

## CHAPTER I

# The Early Years

## A Department in the Making, 1895–1920

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### Political Science: The Historical Context

A key element in the pedagogic outlook of Graham Wallas and the Webbs for the LSE was that academic study should have contemporary relevance and application. Sidney Webb and Wallas both had practical experience of education and local government, with Webb a member for Deptford of the London County Council (LCC) and acting as Chairman of its Technical Education Board (TEB). He had previously lectured in political economy at City of London College and the Working Men's College. Similarly, Wallas had long years of experience on the LCC and the London School Board. Both wished to extend educational opportunities, and to this end, along with the LSE's first Director, William Hewins, though separately, embraced the meritocratic aspects of the University Extension movement.<sup>1</sup>

It has been credibly claimed that the founding of the LSE owed as much to the City of London as it did to the Fabian Society. Several strands came together to promote the notion of commercial education. In 1888, the London Chamber of Commerce instituted a scheme of commercial education. Meanwhile, the

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<sup>1</sup> Qualter 1980: 12; *The Times* 1947: 6.

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#### How to cite this book chapter:

Bannerman, G. 2021. The Early Years: A Department in the Making, 1895–1920.

In: Schonhardt-Bailey, C. and Bannerman, G. (eds.) *Political Science at the LSE: A History of the Department of Government, from the Webbs to COVID*. Pp. 21–52. London: Ubiquity Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/bcn.b>. License: CC-BY-NC



**Figure 3:** Map of the School, 1914–1915; Credit: LSE Library.

1889 Education Act led to the founding of the TEB of the LCC to manage funds allocated to county councils for the provision of technical education. The TEB was chaired by Sidney Webb until 1898, and as Webb also chaired, from 1901, the LSE's Board of Governors, he was in a strategically important and informed position. Both the London Chamber of Commerce and LCC helped establish the School on a firm financial footing. The LCC provided funds to the School in its early years, while the London Chamber of Commerce advertised the first session of LSE courses as an extension of its own educational activities.<sup>2</sup>

Theoretical rigour underpinned Webb's scientific approach to solving the problems of modern industry and society. Webb held the modernist position that informed policy analysis would lead to good policymaking—and that universities had a vital role to play in this process. Writing in 1889, he argued that the traditional elitism of universities had suppressed any instinct for political action:

The radical vice of University life—the divorce of thought from action—has tended to deprive many resident University men, of all capacity, for

<sup>2</sup> Kadish 1993: 227–233.

real political work in national matters, whilst their social and municipal surroundings, far removed from the pressing industrial problems of the great cities, tend to hypnotize their mind and to lull even the most advanced of them to a placid acquiescence in, or merely spasmodic protest against, the *status quo*.<sup>3</sup>

For Webb, the divergence between thought and action led to a chasm between the seminar room and the corridors of power. The Fabians hoped to bridge that gap, and the School's early years were characterised by a dynamic, assertive approach to academia, with public policy objectives never far from the surface. Universities in late Victorian Britain were not renowned as either agents of professional research or social change. Political science had been taught at Cambridge since the 1870s, with two papers, both largely historical, offered as part of the History Tripos—a Chair was not established until 1926. At Oxford, politics courses were taken in the History School within the 'Modern Greats' or Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) course of study, which was not established until 1920.<sup>4</sup> Politics and Government, broadly defined, was a low priority, and while taught at Oxford, Cambridge and the LSE, it was not until the 1950s that political science in Britain acquired the trappings of an academic discipline, with a professional association (the Political Studies Association) formed in 1950 and a journal (*Political Studies*) published in 1953.<sup>5</sup>

Conversely, in the United States, the American Political Science Association had been formed in 1903, representing a new departure in political science methods and techniques, with the discipline concerned with establishing the principles and practices of better governance. A professional journal, the *American Political Science Review*, followed shortly afterwards, with its first publication in 1906.

For critics of public school and university education, the main indictment against it was its failure to stimulate the intellect and to connect academic thought and political action. Having attended Shrewsbury and Christ Church, Oxford, before working as a Classics schoolmaster, Wallas understood the shortcomings of the ancient schools and universities. Immersed in ancient Greek thought, Wallas embraced Aristotle's vision of the virtuous society as in the *polis*.<sup>6</sup> He described what the study of government looked like in Oxford in the late 19th century:

If any one [*sic*] had reflected that Government is a service like any other service, and had gone to Oxford, for instance, which believed itself to be a University given to the study of Government, and asked for advice,

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<sup>3</sup> Webb 1889: 42.

<sup>4</sup> Hayek 1946: 1; Den Otter 2007: 39.

<sup>5</sup> Kavanagh 2007: 97.

<sup>6</sup> Qualter 1980: 4–5; Bevir 1997: 288.

he would have been advised to read a very few interesting books by Aristotle or Hobbes, but would have found it very difficult to apply what he read in those books to the actual problems of how you should administer a Factory Act, how you should develop Poor Relief, or what you should do about the gold standard.<sup>7</sup>

With a curriculum blending Public Administration, political history, constitutional law and the history of political thought, the LSE clearly ‘intended to abandon the traditional Oxford and Cambridge approach to higher education.’<sup>8</sup> The *New Age* of 22 September 1898 lauded the School’s approach: ‘To the students of facts whose gospel is the blue-book, and to whom statistics are the sword of progressive faith, the London School of Economics is a very temple of light.’<sup>9</sup>

Yet, by and large, despite the language of innovation and the application of scientific techniques, much remained familiar. Most of the scholars at the LSE before 1920 were children of the mid-to-late Victorian period, where the dominant political view was shaped by the Whig interpretation of history, of constitutional progress and development. By the end of the 19th century, that interpretation had been transformed into the ‘Westminster model’ approach, presenting the political system of parliamentary sovereignty, elections, the party system and party majorities as the model of government, not only to be studied, but to be emulated.<sup>10</sup> It has been convincingly argued that this hybrid ‘Whig/Westminster’ constitutional model had a specific political role, as ‘a means of inducting would-be rulers into a political tradition and an appreciation of the wisdom embedded in British political institutions and culture.’<sup>11</sup>

While the consideration for political science among the founders of the School extended to it being conjoined with economics in the School’s name, it is ironic that modern political science never took a hold at the School; establishing political science as a discipline was problematic.<sup>12</sup> Anthony Howe has suggested a reason for this omission:

The reason why political science didn’t take off is that training for politicians in the UK was still much more linked to the arts and humanities than it was to the social scientific mission. Look at how political science was taught at the LSE. There were three key people. Wallas until the 1920s, then Laski takes over, then Oakeshott. But Wallas, although

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Qualter 1980: 5.

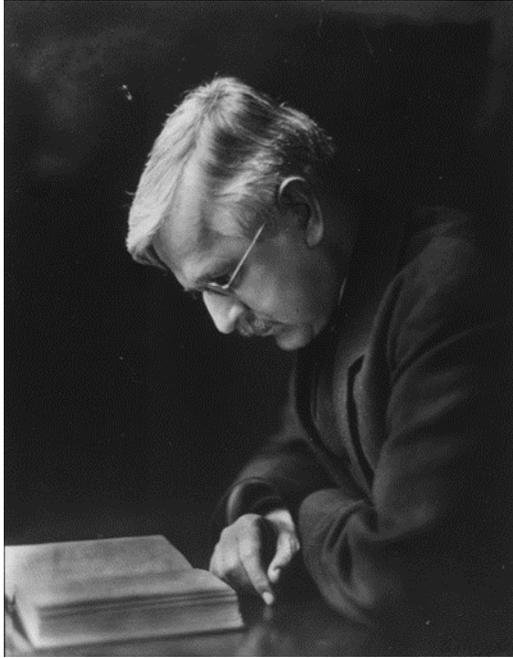
<sup>8</sup> Kadish 1993: 237.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in *ibid.*: 241.

<sup>10</sup> Kavanagh 2007: 98–99.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*: 103.

<sup>12</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 226; Hayek 1946: 7.



**Figure 4:** Graham Wallas, c. 1920s; Credit: LSE Library.

I think he started off more interested in creating that science, ended up more of a political psychologist.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, while Wallas was an enthusiastic supporter of the scientific investigation of government and political institutions, it was clearly the case that he was not a political scientist in the more rigorous sense of the term apparent today, but rather a public moralist who believed political theorists should examine diverse fields of inquiry in addressing political and societal problems.<sup>14</sup>

It was undoubtedly the case that Political Science and Public Administration, the two streams within ‘political science’ taught at the School, were intended to promote an understanding of government, the policymaking process and the historical evolution of local, national and imperial government institutions. The fundamental objectives were differentiated from the pervasive political philosophy taught at Oxbridge. Early teaching was dominated by Public Administration and ‘what do bureaucrats really need to know’ with ‘key experts’ appointed as lecturers.<sup>15</sup> The curriculum was probably closer to Oxford and Cambridge

<sup>13</sup> Howe interview 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Qualter 1980: 13; Bevir 1997: 284.

<sup>15</sup> Howe interview 2020.

than the Webbs would have wished, and indeed Beatrice Webb noted in her diary that Leonard Hobhouse was recruiting for the LSE at Oxford, while ‘the young Trevelyans’, presumably George Macaulay Trevelyan and Robert Calverley Trevelyan, were similarly engaged at Cambridge.<sup>16</sup>

With the cultivation of these direct links to Oxbridge in mind, it is especially notable to consider Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, who taught the same Political Science courses and delivered the same lectures at the LSE as he did at Cambridge.<sup>17</sup> Those courses were as follows:

- The Machinery of Administration in England;
- The Use of Political Terms;
- The Bases of Political Obligation;
- The Structure of the Modern State;
- Popular Government;
- The British Empire and Other Composite States;
- Some Theories on the Basis of Political Obligation;
- The Government of the British Empire;
- The Structure of the Modern State;
- The Functions of the Modern State;
- The Central Government of England comparatively treated;
- then in 1902, ‘the most noteworthy of his courses’;
- The History of Political Ideas, repeated with ‘constant changes’.<sup>18</sup>

There is perhaps no clearer example of the limits to establishing a new direction in academic studies than this resort to a pre-existing curriculum. While the LSE assumed and promoted an empirical approach to research and teaching, useful for politicians and administrators, there was little methodological self-consciousness or construction of grand themes of politics and political ideas. The nebulous character of political science at the School was apparent in the almost complete absence of quantitative methods. The historical tradition was a key factor, for political science in Britain was inductive, reflective and largely non-theoretical—a product of the non-scientific approach of the ‘Whig/Westminster’ model.<sup>19</sup>

The idea of a ‘discipline’ of political science has been characterised as giving a ‘false coherence’ to political studies at the end of the 19th century—a century increasingly dominated by a Whiggish interpretation of history, emphasising the progress of liberty, freedom and representative government, fostered by an intimate connection between history and political studies. At Cambridge,

<sup>16</sup> *BW Diaries*, vol. 16: 18/1421.

<sup>17</sup> Martin 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Forster 1934: 96–97; Lowes Dickinson returned in 1924 to present the course ‘The Causes of the War of 1914’, preparatory to his book *The International Anarchy, 1904–1914* (see Lowes Dickinson 1926).

<sup>19</sup> Kavanagh 2007: 103–104.

political science was closely connected with history, while at Oxford the great historian E. A. Freeman expressed this connection with the aphorism: ‘History is Past Politics; Politics is Present History’. While that linkage was contested, not least by Wallas, ‘historical-mindedness’ featured prominently in the LSE Political Science curriculum.<sup>20</sup>

The grand narrative of Whig historians—continuity, freedom and peaceful development—was, however, overtaken by a more ethical and empirical, and less speculative, philosophical analysis of political studies.<sup>21</sup> The Webbs, Edwin Cannan, and Wallas were key figures in the emergent empirical and neo-positivist approach, with, for example, the Webbs’ studies of local government and trade unionism intended to frame contemporary dilemmas in historical perspective.<sup>22</sup> As one historian has pointed out: ‘Empirical investigations of institutions and political practice took the large place that traditionally had been given to the history of political thought.’<sup>23</sup>

Webb indeed stated that ‘the purpose of the school was the application of scientific method to public and private administration.’<sup>24</sup> It was a view with which leading politicians agreed. The Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Balfour stated: ‘It [LSE] aims at giving an education to all those who have to carry on administrative functions in this country.’<sup>25</sup> The Liberal politician Sir John Simon argued: ‘The great function of that school must be to bring together the scientific development of certain special studies and the needs of the man of administration and of policy who must be guided and inspired thereby.’<sup>26</sup> Similarly, R. B. Haldane ‘looked upon the school as a school where subordinate leaders were trained—men who were ready to take the general indication and work it out, and who were not afraid to take the responsibility that was put upon them.’<sup>27</sup> It is a great credit to the founders of the School that its place in training future leaders was acknowledged after just over a decade of the School’s existence.

## The Identity of the School

The early identity and profile of the School was ambiguous. In its early years, the School was intimately related to wider concerns over Britain losing ground in trade, technical expertise and scientific research. Before the School opened, *The Times* advertised the School’s business courses (Commercial Geography,

<sup>20</sup> Den Otter 2007: 37–39.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*: 61; Howe interview 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Den Otter 2007: 56.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*: 62.

<sup>24</sup> *The Times* 1910b: 7.

<sup>25</sup> *The Times* 1906a: 14.

<sup>26</sup> *The Times* 1907b: 4.

<sup>27</sup> *The Times* 1911b: 15.

Commercial History, Commercial and Industrial Law, Banking and Currency) under the heading 'Higher Commercial Education'. By 1896, 'Railway Economics' had emerged as a field of study.<sup>28</sup>

By 1897, T. A. Organ, Chairman of an LCC Special Committee dealing with the subject, spoke on 'The Need for Systematic Commercial Education'. For such men and groups, the LSE was primarily a commercial school, competing with similar institutions in Germany, France, Russia and Austria. Organ voiced a familiar refrain: 'At present in the higher branches of commercial life the foreigner holds the field, but there was no reason why he should continue to do so provided we supplied systematic training for our native talent.'<sup>29</sup>

If this was a common theme in the School's early years, it was partly a reflection of the LSE struggling to establish its identity. Collaboration with the LCC and London Chamber of Commerce was largely responsible for foreign trade, commercial law, railway economics and banking courses at the School.<sup>30</sup> Even Lord Rosebery spoke of the School in commercial terms, a theme echoed in the press to the point of suggesting that Political Science should be jettisoned from the School's name:

Whether or not the School of Economics—which might, perhaps, abandon, without disadvantage, the too wide and indefinite claim to be also a school of 'political science'—can fill the gap of which Lord Rosebery speaks we do not undertake to say. But the value of its work has already been practically recognised by practical men.<sup>31</sup>

The admixture between the School's emerging academic profile and its vocational business syllabus was often remarked on: 'The work of the school is arranged in the following groups, some of which are appropriate for University Honours in the Faculties of Arts, Laws, and Economics, and some for professional, commercial, and administrative purposes.'<sup>32</sup>

Alon Kadish has convincingly argued that the School was a university and a business school, and indeed the School's positive impact on commercial education was often praised.<sup>33</sup> As Anthony Howe suggests, vocational subjects were a 'money-spinner', generating revenue for the School and, though eventually

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 27 September 1895, p. 7; *The Times* 1896a: 5; *The Times* 1896b: 12.

<sup>29</sup> *The Times* 1897a: 10.

<sup>30</sup> *The Times* 1898a: 12.

<sup>31</sup> *The Times*, 22 March 1901, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> *The Times* 1908a: 13.

<sup>33</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 60; Sir Arthur Rucker, Principal of University of London, stated that approximately 900 students had studied business-related subjects; *The Times* 1902a: 10.

disappearing from the syllabus, had led to the School having a foothold, presence and visibility in financial and commercial circles and the City of London.<sup>34</sup>

### The Founding Faculty

While the value of ‘political science’ was questioned, the subject, such as it was, peacefully co-existed with the vocational curriculum easily enough. As we have seen, political science at LSE was based on empirical, positivist inquiry, and aimed at making an impact on public policy. Early Calendars indicate the empiricist rather than speculative aspects of political studies, with lectures on Comparative Politics, Political Economy and Administrative History, while Constitutional History in its many forms remained a bulwark.

The historical evolution of local government and its relations with central government was a particular interest of Webb and Wallas. Indeed, the School briefly recruited the renowned statistician, political economist and folklorist of local institutions, Sir G. L. Gomme, who taught Public Administration between 1896 and 1899. His six lectures on ‘The Principles of Local Government’ delivered at the LSE in 1897 were an early School publication.<sup>35</sup> Many early lectures were published in a series of books edited by William Hewins entitled *Studies in Economics and Political Science*.<sup>36</sup> This empirical and historicist trend was reflected in further publications, including Frederick Galton’s collection of documents relating to trade unionism, Edwin Cannan’s history of local rates in England and comparative European political studies, including Bertrand Russell’s Lectures on German Social Democracy.<sup>37</sup>

In the School’s first term, ‘Political Science’ was one of the nine subject areas. Full-time, three-year courses were offered in Economics and Political Science, with the latter dominated, at least initially, by Graham Wallas, who conducted a 20-lecture series on ‘The English constitution since 1832’ with ‘lectures on the growth of political theory and comparative study of foreign constitutions’ also listed, a course students completed in their second year. A final, research-based course completed the third year of study.<sup>38</sup> Anyone could attend lectures or classes of any single course. General lectures were supposed to operate as ‘feeders’ for more specialised, advanced courses.<sup>39</sup> For someone who has been described as critical of studying comparative institutions and constitutions,

<sup>34</sup> Howe interview 2020.

<sup>35</sup> *The Times* 1897b: 6; *The Times*, 2 December 1897, p. 11; review in *The Times*, 7 January 1898, p. 7; *Daily Mail*, 10 December 1897.

<sup>36</sup> *The Times* 1897d: 6; Den Otter 2007: 62–63.

<sup>37</sup> Notice of publication, *The Times*, 11 March 1896, p. 12; review of Cannan, *The Times*, 13 March 1896, p. 13; *The Times*, 26 October 1898, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> LSE 1895: 9–11.

<sup>39</sup> Kadish 1993: 237.

Wallas spent quite some time teaching these subjects. Nevertheless, these subjects did at least meet the criteria of empirical scientific methods rather than the speculative philosophy so common at Oxbridge.<sup>40</sup>

The curriculum of the School, Political Science included, was subject to some criticism. The economist Alfred Marshall stated that early lecture lists were determined more by who was available rather than by educational considerations. While there may have been some truth to Marshall's claims, it was inevitable that it would take time to establish a capable intellectual cadre across the School.<sup>41</sup> In the first prospectus, only 11 lecturers were named—nearly half remained with the School for 30 years or more, and this great longevity meant there was a remarkable degree of academic continuity at the School between 1895 and 1920.<sup>42</sup>

In appointing academic staff, merit, knowledge and expertise free of the cloying influence of religious orthodoxy, class, status and political affiliation were the key considerations in the Webbs' approach. Nevertheless, they had difficulty attracting those who shared their vision of political science. After advertising a one-year post for a lecturer in Political Science, Beatrice Webb was disappointed by the limitations of the candidates and their respective interests:

Making arrangements to start the London School in its new abode at Adelphi Terrace in October ... Advertising of Political Science Lecturer—and yesterday interviewed candidates—a nondescript set of University men. All hopeless from our point of view—All imagined that Political Science consisted of a knowledge of Aristotle and 'modern'(!) writers such as De Tocqueville—wanted to put the students through a course of Utopias from More downwards. When Sidney suggested a course of lectures to be proposed on the different systems of municipal taxation, when Graham suggested a study of the rival methods of election from ad-hoc to proportional representation, the wretched candidates looked aghast and thought evidently that we were amusing ourselves at their expense. One of them wanted to construct a 'Political Man' from whose imaginary qualities all things might be deduced, another wanted to lecture on Land under the Tudors but had apparently read only the ordinary textbooks. Finally, we determined to do without our lecturer—to my mind a blessed consummation. It struck me always as a trifle difficult to teach a science which does not yet exist.<sup>43</sup>

Beatrice Webb's waspish and sardonic comments reflected her surprise at being confronted by the absence of political science and political scientists in Britain.

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<sup>40</sup> Bevir 1997: 285.

<sup>41</sup> Coats 1967: 411.

<sup>42</sup> Hayek 1946: 5.

<sup>43</sup> *The Times*, 13 May 1896, p. 15; *BW Diaries*, vol. 16: 14 July 1896, 53.

Consequently, the School decided not to appoint another lecturer, and the Cambridge Fellow Lowes Dickinson appears to have been appointed to a teaching role.

The reality was that there was a relative lack of specialist teachers of politics—most of those teaching ‘Political Science’ had taken a first degree in Humanities, usually History, Philosophy or the Classics. Even as late as 1966, nearly 40% of the university teachers of Politics and Political Science in Britain had taken History as a first degree.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps inevitably, given the Oxbridge historicist tradition, none of the teaching staff between 1895 and 1920 possessed a Political Science degree.

The personnel of the early years were suitably eclectic, from the Fabianism and liberalism of Wallas and F. W. Hirst to the tariff reform conservatism of Hewins, Mackinder and Sir Percy Ashley. The broad range of political views was consistent with the Webbs’ intention to source knowledge, information and expertise free from political considerations. As Friedrich Hayek observed:

Politics entered no more than through Webb’s conviction that a careful study of the facts ought to lead most sensible people, to socialism; but he took great care to select the staff from all shades of political opinion, more anxious to bring promising men under the influence of the new institution than to have it dominated by any one kind of outlook.<sup>45</sup>

Even friendship did not influence staff choice and tenure. The third Director of the School, William Pember Reeves, complained, when pressed to resign by Sidney Webb, that Webb ‘was ruthless in the pursuit of his causes and allowed no personal considerations, either on his own behalf or of that of his friends, to stand in the way of the success of an institution or a movement he believed in.’ Beatrice Webb noted this as a compliment of Webb’s disinterested and meritocratic approach, when Pember Reeves had meant it as an admonishment.<sup>46</sup>

The previous Director, Halford Mackinder, also held different, though not entirely opposite, views to the Webbs, but the relationship remained highly professional. As Beatrice Webb wrote: ‘It is an instance of the absence of a common creed—our views are not mutually antagonistic—but they never meet and would never meet if we went on working for all eternity.’<sup>47</sup> It was undoubtedly one of the School’s strengths that it was not beholden to a self-imposed ideological straitjacket. That was largely the work of the Webbs, who were highly lauded by contemporaries for their literary and educational efforts as a ‘singularly bright example of a literary partnership between husband and wife.’<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Kavanagh 2007: 100.

<sup>45</sup> Hayek 1946: 5.

<sup>46</sup> *BW Diaries*, vol. 35: 29 April 1919: 32; Dahrendorf 1995: 133.

<sup>47</sup> *BW diaries*, vol. 26: 19 May 1908, 121.

<sup>48</sup> *Daily Mail*, 31 December 1897.

In the period between 1895 and 1920, there were only nine permanent lecturers in the two strands of ‘Public Administration’ (PA) and ‘Political Science’ (PS).<sup>49</sup> They were as follows:

- Percy Ashley (History and PA, 1899–1908);
- Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (PS, 1896–1920);
- H. A. Grimshaw (PA, 1917–1928);
- F. W. Hirst (PS, 1897–1900);
- Hastings B. Lees-Smith (PA, 1906–1941);
- William Piercy, first Baron Piercy (PA, 1913–1917);
- Hon W. Pember Reeves (PA, 1896–1918);
- Graham Wallas (PS, 1895–1932); and
- Sidney Webb, first Baron Passfield (PA, 1895–1927).

None possessed a formal political science training or background—Ashley, Dickinson, Hirst and Wallas were primarily historians. The importance of a classical education is plainly apparent: Ashley, Hirst, Lees-Smith and Wallas all went to Oxford, while Lowes Dickinson attended Cambridge, Pember Reeves was educated in New Zealand, and both Piercy and Grimshaw studied at the LSE for the BSc (Econ). Webb had attended Birkbeck College and King’s College London before being entered for the Bar.

In 1912, Webb received the honorary title of Professor of Public Administration, though he had been an occasional lecturer since the School’s formation.<sup>50</sup> We also find 28 occasional lecturers for the period 1895–1932, listed in the Register published in 1934, consistent with Dahrendorf’s observation that the LSE possessed a ‘galaxy of Occasional Lecturers.’ The list includes some of the great minds of the period, including A. V. Dicey (PS), 1896–1899, Elie Halevy (PS), 1912–1913 and Beatrice Webb (PA), 1895–1901, 1903–1906 and 1915–1916. This dazzling intellectual cohort testifies to the School’s increasing intellectual lustre.<sup>51</sup> The occasional lecturers were as follows:

- Mabel Atkinson (PA), 1901–1902;
- Ernest Barker (PS), 1912–1913;
- Sir J. A. Cockburn (PS), 1910–1911;
- C. Dagleish (PA), 1909–1910;
- A. V. Dicey (PS), 1896–1899;
- Vicente Echeverria (PS), 1910–1911;
- Sir C. H. Firth (PS) 1896–1897;

<sup>49</sup> LSE Registrar 1934.

<sup>50</sup> Hayek 1946: 18; for example, three lectures on ‘The Policy of Trade Unions with regards to their processes and machinery’, *The Times* 1897b: 6; local government, *The Times*, 10 May 1900, p. 12; and unemployment, *The Times*, 27 January 1910, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 59; LSE Registrar 1934; Hayek 1946: 11–12.

- R. C. Glen (PA), 1898–1899;
- Sir G. L. Gomme (PA), 1896–1899;
- Élie Halévy (PS), 1912–1913;
- J. H. Harley (PS), 1911–1912;
- E. J. Harper (PA), 1895–1897;
- John Kemp (PS), 1896–1598;
- G. F. McCleary (PA), 1902–1903;
- Sir Donald Maclean (PA), 1901–1902;
- J. D. Pennington (PA), 1907–1908;
- Marion Philips (PA), 1911–1912;
- E. T. Powell (PA), 1909–1911;
- Hon. Josiah Quincy (PA), 1899–1900;
- Prof. F. F. Roget (PA), 1910–1912;
- Sir Herbert Samuel (PA), 1904–1905;
- Arthur Sherwell (PA), 1899–1900;
- Sir Henry Slesser (PA), 1909–1911;
- F. H. Spencer (PA), 1902–1903;
- Sir Charles J. Stewart (PA), 1913–1914;
- Sir Frank Swettenham (PA), 1903–1914;
- Beatrice Webb (PA), 1895–1901, 1903–1906, 1915–1916; and
- C. N. Sidney Woolf (PS), 1913–1914.

Future luminaries, most notably, J. M. Keynes (MA) with a course of lectures on ‘Indian Trade and Finance’, also began teaching during this period.<sup>52</sup>

Wallas and Webb infused their passion for higher education and its public policy objectives into the School.<sup>53</sup> Over his long tenure, Wallas held numerous posts, possessing lectureships as political theorist, political scientist and constitutional historian. While those teaching Public Administration and Political Science had no Convener or Head, Wallas was undoubtedly *primus inter pares* of the proto ‘department’. His historical expertise, interests and background were plain to see from his highly regarded publication *The Life of Francis Place, 1771–1854* (1894), which implicitly displayed the author’s admiration and respect for the sturdy radicalism of the lower middle class in mid-Victorian Britain.

As Professor of Political Science, 1895 to 1923, and Professor Emeritus, 1923 to 1932, Wallas taught at the LSE for 37 years. Students regarded him as ‘the permanent member of the Department of Political Science.’<sup>54</sup> On his appointment as Emeritus Professor, he was described as ‘one of the best loved teachers in the School of Economics’, which he made ‘not merely a centre of research,

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<sup>52</sup> *The Times* 1911c: 11.

<sup>53</sup> LSE 1906: 13.

<sup>54</sup> W. H. B. et al. 1923: 169–170.

but a centre of research that had coordination and design.<sup>55</sup> His most famous work, *Human Nature in Politics* (1908), outlined his unique emphasis on political psychology, though his attacks on rational political behaviour did not gain him many adherents in Britain. There was a gap in research interests and objectives between Wallas and the Webbs, pithily interpreted by Wallas, and related by Alfred Zimmern, which was considered in terms of a battle between human agency and institutions: Wallas was interested in town councillors, while Webb was interested in town councils.<sup>56</sup>

Alongside Webb and Wallas in the early cohort of the School was Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, who taught Political Science between 1896 and 1920. In 1911, he was placed on the permanent staff as a ‘Lecturer in Political Science’.<sup>57</sup> Described as ‘always accessible to pupils and students’, Dickinson’s ‘somewhat wizened and dusky features were irradiated by a very beautiful and welcoming smile, and his voice had a sweet if husky timbre that lent, together with his eager laugh, a great charm to his talk’. Dickinson succeeded to a Fellowship at King’s College, Cambridge in Neo-Platonic philosophy in 1887, before his appointment to a History lectureship in 1896. His father had been a founding member of the Working Men’s College and an active Christian Socialist. Dickinson himself was actively involved in socialist circles, especially arguing for an end to ‘secret diplomacy’ via the Union of Democratic Control.<sup>58</sup>

A notable feature of the early years was the transition of those who had obtained Russell Scholarships, with £100 per annum for two years, to teaching positions. The Studentship required the recipient to deliver a short course of lectures at the end of two years, which acted for some as a platform towards an academic career. Funded by Bertrand Russell, the recipient was expected to ‘devote himself to the investigation of some subject in Economics or Political Science’. The Political Science papers consisted of Ancient Constitutions, Modern Constitutions, Theory and History of the English Constitution and a general paper. F. W. Hirst, the first recipient in 1896, was, for the next three years, a lecturer on municipal and local government. He was editor of *The Economist* from 1907 to 1916, a prominent Cobden Club member and a liberal internationalist, promoting doctrines of peace, economy and free trade.<sup>59</sup> Percy Ashley, a graduate from Lincoln College, Oxford, obtained a Russell Scholarship in 1898, and lectured on History and Public Administration from 1899 to 1908.<sup>60</sup> Ashley was a younger brother of the economic historian Sir William Ashley, and father of the historian Maurice Ashley. Always primarily interested in commercial policy, he held numerous posts at the Board of Trade, acted as

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 170; Kavanagh 2007: 104–105.

<sup>56</sup> Weiner 1971: 29.

<sup>57</sup> Cox 2018.

<sup>58</sup> LSE 1906: 12; *The Times* 1908b: 11; *The Times* 1932: 12.

<sup>59</sup> *The Times*, 11 August 1896, p. 9; *The Times* 1953: 8; Hayek 1946: 10.

<sup>60</sup> LSE 1906: 11; *The Times* 1898c: 7; Hayek 1946: 10.

an advisor to Arthur Balfour, and in the 1930s served as Secretary and member of the Import Duties Advisory Committee.<sup>61</sup>

Other academics played a similar multi-faceted role. William Pember Reeves (1857–1932), a New Zealand journalist and politician, and New Zealand High Commissioner in London prior to his appointment with LSE, was associated with the Fabian Society from an early date. He taught Public Administration between 1896 and 1918, while simultaneously serving as Director of the School between 1908 and 1919.<sup>62</sup> Other members of the department included H. A. Grimshaw (PA, 1917–1928), and Hastings B. Lees-Smith (PA, 1906–1941). Lees-Smith had a long career at the LSE. Initially a Liberal, he joined the Labour Party in 1919 and led the party when Attlee joined the wartime Coalition Government in 1940.<sup>63</sup> Grimshaw was an LSE BSc (Econ.) graduate and recipient of the Hutchinson Research Studentship during the First World War. He argued that under-consumption was a key economic problem. At a Ruskin College Conference to discuss ‘Trades Unions and Output’, he suggested that ‘so long as there were high incomes on one hand and next to no incomes on the other there would be produced more than enough of the luxuries and less of the necessities of life. The industrial machine produced too many ballet girls and banquets and too few boots and too little bread.’<sup>64</sup>

William Piercy, first Baron Piercy (PA, 1913–1917), subsequently had an illustrious career as an economist, civil servant, businessman and financier. Piercy had been a full-time undergraduate at the LSE from 1910, studying at night, and graduating with a BSc in 1914, when he was the recipient of the Mitchell Studentship to conduct research on ‘The System of Local Finance in France, and Germany in their effects on Business Enterprise.’<sup>65</sup> He served at the Ministry of Supply and Ministry of Aircraft Production in the Second World War, was raised to the peerage on 14 November 1945, and served as a Director of the Bank of England (1946–1956) and Chairman of the Wellcome Trust (1960–1965). He retained his academic interests to the end of his life, serving as a Governor of the LSE, and a member of the Court and Senate of the University of London.<sup>66</sup>

Overall, the teaching of Political Science and Public Administration attracted a wide array of talented individuals. If there was a slightly left-leaning tendency, it was of a liberal left and a Labourist persuasion rather than towards Marxian socialism. While we can detect a clear concern with ethics in politics, which ranged from embracing under-consumption theories to greater transparency

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<sup>61</sup> Lecturing on ‘State Promotion of Foreign Commerce’, *The Times* 1912a: 9; *The Times*, 14 September 1945, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> *The Times* 1908c: 9; Donnelly 2016.

<sup>63</sup> LSE 1906: 13.

<sup>64</sup> *The Times*, 28 December 1916, p. 3; *The Times* 1920a: 14.

<sup>65</sup> *The Times* 1914a: 11.

<sup>66</sup> LSE 1914: 35; *The Times*, 9 July 1966, p. 10.

in foreign policy, it is fair to say that conservative positions were well-represented, especially when connected to imperial defence and tariff policy. The Webbs themselves were involved in the ‘co-efficiency’ movement which in a non-partisan way, was concerned with empire, social reform, and eugenics, and which brought together many people of different political persuasions.<sup>67</sup>

The LSE student body in the early years was different from that of Oxbridge. Wallas spoke of the LSE students as ‘mainly of the type to which I had become accustomed in the University Extension movement—a few ambitious young civil servants and teachers, and a few women of leisure interested in the subject or engaged in public work.’<sup>68</sup> Undoubtedly, the business and vocational courses offered at the School and the evening classes provided the basis for a student body which was less classically inclined and far less likely to have been educated privately at the great public schools. Anthony Howe argues that the ‘typical’ LSE student of the first decades of the School’s existence was ‘lower middle class’ in status and ‘rather similar to Webb’, with the School generally for the ‘aspiring lower middle classes.’<sup>69</sup>

The School witnessed a substantial increase in numbers before 1914 and after the declining numbers during the war witnessed an upsurge after demobilisation in 1918. Over the period 1895 to 1920, a large number of students attended the LSE. By 1906, more than 5,000 students had attended since 1895. Each session witnessed a progressive increase, with, for example, 542 students in 1901–1902 rising to 1,635 (including 82 foreign students) in 1906–1907.<sup>70</sup>

### The First Courses

The first 25 years of the School’s existence witnessed a rapid expansion of what we might term the ‘proto-department’. The initial focus of political studies on local, central and imperial government and the fundamental principles of political and constitutional theory were driven largely by analysis of Britain and its colonial empire. Over time, the curriculum became more refined and focused, as the School aligned itself more with the model of the *École Libre de Sciences Politiques* in Paris.

The Anglo-centric nature of the course of study had never been complete and there was always a comparative element, but it is certainly true that the Whiggish story of Britain’s political development impacted and informed the curriculum. Nevertheless, comparative analysis of foreign institutions, constitutions and governments played an important part of the curriculum, interwoven with

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<sup>67</sup> Radice 1984: 146.

<sup>68</sup> Cited in Hayek 1946: 8.

<sup>69</sup> Howe interview 2020.

<sup>70</sup> LSE 1907: 22–23.



**Figure 5:** Passmore Edwards Hall, 1902; Credit: LSE Library.

other emerging ‘departments’ of economic and political geography, economic and political history, law, public administration and public finance.<sup>71</sup>

In 1900, the LSE’s application to join the University of London was successful. It was a crucial moment, for the School’s growth and expansion was intimately tied to its place within London University. By 1902, the LSE functioned as a School of the University’s newly formed ‘Faculty of Economics and Political Science including commerce and industry’. The credibility of the School was enhanced, and its newfound status fended off accusations that ‘LSE would be devoted to [a] utopian sort of Fabian politics’. Sidney Webb was astute in his ‘academic diplomacy’ in his recognition that the School could occupy an important niche within the University of London.<sup>72</sup>

In 1901, the BSc (Econ.) and DSc (Econ.) were established as ‘the first university degrees in the country devoted mainly to the social sciences’ and recognised by the University of London. The LSE was the first university to incorporate a university degree mainly devoted to the social sciences, antedating the Cambridge Economics Tripos by two years. The first Final Exams of the BSc were held in 1904, and the structure of the degree remained in place until 1923. The Final Exam consisted of three compulsory papers of Economics, History, and Public Administration and Finance, two essay papers and four

<sup>71</sup> LSE 1902: 23.

<sup>72</sup> Howe interview 2020.

papers on one of ten special subjects from Economic History, Statistics, to the History of Political Ideas.<sup>73</sup>

Several revisions were made to make courses more coherent, with Political Science acting as a nexus within several of the School's emerging fields of study, drawing on other disciplines, but in the process forming a more focused syllabus based on government and administration. By 1902, more familiar courses to modern programmes emerged, and a more streamlined syllabus was the result. International and Constitutional Law and Public Administration were compulsory classes for Political Science students around which other optional courses could be taken from other disciplines. Courses were organised under four heads—Political Science, Public Administration, Local Government and Public Finance.

For the BSc (Econ.), students of Political Science studied International and Constitutional Law, and a range of Public Administration courses, consisting of:

- Economics Descriptive and Historical;
- General Economic Theory;
- The Theory and Practice of Statistics;
- The Structure and Functions of the Modern State;
- The Government of the British Empire;
- The Historical Development of Europe;
- British Constitutional History since 1760;
- Local Self-Government in England and Abroad;
- Public Finance; and
- International and Constitutional Law.

Public Administration students were also advised to attend courses on Economic Geography, the History of British and German Commercial Policy, and the policy of different countries in relation to Railways.

Under Political Science, Dickinson managed 'Government of the British Empire' and 'The Structure and Functions of the Modern State', while under Public Administration, a range of comparative historical courses were offered, including British Constitutional History since 1760 (Wallas), Outlines of European History, 751–1321 (Ashley), Renaissance and Reformation, 1321–1648, (Ashley) and Pre-Revolutionary Europe, 1648–1789 (Ashley).<sup>74</sup> Local Government under Webb and Ashley consisted of comparative analysis of England, Scotland (taught by Miss Atkinson) and the history and functions of municipalities in Britain and abroad. Cannan delivered courses on public finance in Britain and abroad, including local and imperial tax systems.<sup>75</sup> By 1902, Beatrice Webb could write: 'Our child, born only seven years ago in two back-rooms in John Street, with a few hundreds [*sic*] a year, from the Hutchinson

<sup>73</sup> Hayek 1946: 13–14; Dahrendorf 1995: 57.

<sup>74</sup> LSE 1901: 10–11, 23–24.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*: 24–25.

Trust, despised by the learned folk as a “young man’s” fad, is now fully grown and ready to start in the world.<sup>76</sup>

The upward trajectory of the department and School was not halted by the resignation of the first Director William Hewins in 1903 and his replacement by Halford Mackinder. Beatrice Webb recorded Hewins as a ‘remarkable man’ for his ‘audacity, enterprise, seal and skill in presenting facts and manipulating persons,’ whose qualities had ‘served the School well against the indifference and hostility of the London business and academic world.’<sup>77</sup>

By 1906, Politics and Public Administration was organised into a more coherent course, offering subjects from a range of disciplines:

- Political Ideas (Dickinson and Wallas);
- British Constitution, including local government (Wallas, Lees-Smith, Holdsworth and Webb);
- Comparative Politics (Wallas);
- English Municipalities (Webb);
- Local Government Seminar (Webb and Lees-Smith);
- Public Finance (Cannan and Foxwell);
- Economics, Theory and History (Cannan, Knowles and Mackinder);
- Demography and Statistics (Bowley);
- Accounting and Business Methods (Dicksee); and
- International Law (Oppenheim).<sup>78</sup>

This broad range of interdisciplinary subjects, the School argued, was vital, for:

The student of Political Science, like the student of Economics, is the better for knowing something of the whole range of economic and political subjects. The following list of lectures has been compiled, however, for a political rather than an economic, point of view, with the object of assisting candidates for Honours in the History of Political Ideas and Public Administration to frame their courses of study.<sup>79</sup>

By 1908, Dickinson and Wallas shared teaching duties on ‘Political Ideas,’ while Lees-Smith dominated ‘British Constitution’ courses, with his courses on local government supplemented by Webb in seminars. In related areas, Mr. Pennington taught on The Government of Manchester, with a seminar by Wallas, Holdsworth taught Law and History, Wallas taught political analysis and comparative politics. Ashley taught on the British Empire. Public finance continued under Cannan and Foxwell. Economic history was taught by

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<sup>76</sup> *BW diaries*, vol. 22: 30 May 1902, 29.

<sup>77</sup> *BW diaries*, vol. 24: 18 November 1903, 37; also resigning his economic history lectureship, *The Times*, 17 December 1903, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> LSE 1906: 49–50.

<sup>79</sup> LSE 1906: 49.

Knowles, Cannan and Lees-Smith, while Morison taught Indian economics, and subsidiary areas of demography, accounting, geography and international law remained unchanged.<sup>80</sup>

Political studies was strengthened by the addition of Lees-Smith, a graduate of Queen's College, Oxford, Vice-Principal of Ruskin College, and lecturer of Political Economy at University College, Bristol.<sup>81</sup> He helped the department attain a more cohesive structure, with a Politics and Public Administration focus, and Lees-Smith, Dickinson and Wallas remained at the forefront of strictly 'political' courses, reducing the role of Ashley, who left in 1908. It remains true that, conceptually, empirical research and study still dominated 'political science' broadly defined at the School.

It may tell us something of the School's priorities that it was organised hierarchically, with Economics first, followed by Politics and Public Administration, History, Law, Geography, Sociology, Commerce and Industry, Accounting and Business Methods, Banking, Transport, Librarianship and, finally, a course 'for the training of Officers for the higher appointments on the Administrative Staff of the Army'. Wallas taught Public Administration as part of a wider range of political and economic courses for army officers.<sup>82</sup> While this hierarchy reflected a preoccupation with the study of Economics and Political Science informing better governance and policymaking, it was also indicative of the increasing academic profile of the School, which continued to advance throughout the period at the expense of the vocational courses which slowly declined.

### Financial and Public Policy Developments

By 1911, the LSE was the fourth largest school among the 31 Schools of the University of London.<sup>83</sup> The progress and success of the School was intimately linked to external factors. Before the principle of State aid for universities was established, the LSE, as a privately founded organisation, was dependent on private donations from local bodies such as the LCC, as well as student fees.<sup>84</sup> Early in the School's existence, LCC funding was important in financing the appointment and payment of regular teaching staff.<sup>85</sup> In 1889, a State grant of £15,000 per annum was made to leading University Colleges in Britain. These

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<sup>80</sup> LSE 1907: 49–50.

<sup>81</sup> LSE 1906: 13.

<sup>82</sup> LSE 1907: 68.

<sup>83</sup> *The Times* 1911b: 15.

<sup>84</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 91; Anderson 2016.

<sup>85</sup> Hayek 1946: 13; *The Times*, 15 February 1896, p. 11; *The Times* 1902b: 5; *The Times* 1902c: 7.

'Annual Grants in Aid' had their origins in the University Extension Movement; by 1905, the grant had increased to £100,000.<sup>86</sup>

Funding was dependent (via Treasury Minute, 2 June 1897) on total local income for Arts and Science of at least £4,000 per annum or receipt of fees in the same subjects to the total of at least £1,500 per annum. Recommended grants were conditional on a minimum standard of development and teaching quality content and delivery having been achieved. A Permanent Advisory Committee of the Treasury appointed by Treasury Minute in 1906 included the LSE, for the first time, within the orbit of State aid. In late 1907, the Committee proposed a grant of £500 for the next qualifying period.<sup>87</sup>

While praising the School's governance and teaching quality, the amalgam of business-related and academic subjects was referred to, as LSE differs 'from other recognised Colleges in that it deals only with a limited and specialised section of higher education'. The LSE was one of four institutions whose status and functions were considered as located somewhere between universities and university colleges. Nevertheless, the Committee made a further grant of £650 in 1910, increasing to £4,500 in 1911. These grants were strictly maintenance grants to meet annual expenditure on teaching and research of a 'University character and standard'.<sup>88</sup> After a few shaky years, by 1911, the Director William Pember Reeves described the past year as a good one for the School largely thanks to the Treasury grant, with revenue of £13,000.<sup>89</sup>

Establishing the School on a solid financial foundation was essential to its progress and recognition as a university rather than a business school. A vibrant teaching of Political Science and Public Administration with an influence on public policy was vitally important to this process. We see this occurring in two areas in particular between 1895 and 1920: the connection of political science to political developments, especially imperial and military organisation, and the vibrancy of political lectures in the public space.

First, as to contemporary issues, Political Science staff played a highly significant role in public policy. Imperial sentiment reached great heights in late Victorian Britain, which was reflected in the life of the School, with military and imperial elements prominent. It was perhaps inevitable that with the first two Directors being keen imperial advocates, imperial governance and the imperial mission would feature heavily, given the wide interest, including among Fabians, in the amalgam of national efficiency, social reform and empire.<sup>90</sup>

These developments assumed numerous forms. For example, Lees-Smith lectured in India under UK Government auspices, with a view to establishing

<sup>86</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 24 September 1889; Board of Education 1910: 57–76.

<sup>87</sup> *The Times* 1906c: 10.

<sup>88</sup> *The Times* 1907a: 6; University Colleges 1909; *The Times* 1910a: 18; *The Times* 1912b: 7.

<sup>89</sup> *The Times* 1911b: 15.

<sup>90</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 43–46.



**Figure 6:** Sir Halford Mackinder, c.1910; Credit: LSE Library.

a Faculty of Commerce at Bombay University. That visit provided the impetus for a scheme encouraging young Indian students to visit England to study political life and institutions with the ultimate objective of assisting Viscount Morley's Indian governmental reforms. The LSE was to provide a special course for Indian students who wished to study problems of Indian administration.<sup>91</sup> Subsequently, a cohort of Indian students studied at the School, with a range of courses focused on India and its place within Britain's colonial empire.<sup>92</sup>

Similar issues of administrative efficiency affected the military, which was increasingly the focus of public policy early in the 20th century. The Liberal Government, concerned at the deficiencies of the British Army revealed by the Boer War, appointed a Consultative Committee, including Sidney Webb and Mackinder, to enquire into providing training for selected officers in military administration. As a result, officers selected by the Army Council assembled at the LSE for the first experimental commercial training courses under Mackinder. Wallas assumed a leading role, teaching a wide range of political and economic Public Administration courses for the army officers' course of study. The course continued until 1914, only to be interrupted by the outbreak of war, but resumed in 1924 and continued until 1932.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *The Times* 1908d: 4; *The Times* 1909a: 12; *The Times* 1909b: 11.

<sup>92</sup> Hayek 1946: 17.

<sup>93</sup> *The Times* 1906b: 9; *The Times*, 11 January 1907, p. 7; LSE 1907: 68; *The Times* 1913c: 6; Hayek 1946: 15; Dahrendorf 1995: 39.

The School's public lectures across the period demonstrate great vibrancy, interest and insight into public policy issues. Lectures encompassed a range of contemporary political topics from bimetallism to electoral systems and local government.<sup>94</sup> Before 1914, the dominant themes, with numerous variations, revolved around a broad range of imperial subjects. While Hewins was Director, imperial subjects were often conflated with commercial policy, but Mackinder was far more active in promoting the Empire, in a more rounded way, though always careful to differentiate his own activities from those of the School.<sup>95</sup> Numerous visitors to the School spoke on the Empire, and Wallas himself delivered a lecture on 'Our Crown Colonies and Dependencies' as part of his British Constitution lecture series.<sup>96</sup>

Mackinder also prepared a series of 'lantern lectures on the United Kingdom for use in the colonies,' as part of a Colonial Office scheme to provide British children with a better knowledge of the colonies and vice versa.<sup>97</sup> Mackinder stridently asserted how the 'building up of empire was to be achieved not only by an army and navy, and through policy, but also by a united, designed, carefully-planned effort in all the schools of the Empire for a generation.'<sup>98</sup>

Even after Mackinder's departure as Director in 1908, imperial administration, history and politics remained an important strand of political studies. A joint programme between University College London, King's College London and LSE on imperial topics, including classes and lectures by, among others, J. H. Morgan, Foxwell and Mackinder, began in 1913.<sup>99</sup>

## The Department and the First World War

Unsurprisingly, the war deeply affected the School, in curbing the more expansive course content which was becoming apparent in the immediate pre-war period. The staple content of Political Science and Public Administration delivered by Wallas (Political Science, local government, British Empire, Civil Service) and Lees-Smith (British Constitution, local and central government, UK financial system) was supplemented by Political Ideas modules taught by Dickinson, Morgan and Wallas.<sup>100</sup> Courses on economic theory and history were expanded, with contributions by, among others, William Cunningham, Lees-Smith, Cannan and Eileen Power, and for Foreign and Political

<sup>94</sup> *The Times* 1897c: 5; *The Times*, 11 October 1897, p. 3; *The Times* 1898b: 12; *The Times* 1905b: 9; *The Times* 1911a: 4.

<sup>95</sup> For example, delivering a lecture at the Ladies' Empire Club on 'the Essentials of British Empire', *The Times* 1905a: 6.

<sup>96</sup> *The Times*, 23 April 1904, p. 16.

<sup>97</sup> *The Times*, 22 November 1904, p. 8; *The Times* 1904b: 12.

<sup>98</sup> *The Times* 1904a: 14.

<sup>99</sup> *The Times* 1913a: 4.

<sup>100</sup> LSE 1915: 36–39.

History and Geography contributions by Piercy, G. P. Gooch, Mantoux and Pember Reeves.<sup>101</sup>

The range of courses was commensurate with the School's founding principles, which were restated: 'The founders of the School contemplated, from the first, the possession of scientific training in the methods of investigation and research, and special courses of study suitable for different groups of business men, the civil and municipal services, journalism and public work.'<sup>102</sup> Ominously, amid increasing international tension towards the end of 1913, and fears of civil disorder and economic and social dislocation, Graham Wallas had advanced the idea of a 'small expert committee' to provide 'invaluable organisation in time of war and might discover methods for a greater, wider, and more effective co-operation in time of peace between the Army authorities and the local government authorities.'<sup>103</sup> While the army course he taught was suspended for the duration of the war, the Liberal politician R. B. Haldane, a long-time friend of the Webbs and supporter and benefactor of the School, praised the LSE's role in the 'wonderful mobilization in August, 1914, and in the methodical arrangement of the transport and supply services ever since.'<sup>104</sup>

The First World War halted the development of the School, diminishing staff and student numbers, approximately by 50%, but after 1918, the School experienced great expansion.<sup>105</sup> The success of the early years was built upon, with a renewed emphasis on professionalism and efficiency allied to rigorous analysis and evaluation in academic approach, providing an effective combination in reinforcing the School's identity as a dynamic, progressive force within British higher education.

Unlike during the Second World War, the School was not evacuated, but remained in London, though many buildings were requisitioned for military use, and students and staff faced the threat of enemy bombing. During the war, wartime themes underscored political and academic commentary. Sidney Webb spoke on 8 October 1915 on 'How War is affecting Democracy', followed by a course of six lectures, beginning 20 October 1915 on 'How to prevent war', with the running theme of 'Why the prevention of War is the most important problem of Political Science for this century'. Reflecting the increasing profile of government activity during the war, Professor Hobhouse presented a course of six lectures on 'The Rights and Duties of the State.'<sup>106</sup> War finance and credit

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<sup>101</sup> Mantoux on Modern French History and Institutions, *The Times* 1913d: 4; LSE 1914: 80–81.

<sup>102</sup> LSE 1914: 39.

<sup>103</sup> *The Times* 1913b: 12.

<sup>104</sup> *The Times* 1915: 5; Dahrendorf 1995: 57.

<sup>105</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 129–131; Stevenson 2014.

<sup>106</sup> LSE 1915: 35; Pember Reeves lectured on the 'Balkans and the Near East', *The Times* 1916c: 4; *The Times* 1916a: 11.

was particularly prominent in public lectures.<sup>107</sup> Post-war reconstruction at home and Europe, and the prospective economic strength and prospects of Britain were being considered as early as 1916.<sup>108</sup>

### William Beveridge: A New Era

By 1918, with the end of the war pending, attention shifted to the post-war world, with close scrutiny given to geopolitics alongside staple course material on the British Constitution, the British Empire and local government. In keeping with previous Directors, Pember Reeves delivered a lecture on 'Consolidation of the Empire' nine months before the war ended. One year after the war ended, a previous Director, Mackinder, delivered a lecture series on 'The British Empire under the New Conditions of the World'.<sup>109</sup> The inaugural lecture of 1918–1919, 'Science and Politics' by Wallas, was a progressive acknowledgment of the great changes expected in the post-war world.

Beatrice Webb was appointed to the Reconstruction Committee under Lloyd George's government in 1917, a task she relished, and Sidney Webb's continuing influence was apparent as the war entered its final year, as the main author of Labour's 1918 manifesto 'Labour and the New Social Order', a programme for post-war reconstruction, which began with the striking phrase 'We need to beware of patchwork' and which argued for a 'deliberately thought-out systematic and comprehensive plan for the immediate social rebuilding which any Ministry, whether or not it desires to grapple with the problem, will be driven to undertake'.<sup>110</sup> The famous 'Clause IV' was drafted as part of the Labour manifesto, providing the intellectual rationale for widespread public ownership which was to become influential in the following years.

Within the School, the keynote in Political Science and Public Administration was continuity. Lees-Smith and Wallas still dominated Political Science and constitutional issues, and there was the same blend of local and national government which had characterised political studies since 1895. The impact of the war was predictable, with an emphasis on military and commercial geopolitical rivalry, most notably in 20 lectures by Lees-Smith on 'Political and

<sup>107</sup> Hartley Withers on credit and finance, *The Times* 1914b: 11; Foxwell on 'Some problems of war finance', *The Times* 1916d: 5; Withers and Mackinnon Wood on 'Problems of economic progress' and 'Enemy systems of food control', *The Times* 1918b: 9.

<sup>108</sup> Sir George Paish on 'The economic strength of Great Britain', *The Times* 1916e: 3; 'Geographical conditions of the reconstruction of Europe' by Mackinder, *The Times* 1916b: 11; Gooch on 'Problems of the settlement: Poland, Bohemia, Alsace-Lorraine', *The Times* 1917: 11.

<sup>109</sup> *The Times* 1918a: 9; *The Times* 1919a: 15.

<sup>110</sup> *The Times* 1918c: 3.



**Figure 7:** Celebrations following the laying of the foundation stone in Houghton Street, 28th May 1920. After the ceremony, LSE students in high spirits carried a statue of Sir Walter Raleigh through London proclaiming that he was to be enrolled as a new student; Credit: LSE Library.

social problems arising from the war' and eight lectures respectively on 'Tariffs and Tariff Administration' and 'The Budgets of the Great Powers' by renowned economist Theodore Gregory.<sup>111</sup>

The resignation of Pember Reeves as Director in May 1919 led to the appointment of William Beveridge, whose brilliant record of scholarship and accomplished background in journalism and the Civil Service augured well for the School.<sup>112</sup> Fittingly, Beveridge delivered the keynote public lecture for 1919–1920 on 'The Public Service in War and Peace'.<sup>113</sup> Beveridge's appointment, combined with the arrival of Harold Laski in 1920, were harbingers of significant changes of personnel and syllabus content in the 1920s which was undoubtedly healthy from an academic viewpoint.<sup>114</sup> Symbolic of new beginnings, George V laid the foundation stone of the main building in 1920, on a site presented by the LCC. The extension was intended to mainly accommodate the new degree of Bachelor of Commerce (BCom).<sup>115</sup> A set of newly minted coins and a copy of

<sup>111</sup> LSE 1918: 35–39; Bigg 2018.

<sup>112</sup> *The Times* 1919c: 6; *The Times* 1919d: 13.

<sup>113</sup> *The Times* 1919b: 15.

<sup>114</sup> Hayek 1946: 19; Dahrendorf 1995: 141–146.

<sup>115</sup> Dahrendorf 1995: 142; *Daily Mail*, 30 March 1920.

Professor Cannan's book, *Wealth: A Brief Explanation of the Causes of Economic Wealth* (1914), were placed beneath the foundation stone.<sup>116</sup>

After two years as Director, Beatrice Webb was pleased with Beveridge and his approach, but reflecting on the School's history, praised her husband and his dynamism and humility, for 'beyond a few of the "old gang" no one recognises that the School is his creation and he does not wish anyone to do so.'<sup>117</sup> Webb's vision, hard work and integrity mean we should accord him a primary role in the evolution of the philosophy of the School and its respective departments.

As noted in the introduction, while the First World War had a significant effect on the School's progression towards maturity, the Spanish Influenza pandemic had no perceptible impact. Neither the School's own Calendars nor indeed Dahrendorf's extensive *History of the LSE* make any mention of the fact that from June 1918 to April 1919 London itself (with a population of approximately 4.5 million) suffered over 16,000 registered deaths from that pandemic.<sup>118</sup>

## Conclusion

The political, educational, and commercial imperatives driving the School forward were all concerned with applying scientific techniques as a means of improving society, inculcating better decision-making, and advancing technical and political expertise. In many ways, the School has not moved from that position. Tony Travers is not alone in feeling a link to the original ethos of the School 'all the way back through George Jones and the Greater London Group to [William] Robson and backward from that to the Webbs.'<sup>119</sup>

The embryonic condition of political studies and 'political science' was in many ways a reflection of the dominance of grand narratives in political and constitutional history in Britain. It would take more than a scientific approach to research to change the contours of political science, but at least a start had been made in shifting the discipline, such as it was, from an over-emphasis on political philosophy. On a more granular basis, the School had recruited some impressive staff members and lecturers, and had shown it was serious in promoting academic study, and in the best traditions of disinterestedness, was devoted to procuring experts from different backgrounds and with different interests and political views.

As early as 1910, the LSE possessed global brand recognition. The first woman to win a scholarship endorsed by the Federation of Women's Clubs of America, Juliet Points, chose the LSE over Oxbridge 'because sociology and economics

<sup>116</sup> *The Times* 1920b: 11.

<sup>117</sup> *BW diaries*, vol. 36: Christmas Eve 1921, 76.

<sup>118</sup> Smallman-Raynor et al. 2002.

<sup>119</sup> Travers telephone interview 2020.

cannot be better studied than at the London School of Economics, which is famous throughout the world.<sup>120</sup>

Although political science did not yet enjoy similar renown, a start had been made, and a distinctive empirical approach had emerged representing a valuable addition to the study of government and politics in British higher education. However, a greater degree of professionalism, the advance of political science as a discipline and a more formal department were, as yet, in the future.

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<sup>120</sup> *Daily Mail* 1910: 3.

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