

SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION
M.A POLITICAL SCIENCE II SEM
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: MODERN POLITICAL
THOUGHT, THEORY & CONTEMPORARY
IDEOLOGIES
UNIT-III

Topic Name-fabian socialism

WHAT IS MEANT BY FABIAN SOCIALISM?

- The **Fabian Society** is a British **socialist** organisation whose purpose is to advance the principles of democratic **socialism** via gradualist and reformist effort in democracies, rather than by revolutionary overthrow

WHO STARTED THE FABIAN SOCIETY?

- Its nine founding members were Frank Podmore, Edward R. Pease, William Clarke, Hubert Bland, Percival Chubb, Frederick Keddell, H. H. Champion, Edith Nesbit, and Rosamund Dale Owen.

WHO IS THE PROPOUNDER OF FABIAN SOCIALISM?

- In the period between the two World Wars, the "Second Generation" **Fabians**, including the writers R. H. Tawney, G. D. H. Cole and Harold Laski, continued to be a major influence on **socialist** thought. But the general idea is that each man should have power according to his knowledge and capacity.

WHAT IS THE FABIAN POLICY?

- The **Fabian strategy** is a military strategy where pitched battles and frontal assaults are avoided in favor of wearing down an opponent through a war of attrition and indirection. While avoiding decisive battles, the side employing this strategy harasses its enemy through skirmishes to cause attrition, disrupt supply and affect morale. Employment of this strategy implies that the side adopting this strategy believes time is on its side, but it may also be adopted when no feasible alternative strategy can be devised.

HISTORY

- This strategy derives its name from Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus,^[1] the dictator of the Roman Republic given the task of defeating the great Carthaginian general Hannibal in southern Italy during the Second Punic War (218–201 BC).^[2] At the start of the war, Hannibal boldly crossed the Alps in wintertime and invaded Italy.^[3] Due in part to Hannibal's skill as a general, he repeatedly inflicted devastating losses on the Romans—quickly achieving two crushing victories over the Romans at the Battle of the Trebia and the Battle of Lake Trasimene.^{[4][5]} After these disasters the Romans appointed Fabius Maximus as dictator. Fabius initiated a war of attrition fought through constant skirmishes and limiting the ability of the Carthaginians to forage for food.^{[6][7]}
- Hannibal suffered from two weaknesses. First, he was commander of an invading foreign army on Italian soil, effectively cut off from the home country by the difficulty of seaborne resupply.^[8] His only hope of destroying Rome was by enlisting the support of her allies. As long as the Italians remained loyal to Rome, then there was little Hannibal could win. Hannibal planned to convince Rome's allies it was more beneficial to side with the Carthaginians through a combination of winning battles and negotiation.^[9] Therefore, Fabius calculated that the way to defeat Hannibal was to avoid engaging with him in pitched battles, so as to deprive him of victories. He determined that Hannibal's extended supply lines, and the cost of maintaining the Carthaginian army in the field, meant that Rome had time on its side

HISTORY

- Rather than fight, Fabius shadowed Hannibal's army and avoided battle,^[10] instead sending out small detachments against Hannibal's foraging parties,^[11] and maneuvering the Roman army in hilly terrain, so as to nullify Hannibal's decisive superiority in cavalry.^[12] Residents of small villages in the path of Hannibal's army were ordered to burn their crops and take refuge in fortified towns.^[13] He used interior lines to ensure that at no time could Hannibal march on Rome without abandoning his Mediterranean ports, while at the same time inflicting constant, small, debilitating defeats on the North Africans. This, Fabius had concluded, would wear down the invaders' endurance and discourage Rome's allies from going over to the enemy, without having to challenge the Carthaginians to a decisive battle. Once Hannibal's Carthaginians had been sufficiently weakened and demoralized by lack of food and supplies, Fabius and his well-fed legions would then launch the decisive battle and crush Hannibal once and for all.
- Hannibal's second weakness was that much of his army was made up of Spanish mercenaries and Gaul allies, whose loyalty to Hannibal was dubious even though they disliked Rome. Being mercenaries, they were unsuited for siege-type battles, having neither the equipment nor the patience for such a campaign. The mercenaries desired quick, overwhelming battles and raids of villages for plunder, much like land-based pirates

POLITICAL OPPOSITION

- Fabius's strategy, though a military success, was a political failure. His indirect policies, while tolerable among wiser minds in the Roman Senate, were unpopular, because the Romans had been long accustomed to facing and besting their enemies directly in the field of battle. The Fabian strategy was, in part, ruined because of a lack of unity in the command of the Roman army. The magister equitum, Marcus Minucius Rufus, a political enemy of Fabius, is famously quoted exclaiming,
- As the memory of the shock of Hannibal's victories grew dimmer, the Roman populace gradually started to question the wisdom of the Fabian strategy, the very thing which had allowed them the time to recover. It was especially frustrating to the mass of the people, who were eager to see a quick conclusion to the war. Moreover, it was widely believed that if Hannibal continued plundering Italy unopposed, the terrified allies, believing that Rome was incapable of protecting them, might defect and pledge their allegiance to the Carthaginians.
- Since Fabius won no large-scale victories, the Roman Senate removed him from command. Their chosen replacement, Gaius Terentius Varro, led the Roman army into a debacle at the Battle of Cannae. The Romans, after experiencing this catastrophic defeat and losing countless other battles, had at this point learned their lesson. They utilized the strategies Fabius had taught them, and which, they finally realized, were the only feasible means of driving Hannibal from Italy.

WHAT DOES THE FABIAN SOCIETY BELIEVE?

- As one of the founding organisations of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, and as an important influence upon the Labour Party which grew from it, the Fabian Society has had a powerful influence on British politics. Other members of the Fabian Society have included political leaders from countries formerly part of the British Empire, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, who adopted Fabian principles as part of their own political ideologies. The Fabian Society founded the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1895.
- Today, the society functions primarily as a think tank and is one of 21 socialist societies affiliated with the Labour Party. Similar societies exist in Australia (the Australian Fabian Society), in Canada (the Douglas–Coldwell Foundation and the now disbanded League for Social Reconstruction), in Sicily (Sicilian Fabian Society) and in New Zealand (The NZ Fabian Society

STRUCTURE

- **Executive committee**
- The Fabian Society is governed by an elected executive committee. The committee consists of 10 ordinary members elected from a national list, three members nationally elected from a list nominated by local groups, representatives from the Young Fabians, Fabians Women's Network and Scottish and Welsh Fabians. There is also one staff representative and a directly elected honorary treasurer from the membership. Elections are held every other year, with the exception of the Young Fabians and staff representation which are elected annually. The committee meet quarterly and elect a chair and at least one vice-chair annually to conduct its business. The current chair of the Fabian Society is Ivana Bartoletti.
- **Secretariat**
- The Fabian Society have a number of employees based in their headquarters in London. The secretariat is led by a general secretary, who is the organisation's CEO. The staff are arranged into departments including Research, Editorial, Events and Operations.

YOUNG FABIANS

- Since 1960 members aged under 31 years of age are also members of the Young Fabians. This group has its own elected Chair, executive committee and sub-groups. The Young Fabians are a voluntary organisation that serves as an incubator for member-led activities such as policy and social events, pamphlets and delegations. Within the group are five special interest communities called Networks that are run by voluntary steering groups and elect their own Chair and officers. The current Networks are Economy & Finance, Health, International Affairs, Education, Communications (Industry), Environment, Tech, Devolution & Local Government, Law, and Arts & Culture.^[49] It also publishes the quarterly magazine *Anticipations*.

FABIAN WOMEN'S NETWORK

- All female members of the Fabian Society are also members of the Fabian Women's Network. This group has its own elected Chair and Executive Committee which organises conferences and events and works with the wider political movement to secure increased representation for women in politics and public life. It has a flagship mentoring programme that recruits on an annual basis and its president is Seema Malhotra, a Labour Party and Co-operative MP. The Network also publishes the quarterly magazine, *Fabiana*, runs a range of public speaking events, works closely in partnership with a range of women's campaigning organisations and regularly hosts a fringe at the Labour Party conference.

LOCAL FABIANS

- There are 45 local Fabian societies across the UK, bringing Fabian debates to communities around the country. Many of these are affiliated to their local constituency Labour party and have their own executive bodies. These local branches are affiliated to the national Fabians and local members have same voting rights as their national counterparts.

CONTEMPORARY FABIANISM

- Through the course of the 20th century, the group has always been influential in Labour Party circles, with members including Ramsay MacDonald, Clement Attlee, Anthony Crosland, Roy Jenkins, Hugh Dalton, Richard Crossman, Ian Mikardo, Tony Benn, Harold Wilson and more recently Shirley Williams, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Gordon Marsden and Ed Balls. 229 Society members were elected to Parliament in the 1945 General Election.^[30] Ben Pimlott served as its chairman in the 1990s. (A Pimlott Prize for Political Writing was organised in his memory by the Fabian Society and The Guardian in 2005 and continues annually.) The Society is affiliated to the Party as a socialist society. In recent years the Young Fabian group, founded in 1960, has become an important networking and discussion organisation for younger (under 31) Labour Party activists and played a role in the 1994 election of Tony Blair as Labour Leader. Today there is also an active Fabian Women's Network and Scottish and Welsh Fabian groups.
- On 21 April 2009 the Society's website stated that it had 6,286 members: "Fabian national membership now stands at a 35 year high: it is over 20% higher than when the Labour Party came to office in May 1997. It is now double what it was when Clement Attlee left office in

CRITICISM

- the early 1900s, Fabian Society members advocated the ideal of a scientifically planned society and supported eugenics by way of sterilisation.^[50] In an article published in The Guardian on 14 February 2008 (following the apology offered by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to the "stolen generations"), Geoffrey Robertson criticised Fabian socialists for providing the intellectual justification for the eugenics policy that led to the stolen generations scandal.^{[51][52]} Similar claims have been repeated in The Spectator.^[53] However, these views on eugenics were not limited to one group of people and were widely shared throughout the political spectrum.^{[54][55]}
- Although H. G. Wells was a member of the Fabian Society from 1903 to 1908, he was a critic of its operations, particularly in his 1905 paper "The Faults of the Fabian"^[56] and parodied the society in his 1910 novel The New Machiavelli.^[57]
- At a speech in the United States the then British MP George Galloway denounced the Fabian Society for its failure to support the uprising of Easter 1916 in Dublin where an Irish Republic had been proclaimed.

THANK YOU