CHAPTER 8

Steps taken by the governments in Great Britain, Europe, the USA, Soviet Russia and Israel to promote infant education

Lien van Niekerk
CONTENTS

8.1 Introductory remarks ......................................................... 228

8.2 Great Britain ..................................................................... 230

8.2.1 The origins and establishment of infant education ............... 230
  8.2.1.1 Charity Schools ............................................................. 230
  8.2.1.2 Dame Schools .............................................................. 230
  8.2.1.3 Sunday Schools ........................................................... 231

8.2.2 The contributions of a number of people to infant education ...... 231

8.2.3 State measures for the promotion of infant education ............... 233
  8.2.3.1 The Reform Act of 1832, the Factory Act of 1833 and the Committee of Council on Education of 1839 .................. 233
  8.2.3.2 The Newcastle Commission of 1858 .............................. 234
  8.2.3.3 The progression of state involvement in infant education during the nineteenth century .............................................. 234

8.2.4 Infant education in the twentieth century ............................ 235
  8.2.4.1 Preliminary to events during the twentieth century .............. 235
  8.2.4.2 The Education Act of 1918 ............................................. 236
  8.2.4.3 The Education Act of 1944 ............................................. 236
  8.2.4.4 The Plowden Report of 1967 ........................................... 237

8.3 Europe .............................................................................. 238

8.3.1 The Netherlands .............................................................. 239
  8.3.1.1 The origins and establishment of infant education ............. 239
    (a) The "Begijnhof" ............................................................. 239
(b) The "Kloppeschool" ("Cloppen") ................................................... 239
(c) The "Matressenschool" ............................................................... 240
(d) The "Bewaarscholen" (Nursery Schools) ................................... 240

8.3.1.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education 241
8.3.1.3 Infant education in the twentieth century 242

8.3.2 France ......................................................................................... 243
8.3.2.1 The origins and establishment of infant education 243
8.3.2.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education 244
8.3.2.3 Infant education in the twentieth century 245

8.3.3 Germany ...................................................................................... 247
8.3.3.1 The origins and establishment of infant education 247
(a) The "Kleinkinderbewahranstalten" ............................................ 248
(b) The "Kleinkinderschulen" ........................................................ 249
(c) The "Kindergärten" ................................................................. 249
(d) The "Volkskindergärten" .......................................................... 249

8.3.3.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education 250
8.3.3.3 Infant education in the twentieth century 251

8.4 The United States of America ...................................................... 252
8.4.1 The establishment of infant education .......................................... 252
8.4.1.1 The Kindergarten ('children's garden') ......................................... 253
8.4.1.2 The infant school ................................................................ 254

8.5 Soviet Russia .................................................................................. 257
8.5.1 The origins of infant education ...................................................... 257
8.5.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education 258
8.5.2.1 The background against which state measures should be seen 258
8.5.2.2 Infant education during Lenin's reign (1917-1924) 258
8.5.2.3 Infant education during Stalin's reign (1924-1953) 259
8.5.2.4 Infant education during Kruschev's reign (1954-1964) 260
8.5.2.5 Infant education during Breshnev's reign (1964-1982) 260

8.6 Israel ................................................................................................. 261
8.6.1 The origins and establishment of infant education 262
8.6.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education 263
8.6.2.1 Kindergartens 263
8.6.2.2 The kibbutz 264
8.6.2.3 Day schools .......................................................................... 265

8.7 Conclusion ........................................................................................ 265

Bibliography ........................................................................................... 266
8.1 Introductory remarks

South Africa does not exist in isolation in the world. Developments in the leading countries in education in Europe, Great Britain, the USA, Soviet Russia and Israel have a decisive influence on the renewal and provision of education in South Africa in general and on infant education in particular. An historical-comparative investigation of infant education in these countries will also shed light on the cardinal role of the state in the provision of infant education in this country.

It may justifiably be asked: Why is infant education subject to state control in the majority of countries? The answer to this question may be found in the views of the following educationists:

- Reilly et al. (1983:105): "If it is assumed that education starts at birth and is continuous, that all early childhood care involves the child in educative experience (although the effects may possibly be negative), that all early childhood education has a strong caring element, that the well-being of the child depends on the well-being of the family as the primary source of education, then the necessity for co-ordinated health, welfare and educational services for young children is self-evident".

- Van der Ross (1987:12): "But the pressing needs of society also develop so that the parents cannot even adequately attend to the preschool children. Fathers traditionally go out to work, and mothers increasingly do so as they also assume the role of breadwinners and/or co-providers for the family".

- Pretorius (1987:26): "Early social experiences play a dominant role in determining the baby's future social relationships and the pattern of his behaviour towards others and because the baby is centred around the home, it is here that the foundations for later social behaviour and attitudes are laid".
The formative nature of this phase of infancy demands a reliable substitute with proper facilities which satisfies certain basic criteria. From the perspective of a system of education the following selected criteria need to be stipulated:

- percentage of trained personnel;
- quality of guidance;
- ratio of pupils to teacher;
- parent involvement;
- availability of supportive services to the centre; and
- quality and effectiveness of management and supervision.

According to UNESCO (1961:75) the redefining of the family, social problems and industrialization has had the following influence on state involvement in infant education:

... although the family remains the most suitable environment for the child's development parents require assistance, since even under the best conditions they can no longer meet on their own all the educational needs of the young child.

The concrete demands of the times led to infant's education being included as a component of the formal education system. Infant education is therefore no longer only a socio-economic matter, but it forms a transition period between informal and formal education.

As has been shown in the preceding chapters, the deliberate education of the infant (whether in or outside the home) is not a new concept. Plato (428 - 347 BC), even centuries before the birth of Christ, emphasized the importance of infant education in the views he expressed that education, and not merely care, should commence within the first year of the child's life. State involvement in infant education (which was at best only a haphazard involvement) was not much in evidence for a very long time. Stoll (1963:263) explains this lack of involvement as follows: Because they had the incorrect idea concerning the child, infant education was in a sad state for a long time (author's translation.)

In vivid contrast to the previous century, the twentieth century is, as described by Forest (1972:191) "the century of the child, because of the unprecedented interest which our society is showing in all phases of child welfare work". Various governments have been motivated by different circumstances during the ebb and flow of time to become involved. The manifestations of this involvement in infant education in the different countries will now be examined.
8.2 Great Britain

During the Middle Ages (ca 500 - 1500) and for some considerable time afterwards, agriculture remained the chief source of survival in most regions of Great Britain. The majority of the population lived in rural areas and cultivated their own provisions. This situation was drastically altered by the Industrial Revolution, within the space of a century and a half (round about 1750 - 1900). The population more than doubled in numbers, new cities were established and in conjunction with these, a new urban working-class. Children as young as four or five years of age were forced to work in factories for twelve to fourteen hours per day in an attempt to supplement the pittance earned by their parents. To crown this the ruling classes were not in favour of schooling for the poor and the working-classes. Private as well as government sponsored infant education in Great Britain had its origin against the background of these depressing circumstances. Both before and after the period when children were driven into mines and factories, institutions developed which were concerned about the well-being of the young child.

8.2.1 The origins and establishment of infant education

8.2.1.1 Charity Schools

As on the Continent, the church in Britain also played an important role in the education of the young child. The Charity School Movement was established in 1698 for the purpose of caring for neglected children and instructing them in the Christian faith. The importance of the Charity Schools lies in the fact that they were the first organized attempt to establish infant education in Britain. By 1741 there were already more than 2 000 of these schools in existence and they were attended by approximately 40 000 children.

8.2.1.2 Dame Schools

Dame Schools were opened by impoverished elderly women. For a couple of pennies a week they looked after the children of parents who were both working or whose homes were overcrowded owing to their large families. The academic-professional equipment of these women was usually very scant - often not much more than a knowledge of the alphabet and an uncertain ability to spell simple words. In spite of the caring function which they fulfilled, the Dame Schools may justifiably be described as the "poor homes of babyminders who had no idea how to
Great Britain 231

Great Britain 230

Great Britain 229

Great Britain 228

Great Britain 227

Great Britain 226

Great Britain 225

Great Britain 224

Great Britain 223

Great Britain 222

Great Britain 221

Great Britain 220

Great Britain 219

Great Britain 218

Great Britain 217

Great Britain 216

Great Britain 215

Great Britain 214

Great Britain 213

Great Britain 212

Great Britain 211

Great Britain 210

Great Britain 209

Great Britain 208

Great Britain 207

Great Britain 206

Great Britain 205

Great Britain 204

Great Britain 203

Great Britain 202

Great Britain 201

Great Britain 200

Great Britain 199

Great Britain 198

Great Britain 197

Great Britain 196

Great Britain 195

Great Britain 194

Great Britain 193

Great Britain 192

Great Britain 191

Great Britain 190

Great Britain 189

Great Britain 188

Great Britain 187

Great Britain 186

Great Britain 185

Great Britain 184

Great Britain 183

Great Britain 182

Great Britain 181

Great Britain 180

Great Britain 179

Great Britain 178

Great Britain 177

Great Britain 176

Great Britain 175

Great Britain 174

Great Britain 173

Great Britain 172

Great Britain 171

Great Britain 170

Great Britain 169

Great Britain 168

Great Britain 167

Great Britain 166

Great Britain 165

Great Britain 164

Great Britain 163

Great Britain 162

Great Britain 161

Great Britain 160

Great Britain 159

Great Britain 158

Great Britain 157

Great Britain 156

Great Britain 155

Great Britain 154

Great Britain 153

Great Britain 152

Great Britain 151

Great Britain 150

Great Britain 149

Great Britain 148

Great Britain 147

Great Britain 146

Great Britain 145

Great Britain 144

Great Britain 143

Great Britain 142

Great Britain 141

Great Britain 140

Great Britain 139

Great Britain 138

Great Britain 137

Great Britain 136

Great Britain 135

Great Britain 134

Great Britain 133

Great Britain 132

Great Britain 131

Great Britain 130

Great Britain 129

Great Britain 128

Great Britain 127

Great Britain 126

Great Britain 125

Great Britain 124

Great Britain 123

Great Britain 122

Great Britain 121

Great Britain 120

Great Britain 119

Great Britain 118

Great Britain 117

Great Britain 116

Great Britain 115

Great Britain 114

Great Britain 113

Great Britain 112

Great Britain 111

Great Britain 110

Great Britain 109

Great Britain 108

Great Britain 107

Great Britain 106

Great Britain 105

Great Britain 104

Great Britain 103

Great Britain 102

Great Britain 101

Great Britain 100

Great Britain 99

Great Britain 98

Great Britain 97

Great Britain 96

Great Britain 95

Great Britain 94

Great Britain 93

Great Britain 92

Great Britain 91

Great Britain 90

Great Britain 89

Great Britain 88

Great Britain 87

Great Britain 86

Great Britain 85

Great Britain 84

Great Britain 83

Great Britain 82

Great Britain 81

Great Britain 80

Great Britain 79

Great Britain 78

Great Britain 77

Great Britain 76

Great Britain 75

Great Britain 74

Great Britain 73

Great Britain 72

Great Britain 71

Great Britain 70

Great Britain 69

Great Britain 68

Great Britain 67

Great Britain 66

Great Britain 65

Great Britain 64

Great Britain 63

Great Britain 62

Great Britain 61

Great Britain 60

Great Britain 59

Great Britain 58

Great Britain 57

Great Britain 56

Great Britain 55

Great Britain 54

Great Britain 53

Great Britain 52

Great Britain 51

Great Britain 50

Great Britain 49

Great Britain 48

Great Britain 47

Great Britain 46

Great Britain 45

Great Britain 44

Great Britain 43

Great Britain 42

Great Britain 41

Great Britain 40

Great Britain 39

Great Britain 38

Great Britain 37

Great Britain 36

Great Britain 35

Great Britain 34

Great Britain 33

Great Britain 32

Great Britain 31

Great Britain 30

Great Britain 29

Great Britain 28

Great Britain 27

Great Britain 26

Great Britain 25

Great Britain 24

Great Britain 23

Great Britain 22

Great Britain 21

Great Britain 20

Great Britain 19

Great Britain 18

Great Britain 17

Great Britain 16

Great Britain 15

Great Britain 14

Great Britain 13

Great Britain 12

Great Britain 11

Great Britain 10

Great Britain 9

Great Britain 8

Great Britain 7

Great Britain 6

Great Britain 5

Great Britain 4

Great Britain 3

Great Britain 2

Great Britain 1

Great Britain

teach or care for the young" (Kent 1970:23). Dame schools only started disappearing from the scene towards the end of the nineteenth century.

8.2.1.3 Sunday Schools

The plight of the poor children in the mines and factories deeply affected Robert Raikes (1735 - 1811), a printer and journalist from Gloucester. In 1780 he established a new type of institution for infant education which was known as the Sunday School. With the help of the local church ministers he started the first Sunday School which accommodated 90 children and four salaried teachers. On Sundays when the children were not working shifts, they were brought together and instructed. Hannah Moore (quoted in: Lawson et al. 1973:240) described the nature of the instruction as follows: "The children . . . were taught to read, to say the Church Catechism, and short Morning and Evening Prayers . . . . They are instructed in such plain religious truths as they can understand; such as will direct and fix their faith, improve their hearts, and regulate their manners". Raikes, emphasizing the early care of the child, in this way established a train of thought which spread world-wide. Similar institutions were established in the surrounding industrial cities in Lancashire and Yorkshire. The services of voluntary workers were mainly used. Touched by the power of the Sunday School movement, the Church of England and the New Conformists formed the Sunday School Union in 1803 to supervise the 7 000 Sunday Schools with their 850 000 pupils of three years of age and older.

Shortly after this Joseph Lancaster (1778 - 1838) and Andrew Bell (1752 - 1832) established the so-called Monitorial Schools in an attempt to keep the rising cost of salaried Sunday School teachers within bounds. In the Monitorial Schools younger children in groups of twenty were instructed by the older children under the supervision of a teacher. Whitbread (1972:6) describes these Monitorial Schools as "the factory system of mass production applied to instruction".

8.2.2 The contributions of a number of people to infant education

Until the earlier part of the nineteenth century the authorities showed no interest in the provision of education for the British nation. The authorities viewed education as the domain of the Anglican state church and was not prepared to interfere under any circumstances — not even to
the extent of providing financial support. In addition to this the industrialists were opposed to teaching as this would cut off their source of cheap labour (the young children). State education would deprive the church of funds and also of their control over the schools. The church again was opposed to the possible secularization of teaching.

The intervention of a few people did, however, give a new direction to infant education. The dire straits in which the working children existed also awoke the compassion of Robert Owen (1771 - 1858), co-owner of the New Lanark cotton spinning mills in Scotland. In January 1816 he established a nursery school for the factory workers' children between the ages of two to seven years. His point of view was: "Idleness, poverty, crime, punishment, are all the necessary consequences of ignorance... much good and evil is taught to and acquired by a child at a very early period of his life... much of the temper or disposition is correctly or incorrectly formed before he attains his second year; and... many durable impressions are made at the termination of the first twelve or even six months of his existence" (Raymont 1973:71). With this Owen emphasized the importance of a good environment for the moulding of the personality of the young child and the uplifting powers of education. Following on this, many other nursery schools were opened.

The first nursery school in England was established in Westminster, London and it had 150 pupils. It was established by James Buchanan (1791 - 1868), the first teacher who had been in the employ of Owen at New Lanark in Scotland. Samuel Wilderspin (1792 - 1866), much impressed by Buchanan's nursery school (in which Buchanan wrongfully presented Owen's ideas on education as his own), established a nursery school in Spitalfields in England. Many more nursery schools were soon to be opened in the other large cities in Great Britain (i.e. in England, Scotland and Wales).

With the support of Charles and Elizabeth Mayo the nursery schools were united in the Infant School Society which saw to the establishment of even more nursery schools so that there were more than 500 nursery schools in Britain by 1835. Under the auspices of the Infant School Society, Elizabeth Mayo started training teachers for the nursery schools through her Home and Colonial Society.

At this time the Kindergarten, as a further type of infant teaching institution, was introduced into Great Britain. The Kindergarten had originated in Germany between 1840 and 1850 as a result of the labours of Friedrich Wilhelm Fröbel (1782 - 1852). The Kindergarten, being more attuned to the middle classes, was initially far less readily accepted than Owen's nursery schools which served the working-classes.
8.2.3 State measures for the promotion of infant education

8.2.3.1 The Reform Act of 1832, the Factory Act of 1833 and the Committee of Council on Education of 1839

In Britain, government involvement in infant education evolved along the lines of "general discussion, followed by an official inquiry, report and more public debate" (Kent 1970:35). Notwithstanding this the progression of this involvement can only be historically-pedagogically reflected upon provided the debates, findings of commissions and legislation which formed the basis for certain decisions, are regularly highlighted. (The legislation referred to comprised general education acts of which only a few articles have any relevance for infant education.)

Public opinion, the inability of the church to create adequate educative opportunities for all children and a new attitude which condemned child-labour as an inhuman practice, left the state no other option but to become involved in education. The state's first legislative involvement commenced with the Reform Act in 1832. With this act in favour of reform the principle of state initiated education was accepted. The Factory Act of 1833 may be seen as the first step towards implementing this principle and removing children from the factories. No children younger than nine years of age could be employed by the factories and in March 1834 a state grant of £20 000 was voted for the purpose of placing those younger than nine in schools. By 1862, an amount of £80 000 had already been spent on this project and in June of that year a committee was appointed to examine infant education, amongst others matters.

State involvement in education was carried even further in 1839 with the institution of the Committee of Council on Education (renamed the Department of Education in 1964). This committee, which had been instituted mainly to supervise the expenditure of state funds which had been granted for teaching, appointed the first school inspectors for the forty-one nursery schools in existence in Britain at the time. In 1845, in his Minutes of the Committee of Council, Joseph Fletcher presented the first detailed inspector's report referring to these nursery schools (approximately half of the nursery schools) which were attached to primary schools. The other nursery schools were independent institutions under the control of teachers who had received their training at Elizabeth Mayo's Home and Colonial Society. In Fletcher's words the aim of nursery schools was "to habituate ... fluctuating minds to order and obedience, to awaken good feelings by little moral and scriptural stories, illustrated perhaps by pictures, and, above all, to promote and superintend ... amusements" (Raymont 1973:163-164).
8.2.3.2 The Newcastle Commission of 1858

On June 30, 1858 a parliamentary commission, the Newcastle Commission, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, was appointed to investigate the general state of education in Britain. In this Commission's report of 1861 appreciation was expressed for the work done in public nursery schools in respect of the instruction of the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). In terms of the findings and recommendations of the Newcastle Commission, the Revised Code appeared in 1862 (repealed only in 1897) "which introduced the administrative principle of payment by results" (Whitbread 1972:26). Subsidies would henceforth be awarded to nursery schools based on the scholastic progress made by three and four year olds as evaluated by the inspectors. This was the cause of much friction. Inspectors were seldom possessed of a sound grounding in infant education and their reports, based on a general impression, revealed no insight into the function and objectives of nursery schools. One such report, which is representative of the criticism of that time, for instance referred to "the dull gallery lessons, the meaningless object-lessons, and the poor teaching of the three R's" (Raymont 1973:244).

8.2.3.3 The progression of state involvement in infant education during the nineteenth century

In an attempt to correct the deficiencies in the provision of education, the Elementary Education Act (also known as the Forster Act) was accepted. Britain was divided into school districts, under the jurisdiction of school boards in accordance with this Act. Compulsory school attendance, which could be instituted by the school boards for children between the ages of five and thirteen years, was proposed. Very few school boards reacted to this proposal and many children were still deprived of teaching. The Education Act of 1880 made school attendance compulsory for children between the ages of five and thirteen years the aim being "to get children out of the dangerous conditions of the slum streets into some kind of institution . . . " (Chazan 1973:27). No official provision for the teaching of children younger than five years of age was made in the Education Acts of 1870 and 1880 and inspection reports proved that the progress of the institutions for infant teaching was slow and sporadic during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Valuable hints and advice were provided to nursery schools by the state from time to time, but in many instances the teachers were too incompetent to benefit from these. The authorities thus started becoming more and more concerned about the improvement of teacher training and they gave their support to teachers training colleges which had been established by the Fröbel Society since 1874.
By 1900 infant teaching was being undertaken in infant classes (as part of the primary school), in nursery schools and in Kindergartens. The emphasis was starting to shift towards the establishment of separate infant schools as mode of providing for the infant, as teachers training colleges could no longer provide in the increasing demand for teachers and because there were also too few classroom facilities for the very young in the primary schools. Up to sixty infants had to be accommodated in one class.

8.2.4 Infant education in the twentieth century

8.2.4.1 Preliminary to events during the twentieth century

In an attempt to overcome these problems, the Education Act of 1902 replaced school boards with 330 local authorities, the so-called Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The LEAs instituted stricter admission requirements for infant schools which forced a sharp drop in attendance. Many children were precluded from proper care by this move.

A more positive aspect was the important administrative changes made in respect of school inspectors at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first female inspectors were appointed in 1883 after women had been excluded from the post of inspector for a period of forty-three years (1840 - 1883). The first inspection report by the female inspectorate in 1905, expressed strong opposition to the inclusion of infant classes in primary schools. The inspectorate pointed out the "horrifying stories of little children sitting in galleries and reciting their tables one hundred times over and not being allowed to move for as long as two hours" (Chazan 1973:27). A second similar report, the Report upon the attendance of children below the age of five, was submitted by the Consultative Committee in 1908. In it the establishment of independent infant schools was proposed as an alternative, particularly for children whose circumstances at home were unsatisfactory. (This ideal was only realized in 1918.)

The poor attendance of state subsidized nursery schools and infant classes acted as a stimulus for the establishment of private infant schools where the emphasis would be mainly on health and care. The Education Act of 1907 brought about the institution of a school health service after it had been found that approximately 40% of all infants admitted to a private nursery school, were in need of medical attention. Rachel (1859 - 1917) and Margaret (1860 - 1931) Macmillan established their first open-air infant school in Deptford in 1914. There was much emphasis on proper care, hygiene, exercise and fresh air. With the promulgation of the Education Act of 1918 (in the acceptance of which the Oxford historian, H.A.L. Fischer had a major share) official approval
was granted for the establishment of independent infant schools for children between two and five years of age. For children below two years of age they recommended family care, while three to five year olds could be accommodated in infant classes.

8.2.4.2 The Education Act of 1918

"The year 1918 will stand out in the history of Education with even greater lustre than the year 1870. The Forster Bill (1870) decreed that sooner or later, every child should learn the three R's. Mr. Fisher's Bill (1918) decreed that every child shall, sooner or later, have nurture as well as teaching" (Kent 1970: 31). To conduct the education of infants it was determined that state subsidized infant schools would in future be subsidized by the LEAs with the reservation that inspectors of the Board of Education were to determine the standards for infant schools. To realize the idea of care it was stipulated that the Ministry of Health would in future be responsible for the control of health conditions in private infant schools.

In 1925 the following supplementary regulations with reference to infant schools were proclaimed: infant schools would be established in areas where the social need was most urgent — as proposed in 1908; in an attempt to stimulate attendance the admission would be lowered to two years of age; essential health services such as the provision of meals, medical services and so forth, would be implemented and the number of children would only in exceptional cases be allowed to exceed 40. The economic depression prevented the immediate implementation of the regulations. In 1933 the chairman of the Board of Education, Professor Hadow was approached to examine the entire spectrum of infant education anew. No government resolutions were, however, passed following his report.

8.2.4.3 The Education Act of 1944

The Second World War gave new impetus to infant education. To circumvent the discrepancies in the state provision of facilities for infant education, the local health services instituted day schools (day care centres) for the children of working mothers. At the end of the war there were already more than 1 431 day schools which cared for 68 000 children.

Inspired by the success of day schools, the Education Act of 1944 (accepted under the guidance of R.A. Butler) determined that the Local Education Authorities had to ensure that "provision is made for pupils who have not attained the age of five years by the provision of nursery schools, or alternatively of nursery classes attached to infant schools" (Pedley 1964:6). Putting this legislation into practice unfortunately only remained an ideal.
The "baby boom" (Swift 1984:81) of the post-war years forced state provision of infant education to a virtually complete halt. All available facilities were needed to accommodate children of compulsory school-going age. In an official circular in 1960 the Minister of Education cancelled all further extension to infant education. To escape from the stifling effect of this decision, private organizations started to provide in the need for infant education themselves. Private organizations such as the Pre-school Playgroups Association, the National Campaign for Nursery Education and the Association for Multi-racial Playgroups were created. By 1966 there were already more than 200,000 three- and four-year-olds in 600 playgroups. These, in conjunction with approximately thirty other organizations under the leadership of Professor Simon Yudkin, successfully agitated in A report on the care of pre-school children for more and better provision of infant teaching than was being provided by the playgroups.

8.2.4.4 The Plowden Report of 1967

In 1967 the state reacted to the public pressure which had been brought to bear and appointed Lady Bridget Plowden as chairlady of the Plowden Commission. The recommendations eventually put forth by her were strongly supportive of the Hadow Report of 1933, and contained the following directive recommendations. As the state was providing approximately 16% of all infant education, with the largest concentration being in London, Plowden recommended that "areas of particular deprivation should be singled out as 'education priority areas' (EPAs) and . . . extra resources should be allocated to improve the provision of nursery schools in these areas" (Kent 1970:72). The sizes of classes were to be reduced to 30 children per class and there was to be only one admission date per year - for five year olds who wished to attend nursery schools. Nursery schools were to be renamed First Schools and children would be able to attend these schools for three instead of two years. The White Paper of 1972 further extended these recommendations and thus infant education eventually became viable (Marriott 1985:19).

The structure of the authority in Britain which is currently responsible for matters concerning infant education is as follows:

- **Department of Education and Science (DES)**
  - Infant schools
  - Infant classes attached to primary schools
- **Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS)**
  - Private infant schools
  - Day schools
238 Steps by governments to promote infant education

- **Local Educational Authorities (LEA)**
  - Registers premises for private playgroups
  - Registers day-mothers caring for eight or more infants.

The above authorities recently formed a brains trust (*Central Policy Review Staff*) by means of which an attempt is being made to supply added momentum to infant education in Great Britain. The emphasis is in particular on co-ordinating the functions of the various bodies of control for the benefit of infant education in general.

### 8.3 Europe

It has for many years been erroneously assumed that extensive provision for infant education was made by the member countries of the European community. The first positive steps of the European community which were truly intended to improve infant education, however, can be traced back to the very recent past. In 1971 the *Council of Europe* launched a project aimed at laying down general guidelines concerning infant education for the various member countries. "The project began at a time when, with a few notable exceptions, pre-school education was not well established in member states and yet there was a big demand for it, far in excess of available provisions" (Woodhead 1979:1).

A conference on infant education, which was a continuation of the *Council of Europe* project, was held in Paris during 1973. The following questions were identified as the focal point of the conference (OECD 1977:7-8):

- What is the justification, either for or against, infant teaching?
- If compulsory infant teaching is rejected, on what basis should it be provided?
- Should it be provided on a full-time or part-time basis?
- If infant teaching is not to be compulsory, how is equilibrium to be achieved between its supply and demand?

Five member countries, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, the German Federal Republic and Finland, were co-opted during this conference to investigate these matters and in 1977 Switzerland also joined their ranks. Without paying attention to the over-all policy for infant education in Europe as a whole, only a few European countries will now be selected to serve as examples of the process of development of infant education.
8.3.1 The Netherlands

The Period of Reform (31 October 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg, until the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648) remains one of the problematic periods to assess impartially. The Catholic Church views this period as the time of the Protestant revolt and the schism of the church while the Protestants describe it as the period of reformation. One fact which cannot be disputed is that this heralded the end of the unity of Christianity and the start of a brand new dispensation for Western man. Of the most important immediate results of the Reformation were the series of religious wars and the struggle for religious freedom and equality which were rife in Europe between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. The reluctance of the government of the Netherlands to become involved in the education of infants, must be viewed against the background of this religious dispute between Catholics and Protestants.

8.3.1.1 The origins and establishment of infant education

(a) The "Begijnhof"

It is difficult to ascertain exactly when and how infant teaching was established in the Netherlands. There is fairly generally consensus that the "Begijnhof" was the first institution to undertake infant education. According to Nijkamp (1970:15) data concerning this institution can be traced as far back as the thirteenth century with the establishment of a "Begijnhof" in 1240 with the aim of providing young children with religious instruction.

The teachers in these beginners' schools were known as "Begijntjes". They were religious women who initially lived spread out all over a city (or cities) and only congregated for the purpose of religious practice. Each later went to live in a "Begijnhof" (each in her own little home) where the daily routine consisted of exercise, meditation, handicrafts, weaving, spinning and the education of children — mainly girls between the ages of 1-10 years.

(b) The "Klopjeschool"("Cloppen")

The term "Klopje" refers to pious women who devoted themselves to religion, meditation and the teaching of boys in "Klopjeschole". Boys from the more affluent families ("de deftichste burgerkinderen" — Wellinga 1964:29) attended these schools. The "Klopjescholen" also admitted older boys, much to the chagrin of private tutors who were thereby de-
prived of their income. During the fifteenth century legislation was passed in Dordrecht and Amsterdam which prohibited "Begijnschule" and "Klopjeschule" from admitting boys older than seven years. They were required to attend the "Groote-" or "Nieuwe Schole".

(c) The 'Matressenschool'

The education of girls received scant attention from the state. Initially this situation was solved satisfactorily. Women known as "matresse", who felt they had a calling, took compassion on the girls and established "matres" schools to cater for their education. Some of these "matresse" exercised a most admirable influence on their charges.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a change in the character of these schools gradually began to manifest itself. The place of the "matresse" who had given their services to the education of the girls for the love of the cause, was slowly being taken over by "matresse" who were being remunerated for their services. The latter were usually more elderly women and no qualification or competence was demanded of them. Neither control nor supervision was exercised by the state. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the "matresse" were totally illiterate and had to substitute a cross for their signature. If a "matresse" was actually able to read, the reading matter was limited to the Bible and the "Haneboek" (an ABC book dating from the year 1650). Children were instructed in dark, damp, dirty cellars which gave rise to their often being described in the past as dens of human suffering (Stoll 1963:269).

Both parents and the state closed their eyes to this and permitted these conditions to continue. As long as the "matresse" paid attention to religious instruction it was believed that the child would develop into a virtuous, good person. Even more incomprehensible is the fact that the opinions and books on education of eminent educationalists of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (for instance, John Amos Comenius (1592 - 167), John Locke (1637 - 1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1798)) would appear to have had no effect on the parents or the authorities. "Matresse" schools spread throughout Europe and were in existence until far into the nineteenth century.

(d) The "Bewaarscholen" (Nursery Schools)

During the nineteenth century a different type of school for infant teaching came into being in Belgium and later also in the Netherlands, namely the nursery school. Although these nursery schools never received legal sanction from the authorities, they played an important role in the history of the development of infant education. Nursery schools were in
the main philanthropic institutions for children from the poorer classes who were often neglected by their parents.

The first nursery school was founded in Brussels by the Dutch "Maatschappij tot Nut van't Algemeen". Other cities soon followed suit. The proliferation of nursery schools was, however, forced to a halt by the religious battle which had been raging in the Netherlands since 1853.

8.3.1.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education

The increasing pressure brought to bear by Protestant parents forced the authorities to intervene for the sake of infant education at the start of the nineteenth century. In 1806 a law was passed which placed the existing "matres" schools as well as the establishment of new "matresse" schools under the supervision and control of inspectors. From that time a certificate known as an "acte van algemeene toelating" (Nijkamp 1970:47) was demanded of prospective teachers. This certificate could be obtained by passing an examination in reading and writing. The large number of illiterate "matresse" forced the authorities to adopt transitional measures to prevent a shortage of "matresse" from developing, which would have meant that vast numbers of children would have been deprived of care. A compromise was therefore reached by permitting local school committees or school inspectors to issue temporary certificates. This measure by the authorities was, however, doomed to failure, owing to the fact that neither the school committees nor the local authorities were even aware of the existence of many of these "matresse" schools.

An investigation of the conditions in "matresse" schools was undertaken in 1821, on behalf of the school committee, by a certain H. Mulder who was a school principal in s'Gravenhage. His report on the conditions in these school was not very favourable. In 1823 H.W.C.A. Visser published a "Handleiding voor Houderesse van kleine Kinderscholen" (Manual for people in charge of infant schools) in which he endeavoured once again to bring the desperate teaching conditions in the "matresse" schools to the attention of the authorities. It was, however, to take a considerable length of time before the authorities took a serious view of these adverse findings. What did happen was that the responsibility for these schools was shifted onto the provincial administrations and local school committees in order to cut down on the spending of state funds.

With reference to infant education in general, it appears that the authorities tried until about 1857, with very little success, to exercise control over the children's age of admission to "matresse" schools and nursery schools, the competence and suitability of teachers, curricula and so forth by means of regulations, decrees and instructions. By means of legislation Minister Van Rappard was instrumental in having all state
involvement in infant education abolished from 1857 onwards. One condition was, however, retained namely that no teaching would be permitted to take place in premises which had not been approved by either a provincial or local authority. Despite this it was impossible to prevent infant schools from being conducted in storerooms and backyards.

In 1881 the school committees of Northern Brabant, Limburg, Friesland, Groningen, Overijsel, Drente, Gelderland and Utrecht requested the state to assume control over infant education again, but to no avail.

8.3.1.3 Infant education in the twentieth century

1920 saw the first appointment of a Minister of Education, a Dr J. Th. de Visser, in the Netherlands. In his Wetsontwerp tot regeling van het voorbereidend onderwijs (Legislation for the regulation of preparatory education) of 1921 he attempted to once again place infant education under legal jurisdiction. In 1923 he succeeded in amending the primary education act of 1920 accordingly.

After the Second World War (1939-1945) serious attention was given to infant education. With the promulgation of the Education Act of 1955, infant education in the Netherlands was firmly established.

Following the promulgation of this Act on 1 January 1956 the following system of infant education came into force in the Netherlands:

- pre-school instruction is not compulsory;
- the age of admission to infant schools is four years of age and the child has to leave this school at the age of seven unless a medical examination confirms that he is not yet ready to attend the normal classes of the ordinary primary school (in this case the child was permitted to remain there until his eighth year);
- the maximum pupil teacher ratio is 40:1;
- to be appointed as infant school teacher, a post-school teaching certificate is demanded of the candidate;
- there are public as well as private institutions for the training of teachers of infants;
- to be admitted to these institutions the candidate is required to have received the training prescribed by law or have passed an admission examination;
- training courses last two or three years, depending on whether the candidate wishes to become an infant school teacher or the principal of an infant school;
- teaching in condemned premises is prohibited; and
- a teacher who is guilty of improper conduct may be dismissed.
In the Netherlands the latest trend is for all infant education to be under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education, whether in public (provided by local authorities) or in private infant schools (provided by Protestant – 3%, Roman Catholic – 35% or neutral organizations). Under the Minister there are two chief inspectors and twenty-eight inspectors in a supervisory capacity. The possibility of lowering the age of admission to infant schools to three years of age is at present being investigated by the authorities.

All nursery schools in the Netherlands are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Social Welfare, while their administration is the responsibility of the local authorities. In co-operation with the inspectors they appoint teachers and ensure that the number of pupils per teacher does not exceed thirty-eight.

A relatively new trend in the Netherlands is the development of playgroups for infants of two and three years old. These play groups were initiated by the middle class mothers. Playgroups are not controlled by legislation, but they do receive financial support from local authorities. Most of these playgroups are affiliated to a national organization, the "Werkgemeenschap Kindercentra".

8.3.2 France

Ever since the French Revolution (1789 - 1795) the successive Governments have not been able to escape the slogan "liberty, equality and fraternity". Propagandistic involvement should not be read into this, but rather an involvement of the state which has been to the benefit of education in general. Infant education in particular has benefited from this to the extent that it was placed at the forefront of developments in Europe.

8.3.2.1 The origins and establishment of infant education

The origins of infant education in France are closely connected to Jean Frédéric Oberlin (1740 - 1826), who was called to the post of minister in the Lutheran congregation at Walbach in the district of Banc-de-la-Roche (the German Steinthal), on the border of the French province of Alsace-Lorraine. During his pastoral visiting, Oberlin met Sara Benzet, a twenty-three year old farm girl, who on her own initiative had started teaching infants to knit.

Oberlin immediately recognized Sara's potential. In 1770, with the permission of her parents, he hired a room and placed children in her care who had been exposed to all manner of dangers or who had already fallen into the undesirable habit of idleness and vice because their parents were at work. This then was how the first infant school (salle d'asile) in France came to be established.
With the co-operation of his wife Oberlin also started training kind, affectionate women as nursery school teachers (conductrices) and established another type of infant school which was called the knitting school (école à tricoter). The task of the teachers was to teach the younger children to speak proper French and at the same time to teach the older children to spin, knit and sing (Erning 1976:11). The basic principles of geography, general Bible History and religious instruction also received attention. Everything had to be presented visually and during the breaks they were under supervision to ensure that they did not get up to mischief or injure themselves.

In an article published in a French magazine in 1824, Oberlin gave an exposition of his activities. Inspired by the success achieved by Oberlin, the Marquise de Pastoret started her infant school for the care of infants (école pour petits enfants). This proved a timely relief for mothers who had been forced to join the labour market owing to economic conditions and the industrial development in France during the nineteenth century. Quite independently the mayor of a commune on the outskirts of Paris, Jean-Denys Cochin, also became involved in infant education.

The early death of his wife orphaned his two infants. The influential Cochin employed the Marquise Madame de Pastoret to care for his children. The entire matter of infant education was of so much importance to Cochin that he even undertook journeys to England to determine what the latest developments in infant education there comprised. On his initiative and recommendations the provision of infant education became a municipal matter in Paris. Other French communes and cities were soon to follow suit.

**8.3.2.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education**

The first education act was promulgated in France in 1833, leading to the official closing of all institutions for infant teaching. The Minister contended that infants were not only cared for but were wrongly also being taught. Subsequently a more competent successor realized that such a drastic step had not been necessary and recommended to the authorities that the infant schools (salles d’asile) which had originally been established by Sara Benzet, be taken over as part of the national system of education. An Ordinance of 1837 enlarged upon this decision and recommended that an inspectorate of women, comprised of the teachers of existing infant schools, should be appointed to supervise the administration of these schools. They could at the same time assist in the training of prospective teachers for infant schools. The establishment of new infant schools was also highly recommended. State subsidies became available to approved infant schools from 1840.
The regulations governing infant education which are still in effect in France at present, originated during the time of the Third Republic (1875 - 1940). Legislation, approved in 1881 under the guidance of Jules Ferry, based infant education on the slogan "free, compulsory and secular" (Austin 1976:194). In 1882 school attendance became compulsory for children aged between six and thirteen years. In accordance with legislation on 30 October 1886 and a constitutional decree on 18 January 1887, nursery schools (écoles maternelles) replaced infant schools (salles d'asile) as a component of primary education (Moody 1978:99).

The untiring diligence of Pauline Kergomard (1838 - 1925) was chiefly responsible for the French infant schools being acclaimed as the leaders in the educational reformation movement. As chief inspector (inspectrice générale) (1879 - 1917), she considered that freedom to play was essential for the small child. She was adamantly opposed to instructing children younger than six in the three R's. Under her guidance the aim of the nursery school (école maternelle) was to create a situation in which the child could feel secure and in which he could optimally realize his personal and social relationships. Teachers were also expected to stimulate the child's inquisitiveness and desire to learn. Yet she wrote in 1907, "France has failed to realize the possibilities of the écoles maternelles and . . . this failure was due to inadequate training of teachers for these schools" (Forest 1972: 104). The training of teachers for infant education had been conducted in a haphazard fashion for many decades.

8.3.2.3 Infant education in the twentieth century

Since 1920 until after the Second World War (1939 - 1945) the functions of the nursery schools (écoles maternelles) had not changed much. "Their functions were primarily protective, secondarily educative and they continued to fill important social needs, especially for the poor" (Austin 1976:178). The 1887 decree was altered on 15 July 1921 and again on 11 February 1928 to make provision for such matters as the establishment of schools, the compiling of a uniform curriculum and teacher training for infant education. The curriculum for children under five years of age included playing, drawing, singing, music, handicrafts and general knowledge. Children over five were to be instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic. To ensure the meaningful functioning of the curriculum, children in infant schools were divided into three age groups, namely:

- the petite for children between two and four years;
- the moyenne for children from four to five years; and
- the grande for children of five to six years.
Over and above the nursery schools (écoles maternelles) there have also been infant classes (classes enfantines) and the children's garden (jardin d'enfants) since 1928 (Trouillet 1972:81). The improvement of teacher training for infant education also received particular attention.

Nursery schools (écoles maternelles) (under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education) were established in communes or towns of which the population exceeded 2 000 inhabitants. The financial burden was borne jointly by the state and the communes. In communes with a smaller population infant classes (classes enfantines) (under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health) were established as part of the primary schools. As many of the communes which had a high enough population figure to qualify, neglected to establish infant schools, an official circular was sent out on 10 November 1931, emphasizing the importance of independent infant schools. This brought about a particularly favourable reaction. During 1963/64 at least 1 million 359 thousand children were receiving education for small children; 75% in nursery schools and 25% in nursery classes. At present there are approximately 16 000 infant schools and infant classes in existence in France and these numbers are increasing steadily. This increase can be attributed, amongst others, to rising state financial aid. In 1958, for instance, the education budget was F4,5 milliard as opposed to F26 milliard in 1970. This represents an increase of 7.6% over a period of twelve years (Austin 1976:195).

The original aim of infant education in France was to care for the children of working parents. The demand for infant education has by now become so widespread that at present 90% of all three-year-olds and practically all four- and five-year-olds are receiving infant education. These overwhelming figures imply that school attendance in France actually starts at the age of four and not at six years of age (which is the official compulsory school attendance age). The duration of the school day is from 08h30 until 16h30, and thereafter the children of working parents are cared for by auxiliary staff until they are fetched from the school.

The Minister of Education is in charge of infant education in France and he is assisted by five chief inspectors (inspectrices générales) who are responsible for matters concerning the teaching of infants in nursery schools (écoles maternelles). A team of 24 regional heads (recteurs) who head 23 education regions (rectorates) are in authority over the academic inspectors (inspecteurs d’académie) who are responsible for the day-to-day decision-making concerning the nursery schools (écoles maternelles) in their regions. The latter inspectors, in turn, are in authority over 150 departmental inspectors (inspecteurs départementaux) who are responsible for supervising the head (directrice) of the nursery school as well as the teachers, and performing the task of a school inspector. Much attention is at present being given to enlarging the teaching body in order to
keep pace with the growing number of pupils in nursery schools. Infant classes \( \textit{classes enfantines} \) fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health and are not controlled by the above-mentioned inspectors.

The only private institutions for infant education are the day-schools \( \textit{les crèches} \) and Kindergartens \( \textit{jardins d'enfants} \). Woodhead (1979:5) very aptly described infant education in France as a "unified, centrally planned, professional pre-school education, with little private provision and few voluntary groups running services". Day-schools \( \textit{les crèches} \) which mainly accommodate one- and two-year-olds are provided at a cost. Kindergartens \( \textit{jardins d'enfants} \) are under the control of individuals and private organizations.

8.3.3 Germany

In Germany lasting state unity was virtually unknown. Since the Middle Ages the German territory has been divided into a number of states, some of them even very small states, each of which existed separately and independently under the control of its own government.

On a few occasions in its history (for instance just prior to the Second World War when the so-called Third German Reich was established) these states were combined into a unified state, but this unity was never of a particularly lasting nature. The German "Bundesrepublik" (that is, Western Germany) which was created after the Second World War (in 1949) from the American, English and French occupation zones in the western part of the former Third German Reich, has since 1955 been divided into eleven smaller states or \textit{Länder}. This constituted a continuation of the division of Germany. Against this background a brief overview will be given of the development of infant education in Germany as a whole – without necessarily referring to any state in particular.

8.3.3.1 The origins and establishment of infant education

The origin of infant education in Germany can be attributed to a letter which Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) addressed to the German rulers in 1524. In this he set forth a plea for the provision of infant schools and also drew parents' attention to their duty to send their children to such schools. Luther contended that in order to master the contents of the Bible the child had to learn to read as early as possible. Wars and poor socio-economic conditions which reigned were the reasons why this ideal of Luther's could not be fulfilled for nearly three centuries.

Touched by the poor social conditions and poverty of her time, the widow Pauline van Detmold (1769 - 1820) started running an infirmary, orphanage, and care centre \( \textit{Aufbewahrungsanstalt} \) in 1802. Neglected
babies and infants up to the age of four years were cared for in this care centre. During the summer months the children of women who worked in the fields were also admitted. The next care centre, the Verwahrschule, was established by Friedrich Wadzek in 1819. This centre also undertook the care of homeless waifs. Wadzek did not merely want to care for these children, but also wanted to cater for their psychic and physical needs. Towards these ends he established his teachers college for the training of care centre teachers (Pflanzschule für Kinderwärterinnen) in which young women were trained for this task.

Germany, in the same way as the rest of Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, was not only a war-torn country, but it also found itself in the middle of the Industrial Revolution. Neglected children and orphans were everywhere. Once again the task of taking compassion on these children was undertaken by individuals, women’s organizations and eventually the church. In 1830 a start was made at establishing care centres (Kleinkinderbewahranstalten) to keep these children, who had actually grown "wild", off the streets.

(a) The 'Kleinkinderbewahranstalten''

The success which Samuel Wilderspin (1792 - 1866) had had with his care centres in Great Britain was particularly instrumental in establishing similar care centres in Germany. The Prussian authorities (Prussia being the largest and most important German state) had also seriously started to bring about a change in the reigning evil of child neglect. Joseph Wertheimer was instructed in 1826 to translate the famous work by Wilderspin, *Infant Poor* (1823), into German and every local authority was provided with a copy of this translation. Care centres based on the lines of the Wilderspin schools had to be established in every district. Wise elderly ladies, virtuous widows and young women of character were allowed to serve as child-minders.

Further directives were formulated by the state of Bavaria in 1839. Care centres (Kleinkinderbewahranstalten) had to be care establishments and not schools; child-minders, who were not required to have any qualifications, were not entitled to be called teachers – their most important task was to give voluntary and friendly service towards the upliftment of these neglected children from their wretchedness; children between the ages of three and six from the middle and lower classes of the population were to be cared for in these establishments, away from the pernicious influences of their environment.

The churches now also started establishing care centres. In 1824 and 1832 the preacher Theodor Fliedner (1800 - 1864) journeyed to Great Britain to study Wilderspin’s care centres and their development. Upon his return he persuaded the women in his parish to assist in the estab-
lishment of care centres (Kleinkinderbewahranstalten). By 1845 there were altogether twenty-nine such care centres, attended by 3,695 children between the ages of two to six years.

(b) The "Kleinkinderschulen"

More and more the opinion was voiced that infant education should become a matter for the state. With the support of the authorities Fliedner established the first infant school (Kleinkinderschule) for the children of the middle and higher classes in Düsseldorf in 1835. A teacher would educate and teach the children according to a set daily programme. A teachers training college, where teachers could be trained for these schools, was also founded in 1838. The demand for teachers grew when many of the German nobility, who had become dissatisfied with the services of governesses, started sending their children to infant schools (Kleinkinderschulen).

(c) The "Kindergärten"

The first Kindergarten accommodating twenty-four children between the ages of two and five, was established by Friedrich Wilhelm Frobel in Blankenburg in 1837. The children were kept busy with many games, and the singing of songs. Frobel believed that the Kindergarten should not be a school in the true sense of the word, but that the child should develop in freedom, although under the supervision and guidance of a teacher. If it were at all possible the children were to be outside where they could play in the sand, use small spades and rakes and observe plants and flowers.

The establishment of more Kindergartens enjoyed state support and financial subsidies. In 1851 this support was suddenly terminated when all Kindergartens were closed down by the Prussian government. Frobel had been erroneously confused with his cousin Karl Frobel, a revolutionary propagandist involved in the 1848 insurrection, and until the day of his death in 1852 Frobel was unable to prove his innocence or to effect the re-opening of the Kindergartens. Only after 1861 were Kindergartens reinstated and then they were run mainly by ecclesiastic organizations.

(d) The "Volkskindergärten"

The founding of factories and industries created a demand for labourers. The increase in their numbers became a lever to force the authorities to supply equal opportunities for education to all children. Private organizations such as the Frobel Society (Frobelverein) (founded in 1866),
sent petitions to the authorities requesting that attention be given to the call of the working classes to recognize infant education in particular as an essential part of education in general. Women's organizations, in conjunction with the working classes, were beginning to campaign for the improvement of the image of care centres (Kleinkinderbewahranstalten) to ensure that the children in these centres would receive not merely care but also infant teaching. In order to free care centres from their purely caring function, they were renamed National Kindergartens (Volkskindergärten). The first four National Kindergartens and a teachers college for the training of Kindergarten teachers were established by Henriette Goldschmidt in 1871.

8.3.3.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education

On 19 September 1877 all institutions for the education of infants were placed under government "supervision". This implied that no further institutions could be established without the approval of the authorities. Inspectors were to visit existing institutions to ensure that no misdeanors were perpetrated which might adversely affect the child.

The first inspector's report concerning these institutions was submitted on 31 May 1884. This brought to light that the stipulated requirements in respect of adequate space for the children, had not been complied with. The prescribed space was also utilized by the teachers as livingrooms, sleeping quarters and work rooms! The furnishing was also impractical for use by small children. Reacting to this report the authorities prohibited all the above misuses. A further report was tabled on 13 November 1884 and this time positive reference was made to the uplifting work which had been done in the institutions for infant education since the time of the previous report.

The demand for well-qualified teachers in infant education became more and more urgent. In 1891 Henriette Goldschmidt, on behalf of the Society for Family and National Education (Verein für Familien- und Volkserziehung) addressed a petition to the authorities in which she requested that all institutions for infant education as well as teachers training colleges should be taken over by the state; that legislation for education should regulate the supply and demand for teachers; that Kindergartens should become part of primary schools (Volkschule) and that standards for teachers' examinations should be determined by the authorities. The reactions of the governments of most of the German states to this petition were negative and they pointed out that it was a parental duty to care for the young child.

In 1895 the majority of women's organizations united to form the Association of German Women's Societies (Bund deutscher Frauenvereine). Acting on their own initiative they endeavoured to ensure better training
for teachers in infant education. The one year course for Kindergarten teachers was recognized by the authorities in 1908. In 1928 the training period was extended to two years and since 1946 the duration of the course is three years. The profession of Kindergarten teacher also gained recognition as a fully-fledged profession. In 1960 all teachers training colleges were united in the National Socialist Welfare Movement (National sozialistischen Volkswohlfahrt).

8.3.3.3 Infant education in the twentieth century

The first committee concerned with the planning of infant education, the German Committee for Education and Culture (Deutscher Ausschuss für das Erziehungs- und Bildungswesen), was instituted in 1953. In a report released in 1957, the importance of infant education was emphatically emphasized, yet progress was hampered by the demands made on the German authorities in the rehabilitation of Germany after the war. A committee known as The German Development Board (Deutscher Bildungsrat) again reiterated the importance of expanding infant education, once again without success.

In West Germany, infant education is even now not legally recognized as part of the system of education. The Ministry of Education of the various states (Länder) also have no jurisdiction over infant education. Infant education is provided in the main by the School Representatives or School Supporters (Schulträger), consisting of local management such as municipalities, church institutions and charity organizations, industrial and commercial bodies (70%) and a few individuals. Kindergartens which are financed by local or charity organizations, receive a subsidy from the states (Länder) or local bodies of control. Infant education resorts under the jurisdiction of the Department of Youth Affairs (Landsjugendämter) and is seen as a social affair.

Since 1957 a distinction has been made between the Kindergarten for children under six years of age and the school Kindergarten (Schulkindergarten) for children of compulsory school attendance age. Kindergartens are in the main independent institutions and not connected with primary schools (Grundschule). Some of the Kindergartens are part of the community homes (Nachbarschaftshäuser) while others are part of school hostel institutions (Kindertagesheime) for three and four year olds.

More and more women are entering the labour market. This fact, in conjunction with the realization that group activities for three- to four-year-olds result in a higher degree of school readiness, have changed the views of the authorities on infant education. The central government as well as the governments of the different states (Länder) have a growing interest in the provision and maintenance of these institutions. Im-
proved training for the teachers in infant education is also receiving attention. A better approach is also being implemented in order to establish a firm foundation for primary school teaching.

Attending a Kindergarten is not free and parents pay approximately 50-69% of the costs.

8.4 The United States of America

The history of the USA starts in 1783 when Great Britain recognized the independence of its thirteen colonies on the east coast of North America. Four years later four of these colonies united into a federation with the separate states retaining considerable power under the autonomy of the central or federal government. Following the principle of expansionism, the USA in time expanded until it reached its present composition.

Free public education is provided in every state of the USA. Although three different programmes of education are in existence in the 50 states, infant education retains its very high priority in the national economy and a number of co-ordinated attempts are being made to improve it.

8.4.1 The establishment of infant education

Three phases dominated the progression of infant education in the USA:

- The first phase was characterized by the expectation that teaching the small child would lead to social reform. The methods typically employed by social workers were also "imported" into the schools, so for instance the teachers paid regular visits to the parental homes, medical services were provided and meetings were held.

- The second phase came about as a result of a growing awareness of the unique and formative nature of the first few years of life. This matter was seen as particularly relevant during the 1920s.

- The third phase focused on the impact of infant education on education in general. Existing teaching practices were criticized and attempts at reform were the order of the day.

These three phases occurred in the USA in each of the two main streams of infant education, namely the Kindergarten movement and the infant school movement. For the sake of clarity the development of these two movements will be discussed separately.
The first public Kindergarten in the USA was established in Boston in 1816, but closed down very shortly afterwards. In 1855 Margarethe Schurz established a German language Kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin. Schurz was an immigrant refugee from Germany and had been a pupil of Fröbel. During a visit to Boston, Massachusetts, she met Elizabeth Peabody (1904 - 1894). Impressed by the initiative shown by Schurz, Peabody established a Fröbelian Kindergarten in Boston in 1860 – the first for English-speaking children in the USA. Although the first Kindergartens were not state aided, they did enjoy the support of churches and philanthropic organizations.

After the pioneering work done by Peabody, Fröbelian Kindergartens were also established in other cities. The flood of immigrants which reached the USA from war-torn Europe also had an effect on the Kindergarten movement. The immigrants had difficulty in assimilating and were loathe to accept the American standards of living. Social problems resulting from this state of affairs were rife. "Slums were in process of formation. They became sources of disease, crime, delinquency and industrial disorders, breeding centres of problems which America was unprepared to meet" (Braun et al. 1972:74). Infant education became the hope of the community in their attempts to bring about reform. Numerous Kindergartens were established by philanthropic societies and teachers started their task of reform under the most appalling conditions. "No neighbourhood was too criminal, no family too degenerate, no child too bad" (Braun et al. 1972:75). Inadequate funds to appoint social workers forced teachers to undertake this service as well. During the mornings they cared for the neglected children and in the afternoons they served as social workers. "They understood the child to be not only a pupil, but a member of a family and a community" (McCarthy et al. 1980:10). Their point of departure was that if the child was in need of help, the family was in even greater need. The early Kindergartens thus made a particular contribution to the welfare of both the poverty stricken family and the small child.

The popularity of the Kindergarten in the United States increased after the Civil War (1861 - 1865). Initially these institutions were established privately; in time, however, philanthropic societies developed in the larger centres and they propagated the idea further. An exhibition of Kindergarten material during the Centenary Exhibition in Philadelphia gave added momentum to this movement.

As a result of a shortage of funds the philanthropic societies were soon unable to provide in the growing demand for Kindergartens. Repeated requests were made to the authorities to implement Kindergartens as the basis for the public system of education. Eventually the
authorities pledged their support for Kindergartens and in 1870 they were officially incorporated in the system of education.

Incorporating the Kindergartens into the system of education was a slow process. Initially empty classrooms in primary schools were used and the social work which was normally done in the afternoons went by the board. To cut down on the expenditure and involve more children, a system with two sessions per day was instituted. The primary school teachers also viewed the Kindergarten with a fair amount of suspicion as they felt that the play activities of the Kindergarten were poor preparation for the more formal activities of the primary school. In time matters improved and the suspicion in which Kindergartens were held, gradually disappeared.

The city of St. Louis, Missouri, is given credit as being the first city to establish (in 1873) a permanent Kindergarten, and here Susan Blow (1843 - 1916) became one of the most prominent Kindergarten educators. She was given valuable guidance in this respect by William T. Harris (1835 - 1909), Superintendent of Education in St. Louis, who later also became the Commissioner for Education of the USA. Thirty years after the establishment of this school in St. Louis, there were approximately 200 000 children attending 3 000 public Kindergartens in the USA and there were also 1 500 private Kindergartens.

Infant education gradually achieved professional status. In 1884 the National Education Association (founded in 1874), established its own Kindergarten Department. By 1915 there were three country-wide organizations concerned with infant education in existence: the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), the National Congress of Mothers and the National Kindergarten Association. The IKU, which was established in 1892, consisted of teachers, principals of Kindergartens and inspectors. In 1918 it already had a membership of 18 000.

Two schools of thought concerning Kindergartens developed in the USA after the turn of the century. The one school was orthodox (more structured) and favoured Susan Blow's Fröbelian approach. The other was heterodox (less structured) and adhered to the Kindergarten principle as set out by Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946) and Alice Temple (1866 - 1949). These two ladies were strongly influenced by the education philosophy of John Dewey (1859 - 1952) and the psychological approach of G. Stanley Hall (1846 - 1924) and Edward L. Thorndike (1874 - 1949). Both groups emphasized two principles in particular, namely the principles of activity and freedom – principles which dominated the American Kindergarten of the twentieth century (Evans 1971:5).

8.4.1.2 The infant school

The available information indicates that the infant school movement in the USA got underway in 1915 when Eva Maclin opened the first Mon-
At that time a number of prominent psychologists and medical men were beginning to make a study of the importance of the pre-school years. In particular the research by Arnold Gesell (1880 - 1961), whom Osborn described as "one of the prime movers in the early childhood education movement" (1980:120), illustrated the unique formative possibilities of the first years of life. The universities of Yale (to which Gesell was attached) and Iowa established psychology clinics to study the pre-school child and to provide treatment for the deviant children in this age group. These clinics provided strong impetus for the infant school movement. A number of universities and colleges began organizing laboratories or experimental infant schools. By 1928 there were already 89 of these institutions of which only 17 were attached to primary schools.

1922 saw the establishment by Edna Noble White of a training infant school where prospective teachers could work and receive training. In the same year Abigail Elliot, a social worker, opened her Ruggles Street Nursery School in Boston. The influence of the Macmillan sisters of Great Britain, where Elliot had worked for a considerable time, led to Elliot’s particular emphasis on the teacher-parent and teacher-child relationships. In 1925 Patty Hill and twenty-five other pioneers established the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Infant schools in this way became an integral part of infant education. By 1930 there were approximately 300 private and laboratory infant schools in existence.

The depression of the 1930s also made its influence felt in infant education. In 1933 the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) was created to cater for the needs of the unemployed. The authorities placed some of the unemployed in charge of emergency infant schools for the children of indigent and unemployed parents. By 1934/35 75 000 children were already cared for in 1 900 emergency infant schools. The Work Progress Administration (WPA) was established by President Franklin Roosevelt in May 1935 to take over the activities of the FERA. This meant that infant schools were placed under directly federal control. By 1937 the number of infant schools had increased to such an extent that the name 'emergency infant school' was replaced with WPA infant schools (Hodess 1983:22).

Further growth in the infant school movement can be attributed to the Second World War (1939 - 1945). A large number of women left their homes to contribute their services to the war effort. Even more infant schools became necessary for these women's children between two and five years old. In 1942, with the passing of the Lanham Act, the authorities set aside funds for the establishment of a further 2 000 infant schools to accommodate 600 000 children. The best known of these wartime infant schools were the Kaiser Child Care Service Centres in
Portland where the Kaiser Shipbuilding Company provided an around the clock service for the care of 1 005 children.

In January of 1943 the various American states were advised of the intended closure of all the Work Progress Administration (WPA) infant schools later that year in April. In October 1943 there were, however, still 1 180 of these still in operation. Numerous infant schools were also reopened in that same year with funds granted by the Lanham Act of 1943. By March 1945 there were once again more than 1 841 WPA infant schools for 51 229 children. When the War ended the numbers decreased dramatically until by 1946 most of the WPA were closed.

The lead the Russians achieved in space exploration with the launching of Sputnik I in 1957, as well as the entrance of women into the labour market and the explosion in research activities concerning the young child, ushered in a new era for infant education in the 50s. The wars in Korea (1950 - 1953) and Vietnam (1964 - 1972) also exerted their influence. The culmination of all this was the Head Start programme initiated in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson (1908-1973). Osborn describes the aim of this programme by saying:

It was hoped that . . . an enriched summer programme for lower class children would give them a 'head start' into life and ultimately reverse the poverty cycle. (Osborn 1980:148)

When this programme was presented for the first time it involved 652 000 children in 2 500 nursery schools and Kindergartens with 41 000 teachers. This focused the attention of the public from all levels of the population firmly on the importance of infant education. Without hesitation the federal government pledged its support for more programmes of this nature. The 60s are justifiably referred to as the decade of infant education in the USA.

Senators Walter Mondale and John Brademas tabled proposals in 1970/71 for the approval of the Comprehensive Child Development Act – by means of which all programmes for infant education would be consolidated. President Richard Nixon (born 1913) vetoed their proposals and averred that such an Act "would commit the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child-rearing against the family-centered approach" (Frost 1973:5-6). Notwithstanding this, an amount of approximately $2,5 billion was voted by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare of the Federal Government for additional programmes for infant education. This department was sub-divided in 1980 into the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, both of which are still involved in infant education.
8.5 Soviet Russia

From the second half of the nineteenth century until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Russia developed rapidly in the fields of industry and economics. This development was accompanied by such social miseries as poor housing conditions, child labour, over-population and famine. Russia's participation in the Crimean War (1853 - 1856) and the First World War (1914 - 1918) resulted in an escalation in these dreadful conditions. The wretchedness of their living conditions brought about a solidarity among the working classes which was unusual in the world at that time. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was eventually to bring an end to this dissatisfaction. With the support of the soldiers, factory workers and rural population, the Bolshevists (opposed to Tzarist rule) under the leadership of Nicolai Lenin (1870 - 1924), succeeded in establishing a new government in Russia in January 1918. The Bolshevists supported the Communist Party. Their political policies were based on the fundamental principles of Karl Heinrich Marx (1818 - 1883), namely the establishment of a labour dictatorship, the nationalization of transport, industry and agriculture, the duty of everyone to work and the right of all children to state education.

8.5.1 The origins of infant education

Although infant education initially started in 1860 – chiefly as a result of the efforts of the Russian educationist, K.D. Ushinsky – there were only 275 infant schools in existence in the whole of Russia for a very long time. Only approximately 5 000 children from the working classes could be accommodated in these schools. In the cities there was an even more dire need. In St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev and the other large centres there were between 10 and 15 public infant schools for children from the working classes. All other institutions which catered for infant education were in private hands and intended for children of the well-to-do.

In an effort to bring relief to the misery of children from the working classes, the first institution for infant education was opened in the Ulaganovosk region in 1889. It was financed by the Trust of Workhouses. Children between the ages of two to ten years were admitted. There was, however, no differentiation made between the various age groups.

Prior to the 1917 Revolution the Tzar paid scant attention to the pleas for reform from the working classes. A very small percentage of the population (in 1897 only 28.4% of the entire population over nine years of age) could read and write because education was denied to children from the working classes.
8.5.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education

8.5.2.1 The background against which state measures should be seen

It was only after Communist rule had been established that Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869 - 1939), saw to it that infant education was provided with a sound foundation. From the first months of the Revolution the schools were used assisting in bringing about the social changes demanded by Russian Marxism. In order to gain an insight into infant education in Soviet Russia, this needs further examination.

The leaders of the Communist Party repeatedly emphasized that their ideal of shaping a "new man" by means of, amongst others, education and teaching, could not be realized unless their initial point of departure was the small child. Krupskaya also wanted to ensure that the communistic principles were internalized by the child at an early age. By means of indoctrination (which has been an integral part of the Russian policy of education since 1917) she wanted to develop a national and collective attitude in the child and by arranging the care of children in state institutions she hoped to bring about the emancipation of women to enable them to occupy their position as man's equal in society (Coetzee 1987:30).

Champions of infant education received the full support and encouragement of the authorities. Anatoli Lunacharsky, the first Communist Minister of Education said:

We can mould a child of 5-6 years into anything we wish; at the age of 16-17 we must break him; and thereafter, one may well say, only the grave can correct a hunchback.

(Counts 1957:52)

8.5.2.2 Infant education during Lenin's reign (1917 - 1924)

Initially Nicolai Lenin (1870 - 1924) avidly advocated the demolition of the family. This implied on the one hand that children's family bonds had to be severed and on the other hand women had to be freed from caring for children, drudgery in the home and the domination of husbands. In 1918 the head of the Petrograd Education Department said in this respect:

We must exempt children from the pernicious influence of the family. We have to take account of every child, we candidly say that we must nationalize them. From the first days of their life they will be under the beneficial influence of the communistic kindergarten and schools. Here they shall assume the ABC of Communism.

(Hans et al. 1930:50)
It thus becomes obvious why a directorate for infant education, which is still functioning, was established shortly after the Revolution to provide education to homeless children (approximately six million were left homeless as a result of the First World War and the Revolution). In this manner infant education became an integral part of national education (Lall, ed. 1983:4).

8.5.2.3 Infant education during Stalin’s reign (1924 - 1953)

In 1924 the Secretary of the Communist Party, Joseph Vissarionovitch Stalin (1879 - 1953), became the new head of state. His policy, aimed at the strengthening of socialism in Russia, was responsible for drastic changes. Stalin was of the opinion particularly that the economy of the Soviet Union needed the manpower of its women, and particularly so in industry and agriculture, and for this reason she was entitled to work away from home.

Small children were not left uncared for while their mothers had to work away from home. They were admitted to infant schools (which took over the traditional position of the grandmother – babushka – in the family) and Kindergartens. A curriculum known as polytechnical training, was compiled in order to orientate infants towards labour. In the Kindergartens the children were occupied with sawing, drilling and gluing blocks and planks. Children in infant schools were placed in "work cubicles" and familiarized with the materials used in production (factory scraps, pieces of metal, wood and wire) (Kline 1957:8).

A new trend in the education policy, which would lead to a change in infant education in Russia, became evident towards the middle of the 1930s. The curriculum was revised with strong emphasis on colour; toys were once again permitted and fairy tales and music again became part of it.

The best illustration of the sharp contrast between pedagogic views of infant education before and after this swing, may perhaps best be illustrated by looking at the choice of songs of these two periods:

A typical song from the polytechnical period

Industrialization
We build factories
Many machines
In a hurry to complete
the plan in four years...
And now, children,
To the shock brigades,

A typical song of the mid 30s

I throw the balls high, high
Fly little balls,
Far away, far away.

The above song was usually sung to a melody from Tchaikovsky’s ‘Queen of Spades’. Brightly
Our country calls us all to help in the factories. coloured balls were given to the children with which they could play while they were singing (Kline 1957:10).

8.5.2.4 Infant education during Kruschev's reign (1954 - 1964)

Nikita Sergeyevitch Kruschev (1894 - 1971) overturned most of Stalin's educative practices and tried to reinstate the ideas put forth by Krupskaya. Play, toys, music and fairy tales were retained but there was also much emphasis on activities such as helping themselves, nature study, gymnastics, drawing, modelling, pasting and music. Infant education in rural areas flourished during Kruschev's reign. 1960 saw the inception of infant schools (yasl'i) for infants of three months to three years of age. Older children, from three to seven years of age still attended Kindergartens (detski sad) where they were prepared for the primary school during the final year or two (Grand 1979:84). These schools were usually situated close to factories, offices, collective farms and other undertakings for the children of the workers (Lall, ed. 1983:4). Intensive professional teacher training was instituted at the same time in order to improve the proficiency of teachers. The needs of childhood were recognized and emphasized.

8.5.2.5 Infant education during Breshnev's reign (1964 - 1982)

The reforms instituted by Leonid Ilyich Breshnev (1906 - 1984) in connection with infant education in Soviet Russia, are currently still in use. Infant schools are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health. A director is at the head of the infant school. The rest of the staff comprises trained teachers, a pediatrician, a nurse, a music teacher and service staff (care takers, cleaning women and cooks).

Kindergartens are under the authority of the Department of Education. Both infant schools and Kindergartens have to be registered with the Department of Education and must adhere to the prescriptions of this department as far administration and upkeep are concerned (Ashra 1928:79). In the cities these institutions are open all year round. On collective farms their activities are bound to the seasons to allow women to work on the lands. After harvesting has been completed the institutions are closed temporarily (Coetzee 1987:31).

Sick children are cared for in the so-called Kindergarten sanatoriums. Some of the Kindergartens in the cities are moved to the rural areas during the summer months for the sake of the children's health.
In Soviet Russia infant education is financed in part by the state and in part by the parents—approximately 3-18 roubles per month, while the average income of a worker comes to about 130 roubles per month (De Reus 1987:49).

School hours are determined by the type of work the parents are doing. Russian children spend between 9-12 hours per day—the longest school day in the world—in the infant schools or Kindergartens. Activities consist mainly of playing and resting under supervision. Play includes games with brightly coloured toys (rings, balls and blocks) which are manufactured in the state factories. Play is always accompanied by music, singing and rhythm. The self-activity principle is implemented by giving the child the opportunity to perform useful tasks. They are also taught to help others. Egoism, individualism and selfishness are not tolerated. Group work, group play and shared ownership are encouraged. A fundamental motto which children are taught in this respect is: *Moe eto nashe; nashe moe* (What is mine is ours; ours is mine) (Chauncey 1969:4).

The authorities have paid particular attention to teacher training for infant education since 1917. Teachers are trained at special teacher training colleges. Since 1954 candidates have to have passed the secondary school final examination to qualify for admission to these colleges where they then take a two year course. As political agents who subscribe to the political objectives of the Communist Party, teachers regularly undergo re-training to ensure that they keep pace with the developments within the social order. By 1974 the personnel in service at infant schools and Kindergartens was already in access of 700 000, and a further 75 000 were in training at thirty tertiary institutions and 200 colleges (Coetzee 1987:31). In spite of the 125 000 infant schools and Kindergartens in existence which catered for 14 million children in 1980, there was and still are long waiting lists. Since Mikhail Sergevitch Gorbachev (1931—) came to power in 1982, no reform worth mentioning has been noticeable in infant education in Russia.

8.6 Israel

Any discussion of infant education in Israel must take into account the unique and dramatic history of that country. The Jews have looked upon Israel as their fatherland throughout the ages, while in a sense they continued to remain an immigrant community living in virtually every country on earth.

The wholesale immigration of the twentieth century had its origins in the latter half of the previous century when the nationalistic Zionist Movement began to propagate a revitalization of the Hebrew language and the restoration of their homeland. Until 1948 four different immigration drives to Israel took place, bringing the population in that
year to a total of 650,000 people. After the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948 (after it had been a mandate of Great Britain since 1918) the population of Israel doubled virtually overnight and doubled again fifteen years later. Approximately 90% of all Jewish immigrants before 1948 had been of European origin, while approximately half of the immigration figure after 1948 was made up of refugees from the Islamic countries (the Middle East and Africa). These Jewish immigrants were mostly illiterate. Various education projects were launched after 1948 to cope with the vast numbers and in an effort to neutralize the inequality in their cultural backgrounds.

8.6.1 The origins and establishment of infant education

The child in Israel occupies a special position. The Jew was particularly attached to his children which confirms the supposition that the Jewish family played an important role in the sphere of education. Originally family education was in the hands of the mother, yet when the boys grew older the father became more and more involved in their education. Girls remained under their mother’s care. Education in the home centred around the Law of God and sacred history. The Law is contained in the five books of Moses, which the Jews call the Torah. Apart from the Torah, children were also instructed at home in the Shemah (national religion) by means of stories from the Bible, Proverbs, the Psalms and devotional songs and prayers. Although transmitting the cultural heritage of the Jews and instructing the boys in the Law had been the task of the family for many centuries, these tasks were taken over by private institutions for infant education after the waves of immigration to Israel.

In 1898 the first Kindergarten was established in one of the earlier agricultural settlements for Jewish immigrants. Kindergartens were mainly seen as an instrument to rejuvenate the national language—Hebrew. They were also an attempt to prepare the child for his primary school career. As a result Kindergartens were of a more formal nature: children sat in rows in front of a blackboard and a bell announced their periods of play. All activities were in imitation of the teacher. Unlike in Europe, men often served as teachers in Kindergartens— and in particular when the Kindergarten formed part of a boys’ school.

Since 1911 a vast number of German Kindergarten teachers immigrated to Israel which led to a change in methods of instruction. They immediately started replacing the more formal activities with the more informal, spontaneous activities such as cooking, woodwork, gardening and hygiene. By 1948 infant education in Israel had already been placed on a firm footing.
8.6.2 State measures for the promotion of infant education

The large scale immigration to Israel brought about two serious problems:

- the Jewish community could assume an oriental nature instead of becoming westernized; and
- if immigrant groups were not integrated rapidly enough the polarization between eastern and western groups could result in ethnic conflict.

Education was seen as the only way to bind the population into a Jewish unity. To put this into practice the Compulsory Education Law was passed by the Israeli Parliament on 1 September 1949. This law made provision for compulsory school attendance for all children between five and fourteen years. In principle it was also agreed that infant education in Israel would be provided in one of three ways, namely by:

- Kindergartens (a matter for the state and private organizations);
- kibbutzes (the responsibility of the kibbutzes); or
- day schools (the responsibility of local authorities).

A separate programme for teacher training, supervision and control would be followed by each of these institutions (Kindergartens, kibbutzes and day schools).

8.6.2.1 Kindergartens

The institution of free and compulsory education for all five-year-olds led to Kindergartens becoming part of the official system of education after 1948. Public Kindergartens are institutions catering for only one year of education. Upon completion of their Kindergarten year five-year-olds were admitted to primary schools. This resulted in Kindergarten teachers being trained, remunerated and inspected by the authorities and falling under the jurisdiction of the newly appointed Minister of Education. Teaching of children below five years of age was still undertaken by private or voluntary organizations.

A network of public Kindergartens came to life overnight. Five-year-olds were to attend the Kindergarten for six hours a day, six days a week. Parent communities soon realized that children from the so-called immigrant regions had a very high drop-out figure in primary school, in spite of the fact that all five-year-olds had to attend a Kindergarten. After numerous ethnographic studies the crux of the problem was iden-
tified as being due to the discrepancies in home education in the various immigrant communities. Children from Middle East communities were, for instance, brought up to be silent observers. At school these children showed very little initiative and were not really inquisitive. The Israeli authorities then put programmes into practice to remove cultural diversity, an example of this being the Centre for Educational Television which provided extensive television programmes for three- and four-year-olds in the mornings and evenings. Kindergartens were also particularly concerned with removing cultural differences between five year olds.

Since the Six Day War (1967) government involvement in Kindergartens has been further extended. The most dramatic step was the extension of public Kindergartens to include children between the ages of three to five years. 67% of all four-year-olds and 38% of all three-year-olds were already accommodated in public Kindergartens by 1972. Children from the more influential communities were, however, still attending private Kindergartens.

8.6.2.2 The kibbutz

The history of the kibbutz (which means group in Hebrew) is very closely interwoven with that of the Zionist movement of the nineteenth century and its insistence on the Jewish occupation of Palestine. The first kibbutz was established at Degania in 1909 as a "voluntarily collective community, mainly agricultural, in which there is no private wealth, and which is responsible for all the needs of the members and their families" (Lall, ed. 1983:27). At present there are more than 250 kibbutzes in existence.

All responsibility for educative activities rests with the collective group (the kibbutz). Children live in children's homes and spend only their free time within the family circle. Babies of approximately six weeks old are placed in the "baby home" of the kibbutz. The time the mother spends with her baby is, however, never less than three hours per day. Babies are cared for by a surrogate mother (m'tapelet) in groups of four to five. At two years of age an infant is moved to a toddler home where he, in the company of eight other children, is cared for until he reaches school going age. During school hours groups of fifteen children are in the care of a nurse-teacher. After school her duties are taken over by the surrogate mother (m'tapelet).

Recent developments in kibbutzes show a tendency towards greater family participation in the education of children. In many kibbutzes the children no longer sleep in children's homes but spend the nights with their parents. This has also brought about changes in the function and task of the children's homes in the kibbutz.
8.6.2.3 Day schools

The growing demand for women to work has resulted in the establishment of day schools as the latest addition to (local) state aided infant education. There are three types of day schools:

- Voluntary organizations have established day schools which are attended by approximately 9,000 children of between two and four years of age. About twenty-four religious, political and private organizations support these day schools which are chiefly controlled by the two women's organizations, namely, the WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization) and Irgun Imahot Ovdot (Working Mothers Association) (Braun et al. 1973:79).

- The Minister of Manpower, in cooperation with the local authorities, has established day schools in the industrial centres for children of one to five years old "for the explicit purpose of enabling more mothers to work" (OECD 1972:21). The children's school day is spent in organized activities, lunch and rest. Only trained teachers are employed.

- The Mother and Child Centres fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health and Welfare. They provide infant education to babies and children up to the age of three years and "are intended to prevent or to compensate for cultural deprivation in backward sectors of the population" (OECD 1972:21). The emphasis is on health, nourishment and physical development and these Centres have over the years acquired a very favourable reputation.

8.7 Conclusion

From the above historical-comparative investigation it becomes clear that infant education provided by the state cannot summarily be taken for granted. Various factors are co-determinants for the authorities being prepared to become involved in infant education:

- The socio-political environment: Infant education is being more urgently recognized as the basis for the total system of education. In Russia, for instance, it is believed that a dedicated communist is moulded during the years of infancy.

- The socio-economic environment: The involvement of the authorities is determined mainly by the available funds. That is why infant education in the developing countries (of which there are many examples in Africa) usually falls outside the sphere of the state.
• The social environment: The working mother has been responsible for a total change in infant education. Whereas uncared for, defenceless children were initially cared for in care centres because their working mothers could not afford someone to look after them, the various institutions (crèches, infant schools and Kindergartens) for infant education which have originated during the latter part of the twentieth century, are more in the line of education centres for the children of professional women.

• The socio-cultural environment: Infant education often serves as an instrument for transmitting culture. In Israel, for instance, great store is set by paternalistic state measures to ensure authentic transmission of culture.

Although infant education, even outside the control of the state, has also blossomed forth, state involvement does tend to increase its quality. France is a testimonial to authorities who are totally dedicated to the well-being of the young child. This has resulted in their total system of education being substantially ‘better off’ than those of the other countries in Europe.

Infant education is the focal point of tremendous advance. More and more authorities are becoming aware of the ripple effect which the early moulding of the young child has on the system of education and even the country as a whole. President Harry Truman (1884 - 1972) put this idea in a nutshell when he said: "If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen. Early childhood education today is in the kitchen, and the heat is on" (Auleta 1969:46).

Bibliography


Zadja, T.I. *Education in the USSR.* New York: Pergamon Press.