due proportion. Why must we breed a thoroughly *adaptable*

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<sup>840</sup> Peter Atkins, ‘School Milk in Britain, 1900–1934’ (2007) 19 (4) *The Journal of Policy History* 395, 399.

<sup>841</sup> See Chapter 3, Part 3 (a).

generation of consumers? ... The more adaptable are the food habits of the public, the more they have learned to be catholic in their tastes, the better shall we be assured that the national diet can be balanced and adequate. The school is the obvious place where this revolution in food habits can be brought about.<sup>842</sup>

Here the argument is for the “future” consumer who needs to be trained for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole. If the child learns good habits regarding their diet in childhood, they will utilise these in adulthood. Training had to take place within the site of the school so that norms could be created that could then be transferred into the sphere of the home. Children would learn and be “conditioned by early experience” to eat the prescribed correct foods within the site of the school. They would then recreate these norms at home. This stance would safeguard the health of the nation through localised regulation of children and families.

Drake also explains that by introducing green vegetables at school, ‘children, meanwhile, would have acquired a taste, which they would not afterwards lose, for fresh wholesome home-grown food.’<sup>843</sup> In this trend “future” consumer child could be educated to appreciate, value, and, as an adult, buy good food. This would ensure that the future generation were healthy and thus less of a drain on resources. It would

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<sup>842</sup> Mr. Le Gros Clark in an address to School Meals Organisers meeting at Bath in April 1947 cited in Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Education, *The Health of the School Child for the Years 1946 and 1947* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1949) 22 [italics as per text].

<sup>843</sup> Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: The Fabian Society, 1933) 19.



also create work in agriculture needed to produce demand for products which would be good for the economy. This stance combined futurity with economics.

The notion of “future” consumer remains throughout this chapter. The perception of children as “current” consumers within the site of the school emerges during analysis of later debates, through the introduction of vending machines from the 1960s onwards.<sup>844</sup> These gave children limited choice over the type of food and drink they consumed and the quantity. However, these choices were still regulated, as the type of food and drink available was determined by adults. From the late twentieth century onwards, children began to influence the content of school meals as focus shifted to child centred rather than adult dominant policy.

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<sup>844</sup> Chapter 5, Part 2, (2) (b) (i).

## PART 2

### Decline in the Provision of Milk and Meals

#### 1) Motivations

The motivations behind the debates towards alteration of school food and education policy in the latter part of the twentieth century were twofold – economic and lessening central state control.

##### a) Economic

‘The energy and colour of British popular culture during the sixties and early seventies ... could not disguise the fact that much of everyday life took place on streets of worn-out brown and grey.’<sup>845</sup>

The key motivations behind the decline in school meals and milk which began in the 1970s were the problems facing Britain’s economy. There was sustained high inflation and unemployment; industrial action by coal miners and rising oil prices led to the 3 Day Work Order in 1974; and the country experienced widespread strikes and social unrest during the Winter of Discontent which had ‘lasted from November 1978 to March 1979.’<sup>846</sup> The Conservative Election Manifesto of 1979 highlighted that:

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<sup>845</sup> Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009) 15.

<sup>846</sup> *ibid* 465.

The State takes too much of the nation's income; its share must be steadily reduced. When it spends and borrows too much, taxes, interest rates, prices and unemployment rise so that in the long run there is less wealth with which to improve Our standard of living and our social services.<sup>847</sup>

Thus, the first motivation behind alteration in policy was that 'proper monetary discipline is essential';<sup>848</sup> put more simply, the primary focus was 'To save money.'<sup>849</sup>

#### b) Lessening Central State Control

'It is time for a new beginning.'<sup>850</sup>

Another key motivation behind alteration in policy was the Conservatives belief that less central state control and intervention was an important factor in maintaining a successful economy and flourishing society. It was noted that the Labour administration, 'by enlarging the role of the State and diminishing the role of the individual, they have crippled the enterprise and effort on which a prosperous country with improving social services depends.'<sup>851</sup> With regard to education, the Conservatives pledged that, 'Extending parents' rights and responsibilities, including

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<sup>847</sup> Conservative General Election Manifesto 1979 (April 1979) para 2  
<<http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/110858>> last accessed 7/6/2013.

<sup>848</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>849</sup> HC Deb 20 November 1979, vol 976, col 1011 (Joseph Ashton, Labour).

<sup>850</sup> Conservative General Election Manifesto 1979 (April 1979) para 7  
<<http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/110858>> last accessed 7/6/2013.

<sup>851</sup> *ibid* para 1.

their right of choice, will also help raise standards by giving them greater influence over education.’<sup>852</sup>

## 2) Techniques of Argumentation

### a) Economic

The withdrawal of school milk was defended in Parliament by using the health of children’s *bodies* within debates, alongside economic arguments. Cuts due to the country’s economic situation meant that the position regarding milk declined in 1968 when, under Harold Wilson’s Labour Government, the duty that had been imposed on Local Education Authorities under The Education Act 1944 to provide school milk to children in maintained secondary schools was removed.<sup>853</sup> This applied to milk that was ‘either free or on payment.’<sup>854</sup> The reasoning behind this was cited as, ‘The estimated saving is £4.5 million in England and Wales.’<sup>855</sup> The situation was impacted further when in 1971, with the country back under Conservative rule, most children over the age of 7 also lost the absolute right to receive free school milk unless they were deemed to require it on health grounds.<sup>856</sup> The Education (Milk) Act 1971 also gave Local Education Authorities the right to withdraw milk provision altogether for children over 7 years old, as well as the option to provide milk at cost to

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<sup>852</sup> *ibid* para 5.

<sup>853</sup> Public Expenditure and Receipts Act 1968, s 3 (1).

<sup>854</sup> Hansard HC 19 January 1968, vol 756, col 708W (Patrick Gordon Walker, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Labour).

<sup>855</sup> Hansard HC 19 January 1968, vol 756, col 708W (Patrick Gordon Walker, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Labour).

<sup>856</sup> Education (Milk) Act 1971, s 1 (1).

pupils themselves or their parents.<sup>857</sup> This would ‘save £5.9 million in this current year and £9 million in a full year.’<sup>858</sup> However for children under the age of 7, free milk at school was not related to a parent's financial circumstances; they all still received free milk automatically.

Although the Labour Government had instigated the gradual removal of milk provision in schools, this further curtailment of milk in 1971 in turn furnished Margaret Thatcher, in her then role as Secretary of State for Education and Science, the title of “milk snatcher”. Thatcher justified the reduction in eligibility through age by referring to the withdrawal of milk by the previous Labour Government: ‘Free milk in secondary schools was withdrawn nearly three years ago and no adverse effect has been observed on the nutrition of that age group.’<sup>859</sup> The *bodies* of children had been observed and the results were utilised within the argument for the withdrawal of milk provision in schools – there were no adverse health effects and therefore milk provision was not necessary. In defence to questioning by Labour MPs Charles R. Morris and Bob Brown, Thatcher claimed that there was no longer a need to provide milk for older children, unless required on health grounds where the school medical officer deemed it ‘medically necessary.’<sup>860</sup> Here it can be seen that the bodies of children would still be observed and regulated within the site of the school. To

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<sup>857</sup> Education (Milk) Act 1971, s 1 (2).

<sup>858</sup> Hansard HL Deb 2 August 1971, vol 323, col 836 (Lord Belstead, John Ganzoni, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Department of Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>859</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 44 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>860</sup> Hansard HC Deb 19 November 1970, vol 806, col 451W (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

provide children under the age of 7, and those attending primary schools over 7 and in medical need, 'safeguards all children who may be at risk nutritionally.'<sup>861</sup>

Combining the arguments of health and economics, Conservative MP Peter Thomas stated that, 'it is a saving in Government money which can be made without any adverse effect on the health of the pupils ... children who require school milk on medical grounds will continue to receive free milk.'<sup>862</sup> Expanding on the economic position, Thomas noted, 'This is a saving of Government expenditure. The money saved will be spent in those areas where it is considered that there is a greater need.'<sup>863</sup> Also using economics to support her stance, Thatcher explained that the need to pass new law restricting free milk would, 'enable us to switch our priorities to fill some gaps in educational provision.'<sup>864</sup> Whilst at the same time providing free milk for those with medical need. Again, the statement of "filling the gaps" is cited as the reason behind alterations in policy debated in Parliament. The gap to be filled here was 'to replace or improve old primary schools'.<sup>865</sup> However, school milk was not deemed to be an acceptable cutback with it being argued by Baroness Anna Dora Gaitskell:

It is a matter of judgment whether it is better to improve old primary schools (for this is the excuse that the Government gave when they announced their decision to stop the free milk)

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<sup>861</sup> Hansard HC Deb 29 January 1974, vol 868, col 232 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>862</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 May 1971, vol 818, col 12 (Peter Thomas, Conservative).

<sup>863</sup> Hansard HC Deb 24 May 1971, vol 818, col 13 (Peter Thomas, Conservative).

<sup>864</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 42 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>865</sup> Hansard HL Deb 2 August 1971, vol 323, col 836 (Lord Belstead, John Ganzoni, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Department of Education and Science, Conservative).

than to invest in the health of our young children from the ages of seven to eleven. Given the choice, I come down on the side of old primary schools and free milk, because to have "spanking" new schools for children who are not particularly healthy does not seem to me at all to be the answer to our problems to-day about the young.<sup>866</sup>

This argument is based upon the stance that if children are not healthy enough to profit from their education, then what use is a "spanking" new school. Akin to the arguments mooted during the debates prior to the introduction of school meals, hungry children do not learn well. This stance was supported by Labour MP Kenneth Marks who called the cut in milk provision a 'mean, messy miserable Measure [sic].'<sup>867</sup> Even though the previous Labour Government had been the first to cut eligibility for free school milk provision, arguments from Labour MPs that 'withdrawal of free school milk as one of the meanest acts of the previous administration',<sup>868</sup> centred on the point that 'Most people who have studied this matter have differentiated between the requirements of secondary school children and primary school children.'<sup>869</sup> Thus Labour's dispute against further reduction in milk provision regarded the nutritional needs of secondary school pupils as less pressing than those of primary pupils – those who they believed Thatcher to be squeezing.

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<sup>866</sup> Hansard HL Deb 2 August 1971, vol 323 col 844 (Baroness Anna Dora Gaitskell, Labour).

<sup>867</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 82 (Kenneth Marks, Labour).

<sup>868</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 April 1974, vol 871, col 1068 (Greville Janner, Labour).

<sup>869</sup> Hansard HC Deb 2 April 1974, vol 871, col 1068 (Reginald Prentice, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Labour).

Labour MP Edward Short expressed concern with the medical need requirement which attached to free milk provision. There was no means test as there was with school meals, and poverty stricken children may not be adequately catered for.<sup>870</sup> This was rebutted by Thatcher who believed that entitlement linked to medical need 'goes wider than poverty.'<sup>871</sup> Therefore, similar to the era of medical inspection criteria, children who needed aid on health grounds would have (hopefully) received it. However Labour criticism also surrounded the stigma of being singled out as a "sick" child who needed milk on medical grounds.<sup>872</sup> The problem of highlighting poor or needy children continued to be an issue in schools. The argument regarding health was rebutted by Conservative MP Peter Fry who dismissed its seriousness by stating, 'expenditure on road maintenance could save lives whereas spending money on school milk does not necessarily save anybody's life.'<sup>873</sup> This is indicative of previous Conservative policy that food and milk provision is a matter for the home and not the school. This non-interventionist approach to school feeding gave the State less opportunity to regulate families in matters the Government deemed as related to the home.

#### b) Lessening Central State Control

In Parliament, when debating the extent to which the State should directly control school meals and education, the tensions between consumer choice and state regulation of children and families were debated. Arguments for less state regulation

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<sup>870</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 61 (Edward Short, Labour).

<sup>871</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 61 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>872</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 72 (R.C Mitchell, Labour).

<sup>873</sup> Hansard HC Deb 7 June 1978, vol 951, col 189 (Peter Fry, Conservative).



and more consumer choice utilised the tools of the perception of “consumer” child, economics, notions of futurity and threats; whereas arguments for greater state regulation and against consumer choice utilised the tools of education as an instrument of persuasion and concern regarding the body of the child.

#### i) School Food

There were changes in the way both politicians and families were thinking about school food. All legislation enacted thus far regarding school meals had placed duties on school boards and later Local Education Authorities to ensure meals were available if children wanted to eat them. As things stood there was little choice available to children over what they ate at lunchtime if they partook in school dinners. The alternatives to eating what was provided at school were to go home for lunch or bring sandwiches in a packed lunch from home. Figures cited in Parliament regarding children who opted to bring packed lunches to school were related ‘to a day in October 1972, when 526,373 pupils in maintained schools in England and Wales brought their own mid-day meal to school. This compares with 594,298 a year earlier.’<sup>874</sup> Packed lunches were not regulated by the State so therefore the Government had less control over what children were eating in the site of the school.

There was a political move away from state interference and more encouragement of individual child (and parental) responsibility. This gave the State less opportunity for regulating children and families. The school was no longer as important as a site of regulation as it had been previously. When questioned by Labour MP Peter Hardy on whether Local Education Authorities had been given advice on how to discourage

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<sup>874</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 February 1973, vol 850, col 287W (Norman St. John-Stevas, Conservative).

pupils from eating nutritional unsound food, Thatcher claimed that it was 'a matter for parents.'<sup>875</sup> Families were self-policing. The political stance from the Conservative party was that it was 'not the State's responsibility to feed children, that her resources in the education service should be concentrated on improving educational facilities'.<sup>876</sup> This argument is akin to those mooted during debates analysed throughout the introduction of school meals in 1906 when parental responsibility was cited as one of the reasons why school meals should not be introduced. Working mothers were once again blamed for the fact that at home, 'their children will be deprived of a decent meal'.<sup>877</sup> A claim refuted by Thatcher who argued that, 'Because women have to go out to work does not mean that they are incapable of looking after the nutrition of their children.'<sup>878</sup> Thatcher stated, 'that most mothers in this country are fully capable of looking after the nutritional requirements of their children.'<sup>879</sup> As previously mentioned, food provision in schools was considered by the Conservatives to be low priority as parents were considered responsible for feeding their children. A point reiterated by Conservative MP Dr. Rhodes Boyson that parents 'are primarily responsible for their children's nutrition.'<sup>880</sup>

Vending machines had been installed in schools as an alternative drinks supply; established in part to offset the withdrawal of milk in schools, raise much needed funds for the school, and also due to changes in social thinking with regard to the

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<sup>875</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 1971, vol 810, col 412W (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>876</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 June 1971, vol 818, col 1222 (Peter Rost, Conservative).

<sup>877</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 June 1971, vol 818, col 1223 (Joan Lester, Labour).

<sup>878</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 June 1971, vol 818, cols 1223-1224 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>879</sup> Hansard HC Deb 10 June 1971, vol 818, col 1222 (Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education and Science, Conservative).

<sup>880</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 March 1983, vol 39, col 373W (Dr. Rhodes Boyson, Conservative).

child consumer. Conservative MP Michael Roberts, in discussing school-based vending machines, noted, 'a wide choice is offered to the pupils,'<sup>881</sup> which gave children some restricted freedom on a self service basis. To support this stance, he advocated quite simply that, 'a school is primarily a place of learning and not a restaurant.'<sup>882</sup> Here Roberts is utilising the perception of "consumer" child to justify the withdrawal of state provision of milk. This change in policy saw the emergence of the perception of the child as a "current" consumer, using their own money or that of their parents, not just as a future consumer or consumer in training.<sup>883</sup> However in reality children were only given choice restricted to those drinks offered within the vending machines – a choice determined by the school, not the pupils. Thus, child choice was advocated so long as it was regulated, even by the Conservative Government. Although the provision of milk had ceased, children were still having their drinks consumption regulated by those adults in positions of dominance within the site of the school. However, by giving the children *some* choice, their drinks consumption was less regulated by the State than it had been previously. This debate highlights the tensions between the regulation of children and the notion of consumer choice.

However, even though children were only given limited options with regards to food in schools there was still argument against consumer choice in favour of greater state regulation. This was supported by comments that since its documented emergence as a potential concern in the 1950s, obesity in the 1970s was a worry amongst school

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<sup>881</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 128 (Michael Roberts, Conservative).

<sup>882</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 128 (Michael Roberts, Conservative).

<sup>883</sup> Although some choice for children had been available following the introduction of tuckshops in the 1920s, changes within society, as detailed in Chapter 1, saw a shift to greater affluence post World War II and children themselves having increased spending power.

children and, 'a commoner form of malnutrition ... than undernourishment.'<sup>884</sup> Undernourishment 'was yesterday's problem. The problem today is obesity.'<sup>885</sup> School meals which met the required nutritional standard were deemed to be blameless so long as the rest of the child's diet was sound and the problem was therefore owing to children's diets within the home.<sup>886</sup> On one hand, it was recommended that liability 'for the supervision of the child's overall intake of food for the day must rest with the parents.'<sup>887</sup> A difficult task when children were in the care of the school for much of the day. On the other hand, 'it has been proved, time after time, that the care of children cannot be left solely to parents, and furthermore that education and welfare are interdependent and must be the responsibility of the State.'<sup>888</sup> Different levels of regulation were mooted so the Department of Education and Science suggested that parents, doctors, and schools should liaise with one another if a child showed signs of obesity. This seems to be a case of cure rather than prevention. Schools were advised to work with parents in cases where obesity was an issue.<sup>889</sup> Here it can be seen that the State was to continue to share parental responsibility with parents. Regulation of families occurred through norms being transferred from the site of the school, via the child, into the home through the medium of school meals. If parents did not adhere to the required norms, and their child was considered obese, the State would intervene. To retain autonomy, the

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<sup>884</sup> Department of Education and Science, Report of the Working Party on Nutritional Aspects of School Meals, *Nutrition in Schools* (1975) 20.

<sup>885</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 93 (Kenneth Marks, Labour).

<sup>886</sup> Department of Education and Science, Report of the Working Party on the Nutritional Aspects of School Meals, *Nutrition in Schools* (1975) 20.

<sup>887</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>888</sup> Hansard HL Deb 23 July 1971, vol 322, col 1345 (Baroness Dr Edith Summerskill, Labour).

<sup>889</sup> Department of Education and Science, Report of the Working Party on the Nutritional Aspects of School Meals, *Nutrition in Schools* (1975) 20.

family would have to recreate the nutritional standards of school meals within the home so to keep their children within the “normal” standard of health and body size.

The rising obesity problems were linked to the concern that ‘many children seem to eat lots of carbohydrate – buns and chips. “Chips with everything” is the order of the day.’<sup>890</sup> It was suggested by Labour MP Joan Lestor that ‘many parents need to be educated about nutrition – not only about under-feeding but about over-feeding.’<sup>891</sup> Lestor uses education as a tool of persuasion to encourage parents to adhere to prescribed food norms. A similar stance to Lestor’s but relating to children was mooted by Conservative MP Sir Brandon Rhys Williams who stated, ‘Children should be guided in what they consume in the light of the most recent advances of medical knowledge’,<sup>892</sup> and ‘there is a need to persuade children to consume the food which is in their best interests to consume.’<sup>893</sup> Williams uses the words “guided” and “persuade” which maintains that there was evidently a need to explain to children and parents which foods were good for them, and encourage them to eat more of them, using education as a tool of persuasion as mooted by Lestor. Williams explained that this could be achieved through ‘partly of advice to parents, partly of advice to teachers and partly of supervision.’<sup>894</sup> Continuing with the notion of shared responsibility for children, Williams uses the word “supervision”. He is advocating greater regulation of children and families through observation and intervention through education. Regulation in this manner would be through Foucault’s notion of self governance. Instead of telling parents not to feed their children certain foods, the State would

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<sup>890</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 93 (Laurie Pavitt, Labour).

<sup>891</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 149 (Joan Lestor, Labour).

<sup>892</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 67 (Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Conservative).

<sup>893</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 67 (Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Conservative).

<sup>894</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 68 (Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Conservative).

educate them as to which foods were better for their child's health. Families would then recreate these norms within the home at local level.

Once again, the argument of higher incomes producing problems was raised with claims by Short that, 'part of the problem of child nutrition today is "the malnutrition of affluence" – not poverty – and it reveals itself in obesity in children.'<sup>895</sup> This meant that the families who would be regulated were not solely working class. It was argued that both malnourishment caused by poverty and that caused by affluence could be combated by ensuring 'that our children get more nutritious food',<sup>896</sup> a balanced diet with more milk and less sugary drinks. This debate also warned of the dangers surrounding the growing 'age of the ad-man,'<sup>897</sup> where society was being inundated with an array of products which were not always of sound nutritional value.<sup>898</sup>

The Department of Education and Science report *Nutrition in Schools* dated 1975 praised the 'traditional two-course meal' for its nutritional value but made the obvious point that 'a nutritious meal will benefit pupils only if they eat it.'<sup>899</sup> The report explained that, although schools were encouraged to guide older children to make nutritionally balanced selections with regard to their lunchtime meal, and make them aware of 'the implications for their health involved in their choice',<sup>900</sup> pupil choice

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<sup>895</sup> Citing Professor Yudkin, Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 61 (Edward Short, Labour).

<sup>896</sup> See Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 62 (Edward Short, Labour).

<sup>897</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 61 (Edward Short, Labour).

<sup>898</sup> For further clarification, see Chapter 1, (3).

<sup>899</sup> Department of Education and Science, Report of the Working Party on Nutritional Aspects of School Meals, *Nutrition in Schools* (1975) 15.

<sup>900</sup> *ibid* 17.

was 'incompatible with the imposition of closely prescribed nutritional standards.'<sup>901</sup> This highlights the problem of combining consumer choice with the regulation of children and families via the medium of school meals. To combat this issue, it was suggested that child opinion should be considered where the supply of meals was concerned, as there was no point in serving up meals which would be left uneaten by the school children. The report recommended that schools should maintain records of food waste so as to find out which foods children liked and serve more of them, and which they threw away and stop serving them. The report detailed, 'that the nutritional status of children in England and Wales is generally good; but, in the interests of children who might be at risk nutritionally, there is still a need to see that the meal supplied in school is of a proper nutritional standard.'<sup>902</sup> Local Authorities, who were in charge of school meals, would thus have to juggle nutrition, supplying enticing food, and cost when producing school meals. It became apparent that views were changing regarding the role children play in determining the food they eat. The report steered thinking about school meals as a service of individual child choice rather than offering absolute nutritional protection in school food which was often not welcomed by pupils in practice. This position highlights an emerging change in the regulation of children from the set meals served to all children pre-1970s, to a more choice based school meals service – a reflection of an increasingly consumer driven society.

A report was published in 1980 for the Department of Health and Social Security. Sir Douglas Black's *Inequalities in Health* took a different view to the earlier *Nutrition in Schools* report of 1975. The Black Report took the opinion that school meals were

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<sup>901</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>902</sup> *ibid* 11.

important for a child's health and wellbeing as well as for their education. Whereas the report of 1975 stated that children should be given choice, even though this may lead to conflict with nutritional standards, Black worried that:

To leave school children, especially young school children, to make their own free choices as to what food is to be purchased would be wrong. Children will frequently prefer to consume foods high only in sugar and other sources of energy. As an inadequate substitute for a nutritious meal, this is likely to lead to increases in obesity and in dental caries.<sup>903</sup>

By stating that "free choices" were "wrong" Black is mooted that regulation of children is more important than consumer choice. Although the 1975 report singles out older children as an example, and the 1980 report references particularly younger children, there is a clear distinction between child autonomy favoured in the 1975 report versus the paternal position of the 1980 report. Different levels of regulation are therefore mooted within the two reports. The reports also highlight conflict between the Department of Health and the Department of Education and the stance they took with regard to the regulation of children and families through school meals. This conflict was noted in Parliament by Lord Beaumont who stated that, 'Nutrition is necessary for education ... But nutrition is necessary for everything. Nutrition is necessary for life. Nutrition is necessary for the growing child and for the adult. These

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<sup>903</sup> Department of Health and Social Security, Sir Douglas Black, *Report of the Working Group on Inequalities in Health* (1980) 325.



matters should belong to welfare, and not to educational budgets.<sup>904</sup> As no one department has overall say regarding school food provision, these differences in viewpoint are regularly witnessed within the reports and debates.

The 1980 report highlighted the inequalities that occurred under the system of providing free school meals. Issues which concerned the working group were the criteria being dependant on means testing determined by parental income, and how some Local Education Authorities were falling short in providing adequate food to the required children. Black stated that undernourishment was still a problem for many children and as such Local Education Authorities should not only provide nutritious meals, they should be free of charge for all school children.<sup>905</sup> The 1980 report also expresses concern that milk drinking was in decline at home and this reduction should be monitored. Both the reports of 1975 and 1980 recommend milk and cheese in diets but neither recommend a reintroduction of free school milk for all children. In what appears to be an act of cost cutting by a Government who believed wholeheartedly that food responsibility belonged in the family home, the proposals from the 1980 report were dismissed and most of the 1975 report upheld as more workable during the proposed implementation of new education law.<sup>906</sup> Consequently, following these proposals, the Government localised control by handing more power to Local Education Authorities. Thus, there would be less centralised state regulation of children and families through the medium of school meals.

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<sup>904</sup> Hansard HL Deb 23 July 1971, vol 322, col 1340 (Lord Beaumont of Whitley, Timothy Beaumont, Liberal).

<sup>905</sup> For all recommendations see Department of Health and Social Security, Sir Douglas Black, *Report of the Working Group on Inequalities in Health* (1980) 328.

<sup>906</sup> The Department of the Environment Audit Inspectorate, *Education: School Meals* (1983) 15.

## ii) Education

The reasoning behind the stance the Government took regarding school food can best be explained by exploring education policy of the early 1980s. By the mid 1970s there had been a shift in thinking that high inflation, high unemployment, and excessive public expenditure required a need for reform. There was the emergence of the New Right – ‘a coalition of neo-liberals interested in free markets, competition and control of public spending, and Conservatives interested in preserving nineteenth century notions of tradition, hierarchy, authority and order.’<sup>907</sup> Approaching the 1979 general election, the Conservatives pledged to lessen government spending and ‘toughen rules governing trade unions’ following the ‘high-profile strikes during the ‘winter of discontent.’<sup>908</sup> The idea was that less state intervention and privatisation would help the economy to recover. The welfare state could be reformed ‘to increase incentives to work and remove (or reduce) dependency, helping to contain public spending,’<sup>909</sup> therefore allowing individuals to become more self-sufficient and less state reliant.

This philosophy sealed a Conservative victory in the election. The Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher explained that ‘Britain in 1979 was a nation that had had the stuffing knocked out of it with progressively more severe belabourings over the previous hundred years.’<sup>910</sup> Expanding on industrial competition from foreign countries, which had prompted the implementation of compulsory education one

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<sup>907</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 24.

<sup>908</sup> Anthony Seldon & Daniel Collings, *Britain Under Thatcher* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000) 6.

<sup>909</sup> *ibid* 3.

<sup>910</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 5.

hundred years previously, and using futurity as a tool to support her argument, Thatcher clarified that the problem was not the rising competition but:

Britain's failure to respond to the challenge effectively. We invested less; we educated and trained our people to a lower standard ... attempts to revive Britain's economy by social reform were battling against very profound social forces: the natural complacency of a nation grown used for more than a hundred years to 'top dog' status.<sup>911</sup>

The Conservative Government began by proposing education reform as the approach to ensuring the country's international prominence. 'Under Mrs Thatcher's leadership Conservative education policy formation would not be so readily based on the One Nation wisdom of Butler, Macmillan and Heath.'<sup>912</sup> There was a break from the all inclusive post-war educational ideology that had been shaped since 1944. The Conservatives favoured parental choice and allowing the best students to flourish. They believed in rewarding self reliance. This was a non-interventionist approach which would see less centralised state regulation in the choices of children and families. Thus, fresh policy that 'would serve tradition and enterprise alike' was created.<sup>913</sup>

Thatcher explained that following the urban riots of 1981 she increased attention to promoting the value of education. She stated that in doing so:

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<sup>911</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> Christopher Knight, *The Making of Tory Education Policy in Post-War Britain 1950-1986* (London: The Falmer Press, 1990) 85.

<sup>913</sup> Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) 125.

... we wanted to increase parent power ... at the heart of the Conservative mission is something more than economics – however important economics might be: there is a commitment to strengthen, or at least not undermine, the traditional virtues which enable people to live fulfilling lives without being a threat or a burden to others.<sup>914</sup>

In the above quotation the words “parent power” are used to promote consumerism in education. Thatcher noted that, ‘Parents would vote with their children’s feet and schools actually gained resources when they gained pupils. The worst schools in these circumstances would either have to improve or close.’<sup>915</sup> The notion of consumer parent was brought to education which was utilised as a tool to help bring forth reform of the education system. Thatcher also utilised the tools of futurity in her argument, alongside economics, and the notion of threats, by stating that her aim in reforming education was to stop future adults becoming a burden or threat to society. Parental choice and competition between schools, ‘intended to make consumers select schools and courses which would maximise qualifications and job prospects’.<sup>916</sup> This stance follows the notion of the child viewed as a “future” worker; not a burden or hindrance to the State but an asset. This position enforced the Conservative values of self-sufficiency and less state interference – principles which have been highlighted throughout this section.

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<sup>914</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 278-279.

<sup>915</sup> *ibid* 591.

<sup>916</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 155.

The Conservative Government wished to take the idea of decentralisation further by giving parents more choice in the actual education of their children. This would eventually result in the Education Reform Act 1988. This Act introduced an option for schools to become grant maintained which effectively cut out the middle man (Local Education Authorities) and meant that schools which opted for grant maintained status had far greater flexibility with their spending and management decisions. Arguments against this policy centred on the view that this was an ‘attempt to restore ‘Victorian values of elitism and excellence.’<sup>917</sup> However the advantage of schools receiving their money directly from the Government was that ‘all the important decisions taken at the level closest to parents and teachers, not by a distant and insensitive bureaucracy, would make for better education.’<sup>918</sup> By localising control there was less centralised state interference in local decision making and governance. The aim of the Reform Act was also to ensure, ‘the efficient and economical provision of skills which would assist in the restoration of Britain’s ability to compete in the world economy.’<sup>919</sup> As Neville Harris notes, ‘the public interest in ensuring that children receive an education and are aided to become fit members of society has not diminished.’<sup>920</sup> The child perceived as “future” worker is evident here as the tool of futurity was utilised in arguments for less central state control. This change in policy affected the regulation of children and families by shifting the

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<sup>917</sup> M. David, ‘Education’ in M. McCarthy (ed), *The New Politics of Welfare: An Agenda for the 1990s?* (Macmillan) p.176 cited in G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 237.

<sup>918</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 592.

<sup>919</sup> G.C Peden, *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Philip Allan, 1991) 237.

<sup>920</sup> Neville Harris, *Law and Education: Regulation, Consumerism and the Education System* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1993) 208.

regulatory power. Regulation still occurred but on a local level rather than hierarchical (top down).

Although the Conservatives were arguing against centralised state interference by advocating consumerism in education, it could be said that in reality parents have no real choice regarding the schooling of their children – they must ensure that their children are educated, either in a private or state school, or that they are taught at home. Therefore, children and families were still regulated by the State during this period, there was merely less direct interference regarding which school individual children attended due to de-centralised control. As Roger Dale explains:

Thatcherite education policy might be seen as not so much anti-statist as anti-universalist and anti-social democratic ... Thatcherism is very much in favour of selectiveness, 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.<sup>921</sup>

The State was still involved in the regulation of children and families through education and the site of the school but Conservative policy at this time was to ensure

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<sup>921</sup> Roger Dale, *The State and Education Policy* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989) 90.

as much parental choice as possible was available as to which school children attended. This meant that, 'Education was to become a product.'<sup>922</sup>

As highlighted earlier in this chapter,<sup>923</sup> 'The existence of consumerism in education is beyond doubt ... So far as schooling is concerned, it tends to be assumed that the parent ... rather than the child is the consumer of education.'<sup>924</sup> Harris contrasts this situation to children's rights 'recognised under the Children's Act 1989. These include rights as consumers.'<sup>925</sup> Wyness also notes that, 'Unlike British child-care policy, there are as yet few opportunities for pupils to express an opinion on the quality of their schooling.'<sup>926</sup> Consequently there is a distinction between the growing role of the consumer child who was developing outside of education and the non-consumer child within it. However, the relationship regarding school meals is different. With regard to food served in schools, the role of "consumer" child would grow considerably under the Conservative Government.

### 3) Effects

In 1980 another major piece of legislation was passed which was to change school food policy once again. Almost moving full circle back to 1906 when school meals were first legally introduced, the Education Act 1980 removed compulsory food provision for all children. Section 22 of the 1980 Act states that Local Education

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<sup>922</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 47.

<sup>923</sup> Chapter 5, Part 1.

<sup>924</sup> Neville Harris, *Law and Education: Regulation, Consumerism and the Education System* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1993) 19.

<sup>925</sup> *ibid* 21.

<sup>926</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 151.

Authorities *shall* provide areas where pupils can eat food and drink brought onto school premises from home, but only *may* provide school meals and milk for children.<sup>927</sup> Local Education Authorities were only under an obligation to provide free school meals to those children entitled because their parents received supplementary benefit or family income supplement.<sup>928</sup> This gave Local Educational Authorities the option as to whether they made any food provision for the majority of children. The removal of obligations also meant that the few children who were still entitled to free school milk before the enactment of the 1980 Act now lost this benefit too.<sup>929</sup> This new legislation would invariably save the Government a considerable amount of money whilst still providing some assistance to the identified “hungry” children from poor families. This meant that the concept of universal school meals put in place after the war had been lost whilst preserving the notion developed when school meals were first introduced: necessitous children should be fed by the State. This shift in law would remove the opportunity for the State to regulate the food consumption of many children and families.

Local Education Authorities gained the power to determine the cost and content of any meals they chose to provide, and thus nutritional standards were effectively removed. The Government, ‘decided that areas such as school meals should bear a greater proportion of the necessary savings to reduce the impact on more essential parts of the educational process.’<sup>930</sup> This non-interventionist approach to school meals was arguably because the Conservative Government ‘dismissed the notion that

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<sup>927</sup> Education Act 1980, s 22 (1).

<sup>928</sup> Education Act 1980, s 22 (2).

<sup>929</sup> Education Act 1980, s 22 (5).

<sup>930</sup> Secretary of State for Education, *School Meals: The Government Response to the Seventh Report from the Education, Science and Arts Committee, Session 1981-82* (Cmnd 8740, 1982) 3.



food poverty even existed in Britain'.<sup>931</sup> The provision of meals and milk were an easy target for the Conservatives who believed in greater parental responsibility with regard to the feeding of children, plus the addition of consumer choice. Thus the 1980 Act brought forth a shift from nutritional quality to cost being the primary concern in budgeting for school meals. This was coupled with the idea of pupil preference. In the 1930s, the argument that mass catering dispelled individual choice was rebutted in a single sentence – 'A child does not in any case determine his own diet.'<sup>932</sup> However, in the 1980s, economics merged with consumer choice as the focus of school meals. The Education Authorities were cited as adopting a 'more "commercial" attitude' to school meals.<sup>933</sup> Conservative MP George Younger described the current system as a 'more diversified and consumer oriented school meals service.'<sup>934</sup> In the 1940s, all children not only ate together, they were offered the same type of staple foods containing recommended nutrients and little choice. Whereas in the 1980s, there were alternatives to in-house lunchtime meals such as packed or home lunches or, if school meals were available, there was more child centred choice over what to eat in the school canteen. Maria Cross and Barbara Macdonald state that, 'Children were now consumers, free to eat whatever they wanted, with no restrictions or control other than their own financial limitations.'<sup>935</sup> Although this was not entirely true, as the food served on school premises was

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<sup>931</sup> Carrienne Hurley & Ashley Riley (eds) *Recipe for Change: A Good Practice Guide to School Meals* (London: CPAG, 2004) 9.

<sup>932</sup> Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 17.

<sup>933</sup> The Department of the Environment Audit Inspectorate, *Education: School Meals* (1983) 16.

<sup>934</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 July 1984, vol 63, col 174W (George Younger, Conservative).

<sup>935</sup> Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 11-12.

determined by the Local Education Authorities, as economics was the focus of school meals, the food provided was the type children would readily buy.

Following the 1980 Act, 'the number of such "sandwich-eaters" subsequently increased significantly.'<sup>936</sup> A packed lunch could, if required, be supplemented with snacks from the cafeteria. Furthermore, there appears to be no official policy that restricts food items brought in from home for school lunches. This move supports the perception of "consumer" child. One 'who takes sandwiches to school from choice (his choice, not his mother's) ... With your own sandwiches you can eat as much or as little as you like and conceal that fact in your lunch-box.'<sup>937</sup> This meant that the State could not regulate the private sphere of the home in the manner it could when more children ate school meals. A report published by the Secretary of State for Education in 1982 supported the position that the food tastes of children were changing:

Over a number of years there had been growing indications that the traditional school meal was less favoured by pupils who, despite the considerable subsidy provided from public funds, were increasingly either turning away from school meals or not eating the standard meal provided. Experiments in some authorities had shown that new approaches whereby

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<sup>936</sup> The Department of the Environment Audit Inspectorate, *Education: School Meals* (1983) 60.

<sup>937</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 21.

pupils were given greater freedom of choice resulted in increased take up of school meals and reduced waste.<sup>938</sup>

Therefore, when schools offered children things that they wanted to eat, a greater number of children partook in school meals, and ate more of the food they chose.

This 1982 report was followed a year later by a Department of the Environment study. It was reported that cash-cafeterias, where children could choose both what they ate and the quantity of food they consumed, were popular and had been introduced 'to provide choice, to combat the decrease in take-up of a higher priced traditional meal and to reduce the net subsidy.'<sup>939</sup> This stance uses economics as an argument. The study highlighted, as with the 1982 report, that in situations where, 'authorities have changed from traditional two-course no-choice meals to cafeteria operations there is much less waste and more choice for the children; but many children now eat sausages baked beans and chips, or a similar meal, every day.'<sup>940</sup> There was concern that the food chosen in school, 'merely reflects a similar change in the type of food eaten at home.'<sup>941</sup> Therefore, if children are given poor quality, non-nutritious food at home, they are likely to replicate these food choices in school. Nan Berger states that:

... children can and do make sensible choices. But it also has to be said that it is unlikely, to say the least, that a child who comes from a home where food comes mainly out of a packet

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<sup>938</sup> Secretary of State for Education, *School Meals: The Government Response to the Seventh Report from the Education, Science and Arts Committee, Session 1981-82* (Cmnd 8740, 1982) 3.

<sup>939</sup> The Department of the Environment Audit Inspectorate, *Education: School Meals* (1983) 5.

<sup>940</sup> *ibid* 2.

<sup>941</sup> *ibid*.

or a tin and where the family rarely if ever sits down for a  
'Proper' meal together will make a sensible choice at the  
school cafeteria.<sup>942</sup>

The use of the term "proper" meal implies that children and families who do not adhere to this norm make poor or "abnormal" choices. When given the option of choices in a cash cafeteria environment, "consumer" child is likely to choose foods familiar to those eaten at home, alongside taking the cost of the food into account. Although it has been estimated 'that British children under the age of 16 spend £680 million of their own money on snacks and sweets every year,'<sup>943</sup> (not necessarily solely within the school cafeteria), given the choice, children 'will save money on food expenditure in order to have spare cash for other purchases. Therefore, cheap food – and processed food usually is cheap – has an additional attraction.'<sup>944</sup> Cheaper, familiar foods will therefore be more appealing to children than healthy, sometimes alien, more expensive foods if they are given the choice. This is very similar to the points noted during analysis of the evacuees in World War II – children do not like to eat food which is strange to them.<sup>945</sup> The cash cafeteria service was criticised by Labour MP Derek Fatchett. His argument centred on the health of children:

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<sup>942</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 71.

<sup>943</sup> Figures from submissions to the Children's Society Good Childhood Enquiry, Lifestyle Theme (2007); and the Office of National Statistics cited in David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 83.

<sup>944</sup> Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 77.

<sup>945</sup> See Chapter 4, Part 2, (2).

Children are eating junk food or convenience food. Their diet is unbalanced. Because of the price of school meals, children are forced to eat cheaper, convenience food that has less nutritional value. This Government are responsible for the health of the children of this country. Their school meals policy will lead to a further deterioration in the health of our children, particularly those from poorer families.<sup>946</sup>

This view also points to class as a theme utilised within the argument for greater regulation, through use of the term “poorer families”. Labour MP Robert C. Brown also argued that the changes removed quality and quantity as the focus of school meals. His argument centred on the bad timing of the move and the reduction of nutritional standards:

Local education authorities are now free not only to charge what they wish for the meals they produce but also to provide whatever amount of food of any nutritional value they please. Inevitably the LEAs have cut back on both the quantity and the nutritional content of the food they provide. "Snacketeria" and other services now abound, and the use of school meals to combat social deprivation is virtually at an end at the very time when Britain's unemployment level is inflicting hardship on increasing numbers of working people.<sup>947</sup>

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<sup>946</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 July 1986, vol 102, col 305 (Derek Fatchett, Labour).

<sup>947</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 August 1980, vol 990, col 219 (Robert C. Brown, Labour).

Both Fatchett and Brown took the stance that more regulation of school food was required rather than less. As Fatchett stated, “This Government are responsible for the health of the children of this country.” Contrary to Conservative policy that parents were responsible for the feeding of children, Labour MPs linked school food with health and, as the State was responsible for child health, it was responsible for child feeding.

Even more children were subjected to the curtailment of free meals when the Social Security Act 1986 introduced that Local Education Authorities must charge all pupils for food and drink, except those whose parents were in receipt of income support.<sup>948</sup> This narrowed the criteria of who could apply for free food. Many children were thus affected by this change in policy, although those deemed to be from the poorest families were still state aided:

Under the Social Security Act 1986 it is estimated that about 550,000 children will cease to receive free school meals ... about 200,000 children will cease to receive free welfare milk ... there will be about 950,000 children in family credit families who will receive cash help in place of free school meals and free welfare milk.<sup>949</sup>

Public funds subsidised school meals for all children who wanted them and completely funded those meals which were available to pupils for free. Paying parents had always contributed to the cost of the meal but as stated in the Education

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<sup>948</sup> Social Security Act 1986, s 77 (2) (3).

<sup>949</sup> Hansard HC Deb 13 November 1987, vol 122, col 359W (Nicholas Scott, Conservative).

Act of 1921,<sup>950</sup> this cost when broken down did not just pay for the food, it also included administration charges and other costs associated with providing school meals, such as cooking equipment and staff wages. Considering that the purpose of school meals was initially to aid poorer children, take up of free meals has never been quoted to be as high as the number of children who are entitled to them, as can be seen in parliamentary debates quoting school meal figures:

It is worrying that 35 per cent. of children entitled to free school meals are not receiving them. The problem involves practices, different coloured dinner tickets and different queues. Kids are extremely sensitive to being made outsiders within their own environment. There is discrimination and we must recognise that.<sup>951</sup>

Stigma has been an issue since the origin of free school food. Perhaps going back to the days before compulsory education was introduced, it was only the very poor children who received charitable donations as their school meal. In the past those in receipt of free school meals were served separately to children who paid and were sometimes served different food. More recently dinner tokens were issued to entitled children who would exchange them for food up to the value on the token, but these still highlighted those children from poorer families. As Brown stated in 1980, 'Is there anything great about a Great Britain which publicly identifies each and every child in the country who suffers the deprivation caused by unemployment?'<sup>952</sup> The

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<sup>950</sup> Education Act 1921, s 83.

<sup>951</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 131 (Terry Rooney, Labour).

<sup>952</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 August 1980, vol 990, col 220 (Robert C. Brown, Labour).

consequence of fewer eligible children opting to eat free school food, is less opportunity for the State to regulate children and families.

a) Compulsory Competitive Tendering

The Local Government Act 1988 initiated a process whereby all public sector catering was to be opened up for private tender.<sup>953</sup> This was called Compulsory Competitive Tendering. This shift in policy was in part mooted as due to the fact that, 'competition is a good way of showing whether an existing operation is efficient within an authority.'<sup>954</sup> However, 'The guiding principle was 'lowest bid wins', and this put economy above quality in provision of the service.'<sup>955</sup> Thus it arguably further reduced 'the school meals service to a commercial operation rather than a social service.'<sup>956</sup> Berger states that previously:

... the meals served were almost exclusively of the meat and two veg plus pudding type, without choice by the child. These were the meals which made the service famous, which underpinned the health of the children and which were not to be displaced until ideas of what children wanted were

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<sup>953</sup> Local Government Act 1988, s 17.

<sup>954</sup> The Department of the Environment Audit Inspectorate, *Education: School Meals* (1983) 54.

<sup>955</sup> Report of the School Meals Review Panel, *Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food: A Report on the Development and Implementation of Nutritional Standards for School Lunches* (London, DfES, 2005) para 1.10.

<sup>956</sup> Nan Berger, *The School Meals Service: From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990) 103.



influenced by what the food industry thought it could make money out of.<sup>957</sup>

The move away from school-based catering committed a journey back to the days when vats of soup were transported to schools in the nineteenth century. Traditional canteens which had been the norm since the 1940s now took the form of school cash cafeterias. As mentioned above, most were self service and the food available ranged from a main dinner type meal to snacks and drinks. As nutritional standards were lost in the 1980 Act, outside caterers could, and did, provide schools with what children *wanted* to eat rather than what nutritional experts thought they *should* be eating. This helped schools, 'to bring in the cash to make the savings the government was forcing on them',<sup>958</sup> and highlights the role economics played in school food policy. Popular choices were invariably, 'chips, burgers, pizza, sausage rolls, sandwiches, doughnuts, cakes, fizzy drinks or variations on these foods.'<sup>959</sup> Previous thought that the purpose of school food was for the benefit of a hungry child's education was lost to consumer choice. As Tomlinson states, 'the era of chips with everything was ushered in.'<sup>960</sup> The advantages of this system were that children could choose to buy as much or as little as they wanted rather than being offered fixed portions of set food. The disadvantages were that all nutritional value could be lost as pupils opted for less healthy food.

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<sup>957</sup> *ibid* 64.

<sup>958</sup> *ibid* 102.

<sup>959</sup> S. Passmore & G. Harris 'Education, Health and School Meals: A Review of Policy Changes in England and Wales over the Last Century' (2004) 29 *Nutrition Bulletin* 221, 224.

<sup>960</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 30.

Central Government had localised services to an extent where the nutritional content of children's school food choices was largely uncontrolled. Furthermore, following the Education Reform Act 1988, schools which opted for grant maintained status had the ability to make their own decisions regarding their food provision. This lessened central state control over school meals further which followed the Conservatives belief that control of a child's food provision and consumption belonged in the private sphere of the home, not the public sphere of the school. These shifts in policy meant that the State intervened less in a child's food choices, thus there was less opportunity for the Government to regulate the food consumption of children and families.

#### b) Health Education and Nutritional Standards

A 1987 report compiled by the Health Education Council titled *The Health Divide: Inequalities in Health in the 1980's*, further connected health and food – continuing the link set forth in the Black Report of 1980. The 1987 report highlighted a class issue regarding the nutritional quality of food consumed by families on various incomes. A study found that, 'the richest group consumed more brown and wholemeal bread, more fresh fruit and vegetables and less white bread, potatoes, sugar and fat than the poorest group ... the richest income group continues to have a healthier diet than the poorest group.'<sup>961</sup> The notion that earning less money equalled a less nutritious diet was not new. Fruit and vegetables have long been cited as more expensive than cheaper foods which 'are often the ones higher in fat and sugar.'<sup>962</sup> It

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<sup>961</sup> Health Education Council, Margaret Whitehead, *The Health Divide: Inequalities in Health in the 1980's* (1987) 65.

<sup>962</sup> *ibid* 72.

was claimed in the report that, 'abolishing child poverty was nowhere in sight.'<sup>963</sup> Nutrition in children had in fact worsened since the removal of nutritional standards in school meals in 1980, alongside increased cost of school meals and the introduction of choice based cafeterias.<sup>964</sup> As James and James explain, 'By eating school meals, therefore, those children entitled to 'free' school meals may simply have been compounding the potential health problems which ... poverty brings.'<sup>965</sup> Increasing general health education in schools was recommended as, at the time of writing the report, emphasise was on drugs and AIDS education rather than nutrition.

Although evidence continued to be placed before Parliament about the links between education and health, there remained no nutritional standard in place regarding school meals. However, there were growing concerns about childhood obesity leading to heart disease and diabetes in later life and society was becoming increasingly bombarded with literature that bad diet equalled bad health. This was nothing new as my research shows – the health of children has been linked to their diet since before school food legislation emerged. In 1987 Labour MP Tony Lloyd introduced the Education (Nutritional Requirements) Bill. The Bill specified that Local Education Authorities *may* provide pupils with milk and that the mid-day meal *should* reach nutritional standards,<sup>966</sup> but the Bill was never passed. Then in 1992 the School Meals Campaign was set up which called for the reintroduction of nutritional standards. However, again, nothing was done to change the landscape of the school

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<sup>963</sup> *ibid* 94.

<sup>964</sup> *ibid* 96.

<sup>965</sup> Allison James & Adrian L. James, *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 151.

<sup>966</sup> Education (Nutritional Requirements) Bill 1987, s 1.

meals service. Under a Conservative Government a non-interventionist stance remained with regard to school meals.

## PART 3

### New Labour

#### 1) Motivations

The *effect* of Conservative policies to lessen central state control developed towards the *motivations* behind New Labour's policies in the late 1990s and beyond. Obesity and child poverty were of concern; particularly following the legacy of Conservative policies promoting individual responsibility which statistics highlighted had not eased the condition of the poor.

Despite ongoing debates from the beginning of school food provision, by 1997 children were still cited as going to school hungry, having had no breakfast at home. There was also the issue that some children were not being fed a hot meal at all as these were not being provided at home or at school. Labour MP Joan Lester noted the link between a child's diet and their ability to learn in class, whilst also utilising the notion of futurity by highlighting the enduring consequences:

Poor diet and poverty in childhood have long-term implications. Some of the effects are immediate, such as children falling asleep in their classrooms because they have had no proper food or breakfast. I know one teacher who keeps a supply of biscuits and fruit juice in the cupboard, which he gives to children whom he feels are undernourished ... more than one quarter of them have no cooked meal, often because they are in accommodation that does not provide the wherewithal, so the school lunch is probably their most

important meal of the day. We must ensure that it contains the essential nutrients for good health in both the short and the long term .... A poor diet will affect children's general level of activity and their academic performance. Without a proper nutritional base in childhood, people may suffer heart disease later on. That, as we know, is one of the major causes of death in the United Kingdom. An estimated 30 per cent. of such deaths are attributed to a wrong or poor diet. The disease process begins in childhood: thickening of the arteries has been seen in children under the age of 10. Obesity is on the increase. A study published in the British Journal of Nutrition estimated that the number of obese children doubled between 1980 and 1990. A change in school meal cooking methods and content could make a significant difference.<sup>967</sup>

The “wrong” or “poor” diet was cited as to blame for poor child health, maintaining the stance that those families who did not adhere to prescribed food norms were deemed to be “abnormal”. Poverty was once again highlighted as a key aspect of poor diet, denoting a continued class issue. Whereas, ‘In 1979 one child in ten (1.4 million) was living in poverty. By 1997 this figure had tripled to over 4.5 million – one in three children.’<sup>968</sup> Of these 4.5 million children it was estimated that, ‘2.8 million of whom are aged between 5 and 16 years.’<sup>969</sup> Whereas previous discussion had focussed on relative poverty in a consumer society, here we are looking at the

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<sup>967</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 March 1997, vol 292, cols 779-780 (Joan Lester, Labour).

<sup>968</sup> Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 10.

<sup>969</sup> *Population Trends*, August 1998, p59 cited in Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 18.

growing rise of food poverty – children who are once more noted as suffering from a poor diet due to lack of parental finance. Lestor explained that, ‘there are appalling levels of poverty and inequality in this country.’<sup>970</sup> There was ‘disturbing new evidence of widespread child malnutrition. Families live in overcrowded and inadequate accommodation’.<sup>971</sup> These were problems which had been highlighted in the early twentieth century when school meals were first introduced. School meals were not reaching all of the poorest children as of the 2.8 million school-aged children living in poverty noted above, it was ‘estimated that around 1.8 million children were eligible for a school meal. This means that around a million poor children go without.’<sup>972</sup> Poverty in childhood was being linked to an increase in the numbers of cases of obesity, which in turn can lead to other health concerns. Making use of the tool of statistics, it was stated in Parliament that:

... a third of serious heart diseases and a third of cancers in this country can be attributed to poor nutrition. That is the scale of the problem that faces us. We also know that a diet high in fats and sugar is causing obesity. Not only do many of these problems begin in childhood, but they are overwhelmingly the diseases of poverty.<sup>973</sup>

Linking poor health with poverty, it could be argued that it is cheaper and easier for poor families to eat convenience foods. Regarding cost, Will McMahon and Tim Marsh state that, ‘many of the cheapest foods are generally the least nutritious – fatty,

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<sup>970</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 March 1997, vol 292, col 777 (Joan Lestor, Labour).

<sup>971</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 March 1997, vol 292, col 778 (Joan Lestor, Labour).

<sup>972</sup> Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 18.

<sup>973</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 133 (Helen Jones, Labour).

oily foods, often high in salt and sugar. It is far cheaper to fill up on a diet of fatty meat products, biscuits, sweets and white bread than healthier fresh fruit, vegetables and lean meat.<sup>974</sup> Regarding ease, Conservative MP Simon Burns stated:

Most children will vote with their feet if they do not like the food that is put before them. They refuse to eat it. They go out and spend their money on fast food, or badger their parents to buy it for them. It is easier for some parents to take that option than to go through all the trouble of preparing and cooking vegetables and meat, or whatever, at home, then sitting down and eating it and clearing up afterwards. It is easier to go to a fast food outlet and buy meals with few nutritional benefits for children or adults.<sup>975</sup>

As had been noted with the increase in food choice in schools following the introduction of cash cafeterias, children would not eat food they did not like. To cater for their tastes, alongside the issue of cost, both parents and schools offered children convenience fast foods. The issues analysed above were raised again in Parliament in 2000 when Labour MP Barry Sheerman stated, ‘the overall nutrition of many people in this country is in a serious state. Indeed, it would not be too dramatic to say that the diet of many British school children is a disgrace and a savage indictment of our society.’<sup>976</sup>

## 2) Techniques of Argumentation

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<sup>974</sup> Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 26.

<sup>975</sup> Hansard HC Deb 18 March 1997, vol 292, col 788 (Simon Burns, Conservative).

<sup>976</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 113 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).



During the election campaign in 1997, 'Tony Blair repeatedly declared that "education, education, education" were to be "the top three priorities" of a Labour government.'<sup>977</sup> 'Education and training were to be the way in which Britain would be transformed from a low-skill, low-wage economy to a high-skill, high-wage and technological economy.'<sup>978</sup> This was crucial 'to Britain's success in what was seen as an ever more competitive global market place.'<sup>979</sup> During a speech delivered to the Institute for Public Policy Research, 'Blair commented ... that his government had a ten-year programme to tackle poverty and social exclusion: "At the end of it, I believe we will have an expanded middle class and ladders of opportunity for those of all backgrounds."'<sup>980</sup> Here class and futurity were both utilised in arguments for education policy reforms. Tomlinson states that, 'Labour education policies would be carefully geared to "middle England" voter aspirations.'<sup>981</sup> New Labour continued with much of Conservative education policy, for example, regarding school choice. Whereas:

Conservatives promised *Choice and Diversity*, New Labour promised *Diversity and Excellence*. The reality was that structural differentiation was ensuring a hierarchical pecking order of schools, which unsurprisingly, given the history of

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<sup>977</sup> Clyde Chitty, *Education Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 62.

<sup>978</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 82.

<sup>979</sup> Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003) 147.

<sup>980</sup> Tony Blair speech to the IPPR 1999 cited in Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 131.

<sup>981</sup> *ibid* 65.

English schooling, continued to mirror the social class structure.<sup>982</sup>

Therefore, 'School education continued to be a divisive rather than a cohesive force.'<sup>983</sup> Choice regarding schools reinforced the class divide: 'Sometimes this is because more privileged groups are more active in choosing desired schools, sometimes it is because such schools are in more prosperous neighbourhoods whose residents continue to get more privileged access to them.'<sup>984</sup>

However, a greater desire to regulate children and families through the site of the school than had occurred during the Conservative administration emerges when the parliamentary debates of this period are analysed. Techniques utilised by MPs during debates include futurity, perceptions of childhood, notions of children as threats, statistics, and child health.

#### a) Education

Arguments for greater regulation of children and families can be viewed through analysis of the Crick Report on Citizenship which was published in 1998. The State's idea of what amounts to a good citizen was nothing new. I examined this notion during my analysis of the Victorian values concerning citizenship and what it means for children to be trained to be "good citizens" in their future adult lives.<sup>985</sup> The Crick

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<sup>982</sup> *ibid* 99 [italics as per text].

<sup>983</sup> *ibid* 110.

<sup>984</sup> OECD (1994) *School: A Matter of Choice*. Paris: OECD: 7 cited in Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post-Welfare Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001) 136.

<sup>985</sup> Chapter 2, Part 2.

Report reinforced the notion of the child as “future” worker/society member by highlighting that citizenship education is, ‘part of preparation for adult life’.<sup>986</sup> Therefore the importance of teaching citizenship is the end result – the future citizen the child will become.

The Report stated that the advantage for pupils of citizenship education would be, ‘an entitlement in schools that will empower them to participate in society effectively as active, informed, critical and responsible citizens’.<sup>987</sup> The words “empower” and “participate effectively” are used in the same sentence. On one hand the report advocates empowerment, on the other effective participation. This corresponds to Donzelot’s notions of persuasion and discipline leading to the adherence of norms. *Empower* signifies persuasion – if you partake in citizenship education you will be empowered; yet *participate effectively* implies discipline. This stance also adheres to Foucault’s notion of normalisation via reward. The State is using the site of the school to regulate norms by teaching children values the State deems as important. When norms have been taught, the individual will be rewarded through empowerment.

The benefits for society as a whole of citizenship education within schools were mooted as, ‘an active and politically-literate citizenry convinced that they can influence government and community affairs at all levels.’<sup>988</sup> These benefits for both child and society would be achieved through enhancing ‘the awareness of rights and

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<sup>986</sup> Final Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (London, DfEE/QCA, 1998) para 1.6.

<sup>987</sup> *ibid* para 1.10.

<sup>988</sup> *ibid*.

duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens'.<sup>989</sup> This would see schools 'making adequate space on the timetable for lessons designed to enable all children to become active and caring citizens when they leave school.'<sup>990</sup> Therefore, although the benefits of citizenship education were noted for pupils as well as society, both benefits would be reaped when the child reached adulthood. Thus, children were being considered in light of futurity and their role as "future" workers/citizens. Furthermore, although the report stated schools would be encouraging *active* citizenship in adulthood, this would be taking place whilst also teaching *passive* compliance for a life in the workplace. Therefore, it could be argued that as it would be the Government's notion of what amounts to a good citizen that would be taught in schools, there was very little active participation for the future adult, let alone the child in the school.

In 2003 the Chief Secretary to the Treasury published *Every Child Matters*.<sup>991</sup> There were five points that the Government mooted as key to a child's well-being, both during their childhood and in later life -- being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being.<sup>992</sup>

The Government promised to close the opportunity gap between children from different areas of society. As an example of this, I have previously analysed that children from poorer backgrounds generally do not have the same chances as their richer counterparts with regards to education; despite repeated attempts to make education more inclusive. The intention of the Government with *Every Child Matters*

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<sup>989</sup> *ibid* para 6.6.

<sup>990</sup> Clyde Chitty, *Education Policy in Britain* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 195.

<sup>991</sup> *Every Child Matters* provided the foundation for the Children Act 2004 which gained Royal Assent on 15 November 2004.

<sup>992</sup> See Department for Education and Skills (DfES) *Every Child Matters* (London: Cm 5860, 2003).

was early intervention and effective protection of children ‘in order to prevent a range of problems in later life.’<sup>993</sup> The words “early intervention” and “effective protection” utilises the notion of children as vulnerable and in need of state protection. The Government thought that prevention was vital to protecting children. “To prevent problems in later life” utilises the perception of children in terms of futurity. Here two perceptions of childhood are used together as a technique of argumentation – the child as “future” worker/citizen is used alongside the perception of the child as “vulnerable” in advancing argument for greater state intervention in family life. James and James explain that there has been, ‘the tendency, in recent years, to present childhood as a time of risk, in which children are defined as being in need of protection, in their best interests, in order to fulfil their potential as adults.’<sup>994</sup> This stance links the tools of futurity and the perception of child vulnerability. *Every Child Matters* is a prime example of this. As Nigel Parton notes, ‘children were conceptualized primarily as future citizens requiring both safeguarding and investment.’<sup>995</sup>

In a shift from Conservative policy of the late twentieth century regarding regulation, the Labour Government of the early twenty-first century believed that, ‘the state had to take a much more active and interventive role in relation to children and their

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<sup>993</sup> Nigel Parton, ‘The ‘Change for Children’ Programme in England: Towards the ‘Preventive-Surveillance State’ *Journal of Law and Society*, (2008) 35 (1) 166, 167.

<sup>994</sup> Adrian James & Allison James ‘Changing Childhood in the UK: Reconstructing Discourses of ‘Risk’ and ‘Protection’ in Allison James & Adrian James (eds) *European Childhoods: Cultures, Politics and Childhoods in Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 111.

<sup>995</sup> Nigel Parton, ‘The ‘Change for Children’ Programme in England: Towards the ‘Preventive-Surveillance State’ *Journal of Law and Society*, (2008) 35 (1) 166, 167.

development.’<sup>996</sup> James and James view this shift in policy as ‘less about the welfare of children and more about the protection of adult communities, in both the present and the future.’<sup>997</sup> This has arguably been the case with much of the policy I have analysed throughout this and earlier chapters; that children are regulated in order to maintain the status quo in adult society. The view that children need protecting so as to ensure they will become effective society members in adulthood inhibits a child’s individual autonomy with regard to choice making and produces tensions between the notions of “consumer” child and “vulnerable” child. *Every Child Matters* highlights that:

... far from being enabled to become reflexive and responsible individuals by the choices available within the ‘risk society’, children are being increasingly ‘disabled’ through recourse to a developmental paradigm that casts them as in need of protection *from* risk as they grow up.<sup>998</sup>

With regard to *Every Child Matters*, ‘it would seem that the “risk” from which all children are to be protected is the risk that, in the absence of such services, there will be various negative outcomes for children as they develop, which will blight their lives as future adults.’<sup>999</sup> The importance of the future adult outweighs the individual

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<sup>996</sup> *ibid* 174.

<sup>997</sup> Adrian James & Allison James ‘Changing Childhood in the UK: Reconstructing Discourses of ‘Risk’ and ‘Protection’ in Allison James & Adrian James (eds) *European Childhoods: Cultures, Politics and Childhoods in Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 111.

<sup>998</sup> *ibid* 113-114 [*italics as per text*].

<sup>999</sup> *ibid* 114.

child experience of choice. This arguably, ‘justifies concerns about protection and risk, which in turn legitimises the control of children by adults.’<sup>1000</sup>

As had occurred with concern of street children in the nineteenth century,<sup>1001</sup> and during evacuation in the 1940s,<sup>1002</sup> the Government were again utilising the notion of “vulnerable” child against a culture of fear from the threat of children – as Wyness refers to them, ‘out of place’,<sup>1003</sup> to advance political policy. Individual child choice is deemed to be “out of place” in the same way that children should not be on the streets or in work as it threatens the established social order. Child choice is viewed here as less central than the regulation of children and families. As occurs within the site of the school, children are perceived as subordinate to adults and any change that affects this status quo upsets the balance of the adult/child divide. Therefore, the notion of “consumer” child had no place in Labour policy outside of the school cafeteria.

#### b) School Meals

Children arriving at school without first having breakfast has been an issue for campaigners since the introduction of compulsory education. This concern has also been linked to the end of nutritional standards in the 1980s and the increase in caterers offering snack style cafeteria foods such as cold sandwiches instead of hot meals. Children who do not have breakfast at home, and who were being fed sandwiches at

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<sup>1000</sup> *ibid* 115.

<sup>1001</sup> Chapter 2, Part 1 (1) (a).

<sup>1002</sup> Chapter 4, Part 2 (1) (a).

<sup>1003</sup> Michael Wyness, *Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 94.

school for lunch, were therefore without access to proper meals for a substantial length of time. This view was mooted in Parliament in 1980 by Labour MP John Home Robertson:

When I drive through that part of my constituency at 8 am and see schoolchildren standing at farm road ends, in all weathers, waiting for transport to school, I often wonder how many of them have had a decent meal before they left the house. I am forced to reflect on the fact that many of them, in the next school session, may not get anything more than a sandwich or a packet of crisps until their parents get back from work after 5 pm.<sup>1004</sup>

As McMahon and Marsh state, 'Although the nutritional value of a hot meal is not necessarily higher than a cold meal, there are many who feel that the provision of a hot meal is important for school children.'<sup>1005</sup> A hot meal available at lunchtime 'is also seen as comforting, more substantial and a more appealing alternative to a packed lunch provided by the school.'<sup>1006</sup> Furthermore, children who eat a hot school meal are required 'to sit together and to use and reinforce the dining manners that they have been taught at home. If such everyday values are not being learned at home, schools can be the place where some children acquire these skills and can be socially included.'<sup>1007</sup> The argument that school meals had a "civilising" effect on schoolchildren had previously been used earlier in the twentieth century.<sup>1008</sup>

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<sup>1004</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 August 1980, vol 990, col 227 (John Home Robertson, Labour).

<sup>1005</sup> Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 38.

<sup>1006</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1007</sup> *ibid* 39.



Using statistics to support her argument, Labour MP Helen Jones argued that, ‘When one in nine children go without breakfast, and one in six do not go home to a cooked meal, it is appalling that the take-up of school meals, particularly free school meals, is falling.’<sup>1009</sup> Once again, the children of the poor were highlighted as being the worst affected by the poor quality of school lunches. Jones expanded:

Although many parents provided both breakfast and a hot meal at night, there were still examples, in the 21st century, of children who went through the whole day without a proper meal; they were merely snacking on bits. That is an indictment of our society.<sup>1010</sup>

It was argued that this was made possible because ‘too many schools are still using vending machines as a source of revenue, and they are usually stuffed with unhealthy products.’<sup>1011</sup> The Government was mooted as having the ‘potential to improve the diets of our young people—particularly the poorest among them—and to set a pattern of healthy eating that we hope would continue.’<sup>1012</sup> Here the training of children for their roles as future adults is noted. Jones expanded: ‘The money that is spent now on school meals could save us a great deal of human suffering, and cost to the health service, in future years.’<sup>1013</sup> Children are viewed in terms of futurity. Healthy children would not grow up to be a drain on NHS resources. Well fed and well trained

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<sup>1008</sup> Chapter 3, Part 3 (a).

<sup>1009</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 134 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1010</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 298 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1011</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 298 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1012</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 296 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1013</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 296 (Helen Jones, Labour).

children would thus be ready to take on their pre-destined roles as consumers and workers of the future, because ‘school meals, which are vital not just for children's health, but for their educational attainment.’<sup>1014</sup> Both Labour and Conservative MPs agreed on this point. Conservative MP Nick St. Aubyn stated that, ‘well-fed children, who have breakfast before they enter class and eat nutritious food during the day, will be more capable of concentrating on their studies.’<sup>1015</sup> This argument was supported by Labour MP David Miliband who noted, ‘the necessity of meals for youngsters to develop properly in education.’<sup>1016</sup> Here the minds of children are cited as important, alongside their bodily health. It was arguably the role of adults to guide children – using children’s perceived vulnerability, to nurture their role as future adults. Jones notes, ‘We are the adults and we have to steer our children in the right direction.’<sup>1017</sup> Techniques utilised here are conceptions of childhood (“vulnerable” and “future” worker/citizen) and notions of futurity, alongside the themes of bodies/minds and health.

The problem of the absence of nutritional standards for school meals was again noted:

Many people put nutrition to one side, as if it were an added-on extra, believing that what is important is teachers, resources, computers and all the other things in a good school, but a child who is undernourished and not getting a proper diet is less able, or unable, to concentrate on the lessons. That is not a healthy child: it is a child who cannot apply himself or herself to the

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<sup>1014</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 300 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1015</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 122 (Nick St. Aubyn, Conservative).

<sup>1016</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 300 (David Miliband, Minister for School Standards, Labour).

<sup>1017</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 300 (Helen Jones, Labour).

business of acquiring knowledge.<sup>1018</sup>

Here again concern is for the mind of the undernourished child and not being able to concentrate on their education is key to the debate. Sheerman expanded his argument to say, 'a child who does not receive sufficient nutrition is a child severely disadvantaged in the learning journey.'<sup>1019</sup> The "learning journey" is important here because it implies that the child is in school so as to learn to become a useful adult. If a child goes to school hungry it will not benefit from its education and will not become a productive future member of adult society. The notion of futurity was supported by Labour MP Terry Rooney who argued that, 'One cannot overstate the contribution that diet makes at an early age to people's health in adult life, in relation to bones, teeth, cholesterol levels and the heart. That is why nutritional standards are so important.'<sup>1020</sup> The child's body is used here to advance argument for nutritional standards in school meals. The reintroduction of nutritional standards would increase centralised state control over school meals and through this children and families would find their food consumption under greater regulation.

Regarding the important site involved in the regulation process, Sheerman highlights how schools are ideal places to teach children the value of good nutrition so as to take this knowledge into adulthood:

One's diet in one's early years has a dramatic effect on one's  
life expectancy and life chances. ... Children get the habit of

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<sup>1018</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 113 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).

<sup>1019</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 117 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).

<sup>1020</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 130 (Terry Rooney, Labour).

good food in their early years and at school. Schools are about education, and they should educate students about diet and good food. We should inculcate them with knowledge about the essentials of good, fresh food and the need for a proper diet. We must encourage lifelong learning —that will help children to become healthy adults and, in turn, good and nurturing parents.<sup>1021</sup>

Futurity is utilised in the argument by the use of the words “lifelong learning”. Children would reproduce the norms learnt within the site of the school inside the home, both now, and when they themselves become parents. Therefore, children would be both objects of regulation within the school, and agents, through regulation of their current and future families by the continued adherence to, and replication of, State defined nutritional norms.

However, it was noted that the lack of healthy lunch options available in schools meant, ‘we cannot encourage children to make healthy choices about food if those healthy choices are not on the menu’.<sup>1022</sup> Furthermore, the school cafeteria was competing against packed lunches from home and outside food vendors. This point was highlighted in Parliament, utilising the perception of “consumer” child, ‘people have a choice —they go willingly to eat in pleasant and welcoming environments. We must do more to encourage schools to provide the premises that make eating food a pleasurable experience.’<sup>1023</sup> An argument supported by McMahon and Marsh who state that, ‘school children in 2000 are much more sophisticated than their

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<sup>1021</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 119 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).

<sup>1022</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 121 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1023</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 118 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).

predecessors in the 1970s ... children are, more than ever, addressed as consumers at every turn.’<sup>1024</sup> Consumer children expect more for their money and need to be persuaded to eat in the school canteen/cafeteria. Sheerman expanded on this point:

... in order to make food attractive to young people one has to make the places in which they eat attractive ... People want to eat in settings that are attractive. If we cannot provide such facilities in schools, we should not be surprised if the lure of the burger bar and the fish and chip shop becomes compelling to schoolchildren.<sup>1025</sup>

To compete with the available choices *outside* of the school, school caterers would need to do more to attract the custom of “consumer” child.

### 3) Effects

In 1997 the Labour Government published the White Paper *Excellence in Schools* which stated that the Government aimed that by 2002 there would be ‘National nutritional standards for school meals.’<sup>1026</sup> These were proposed to be ‘minimum nutritional standards for inclusion in school meals contracts which allow schools, LEAs and caterers flexibility to respond to local tastes and to offer choice.’<sup>1027</sup> This was an attempt by the Labour Government to balance consumerism with increased regulation.

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<sup>1024</sup> Will McMahon & Tim Marsh, *Filling the Gap* (London: CPAG, 1999) 33.

<sup>1025</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 119 (Barry Sheerman, Labour Co-operative).

<sup>1026</sup> Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) *Excellence in Schools* (London: Cm 3681, 1997) 8.

<sup>1027</sup> *ibid* chapter 6, para. 48.

Breakfast clubs were also being set up in some schools where, ‘children arriving at school before the start of formal lessons can be served food on a drop-in basis ... They typically serve toast with spreads, cereals, fruit and sometimes hot food.’<sup>1028</sup> Kellogg’s have sponsored a breakfast club initiative since 1998 and it is noted on their website that, ‘Breakfast clubs are proven to improve children’s behaviour, punctuality and attendance rates at school. They also increase concentration levels throughout the morning and can often improve relationships between teachers and children so everyone’s happy!’<sup>1029</sup> This puts emphasis on the child’s *mind* and *body* – if a child’s body is well fed, the mind can concentrate on schoolwork. The breakfast cereal sponsorship also emphasises “future” consumer child, regarding training a child to like a brand which they will buy as adults, and “current” consumer child within the school, eating the brand of cereal which the school buys and the child/parent pays for. A school where a breakfast club service is offered arguably provides multiple benefits to families. Children start the school day fed and therefore ready to learn without being hungry, as noted above. The clubs also allow working parents more flexibility, as their children are under the care of the school an hour earlier in the morning. However, what the children were fed for breakfast was not at this point under nutritional guidelines.

The Education (Nutritional Guidelines for School Lunches) (England) Regulations 2000,<sup>1030</sup> were introduced applying to all school lunches served in state maintained schools. Labour MP David Miliband, Minister for School Standards, explained that

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<sup>1028</sup> Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 46.

<sup>1029</sup> Breakfast Club for Kids, Kellogg’s UK

<[http://www.giveachildabreakfast.co.uk/about\\_breakfast\\_clubs.aspx](http://www.giveachildabreakfast.co.uk/about_breakfast_clubs.aspx)> last accessed 19/4/2013.

<sup>1030</sup> The Education (Nutritional Guidelines for School Lunches) (England) Regulations 2000, SI 1777.

the guidelines were, ‘practical to implement and that children—the ultimate consumers—would understand them.’<sup>1031</sup> Here the perception of “consumer” child was noted by the Government when drafting the regulations. This was alongside the notion of “vulnerable” child, who needed the inclusion of nutritional standards in their school meals so as to safeguard their current and future health. These two perceptions of childhood helped the Government to justify increasing intervention in the food consumption of children and families. Class was also highlighted because the regulations were particularly going to benefit poor children, as Labour MP Jacqui Smith stated:

New nutritional standards will ensure that all children are able to have healthy and enjoyable school meals. Children from less well-off families, including those who receive free school meals, are likely to benefit most from new nutritional standards. Those standards thus play an important role in eradicating child poverty and in dealing with the issues that affect children from some of our poorest families.<sup>1032</sup>

However, the regulations were only minimum standards as had been mooted in the Excellence in Schools White Paper. Unfortunately, adherence to the standards were not effectively supervised, with caterers ‘left to monitor themselves – no audit was put in place to check whether they or their schools were compliant with requirements.’<sup>1033</sup>

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<sup>1031</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 301 (David Miliband, Minister for School Standards, Labour).

<sup>1032</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 149 (Jacqui Smith, Labour).

<sup>1033</sup> Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 20.

Government initiatives such as the National Healthy Schools Programme 1999, National School Fruit Scheme 2000, and the Food in Schools Programme 2001 were introduced aimed at encouraging children to eat healthily at school. The Government's message appeared to be contradicted by alliances with "junk food" manufacturers such as Walkers Free Books for Schools launched in 1998, supported by the then Education Secretary David Blunkett, and Cadbury Get Active 2003, where the aim was to collect tokens from bars of chocolate in exchange for school sports equipment, supported by Sports Minister Richard Caborn. The Food Commission stated, as an example, that in order for schools to gain enough tokens to exchange for volleyball posts, 'children would need to eat 5,440 chocolate bars containing over 33kg of fat, and nearly one-and-a-quarter million calories.'<sup>1034</sup> With government endorsement, 'Seduced by the lure of free equipment and money, schools all too readily make the transition from advertising to offering commercial merchandise in the form of curricula materials designed to build brand loyalty'.<sup>1035</sup> In a similar move to the Milk Marketing of the 1930s, this is a further argument that schools are 'training grounds for educating students to define themselves as consumers'.<sup>1036</sup> The difference here is that the children are not just viewed by marketers as consumers of the future as they were in the 1930s; in the 1990s/2000s they can actively buy the products themselves – hence they are perceived as both "future" and "current" consumers at the same time.

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<sup>1034</sup> The Food Commission, 'Cadbury asks children to eat two million kg of fat – to get fit!' 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003, <[http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/press/cadbury\\_get\\_active/](http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/press/cadbury_get_active/)> last accessed 15/3/2013.

<sup>1035</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power, and the Politics of Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) 94.

<sup>1036</sup> *ibid* 95.



In Parliament, MPs had noticed that despite the reintroduction of nutritional standards to school meals, ‘significant numbers of children are getting fatter’.<sup>1037</sup> The argument that arose in Parliament in 1971 regarding the ad-man, ‘who can sell the inferior product by persuading people that it is a superior product. ... People are persuaded by the ad-man to buy nutritionally less desirable foods’,<sup>1038</sup> resurfaced in 2004 as ‘television advertising, which force-feeds young children the desire to have some of this rubbishy food’.<sup>1039</sup> The amount of advertising children were exposed to was not helped by convenience food culture and that, ‘In the United Kingdom, food is often cooked in a microwave and rushed down by children sitting in front of the television.’<sup>1040</sup> In Parliament it was suggested that, ‘We must try to ensure that children learn to deal with advertising and to assess properly the messages that many advertisers give them about food.’<sup>1041</sup> Here the stance was that children needed educating to understand which foods were deemed “correct” and which were “wrong”.

The connection between lack of exercise, television culture, and obesity can be seen in the following paragraph cited in a 2004 House of Commons Health Report into Obesity:

Levels of walking and cycling have fallen drastically in recent decades, while the number of cars has doubled in 30 years.

Children are also increasingly sedentary both in and out of

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<sup>1037</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 300 (David Miliband, Minister for School Standards, Labour).

<sup>1038</sup> Hansard HC Deb 14 June 1971, vol 819, col 61 (Edward Short, Labour).

<sup>1039</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 297 (Kerry Pollard, Labour).

<sup>1040</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 128 (Charlotte Atkins, Labour).

<sup>1041</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 134 (Helen Jones, Labour).

school. A fifth of boys and girls undertake less than 30 minutes activity a day. Television viewing has doubled since the 1960s, while physical activity is being squeezed out of daily life by the relentless march of automation.<sup>1042</sup>

As Palmer states, ‘children are increasingly battery-raised – cooped up in their homes, living virtual lives, or in the car, being transported from club to class to club – rather than enjoying the free-range existence they could expect even twenty-five years ago.’<sup>1043</sup> These arguments highlight the lifestyle changes which had taken place that were being blamed for the rise in obesity. Buckingham notes that television is, ‘a relatively inexpensive form of entertainment, which is a major reason why it is more heavily watched in less wealthy families, who are also more likely to be obese.’<sup>1044</sup> He argues that it:

... may be that advertising encourages people to eat an unhealthy diet, which in turn is one contributory factor in obesity. But it may equally be that people who are disposed (for various reasons) to eat an unhealthy diet – or are unable to afford a healthy one – are also inclined to watch a lot of television.<sup>1045</sup>

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<sup>1042</sup> House of Commons Health Committee, *Third Report of Session 2003–04 on Obesity*, Volume 1, HC 23-I, London, 2004, summary, 3.

<sup>1043</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 62.

<sup>1044</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 112.

<sup>1045</sup> *ibid.*

That is not to say poor families go out of their way to choose junk food, it is merely that in many cases convenience food is the cheapest option available. The problem here is that, 'For many families living on low incomes in Britain, their food choices are severely restricted and revolve around deciding between value and own brands, hunting out special offers and looking for clearance-priced goods.'<sup>1046</sup>

Society's obesity angst is 'a contemporary manifestation of a long-running attempt to manage and modify the dietary habits of the "lower orders" of society.'<sup>1047</sup> The pendulum has merely swung from there being concern of poor people being underweight, to them being deemed as overweight due to their "abnormal" diets. Obesity in children viewed in this vein is the new consequence of childhood poverty. Concern for obese children was utilised by Parliament as justification for state regulation of working class diets.

#### a) Jamie Oliver

Despite discussions in Parliament regarding the position of school meals a year earlier, it was largely a television programme shown on Channel 4 in 2005 that provided the catalyst which changed the landscape of school meals once again. TV chef Jamie Oliver highlighted the plight of the school meals service in *Jamie's School Dinners*. His *Feed Me Better* campaign followed, along with much media and public support. Jamie brought to the attention of the nation the state of school meals on a

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<sup>1046</sup> George McNamara, 'Poverty and Nutrition' in Carrieanne Hurley & Ashley Riley (eds), *Recipe for Change: A Good Practice Guide to School Meals* (London: CPAG, 2004) 5.

<sup>1047</sup> David Buckingham, *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) 121.

scale previous initiatives had failed to do. As Palmer notes, ‘the people of the developed world have suddenly noticed we’ve been poisoning our children ... Instead of building healthy bodies, it’s simply making children fatter and unhealthier by the year.’<sup>1048</sup> There was public outcry over the infamous processed Turkey Twizzlers fed to children in schools and the revelation that the ‘Average spend on the ingredients of a primary school meal provided by local authority caterers is 35p. For those provided by private contractors, the spend can be [sic] as low as 31p.’<sup>1049</sup> The low amount of money spent on the ingredients of school meals meant ‘our young people being fed a diet of highly processed food, mechanically recovered meat and lots of additives.’<sup>1050</sup> For example, the twizzlers consisted of ‘reconstituted bits of poultry (probably the bits you’d rather not think about) mixed with fats and additives.’<sup>1051</sup>

It was highlighted that by giving children choice over what they ate in school they would opt for the unhealthy option as had been mooted years earlier.<sup>1052</sup> “Consumer” child was not compatible with nutritional regulation. In the *School Dinners* series the dinner ladies stated that, ‘the reason they served up turkey twizzlers and other nutritionally hopeless dishes wasn’t just a question of cost and convenience; it was because the children refused to eat anything else.’<sup>1053</sup> This was an issue also noticed by Parliament where it was stated that, ‘children will eat what they are used to, and

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<sup>1048</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 19.

<sup>1049</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 297 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1050</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 297 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1051</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 26.

<sup>1052</sup> Chapter 5, Part 2 (2) (b) (i).

<sup>1053</sup> Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 26.

that it is our jobs as adults to get them used to eating decent meals.’<sup>1054</sup> Jamie’s campaign called for (among other things) the return to restriction of child choice over the school lunch menu, the reintroduction of fresh food in schools, and strict nutritional standards.

In light of the publicity, children were visible once again and their poor condition had been brought to the attention of the public, as had happened during evacuation in the 1940s.<sup>1055</sup> The Government set up the School Meals Review Panel in 2005 which made recommendations that reinforced the notion of school meals as a benefit to society. The panel stated that:

The health advantages of well-cooked, well-presented meals, made from good-quality ingredients to accepted nutritional standards ...are inestimable. The benefits of good school meals go beyond high quality catering. They also produce social, educational and economic advantages.<sup>1056</sup>

The economic advantages were both short term, in a reduction in childhood obesity; and long term, in the reduction of ‘the chances of young people suffering from various chronic diseases later in life.’<sup>1057</sup> Better health both now and later would reduce strain on the NHS and be financially beneficial on the public purse. Furthermore, ‘The

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<sup>1054</sup> Hansard HC Deb 4 February 2004, vol 417, col 298 (Helen Jones, Labour).

<sup>1055</sup> See Chapter 4, Part 2, (1) (a).

<sup>1056</sup> Report of the School Meals Review Panel, *Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food: A Report on the Development and Implementation of Nutritional Standards for School Lunches* (London, DfES, 2005) para 1.

<sup>1057</sup> *ibid* para 10.

economic costs of the changes should be modelled against the economic benefits. ... the possible link between better nutrition, educational attainment and associated life-time earnings gain.<sup>1058</sup> The Report confirmed that the associated cost of school food reform, 'is a price worth paying.'<sup>1059</sup> It is clear that the investment in "future" worker child still remains at the forefront of policy changes, alongside economic fears regarding future healthcare needs; combining futurity, economics, and health to advance policy change for school meals.

It was noted that, 'Children fed a monotonous diet of poor quality, predominantly processed food do not thrive.'<sup>1060</sup> In a similar vein to the introduction of school meals one hundred years earlier, poor quality food was blamed for lacklustre children. As was mooted at the beginning of the previous century, schools can help children to 'establish healthy eating patterns which will last for life'.<sup>1061</sup> Although now greater attention was being paid to the nutritional standards of school meals due to advancements in nutritional science, the site of the school was still deemed as necessary to set patterns of behaviour during mealtimes, be it obedience and manners; or good healthy eating habits. Both poor diet and increasingly sedentary lifestyles were highlighted:

Children's diets now contain too much saturated fat, sugar and salt; and too few fruits and vegetables, and foods containing essential vitamins and minerals. At the same time their rates of physical activity have fallen substantially. This current

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<sup>1058</sup> *ibid* para. 4.45.

<sup>1059</sup> *ibid* para.4.42.

<sup>1060</sup> *ibid* para 5.

<sup>1061</sup> *ibid* para 4.

unbalanced diet and low activity lifestyle of many children can affect their health profoundly, with both short and long-term effects.<sup>1062</sup>

This was supported by data stating, ‘In 2006 17 per cent of 12 to 15-year-old boys in Britain were obese, compared with 11 per cent in 1995. For girls, the figure is 15 per cent, compared with 12 per cent a decade earlier.’<sup>1063</sup> Furthermore, ‘Obese children are highly likely to become obese adults – 83 per cent of obese children aged 10 to 14 remain obese into adulthood.’<sup>1064</sup> These statistics substantiated both concerns over the short term risks of lack of exercise, combined with poor eating habits, and also the long term risks of obese children remaining as such and developing chronic health complaints in adulthood. In Parliament it had been stated that ‘Britain is the proud holder of one title: the fattest European nation.’<sup>1065</sup> This assertion was supported by a House of Commons Health Committee Report that noted, ‘Not only does England have some of the worst figures in Europe but it also demonstrates some of the worst trends in the acceleration of obesity’,<sup>1066</sup> and that ‘Around two-thirds of the population of England are overweight or obese. Obesity has grown by almost 400% in the last 25 years’.<sup>1067</sup>

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<sup>1062</sup> *ibid* para. 1.28.

<sup>1063</sup> ONS, Social Trends (2008:98-9) cited in Richard Layard & Judy Dunn, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London: Penguin, 2009) 66.

<sup>1064</sup> Department of Health Survey cited in Richard Layard & Judy Dunn, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London: Penguin, 2009) 66.

<sup>1065</sup> Hansard HC Deb 22 June 2000, vol 352, col 127 (Charlotte Atkins, Labour).

<sup>1066</sup> House of Commons Health Committee, *Third Report of Session 2003–04 on Obesity*, Volume 1, (HC 23-I, London, 2004) para. 34.

<sup>1067</sup> *ibid* summary.

The findings of the School Meals Review Panel highlighted the tensions of managing child consumer choice with regulation via healthy eating. As explained during analysis of school food in the 1980s, children *can* make good food choices but when given the choice of junk food against healthy food, they will generally opt for junk. In 2001, a report called *Promotion of Food to Children* by the Food Standards Agency, ‘found that although children understood the basic principles of healthy eating, they had little interest in putting healthy eating principles into practice.’<sup>1068</sup> A further Food Standards Agency report in 2006 (Report from the School Council Network) found, ‘again, that children have a good knowledge of healthy eating ... [yet] children ate unhealthy food simply because they had the choice to do so.’<sup>1069</sup> As Cross and Macdonald state, children, like adults, ‘know what’s good for them but are prey to market forces.’<sup>1070</sup> The recommendations of the School Meals Review Panel was to cease giving children the choice of opting for junk food when in schools and instead only offer them healthy food options. Thus, it was mooted, ‘by constructively controlling choice that we will widen children’s food experiences.’<sup>1071</sup> Use of the words “constructively controlling” reveals a shift away from the perception of the child consumer to a more regulated school food service. Which would consequently result in greater regulation of children and families. As Buckingham notes:

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<sup>1068</sup> Food Standards Agency, *Promotion of Food to Children* (2001) cited in Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 73.

<sup>1069</sup> Food Standards Agency, *Report from the School Council Network* (2006) cited in Maria Cross & Barbara MacDonald, *Nutrition in Institutions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 77 [bracketed wording mine].

<sup>1070</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1071</sup> Report of the School Meals Review Panel, *Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food: A Report on the Development and Implementation of Nutritional Standards for School Lunches* (London, DfES, 2005) para 17.



The commercial emphasis on satisfying children's *wants* is thus rejected in favour of a renewed insistence on their *needs* ... children must be kept pure from contamination by commercial interests, and, at the very least, their relationship with the market must be strictly regulated and controlled.<sup>1072</sup>

Here we see the re-emphasis of children as vulnerable, unable to make their own decisions, and thus needing adult protection from themselves. A reoccurring theme that has been mooted from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, 'Children need protection not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the state itself.'<sup>1073</sup> This means that children lose their individual autonomy in order to ensure conformity to the production of an effective future adult society.

There was a return to the belief from the 1930s that, 'A child does not in any case determine his own diet.'<sup>1074</sup> Jamie Oliver argued for restriction of child choice over school meals by stating, "You wouldn't ask them what they wanted to read in English class. If they'd asked me, I'd have chosen ... comics or porn."<sup>1075</sup> As Palmer states, 'Children do need the opportunity to learn to make choices, but it's up to parents to

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<sup>1072</sup> David Buckingham, *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000) 166 [italics as per text].

<sup>1073</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 217.

<sup>1074</sup> Barbara Drake, *Starvation in the Midst of Plenty: A New Plan for the State Feeding of School Children* (London: Fabian Society, 1933) 17.

<sup>1075</sup> Jamie Oliver cited in Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About it* (London: Orion, 2006) 25.

decide which choices to offer.’<sup>1076</sup> These points highlight a shift back to adult dominant policy and greater regulation of school food.

The recommendations of the School Meals Review Panel were accepted by the Government, with minor amendments and a timetable for implementation was set up. New nutritional standards were to be phased in periodically beginning in September 2006 and would cover school lunches and food served other than at lunchtime for example, breakfast clubs, tuckshops, and vending machines. This banned junk food such as crisps, chocolate, and sweets. All state maintained schools had to comply and, unlike the 2001 standards, they were monitored by Ofsted inspections. The standards became law under The Education (Nutritional Standards and Requirements for School Food) (England) Regulations 2007. Here it can be seen that once children became *visible* and had caught the attention of the public following the Jamie Oliver campaign, it became the responsibility of the State to intervene in school meals policy.

Regulation was thus still occurring through schools, and these continued to be important sites in regulating the food intake of children and teaching food norms. However, the television campaign added a further opportunity to educate families regarding school meals by transferring norms of health and education, via the television set, directly into the private sphere of the home. This meant that the regulatory pattern altered to include a different method of regulation. Children and families could have their eating habits influenced through several diverse mediums

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<sup>1076</sup> *ibid* 24.

(schools, health visitors, television) and consequently find their food consumption increasingly regulated as a result.

Regarding free food criteria in schools maintained by Local Education Authorities, the Education Act 1996 detailed that Local Education Authorities *may* provide milk and meals and where they do *shall* 'charge every pupil the same price for the same quantity of the same item.'<sup>1077</sup> Provision still had to be made to supply free meals to pupils whose parents were in receipt of income support and this was extended to include those whose parents received income based job seeker's allowance.<sup>1078</sup> The 1996 Act was amended by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (this Act also abolished grant maintained schools). The 1998 Act stated that any nutritional standards must be complied with.<sup>1079</sup> It also detailed that Local Education Authorities *shall*, 'if requested to do so by or on behalf of any registered pupils at a school maintained by the authority, provide school lunches for those pupils;'<sup>1080</sup> unless it is unreasonable for them to do so. The Education Act 2002 later amended the free school lunch eligibility criteria, to also include 'support provided under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or in receipt of any other benefit or allowance, or entitled to any tax credit under the Tax Credits Act 2002',<sup>1081</sup> thus increasing the numbers of children eligible to receive free school meals. Furthermore, although there was no obligation to provide milk in schools, if they did, it must be free for those children eligible for free meals.<sup>1082</sup> These alterations meant that a larger number

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<sup>1077</sup> Education Act 1996, s 512 (2)(b).

<sup>1078</sup> Education Act 1996, s 512 (3).

<sup>1079</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s 114 (1).

<sup>1080</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s 115 (2).

<sup>1081</sup> Education Act 2002, s 201 (1).

<sup>1082</sup> Education Act 2002, s 201 (1).

of children could be regulated by the State when they consumed food within the site of the school.

The School Food Trust, a non-departmental public body set up in 2005 by the Department for Education and Skills, reported that ‘Take up of school meals in 2005-2006 was 42.3% in primary schools and 42.7% in secondary schools.’<sup>1083</sup> Furthermore, ‘Free school meal eligibility was 18% in primary schools and 17% in secondary schools.’<sup>1084</sup> Alongside the food sold or served in schools, the School Food Trust also provides schools with advice on implementing “lunchbox criteria” which it refers to as Packed Lunch Policies. Any packed lunches supplied by schools must meet the standards set out for school lunches. However, the standards do not apply to packed lunches that children bring into school from home. This means that informal school policies may or may not be employed by individual schools to ensure any food brought in from home is nutritionally consistent with food brought at school. The lack of legislation on packed lunches brought in from home is arguably due to questions on how this would be enforced and how it blurs the boundaries between home and school-based choices. However, as regulation of children and families within the sphere of the home, via the medium of school meals, has increased by the State again in recent years, only time will tell if further policy will be debated to increase intervention in this way.

## Conclusion

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<sup>1083</sup> School Food Trust, *First Annual Survey of Take Up of School Meals in England*, March 2006 at <<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/partners/reports/annual-survey-of-school-meal-take-up>> last accessed 28/12/2012.

<sup>1084</sup> *ibid.*

In this chapter, I have highlighted that the *motivations* behind education and school meals policy enacted during the late twentieth century (Part 2) were primarily economic and centred on the Conservatives belief in less centralised state control. *Motivations* highlighted in the early twenty-first century (Part 3) were rooted in the *effects* of previous policy. The *techniques of argumentation* utilised by MPs in both parts were similar to those used during analysis of previous periods but with one notable exception – the introduction of the perception of “consumer” child.

Tensions between “consumer” child and the regulation of children and families were highlighted during my analysis of the parliamentary debates of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Under the Conservative administration, the notion of “consumer” child was utilised as a *technique of argumentation* to justify economic changes and less centralised state intervention in matters of the family. Consumer choice was deemed to have a place in policy decisions regarding school food and within education. However, the choice with regard to education was parental rather than child centred. “Consumer” child found a place in school meals policy, at first as a future consumer, and later as a current consumer, spending their parents’ money or indeed their own. This is not to say that children and families were not regulated under the Conservative Government – they were – the regulation was less centralised as had been the case before the Conservative administration of the period. Giving parents choice as to which school their children would attend, and giving children limited choice as to the meals they ate within the site of the school, meant that the State was not as invasive in matters it deemed as being part of the duties which take place within the family home. This meant that children and families did not find themselves *as* regulated as they had been previously.

Significant legislation passed during this period was the Education Act 1980 which removed compulsory food provision for all children. Following this Act, the number of children taking packed lunches to school increased significantly. This shift in law removed the opportunity for the State to regulate the food consumption of many children and families. Another significant piece of legislation was the Local Government Act 1988 which introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering to school meals. This shift in policy was motivated by both economics and consumer choice. These were key themes throughout the Conservative administration.

Clear divisions can be seen between Labour MPs and Conservative MPs during analysis of parliamentary debates regarding the feeding of school children and how the MPs belonging to different political parties think children and families should be regulated. There is a more obvious split between the viewpoints of the parties during this period under analysis than had been seen in earlier debates in previous chapters. Labour MPs disagreed with Conservative MPs over the State's involvement in the regulation of children and families. During analysis of the debates that took place under New Labour's administration I argued that the *effects* of Conservative policies to lessen centralised state control are seen within *motivations* behind Labour policies to increase state intervention in the lives of children and families.

Poverty was once again highlighted as a key aspect of poor diet and the Labour Government pledged to combat this. The Government published *Every Child Matters* which highlighted that the techniques utilised by Labour to alter policy centred on the perceptions of “vulnerable” child and “future” worker child. The

notion of futurity was also used in debates surrounding citizenship education in schools. Regarding both education and school food policy, the Labour Government favoured the regulation of children and families over “consumer” child choice. This was seen with the reintroduction of nutritional standards at the expense of the cash cafeteria system, the introduction of breakfast clubs in schools and the high profile Jamie Oliver campaign which brought the poor condition of children to the attention of the nation, as had occurred during evacuation in the 1940s. Once more, *visible* children became the responsibility of the State and children and families found their food consumption under increased regulation again. The medium of television also joined the site of the school as a means of transferring norms into the family unit, highlighting a shift in the pattern of regulation.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

In the one hundred years since the legislative introduction of school meals in English schools there have been many changes, yet many constants remain. In this thesis, I have examined the history of school food policy, predominantly focusing on the motivations, techniques of argumentation, and effects behind education and school meal legislation, and the extent to which changes in provision affected the regulation of children and families.

The themes of *bodies* and *minds*, *victims* and *threats*, alongside notions of *futurity*, *class*, *economics*, *health* and *education* dominate policy debates throughout the period analysed in this thesis. School food brings these themes together and acts as a *vehicle* – a carrier of policy – to continue the regulation of children and families, through the transmission of norms, from the site of the school into the family home. Food transverses the sphere of the home and the sphere of the school, and subsequently highlights tensions between the public and private domains.

In this thesis, during my analysis of the *motivations*, *techniques of argumentation* and *effects* of changes in school food policy, I explained that these three strands interconnected as each subsequent section built on themes analysed in the previous parts. These each helped me to explain the development of school meals and milk and the regulation of children and families as a result. Some motivations, techniques of argumentation and effects changed throughout each period I analysed, some remained constant, and some were reworked during different times according to the priorities of the State. Some were used together, some individually but they each



helped to highlight how school meals and milk continue to act as a vehicle of regulation. I argued that since the introduction of compulsory schooling, and subsequent school meals policy, children and families have constantly been regulated by the State, but there have been, and continue to be, different patterns, different forms of regulation occurring during different periods in history.

To explain these shifting patterns of regulation I drew on the work of Jacques Donzelot and Michel Foucault to examine the idea that children and families became both the *object* and *agent* of state regulation through the site of the school. I also explored how perceptions of childhood were developed through political and social policy shifts detailed within the parliamentary debates and secondary literature of each period. I used these perceptions as a framework to theoretically highlight how different ideas of childhood were used in Parliament for the purpose of regulation.

The notion of “future” worker/citizen can be traced throughout the history of school meals. Utilising perceptions of childhood, each government has expressed a desire to guarantee the nation as a strong world force and/or the threat unhealthy adults (and children) pose as a potential drain on public resources. The underlying motivations for alteration in school food policies varied during each era, although the themes of *futurity*, *health* and *education* remained. Concern for the *bodies* and *minds* of working class children and their families were traced throughout, although at times each entity took precedence over the other. The greater the concern for both the bodies and minds of the working classes, the greater the scope of regulation by the State.

Furthermore, my analysis of parliamentary debates during each period from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century showed that, although the objectives of MPs were often the same, the perspectives which informed their arguments were at times very different, even within the same political party. It is clear that although there were differences of opinion on how best to deal with changes in economic or political policy, there has been almost unanimous agreement when changes needed to be made that *something* had to be done. However, as seen from the number of departments producing reports on children and food, there were many differing perspectives, agendas, and approaches to how it was perceived that children should be fed. There has never been, nor is there now, one government department in charge of school food.

Historically, political opinion has changed on issues such as the potential health benefits of giving milk to children and what foods children should be eating. The political agenda behind the implementation of school meal legislation has, over time, moved slowly from anxiety over malnourished children, which drew concerns about their fighting potential in war during the early 1900s; to providing children with school milk which had the desirable consequence of helping the struggling milk industry in the 1920s and 1930s; to the worry of a nation of obese children as concern increased about relieving the potential burden on the National Health Service when these children suffer obesity related illness in later life from the 1950s onwards. Economic issues have also been highlighted throughout this thesis. This has all affected the regulation of children both within the site of the school and in the private sphere of the home, by altering both the availability, and content of school meals.

As Rose and Falconer state:

The need of children for nutrition is a constant but how a child is fed is variable. Initially, school meals were a charity intended to combat malnutrition and then, after the Second World War, commonly offered to all children at a subsidised price or free of charge. Today, school meals are an expression of diversity of individual tastes.<sup>1085</sup>

What has also been evidenced in my thesis is the continuing debate over the role of the State infringing on the concept of parental responsibility. The amount of state interference in matters of feeding school children varied enormously depending on which political party was in office and economic influences at the time. My analysis of parliamentary debates has highlighted tensions over the infringement of parental responsibility, against regulation of children and families from the initial development of school meals policy through to the present day. Most notably post World War I saw an increase in state control of school feeding. This was mirrored by policy throughout World War II and subsequently during the rise of the welfare state. In the 1970s concerns over parental responsibility were resurrected and utilised so that state control of school meals was heavily curtailed. These changes influenced the regulation of children and families by amending the provision of food available in schools.

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<sup>1085</sup> Richard Rose & Peter Falconer, 'Individual Taste or Collective Decision? Public Policy on School Meals' (1992) 21, 3 *Journal of Social Policy*, 349, 351.

In Chapter 2, I examined the origins of compulsory education in the nineteenth century and analysed why it was introduced by exploring the themes of the child's *body* and *mind*. Drawing on the work of Donzelot, I explored the notion that the children of the poor were considered by the upper and middle classes to be threats, both in the present and to the future. The primary perception of childhood at this time was as "current" worker but the reformers of the period utilised an idea of the child's "special status" to introduce restrictions on children's employment and reinforce Victorian values of childhood innocence through the development of a renewed perception of the child – as "vulnerable". I argued that the school became a site for regulating working class families by drawing attention to tensions found in parliamentary debates over the regulation of children and families, against arguments for the preservation of parental responsibility.

Using Foucault's notions of self governance and normalisation and Donzelot's concept of agency I argued that through the introduction of compulsory schooling, working class children and families became both the *object* and *agent* of regulation. By placing working class children within the site of the school to learn prescribed norms, children increasingly became the object of state regulation. Families were also the object of regulation because they had to ensure that their children were educated. If parents failed in their duty, this would result in further regulation in the form of sanctions. Children became agents of regulation when they transferred the prescribed norms, from the site of the school, into the private sphere of the home. Families also became agents due to the recreation of norms within the family unit. This allowed the State the opportunity to continue to indirectly regulate children and families.

In Chapter 3, I argued that the effects of compulsory education – the visible, hungry, working class child in the site of the school – became the incentive motivating the introduction of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906. Due to the organisation of the site of the school, children were under observation and surveillance en masse and their poor condition in part motivated debate in Parliament regarding the implementation of school food policy. School meals began as a facility seen as providing essential fuel to aid a child's ability to learn so as to be a good future worker for the maintenance of the nation. I argued that the reasoning behind the 1906 Act was to ensure money was not wasted on education which children could not benefit from due to their hunger. Notions of *futurity*, *health*, *education* and the *minds* of children were prevalent in debates alongside developing perceptions of childhood. I explored the tensions between concern for the emerging “vulnerable” child and “future” worker and opinion in support of providing food in schools, against the political and economic arguments against the introduction of school meals. Tensions between differing levels of regulation and involvement in the private sphere of the home, introduced in Chapter 2, again became clear during my analysis of the parliamentary debates of this period.

In Chapter 3, I also argued that during World War I, when children became part of the war effort, the perception of childhood returned to that of “current” worker (due to necessity), utilised alongside continuing notions of “vulnerable” child and “future” worker. I subsequently examined post-war policy, depicting the desire for social change and the influence this had on the regulation of children and families through alteration in school food policy. *Futurity* and *education* were important issues mooted in debates at this time and alongside food policy, childhood became more prolonged

due to the school leaving age being raised to 14. This gave the State greater scope for regulation as children were in the site of the school for longer.

In Chapter 4, I examined the focus of debates on the *bodies* of children during the implementation of milk of schools, alongside economic concerns within the milk industry during the 1920-1930s. The effects of alteration in policy saw milk overtake meals as the chief concern of Parliament until the introduction of nutritional standards when quality of food became an issue alongside quantity. Following the outbreak of World War II, focus centred on both the *bodies* and *minds* of children and families. Through changes to school food policy, the State gained greater scope for the regulation of children and families as school meals became available for all children. The State became involved in family life on an unprecedented scale during and following the war. This resulted from World War II food strategy and post-war policy, in part motivated by reconstruction and in part about the building of the welfare state. *Futurity*, *health*, and *education* were important points mooted within debates. The school was not the only site of regulation during this period, as part of the welfare reforms saw the formation of the NHS where health visitors, as agents of the State, were able to transmit education and health norms directly into the private sphere of the family home.

In the final part of the chapter, I illustrated how the effect of earlier milk policies became the focus of motivations behind the next. Obesity emerged as a concern within the debates following developments in nutritional science during the 1950s-1960s. Issues of *class* and the *health* of children were argued in Parliament to advance reform of school food which led to nutritional standards introduced for

school meals. The motivation for this was the child as “future” worker. I explained that one of the aims of introducing nutrition in schools was to create norms which could be taught within the site of the school and transferred into the sphere of the home, via the child, continuing indirect regulation of families.

In Chapter 5, I argued that a new perception of childhood can be seen from my analysis of the parliamentary debates of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries – “consumer” child – a perception which I used as a framework to highlight the tensions in school meals debate between consumer choice, and the regulation of children and families. The first perception of the child consumer was as “future” consumer, followed by “current” consumer vicariously through their parents, to “current” consumer in their own right, spending their own money, or the money of their parents. All these perceptions can be linked to changes in social policy based on underlying political and/or economic factors.

I explained that clear political party divisions can be found in the period analysed in this chapter. The perception of “consumer” child was used by the Conservatives during arguments for changes in school food policy to lessen centralised state control and aid the economic situation of the 1970s and 1980s. During this period the school meals service became a commercial enterprise motivated by market forces. Food provided so that children could benefit from their education because they had better attention in class (concern for the mind) was lost to consumer choice. It followed that there was less regulation of children and families in the sphere of school food.

Conversely, Labour MPs used the perception of “consumer” child alongside “vulnerable” child to argue for *increased* state intervention in the lives of children and families through school meals policy. The focus gradually returned towards greater regulation in the latter part of my analysis. This was due to rising concerns regarding obesity and the threat to state resources if left untreated which had been brought to the attention of the public (visible children) following Jamie Oliver’s television campaign. The notion of *futurity* and issues of *health* were utilised alongside the notion of *threats* to alter school food policy. Thus, I argued that although the vehicle of school meals was still being used to regulate children and families, once again the school was no longer the only site of regulation, television had also become a medium for transmitting health and education norms into the private sphere of the family home.

Although the *mind* of the child was still a concern as the argument shifted back in favour of the “vulnerable” child during the 1990s/2000s, it was now a by-product of school food provision rather than a driving force. For example, in the 2005 report *Turning the Tables* it was noted that those from schools ‘where food had already been improved speak of associated improvements in behaviour: of calmer, better behaved children, more ready to learn. Improving food in schools may contribute to improved attainment and behaviour.’<sup>1086</sup> However, alongside economic concerns, it was the *body* of the child, both now and later in life, that became the primary anxiety and the impetuous for alteration in school food policy due to increasing obesity concerns.

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<sup>1086</sup> Report of the School Meals Review Panel, *Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food: A Report on the Development and Implementation of Nutritional Standards for School Lunches* (London, DfES, 2005) para 2, 6.



Therefore, I have found that the themes surrounding the regulation of working class children and families, through the vehicle of school meals, remain rather constant but the reasoning behind the regulation, and the pattern of regulation itself, changes over time. The stimulus behind school meals policy has shifted from being concerned about the *mind* of the child primarily over the body (1900s), both *body* of the child and *mind* equally (1940s), to no concern at all (1980s), to concern about feeding for the *body* first then the *mind* (1990s/2000s). The body of the child relates to their role as a future adult – if the child remains in good health, their adult body will be in sound physical condition, not a drain on NHS resources and able to work so as to contribute to the economy and society. The mind of the child is concerned with the present as well as the future. A healthy mind means that the child will behave well in class. It also means that he/she will learn more and therefore benefit from his/her education. This will be beneficial in the long-term as regards to better exam results and a better job as an adult. The themes of bodies and minds are regularly combined with notions of futurity, perceptions of childhood, health, and education within the parliamentary debates.

I used the work of Donzelot and Foucault to explore the regulation of working class children and families. The themes which developed from my analysis fit with the notion of disciplinary societies developed by Foucault and explored further in relation to families by Donzelot. In the periods examined in this thesis, a disciplinary mode of regulation is presented.

Regulation continues to occur through school food because the vehicle – school meals – continues to act as a carrier of policy. However, the latest trends seem to suggest

the pattern of regulation has changed and the institutional authority of the site of the school has been fractured. This could first be witnessed through my analysis of the formation of the NHS and health visitors permeating the private sphere of the home, transmitting health and education norms directly into the family unit. Following the Jamie Oliver school meals campaign, norms of health and education were transferred into the family home via the medium of television.

It has not been covered in this thesis, but it possible that regulation is going beyond the notion of disciplinary societies, through sites such as schools, towards control societies. Both Foucault and Donzelot suggest that regulation is dispersed throughout society; therefore, changing patterns could indicate that regulation of children and families is now dispersed locally, within the community, within the home, even via television sets. It is thus arguable that we are 'moving towards "control" societies that are no longer exactly disciplinary.'<sup>1087</sup> Although the vehicle of school meals remains, and food could be key in new patterns of regulation, the site of the school is now one of several mediums existing for the regulation of children and families.

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<sup>1087</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) 174.

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