



RICHARD M. TITMUSS

**Essays on
'the
WELFARE
STATE'**

*Second Edition with a new chapter
on 'the Irresponsible Society'*



unwin university books

RICHARD M. TITMUSS

Professor of Social Administration
in the University of London

Essays on
'The Welfare State'

SECOND EDITION
with a new chapter on
The Irresponsible Society

LONDON
UNWIN UNIVERSITY BOOKS

First Published in Great Britain in 1958

Second Impression 1958

Third Impression 1960

New Edition with a new chapter (4th impression) 1963

Fifth Impression 1964

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Second Edition © George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1963

UNWIN UNIVERSITY BOOKS
George Allen and Unwin Ltd
40 Museum Street
London W.C.1

Printed in Great Britain
By Offset
in 11-12 Bell Type
by Unwin Brothers Limited
Woking and London

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The Cost of the National Health Service
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(Cambridge University Press)

and other works

PREFACE

SIX of these ten¹ lectures have already been printed, the first in 1951, the last in 1957. At intervals during these years I was reminded by some of my friends responsible for the teaching of social administration that students of the subject had difficulty in obtaining the relevant journals and reports. It is true that these lectures reached the sometimes unwelcome finality of print in a variety of published forms, and that certain journals are not easily available to students, particularly those less fortunately placed than students at a university. In publishing them now in book form I must, however, make one or two personal comments.

All these lectures except one were written with two kinds of audience in mind; those who come to listen and those who prefer to read. In revising them in the interests of the latter I have tried to remove some of the more obvious adornments that go to the making of a public lecture. Nothing of any consequence can have been lost in the process. I have added footnotes and references here and there, and corrected the most noticeable lapses in visual style.

What I have not been able to do much about without injury to the flow of the essays is a certain repetitiveness of content and ideas; a tendency, in several of them, for the same point to be taken up, treated in one more lightly, in another in more detail, yet never worked out as satisfactorily as if one were writing a book. For these faults I apologize.

In reprinting these six lectures I have taken the opportunity to include four that have not been published. One is a Fawcett Memorial Lecture on 'The Position of Women', given at Bedford College, London, in 1952. Here I have included some new material and added more up-to-date references.

The remaining three lectures, all on the National Health Service, were given under the auspices of the Sherrill Founda-

¹ The eleventh was added in 1963.

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tion in the Law Faculty at Yale University in the United States in April 1957. Though addressed to an American audience they contain material which may be of interest to students of the subject in Britain and other countries. They were subsequently submitted, with other evidence, to the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration.

The Appendix to these Health Service lectures is perhaps a curiosity and needs a word of explanation. In reflecting on the many misconceptions about the Service that are current in the United States as well as in Britain I felt that something more than general statements would be appreciated. Yet one has to deal heavily in generalities in the delivery of public lectures. In respect to certain problems I wished to discuss I therefore assembled the relevant facts and Professor Eugene Rostow, Dean of the Law Faculty, was good enough to arrange for this appendix to be mimeographed and circulated to the audience.

Since these lectures were given at Yale some new evidence of value to students of the Health Service has appeared. I refer particularly to the *Report of the Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries* (the Franks Committee). I have therefore included some of the material from this report in my discussion of the question of the professional freedom of the doctor under the Health Service.

Apart from these additions I have made no effort to bring up to date either the content or the documentation of these ten essays. To have undertaken such a task would have meant a complete recasting of the subjects discussed. Yet there were times when I was tempted to do so. Some of the themes I have pursued here have been overtaken by events; some by books. Our understanding of certain fundamental problems of social life in contemporary Britain has been deepened by a number of important books published in the last few years. They underline, for students of social administration in particular, one conclusion that, I hope, reviewers will draw from these essays. The social services (however we define them) can no longer be considered as 'things apart'; as phenomena of marginal interest, like looking out of the window on a train journey. They are part

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of the journey itself. They are an integral part of industrialization.

The recent works I have in mind include the contribution to the study of social mobility by Professor Glass, Mrs Floud and their colleagues; the research undertaken by Professor Simey and his colleagues at Liverpool on industrial and social change; Mr Peter Townsend's book *The Family Life of Old People*; Mr John Vaizey's study of *The Costs of Education*; and Mr C. A. R. Crossland's book *The Future of Socialism*. These I would have singled out as the most important sources of new material and new thinking in relation to the topics discussed in these essays had I embarked on the task of rewriting. If the role of the social services is to be re-interpreted in the light of the social structure of Britain in the second half of the twentieth century then it is to sources such as these that we must turn, both for the facts and for a clearer vision of reality.

I have had much advice and thoughtful criticism from friends who read particular drafts of these essays. I am grateful to Mr B. Abel-Smith, Mr N. H. Carrier, Mrs C. Cockburn, Mrs M. M. Gowing, Miss P. Jephcott, Dr J. N. Morris, Professor K. de Schweinitz, Mr J. Smith, Mr P. Townsend and Mr P. Willmott. I am also grateful to Mr Paulding Phelps for the considerable assistance he gave me in compiling the Appendix. In thanking them for their kindness I wish to absolve them all from any attachment to the often controversial views expressed in these essays. To Miss Judith Mason, my secretary, I owe an exceptional debt of gratitude for her patience and help in many ways. And to my students at the London School of Economics I am grateful for their continuing spirit of questioning. Finally, I wish to thank Mr Donald MacRae, Managing Editor of *The British Journal of Sociology*; the Liverpool University Press; the Editors of *The Political Quarterly*; the Editor of *The Listener*; the Editor of the *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Social Work*; and the Editor of *The Hospital* for permission to reprint the essays published in their journals.

London
January 1958

RICHARD M. TITMUSS

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*Social Administration in a Changing Society*¹

THE decision of the University of London to create a new chair in Social Administration was an expression, I suppose, of the importance of the social services today in the life of the community. It was also perhaps a sign that, in the eyes of the University authorities, the subject had advanced to a respectable age and had acquired some academically respectable disciples; that it had grown out of its former preoccupation with good works for the deserving poor; and that the subject now justified an academic chair, and someone to invade, on the one side, a modest corner of the territory of public administration and, on the other, some part of the broad acres of sociology.

It might be said, then, that the days when social administration, with its interest in the education of future social workers, was regarded in University circles as a poor but virtuous relation, are now coming to an end. It is an interesting speculation, but hardly justified, I think, by the arrival of a new professor. 'Promise,' as George Eliot remarked in *Middlemarch*, 'was a pretty maid, but being poor she died unwed.'

The future of social administration depends, to some extent, on the future of the great experiments in social service which have been launched in Britain in recent years. Their future is uncertain. To this uncertainty must be added, in the teaching of

¹ An Inaugural Lecture delivered on May 10, 1951, at the London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London), and published in *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. II, No. 3, September 1951.

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social administration, the awareness of intellectual uncertainty which attends on those concerned with the study of human relations, for only now are we beginning to grope our way towards some scientific understanding of society. Uncertainty, then, is part of the price that has to be paid for being interested in the many-sidedness of human needs and behaviour. However, we draw some comfort from Karl Mannheim's thought¹ that it is precisely our uncertainty which brings us closer to reality than is possible for those who have faith in the absolute or faith, I would add, in the pursuit of specialization.

It is customary on these occasions to begin with a broad definition of one's subject. After these preliminaries, I propose to say something about the origins of the Social Science Department. Next, I shall briefly discuss certain aspects of the historical development of the social services since the beginning of the century, and I shall attempt to explain how these developments have contributed to some of our present difficulties. Then I shall try to formulate certain problems of social, economic and administrative importance which seem to me to require more study. Finally, I shall attempt a few generalizations about the nature of some elements of social change which, by their effect on the individual and the family, affect also the structure and roles of the social services.

Social administration may broadly be defined as the study of the social services whose object, to adapt Simey's phrase, is the improvement of the conditions of life of the individual in the setting of family and group relations.² It is concerned with the historical development of these services, both statutory and voluntary, with the moral values implicit in social action, with the roles and functions of the services, with their economic aspects, and with the part they play in meeting certain needs in the social process. On the one hand, then, we are interested in the machinery of administration, which organizes and dispenses various forms of social assistance; on the other, in the lives, the needs, and the mutual relations of those members of the com-

¹ Mannheim, K., *Ideology and Utopia*, 1936, p. 75.

² Simey, T. S., *Principles of Social Administration*, 1937, p. 9.

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munity for whom the services are provided by reason of their belonging to that community. To take part in the study and teaching of these subjects in the spiritual home of Sidney and Beatrice Webb is a privilege. For this and other reasons I am deeply conscious of the honour of being the first occupant of this chair, not only because it is a new one, but because it carries with it the headship of the Department of Social Science and Administration. The department has for long been associated with many distinguished men and women. Nearly forty years ago, Professor Tawney was in at the start of the department. Academically speaking, it was not perhaps a very respectable affair in those days. That it is more acceptable now is due to Professor Tawney and to many men and women who, like him, never ceased to demonstrate their belief in the possibility of social progress. Thus, it is not chance that brings me here to-night but faith, the substance of things hoped for by my predecessors, 'the evidence of things not seen'.

In December 1912, on a proposition by Mr Martin White, seconded by Mr Sidney Webb, it was decided to establish a Department of Social Science as part of the School of Economics to continue, according to the minutes, 'the work so admirably carried on since 1903 under Mr C. S. Loch of the Charity Organization Society'.¹ The new department was helped by financial aid from Mr Ratan Tata, an Indian millionaire, who promoted the Ratan Tata Foundation, whose main function, under the directorship of Professor Tawney, was to inquire into the causes of poverty. The Foundation was linked to the new department, which was then known as the Ratan Tata Department of Social Science. It was not until 1919 that the School assumed complete responsibility.

At the start, in 1913, there was a straightforward bluntness about the teaching purposes of the department. 'It is intended,' states the Calendar for that year, 'for those who wish to prepare themselves to engage in the many forms of social and charitable effort.' A one-year course of theory and practical work was pro-

¹ London School of Economics: minutes of meeting of Court of Governors December 31, 1912.

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vided, and the students were examined for the award of a certificate. Some of the questions set in the first examination bear a strong resemblance to those which *The Economist* asks of its readers from time to time. 'How far,' ran one question, 'is the danger of demoralizing the handworking classes by over-legislation a real one?' And just as pertinent was the question—'To what extent are we justified in regarding the theories of the earlier economists as the outcome of the social needs of their day?' A value-judgment, as we should call it now, seems to have slipped into this question which suggests that later economists were more objective in the formulation of their theories.

It may seem to some of us today, conscious of the need for a better understanding of motive in human behaviour, of the dynamic relationship between man and society, that the educational problems facing the new department were relatively simple. It was still possible to accept the surface view of reality in behaviour, for awareness of the new layers of the human mind opened up by Freud's study of the unconscious had not as yet penetrated very far. The anthropologists had not yet begun to stress the importance of the configuration of culture, economics could still be unashamedly taught to social work students without much reference to theory, while statistics in the hands of Mr Bowley (as he then was) were, by all accounts, a pleasurable experience. The staff of the department, like the syllabus, was more manageable than it is today. Professor Urwick, who was in charge, was assisted by Mrs Bosanquet and by visiting lecturers. Under the heading of 'Economics' a course of lectures was given by one practical-minded visitor on 'The Household Economics of the Handworking Poor'. For the sum of 10s. 6d. the students were told in six lectures how the poor bought their food, stored it and cooked it. Karl Pearson came and discussed the merits and demerits of breast-feeding and the relationship of alcoholism to infant mortality. Early in 1913 a new staff appointment was made, and judging by the book on social work which the new assistant subsequently wrote,¹ he seems to have

¹ Attlee, C. R., *The Social Worker*, 1920.

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been a good choice. There were only two applicants for the post and, according to the minutes, the selection committee, 'after very careful consideration', appointed Mr C. R. Attlee. Unfortunately, the minutes are silent about the committee's opinion of the rejected candidate. He was Mr Hugh Dalton.

Throughout the years of change and expansion that followed, the department established a reputation for flexibility in teaching, for friendliness in relations, and for the interest it took in the welfare of its students that was largely due to the influence of five people: to Urwick, for his pioneering work as head of the London School of Sociology from 1903 to 1912 and from then until 1921 as head of the Social Science Department; to Hobhouse, for his faith in social progress based on his concept of the 'liberation of the individual'¹ and for his personal interest in the studies of each student to whom he was known, I am told, as 'Father Christmas'; to the stimulating personality of C. M. Lloyd who succeeded Hobhouse in 1922; to my predecessor, Professor Marshall, who took over the department during a difficult period of reconstruction at the end of the Second World War and, lastly, to the wisdom and devotion of Miss Eckhard who has played such a large part in steering the fortunes of the department and its many students since she first joined the School in 1919.

This department for the study of social administration was founded at a time when fundamental moral and social issues were being debated with vigour and a new sense of purpose. It was a product of the ferment of inquiry to which the Webbs, Charles Booth and many others contributed so much. Poverty, on the one hand, and moral condemnation of the poor on the other, were being questioned. Inquiry was moving from the question 'who are the poor?' to the question 'why are they poor?' Professor Tawney, aware, as he has repeatedly taught us, that the most important thing about a man is what he takes for granted, was in his element when he gave his inaugural lecture as Director of the Ratan Tata Foundation before the new social science stu-

¹ Hobson, J. A., and Ginsberg, M., *L. T. Hobhouse: His Life and Work*, 1931.