The Richard M. Titmuss Memorial Lecture

THE NEW RIGHT AND SOCIAL POLICY

A Review of a Decade of Thatcherism

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THE RICHARD M. TITMUSS MEMORIAL LECTURE

Richard M. Titmuss was appointed Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics in March 1950, a position which he held for the rest of his life till 1973. He was one of the outstanding and original social scientists of his generation and in his research, lectures and personal encounters shaped anew the whole concept of social policy in Britain and abroad. For a period of three decades he exerted immense influence in scholarship, politics and government at home and in many countries throughout the world.

Richard Titmuss was a great friend of Israel and his thought and work very much influenced the study of social policy in Israel, as well as left lasting imprint on the social policies of the country. The lecture series in his memory has been made possible with the kind help of his friends in the United Kingdom and by a generous grant of the National Insurance Institute of Israel.

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When Richard Titmuss died in 1973, Richard Crossman spoke at his memorial service. These two men were perhaps the most influential thinkers and writers on social policy in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. They were united in their friendship for Israel. I was privileged to work with both of them in the last years of their lives. During the service Crossman said of Titmuss:

> He was the only man I have known well who saw clearly, luminously, consistently and with a wonderful happiness the vision which deserts most of us pretty often in our lives.[1]

Twenty-two years ago Richard Titmuss, speaking at this university, said:

> We have begun to realise that social growth - the need for integration, the need for more equality of opportunity, the need for freedom from want - deserves as much attention, intellectually as well as in terms of political action, as economic growth.[2]

While social growth deserves as much attention as economic growth it has not, in Britain at least, received it. Most of the agenda of social policy in Britain has, in recent years been determined by the New Right.

In this lecture I will examine the influence of the New Right in the British context. Then I shall try to draw some broader lessons in terms of the influences and issues that this

B. What is the New Right?

The New Right is not one precise school of thought but certain general features can be described. It favours free markets and the laissez-faire economy. It seeks to roll back the influence of the state and government provision. It sees government as heavily influenced by producer interests at the expense of consumers or users of services. Government provision is bureaucratic, inflexible and inefficient. Government tends to protect trade union and professional restrictive practices and maintain state monopolies. The New Right sees the role of social policy as being, in Titmuss' term, that of providing 'residual welfare' which protects the poorest with selective or targeted provision to relieve poverty or provide a minimum of health care or education. Individuals are seen as responding to opportunities facing them in the light of their self-interest alone. If, as Milton Friedman put it, people are paid to be unemployed, then they will be unemployed. A specific aim of the New Right is to reduce dependence on the state. Welfare is primarily to be provided through the family or, failing that, through charity and voluntary effort.

One thing is certain about the New Right: it is not new. It is 19th century liberalism resurrected. While it may be an old idea, its power is enormous. As Keynes wrote [3]:

> The Economists were teaching that wealth, commerce and machinery were the children of free competition .... But the Darwinians could go one better than that - free competition had built Man. The human eye was no longer the demonstration of [God's] Design, miraculously contriving all things for the best; it was the supreme achievement of Chance, operating under conditions of free competition and laissez-faire. The principle of the Survival of the Fittest could be regarded as a vast generalisation of Ricardian economics. Socialistic interferences became, in the light of this grander synthesis, not merely inexpedient, but impious, as calculated to retard the onward movement of the mighty process by which we ourselves had risen like Aphrodite

Yet as Keynes' essay on the end of laissez-faire continued:

> This is what the economists are supposed to have said. No such doctrine is really to be found in the writings of the greatest authorities ... the popularity of the doctrine must be laid at the door of the political philosophers of the day, whom it happenned to suit, rather than the political economists.

The ideas can be traced far back but Hayek, Friedman and Nozick are among the most influential writers. In Britain the ideas of the New Right have long been purveyed by the Institute of Economic Affairs; more recently they have been reinforced by the efforts of the Centre for Policy Studies, co-founded by Mrs Thatcher, and by the Adam Smith Institute.

So much, in brief, for the political philosophy. What of the philosophy of the politician with power in Britain?

C. Mrs Thatcher's Political Philosophy

Mrs Thatcher is a politician with strongly held beliefs: in her own term's a conviction politician. The New Right is a political philosophy. Can we associate her beliefs with the New Right?

Mrs Thatcher's political beliefs appear to match very closely those of the New Right philosophy. Her personal advisers are drawn from the New Right. Those who sought to resist curbs on public spending she abusively termed "wets" or "spenders". One by one she has sacked all the prominent "wets". She clearly regards the private sector as wealth creators and the public sector as wealth consumers.

To cite one illustration of her attitude, in 1983 a paper prepared by the Central Policy Review Staff was, on her authority, circulated to the Cabinet [4]. It proposed: ending

private health insurance; charges for doctors' visits and higher charges for drugs.

Mrs Thatcher is quite exceptional among politican in the degree to which her political philosophy and sense of moral rectitude drive her on. She reminds one of the mother who sent her son off to university with the words: "In time you may know more than me, but I shall always know best." Mrs Thatcher recently said in an interview: "I hang on until I believe there are people who can take the banner forward with the same commitment, belief, vision, strength and singleness of purpose." [5] As yet she shows no sign of believing anyone fits her demanding standards.

D. The Record of the Last Decade

Britain has a prime minister who has now accumulated exceptional political power and dominance. On every indication Mrs Thatcher shares the philosophy of the New Right. Two weeks ago she celebrated ten years in office as Prime Minister.

What has happened to social provision and social conditions in Britain over the last decade? Separating myth from reality is none to easy. Let us look at a number of spheres in turn.

Social security expenditure has increased in real terms, indeed has grown faster than gross domestic product. Most benefits, with the notable exception of unemployment benefits, have broadly increased in line with prices. Total expenditure has gone up with greatly increased numbers of unemployed people and one parent families as well as the longer term increase in the number of elderly people. The entire social security system was subject to a searching review which proposed the abolition of the state earnings-related pension scheme, the second-tier state

parts and some co-ordination of different means tests. The relative balance between contributory and means-tested benefits remains much the same as it was ten years ago.

The National Health Service too has been growing. Expenditure has increased by some forty percent after allowing for general inflation, with some fifteen percent more medical staff. Charges for prescription and optical and dental care have increased much faster than inflation but doctor consultations and hospital care remains free. To some extent resources have been shifted into long-term care away from acute services. Regional inequalities have been reduced. Mortality rates have declined and are less dispersed. In a new review published last January Mrs Thatcher herself wrote in a forward: "The National Health Service will continue to be available to all, regardless of income, and to financed mainly out of general taxation." [6]

Personal social service expenditure, which includes social work, has also grown faster than gross domestic product, although barely fast enough, overall, to keep pace with demographic change. Domiciliary services have declined relative to the number of elderly people and community care has certainly not kept pace with the rate of de-institutionalisation.

In education, expenditure has in total remained broadly constant in real terms. Expenditure on schools has increased in real terms relative to the numbers of children. By contrast, in higher education expenditure per student has fallen slightly although the proportion of the age group continuing in education has remained constant. The Education Reform Act last year introduced a national curriculum and local management of schools, and allowed schools to opt-out and receive direct funding from central government. Public spending on training has increased very rapidly as public

It is in the housing field that the most striking changes have occurred with a major effort to privatise publicly provided, government administered council housing. New council building has declined drastically and about one million council dwellings have been sold to their occupants. On the other hand, some seven million dwellings remain as council tenancies. There has been a major decline in the subsidy for new public building but this has to some extent been transferred into an increase in public funding concentrated on poorer tenants. Housing, however, does stand out in that public expenditure on it has declined in real terms over the last decade. Homelessness has increased, as witnessed on many London streets. On the other hand, in terms of amenities and density, all tenures have improved.

Changes in public expenditure do not, however, present the whole picture of what has been going on. In a number of spheres there has been major restructuring.

First, there has been a shift from direct public provision towards public financing of privately provided or contracted out services. For example, there has been little growth in the number of publicly provided old peoples homes but there has been a major growth in public financing of places in private residential homes funded through the social security system.

Second, there has been a major assault on local government provision of housing and other social services. This was carried out by the Thatcher government in the belief that local authorities were wanton and inefficient in their expenditure (and in many cases controlled by the Labour Party). In some cases this has lead to direct centralisation of organisation and in other cases towards allowing opting out into new types of organisation: parents are to be allowed to vote to opt their school out from local education authority administration while retaining central government funding; tenants on housing estates are to be allowed to opt

Third, there has been in the social services, as in Britain more generally, a major diminution of trade union power achieved largely through legislation but in part through the impact of double digit unemployment.

Fourth, there has been an emphasis in all spheres on management audits, performance criteria and accountability. As may be imagined, this has not received a whole-hearted welcome, particularly in the universities.

Turning to social conditions, there has been an increase in relative poverty and in inequality: both original and disposable incomes have become more unequal, but original incomes much more so than disposable incomes. More people are dependent on state benefits. Inequality between rich and poor has increased, as has the difference in wealth between South and North. These changes, though important, have not been vast, and they are not primarily the result of cut-backs in social provision. Nevertheless, feelings of powerlessness abound. As Thomas Hardy wrote: [7]

> ..... naught remains
> But vindictiveness here amid the strong,
> And there amid the weak an impotent rage.

This brief summary of the last decade in Britain is, I hope, enough to show that, although there have been changes in the social provisions, there has not been a revolution in social policy. In making this overall assessment my purpose is not to be sanguine or complacent. In my personal opinion, for reasons that will become clear, social provision has fallen far below what has been needed, with effects that have, in many cases, been damaging, fatal, and - because there was an alternative - tragic.

There are, of course, possible criticisms of my overall view of the record. First, many in Britain would dispute my broad

closures have to be balanced against other openings. What is evident is the inadequacy of many provisions relative to needs - but this is not new. While deprivation has increased at the bottom end this has largely been due to economic changes or changes in the original distribution of income. Social provision has been maintained and has mitigated the worst effects.

A second critique that could be made of my summary is that, while there is yet to be a rolling back of the state, this is almost certainly what lies ahead. Opting out of schools and the encouragement of private health insurance are, some believe, pre-cursors to the fragmentation of comprehensive services. The development of a costing framework for health care, explained in terms of increasing the efficiency of the service, is, some believe, the preliminary to wide-scale privatisation. When the economy gets into difficulties, as is now beginning to happen, then pressure on social security expenditure - nearly a third of all government expenditure - will make drastic cuts inevitable. This view may be correct: time will tell. But having myself forecast such a drastic cut-back in the welfare state six years ago, which has not come to pass, I am hesitant about making such far-reaching forecasts again.

The fate of one radical proposal is illustrated by considering what became of the Central Policy Review Staff's paper circulated in 1983, which I described earlier? Let me quote from a new biography of Mrs Thatcher by Hugo Young: [8]

> When they received this paper, out of the blue, many cabinet ministers were horrified. They could not see the economic, let alone the political, sense in it. The wets, in particular, wanted it to get no further. So they devised a double-sided strategy.
>
> The first part was to stop cabinet discussion in its tracks. The wets wanted to signify that the Think Tank's startling programme was deemed not worthy of further consideration. On September 9, in a rare display of unity, they succeeded in forcing it off

> It was this unauthorised act of open government that finally killed the CPRS proposal for a six-month study in thinking the unthinkable. The prime minister was furious, but chastened. Various exercises in damage-limitation were undertaken, including the pretence that the whole thing had been an error not by her but by the cabinet secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, who had mistakenly circulated the paper and put it on the agenda. This contention was greeted with ridicule by those who heard it, aware, as one of them put it, that 'not a fly moves on the wall without her knowing'. Newspapers were briefed to the effect that she opposed the Think Tank report and really had nothing to do with it.
>
> This was not the case. She had clung on to it until, following the Economist story, the majority of ministers told her she had made a terrible blunder. Lord Hailsham said in cabinet: 'It is the worst mistake the Government has made since it came to power.' When the voices were collected she said, in what one minister called a petulant huff, 'All right then, shelve it.'
>
> They each had their own opinion about why the blunder had occured. Jim Prior probably came closest to the truth. He put it down to the Falklands effect. 'Does anyone imagine she would have dared to circulate the paper if it hadn't been for Falklands euphoria?' he privately inquired.

While the future remains uncertain, we can at least try to understand what the record of the last decade tells us about the New Right and social policy.

E The Successes and Failures of the New Right

What has been achieved?

The first achievement has been to shift the discussion on the Right away from notions of an ordered hierarchy in society with 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate'. Poverty in the past has been seen as the product of the moral deficiencies of the lower orders or inferior races, and many

had to be de-pauperised: "decent people cannot be expected to take repulsive children, using bad language and telling lies ... they must be made lovable and attractive."

The New Right has tended not to treat any part of society as aliens who felt, thought and behaved differently; rather all were treated as fellow human beings. This common humanity now happily adopted by the New Right was, perhaps, best expressed by a member of the old left, the founder of the National Health Service, Aneurin Bevan, when he wrote: [10]

> After the first death, there is no other." With that lovely and tender line the poet Dylan Thomas ends a poem on the death of a child killed in a fire-raid on London. The poet here asserts the uniqueness of the individual personality. If the imagination can plumb the depths of personal tragedy, no multiplication of similar incidents can add to the revelation. Numbers can increase the social consequences of disaster, but the frontiers of understanding are reached when our spirit fully identifies itself with the awful loneliness and finality of personal grief.
>
> The capacity for emotional concern for individual life is the most significant quality of a civilised human being. It is not achieved when limited to people of a certain colour, race, religion, nation or class. Indeed, just to the extent that this or that group commands our exclusive sympathy, we are capable of the most monstrous cruelty, or at best indifference, to others who do not belong to the group.

It is welcome that the New Right now thinks of people of all races and religions, male and female, as fellow human beings who make choices subject to differing economic, social and political constraints. They reject racial or other stereotypes and are affronted by the obscenity of prejudice whether against black or brown people, against Jew or Arab, against women, or against people with physical or mental disabilities.

On the other hand, vague, but judgemental, notions of an underclass or a dependency culture have developed in New Right thinking. Charles Murray's writing about the United States [11], focusing on groups dependent for long periods on

individual; now the responsibility is laid at the door of social policy for creating the conditions that allegedly lead to this social problem. Virtually all Murray's claims have been academically demolished, notably by the Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty. Yet this and similar writings continue to give a spurious academic credibility to the claims or pre-suppositions of the New Right. The fact is that the causation of social problems is in most cases extremely complex. Treating the social policy response to a problem as being the cause of the problem on the basis that the problem and the response go together is hardly convincing social science. But the challenge to social science remains in societies where some groups are excluded, impoverished or discriminated against - wherever there are second-class citizens - to research and analyse inequalities in opportunities, in services, and in life chances.

The second achievement of the New Right has been to challenge the welfare state consensus that dominated thinking for 30 years. They can justly claim to have set the terms of recent policy discussions.

The New Right have exposed the emptiness of the assumption that public provision is necessarily a good thing and market provision is, if not bad, decidedly inferior. Many on the left, and to a degree Titmuss seemed to share this view, saw social progress in terms of rolling back markets which were unplanned, governed by greed and the law of the jungle. Civilisation was seen as synonomous with extending planned social provision based on needs. Few now, whether on the left in Britain, or ruling Russia or China, would take this attitude towards markets or assume the self-evident superiority of planned government provision.

Third, the New Right have challenged trade unions, professional associations and pressure groups. They have stressed that suppliers of services, trade unions and

revered but often embarrassing - suggested a remedy for this in the higher education field. He suggested that students be free to select the lectures they would attend and that teachers pay should depend on the fees they could attract; but he did think that teachers should be obliged to give a certain number of lectures: [12]

> If the teacher happens to be a man of sense, it must be an unpleasant thing to him to be conscious, while he is lecturing his students, that he is either speaking or reading nonsense, or what is very little better than nonsense. It must too be unpleasant to him to observe that the greater part of his students desert his lectures; or perhaps attend upon them with plain enough marks of neglect, contempt, and derision.

But he recognised that the idle instructor could rely on the student paper or essay and:

> by now and then making an occassional remark upon it, he may flatter himself that he is giving a lecture. The slightest degree of knowledge and application will enable him to do this without exposing himself to contempt or derision, or saying anything that is really foolish, absurd, or ridiculous.

A fourth effect of the New Right and Thatcherism has been to shake up management and create a widespread sense of insecurity and instability. Some regard this as essential for change and as a salutary reminder that life is hard and there is no such thing as a free lunch. Others regard it as counter-productive, producing dissatisfaction, resistance to change, and lack of the commitment so necessary in many social services.

Many supporters of the New Right claim privatisation as a major achievement. Yet as noted already, in many cases there has been a shift from public to private provision but a continuity of public financing. One can be reasonably certain that that which is publicly financed is or will be publicly regulated. Privatisation has been claimed as contributing to efficiency. Private provision is judged by the New Right,

contracted out because they are cheaper even if the saving is entirely at the expense of the cleaners already low wages. Parent power in schools is assumed unquestioningly to be a good thing even though professional teachers may be as concerned or knowledgeable about what is best for children as their parents who are to be invested with consumer power. We are asked to believe that a hospital financed by private insurance is creating wealth whereas a hospital financed in the National Health Service is consuming wealth.

While the New Right's achievements may be debatable, its failures are indisputable. I would contend that on all its central objectives with regard to social policy it has failed totally.

There has been a failure to roll back public expenditure. There has been a failure to reduce numbers dependent on social security. There has been a failure to move to "residual welfare": universal free education and health care continues, and a universal child benefit paid to all children whatever the family income remains.

F. The Lessons of Thatcherism for the New Right

What lessons, then, can be drawn from the experience of Thatcherism?

Writing about America the irreverent reporter P J O'Rourke wrote: [13]

> The Democrats are, more or less, the party of Government activism, the party which says government can make you richer, smarter, taller and get the chickweed out of your lawn. The Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work and then gets elected and proves it.

If government does not work, as the New Right alleges, why is there so much of it about under a Conservative government

One possible answer stresses the forces of resistance. Professions and trade unions in alliance with the Civil Service resist reductions in their power. All the major professions in Britain - teachers, lawyers, doctors, social workers - are under threat from the government but to a degree their public standing enables them to resist. Some of these professions enjoy considerably higher standing than do politicians. And thus they have been able to organise effective resistance.

A second source of resistance has come from those who are dependent on social spending. For example, the eight million pensioners whose votes are avidly sought are extremely sensitive to changes in pension provision. Rolling back the state may allow taxes to be reduced but it also involves the loss of services. The political balance is such as to make any changes gradual rather than sudden.

A third reason for lack of change is not directly to do with the producers or consumers of services but rather the underlying attitudes of voters. Opinion polls suggest that an option of reducing taxes and cutting services is now supported by a tiny proportion of the population - three percent in a recent poll.[14] Slightly less than half wished to remain the same as now, but half the population wished to see more spending on services even if it meant increased taxation. Surprisingly, perhaps, these attitudes do not differ to any great extent between voters for different political parties. Such a view strongly supports the need for extensive collective provision to ensure all have access to health care, education, and some level of social security. The New Right and the Thatcher government have not, it would appear, been at all successful in changing social attitudes.

To take one minor example we may consider a British dispute about dietary law. Recently a furious controversy arose when a junior minister of health with outspoken views on most matters suggested that most British egg production was

scrambled; she had to resign.
Whether most eggs were infected was hotly debated. What was unquestioningly accepted was that the government had an overall collective responsibility for consumer protection.

Why are social attitudes so committed to the welfare state? Many answers are possible.

Allegiance to any political system depends on its justifying its legitimacy; this in turn depends on the underlying rules being accepted as fair; these rules are thus likely to involve a collective responsibility for maintaining the lives of citizens.

For individuals to act as deliberative and purposive agents - a precondition for liberal democracy and an underlying assumption of the New Right - they must be literate, healthy, informed and not discriminated against on the basis of race, religion or sex - each inevitably dependent on social policies.

Another reason for maintaining collective provision is the recognition of the limits of consumer sovereignty - even for those who are intelligent and prosperous. There are many contexts, notably where health care is required, when consumers are inevitably weak in relation to the professional providers. Similarly, it is widely recognised that many risks which have social consequences, such as unemployment and marital breakdown, are uninsurable in any feasible private insurance market. Private provision can never be made for such risks.

It is widely recognised that market provision will inevitably be concentrated on richer consumers or demanders of services, increasing social division and decreasing cohesion. Whether you call it collectivism, solidarity, or common decency, once social services have become available on the basis of needs there are few prepared to return to provision dependent on

The New Right, I would contend, has failed to come to terms with the limits to individualism.

Collectivism is alive and well. Some, such as Mrs Thatcher herself,are forced to practice it reluctantly; others do so enthusiastically. There is little sign that areas that have become collective responsibilities are returning purely to the private sphere. Direct public provision may decline but public responsibility and financing show little sign of doing so. It may be that once something has become a collective responsibility, or some problem is seen to be affected by collective action, it will always remain a collective concern.

The social values engendered by the welfare state have not been replaced by those of the New Right.

A second lesson concerns the complexity of choices.

Titmuss was highly critical of simplistic models of economic or computer man. Friedman's provides a good example of a simplistic approach in his espousal of a negative income tax. Friedman argued that this was the right remedy for poverty but he failed to address the questions that inevitably arise - questions about the appropriate income unit, the time period for assessment, how far any account should be taken of the past saving or contribution behaviour. For failing to address such crucial questions, Titmuss' contempt was entirely appropriate.

A second over-simplification is to imagine that there is a clear and unchanging boundary between the public and private spheres. One example of a shifting boundary arises ou of the growing concern over child abuse in Britain: steps to increase the protection of children against abuse within their own families are inevitably having to intervene in the previously private world of the family.

has occurred with old people's homes. One lesson that the British experience offers is that privatisation does not mean de-politicisation. Privatised care requires a regulatory framework. Ironically that regulatory framework may be much tighter and more effective than was the public supervision when responsibility rested entirely with a public body. The assumption that if it was public and non-profit-making it was run in the interests of the public left many institutions virtually exempt from scrutiny. By shifting them into the private sector, within a regulated framework, it has been necessary for government to define objectives and measure performance - what is apparently private may prove more public than what was apparently public.

A third lesson is that the the New Right's analysis of the problem has been at odds with its prescription. It is not internally consistent.

The stress on residual welfare and the objective of targetting, means-testing or in other ways making social provision selective is bringing about a particular problem of incentives. There is a serious gulf between the New Right's proposed action and its analysis of the problem. The New Right's analysis concentrates on individuals, and the incentives facing them. They want people to work harder, search for jobs, and save for old age. The effect of targetting and increased means testing is, however, precisely the opposite. The poverty trap in Britain is the product of the cumulative impact of the overlap between income taxation, earnings related national insurance contributions, means tested family credit, means tested assistance with rents and means tested rate rebates. The disposable income of a two-child family with earnings of £140 per week or about two-thirds of average earnings, was in 1988 just £10 more than that of such a family with earnings of £60 per week - in fact as earnings rise by £80 the gain in disposable income is slightly under £10.[15] Unemployed people, the great majority of whom depend on supplementary benefit, or income support as

families. Over a million pensioners who have saved for their old age, individually or through an occupational pension scheme, end up no better off as a result of their thrift because their supplementary pension is means-tested.

It is a strange irony that Beveridge, whose model of social security is now criticised as being too untargetted and expensive, advocated universal benefits in part on the most respectable ground that it would encourage thrift and personal saving for old age. If in the future there is increased means-testing, with the state in a residual role, so that those who had saved more for themselves get less from the state, then this could only have the effect of diminishing individual incentives to save. The strategy of the New Right for more selective social provision would appear to be altogether at odds with their desire to enhance individual incentives to self-provision.

If targetting and means testing were pursued further, then the number of people affected by a wider poverty trap would be greatly increased. At present, the severest poverty traps affect only those at the very bottom of the income distribution: if targetting were extended, for example by means-testing Child Benefit, it would take in far larger numbers and face them with effective marginal tax rates ranging from 70 per cent up to nearly 100 per cent. The strategy of increasing targetting or selectivity is bound to reduce incentives facing those on low incomes. It also results in bizarre distortions in the housing choices facing low-income tenants.

The obvious reason for increased selectivity is that it is a strategy above all of cost minimisation. Yet even this objective may be short-sighted . Costs may be minimised now but if incentives to earn or save are restricted then eventually behaviour is likely to adjust, leading to increased poverty and increased expenditure on poverty

providing for themselves, the resulting poverty can hardly be blamed on the victims - the moral failure lies in the government and society.

A fourth lesson is the New Right's irrelevance to many social issues.

Law and order cannot be left to the free market. Along with defence even the New Right recognise that there must be Government responsibility for law and order. Yet crime is clearly a social phenomenon. Thus, leaving the social factors which cause crime entirely to be resolved through market mechanisms is clearly nonsense.

The same may be said of many other social issues. There simply is no realistic New Right response to drug addiction, to racial discrimination, or to many other social evils. Nor is individualism remotely relevant to environmental problems that recognise no customs posts or passport controls - nor indeed is nationalism relevant to such global problems.

The New Right, in stressing individualism, makes the error of thinking that people act solely as individuals. In one sense, of course, we do, but in a much more important sense we are part of society. Almost incredibly, Mrs Thatcher is on record as having said there is no such thing as society.[16] The failure to see that we are part of a society and that our personal identity and welfare depend on our interaction with our fellow humans allows the New Right to propose individualistic social policies. It is possible to provide for an individual's health care or pension. It is not possible, and it never will be, to provide individual protection against environmental damage, against crime, against group or national violence, or to provide a sense of community, belonging or social purpose in life.

individual can make to society, on the sense of community, on the sense of control over events, and on the opportunities available. Thus full employment may be more important as a social policy than improvements in social security. Female emancipation and employment opportunities may be more fundamental to poverty within families than improved child benefits. Social policy affects all these and is not solely concerned with the social provision of those things which the market cannot provide. To restrict social policy to social service provision is to ignore its role in shaping society.

Yet here we come to the New Right's most fundamental limitation: it advocates that society will be and should be shaped by markets rather than any broader goals or vision. Thus, it is for the New Right entirely appropriate that social policy should be the handmaiden of the market economy, picking up the economic and social casualties. The New Right sees the free market as providing the essential dynamic in society determining the pattern and direction of social change. Social provision is justified as a means of enabling the poorest to have a certain minimum of a few essential resources. But the overall direction is provided not by society and government, but by the mechanisms of the private market. Such a view contrasts with one in which society gives priority to certain social goals, not merely negative freedoms based on law and order, but also positive freedoms requiring opportunity, integration and social justice. Such a broader vision of the structure of society stretches to wide horizons far beyond the narrow vision of the New Right.

H Challenges to Social Policy

I have been mildly critical of the New Right and its conception of social policy. Finally let me try to be more positive. For to criticise New Right ideas is not to suggest that all is well with traditional social policy analysis.

First, I would suggest, the conception of welfare needs to be broadened in social policy analysis. Titmuss made a three-fold division into social welfare, occupational welfare, and fiscal welfare. Much work on caring suggests that Titmuss's three-fold division should be extended to a five-fold division: to encompass voluntary welfare, produced by unpaid work in the community, and family welfare, produced by immediate family members. This last is responsible for the greatest part of social care - for children, for disabled people, and for the frail elderly - and redistribution of income within families is responsible for the greatest component of social security. Unless all these forms of welfare are explicitly considered there is a danger that social policies will presume on and reinforce existing divisions of responsibilities.

Second, I would suggest that more attention should be focused on opportunities. Traditional social policy has been unduly concerned with casualties, with picking up the pieces, and with doing things for people. Individuals, as Titmuss clearly appreciated, have responsibilities as well as needs. Vastly more attention in social policy studies is devoted to dealing with social problems than to preventing problems. Welfare handouts are no substitute for independence and the opportunity to produce for oneself: that opportunity may depend on employment opportunities, rehabilitation, housing - in short, it may depend on social provisions. Yet the social provisions are rarely assessed in terms of how they enhance opportunities. Most people are only too keen to stand on their own feet. But this is difficult without a secure

Third, I would suggest we need to think more about goals. Of course our goals depend on our values: the kind of society we want to live in depends on values and the status we accord them. Social policy can never be value-free. Tawney put this bluntly: "certain types of life and society are fit for human beings and others not." The real enemy was "the corrupting influence of a false standard of values, which perverts, not only education, but wide tracts of thought and life." [17]

We live in a world of growing interdependence between individuals, both within nations and internationally. For an integrated, cohesive and civilised world, social policy must enhance opportunities for all. Integration and community need positive policies. In this area, US policy towards its black minority - with explicit equal opportunity policies and, for example, quotas of minority students in many major universities - is far ahead of Britain where even collecting the facts by ethnic monitoring is only just beginning. Such an issue is, I suggest, far more important than many more traditional social work and social policy concerns. No society can be long sustained in which a minority is deprived of social justice, lacks integration and is devoid of power. Equally, a peaceful world is in the long run dependent on a just distribution of wealth and power. Social policy is central to tackling such problems of inequality and injustice. The policies it calls for often require a leap of imagination, in which the academic community must take a lead. It may suggest policies at present unthinkable - but where the academic community leads, politicians with vision will follow. Titmuss believed that and so do I.

In conclusion, the notion upheld by the New Right - that society or the world can advance solely on the basis of individual self-interest - is not only irrelevant to social policy: it is also dangerous.

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