

SPA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIAL POLICY ASSOCIATION

May/June 2001

Poverty: A Study of Town Life

2001 is the centenary of the publication of Seebohm Rowntree's first study of poverty in York. This important event has been celebrated in a number of ways.

- A new study of poverty in York has been undertaken with the support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Huby, Bradshaw and Corden 1998).
- A national conference on poverty research took place (again with JRF support) in York and the proceedings have now been published in three volumes (Bradshaw and Sainsbury 2000 a, b. and c.).
- Then also associated with the centenary was the national study *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain* (Gordon et al 2000) funded by JRF.
- Now a facsimile of the original has been published by Policy Press (Rowntree 2001) supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

Editions of *Poverty* went on being published until 1922 and included revised editions of the original to take account of the possible impact of old age pensions and a cheap Everyman Edition. This facsimile of the first edition published by Macmillan contains the original photographs, charts and tables as well as the maps of York, one of which shows the position of the Licensed Houses (which has provided York social policy students with such amusing research opportunities over the years).

Three claims can be made for *Poverty* that ensures its place as a very important social policy text:

1. It had a remarkable impact on public understanding of poverty as well as on attitudes to the poor. The facts are "preparing the public mind for reforms for efforts" wrote Samuel Barnett. The facts also made a major contribution to undermining the ideas of the Charity Organisation Society. After *Poverty* they found it hard to argue the distinction

between the deserving and undeserving poor and that social case-work was the answer to poverty. Since Rowntree and to this day, despite Charles Murray and the Moral Underclass Discourse (MUD), poverty has been understood in structural not behavioural terms.

2. It immediately had an impact on policy, influencing the spate of social reform enacted by the Liberal Government after 1906. The young Tory, Winston Churchill, bought a copy of the first edition and reported that it "fairly made my hair stand on end". In 1904 he crossed the floor of the House of Commons and he and Lloyd George became the 'Heavenly Twins' who drove through the Liberal social reforms. Later his work was of great influence in setting the benefit levels proposed by Beveridge.
3. Rowntree, in *Poverty*, established the British tradition of empirical social science research designed to inform policy – what we now call 'evidence-based policy'. *Poverty* can claim to be the first quasi-scientific study of the subject. His methods were copied in a host of other local studies and of course he followed up his 1899 study with two other studies of poverty in York in 1936 and 1950. For the first time he compared household income with a poverty threshold which had some scientific rationale. He carefully distinguished between primary and secondary poverty, though he did not himself make much of the secondary poverty standard and dropped it in the later surveys. He was the first to argue however implicitly for a participation standard for poverty. He was the first to demonstrate the causes of poverty were low wages not feckless breeding or misspending. He established the idea of the life-cycle of poverty and he explored the

**Jonathan
Bradshaw
reminds us of
the importance
of Seebohm
Rowntree's
classic study.**

SPA Matters

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Poverty: A Study of Town Life cont.

association of poverty with poor housing and ill health and the social and economic costs of poverty. In the post-war period poverty researchers sought to draw a line between the conceptualisation and methods Rowntree enunciated. But his methods and ideas are still extant in modern poverty studies.

Reading *Poverty* today still makes ones "hair stand on end". Rowntree would be amazed at the affluence of York today. He and perhaps those who visit the City of York to admire the glory of the Minster, the Viking remains, the superbly preserved medieval core may be surprised to learn that as he claimed the conditions of life in York are not exceptional and are still fairly representative. The latest DETR Index of Social Deprivation has two York wards in the most deprived quintile in England and 10 York wards are in the bottom half of the distribution. In 1998 8 per cent of the population lacked at least seven socially perceived necessities and 15 per cent of children were receiving free school meals.

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Professor Jonathan Bradshaw
University of York

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SPA News

is edited by

Saul Becker

Department of Social Sciences
Loughborough University LE11 3TU
E-mail: S.Becker@lboro.ac.uk

The new Editor (from the October 2001 issue)
is Michael Cahill, School of Applied Social
Science, University of Brighton, Falmer,
Brighton BN1 9PH.

Tel: 01273 643467

Fax: 01273 643473

E-Mail: m.cahill@bton.ac.uk

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Discounts for SPA Members on Subscriptions to Journals

SPA members are entitled to discounts on a number of relevant academic journals. We've recently re-confirmed the arrangements with the relevant publishers and are discussing with them ways of making it easier for members to claim these discounts.

Policy and Politics SPA members are entitled to a 25% discount on subscriptions to *Policy and Politics*. Although introduced initially for one year, this is now an on-going benefit for SPA members. Simply tick the box on the subscription application form (also available on the Policy Press website).

Journal of European Social Policy SPA members are entitled to a 20% discount on subscriptions to this journal.

Social Policy and Administration The discounted rate for SPA members is £34.00 (\$53.00 for US-based subscribers). Full details of *Social Policy and Administration*, including subscription rates and the option to subscribe on-line, are available at <http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk/journals/spol/subscrip.htm>. SPA members should simply explain they are members and eligible for the discount when subscribing.

In relation to all the above journals, members may find it helpful to quote their SPA membership number – this number appears on the address label used to mail your *SPA News*.

Our next task is to set up links from the SPA website to the subscriptions websites of these journals to make it even easier for members to claim discounts.

Caroline Glendinning
Convenor Membership and External Relations Group

Quality Assurance Agency – Nomination of Subject Specialist Reviewers

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has invited Learned Societies and Professional Bodies to nominate subject specialists to contribute to the forthcoming subject reviews. Social policy and administration and social work are among the subjects to be reviewed between 2000 and 2003. Some SPA members will already have been nominated to the QAA by their employing institutions, but the SPA is inviting other members to consider nominating themselves or

colleagues to the QAA. There are no limits on the number of reviewers which learned societies can recommend to the QAA.

For the period 2000–2003 reviewer recruitment is on-going and training will continue well into 2002; there is therefore ample time for nominations of reviewers for academic years 2001/2 and 2002/3 to be made. Reviewers will need to take part in an initial 2-day (including overnight stay) training session at an appropriate venue in England, Wales or Scotland.

Application forms and subject codes are available on <http://ssr.qaa.ac.uk>. The user name is *ssr*; password is *hm2001pr*. Completed forms should be returned to Dawn Blackwood at the QAA. Any queries should be addressed to Dr Peter Milton, Director of Programme Review at the QAA.

ESRC News

Representatives of the ESRC met with members of the SPA executive in March.

Key points raised were:

The need to improve the profile of social policy within the ESRC. A call for nominations to ESRC Boards had been issued, and it is anticipated that vacancies will become available on the SHAR virtual college this year. Details can be found on the new improved ESRC website: www.esrc.ac.uk

Success in grant applications and studentships. Between 1996-1999, just 12% of social policy grant applications to the ESRC were funded, compared with 26% for sociology and 29% for economics, for instance. The success rate for studentships is slightly better. In 2000, 40% of social policy students who applied were successful in being awarded studentships, although of the 541 offers made by the ESRC for studentships across subject areas in that year, just 25 were in social policy.

A workshop on the ESRC grant application process, offering support and advice in developing and submitting proposals, will be offered by ESRC representatives at the SPA conference in Belfast.

For more information, please contact Linda Bauld (L.Bauld@socsci.gla.ac.uk)

The 2004-05 SPA Conferences; Call for Tender

We are looking to appoint an institution/group to plan and conduct the SPA Annual Conferences in 2004 and 2005. Our Annual Conferences generally attract 250–300 delegates from within the UK and overseas. We provide up-front financial support and our conference planning experience is readily available. All enquiries in the first instance should be directed to Professor John Dixon, SPA Hon Sec, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA. Tel: 01752 233274, Fax: 01752 232309, Email: J.Dixon@plymouth.ac.uk

The Learning and Teaching Support Network subject centre for Social Policy and Social Work – SWAPItsn – aims to support Social Policy lecturers in improving students’ learning. In the second of a series of articles, SWAPItsn Learning and Teaching Advisor Pat Young, offers some ideas for linking the teaching of Social Policy to students’ experience.

Making Social Policy ‘real’

The strength of Social Policy is its engagement with real issues that affect people’s lives. The discipline has been particularly attractive to mature students, who very readily relate their learning to life experiences and wider knowledge of social issues. Younger students often need more encouragement. Esther, a 20 year old student in the final year of her degree course, explains the benefits she found in adopting an active approach to learning and making links with her experience:

Sometimes the academic material can appear to be far removed from my own actual experience and quite complex. Working in groups and problem solving engages my attention much more than being a passive learner. This sort of interactive approach has led me to be much more enthusiastic about Social Policy. I have recognised that it is not purely about complex academic discourses but that it has real affects on people’s lives.

As Esther suggests, relating academic learning to personal experiences leads to a greater degree of engagement with the subject. Higher level cognitive skills, involving reflection, application and evaluation, are developed as students compare ideas and models with their own experience. Motivation to learn is stimulated. Learning is more memorable.

How can younger students be encouraged to relate to their learning of Social Policy? One way is to provide placements offering experience relevant to Social Policy, as well as opportunities to increase employability. Information on relating placements to academic learning can be found through the Sociologists in Placements (SIP) web site at www.unn.ac.uk/academic/lss/sip.

An alternative is to supports students in accessing the experience which they already have. The illustration provided here focuses on organisational change in the public sector – not the ‘sexiest’ of topics, and one which students with little experience of public services, as workers or service-users, can find somewhat dull. Younger students do, however, have experience of one aspect of the public sector – schools, and the university in which they study. Links to education offer a means of engaging interest and making Social Policy issues ‘real’.

The first exercise is used at the start of a lecture which focuses on the tension between professional discretion and procedural bureaucratic administration. The exercise (purely

fictional of course) is presented on the OHP and briefly fed back by groups of three to four students. It takes no more than ten minutes, but provides a reference point for many of the issues in the remainder of the lecture.

Exercise: Bureaucracy and Professional Discretion

At University A there is a large-scale modular programme:

- students who hand work in late explain to their personal tutor why they are late and the tutor decides whether the work should be accepted and if any penalty should be applied
- students who want to change their modules are allowed to do so if the tutor taking the new module is happy to take them

At University B there is a large-scale modular programme:

- students who hand in work late give a written explanation to a special Late Work Panel which anonymously applies a set of rules and prescribed outcomes to make a decision
- students who want to change modules must do so by a pre-set date – no exceptions are allowed

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each system – for whom?
Are there any other models?

The second exercise draws on students’ experiences of school and of university education. It relates the concepts of Fordism and post-Fordism, explained in the lecture, to changes in the organisation of social welfare. Students are allocated one of the tasks in their groups and then briefly feed back their ideas. Notes on Rustin’s (1994) article on post-Fordism in the context of higher education, placed on the web-site, provide back-up information.

Exercise: Fordism and Post-Fordism

Task A

- What would a system of secondary education based on Fordist principles be like?
- To what extent can the UK system of secondary education be described as Fordist?

Task B

- What would a university based on post-Fordist principles be like?
- To what extent can this university be described as post-Fordist?

Students can continue this process of active engagement in their assignments. Critical

thinking is demonstrated by students who have developed the confidence to use their own experience as a basis for asking questions. Does this policy make sense to me? Does this theory fit with the way I experience the world? Material available through the FDTL project on Assessment in Sociology further develops the use of autobiography to diversify assessment practices and improve student learning. Access this work at www.bathspa.ac.uk/socassess.

- Future articles in the series will focus on: assessment; the opportunities and challenges of multi-disciplinary teaching; and the use of information technology in teaching Social Policy.
- If you would like to comment on this article, or offer examples of practice relating to any aspect of learning, teaching and assessment in Social Policy, please contact p.young@swap.ac.uk.

Re-shaping the Curriculum

Last week I received my February/March copy of *SPA News*, and was immediately struck by the coverage devoted to teaching and learning issues; more or less connected were pieces on benchmarking (by Pete Alcock and Margaret (p3) or Maggie (p28) May), Curriculum 2000 (Pat McNeill), Sociology and Social Policy (Peter Taylor-Godby) and lectures (Pat Young). We can have no doubt that the profession is alert to the variety of new demands upon the Social Policy curriculum.

The following day a young undergraduate spent over an hour recounting a complex and harrowing tale of his previous two years; his main text centred on deeply hurtful family crises and conflicts and their systematic disruption of academic life. As personal tutor, I found myself the sole confidant, entrusted with an extra-mural 'curriculum' literally bursting with alternative benchmarks. Of particular significance was the sub-text – a mix of embarrassment, guilt and apology from a young person pouring out an explanation as to "why I haven't done as well as I would have liked". By the benchmark of traditional intellectual frameworks, he had underperformed, been sidetracked and diverted. But, the depth and breadth of resolve and growth amidst dense distress, cried out for greater recognition than I was permitted to give.

As we attempt to respond to the new demands upon the curriculum, it will be important to find ways of incorporating and accrediting different dimensions (personal and social, cognitive and emotional) of student experience. Perhaps the two largest forces are, firstly, the conjunction of audit or

- For news of events and resources, access the SWAPItsn website at www.swap.ac.uk. Join SWAPItsn staff at the SPA conference in Belfast, where we will be exploring developments in e-learning and sharing practice in teaching and learning. SWAP staff are also offering support for academics wishing to use ICT in presentations at the conference – e-mail s.orton@swap.ac

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Pat Young
University of the West of England
P.Young@swap.ac.uk

regulation (making Higher Education more consistently accountable) with the re-professionalising tendency of benchmarking (identifying and safeguarding the key features of Social Policy). Secondly, there is a creeping vocationalisation which argues for a greater prominence of 'skills' and 'employability' alongside closer recording ('Files') of student progress.

The significance of these influences and changes may not yet have been fully digested by a majority of social policy colleagues. Many will, for example, consider the business about files a 'little, local difficulty'. They would do well to consider the implications of a recent prediction that "Progress files will begin to replace traditional degree classifications from the coming academic year ... their universal and uniform use will be 'expected' from 2002-3." (Phil Baty, Files replace degree classes, *THES*, 9.3.01 p7)

There is no doubt that clearer lines of accountability and explicit professional standards can bring Social Policy into greater coherence and prominence; similarly, I am firmly committed to more systematic recording of student progress. But, two cautions are necessary:

- As benchmarks are chiselled out of the Social Policy landscape, where are the signs that comparable attention is being paid to the emotional and social landscapes of students? Is there not a danger that curriculum re-shaping is more reflective of the concerns of government auditors and professional academics than of the very customers for whom it is allegedly constructed?
- As the cries for 'relevance', 'employability' and 'skills' grow louder, how much evidence is there of an appropriate critical scrutiny of the assumptions (conceptual, theoretical and

Duncan Scott
considers how
we might value
students' wider
experience.

pedagogic) upon which they are based? When we encounter the familiar distinctions between core skills, process skills and personal skills or attributes, where is the debate about the demonstrable dominance of the 'cognitive tendency'? How important is it to insist on consideration of moral awareness, political consciousness and emotional intelligence? Where is the evidence for what Edward Said has termed 'Reading Critically'? The student is encouraged to go beyond analyses of inequality and injustice, and to explore radical responses to such conditions; responses about different versions of the 'good society' rather than just getting ahead in the present one.

[Dear Reader, Just before you Email copies of your module on 'Social Inequality and Social Policy', may I share with you a recently compiled list of skills from Manchester University? In at number 7 of the 8 core skills, was 'Critical Analysis', subsequently defined as 'Use of logical thought'! Critical/logical, what's in a word?]

We may be in danger of re-shaping our curricular activities to produce something that has all the neatness and elegance of a display of dried flowers – to be admired, but squeezed of life, passion and commitment. For example, when I told my post-graduate daughter the anonymised details from the student's story, she rushed to her Urban Studies shelf and pressed upon me one of her favourite reads. This was a moving assertion of the relevance of vulnerability in intellectual life, "... of the possibility that a personal voice, if creatively used, can lead the reader, not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues." [Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1996, p14]

'Vulnerable' is not what comes to mind when reading through quality assessment guidelines (although, ironically, it is exactly what many of us feel during audits and assessments!). Yet, many of the most creative pieces of student work are those which have learnt to be confident about uncertainty, ie "I gradually learned to be whoever

I needed to be in each circumstance. ... I understand the qualities required to be a good Social Worker; I also see what it is that makes an inadequate Social Worker. But, more crucially, I now have a better understanding of myself; of who I am, who I was, and what I need to be when I study, and interact with, a diversity of people in a multitude of circumstances."

[Second year Social Policy undergraduate essay, after a split field placement in two hospital settings]

Benchmarks and Progress Files – for what? Pete Alcock's admirably succinct account of the Social Policy benchmarking process (*SPA News*, Feb/March 2001) repeatedly asks us to 'pay attention' (eg to values, in the last of his 6 bullet-points). I can remember being told to do that a thousand, thousand times at school; usually there was a crisp preface along the lines of 'Sit up' or 'Shut up'. Absolutely right; just as my fat dictionary notes, we must engineer a "Concentrated direction of the mind ..." (*Collins English Dictionary*, Glasgow, Harper Collins, 1994, p97)

But, as we respond to the clamour of audit and pay attention to benchmarks, can we also do two things? Firstly, can we work to a *wider curriculum*? Can we creatively respond not just to the new vocational trimmings of classes in CV construction and career preparation, but also to the landscapes within and beyond work experience, far away from most professional curriculum discourse, yet in the epicentre of most students' lives.

Secondly, can we create a *deeper curriculum*? Can we embrace the re-emphasised cognitive ingredients and core skills, but then explore and accredit all those "... efforts to map an intermediate space we can't quite define yet, a borderland between passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and autobiography, art and life."

[Ruth Behar, op cit, p174]

Can we? Oh, by the way, that student I mentioned in the second paragraph, he's writing a dissertation about his experiences; wish him luck.

Duncan Scott, University of Manchester

In the October/November 2000 issue of *SPA News* you published an article based on an interview that Robert Page conducted with Vic George and myself. In the course of our discussion I described *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy* as a "superb collection of case studies" and "an original work of intellectual synthesis".

It has since been drawn to my attention that I omitted the names of some of the authors and gave its title incorrectly. The full list of authors is: Phoebe Hall, Hilary Land, Roy Parker and Adrian Webb. The correct title is as stated above.

I apologise for these errors which were entirely my fault.

Yours



Bob Pinker, LSE

Problematic Substance Use and the Young Homeless

In October 2000, the homeless once again received widespread media coverage. The homelessness 'tsar', Louise Casey, claimed that giving cash to beggars was misplaced goodwill. In a controversial campaign, a £240,000 advertising blitz urged people not to give to the homeless on the streets but instead to donate to recognised charities at collection points in pubs and shops. One of the driving forces behind the campaign was that the homeless may spend money on drugs or alcohol. Unsurprisingly, this campaign was severely criticised by some, although not all, of the agencies who work with the homeless as a simplistic and offensive campaign. These agencies highlighted the many problems homeless drug users face in accessing appropriate support and suggested that the political focus should be on addressing these problems. They also highlighted the problems of distinguishing between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' homeless, suggesting it would ultimately disadvantage all homeless people. The debate was largely grounded in professional experience about the lived realities of working with the young homeless rather than rigorous research. Whilst the panoply of health and social needs of the homeless have been identified in a number of studies, few studies have explored in detail the links between substance use and homelessness.

In January 2001, we (Emma Wincup and Gemma Buckland, University of Kent at Canterbury, and Rhianon Bayliss, Cardiff University) began work on an exploratory eighteen month study which will seek to determine patterns of substance use (tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, and illicit use of prescribed medication, over-the-counter remedies and solvents) amongst homeless people, focusing on those under 25. The involvement of the young homeless in substance use will be analysed against a backdrop of their involvement in other risky behaviours which may impact on health. Young people's pathways to homelessness and substance use are complex, and we will seek to explore these with young people themselves. In particular we will aim to highlight other risk factors besides homelessness which make them vulnerable to substance misuse. Studies have suggested that young homeless people have limited access to drugs information, drug services and health services in general. We will consider potential barriers with both young people and those who work with them and suggest ways of overcoming these barrier. The above research questions will

be addressed through interviews and ethnographic observation in four geographical locations across England and Wales leading to the generation of qualitative and quantitative data.

A plethora of policies have been launched between 1998 and 2000 in England and Wales which are relevant to our analysis of problematic substance use and the young homeless. They are broad in scope and many relate to promoting health and social inclusion. Whilst some of these policies can potentially overcome some of the difficulties experienced by the young homeless, others may prove detrimental to the well-being of this particularly vulnerable group. Examples here might include recent announcements that hostel accommodation is to be conditional upon joining education and training schemes; the zero tolerance approach to begging which might lead to offending and the Alcohol Action Plan. The latter focuses on under-age drinking, public drunkenness and the prevention of alcohol-related crime. The high visibility of young homeless drinkers may mean that they are targeted by the police and susceptible to being arrested. Given the complexity of problem substance use and youth homeless as social problems, many policies are relevant. The two most significant ones are discussed below.

In April 1998, *Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain* was launched which is the Government's 10 Year Strategy for tackling drug misuse. The strategy identifies the homeless as one group at particular risk of developing patterns of problematic substance use. Both focus also on the young (i.e. the under 25s) and dedicate one of its four aims to helping young people resist substance misuse to achieve their full potential in society. Action promised which may impact on the young homeless includes appropriate and specific prevention interventions for at risk groups; improvements to the range and quality of treatment services for the under 25s and promoting access to specific support services for young people.

In 1999, the Rough Sleepers Unit was established and published a national strategy for reducing the number of rough sleepers, *Coming in from the Cold*. The strategy promised a radical new approach to helping vulnerable rough sleepers off the street, rebuilding the lives of former rough sleepers and preventing new rough sleepers of tomorrow. It was recognised that young people by virtue of their age were vulnerable and included specific proposals to help them, for example the provision of emergency accommodation and family mediation. Those who misuse drugs and alcohol were defined as a vulnerable group and the need for appropriate support and help for this group

emphasised. Initiatives flowing from this include specialist workers, funding for extra services and the creation of a Homelessness and Drugs Unit within DrugScope. The strategy also recognised that rough sleepers with physical or mental health problems have traditionally had poor access to health care and measures to address this have included audits of primary care provision, some additional resources and training for frontline voluntary sector staff around mental health issues.

We hope that our findings will feed into future policy by highlighting good practice, making recommendations for appropriate and accessible treatment services and offering suggestions for good quality targeted prevention activity based on evidence of identified need. Other researchers have noted that many of the policy proposals in the homelessness field have lacked robust supporting evidence. We hope to address this with regard to problem substance use amongst the young homeless.

Dr Emma Wincup
School of Social Policy, Sociology and
Social Research
University of Kent at Canterbury

ATD Fourth World: Participation Works

Those movements pushing for the participation of people at the receiving end of government action “are creating a new vision of social policy,” as Peter Beresford, Professor of Social Policy, Brunel University, wrote in *SPA News* recently (October/November 1999).

One of those movements, ATD Fourth World, has recently published a report, *Participation Works: Involving people in poverty in policy making*, which details the methods and findings of its Public Debate Project.

The Public Debate Project

The project, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, among others, developed out of ATD Fourth World’s work over 30 years in the UK with people living in persistent poverty. Its objectives were three-fold: to enable people living in long-term poverty to take part in the public debate; to have their contribution valued by others; and to influence policy-makers at a national level.

Its premise is that people who face daily the realities of living in poverty and who are on the receiving end of anti-poverty and welfare legislation and strategies, have a unique understanding of what works and what does not. They, therefore, have a contribution to make to discussions concerning proposed policies.

Furthermore, initiatives which seek to reach out to the most disadvantaged people are instructive in showing how to build truly democratic and inclusive systems.

The Prime Minister has committed the Government to ending child poverty by 2020, and the consultation document ‘National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal’ shows the efforts being made to engage with local people. However, as the report *Participation Works* details, there are no easy answers to the notoriously difficult question of how to involve those people for whom rejection and exclusion are a daily experience.

During its three years, the Public Debate Project brought people living in poverty face-to-face with MPs, government ministers and civil servants, through its policy forums and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty, which ATD Fourth World was instrumental in founding. But this did not happen by magic, it would not have been possible if the trust of the participants had not been gained through many years of on-going contact and support.

There were 20 people from London and the South East who were at the core of the project. Others from further afield in England and Scotland were involved on particular occasions, making a total of 70 people, all of whom have direct experience of poverty. Most of these people had known ATD Fourth World for some years, many through its family support work, others through its cultural workshops and family respite stays at Frimhurst, its centre in the Surrey countryside. It was this base of belief and understanding that enabled the participants to develop their skills through training seminars in order to put forward their views in formal settings.

As well as an environment which fosters self-confidence, other conditions are necessary for participation to work, and are detailed in the report. The process must be flexible, which means being creative about the way we get together and how we encourage others to contribute to a discussion. It requires a very deep commitment, because participation is a time-consuming and resource-intensive process.

The report also details some of the barriers to participation. These include physical obstacles such as ill health, disability and lack of energy and time when the struggle to live day to day becomes over-whelming, as well as the conviction, borne of experience, that they have nothing important to say, that they will not be listened to and that, in general, the sphere of politics and policy is beyond them or irrelevant to them. There is also the question of the language used in discussions being too complicated or inaccessible.

Report Launched

Participation Works was launched at the Houses of Parliament in July with the Rt Hon Dr Mo Mowlam MP, Chair of the Ministerial Network on Social Exclusion.

On this occasion, Speaking for ATD Fourth World, Tricia McConalogue said, "If you want to understand poverty's effects, then you have to speak to us. We have a lifetime of experience and we understand poverty because we are living it every day, but people don't usually ask our opinions and when politicians get it wrong, the most vulnerable are the worst affected and that pushes us further away."

Chris Lawrence-Pietroni of Charter 88 spoke about his experiences of attending the All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty along with representatives from the Public Debate Project. "It was through these meetings, and by collaborating with men and women living with poverty, that I began to understand what the word 'participation' actually means. Those discussions were some of the most difficult, but ultimately some of the most stimulating and enlightening that I have ever taken part in." He went on to describe 'Participation Works' as "a radical agenda both for the way in which we go about eradicating poverty and for the way in which we "do" democracy."

Policy Findings

Participation Works brings together the concrete policy proposals raised during the Public Debate Project. Subjects looked at are: education; welfare reform; access to culture; and family support, fostering and adoption. They are a testimony to the coalition of skills and perspectives which is necessary to create social policy, the participants brought raw experience with them and it was with the support of project workers that these practical suggestions were drawn up. In each subject area, the report makes clear that poverty is not just a question of a lack of money but is a complex mesh of life circumstances where the pulling on one strand has an impact on all the others.

Certain aspects of Government policy are highlighted where they are having the reverse effect of what is the stated intention. For example, one participant noted, "League tables encourage the middle classes to move their kids out of certain areas. If you haven't got the money to do the same with your child, you enter the school system thinking you've sentenced your child to a bad education."

A Human Rights Approach

Participation Works calls on the Government to recognise, as the United Nations has, that poverty denies access to, for example, adequate

health care, education and housing, and is an obstacle to a person fully developing their potential. In other words poverty undermines fundamental human rights.

The report asserts that, "A Government sensitive to old left caricatures of 'rights without responsibilities' is correct to assert that the two go hand-in-hand. However, the danger is over-compensation and imbalance towards the take-up of responsibilities. The Government must face the fact that rights access must be in place first, if individuals are ever to be consistently able to take up their 'rightful' responsibilities."

Making Participation Work

Participation Works offers a blueprint for how people living in poverty can be included in the policy making process. It reviews methods used, the necessary conditions for, and the barriers to, participation, as well as offering concrete policy proposals.

It concludes, "This report demonstrates that the case for the involvement of those personally experiencing poverty, in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy is not based on a patronising 'generosity'; rather it is rooted in the reality that people in poverty are all too aware of their circumstances, they have ideas regarding policy improvement, and are actively seeking to share this expertise. A guaranteed role for them would energise the desperately needed shift from crisis-led to preventative anti-poverty work in the UK."

If you are interested in finding out more information about the work of ATD Fourth World please contact John Penet, National Co-ordinator: ATD Fourth World, 48 Addington Square, London SE5 7LB, Tel: 020 7703 3231, Fax: 020 7252 4276, Email: atd.uk@ukonline.co.uk

Announcing the Launch of a New Centre for Research to Study Socially Inclusive Services

As Government policy stresses the importance of joined-up action, inter-agency working and community empowerment, a new Research Centre has been established in Edinburgh to provide a national centre of expertise on issues of social inclusion in local private and public services. The School of Planning and Housing in Edinburgh College of Art, in association with the School of Management in Heriot-Watt University, has been awarded a Research Development Grant of nearly £0.5m by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) to

establish the **Centre for Research into Socially Inclusive Services (CRSIS)**. This will create an interdisciplinary centre to stimulate, support, undertake and disseminate research into the provision and use of local private and public services in deprived areas. Key themes of the Centre include the analysis of financial exclusion, retailing and social exclusion and local public service provision. The Centre aims to raise understanding of the issues of social inclusion in the sphere of service access and consumption to inform policy in Scotland and the UK.

To mark the designation of the Centre a launch event took place on Tuesday 8 May 2001, held in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh. Among the key note speakers who addressed the various

research and policy questions surrounding service inclusion and social justice were Margaret Curran, Deputy Minister for Social Justice in the Scottish Executive, and Professor Glen Bramley, Director of the new Centre.

If you or your organisation would like further information regarding the Centre's activities, please contact the CRSIS Director, Professor Glen Bramley, at the address below, or visit our web site: <http://www.crsis.eca.ac.uk>

**Prof. Glen Bramley, CRSIS Director,
School of Planning and Housing,
Edinburgh College of Art / Heriot Watt
University, 79 Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1
2HJ. Tel: 0131 221 6174, e-mail: crisis@eca.ac.uk.**

Urban Studies

News from the Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow

New Research

Neighbourhood Research Resource Centre (NRRC)

The Department has been awarded funds to establish a Neighbourhood Research Resource Centre (NRRC) under the ESRC's Evidence-Based Policy and Practice (EBPP) Initiative. The new Centre is due to commence in April 2001 and is a collaboration with the University of Bristol's School for Policy Studies and will create a new capacity to inform neighbourhood renewal policies with summaries and evaluations of new and existing research on neighbourhood processes. The NRRC will be co-directed by Ade Kearns (Glasgow) and Ray Forrest (Bristol). More information on the work of the NRRC will appear in future editions of *Network* and it is intended that the Centre has its own web-site. In the meantime, please contact Ade Kearns (A.J.Kearns@socsci.gla.ac.uk) or Ray Forrest (r.forrest@bristol.ac.uk) for more information.

The Role of Housing Systems in Safeguarding Social Cohesion

Led by the Austrian-based Centre for Urban and Regional Research, the Department is a member of a consortium that has been successful in securing funding from the European Commission. The project aims to answer questions about the extent that the various housing provision systems contribute to reducing the risks of poverty and the extent that they are able to cope with the current transformation of family and demographic structures. The project will also consider the extent that the various housing provision systems contribute to reducing the emerging dangers in many urban areas resulting

from increasing social inequality and international migration or to what extent do they increase these dangers? What measures within the competence of housing systems could reduce problems arising from increasing risks of poverty, the transformation of family and demographic structures and growing social and ethnic inequality? The Glasgow team will be led by Mark Stephens (m.stephens@socsci.gla.ac.uk) and will include Peter Kemp and Gwilym Pryce.

Recently completed projects

Changing Housing Demand in Glasgow

Social renting in Glasgow contracted by 20% between 1981 and 1997. The overall demand for social housing in the city has fallen (measured crudely by waiting lists) and Glasgow City Council is concerned that some estates confront low demand. In response to uncertainty about the future of demand in Glasgow and in the wider context of the proposed stock transfer of the City's public housing, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Homes commissioned the Department of Urban Studies to carry out two demand projects operating at different spatial scales. The model, unique to the UK, enables the analyst to forecast demand for housing in Glasgow and its contiguous suburban local authorities from 1996 to 2009. It is also possible to simulate different scenarios and to disaggregate the effects between tenure and the core city and suburbs. The model suggests that by 2009 the overall level of social rented housing demand in Glasgow will be 116,500 households but may be lower (108,000) or higher (127,000) depending on economic and policy outcomes in the intervening period. The model suggests that social housing demand would fall in Glasgow by 18.1% of the 1996 level. All of the reports are available from Glasgow City Housing at Wheatley House, 25

Cochrane Street Glasgow G1 1HL or Scottish Homes, Highlander House, 58 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 7PA.

Attitudes to Council Housing

The future of council housing is now being questioned and seems less certain than before. The recent housing Green Papers for England and Scotland envisage that, if tenants vote in favour of it, much of the existing stock of council housing will gradually be transferred to housing associations. Peter Kemp examined public attitudes to council housing. If they had a free choice, the great majority (87 per cent) of people would rather not rent at all and would choose to buy their home. In reality, however, some households have little option but to rent their accommodation, either in the short term or permanently. The survey found that preferences about landlords vary considerably according to people's current tenure. The majority of tenants would rather continue with their current type of landlord. The most 'loyal' are those currently renting from a local authority, among whom a clear majority (about eight in ten) would rather rent from this landlord if given a choice. Of the remainder, two thirds would rather rent from a housing association and a third from a private landlord. For more details contact Peter Kemp (p.kemp@socsci.gla.ac.uk).

Cars Give Us a Lift

Why do we like our cars so much? Is there any prospect of reversing the trend to higher levels of car ownership and use? These questions were addressed in the Transport Housing and Well-Being (THAW) Study, funded by the ESRC. With the findings of this research project we can consider what the benefits of car ownership are, and also reveal car owners' perceptions of public transport. Two main advantages of car use were highlighted: again, greater privacy (identified by 63% more car users than public transport users); and a greater sense of control (identified by 47% more car users). Given that cars seem to offer

psychological benefits to their users, and that car users have such negative views about public transport, the prospects of converting more people to use public transport in urban areas do not look good. Major investment in public transport services are required to improve their ability to offer privacy, safety, and a sense of reliability and control. Available FREE from the Department: The Thaw Report: Findings of a Study of Transport, Housing and Well Being in the West of Scotland.

New Teaching Programmes

Masters in Urban Research – This will be a tailored full-time and part-time urban studies research training degree for research students and for those simply interested in undertaking a postgraduate qualification in urban research. For further information, contact Kenneth Gibb. Tel: 0141 330 6891 or e-mail: K.Gibb@socsci.gla.ac.uk

Masters in Public Policy Research – The aim of this course is to prepare students in the use of research for public policy. It will be suitable for graduates wishing to gain a higher degree in social science research or pursue a career with a public agency. It will also be of interest to graduates in public sector organisations who are managing research or evaluating public policy. For further information please contact Ade Kearns. Tel: 0141 330 5049 or e-mail: A.J.Kearns@socsci.gla.ac.uk

MPhil in Urban Management – This will be aimed at practitioners in housing, urban regeneration and neighbourhood management. There will be compulsory core courses in Strategic Management and Urban Governance and a compulsory work-based project. Proposed options include urban regeneration; local economic development; project management; partnership working; property management; housing management; housing finance; housing development; housing authority as enabler and community participation. For further information contact Suzie Scott. Tel: 0141 339 6162 or e-mail: S.Scott@socsci.gla.ac.uk.

'In Brief' and 'New Publications' will, in future, be edited by Stuart Duffin. Items for inclusion in the October issue should be sent to Stuart by 20th August 2001.

Stuart Duffin, Citizen's Income Study Centre, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AS.

Tel: 0207 955 6530, Fax: 0207 955 7453,

Email: s.duffin@lse.ac.uk

New Labour and Social Policy

With a General Election possible at any time between now and next May, but likely to be sooner rather than later (indeed it may have been announced by the time you read this), *SPA News* is pleased to publish this collection of specially commissioned articles on *New Labour and Social Policy*. The 36 contributions, from distinguished academics – all members of the Social Policy Association – assess New Labour's policy achievements during their first term.

Contributors have *not* been asked to identify the most important social policy achievement of Labour's first term, but rather to write about one policy achievement which, in their view, is important and worthy of being recorded. The selection of 'achievements' is broad, and includes major pieces of legislation (for example, the National Minimum Wage being selected by five commentators), and other national policies and strategies (including the targeting of health inequalities, the attack on poverty and social exclusion, redistribution, employment policies, benefit changes, tax credits, the national Aids strategy, the introduction of numeracy and literacy hours and education maintenance allowances, mental health promotion, neighbourhood renewal); to considerations of policy change for

Scotland and international development; to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (selected by 3 contributors). Others have focused on new initiatives concerned with care work, care regulation and care financing, the rights of disabled people, the modernisation of social services, developments in the voluntary sector, while a few have focused on more 'hidden' changes (hidden to social policy academics, not to the people who benefit from them), such as new standards for public libraries and maximum fair rents.

This assessment of Labour's social policy achievements is not only broad and varied but it is often a highly critical account. Indeed, part of the brief for contributors was to also identify a priority for the incoming Government. Thus, the assessment of achievement is also tied up with contributors' critiques of what more needs to be done and why. New Labour has made some very real and important achievements in its first term. But the messages from these contributions are clear: there is no room for complacency and far more has yet to be achieved if New Labour is to fulfil its own aspirations for a better, more decent and modern society. And what's more, there are numerous suggestions here for how this might be done.

**Professor Saul Becker, Editor,
Loughborough University**

The Scotland Act

Michael Adler

Although, strictly speaking, the Scotland Act 1998 does not qualify as a 'social policy achievement', it has led to so many important social policy achievements in Scotland that I hope it will be allowed to count. The Scotland Act established the Scottish Parliament, which can now legislate on a wide range of non-reserved matters that include many areas of social policy including education at all levels, health and social care, housing, civil law and criminal justice. In the first elections which took place in May 1999, electors were asked to cast two votes – one to elect 73 constituency members under the familiar first-past-the post rules and the other to identify 56 'top up' members from party lists in each of the eight regions. This procedure was intended to produce a distribution of seats that would reflect the distribution of the votes cast for each party better than the Westminster Parliament does, and make it very difficult for a single party to obtain an overall majority. This is indeed how it turned out – the Labour Party won the largest number of seats but not enough to give it an

overall majority and formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

The Liberal Democrats contested the election with a manifesto commitment to oppose the introduction of tuition fees in higher education and, as a condition of joining the coalition government, insisted on the establishment of a committee to look into the issue. In the event, the Cubie Committee on Student Finance recommended a system of graduate endowments, whereby students do not pay 'up front' fees but make a contribution to the costs of higher education after graduation, and this principle was accepted by the government. The Liberal Democrats were also committed to implementing the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Long-term Care of the Elderly that the nursing and care costs of elderly people should be met by the state. The Labour Party was opposed to meeting everyone's care costs on the grounds that many old people can afford to do so themselves but, faced by the prospect of defeat in Parliament, they have had to concede on this issue too. Although I used

to be very sceptical about proportional representation and coalition governments, these achievements, which have resulted in the introduction of more civilised social policies than those which have been introduced south of the border, have made me change my mind. For these two

measures, and for much more besides, we have the Scotland Act to thank.

Professor Michael Adler, University of Edinburgh

A National AIDS and Sexual Health Strategy

Peter Aggleton

Until recently, the UK was one of a few countries to successfully 'manage' its rates of HIV infection. Reported new infections were relatively low and there was evidence that the epidemic remained largely confined to those groups first affected (mainly gay and other homosexually active men and injecting drug users). Somewhat paradoxically, the UK is one of the few countries in the world never to have had a National HIV/AIDS Programme.

When Labour were elected to power, they announced that they would develop an HIV/AIDS strategy to build upon what had been learned, and to ensure that the epidemic remained under control. A high powered group of clinicians, health service managers, government officials and voluntary sector workers were assembled and has been meeting regularly for nearly two years. After numerous delays, we are still awaiting the publication of this strategy. In spring 2000, a more ambitious goal was announced – namely the Government's commitment to developing a national sexual health strategy for England. A more overarching approach was felt necessary. There is now talk of this document being published *after* the General Election.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, recently said that 'Collective experience with HIV/AIDS has evolved to the point where it is now possible to state with confidence that it is technically, politically and financially feasible to contain HIV/AIDS, and dramatically reduce its spread and impact.' Why, therefore, were there more HIV diagnoses in 1999 in the UK than in any year since 1985, when HIV testing first became widely available? And why, moreover, should the PHLS Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre recently have to warn that

the reported number of new infections for the year 2000 will be the highest ever?

Dr Angus Nicoll, Director of the PHLS Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre recently said: 'HIV prevention efforts among gay men have largely stalled and there is a danger that HIV transmission will start returning to its high levels of the early 1980s'. Moreover, in both 1999 and 2000, the number of new HIV diagnoses amongst heterosexuals was higher than among gay and bisexual men. Of the 2,868 reported new diagnoses in 2000, 1,315 were heterosexually-acquired compared with 1,096 amongst gay and bisexual men.

Just as concerning is evidence that rates of other STIs are also on the increase. In England, rates of gonorrhoea rose by 30% in a single year among heterosexual men and women. The increases have been greatest for gonorrhoea among teenagers where increases reached 40%. Significant rises were also seen for gonorrhoea among homosexual men of most age groups, and among this group there were particularly worrying outbreaks of syphilis.

The time for talking is over. We need concrete action now. Let's publish the report and move forward. It would be ironic indeed were HIV/AIDS to have been more effectively controlled under successive Conservative administrations – with all their anxieties about sex and relationships – than under a Labour administration which acknowledges the need for strategic intervention in this important field.

Professor Peter Aggleton, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

The National Minimum Wage

Pete Alcock

The introduction of a national minimum wage was a key manifesto commitment for Labour in 1997 and they moved quite quickly to implement it within two years of their election victory. The level at which the wage was fixed, £3.60 (later £3.70) an hour was not as high as some had

hoped, although it is estimated that over 1.5 million employees, mainly women, have benefited from its introduction. However, it is the principle rather than the practice which make this such an important achievement for social policy. Although minimum wages are common in

many other developed countries there had never been an enforced national minimum in the UK; and previous governments, most notably the Thatcher and Major administrations, had voiced strong opposition to the idea predicting the direst of economic consequences, including increased unemployment and business failure. But Labour had the courage of their convictions. The economic disasters, of course, did not materialise – and now Shadow Chancellor Michael Portillo has even come out as a supporter and has pledged to maintain a national minimum.

The policy landscape has thus been changed, and the implications of the change are, potentially at least, of fundamental importance to social policy. Throughout most of the last century or so liberal policy making to tackle inequality and promote greater social justice has been channelled through instruments aimed at redistribution – taking money in taxation from those that have and giving it as benefits or credits to those that have not (or in the 1980s the reverse of this). This redistribution has achieved much in reducing inequalities, if not (as we often argue) as much as many in the social policy community might want. However, redistribution is just that – it

operates post hoc on an already unequal distribution of income and wealth. This courts the potentially hostile reaction which has dogged redistribution policy since the Thatcher years – it is taking ‘my’ money and giving it to someone else. It also means that social policy is in effect ‘mopping up’ after the inequities created by economic markets. Economic performance can be influenced by intervention in markets (not just a Keynesian idea). So too can social justice, and this is where the national minimum wage is such an important achievement. It places intervention in markets onto the agenda of policies for the pursuit of social justice; and once there it will be difficult to remove – as Portillo appears to have recognised.

Thus the national minimum wage has significantly altered the rules of the social justice game. Like a wedge it could perhaps in the future be driven further into anti-social market activity – maximum wages have also been campaigned for in the past (David Beckham beware!). And so the policy priority for the future, whoever now wins the next election, can be boiled down to two words – raise it!

Professor Pete Alcock, University of Birmingham

Mental Health Promotion

Marian Barnes

So – put yourself on the line time. What am I prepared to identify as an achievement of the Labour government elected in 1997? I want to identify a specific policy which is important in its own right, but which is also indicative of a broader change in the way in which it is possible to address policy issues. The particular point is Standard one of the National Service Framework for Mental Health:

‘Health and social services should:

- promote mental health for all, working with individuals and communities
- combat discrimination against individuals and groups with mental health problems, and promote their social inclusion.’

Health promotion generally, and mental health promotion in particular has had a very low profile. Power bases within the NHS have always been weighted in favour of those who claim to ‘cure’ not those who aim to ‘prevent’ poor health. The Tory government’s focus on the architecture of the NHS and the competitive ethos of the market in health care sidelined any notion that it might be the responsibility of the state to ensure positive mental health, or to act to limit the stigmatisation of those experiencing mental health problems.

Whilst an adviser to Tony Blair, during a visit to an academic department not very far from my own, was heard to mutter disparagingly about

public health weirdos coming out from the woodwork, the reality is that the profile of health promotion and prevention has been raised substantially. The symbolic inclusion of mental health promotion as the first NSF standard marks a legitimisation of action that was previously regarded as peripheral if not misguided. It becomes possible to secure money for regeneration projects which have specific mental health promotion objectives. Action to combat discrimination becomes one focus for assessing the performance of health improvement programmes.

So what’s the priority for the next government? Whilst mental health promotion is at last getting some of the attention it deserves, the government has come up with proposals for the reform of the 1983 Mental Health Act which arguably reinforce the discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems. People seeking support before a crisis develops are still being turned away by mental health services. How about a Mental Health Act which includes rights to the support necessary to avoid the use of compulsion? This could make a real contribution to a reduction in the exclusion experienced by people who have been ‘sectioned’.

Dr Marian Barnes, University of Birmingham

Making it Real

Peter Beresford

In social policy the devil is always in the detail. That's why it is important to focus on what new policies actually mean to people on the ground. New Labour has just done something that is of fundamental importance to tens of thousands of tenants registered with fair rents. I know because I am one of them. It's made no headlines and no Tory government could be expected to do the same. The government's successful appeal to the House of Lords means that the 1999 Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order, which was quashed by the Court of Appeal after being challenged by landlords, has now been reinstated. This now restricts rent rises to a formula based on the Retail Price Index. It means that people who live in areas where house prices and market rents have soared will no longer be forced out of their homes as their 'fair rents' are hiked through the roof. This is one case where government has listened to people's concerns and made a real difference.

It highlights the importance of government taking the same in-depth approach to achieving the user-led policy and provision prioritised in new programmes, policy documents and legislation. They used to say that English love stories ended with marriage, while French ones started with it – and then took us on a lively journey of affairs, reconciliations and estrangements. Commitments to participation, partner-

ship and empowerment – and all the other buzz words of our age – are just the beginning of the story, not the end of it. What we need from a new government is a strategic approach to involving citizens and service users organisations which makes it possible to turn the participatory rhetoric into reality.

Much work around partnership and empowerment so far has been of the quick and dirty kind. That sadly is the route to dashed hopes and expectations. What is now required instead is for service users and user controlled organisations to be involved early, equally, systematically and coherently in defining, shaping, monitoring and evaluating the agendas of social care, health, education, benefits and other key social policies. This demands much hard work and trust building with service users and their organisations. So far we have seen more populism than truly participative policy. The results have often been damaging and divisive, demonising groups like asylum seekers, lone parents and mental health service users and creating only one real beneficiary – the political right. The real priority now must be to get serious about user involvement and to remember that if tabloids are for anything it's reading, not policymaking.

Professor Peter Beresford, Brunel University

The Real Increases in the Income Support Scales for Children

Jonathan Bradshaw

It may seem an arcane choice but the increases in the Income Support scales for children are for me the most important social policy act of the Labour Government. They were announced in the April budget 1999 and implemented from 23 October 2000. Up to then the scale rates for children had been increased more or less since 1980 in line with price inflation. This is one of the most important reasons for the huge increase in child poverty and inequality that we have experienced over the last 20 years. The children of parents on benefits have been left behind. From October 23 2000 the scales were increased from £26.60 for a child under 16 to £30.95. An increase of 16 per cent – well above the rate of either price or wage inflation.

Nearly one in five children in the UK is living in families dependent on Income Support (or income tested Job Seeker's Allowance). All the evidence suggests that they are the most deprived of all our children. They constitute over

half of children living in families with incomes below half the average.

Yet until the 1999 budget the new Government had done nothing to improve their living standards. Indeed by abolishing the lone parent premium in Income Support (for new claimants) they had effectively cut their living standards. All the rhetoric of Ministers in the first two years was that the only effective way of reducing child poverty was to get the parents into employment. In-work measures including the New Deals, Working Families Tax Credit, Childcare Tax Credit and real increases in Child Benefits were all announced to help poor families in employment but nothing for children on Income Support.

The Family Budget Unit estimated in January 1998 that a couple with two children under 11 needed £154.04 per week to achieve a low cost but adequate standard of living. Income Support at that time paid £121.75 – a shortfall of

£32.29. The FBU low costs but adequate budget standard would have been £169.27 in September 2000. On October 23 the Income Support paid to the family was increased to £158.10 – a substantial closing of the gap between the Income Support scales and the FBU standard. The difference is now £11.17.

There is still some way to go. The April 1 2001 increase is no more than the rate of inflation.

The level of the Integrated Child Credit is now the key issue. But that one inflation busting increase did more than anything else that the Government has done to convince me that they might be redeemable – after a really awful start.

Professor Jonathan Bradshaw, University of York

Who Are We? New Labour, 'Race' and a Modern British People

John Clarke

Perhaps the most significant act of the 1997 Labour government was to establish an inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's treatment of the Stephen Lawrence case. The police's failure to investigate his murder effectively, their demeaning treatment of his family and friends, and their reluctance to explore the case's – and their own – racial dynamics had given this case an immense public and political charge. More than anything else, it came to stand for the deeply troubled history of the relationship between black people, policing and the nation.

Labour's recognition of the practical and symbolic weight of the Lawrence case was important. Their readiness to establish the inquiry sent out strong messages about their view of Britain as a 'modern society'. It signalled a shift in the place of 'race' in contemporary British politics – encompassing a recognition of the dangers of racism in social life and in public institutions; a readiness to be critical of institutional failures. The inquiry created a space to talk about racism as a formative part of British public life. Its critical findings were augmented by Labour's establishment of a legal category of 'hate crimes' (including racial hatred) and new duties laid on public organisations to combat racism and discrimination. These processes changed some critical

dimensions of the relationship between 'race' and British public culture.

So why am I left feeling let down and frustrated? Partly it is because New Labour's view of race remains a limited and impoverished one – oscillating between strong commitments against racism and 'blaming the victim' approaches to social inequality and exclusion. Partly it is because Blair's 'forces of conservatism' constantly choose 'race' as one of the sites around which to fight back – whether in the popular media or the responses of the police to the Lawrence inquiry. But mostly, I think it is because New Labour can see no connection between their 'domestic' anti-racism and their response to migrants and asylum seekers. The constantly racialised treatment of the 'Others' who seek to enter the UK has been one of the most depressing features of the last four years. It has poisoned public discourse, degraded those who are subject to it, fuelling xenophobic and racist cultures, and revealed a grotesque and protectionist nationalism that should have no place in conceptions of a 'modern society'. We could do with some 'joined up thinking' here.

Professor John Clarke, Open University

'Race' and New Labour

Gary Craig

The death of Stephen Lawrence revealed the extent of racism within one major public agency, the Metropolitan Police. The major – and important – political response to Stephen's death was the Macpherson Inquiry. The central conclusion of the inquiry was that the police were open to the charge of institutional racism – *a collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin* – and the 70 recommendations of the Inquiry were

largely for police forces everywhere to challenge racist practices within their own organisations. Some of the Inquiry's conclusions spilled over into more general questions of the provision of social and welfare services. Local education authorities and school governors were urged to develop anti-racist strategies, and local government and other bodies encouraged to build anti-racist strategies founded on an appreciation of cultural diversity, informing community safety and crime and disorder partnership working.

However, these other relatively weak recommendations were effectively obscured until fairly recently by discussion of the role of the police. Additionally, the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence was, sadly, not unique; the Institute of Race Relations has documented at least 24 racially-motivated murders in Britain since 1991; and the performance of police forces around the country in responding to the Macpherson recommendations have been, at best, uneven.

Although the prominence achieved by the Lawrence case was partly due to the abject failure of the police to prosecute and most of all by the campaign led by Stephen's parents, the government played an important role in ensuring that the Inquiry was held, that its recommendations have been debated publicly and in now requiring, through legislation (the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000), effective from April 1st 2001, that every public body has a duty to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity. Local authorities, universities, schools and housing

organisations, will now be required to monitor the ethnic composition of their workforce and assess the impact on racial equality of new policies and services.

Three tasks are critical now for a future government. One is to ensure that the effectiveness of this legislation is monitored and that strong action is taken against those public bodies which fail to act appropriately, if the legislation is not to go the way of past feeble race relations powers; the second is for the government to extend this duty to private sector organisations - why should Railtrack, to take an example entirely at random, be free from this requirement?; and the third, is for government itself to show, by its actions, that it will provide a strong lead. Many of the institutions of government are as institutionally racist as the Met was shown to be; and the government's role as watchdog will be fatally flawed if it is seen itself to fail in this area.

Professor Gary Craig, University of Hull

Employment Policy

Alan Deacon

New Labour's most significant achievement is the success of its employment policies.

The numbers in employment have risen by over a million since April 1997. Contrary to popular belief the increase is not just in part-time jobs. The biggest rise has been in full time male employees and the growth in full-time jobs for women has outstripped that of part-time jobs. Unemployment in the ILO definition has fallen by a quarter and the numbers out of work for more than a year have all but halved. Anyone who doubts what this means for individual and collective well being should look again at the accounts of mass unemployment in the 1980s provided by Adrian Sinfield, Michael Hill, and others.

It is true, of course, that unemployment was falling when New Labour took office. But inheriting a trend is not the same as sustaining it over 4 years, during which inflation has also been kept remarkably low. It is also true that global economic conditions have been benign, at least until recently. But unemployment in France is still over 9% at the height of a boom.

A more serious qualification is that worklessness has not fallen by anything like as much as unemployment, and remains desperately high in some localities. One consequence of this is that the decline in unemployment has had less impact

upon the incidence and severity of child poverty than might be expected. But even if lower unemployment is not a sufficient condition for the abolition of poverty, it is still a necessary condition. This is not just because earnings are always more likely to lift families out of poverty than are benefits. It is because increases in both the number of people in work and in their take-home pay is essential to create the headroom for increases in the level of income support benefits for children.

The most important point, however, is that New Labour has eschewed the combination of fatalism and utopianism that had characterised much left thinking on unemployment. It was a combination that argued – in effect – that governments should not do anything if it could not offer the unemployed work on the best terms and conditions, and should not introduce compulsion lest they be accused of blaming the victim. Breaking with that thinking was a bold step and one that has been largely vindicated.

The challenge for a second term is to accelerate the decline in worklessness. It will get more difficult as global conditions worsen and policies have to focus upon the harder to employ.

Professor Alan Deacon, University of Leeds

The National Minimum Wage

Hartley Dean

By introducing the National Minimum Wage (NMW) New Labour achieved an ambition that Keir Hardy had held at the turn of the twentieth century, yet which Old Labour never completely fulfilled. With Labour support, past governments had established Wages Councils to secure minimum pay in selected trades and industries (a system abolished by the Conservatives in the 1980s), but Britain stood alone among the major industrialised countries of the world in not having a statutory NMW. Yet in 1999 a Labour government finally legislated for a minimum wage that has since benefited some 1.5 million low paid workers. Two thirds of those workers have been women, and the NMW has succeeded where equal pay legislation failed in at last narrowing (albeit minimally) the gender pay gap.

The significance of the NMW is not to be underestimated. It was resisted by employers, particularly in low productivity sectors, though the overall cost in the first year was just 0.5% of the national wage bill. However, the manner of its introduction was a disappointment: first, because the government would not commit itself to regularly up-rating the level of the NMW and secondly, because the NMW was initially set at a very meagre level. In the event, the government

did make ad hoc up-ratings of the NMW from £3.60 per hour to £3.70 per hour in 2000 and to £4.10 per hour in 2001 (with lower rates for workers aged 18-21). Yet these levels compare badly with the Council of Europe's recommended 'decency threshold', which is currently equivalent to £7.39 per hour. The NMW is not a living wage and, in order to meet its declared aim of 'making work pay', New Labour has resorted to upgrading our system of means-tested in-work benefits, with the introduction of Working Families Tax Credit and, in 2003, a new Employment Tax Credit.

The evidence suggests that using tax credit systems to subsidise the payment of low wages simply locks us in to a low-wage economy. Raising the NMW on the other hand, could lift us out of it. Policy responses to economic globalisation have been shifting the cost of social protection increasingly from capital to labour. The NMW provides a mechanism for beginning to shift it back again. A priority, therefore, for a new government should be to realise the potential of the NMW by raising and sustaining it at a level at least commensurate with the European decency threshold.

Professor Hartley Dean, University of Luton

...And in Scotland?

David Donnison

After seventeen years under a regime which denied there was any poverty in Britain and did its best to suppress all talk of it – while driving more and more people into it – poverty is back on the political agenda. Full employment too. Those of us who care about these things need no longer feel like eccentric old fogeys, shouting into an unheeding wind. We still have a long way to go, as my colleagues writing in these columns will rightly remind us, but with the Treasury for the first time leading, rather than obstructing, the movement towards social justice we can hope for further progress.

Since few writing in these pages will give much thought to Scotland I'll use the rest of my space to tell how the last four years look from Glasgow. We have yet to turn around the industrial disaster which has happened on Clydeside; but, at last, this country has an unstuffy, accessible Parliament whose agenda reflects the concerns of its people. Petitions

dealing with any matter devolved to Scotland can be sent in, and many are passed on to the relevant committees who listen to the petitioners and discuss their concerns. People who actually experience poverty – not just the salaried staff of pressure groups - get to meet these committees and talk with them. The Parliament's debates appear on its web site next day, and often on television too.

If you think that means noisy populism rules, remember that we have abolished Section 28 (2a we call it) in face of fierce and well-funded opposition. Our government is being more generous than Westminster's to university students (no fees) and to elderly people (free residential care and – before long – free rail and bus travel, and efficient central heating for all of them who live in rented housing). It is also making radical reforms to feudal land laws, giving tenants of the big estates the right to bid collectively for them when they change hands.

As important in the longer run may be the proof we have been given that proportional representation and coalition government work, bringing to public attention issues and possibilities that would be suppressed by the elected

dictatorship still ruling in Westminster. Who's next for devolution and P.R.?

Professor David Donnison, University of Glasgow

Shifting Focus: Caring, Paid Work and Lone Mothers

Rosalind Edwards and Simon Duncan

New Labour has begun to recognise care as an issue in balancing employment and family life. The Government has introduced: the National Childcare Strategy; the childcare tax credit as part of the Working Families Tax Credit; extended maternity leave and pay; paternal leave – initially unpaid but now to be paid; and unpaid entitlement to Time Off For Dependents in care emergencies. This is an achievement compared with the almost hostile stance of the previous Conservative administration.

But what is noticeable is that care is only acknowledged as an issue for parents in paid work. Furthermore, while New Labour has legislated to financially support the paid work side of mothers' employment-care balance, beyond birth it has only legislated for, not financially backed, the caring side. This paradoxical 'imbalance' is most exemplified in the treatment of lone mothers. New Labour has gone furthest in shifting the balance towards treating lone mothers as workers rather than carers. First, the extra child allowances available to lone parents were cut, following proposals made by the previous Conservative government. Second, welfare to work is seen as the way forward. The New Deal for Lone Parents was introduced to channel lone mothers into paid work. Lone mothers have interviews with a personal advisor in their local job centre in order to discuss finding paid work. But lone mothers didn't flock to turn themselves from carers into workers while the scheme was voluntary. Only a low proportion saw their personal advisor, and even fewer went on to find jobs. So interviews are now becoming compulsory, and repeated rather

than one-off. Lone mothers who are not workers are being posed as workshy, rather than as carers.

One reason for lone mothers' reluctance to be involved voluntarily in the New Deal may be that they have a better idea of the costs and benefits of paid work than the government – after all, many would only have access to short-time, low paying and often unrewarding jobs. But maybe lone mothers also have a more sophisticated, less economic, view of costs and benefits. Caring for their child/ren is a prime responsibility, and this is not only work but is valuable. In this way, lone mothers are no different from partnered mothers who have the choice as to whether paid work is good for them and their children.

So, our priority for the next government is a shift to respect different definitions of good motherhood and how this links in with daycare and paid work, and to develop supportive policies rather than impose top-down prescriptions. Importantly, attention should shift from lone mothers to *all* mothers, and then to all parents. The focus should be on the social and educational benefits for children of high quality daycare, for example, rather than a means of getting lone mothers into jobs. Long hours in paid work for fathers also needs to be regarded as a problem. In other words, there needs to be a fundamental shift in how we think about productive work to include care.

Professor Rosalind Edwards, South Bank University, and Professor Simon Duncan, University of Bradford

The Macpherson Inquiry

Norman Ginsburg

The establishment of the Macpherson inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence was announced less than three months after the election. Middle England at last felt some real discomfort about racist police behaviour, which, in this case as in so many others, failed to nail the

perpetrators of a hate crime. The Macpherson report, published in February 1999, made 72 recommendations, almost all of which focus on police reform. It has contributed to a step change in the national discourse about racism in the deep structures of institutions, going far beyond the

police. Black journalist Gary Younge saw the Stephen Lawrence case as 'our Rodney King' with Macpherson shifting establishment thinking away from 'what are we going to do about these blacks?' towards 'what are we going to do about racism in our institutions?' The editor of *The Spectator*, Boris Johnson, interviewed Macpherson and found, to his apparent surprise, that he had 'begun to see things [Macpherson's] way'.

Macpherson demonstrated that routine 'colour blindness' within the management, procedures and practices of an organisation contributes to adverse outcomes for minority ethnic groups. Macpherson offered a common-sense definition of these processes as institutional racism, which is 'detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping'. The concept of institutional racism is problematic, but it is now at least recognised by a wider cross section of society. The government produced an action plan, followed up, so far, by two annual reports on its implementation. This has led to a significant strengthening of race relations

legislation, with the police being brought under its ambit for the first time, renewed efforts to get the police to 'embrace diversity' through the inspectorate and through 'best value' audit, and the establishment of a new Independent Police Complaints Commission.

For the future, New Labour must maintain and develop this momentum against resistance from within the police and other quarters. As the drama of the Lawrence case and the Macpherson hearings fades, we could return to the situation under the Conservatives when the struggle against racism was on the back foot. This danger is compounded by New Labour policies which reinforce institutional racism: the harsh new regime for asylum seekers, the extension of the anti terrorism legislation to racialised movements, the threat to jury trial, and 'freedom of information' legislation which protects secrecy within the police and criminal justice system. Undoing such measures must be a priority.

Professor Norman Ginsburg, University of North London

Numeracy and Literacy Hours

Howard Glennerster

Contrary to Chris Woodhead's outburst I would judge that one of Labour's real achievements has been the introduction of numeracy and literacy hours into our primary schools. They began as a local experiment to ensure that children in poor schools received carefully structured teaching in these basic skills. It is all too easy to be deflected from that task by all the other claims on a teacher's time in a difficult school. The Labour Government required it everywhere – much to many teachers' annoyance. The evidence is that it has worked. While it is true overall achievement standards were rising before 1997 in reading and maths, and have gone on improving, what is rarely noticed is that poor schools have been doing disproportionately better since 1997. We define "rich" schools as those in which only 5% of pupils are on free schools meals. We define "poor" schools as those in which 40% of the children are on free school meals. Since 1997 pupils in poor primary schools have raised their reading, writing and maths scores faster than those in the rich schools. They had further to go to be sure, but in maths, for example, the results are remarkable. While the median rich school improved its scores at key stage 2 (11 years old) so that 85% of children reached the expected

levels compared to 79% two years earlier, the poor schools did better. 49% of their pupils reached the expected level instead of 37% – twice the rate of improvement. A similar story holds at key stage one (7 year olds) for reading, writing and maths.

For over thirty years we have known that the UK does relatively badly for the less able and children in the poorest schools compared to Scandinavian and European countries. That phenomenon has continued despite sporadic attempts to remedy it. Let us hope these better results persist.

What more would I want? We still do not recognise the sheer scale of disadvantage under which many schools are working. Ruth Lupton's work in CASE has reminded me of that yet again. We have to compensate those schools who take poor or difficult children and work in areas of concentrated difficulty far more than this government has been prepared to do. That means weighting the school allocation formula generously for pupils' special difficulties and deprived postcode.

Professor Howard Glennerster, London School of Economics and Political Science

Targeting Health Inequalities

Hilary Graham

Hard on the heels of its election victory, the New Labour government launched a new strategy for public health. The oblique references to 'health variations' found in the policy documents of the previous Conservative administration were erased. Inequalities in health were named, shamed and described in detail. White Papers followed, confirming that public health policy is 'to narrow the health gap in childhood and throughout life between socio-economic groups'¹. It is an ambitious goal: over the last three decades, rising living standards and increasing life expectancy have been accompanied not by a narrowing, but by a widening, of these fundamental dimensions of individual welfare.

Making the reduction of health inequalities central to public health policy is an important achievement. It puts the UK in step with policy developments in and beyond Europe. But the new health strategies, like the ones which preceded them, are structured around disease outcomes: around reductions in mortality rates for cancer, heart disease, accidents and suicide. The health minister has recently announced health inequality targets for a second New Labour government. Again, however, they are set around disease outcomes and not the broader inequalities in life chances and living standards which, the government acknowledges, determine health inequalities.

My priority for the next government is to set targets, those ubiquitous drivers of expenditure and performance, for reducing these broader inequalities. The Swedish National Health Commission has provided a blueprint for this equity-oriented strategy, setting targets for reductions, not in disease and injury, but in exposure to their social determinants². The social determinants include income inequality and poverty, selected because they 'have the greatest potential for reducing the overall level *and* the social inequalities in the burden of disease'.

The New Labour government has taken a first step towards the Swedish model by setting child poverty targets for 2010 and 2020. It opens the way to the development of an equity-oriented public health strategy which, in the words of the government, addresses 'the root causes of health inequalities'³.

1. Secretary of State for Health (2000) *The NHS Plan*, London: The Stationery Office.
2. Ostlin, P and Diderichsen, F (2000) *Equity-oriented National Health Strategy for Public Health in Sweden*, Brussels: European Centre for Health Policy.
3. Secretary of State for Health (1999) *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*, London: The Stationery Office.

Professor Hilary Graham, Lancaster University

Libraries and Pensions

Dulcie Groves

One of Labour's achievements is concerned with setting public library standards.¹ From April 2001 the government will set standards for a 'comprehensive and efficient' local authority public library service. Goals include convenient and suitable location, adequate opening hours, computer access, choice of available books and materials, satisfactory book issuing and reservation, encouragement of library use and provision of appropriate levels of qualified staff.

At school and in university vacations I had the run of the wonderful post-war Cardiff central lending and reference library. 'Pink cards' cascaded into our house, signalling the arrival of new 'serious' leisure books, suggested and reserved

for two 'old' pence. For life-long education, a first-class public library service is essential. Libraries are notably popular with older people.

The London Borough of Camden (1965), my home, inaugurated an out-standing library service, now improving after decades of deterioration. A persevering reference librarian rescued me when calls to a dedicated phone line failed to produce the key 'library standards' document by post or on the advertised website. The document was eventually located on and printed off a subscribers' service unavailable to library users at large. The librarian had been trained to use this special service only the day before!

My selection of a priority for a new government is for them to earnings-link the basic state pension. Like most pensioners I devoutly wish that the government would annually uprate the basic state retirement pension in line with which-

¹Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Libraries, Information and Archives Division, *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries – Standards and Assessment*, 2001.

ever is the higher of the annual increase in earnings or prices, as intended by the 1974-9 Labour government. As an academic I regretted the early 80s Conservative decision to link to prices only. As a pensioner, I am all too aware that my £64.13p (95%) pension would be worth over £90 had the earnings-link not been broken. After a full working life as a university lecturer (and an extended education) my basic retirement pension is 25% of my combined state and USS pensions, after tax. And I'm an 'affluent' pensioner, believe you me.

Why tackle pensioner poverty via ever more means tests with heavy administrative costs?

Pensioners don't like intrusive application forms. Married women have cause to dislike the MIG and proposed 'pension credits' requiring 'couple' assessments. The poorest pensioners failed to apply for income support. Will they apply for the more generous Minimum Income Guarantee? Will the MIG discourage investment for retirement? It would be much more sensible to uprate the National Insurance pension in line with earnings increases than spend money on expensive and possibly ill-targeted 'social assistance'.

Dr Dulcie Groves, University of Lancaster

The Voluntary Sector

Margaret Harris

The 'voluntary sector' (including community, neighbourhood and self-help groups as well as social welfare service providers and all kinds of charities) has fared well in New Labour's first term. While the suspicion remains that some politicians and policy-makers still take an instrumental view of the voluntary sector (seeing it as primarily a mechanism to be used to deliver governmental policy objectives), there has been a discernible change in approach. This can be summed up as a positive respect for the sector in all its variety; an acceptance of its differences and distinctive features and a growing appreciation of its strength and weaknesses as a player in the social policy arena.

The first term began well with the appointment of Alun Michael as the government minister with responsibility for the voluntary sector. He had been personally involved with the grassroots of the sector and he oversaw the publication of a formal statement of mutual understanding by the governmental and voluntary sectors (the 'Compact'). Respect for the sector has also been reflected in the ongoing assumption that voluntary organisations and community groups will be important players in the modernising agenda and rural regeneration, as well as in area-based and issue-based initiatives such as Sure Start, New Deal for

Communities, New Deal for Young Unemployed People, Community Legal Services and Single Regeneration Budget programmes. Specific funding has been promised to encourage volunteering by older and unemployed people and to support community groups in deprived neighbourhoods.

Taken together, these various initiatives and policy approaches do seem to amount to a qualitative shift in assumptions about the role of the voluntary sector in social policy. The priority for the second term must be for New Labour to demonstrate that it not only respects the sector as a social policy player but that it is also prepared to accept it as an *independent and autonomous* player. This means accepting the risk that voluntary and community organisations will sometimes have different ideas from governmental agencies about social policy priorities and about appropriate responses to social problems.

We have heard much during New Labour's first term about the importance of 'civil society'. Now we need to be convinced that New Labour is prepared to permit civil society to grow as it will – with all the risks and benefits that this will entail not only for social policy but for democracy itself.

Professor Margaret Harris, Aston Business School, Birmingham

Residential Care – An Achievement and an Outstanding Priority

Michael Hill

The setting up of the Care Commission in England, and related reforms in Scotland and Wales is an important step forward for the regulation of many social care activities. At last the divided system of inspection and supervision

for residential care has been brought to an end. This has ended the divisions between the supervision of social care homes and nursing homes, and systems in which adjacent authorities might take different views of appropriate standards. It

has also ended the situation in which local authorities were expected to combine roles as purchasers with roles as regulators. Furthermore, where they are also still providers, they will now be subject to an independent regulatory regime, which treats them no differently from other providers. On top of that the new regulatory system goes way beyond residential care to cover many other aspects of day and domiciliary care.

While its predecessor was edging its way towards this reform, Labour is to be congratulated for pushing on with it effectively. This is partly attributable to the fact that the Royal Commission Labour set up to look at long-term care recommended the setting up of the Care Commission. More disappointing has been the government's response to the most important of the Royal Commission's recommendations, that 'personal care' in residential and nursing homes (as opposed to what may be called the 'hotel charges') should be free for all assessed as in need regardless of income and savings. The

government response has been to draw a distinction within personal care between social care and nursing care, promising that the latter should be free. Clearly this response was influenced by the cost of the Royal Commission's proposal. Yet failure to enact that leaves very high costs for many old people, contrasting anomalously with the free care they get when within hospitals. Means and asset tests remain therefore still very significant in relation to residential care, with strong incentives to hide or pass on assets. It may be doubted whether a satisfactory distinction can be drawn between nursing care and social care when people are so handicapped as to need residential care. It is hoped that the government will think again about this issue. That thinking may be encouraged by the fact that the government of Scotland has accepted the Royal Commission's recommendation.

Professor Michael Hill, Goldsmiths, University of London

Modernising Social Services

Norman Johnson

In the 1997 manifesto and the ensuing election campaign, the Labour Party unequivocally identified education as its first priority. This was followed by health, welfare to work and law and order. The personal social services were given much less prominence. Between May 1997 and November 1998, policy in the personal social services lacked a coherent strategy. What appeared was a series of ministerial statements, mainly in the field of child care.

The White Paper, *Modernising Social Services* (1998), provided the necessary coherence and indicated a clear set of priorities for both children's and adult services. Each chapter contained specific proposals for achieving improvement. There was also a promise of increased funding amounting to 3.1 per cent above inflation in each of three years from 1999/00 to 2001/02: £1.3 billion of the extra £3 billion would be paid into a social services modernisation fund. Particularly noteworthy, has been the complete implementation of the proposals.

The Protection of Children Act (1999) transformed the vetting and registration of people deemed unsuitable for work with children. The Care Standards Act (2000) will substantially change the system of regulation by providing for the establishment of a National Care Standards Commission, responsible for regulation, setting standards and arranging for the inspection of the

whole range of residential and domiciliary services. The same Act provided for the establishment of a General Social Care Council to regulate both the conduct and training of *all* social care staff. Other Acts flowing from the White Paper include the Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000) and the Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000).

In March 1999, the report of the Royal Commission on Long-term Care recommended that the costs of long-term care should be split between living and housing costs and personal care. Living and housing costs should be the subject of co-payments according to means, but personal care should be paid for from general taxation. The government's much delayed response was to make a distinction between *personal* care and *nursing* care. The costs of nursing care would be met from general taxation, but the costs of personal care would not be met in this way. Personal care includes bathing, toileting, feeding and dressing and it is going to be difficult to decide on the criteria to be applied. All sorts of anomalies are likely to arise. A priority for the new government is to follow Scotland's lead and agree to cover all personal care from general taxation.

Professor Norman Johnson, University of Portsmouth

More Sustained Change: Less Frenzied Activity

Ken Judge

Soon after they were elected New Labour set up special initiatives and action zones in the most disadvantaged parts of the country. But scarce resources were invested in too many poorly designed interventions with little prospect of reducing social exclusion and inequality. Health Action Zones are a case in point. When they began they engendered enormous local enthusiasm, but they were never given enough time or resource to make real progress. They were hampered from the start by hopelessly ambitious objectives and they have been suffocated ever since by central controls.

Fortunately there are encouraging signs that lessons have been learned. For example, the Social Exclusion Unit and the DETR are developing a more coordinated and sustainable set of policies for tackling neighbourhood renewal. There is every possibility that Local Strategic Partnerships in general – and initiatives such as New Deal for Communities (NDC) in particular – will act as catalysts to achieve real change. There are indications with NDC, for example, that creative and concerted efforts will be made to take *research and development* seriously and that practical lessons about sustainable community development will be learnt and disseminated and acted upon.

But New Labour cannot afford to rest on its laurels. There remains an over-emphasis on

setting targets for social policies without sufficient awareness of practical issues of implementation. There is merit, of course, in Ministers wanting to reduce area differences in infant mortality rates to honour their commitment to tackle health inequalities. But if they want to promote realistic strategies to achieve change at the local level then they have to acknowledge that too much instruction from Whitehall is counter-productive. New Labour should distinguish between aspirational goals on the one hand and realistic targets – expressed in terms of the expected consequences of purposeful investments in activities and processes – on the other.

Tackling social exclusion and reducing inequality is a major undertaking. We need new kinds of multidisciplinary research to learn about and to foster good practice. This means that much more thought has to be invested in the design of initiatives, and once set up these projects need to be given adequate time to prove themselves. Next time New Labour should implement its social justice agenda in a new way. It should launch fewer initiatives that have more forethought, and place greater trust in local partners. Sustainable social change cannot be driven solely by Whitehall.

Professor Ken Judge, University of Glasgow

Redistribution

Ruth Lister

The 'big achievement' would be the commitment to the eradication of child poverty, but I want to focus on a lesser known, yet key, element of the larger policy. Lesser known because the Government tends to keep rather quiet about it. Key because it is making an important contribution to cutting the number of children living in poverty. I'm talking about the 80 per cent phased real increase (by October 2001) in the income support/income-related JSA rates for children aged under 11 and their alignment with the 11+ rate.

This is, in part, a piece of evidence-based policy-making. Research by the Centre for Research in Social Policy had demonstrated that the gap between benefit rates and needs was greatest for younger children. The first phase of the increase also went some way towards making good the effect of the disastrous decision to go ahead with the abolition of lone parent benefits. Subsequent announcements tended to be tucked

away in the Budget small print so that even some social security experts did not immediately spot them.

Initially, New Labour had been rather dismissive of suggestions that improving out of work benefit rates should be a priority. They were portrayed as promoting an Old Labour style *status quo* of 'passive' 'dependency'-inducing welfare. This may partially explain why the Government does not now spin what it is doing from the rooftops. But its unusual reticence is also symptomatic of a more general preference for stealthy as opposed to up-front redistribution.

My priority, therefore (assuming a second term), is for the Government to come out of the redistributionist closet and make the case for improved benefits (based on minimum income standards) and for the progressive taxation needed to fund them. While redistribution by stealth may make short term political sense, it

can only go so far in reversing the redistribution towards the rich that took place under the Conservatives. Moreover, it gives the impression that the Government does not really believe in what it is doing, which is not conducive to gaining public support for its anti-poverty strategy.

The new Chair of the Inland Revenue has declared that he wants to promote taxation as a

badge of good citizenship. I hope the Government will follow his lead and direct its exhortations about citizenship responsibility in a more even-handed way to the taxpayer as well as the benefit recipient.

Professor Ruth Lister, Loughborough University

The National Minimum Wage and What to Do about Public Services?

Susanne MacGregor

Prior to New Labour, the UK had never had a national minimum wage, even though it is said that Beveridge favoured the idea. Labour promoted the policy in opposition in the late 1980s. It is one of the few old Labour ideas to have survived. The argument against has been the fear that jobs would be lost. A Low Pay Commission of wise people now deliberates and recommends a rate. The most recent increase was well above inflation. The LPC have concluded that there has been no significant impact on jobs, a view accepted by most employers' representatives. Along with the introduction of NMW and acceptance of European protocols on working-time, part-time working and parental leave, Labour has introduced a range of policies designed to improve work incentives and give more support to low-income, working families. This is all part of Gordon Brown's active approach, restoring the prospect of a 'full employment' society and encouraging people to take work, even if low-paid or part-time, either as a step to returning to employment or to combine work with other commitments, rather than remaining dependent on benefits. It is what people want and is better for society as a whole. What we need now is to build on this and establish ways to improve the terms and conditions of work for low paid workers, aiming at fair rewards and quality work for all.

My 'priority' for a second term is concerned with public services. In government, Labour argued that the level of public spending is not the

best measure of the effectiveness of government action in the public interest. It is what money is spent on that counts more than how much money is spent. In the first term, the policy of overall expenditure restraint was generally maintained, particularly through the tight policies of the first two years, but there were significant changes in the internal distribution of planned government expenditure and obvious largesse in later budgets. Overall, the total amount of tax taken by government had increased by the end of the first term. 'Stealth taxes' was the phrase used. There were clear re-distributive effects. But still, anyone working in or using the public services today cannot fail to note the stark contrast between the squalor of the public sphere and the sparkling glamour of the private sector. The promise of better public services cannot be married with the offer of low taxes indefinitely. Quality control, audit, performance measures, league tables, incentive payments, challenge funds and other devices of the new managerialism will not be enough to do the trick. The gap between public sector pay and private sector rewards is now serious and leading to problems in recruitment, especially when combined with big disparities in housing and travel costs in different areas. A second Labour government must take a lead in opening up a new debate about the link between tax and public spending.

Professor Susanne MacGregor, Middlesex University

Internationalism and Human Rights

Nick Manning

Achievements

What is covered by 'social policy'? I would like to extend the conventional parameters in an international direction to include the Department for International Development, and the priorities developed by Clare Short and Gordon Brown in relation to less developed countries. DfID has

made poverty reduction the key test for policies in relation to international aid, in relation to United Nations agreements on social development, and in relation to the World Trade Organisation. There have been major DfID research initiatives on the relationship between global economic development and poverty

reduction, and Gordon Brown has taken the initiative to try to secure the reduction in LDC debts in relation to national poverty policies.

While some critics would say that achievements on these issues are very modest, there has nevertheless been a marked change in terms of setting the agenda for international development priorities. The WTO is on the defensive (even though Clare Short is none too keen on help from international activists and demonstrators); the World Bank has reassessed its attitude to the role of governments and the development of social capital; and whatever the shortcomings of the UN's peace keeping capacities, the sequence of UN meetings on the environment, women, and social development, to which national governments are major contributors, is helping to define an agenda which challenges the developments of globalisation to be socially inclusive. New Labour has made important contributions to these processes.

Priorities

Turning to the future, I would like to consider the

way in which Jack Straw's law and order concerns have impinged on mental health. As a non-executive director of one of the biggest mental health trusts in the UK, I and my colleagues have received £17 million to build a unit to incarcerate "dangerously severe personality disordered" people at Rampton hospital. This means locking people up who have committed no crime, and who may not be treatable, merely because they are felt to be a threat. Even with due process, we now know that the courts have made a series of historic mistakes; even so, there is considerable uncertainty as to how people confined to the DSPD unit will be identified. Developed at the same time as British citizens have acquired human rights, this unit highlights the need for New Labour to take human rights at home seriously, and I would like to see human rights concerns prioritised within New Labour's social policy planning.

Professor Nick Manning, University of Nottingham

The Minimum Wage

Eithne McLaughlin

For me the single greatest achievement of this administration has been the introduction of the National Minimum Wage and thereby the ending of the UK's shameful position as one of the very few developed countries without this basic protection of its citizens from exploitation. I have several reasons for my choice: (i) such protection attends to both the citizen's material and non-material needs and for that reason has always had a high priority for me, being on a par with anti-slavery provisions; (ii) the processes involved both in establishing the initial rate and of agreeing annual rises embody a corporatist approach to policy making with the otherwise highly centralist, even retentive approach to policy making of this administration. (iii) I have also

chosen the National Minimum Wage because it is the only measure from this administration to disproportionately benefit lower income women. I have singled out the National Minimum Wage despite the fact that its full potential in terms of alleviating poverty, enhancing social solidarity has not been seized upon by this administration. Should there be a second labour term I would like to see (i) a new focus on enforcement mechanisms and better publicity for the National Minimum Wage and (ii) full funding of the annual rises in key public service areas such as health, social care and education.

Professor Eithne McLaughlin, The Queen's University of Belfast

Tax Credits/Care Work

Jane Millar

Out of all the possibilities, why choose tax credits as a particular achievement of the Labour government? Surely these are just 're-badged' social security benefits? I picked them for two reasons.

First, tax credits are already playing an important role in supplementing wages for many poor families. There are about 1.1 million families receiving the Working Families Tax Credit and, on average, they get just over £73 per week. Their average gross earnings are just £158 per

week. There are also about 27,000 people receiving the Disabled Person's Tax Credit. We do not know enough about access and take-up, nor about the impact of payment through the pay packet, but these tax credits are clearly central to achieving the policy goals of making work pay and eliminating child poverty.

Second, tax credits represent the future. The Children's Tax Credit comes in from April 2001, and from 2003 we are promised a Pension Credit,

an Integrated Child Credit and an Employment Tax Credit. It is true that so far tax credits are not very different from social security benefits. But they suggest a different future and a new policy trajectory. The IR and the DSS become one department? There is much less reliance on weekly means tests and more on an annual assessment of income and needs? Payments are made annually, monthly or weekly, depending on what people prefer? Needs are assessed on both an individual and family basis, payments likewise? Whatever we think about them, these are all potential policy developments that we need to start to analyse now.

Turning to priorities, I would like the government to take the issue of care work as seriously as they have taken the issue of paid work. There

has obviously been a small army of talented people in various departments – the Treasury, DSS, DfEE, DTI – examining paid work from all angles and producing detailed analyses, exploring where we are and where we should be going. We have yet to see the same level of attention directed towards care work, which remains an afterthought, tucked in around the sides of other policy. But the role of the welfare state in respect of care work is a major unresolved issue and one that has a direct impact on the everyday lives of millions of people, especially women. Let's see a similarly detailed analysis of this topic, and some hard thinking about these policy goals.

Professor Jane Millar, University of Bath

Immigration and Asylum

Robert Moore

'New' Labour's opportunity was to break with the record of previous Labour governments which institutionalised racism in the heart of state practice. The opportunity was lost in the first term of government, rather 'New' labour continued the Dutch auction over immigration, asylum and refugees. The outcome had been increased hostility to minorities. Hostile immigration policies have nearly always been accompanied by race relations legislation, thus we have the *Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)* but only a very muted recognition that we are a country that needs more immigrants.

No government has yet liberalised its immigration laws, but the next Labour government could make history by repealing the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. It should be replaced with legislation that acknowledges the UK as a nation of immigration and a society that welcomes immigrants and asylum seekers. Carrier's liability should be abolished but legislation introduced to punish more severely the organised gangs of criminals who smuggle people. The dispersal and vouchers policies for asylum seekers should be dropped and the social and economic needs of newcomers should be met according to the same criteria as natives. Additional resources should be made available to local authorities in settlement areas.

Major reforms are needed in the Home Office, if necessary replacing those staff who are

unwilling or unable to operate humane policies. The Home Office should acquire sufficient staff and a computer capable of rapidly handling immigration and asylum business. Additional staff will need to be appointed to clear the backlog of casework. The immigration service should not be exempted from the provisions of the new Race Relations Act with regard to ethnic origin.

The next incoming UK government should take the lead in Europe in pressing for rapid action on the Council Directive of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. In concert with our EU partners steps should be taken to enhance the status of third nation migrants to the Union. Lacking full citizenship and crucially without the vote, these residents may not fully enjoy such benefits as may flow from the implementation of the Directive. If issues of blood and soil can not be resolved, the status of *denizen*, with all citizenship rights except the title of citizen should be instituted, with protection under the Directive guaranteed to all denizens. For our own part the UK government should enhance the enforcement capabilities of the CRE in order to ensure that equal opportunities policies are fully implemented.

Professor Robert Moore, University of Liverpool

Intermediate and Long-term Care

Gillian Parker

Imagine the scene: you are 82, your husband died two years ago and you live on your own. You had a minor stroke last year, and you are sitting in your armchair pretty sure you have just had another. Five years ago your prospects would have been bleak – admission to an acute medical ward, a subsequent move to a rehabilitation ward (often housed in the old workhouse) and, if you had not already given up hope and died, a visit from a social worker to discuss whether you ‘should’ return home. Now, if you live in the right place, your GP can contact the hospital at home or rapid response team and arrange a package of nursing and rehabilitation care in your own home. Even if you are admitted to hospital, supported discharge services may return you home in a relatively short time.

For the right patients, such care seems to have no deleterious effects, costs about the same as an acute admission, and may prevent or delay admission to long-term care (Parker et al, 2000). And patients like it. ‘Intermediate care’, as it is now called, was not invented by New Labour, but they have recognised its potential, written it into the NHS Plan, and promised new funds of £405m by 2003/4, coupled with some increases to local authority funding. It’s not right for everyone, and it is important that new schemes replicate the characteristics that made the early schemes suc-

cessful and that proper assessment is offered. But its potential for improving health and social care for older people is considerable – reduced disruption to formal and informal support, care in familiar surroundings, no worries about who is feeding the cat, food from your own kitchen, undisturbed sleep, and rehabilitation in a realistic setting.

A related priority for the next government must be to sort out long-term care financing. Subsidising ‘nursing care’ will not solve the problem, indeed may exacerbate it. Even if intermediate care affects the numbers entering residential or nursing home care, and improves rehabilitation standards, some people will still need to enter care and others to be supported in their own homes. Access to social care and its funding is currently woeful. *Pace* the Royal Commission on Long-Term Care, an informed public debate about what we want for the future (our own) and how much we are prepared to pay for it is long overdue.

Parker G, Bhakta P, Katbamna S, Lovett C, Paisley S, Parker S et al (2000). Best place of care for older people after acute and during sub-acute illness: a systematic review. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 5,3: 176-189.

Professor Gillian Parker, Nuffield Community Care Studies Unit, University of Leicester

The Working Families Tax Credit

Robert Pinker

In my view, the Working Families Tax Credit scheme stands out as the Labour Government’s most promising policy initiative to date. It has been criticised because it gives insufficient help to the poorest unemployed people without children. Nevertheless, it has already helped many of our most disadvantaged families by raising 1.2 million children and 800,000 adults out of poverty.

Some critics of New Labour claim that its social policies are shaped more by considerations of political expediency than principle. The Working Families Tax Credit scheme, however, is a principled attempt at redefining the relationship between the status of citizenship and the ends and means of social policy. It challenges the normative assumptions that have underpinned much collectivist theorising on this issue since the full-employment years of the 1950s – notably with regard to their neglect of the personal and collective obligations on which the satisfaction of all our welfare rights ultimately depend.

Until recently, most theories of citizenship have underestimated the importance that ordinary people attach to the status of being employed and the enjoyment of economic independence. The greatest challenge facing governments in today’s global economy is that they can no longer even pretend to guarantee their citizens a right to work. If, however, they are to continue underwriting rights to welfare they must pursue policies that require unemployed citizens to demonstrate a genuine willingness to seek work - if they are able to do so – and to accept the offer of a job if one is made.

Governments, for their part, must provide the means by which deskilled and unskilled workers can acquire new skills and adapt to the challenges of a continuously changing labour market. They must also provide a structure of incentives that encourage unemployed people to move out of the world of welfare dependency and into the world of economic independence.

Taken together with the other provisions of

Labour's New Deal, the Working Families Tax Credit scheme offers a policy structure within which these requirements can be met – if the necessary jobs are forthcoming and economic growth is maintained.

As for my outstanding policy priority, I can only reiterate my hope that a future Labour Government will eventually implement the

recommendations of the Royal Commission on the long-term care of the elderly in full. Pensioners in general, and the frail elderly in particular, are still losing out on Labour's New Deal.

Professor Robert Pinker, London School of Economics and Political Science

Disabled People's Rights

Sheila Riddell

New Labour has done a considerable amount to put in place the organisational and legislative structures required to advance the rights of disabled people. The Government has made a great deal of progress in implementing the recommendations of the Disability Rights Task Force which reported in 1999. The Disability Rights Commission has been established and the SEN & Disability Bill is to be introduced shortly. New anti-discrimination measures relating to employment and access to goods and services will be introduced in 2004. This extension of disabled people's rights is of immense importance for two reasons. First, it accords social recognition to a group who have often been invisible and secondly, the legislation acknowledges that impairments, which are not disabling of themselves, become disabling because of physical, social, economic and attitudinal barriers.

A major priority for the Government is to put in place the social and economic conditions to enable disabled people to claim their rights. As experience in the area of sex and race equality suggests, legislation cannot of itself produce equality. To achieve social justice, people must have the confidence to seek redress when they experience discrimination and need access to appropriate legal advice. Disabled people are currently not in a strong position to challenge injustice. They are much more likely to be unemployed and living in poverty than the rest of

the population (in Scotland, almost 50% of the working age population of disabled people is without work). Through the New Deal for Disabled People, the Government has attempted to encourage unemployed disabled people back into the labour market. However, the scheme has been aimed at those on incapacity benefits, who have previously worked and might be able to get and keep a job with relatively low levels of support. Far less attention has been paid to people with higher support needs. Supported employment schemes for this group are typically run by voluntary sector organisations on shoestring budgets and benefits regulations still prevent people from progressing towards greater labour market participation. In addition, whilst the Government is committed to enabling all disabled people 'to lead a fulfilling life with dignity', the persistent emphasis on work as the key to citizenship means that those on benefits (about 50% of disabled people) are in danger of even greater marginalisation.

Links between poverty and disability are well known; if you are poor you are more likely to be disabled and being disabled makes you poor. Tackling poverty is an essential pre-condition to enabling disabled people to make use of their new legal rights.

Professor Sheila Riddell, Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, University of Glasgow

The Minimum Wage

Adrian Sinfield

The establishment of the National Minimum Wage is an important advance. There are, of course, still problems – levels still too low, coverage too restricted, and anxieties about how vigorously the Inland Revenue pursues evaders. But I have to confess that I had expected that New Labour in its initial Newness would find some reason for not bringing it in. I recalled a meeting on Wages Council

rates of pay in 1969 which Frank Field organised with trade union officials, and Fred Twine and I attended. There was a pronounced lack of interest among most of the few who even bothered to attend. In the 1970s there was the firm negative to minimum wages given by the Inter-Departmental Working Party led by the Department of Employment, followed in successive decades by the

restriction, then abolition, of even the limited Wages Councils by the Conservatives. The achievement of the Low Pay Units in getting minimum wages back on to the union and public agenda deserves full recognition and shows what determined and well-argued policy advocacy can do.

However limited, the Minimum Wage is a clear sign that the market has to meet certain standards. Its specific acceptance by the Conservatives – remarkably quickly given their previous shrillness – should encourage the struggles to tackle deprivation in work and give some real meaning to ideas of ‘work-life balance’ and ‘family-friendly’ employment.

Building on this achievement, the next government should take proper account of Richard Tawney’s advice before the first world war: ‘What thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, thoughtful poor people call with equal justice the problem of riches’. Much higher priority must be given to tackling the variety of ways in which forces reinforcing and

widening inequalities subvert policies to abolish poverty and frustrate social inclusion – or social justice as we call it in Scotland, with some interesting variations on what are said to be UK goals.

As a limited, but still vital, step the standing Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, closed down by Mrs. Thatcher as one of her very first acts in 1979, must be replaced in some substantial way. National Statistics needs an explicit and independent brief to help strengthen understanding of the various systems of distribution and redistribution in our society. A good start would be a democratic accounting of the hidden tax and occupational welfares which reinforce inequality across our society before half a century closes on Richard Titmuss’s [exposition of the] social division of welfare.

Professor Adrian Sinfield, University of Edinburgh

Neighbourhood Renewal

Marilyn Taylor

Before 1997 it would have been difficult to imagine central government spending two years in face to face discussions with local people on any policy, let alone expending this amount of energy on tackling the decline of Britain’s poorest housing estates. Add to this the fact residents are now seen as being central to the solutions to this decline, and the scale of the change over the past four years becomes apparent. As academics, some of us may now be sceptical about the soundbytes (‘joined up thinking’, ‘capacity building’ and so on), but most of this language is several light years away from the language of the market and the MBA that marked out the rising stars of the 1980s.

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal has the potential to be a significant step forward. There may still be questions about the extent to which it can redress structural inequalities or significantly shift power, but there are clear signs that government has learnt from past mistakes and that there is a commitment to go on learning. This commitment has strengthened the position of allies in local government and other public and it has the potential to convince the sceptics that this is the direction they have to take. A lot will depend on the extent to which government at central, regional and local level is prepared to trust communities, devolve spending and take risks. A lot will

depend too on the incentives available to drive genuinely new ways of working in local public services and the extent to which resistance is sanctioned. But there is a genuine window of opportunity here.

So what still needs to be done? A lot of the emphasis is on building within excluded communities – more needs to be done to build the ties between these communities and the rest of society. This requires investment in transport and improving physical access in a way which makes these neighbourhoods part of the wider community. It requires more investment in genuine housing choices that do not depend on ability to pay and do not intensify the gap between those with and those without choice. It requires incentives, like the US Community Reinvestment Act, to bring finance into communities. And it means flexible benefit/income policies which allow people to make the most effective choices: about how they take advantage of the economic opportunities that renewal should bring (whether through individual jobs or social enterprise); about how they contribute to renewal, whether or not they are in the labour market; and about how they are rewarded for their contribution.

Professor Marilyn Taylor, University of Brighton

Student Grants for Further Education

Peter Taylor-Gooby

This legislative birth-day present for New Labour's first happy return in government is (appropriately) two for the price of one. First, the national rolling out of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme currently being piloted in 15 areas. This programme provides assistance to young people from low-income families who are entering post-compulsory education by providing a weekly allowance and bonuses for retention and achievement. The weekly allowance is based on parental income and ranges from a maximum of £30 to £40 per week for those under £13,000 to a minimum of £5 per week for those with incomes nearing £30,000. The first year evaluation (DFEE Research Brief no 257, 2001) indicates that the allowances increase participation by an overall average of about 5 per cent, with higher rates for the lowest income groups, those in rural areas and young men.

This government is committed to expanding education (and training) opportunities at exactly the same time as it is concerned to constrain public spending – a neat example of how the competitiveness imperative of globalisation compels national governments to strive for the most attractively productive labour force, while vying for the lowest collectivised cost. One problem with the expansion of education opportunities, illustrated for example by the growth of higher education in the 1990s, is that when supply of something that people value in an open system is increased, the more privileged groups tend to be found at the head of the queue (see Glennerster and Hills, *The State of Welfare*, Oxford, 1999, p. 62). Direct solutions, such as

simple denial of access to education beyond age 16 to the children of the middle class, are, unfortunately, electorally unfeasible. EMA offers a way of diminishing one obstacle to the participation of less well-off students after 16, thus enhancing more equal opportunities. There is also the spin-off for those in HE social policy departments, that members of the groups whose participation in FE is enhanced by programmes such as EMA are more likely to pursue the courses we teach.

Ideally the principle of EMA could be extended to include older students on comparable courses. If it is necessary to find a way of financing the policy, one obvious candidate within education is the charitable status of private schools and the associated remission of VAT, council tax and some national insurance surcharges. The Independent Schools Information Service estimated at the time of the last election that this concession was worth in the region of £2 billion. Abolition would necessitate a fee increase of at least 10 per cent. Financing EMAs through this means might be understood as, in effect, compelling those who send children to private schools to subsidise the further education of students from lower income families, which has its attractions. This is the second legislative birthday present. Such a policy would of course raise further issues, including the maintenance of charitable status for higher education institutions....

Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby, University of Kent at Canterbury

Tackling Pensioner Poverty

Alan Walker

An important achievement of the New Labour Government's first term of office is that it tried to tackle pensioner poverty. This contrasts directly with the indifference towards this subject of the previous Tory administration but, as with so much of the Government's agenda, it has lacked sufficient conviction to do the job properly. If space allowed a similar story could be told about the funding of long-term care.

The 1997 Manifesto committed the Government to maintain the basic NI pension as the 'foundation' of retirement income and to uprate it 'at least' in line with prices. In power however, this strategy has not been pursued and, as everyone knows, it was not until the outrage of pensioners

at last year's 75p rise hit the headlines that the Government departed from its previous course and made an inflation-busting increase in the basic pension.

Rejecting universalism as 'Old Labour' the Government chose instead to continue the Tory selectivity but with characteristic third way aspects. First of all income support was re-branded as the minimum income guarantee (MIG), then it was set at levels unimaginable under a Tory Government and, finally, special measures have been taken to encourage people to claim it including a national advertising campaign.

There is little doubt that this strategy has succeeded in encouraging some of those that were

previously eligible for income support but not claiming it to do so. But it has not abolished poverty among pensioners, nor will it, and that is the priority that the next Government should set itself.

The basic problem is the Government's selective means-tested approach. Its own research shows that only one in seven pensioners can be encouraged into applying for means-tested MIG because it carries stigma and is not seen in the same light as the NI pension. Of course they are right and, as if to emphasise the difference, the Government has been simultaneously conducting a high profile campaign against benefit fraud which will reinforce pensioners' conviction that MIG is not a right whereas NI is (and demonstrates a lack of 'joined-up' policy thinking). Another problem is the survival of paternalistic political attitudes towards pensioners which are completely out of step with the new politics of old age. Thus, rather than increasing the basic pension and recognising older people's right to self-determination, the Government introduced price concessions on fuel and TV licences. Again this illustrates a lack of joined-up thinking in Whitehall because the government itself has been encouraging self-determination among pensioners through the Better Government for Older People Initiative.

It is unacceptable in a rich European society that pensioners (and any other group for that matter) should live and die in poverty. That is the fundamental conviction that should drive policy in Labour's next term. It requires the abandonment of the Government's opposition to universalism in the pension field (and also with regard to long term care funding) which is derived from the Transatlantic Consensus objectified in very negative Treasury forecasts of future costs, forecasts which are belied by the surplus in the NI fund. In addition some creative thinking should allow the problem to be solved without massive public expenditure. Most of the poorest and those requiring care are over the age of 75 and a special pension addition could be targeted on that group without means-testing (as suggested 3 years ago by all of the organisations of pensioners).

It is laudable that the Government has pledged itself to abolish child poverty and is using child benefit as a key part of its strategy to do so, but why can't the same conviction be shown towards pensioners?

Professor Alan Walker, University of Sheffield

Poverty and Social Security

Carol Walker

After nearly 20 years of Conservative government, which had seen poverty and inequality rise, the acknowledgement of the new Labour government of the existence of poverty and of the adoption of strategies to tackle it was very welcome. The commitment to reduce child poverty and improved benefits for children, together with the fall in unemployment and the measures to improve access to childcare are important achievements.

But a major disappointment, and a priority for the second term, must be an efficient, effective and compassionate social security policy. The Government's Contract for Welfare concentrated almost entirely on the first half of its mantra 'work for those who can', to the neglect of the alleged commitment to 'security for those who can't'. The debate about the failure to restore the earnings link to benefit upratings and the meagreness of income maintenance benefit increases has concentrated almost entirely on benefits for pensioners. However, the weekly benefits for the majority below retirement age, many getting roughly 25 per cent less than retired people and the gap between those on benefit and those in work continues to rise as it has since the abolition of the earnings link in 1980. While extra resources have been allocated to in-work benefits such as

the Working Families Tax Credits, the failure to increase the value of national insurance benefits, the tougher rules for incapacity benefit, the abolition of payments for lone parents, has offered the means-test a secure future. This has happened despite falling unemployment totals and the resultant reduction in predicted benefits spending. This has happened even though the Chancellor – at least before the foot and mouth epidemic – was awash with money. If the Government refuses to allow those not working to see a real increase in their standard of living when the economy is buoyant, what chance is there when, inevitably, harder times return?

For those that were at best saddened by the Government's failure to halt the declining standards of living of those on benefit, the anti-fraud advertising campaign launched in March 2001 was the final straw. It was bad enough that the 'Fraud Hotline' was relaunched, but the TV and newspaper campaign against fraudulent claiming was pandered to the worst prejudices. You can now 'shop a cheat' on the internet – anonymously of course. Is it any wonder that, according to government figures, between £2 billion and £4 billion is unclaimed. Is it any wonder that even Thora Hird could not encour-

age sufficient numbers of pensioners to claim means-tested Minimum Income Guarantee?

With its huge majority, and a buoyant economy, the Government had the opportunity to encourage people into work without stigmatising those who could not work. They had the opportunity to reduce dependence on means-tested benefits and the inevitable plethora of rules which encourage fraudulent behaviour. They had the opportunity to invest in more secure and more efficient administration to deter and prevent fraudulent claims without a scandalous advertising campaign of which the

most right-wing tabloid could be proud. They had the opportunity to take the moral high ground and, while concentrating on extending the opportunities and support to encourage people into work, also offer genuine, un-stigmatised protection to those who could not. In these respects the Government has failed. A humane, efficient and fair benefits system that offers genuine security should be a priority for the next term.

Professor Carol Walker, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside

Way Forward for a National Care Strategy

Fiona Williams

For over thirty years, and intermittently for almost a century, women's organisations have insisted that childcare for working mothers was a public responsibility. A serious acknowledgment of this came from the National Childcare Strategy and New Labour's commitment for one million childcare places by 2003, along with a raft of measures and proposals from the Treasury, the DTI, DSS, DFEE and DoH, aimed at supporting working parents.

However, policies on maternity pay and leave are redressing thirty years of neglect. Britain lags behind in Europe for provisions for working parents; it was the EU rather than New Labour which was behind the part-time and parental leave directives, whose implementation has left employers off the hook. The thrust of New Labour's arguments has been less about the wellbeing of children and their mothers, and more about moving people, especially single mothers, off welfare and into work, for the competitiveness of business and the new economy.

These new policies may only be small mercies, but they create spaces. The National Childcare Strategy proposes a universal right to childcare. Combined with legal requirements on employers to provide flexitime and part-time hours for parents of young children, this would be a vote winner amongst most of the 4.5 million

working mothers. But 'care' needs still more vision to win broader support. We all have care needs and most have care responsibilities: these require time, choice, financial and practical support. A **National Care Strategy** could mobilise a joined up approach. It would bring together strategies for childcare, for the care and support of older people and disabled people, for income support, for family policies and family law, for employment and education policy, for anti-poverty and anti-discrimination measures. It would counter the material inequalities that arise from care giving and receiving, and challenge the dichotomy of active caregiver and passive care receiver. It would seek to balance paid work with time for self and others. It would recognise diversity in the social processes of care and mobilise the voices of all those involved, especially children, older people, disabled people and carers. It would provide a robust assessment of the values attached to care and intimacy (such as trust, dignity, mutual respect, bodily integrity) and use these as guidelines for informal, social and professional practices of care. It would, in practical ways, instate an ethic of care alongside the ethic of paid work as the basis of citizenship.

Professor Fiona Williams, University of Leeds

Must do Better or Older Voters will Stay at Home

Gail Wilson

The big first for the Government is to shift from seeing older people as an unproductive burden on the welfare state to recognising them as a voting constituency with interests like any other group. Despite Mr Mandelson's early advice to ignore elders, ten million people with a high

propensity to go to the polls, or use their postal votes, are worth cultivating. Recognition is one thing, getting it right is another. Welfare transfers have been a disaster. First there is the pensions fiasco. Failure to raise the basic pension, combined with ultra complex proposals for extra

tiers, credits etc., mean that 54% of all pensioners are going to be eligible for means testing in 2003. Add to this all the older homeowners (over 80% in parts of S England) who will be means tested if they need long term care. Then add Gordon Brown's £100 charity hand out for winter fuel and the pauperisation of the older population looks well on the way.

The picture *may* turn out to be different for welfare delivery. Top down efforts to encourage joined up government have included an Inter-Ministerial Group led by Alistair Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, and the Cabinet Office (Performance and Innovation Unit) oversaw the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) initiative that was mainly about better partnerships for local services for elders. The NHS began to produce national care standards and to develop intermediate care aimed at giving older patients the chance to rehabilitate before moving back home or going into some form of long term care. The Department of

Health also set up the General Social Care Council as an NDPB (Non-Departmental Public Body) to oversee professional standards for all care workers, with the main emphasis on caring for older people. From bottom up BGOP also gave a voice to older people themselves, with women and members of minority ethnic groups represented.

However in the future welfare transfers and welfare delivery are not alternatives. Better pensions would save money on health and social care as well as cheer up the voters. The questions for the next term are: 1. Will the pensions mess be sorted out? 2. Can service delivery really be improved, or will this term's initiatives turn out to be another cost cutting exercise and not about quality? 3. Will Scotland lead the way in providing high quality health and long term care for free?

Dr Gail Wilson, London School of Economics and Political Science

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European Social Policy

Hantrais, L. (2000) *Social Policy in the European Union*, Macmillan.

The 1995 edition of this book, has become an invaluable reference for academics and students with an interest in social policy in the European Union. In the original preface, the main assumptions are established: the approach is based on the assumption that students and analysts of comparative social policy are concerned with identifying the social determinants of policy and are looking for 'culturally specific causes, variables, institutional arrangements and outcomes and that national governments will differ in their policy responses to common social problems.

This assumption is used in the new edition and with good reason. Since the 1995 edition, which allowed little time to assess the impact of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, major changes have taken place in the European Union. The effects of the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria, the financial and economic implications of the Single European Market and the advent of EMU in 1999 have all contributed towards a changing perspective on social policy. The earlier advent of poorer nations such as Greece and Portugal raised issues as to the distribution of wealth and poverty amongst the member states; the accession of three wealthier nations with highly developed welfare systems adds a new incentive to be more pro-active in social issues. These issues are addressed throughout the book, and extensive use is made of contemporary data. The election of the New Labour government in 1997 has also provided an additional focus as one of the governments first actions was to sign up to the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty. The concept of social exclusion and inclusion in national policy owe much to the efforts of the EU.

The book also addresses the problems of 'widening and deepening' and consequent subsidiarity issues. The welfare systems adopted by member states have previously been based on the social market or Beveridge model and the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria has reinforced the social-democratic model approach. Ironically, the likely accession of the former Eastern European states, many of which have based their systems on the residual welfare model, has the potential for dis-harmonisation of social policies.

These issues and paradoxes are discussed lucidly and the future social policy role of the EU, particularly in the light of such contradictions, are raised. The breadth and complexity of the issues is addressed clearly, no mean feat given

the enormity of the task, and the problem of burying the reader in fine detail is avoided. The use of the EU documentation boxes at the end of each chapter (a technique used in the first edition) means that flow and clarity is retained in the text itself.

The original edition provided an accessible overview and analysis of social policy issues in the EU and for 5 years was an essential companion for anyone involved in the study of European social policy. The new edition retains all that was relevant from that edition whilst at the same time addressing the complexities of social policy in a contemporary EU, in which broadening of membership appears to be working against harmonisation of social policies. This edition does not offer solutions but it does force the reader to address the issues and apparent contradictions for themselves.

Melvyn Wiles, University of Lincolnshire & Humberside

Bonoli, G., George, V. and Taylor-Gooby, P. (2000), *European Welfare Futures: Towards a Theory of Retrenchment*, Polity Press.

This ambitious book promises to tell us which direction European welfare states are going, and to provide a theory to boot. It is undoubtedly the case that the Esping-Andersen (1990) circa 1980 developmental model needs revision to take account of such factors as gender and other worlds of welfare, within a less class-reductionist perspective of institutional pressures. It also needs updating to account for the contemporary restructuring of welfare states.

Bonoli et al on the whole succeed in constructing a sophisticated account which weaves together and sensitively assesses the available evidence on such factors as globalization, public opinion, the strength of neo-liberal ideology, and the way that these have all been mediated by institutional frameworks and actions of labour movements. There are some problems, however, in the way that they seem to argue for a 'strong' tendency towards retrenchment from what is claimed to be the chief social policy task facing national governments: 'squaring the welfare circle' of increasing social demands (unemployment, family change, population ageing etc.) against perceived national and international political-economic pressures that favour reduction in state provision. Thus we should undoubtedly endorse the recommendation of Stefan Svallfors on the back cover that the book deserves to be read closely by scholars, students

and policy makers. However, a somewhat disputable claim is that the book asserts that:

...contrary to what is argued in many quarters, policy-makers do have a choice; retrenchment of the welfare state is neither inevitable nor similar across countries of the Western world.

It is certainly the case that the book identifies a 'space for manoeuvre'. Nevertheless the dominant message still seems a rather pessimistic one. While the final chapter sees retrenchment as 'political' rather than determined by economics, demography and family change, it still insists that it is 'the keynote in welfare policy' (p.153). So, apparently, all European societies must dance to the tune of retrenchment. Though we can vary the steps a bit, we can't stop the music and ask for a less discordant song.

I think the book arrives at this conclusion because the assumption of an administrative 'need' to square the welfare circle hangs over it as a theoretical straightjacket into which the evidence is sometimes compressed. This is to some extent contradicted in the detail of the book, which potentially could have allowed a more politically optimistic and theoretically open-ended approach. The danger is that their approach at times unintentionally depoliticizes the contemporary crisis in European welfare states. For example, in contrast to what is asserted (on p.121) retrenchment in Britain and the USA in the Thatcher-Reagan era did not come about from 'squaring' of anything, but was an ideologically inspired campaign to roll back the state. In addition to retrenchment, the story is also one of remarkable resilience of European welfare, and the book itself shows how labour movements have strongly contested retrenchment, most spectacularly in France in 1995.

All this matters because we are not only talking about a book, but also our common future, and while their pessimism is not entirely unwarranted, perhaps there's just a little more hope than Bonoli et al seem to imply.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity

Mick Carpenter, University of Warwick

Geyer, R. R. (2000) *Exploring European Social Policy*, Polity Press.

The only misleading thing about this book is its title. It is about *European Union* social policy. Apart from that you get exactly what the author promises. Geyer is an American political scientist working at Liverpool University. He came to Europe as an eager social democrat and is clearly

a Nordophile. He is fascinated by the implications which the development of EU social policy has for the welfare systems of member states. In this, the first volume of his project he is concerned to 'map out' what EU social policy is. In the second, he promises to examine how the latter impacts upon national systems.

Geyer makes no pretence at developing a substantive theory of social policy development within the EU. Instead he aims to provide us with an accurate account of the development, scope and impact of EU policy programmes and measures in order to 'provide academics and policy practitioners with an accessible foundation' (p. 207) which they can use 'to explore their own particular questions'. The first two chapters provide us with an overview of social policy developments from the 1950s until the end of the century. Geyer argues that social policy questions were not prioritised in the 1950s and the 1960s and the grandiose hopes of the 1970s were dashed. These were subsequently revived by the Single European Act and the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam. Coverage includes: the core and peripheral aspects of labour policy; (chapters three and four); gender policy (chapter four); anti-poverty, social inclusion and anti racist measures (chapter five); and measures concerned with the elderly, disabled people and the young (chapter eight). The overall conclusion is that while labour policy measures remains a strong feature of EU social policy and gender policy has become a successful new area, many of the more recent developments have yet to establish strong roots. The author however, is optimistic that the EU social policy dimension will continue to grow and develop. In his concluding chapter, Geyer outlines the principle insights he has gleaned from his exploration. He characterises EU social policy as regulatory and neo-voluntarist. It 'lacks the breadth, depth, legitimacy and financial muscle of national social policies' (p.208) and is no threat to them.

This is an extremely useful study. It neither minimises nor exaggerates the importance of the EU social policy dimension. It recognises its complexity and diversity and makes a strong case for recognising its increasingly symbiotic relationship with national systems. The publisher's blurb describes it as a text book but it is more than that. It may well be of use to undergraduates who will find a clearly written account of a very complex field of study. However I have no doubt it will be a useful basis for other academics to gain an up-to-date picture of EU social policy and will help them develop their own thoughts about its significance. We can all look forward to the second volume with anticipation.

Arthur Gould, Loughborough University

Beck, W., van der Maesen, L., Walker, A. (eds.) (1998) *The Social Quality of Europe*, The Policy Press.

This book aims to stimulate debate about the future of the EU, especially the balance between economic and social priorities; to emphasise the importance of 'social quality' in a more unified Europe; and to initiate a dialogue between European policy makers and social scientists. It sets out both an academic analysis and a political programme. The 21 chapters are mostly written by individuals well known in the field, from a variety of social sciences and representing the majority of the Member States, plus Hungary and the Czech Republic. Part One consists of the fifteen papers and commentaries presented at an 'expert' meeting in 1996, covering the economic, legal, social and political dimensions of the 'social quality' debate. Part Two comprises syntheses of four themes running through these papers: employment; social protection; integration, particularly relating to older people; and social exclusion. Finally, Part Three consists of a detailed exposition of the concept of 'social quality' and some general conclusions.

The book contributes to the longstanding debate about the 'competence' of the EU in the social sphere, and the extent and nature of the relationships between economic and social policies. In a short review, it is impossible to do justice to the arguments of individual authors, but a number of themes recur, which give coherence to a diverse collection. For example, the assertion that the 'social dimension' is primarily a national concern, and separate from, even antithetical to a competitive market is contested. It is argued that this sees economic growth as an end in itself rather than the means to improve the quality of life of EU citizens. A number of the authors also challenge what they see as the dominant assumption that policies to enhance 'social quality' threaten economic growth. They cite evidence supporting a positive relationship, making it easier to claim a legitimate role for the EU in developing a strong social agenda. Other authors place more emphasis on social protection as involving political rather than economic choices, and thus as inevitably contentious. In addition, the frequent assumption that increasing the EU's competence in social policy lessens the role and sovereignty of national governments is questioned. National governments at present may find it difficult to withstand pressures to reduce social protection, in the absence of agreements at EU level on a minimum framework.

In focusing on the concept of 'social quality', the editors are proposing the development of a tool for setting goals and measuring changes in the welfare of EU citizens that includes, but is

broader than 'poverty' or the currently fashionable 'social exclusion'. This breadth is attractive, but as the editors accept, makes for difficulties in translating the concept into something precise and measurable across the Member States. They aim, in this book, to begin rather than resolve the debate.

This is not a new book. However, the themes identified and discussed retain a contemporary resonance that makes it of continuing value as a teaching resource and for others who want to explore the dimensions of a more ambitious social agenda for the EU.

Jane Keithley, University of Durham

Crouch, C. (1999) *Social Change in Western Europe*, Oxford University Press.

Some will undoubtedly argue this is a remarkably ambitious book, it is! Colin Crouch writes a general sociology of contemporary Western Europe following the arrival of the single European currency, developments in increasing European integration, and the frequent reference in much political and economic discussion to a 'European model'. He explores whether such a thing as Western European social form exists and where such a form might fit into more general patterns of social change in advanced societies.

The book itself is the first in a 'European Societies' series which Colin Crouch is also the editor for. His own book considers what European societies look like at the end of a turbulent millennium. The material examined covers 16 countries, Ireland is the smallest inclusion, thus excluding Luxembourg of the 15 current EU Member States but also including Norway and Switzerland.

The periods covered after the excellent Prologue and Chapter I (The Making of Contemporary Europe), are essentially the early 60's and mid 1990's. The central argument of the book centres on a theory of what Crouch calls 'mid-century social compromise' as it relates to four institutional areas: industrialism, capitalism, traditional community, and citizenship – these create the 4 parts of the book.

Several elements of the book are particularly impressive, not least the seemingly endless empirical data of figures, tables, and the Statistical Appendix – the References and Index are also student friendly. The 'Analysing the process of change' (p.44) within chapter 1, reminded me of one of my favourite scholarly texts, *Social Europe* (Bailey, [ed] 1998), including a similar discerning analysis of social change. The Paradox of Religion (chapter 9) and Is There

a Western European Form of Society? (chapter 14), I also found to be particularly intellectually incisive, for example see 'sharply defined classes with blunted inequality' (p.398). The notion of class features strongly in this book, the pendulum of class was busy during the last century, a point made strongly in a re-analysis of the mid-century compromise (p.414).

Crouch ponders within the Preface whether he has foolishly tried to produce a text for too wide a range of students from undergraduates to postgraduates. My view is he need not worry, his ability to analyse existing ideas, advance new arguments and be remarkably jargon free will make this book readily accessible for any student of comparative European sociology.

Bailey, J. (ed.) (1998) *Social Europe* (second edition), Longman.

David Barrett, University of Luton

Bailey, J. (ed.) (1998) *Social Europe*, Longman.

This is a text concerned with exploring the sociology of Europe, as opposed to European social policy. The latter, nonetheless, does make an appearance. In the first part of the book, which is concerned with examining the economic, demographic and social (class, gender and 'race') context of Europe, social policies are explored most directly in the chapters by Glasner (gender) and Rex ('race' and ethnicity). Glasner, for example, compares policies designed to reconcile work and family-life across the European Union in some detail, while Rex in comparing European perspectives on multiculturalism, examines the role of education policy in a number of European countries. In the first part of the book, social policy also emerges as an indepen-

dent variable when attempts are made to explain other social phenomena. Thus, in his chapter on class, Davis reviews the evidence on the impact of European welfare states in altering income distribution patterns, while in his chapter on demographic trends, Simons explores the influence of pronatalist policies on fertility rates.

The second part of this book is entitled 'Responding Institutions'. The ground covered here varies in its relevance to social policy students. Thus, the chapters on religion (Davie) and the sociology of leisure (Clark) are probably the least relevant. The topics of trade unions (Proctor) and crime and policing (Levi and Maguire), while beyond the terrain of most comparative or European social policy courses, hold greater relevance. Finally, the chapters on education and training (Chisholm) and health (Towers) are clearly much more firmly located within the field of social policy. That said, though, each of those two chapters, and particularly that on health, devotes a considerable amount of space to exploring the sociology of the subject matter.

Leaving aside the fact that social policy is only a secondary concern of this text, there are two other features which would make me cautious about recommending it to my students. In the first place, Part One contains a large amount of comparative data, but there is insufficient attention given in both the individual chapters and in the editor's introductory chapter to issues around the comparability and interpretation of that data. Secondly, a guide to the sources of comparative social data is also missing. Given that much of the data presented in Part One is already out of date (most of it refers to the early 1990s or before), such an omission limits the book's potential as a longer-term learning resource for students.

Majella Kilkey, University of Hull

This edition of 'Book Reviews' was edited by Catherine Bochel, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. The new Book Reviews Editor is Linda Bauld. Please send books for review directly to her: Linda Bauld, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Lilybank House, Bute Gardens, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8BR. Tel/Fax: 0141 330 4352. Email: l.bauld@socsci.gla.ac.uk

Personal choice

My personal choice is a very long, extremely well written book which quickly established itself as a classic in modern social history: E.P Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. I first came across it in 1970 as a first year student at the University of Essex when I was required to write an essay comparing and contrasting the use of class in Thompson's book with that employed by Neil Smelser in his *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*, a functionalist sociological account.

The Making of the English Working Class is in four parts: the first describes the popular radicalism which led to the revolutionary agitation of the 1790s; the second examines the experience of workers during the industrial revolution; part three documents plebeian radicalism, and the final quarter of the book is a discussion of class consciousness in the 1820s and 1830s. Like so many readers, I was captivated by the enormous erudition, wit, fine writing and sheer panache of the book.

Reading it in 1970 I was able to use the 1968 Pelican edition which contains a postscript in which Thompson responds to the many reviews which had appeared since the book's first publication five years earlier. Reading these reviews in the historical journals was an excellent introduction to the debates on historical methods and class formation in early nineteenth century Britain. From that point I was hooked and read all I could find by Thompson even down to his 'notes to readers' in the early 1960s volumes of *New Left Review*. Tracing Thompson's writings put me in touch with the work of the 'old' New Left of which he had been such a significant figure along with Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Alasdair Macintyre, Charles Taylor and others.

Much of their work revolved around questions of culture, media and advertising in the UK which were eclipsed when Perry Anderson and a younger generation assumed control of that journal.

Among Thompson's many achievements in *The Making of the English Working Class* was his ability to breathe life into the past making the debates and disputes of the 1790s come alive again. Allied to this was his conviction that



ideas matter and are often embodied in men and women's sacrifice and commitment in campaigns and movements. Thompson was to demonstrate this clearly in his own life, notably in the 1980s, when he put aside his historical work to campaign from one end of the country to another for European Nuclear Disarmament. Indeed, his 1970 book *Warwick University Ltd*, remarkably prescient as to the way in which business values would invade the university system, resulted from a campaign by students at that university. They had

published files found in a sit-in in the Vice Chancellor's office which showed the communication between Special Branch and the administration of the university.

The arguments in *The Making of the English Working Class* would, I am sure, need to be greatly modified by the mountain of historical scholarship which has appeared over nearly forty years since the book's first appearance. But it remains a classic: a model of how political engagement and enthusiasm combined with the rigours of academic scholarship can illuminate our understanding of social change.

Dr Michael Cahill, Reader in Social Policy, University of Brighton

Michael Cahill,
SPA News
incoming
Editor, discusses
one text which
has influenced
his thinking.

Contributors are invited to nominate four texts which they believe any self respecting Social Policy undergraduate should read. One text must be at least 20 years old. Hugh Bochel and Angus Erskine provide their choice.

Three plus one

Three ...

Williams, F. (1989) *Social Policy: A Critical Introduction*, Polity

Hills, J. (1997) *The Future of Welfare: A Guide to the Debate*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Parsons, W. (1995) *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*, Edward Elgar

... Plus one

Hall, P, Land H, Parker R and Webb A. (1975) *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy*, Gower

Given that we hope that social policy graduates will have a variety of skills, including critical and analytical abilities, be able to understand the links between theory and practice and be able to identify and appreciate different value positions (see the benchmarking statement for more details!) it seems necessary that they be aware of the broad range of approaches to social policy, including both theoretical and practical aspects. I have therefore sought to suggest books that I believe can help to develop these.

My first book is Fiona Williams' *Social Policy: A Critical Introduction* which provides a comprehensive and well-argued introduction to some of the major theoretical perspectives and an examination of the ways in which racially structured patriarchal capitalism has influenced the development and operation of the welfare state, thus enabling students to develop a good critical understanding of the importance of these and the ways in which effectively, power operates. This book serves as a very good text whilst at the same time containing sufficient ideas and analysis to remain challenging throughout, and even beyond, a degree programme.

My second choice is John Hills' *The Future of Welfare: A Guide to the Debate*. The first edition of this was produced in 1993 and the second edition in 1997. Both have provided a large amount of information, well presented and comprehensible, on a range of key areas of welfare that should enable students to present evidence and marshal their arguments effectively. Surely it is about time that a third edition of this work is produced, bringing the same strengths of analysis and presentation to an examination of the future of the welfare state after the first New Labour government?

Third is Wayne Parson's substantial text *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and*

Practice of Policy Analysis. In this case the full title is perhaps necessary to be clear about its relevance to the study of social policy. The book is in some respects almost encyclopaedic, at least in its coverage of a wide range of conceptual models, some of which will be familiar to social policy graduates but many others of which could usefully be added to the tools that we use to understand our subject. All of these are underpinned by Parson's awareness of the potential value of a 'policy orientation' and he engages with both analysis of the policy process and analysis in and for the policy process. Again, as with Fiona Williams' book, there is more than enough to keep the most able students in ideas.

Finally, the book that is over 20 years old is Hall, Land, Parker and Webb's *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy* which, designed originally for students of 'social administration', in many respects was an attempt to apply some aspects of a policy studies approach to a number of case studies drawn from the 1940s to the 1960s. The book is therefore useful as it charts not only a period which is sometimes portrayed as being consensual in nature, but also one when there was perhaps a more positive attitude to state intervention and provision and a belief that governments could make a difference. The combination of contextual writing and case studies makes it relatively approachable whilst the conclusions (or 'emerging propositions' as the authors term them) not only inform us of that period but continue to direct us in valid directions for the present day.

Hopefully, after reading all of these, our graduates should have gone some significant way to achieving our goals for them.

**Professor Hugh Bochel,
University of Lincolnshire and Humberside**

Three ...

Tressell, R. (1955) *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, Lawrence & Wishart

Piven, F. F. & Cloward, R. (1977) *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, Pantheon Books

Boyson, R. (1971) *Down with the Poor: An Analysis of the Failure of the 'Welfare State' and a Plan to End Poverty*, Churchill Press Ltd

... Plus one

Harris, J. (1977) *William Beveridge: A Biography*, Clarendon Press

All of my choices were published more than twenty years ago. I am not sure if this says something about my reading habits, but it avoids offending recent authors. My first choice is Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Today, students should read his account of the life of a group of painters and decorators before the First World War for two reasons. First, it shows us that academics do not have a prerogative on incisive analysis of social relations. Tressell articulates capitalism at the beginning of the twentieth century and the needs to which it gave rise more clearly than any social policy text or sociological analysis. People's lived experience has to be listened to if researchers are to understand how the world operates. Second, reading the book today explains why a welfare state was needed and shows how much is very different and how much essentially the same after a century of welfare reform and social change.

Tressell links to my second choice *Poor People's Movements: why they succeed and why they fail*. It reminds the reader that people through struggle and mobilization create welfare reform. Piven and Cloward analyse the Unemployed Workers Movement, the Industrial Workers Movement and the Civil Rights Movement and present a very readable account of the struggle for welfare reform in the U.S. in the twentieth century. The politics of the U.S. are different. The repression that these progressive movements faced can be measured in murders and death, but there is a question for the UK. Does reform come from protest or argument? Looking back upon the book, I am not as convinced as I was by Piven and Cloward's anarchism. There is a balance in achieving change between rational persuasion and disorganised protest. (PS whoever has my copy, please give it back or I'll kick your head in).

Take my first two choices away for holiday reading.

In contrast to the first two, I choose something

with which I have no sympathy. It is not so much a book that should be read as representing ideas that students should engage with. Students today, just as when I was, tend to have little interest when they disagree. *Down with the Poor* is a book that I read as an undergraduate and thought as ridiculous as I do today. How absurd that Rhodes Boyson could compare people in the welfare state to battery chickens because the chickens and the people have no moral fibre? Now we live in a world of seemingly infinite consumer possibilities. Maybe we will soon be able to buy chickens with extra moral fibre from our local supermarket? When I was a student the idea that Boyson would become Minister for Social Security was ridiculous. If in the mid 1970s, instead of laughing at the ideas coming from the IEA and other New Right think tanks, people like me had engaged with their ideas, the last laugh would not have been theirs for most of my adult life. In part it was because many students, at the time, failed to argue with ideas they did not like and, instead, quarrelled with people who shared their values. Today's students should be encouraged to read, take seriously and then engage with a range of views, even if they seem daft or offensive.

Plus one

Jose Harris's biography of Beveridge is an important book for students to read for two reasons. First because Beveridge lived his life across a time of major social and welfare change and was connected to policy making, policy implementation and academia. His life emphasises to social policy students what the subject is about, understanding through study and analysis and making things happen through engagement and politics. Second, Harris's approach to her work is an exemplar of what social policy should be about: scholarship; detailed, systematic, and methodologically informed investigation.

Dr Angus Erskine, University of Stirling

Elections have recently been held in Israel and America. Uri Yanay (Israel) and Sheila Kamerman (USA) discuss the results and implications.

A letter from Israel

The recent (6 February, 2001) elections in Israel were, in fact, only a referendum. This time Israel did not vote for its 120 Knesset members, but, instead, the public was asked to elect the prime minister only. One candidate was the leader of the Labour Party, Ehud Barak, and the second candidate was the leader of the Likud Party, Ariel Sharon. This referendum was called before implementing the final steps in Oslo's peace accord with the Palestinians. Voting for Barak meant proceeding with his line of accelerated peace talks, whereas voting for Sharon meant slowing the peace process, and continuing the negotiations with the Palestinians 'by the book', namely, expecting full reciprocity in each step.

Because of the acute nature of the February referendum, one would not expect any significant changes, shifts in the Israeli social policy. After all, the 'real' elections took place only 20 months earlier, in May 1999, when Benjamin Netanyahu was replaced by Ehud Barak. Barak favoured Blair's notion of the 'Third Way', and Prof. Anthony Giddens visited Israel to deliver the gospel. Sharon does not seem to have any clear direction of social policy, or did not specify any such guidelines. However, here, in Israel, we did witness some changes in social policy. Three such changes will be noted. They relate to foreign workers, to the newly (1995) established National Health Insurance scheme and finally to crime victims. First to foreign workers.

The leading ideology of the Israeli nation was to introduce 'Jewish Labour' and to rely on this labour only. Since the turn of the century, Jewish immigrants to Israel were involved in manual labour in industry, farming, construction etc. Jewish musicians, scholars and merchants found themselves hoeing gardens, picking oranges or working at a production line. The idea of the Kibbutz was to cultivate the dry, desert like land and turn it into a garden. This was the spirit of rebuilding an old-new homeland. However, the Six Days War (1967) introduced cheap Palestinian 'cross boarder' workers into the Israeli labour force. Many Israeli workers lost their jobs because Palestinians were ready to work harder, longer hours, and for less money.

The first Intifada (Palestinian uprising) in the late '80s, made Palestinian workers less attractive to the Israeli employer. Instead, replacement was sought from other sources. Workers from as far as China, Thailand, Philippines were invited to work in the Israeli market, mainly in the agriculture, construction and tourist industries. The influx of foreign workers, replacing Israelis and Palestinians alike, became a recognised solution. Almost ten percent of the Israeli labour

force (1997) were non Israelis.

However, despite gaining tenure in the Israeli labour force, only recently did foreign workers, even the documented workers among them, gain state recognition. From January 2000, employers have to sign an individual contract with each foreign worker. The contract must be translated into her/his language. Each foreign worker is entitled to comprehensive health insurance paid jointly by the worker and his/her employer. However, this recognition resulted also in inclusion of most of the documented foreign workers in the Israeli income tax and the National Insurance systems. Now, both Israeli and Palestinian workers feel that they share a common competitor: cheap labour by imported workers from the East.

Foreign workers are supposed to earn Israel's basic monthly salary (about £500), pulling both Israeli and Palestinian workers' earnings down to that level, at which many of them feel exploited. They used to earn more. Regretfully, despite having shared interest, not always do Israelis and Palestinians join hands to re-claim their employment back. Recent statistics show that almost ten percent of the Israeli workforce is unemployed. Foreign workers increasingly become the focus of much public discussion because of their implications for the Israeli economy, culture and self perception.

In 1995 Israel adopted a new, comprehensive National Health Insurance scheme. All Israelis, Jews and Arabs, have a comprehensive health care for about 5 percent of ones' salary. The Scheme does not include any dental medicine, nor does it have a care programme for the elderly. The principle of this scheme was that when medical services are needed they would be provided free, except for medication. A list of basic medicines was prepared. Listed medication would cost a flat rate (about £2 per prescription). Other medicines cost up to their market prices. But these extra charges for medicines only indicated the beginning of payments, particularly charges for medical services.

About two years after the insurance scheme was launched (1997) it was realised how much it costs. To cover the programme losses, and to discourage people from consuming 'unnecessary' medical services, a flat rate of NIS 15 (£2.50) charge was to be collected whenever a patient saw a medical consultant. An additional charge of NIS 20 (£3.50) was to be collected whenever a medical test, or a small medical procedure had to be performed. One payment of this charge would allow for seeing the very consultant (only) for that annual quarter. Obviously, the first to suffer from these charges

were large families, having many children, and older people, both requiring (and deserving) frequent medical attention. These charges have a ceiling, above which a person or family will not have to pay more for seeing a medical consultant during that quarter. However, the mere existence of such charges results in a significant barrier to medical services, and ought to be canceled. Barak's government promised to abolish these charges, but this did not help Barak win the elections.

Finally, until not long ago, Israel enjoyed a low crime rate. People and property were safe. If a person was victimised, his/her family would look after the victim and secure his/her welfare. Welfare services were always there to give an extra helping hand. In fact, only victims of Hostile (terrorist) Acts were assisted and compensated by a generous government programme. However, this programme does not apply to those who were victimised in a 'criminal' (non-terrorist) act. Becoming a 'normal', western, industrial society, Israel suffers today from what is considered as a

'normal' crime rate. Pressure exerted by victim organizations and women's groups have led the Israeli Knesset to present a new law, introducing criminal injuries support and compensation programmes. This law has been enacted in March 2001, and there are still no regulations or specific entitlements, but the principles have been agreed upon. Like any other Western state, Israel too will soon have a criminal injuries support and compensation system, aimed to help those who were criminally victimised.

Like in the past, the Middle East still is a very (very) complicated arena. The Media fails to deliver this complexity. What we urgently need here now is not only peace but also water. There is a real shortage of water in the area. Can social policy deliver a solution?

Prof. Uri Yanay, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, Mt Scopus, Jerusalem 91905 Israel
uri.yanay@huji.ac.il

SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW 12

Edited by **Hartley Dean, Robert Sykes and Roberta Woods**

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A letter from the United States

The Presidential election held on November 7, 2000 will go down in U.S. history as one of the most extraordinary and unprecedented elections since George Washington was elected the first President. Readers are undoubtedly familiar with the dramatic story of an election in which the popular vote went for Vice President Gore while the electoral vote was a cliff-hanger for a month until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of then governor George W. Bush, on a technical issue – thus giving the Florida electoral vote and the election to George W. Bush. Bush became the first President in more than a century to assume the Presidency having lost the popular vote and the political authority it commands. Moreover, as a result of the election, the Senate is divided equally between Republicans and Democrats, and the House of Representatives is also close to a tie.

The overarching theme expressed by many journalists and political pundits at the time was that Bush would be seen as an “accidental president” who only won the election because of a series of errors in the Florida election machinery. And, without question, Bush would have to seek out bipartisan support for his initiatives. In effect, it was argued, Bush campaigned as a “compassionate conservative”. This image, promoted extensively during the campaign, coupled with the election results, would force him toward the political center.

Two months into his presidency, what then do we see?

Instead of a “compassionate conservative” and without a popular mandate, we seem to have ended up with a President who reflects a more extreme, far right position than any other president over the last four decades, especially with regard to social policy, far further right than either his father, President Ronald Reagan, or President Richard Nixon.

A brief summary of what is happening in social policy since Governor Bush became President Bush, and the implications for the future of social policy, provide a sense of what is occurring:

Income Taxes, Old Age Benefits (Social Security), and Health Insurance for the Elderly (Medicare)

Bush’s first major social policy initiative is a proposed tax cut of \$1.6 trillion over the next 10 years, really a \$2 trillion tax cut once interest costs are included and about \$2.6 trillion if it is accelerated, and made retroactive, as he is currently urging (but not including in his figures). This tax cut is warranted, supposedly, because of the projected big surplus (which may or may not occur given the current economic downturn in the U.S.), or as a stimulus to the economy. (Apparently, he has not made up his mind which rationale will sell better and seems to be using both depending on

the audience.) As has been noted by many social policy analysts, the proposed tax cut benefits the wealthy disproportionately, with the top 1 percent of income tax payers receiving about 40 percent of the benefit. In contrast, the poor and near poor will get no benefit (because they pay no income taxes albeit plenty of other taxes) and will bear the major part of the cuts in social spending that the tax cut will force.

The current surplus in Old Age and Survivors’ Benefits (Social Security in U.S. terms), essential for sustaining the projected increase in beneficiaries once the “baby boomers” reach old age beginning in 2015 — and Medicare (health insurance for the elderly and disabled) constitute a major source of funds for the President’s proposed tax cut. He has made an explicit commitment not to spend any of the Social Security surplus to fund the cut but proposes to divert about \$600 billion of these funds into private personal savings or investment accounts, urging privatization of part of Social Security. His argument is that buying stocks and bonds is the best way to deal with any future financial insecurity in this system. He has not been willing to make a similar commitment to Medicare, refusing to state that he would not raid the current Medicare surplus to pay for his tax cut. Moreover, whether proposed legislation providing for Medicare coverage of part of the cost of prescription drugs – a major problem faced by the elderly and others – will be enacted, remains to be seen. In effect, both old age social insurance benefits and health care benefits for the aged could be significantly cut if the President’s proposed tax cut is enacted. The Democrats have the votes to stop or at least modify this proposal, if they both choose to do so, and handle the parliamentary maneuvering appropriately.

In addition to his proposed income tax cut, the President has proposed and Congress is well on its way to enacting, the elimination of the so-called marriage penalty (whereby under certain circumstances some married couples pay more in taxes than two single adults with the same total income) and inheritance taxes. However, the latter proposal, which would benefit a very few rich people, now seems likely to be modified, raising the size of an estate permitted to pass without being subject to taxes but not completely eliminating it.

Finally, with regard to tax policies, are a series of child-related proposals. The President has proposed a doubling of the child tax credit, from \$500 to \$1,000 a year, per child, but neither he nor the Congress seem to be supporting any of the Democrats’ child-related proposals. These latter proposals include: making the child tax credit refundable (non-wastable), so as to make it available to low and moderate income families

who now owe no income taxes; raising the level of the child (and dependent) care tax credit (the level has not been raised since 1981) and making it refundable; and/or increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (the prototype for the British Working Family Tax Credit).

Means-Tested Benefits for the Poor and the Working Poor

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the means-tested, cash benefit program that is the U.S. counterpart of British Income Support, will be re-assessed by the Congress in 2002 and reviewed for "re-authorization". Enacted in 1996 and implemented in 1997 as part of the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act", sometimes referred to as "welfare reform", TANF and its related programs are likely to be extensively discussed during the coming year. Summarizing the major provisions, the legislation: limits receipt of federal cash assistance to a lifetime maximum of five years; requires poor mothers of children aged three months and older to seek and obtain employment within two years of claiming benefits; excludes recently arrived legal immigrants from receipt of certain federally funded benefits; penalizes claimants and beneficiaries not following specified rules; provides cash benefits that equal considerably less than the official poverty threshold; and varies in eligibility criteria and benefit levels from state to state.

Since TANF is funded by a federal "block grant" to each state, based on the size of the caseload and benefit levels in 1994, the primary concern of social policy advocates currently is that now that caseloads have been reduced by about 40 percent with most of those leaving the welfare rolls now working, an effort will be made by Republicans to cut the funds rather than permitting states to keep them. If the funding is sustained, states can continue to use this "wind-fall" as some already do: to make benefits more adequate, increase child care subsidies, support more training and education initiatives, expand wage supplements and aids for the working poor, enact a state earned income tax credit, establish a special program for the marginally functioning and unemployable, and/or establish a contingency fund in case of a recession. If funds are cut, state options will be severely constrained.

Unfortunately, and of some concern, President Bush is already proposing cuts in the existing modest funding for child care assistance for low-income families, and proposing cuts in funding for programs designed to combat child abuse, as well.

There is growing concern, also, that a slowing economy and renewed double-digit inflation in health insurance costs are likely to lead to larger numbers of those without health insurance, now about 14 percent of the population. Republicans

are proposing tax credits to help people buy insurance. Critics argue that the proposed tax credits are too small to make health insurance affordable for low- or modest-income families and urge support for expanding Medicaid (health assistance for the poor and low income) or the State Child Health Insurance program established in 1997, and expanding coverage for the parents of children covered under the latter program.

Other Social Policy Initiatives

In addition to the "big ticket" items mentioned above, President Bush has moved to the right in a variety of other areas. For example, he has repealed a set of workplace safety rules, withdrawn new regulations requiring a substantial reduction in the permissible levels of arsenic, a known carcinogen, in drinking water, and indicated his objection to any remaining affirmative action initiatives. Medicaid and Food Stamp take-up (the latter is the in-kind benefit subsidizing food costs for poor and low-income individuals and families and especially important for children in these families) have continued to decline. This has occurred in part because claimants rejected for TANF often incorrectly assume that they do not qualify, and in part because TANF has changed the culture of the benefit delivery system, making it less welcoming and restricting eligibility, often inappropriately. Thus far, there is no sign of the outreach efforts encouraged by the previous administration. And President Bush has proposed expanding financing for religious charities giving new tax incentives to charitable institutions for personal social services, as long as the services provided are not overtly religious (do not require prayers or worship as part of the service program). Some observers believe that he is close to violating our constitutional church/state separation. President Bush has also proposed an expanded federal investment in education, but here, too, the focus is very conservative, and far too complex to explain here.

Conclusion

Those interested in social policy, and concerned about its impact on children, the disabled, the elderly, and/or the poor, cannot help but be concerned with the direction taken by President Bush and the Republican dominated Congress. Clearly, neither bi-partisanship nor compassion seem to be the current theme. Nor, thus far, have we seen effective Democratic opposition. Nonetheless, it is early in the Bush presidency. There is time yet for confrontation, or for constraint and compassion. Hopefully, there will be some evidence of both soon.

Sheila B. Kamerman, Compton Foundation Centennial Professor and Director, Columbia University Institute for Child and Family Policy

“Mildew. Come in dear boy. Take a pew.”
 “Dear boy?” From the way he said it I could tell this was not going to be a fun interview. But when are interviews with the VC ever fun? Especially appraisal interviews.

“Hard to believe, I know, but it’s time for your annual appraisal. Where does the time go, eh? It seems only yesterday that you sat there, brim full of hopes, ambitions, dare one say even dreams for the future. And here we are one year later, and the future’s here. Let’s see how you’ve done.”

Try as I might I couldn’t remember which particular hostages to fortune I’d been foolish enough to give last time we went in for this ritual humiliation, but *he* knew. He had them there, all written down like Mother Shipton’s prophecies, only these had been self-inflicted.

“Let’s look at how your research plans have panned out shall we? Three ESRC research applications wasn’t it? Plus the three articles that were “well under way” when we last spoke. And of course the book that was, as I recall, “imminent”. What a productive year this must have been.”

“Ah well you see, Vice Chancellor, the best laid plans and all that. Didn’t quite work out as I had planned. Have you seen those ESRC application forms? You need a PhD to understand them, let alone fill them in.”

“I believe that’s why they usually ask for them to be completed by people with PhDs. The articles?”

“Oh they’re well under way.”

“The book?”

“Even better news there, sir.”

“Surprise me, Mildew.”

“It’s imminent.”

“So this time next year?”

“No problem, sir. I think I can say with absolute conviction that it will definitely be, how shall I put it...?”

“Imminent?”

“Exactly.”

“Let’s move on. You had plans, I see, to double your department’s income by franchising courses in foreign parts. Any joy?”

“Ah, well there I have got a success story to report. In the last year I’ve used the University’s enterprise funds to visit universities abroad to get the balls rolling. Tenerife, Antigua, Fiji, Hawaii, the Azores.....”

“The Azores? I didn’t know they had a university.”

“Well, no, not yet. Isn’t that the point?”

“And with how many of these places have you concluded franchising agreements?”

“None as yet. But several of them are...”

“Imminent?”

“More like “well under way” I’d say. A few more visits and this time next year...”

“Yes, yes, I think I can guess the rest. Lets look at your plans for reshaping the curriculum in line with the University’s drive towards a more market led syllabus. I see that you had plans to set up degrees on the Social Policy of EastEnders, the Economics of Game Shows, the Politics of Big Brother and the Criminology of Brookside. Just what this University needs to keep up the applications. Senate were most impressed. When can we put them in the prospectus?”

“Soon, very soon. They’re about to take off in a big way. We’ve already bought up a job lot of Willmot and Young as the course text for the first one. And my colleagues have been on the phone day and night to *Who Wants to be Millionaire?* to get some fieldwork experience for the second. We’re well under way with that. This time next year....”

“Yes, yes, yes. So that just leaves your plans to improve your students’ retention. At least you were quite modest in your proposals last year. It says here that you were hoping to reverse the haemorrhage of the past few years and try to retain at least some of each year’s intake. Have you?”

“Ah. Well, to be honest, not as much as I’d hoped. In fact not much at all.”

“Mildew, do you actually have any students still enrolled on your degree programme?”

“Almost. We did have one but to cut a long story short, no sir, none.”

“None at all?”

“I’m afraid not sir. But I do have plans for next year. Excellent plans which, given the co-operation of the other departments and full financial backing from the University I’m sure I can....”

Then came the customary pitying look, deep sigh of disappointment and sad shaking of the head that usually accompanies these encounters. And so ended my annual appraisal. Over for another year. As usual, things soon settled back to normal and life has gone on pretty much as before. I think it’s very valuable to have a good look at one’s progress from time to time, to get the feedback from respected senior colleagues and to re-evaluate where one is going. Without it we’d just stagnate. A man’s reach should always exceed his grasp (or is it vice versa?), and I’m firmly of the belief that annual appraisals help us all to reach for the stars.

Professor Mosser Mildew, SPUTUM
 Social Policy Unthinkable Thinktank at the University of the Millennium



Evaluating Labour's Health Policies, 24th March 2001, City University

Over 50 people attended this second health policy conference organised by the SPA's Health Policy Group. Participants ranged across both the NHS and academic worlds.

The focus of the day was set by Professor Steve Harrison's (Manchester) plenary session on *New Labour, Modernisation and the Medical Labour Process*. His paper raised a number of themes which were addressed by other presenters later in the day. In particular, he highlighted some of the tensions inherent in the Labour Government's modernisation agenda in relation to the regulation of medical activity drawing his analysis from a range of conceptual and theoretical standpoints (despite an attempt to steer away from social theory) but emphasising the continued need for empirical research.

Following Steve Harrison's plenary session the conference split into two paper streams. In one stream John Carrier (LSE) and Ian Kendall (Portsmouth) elaborated aspects of Steve Harrison's paper with their exploration of *The advent and advance of 'regulatory pluralism' in the NHS: a return to planning and mechanisms of administration and legal regulation*. This was followed by a paper *researching emergency hospital admissions* by Jon Glasby and Rosemary Littlechild (University of Birmingham). The other stream dealt with aspects of primary care first with a paper from Graham Moon and John Mohan (Portsmouth) highlighting the potential resource implications of differences in residence and registered populations within Primary Care Groups. This was followed by a paper from Alison Chisholm (Oxford Brookes) who explored some of the methodological problems inherent in trying to measure the success of the contribution of PCGs to partnership working – a good reminder of the importance of methodological rigour.

Following an excellent buffet lunch the afternoon streams addressed issues of public participation and, complementary therapies and health inequalities. The two papers examining public participation provided a concise picture of responses to the Government's policy in this area with Sarah Mudd (Barts and the London NHS Trust) presenting the results of research on Trust approaches to public participation in East London in 1998 and Rita Haworth (Salford) reviewing the state of public participation in Primary Care Groups. In the other paper stream Liz Stopp (Bath) examined *New Labour's Health Policy and the Integration of Complementary Therapies* and Madelaine Murtagh (Newcastle) reviewed the government's approach to tackling health inequalities to assess the extent to which this is an agenda for change.

The papers provided an interesting cross section of debate which ranged the length and

breadth of the current government's health policy and highlighted the importance of theory and methodology in pursuing health policy research. It was encouraging to see such a large audience and we were particularly pleased by the participation of research students as paper presenters and by those from outside the academic community. We want to thank all the paper presenters and participants for making the conference so successful.

The conference confirmed the increasing level of interest in health policy issues within the SPA and wider community. In order to discuss ways of developing health policy within the SPA a meeting will be held at the SPA Conference in Belfast. Look out for details at the conference. The meeting will provide an opportunity to review what the health policy group has been doing to date and ways in which we can develop further activities. If you are not going to the conference but are interested in supporting the health policy group or have ideas for activities please contact one of the Organising Group.

Caroline Glendinning (Manchester), Nancy North (Portsmouth), Stephen Peckham (Oxford Brookes), Roland Petchey (City), Organising Group

Complexity Science and Social Policy, 1st March 2001, University of Salford

The SPA Study Day Complexity and Social Science generated more interest than expected with over 60 people asking to be kept on a mailing list, 45 people registered for the day and a turnout of 36 where travel problems had been bad. The presentations (6 speakers) demonstrated ways in which Complexity Science is relevant to the analysis and practice of social policy, and at the same time clearly showed the inevitable critical engagement that such a research programme must adopt. Indeed, discussion on the day focused on how the need to develop the relationship between Complexity Science and other approaches to policy analysis, covering issues of methodology, ontology and epistemology, as well as the normative stance of complexity (particularly in relation to managerialism). These debates clearly demonstrated the value in establishing a network to keep these debates going and the potential for a seminar series and it was agreed I would co-ordinate submitting a proposal to the ESRC for this. The presenters are writing up their papers for a special edition of the new on-line Journal of Social Issues to be published in the summer.

(Dr) Will Medd, Research Fellow, Institute for Public Health Research and Policy, Humphrey Booth House, Hulme Place, University of Salford, Salford M5 4QA. Tel. 0161 295 2806

“Quality in Later Life: Rights, Rhetoric and Reality”

British Society of Gerontology Conference 2001

31 August to 2 September in the University of Stirling, Scotland

Further details are at www.joa.co.uk/bsg2001.html, or contact: Norma Jones, Jones Ogg Associates, The Cork House, 104 Constitution Street, Edinburgh EH6 6AW. Tel: 0131 538 8191, Fax: 0131 477 7042

International Year of Volunteers 2001

**Scottish Symposium on Volunteering:
Exploring Definitions of Volunteering for the 21st Century**

27–28 August 2001

Edinburgh First at the University of Edinburgh

The aim of this first Scottish Symposium on Volunteering is to explore a theory and philosophy of volunteering at the beginning of the 21st Century. The exploration will lead us to develop and expand the theoretical framework of volunteering, and will re-examine the definitions and language of volunteering and community involvement.

Key themes will be developed through the presentation of papers and critical discussion, which will take place in a residential setting over two days.

For further details contact Brian Magee, Policy Officer, Volunteer Development Scotland, 72 Murray Place, Stirling FK8 2BX. Tel: 01786 479593.

**EISS CONFERENCE
BERGEN, 27–29 SEPTEMBER 2001**

European Social Security and Global Politics

We are pleased to announce that the Norwegian section of EISS (European Institute of Social Security) and Centre for Social Research, University of Bergen, will host the annual multidisciplinary conference to be held in Bergen at the end of September 2001. The conference will start after lunch on Thursday 27 September and end with a festive dinner at Mount Floyen, overlooking the city of Bergen, Saturday 29 September.

The general theme of the conference will focus on the challenges of European welfare states in an era of an economically and politically more and more integrated world. To what extent is it likely, possible, or desirable that relatively strong European welfare regimes, embedded in the politics of the nation state, will persist? Given specific values and interests will or must a new configuration of European welfare states be outlined? Is ‘globalisation’, or a more international economy and society, more or less conducive to the economic, cultural and political sustainability of comprehensive national welfare states? Is Europe (still) a model for other regions of the world in terms of social security protection and welfare provision, or what, if anything, can Europe learn from other regions? These broadly phrased questions and topics can be approached from several disciplinary perspectives, in a more or less comparative framework, within a long or short time perspective, be studied historically or with a future orientation, on the macro- or micro level, and with a concentration on one or several of various kinds of welfare and social security programmes.

Information about the conference can be obtained from Rut Fjellberg, Centre for Social Research (rut.fjellberg@sefos.uib.no; phone: 47-55589714).

British Sociological Association
MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY GROUP

Annual Conference 2001

September 21st–23rd
University of York

Plenary Speaker
Professor Michael Bloor
SOCSI, Cardiff University

*“On the consulting room couch with Citizen Science: the approach of the
Sociology of Scientific Knowledge to practitioner-client relationships”*

Further details available from:
British Sociological Association
Unit 3F/G Mountjoy Research Centre
Stockton Road, Durham DH1 3UR
bsamedsoc@britsoc.org.uk

&

the BSA Medical Sociology Group web site: <http://medsocbsa.swan.ac.uk/>

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Social Policy Association

NEW LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICIES FOR WOMEN

One day workshop

21 September 2001, London Guildhall University, Tower Hill site, London

The workshop will provide a critical assessment of New Labour social policies and their differential impact on women and men.

Issues to be addressed will include:

- The Childcare strategy
- Family-friendly and 'work-life' balance policies
- Working Family Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit
- The New Deal and young unemployed women
- The New Deal and lone parents
- Reconceptualising paid and unpaid work
- New conceptions of caring work

Confirmed speakers:

Jane Millar, University of Bath,
'Lone Mothers and the New Deal'

Katherine Rake, London School of Economics and Political Science,
'The citizen worker and the New Deals - a gender analysis'

Fiona Scheibl, University of Cambridge,
'Organisations' responses to changing work and family relationships: the case of SMEs in the UK'

Janet Shucksmith, University of Aberdeen,
'Child and family health strategies in Scotland'

Participants are limited to 40 people – so please book early

For more details please contact:

Dr Christine Cousins
Department of Economics, Social Sciences and Tourism
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield
Herts AL10 9AB
Tel: +44-(0)1707-284414
Fax: +44-(0)1707-284799
Email: c.r.cousins@herts.ac.uk

Social Policy Association Conference 2001 (SPA/ISPA conference)

Reconstituting Social Policy: Global, National, Local.

This will be a joint event with the Irish Social Policy Association (ISPA) and will take place at **Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland** from midday on 24th to midday on 26th July. This will be followed by a conference hosted by the ISPA at **Trinity College, Dublin** from the evening of 26th to the evening of 27th July entitled *Development, Regeneration and Social Policy*.

Please book now ... before 30th May 2001 (after this date a late penalty will apply)

Reconstituting Social Policy: Global, National, Local (at QUB)

Workshops at the **Belfast Conference** will focus on the impact or implications for social policy of the following themes 1) Equality and human rights; 2) Political violence; 3) New constitutions and societies in transition; 4) Supra and international governmental and non-governmental organisations; 5) Devolution; 6) Federalism; and also 7) Reconciling criminal and social justice; 8) Effective teaching and learning in social policy (including two e-learning sessions).

Keynote speakers include Guy Standing from the ILO speaking on 'Human Rights and Social Policy' with respondent Pauline Conroy, Independent Policy Analyst, Dublin; and Mary Daly from QUB, speaking on 'Governance and Social Policy'. The third plenary session will be a symposium – Reconciling Criminal and Social Justice, with contributions from Dee Cook (Wolverhampton), Eugene Mc Laughlin (OU), Valerie Bresnihan (IPRT) and Paddy Hillyard (UU).

Other sessions will include : Meet the Funders ; Preparing for the QAA; Environmentalism and social policy; Health and Social Policy, Gender Equality in Universities; User involvement in social policy, an ISPA forum and poster presentations on policy research. The social programme start on Monday and will include a coach tour in rural Northern Ireland, a walking tour of Belfast, three wine receptions (one for post-graduates only), a gala dinner at the Belfast City Hall and music from the *Accidental Ceili Band* and *the Sydney Solidarity Choir*. Academic publishing advice for prospective authors will be provided by Jo Campling. We operate a 'family friendly' policy – creche facilities available for those who book in advance

*Accommodation is at a premium in Dublin city centre in July.... Please book immediately
Deadline for bookings is 30th May but accommodation at TCD
will become more limited as time goes on*

Development, Regeneration and Social Policy (at Trinity College Dublin)

For those requiring transport a bus will take participants (who book in advance) to Dublin on the afternoon of 26th July. **Workshops** at the **Dublin Conference** will focus on 1) economic development; 2) The role of partnerships (local, national, international, public-private etc); 3) urban or rural regeneration (including issues such as taxation incentives, marginalisation and community participation).

Keynote speakers include David Donnison, Emeritus Professor, University of Glasgow, Seamus O'Conneide, NUI, Maynooth and Anne Power, from the LSE.

The social programme will include two visits to sites of regeneration in Dublin City , a gala dinner at Dublin Castle, and all the sightseeing you can pack into a day in the centre of Dublin. The social programme will continue on Saturday.

Details of costs and booking arrangements are available from the Conference Secretariat or the SPA website <http://www.social-policy.com> or the Queen's University website <http://www.qub.ac.uk/spaconf> . Also ISPA website : <http://www.ispa.ie>

Enquiries

Belfast:

Siobhan Bogues (Administrator)
SPA Conference Secretariat
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Queen's University, Belfast BT7 1NN.
Fax: +44- (0)28 9020 9300
Tel: +44- (0)28 9022 9009
Email: spaconf@qub.ac.uk

Dublin

Martina Reidy (ISPA Administrator)
Dept. of Social Policy and Social Work
University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4.
Fax: 00353-1-706 1197
Tel: 00353-1-706 8198
Email: martina.reidy@ucd.ie

Hello and Goodbye

This is my last issue as Editor of *SPA News*. It's a job I have held for the last six years, and one which I have enjoyed enormously. In this period I have not written an editorial for the Newsletter so I suppose this is both my first and my last.

I wanted to use this opportunity to say something about the reason for, and importance of, having a Newsletter like *SPA News*. It seems to me, and those in the Executive and outside who have welcomed the current format, that a printed Newsletter like this fulfils many functions, not least as a membership service. It is also a means by which challenges to, and developments in, the discipline can be communicated widely to the membership and beyond. But *SPA News* has also developed as a vehicle for communicating policy ideas and debates. It has given the social policy community a rather unique forum to express ideas and issues – concerning both the discipline and the 'doing' of social policy – in a fresh, accessible and 'to the point' way. It's important that we have this kind of forum – which is very different

to our academic journals - and it's important too, especially in the rather narrow context of the RAE, that these contributions are also valued.

On a lighter side (but perhaps no less important for that), the Newsletter has helped some of us get to know a little better others in the social policy community through their contributions to 'Personal Choice' and '3 plus 1'. Finally, an articulate and informative Newsletter (and one which is produced to high standards) also helps give the Association a professional identity to those outside the discipline, both in policy making as well as in higher education.

In the context of giving a forum for ideas, issues and debates, and for making us think, I have particularly enjoyed the '20th Century Landmarks' (*SPA News* October/November 1999) and 'Foreword Thinking' (*SPA News* February/March 2000) sections, and also 'New Labour and Social Policy' in this issue. But other features also come to mind, including the 'What Works in Social Policy?' items, and the series on 'User Involvement'. Others have told me that they especially enjoy the 'Letters from abroad', 'Personal Choice' and '3 plus 1' sections, while the Association's postgraduate students (and 'too busy to read' academics) seem to find the 'New Publications', 'In Brief' and 'Book Reviews' sections rather helpful. The Newsletter has also given a regular slot to the reporting of conferences and seminars (often funded by the SPA) which many of us cannot attend but which we would like to know something about. And then, of course, there is Professor Mosser Mildew of SPUTUM, whose resemblance to anyone living is purely coincidental and whose accounts of University life you either love or hate. If a Newsletter can make us sometimes smile – as well as think - then I suspect that this is not a bad thing.

I hope that *SPA News* will go from strength to strength and will introduce new sections, close down older ones when they have outlived their usefulness, and develop a new identity and sense of purpose to reflect changing times, changing needs and the commitments of a new (and hopefully energetic) Editorial Group and new contributors. I would like to thank Catherine Bochel (who is also retiring with this issue) for her work on the Book Reviews and Michael Cahill for his work on New Publications and In Brief. Also, thanks to all those regular contributors (especially Caroline Glendinning, John Jacobs, Maggie May and Duncan Scott) and the many others of you who responded so positively to my requests for items and articles. I wish the new Editorial Group, Michael Cahill (as Editor), Linda Bauld and Stuart Duffin all the best for the future.

Saul Becker, Loughborough University

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