'Virtue', 'Citizen Character' and 'Social Environment': Social Theory and Agency in Social Policy since 1830

JOHN OFFER

Professor of Social Theory and Policy, School of Policy Studies, University of Ulster, Coleraine, Northern Ireland BT52 1SA
email: J.Offer@ulster.ac.uk

Abstract

This article takes a fresh look at the intellectual context of the poor law in Britain and Ireland from the 1830s to the 1930s, and is focused on the different conceptions over time of the 'service user' as agent (drawing on Le Grand) in relation to a fundamental contrast between social theory which is 'non-idealist' and 'idealist' (drawing on Harris). It first examines the ideas of liberal tories, rather than Benthamites, in remodelling the poor law in England and introducing it to Ireland in the 1830s. Second, it explicitly draws a contrast between idealist and non-idealist social thought, relating it to the idealist nature of both the majority and minority reports on the poor law of 1909 and to the non-idealist thought of Spencer and the earlier discussion. The subsequent dominance of idealist thought in social policy theory and practice is then reviewed, considering Titmuss on agency, the 'rediscovery' of informal care in the 1970s as evidence of a shift to the non-idealist perspective that people can act as rational agents for their own well-being, and the resurgent influence of idealist thought on 'New Labour'. The article concludes that links identified between ideas of agency and types of social theory since the 1830s enhance our understanding of debates today.

It is nearly 60 years since the demise of the poor law in 1948, although workhouse buildings (then already designated Public Assistance Institutions) survived longer in social service provision. In historical studies the poor law has undergone reassessment (Dunkley, 1982; Finlayson, 1994; Harris, 1992; Mandler, 1990), but in social policy studies its 'inadequacy' is contrasted with 'enlightened' 1940s legislation (Deacon, 1982, and Lewis, 1995, are exceptions). A discipline's understanding of its past can be a legend bolstering today's priorities. This article raises contextually based questions about social theory and the poor law from the 1830s to the 1930s concerning two changing and linked aspects of the individual 'service user' as agent: their power to choose outcomes, and their own responsibility for their 'problems'. Connections between divergent conceptions of agency and 'non-idealist' and 'idealist' social theory are demonstrated. On the premise that understanding social policy today rests on understanding the past, the analysis is later applied to three areas where it can prove fruitful: agency in

the writings of Titmuss; the rediscovery of informal carers in the late 1970s/early 1980s; and the influence of idealist thought in the present Labour government's thinking about welfare. Much is still to be learnt, it is suggested, from the ideas behind continuity and change in poor law theory.

The interpretation advanced tests and develops two contemporary analyses (Le Grand, 2003; Harris, 1992). Le Grand pinpointed how assumptions about agency and motivation held by policy makers affect policy. He divides into two categories the way agency is imputed to service users, with 'pawns' as mute and powerless recipients of what is prescribed, contrasted with 'queens' exercising choice. Service providers are categorised as 'knights' (motivated by altruistic sentiments) and 'knaves' (motivated by self-interest). Le Grand found movement in the 1970s and 1980s towards users as 'queens' and providers as 'knaves'. The distinction between 'pawns' and 'queens' in particular, with adjustment to introduce 'lapsed queens', helps interpret earlier times. The focus Harris places on a broad definition of idealist social thought has also helped, but the implicit contrast with non-idealism is drawn explicitly here.

The first section examines the prominence of the 'Noetics' in poor law reform in England in the 1830s and the conflict heralding the introduction of a poor law to Ireland in 1838, conflict illuminating the conception of agency in English reform. The second examines 'idealist social thought' conceived, broadly, as providing an intellectual framework to interpret thinking on welfare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and reconsiders the majority and minority reports on the poor law of 1909. The third discusses 'non-idealist social thought', considering particularly Herbert Spencer and the remaining years of the poor law. The fourth extends the discussion into the interpretation of contemporary policy ideas.

'Virtue' and the poor laws in Britain and Ireland in the 1830s

Revolution in France, the Napoleonic wars, the Act of Union with Ireland, and economists' alarms over the costs and consequences of outdoor relief (including Malthus's concern in his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* of 1798 that population growth would outstrip resources) formed the backcloth to poor law thought in the 1830s. Governments stalled on reform in this hothouse climate: the 'old' poor law perhaps kept the peace. However, in 1830 the rural insurrection of the Swing disturbances erupted. If the poor law no longer guaranteed stability, the case for reform triumphed (Dunkley, 1982). A Royal Commission to inquire into the poor law was established in 1832. However, it is often overlooked that liberal tories played a prominent part in the membership of the commission, in the report of 1834 and the act of the same year, and in the separate commission on a poor law for Ireland, where there was no old poor law.

Mandler has redressed this situation. Nassau Senior, he reminds us, was co-author of the 1834 report with Edwin Chadwick. But Chadwick was 'an outsider

and effectively an isolate': most commissioners 'were neither Benthamites nor liberals nor even whigs, but liberal tories' (Mandler, 1990: 82). By the 1820s a liberal tory position was emerging that fused economic liberalism with political authoritarianism: in intellectual form a combination of natural theology with political economy, developed particularly at Oriel College, Oxford by the Noetics (from the Greek meaning 'reasoners'). Mandler applies the term to those in and around Oriel College, such as Coplestone, Davison, Whately and Senior, and to like-minded others. The natural progress of human improvement reflected striving by individuals for higher levels of virtue, not the pursuit of happiness or material goods. Providence reinforces duty through the presence of scarcity, and its potentially catastrophic Malthusian consequences: key virtues are prudence and industry, with the accumulation of wealth as a sign of virtue, enabling further moral achievement through benevolence. Conservatism followed, with the Noetics believers in rule by the virtuous, best able to nourish the progress of morality. Governance was their province, but governments were unable to create virtue or prevent sin, though through impious measures they could hinder virtue and encourage vice.

Liberal tories infused with Noetic beliefs derived from Oxford days assumed positions of authority. Nassau Senior's connections before 1830 were liberal tory, but he 'had been assiduously worming his way into high ministerial circles since the day the whigs took office' (Mandler, 1990: 97). On the Royal Commission, alongside Senior, the core members were William Sturges Bourne, Bishop Sumner of Chester, Bishop Blomfield of London and the Rev. Henry Bishop, all connected with the Noetics.[1] Chadwick, familiar to the Noetics by contributing to their *London Review*, was initially an assistant commissioner, nearly half of whom had Noetic links. The Webbs' description of the majority of the membership as Benthamite was distorted: 'although this tory dog had a Benthamite tail, it was the dog which wagged the tail and not vice versa' (Mandler, 1990: 83). For the Noetics, their end was the propagation of virtue. Utility could be judged by government; virtue could not. Like the Benthamites, the Noetics understood the limits of self-interest in achieving desirable ends, but they were reluctant to direct or override it. If self-interest had deleterious consequences, often it was because God intended it so. Suffering could be surmounted only by learning duty and virtue.

The Noetics had reached the 'principle of less eligibility' independently of the Benthamites. They controlled the Bill of 1834 and the appointment of the parliamentary draughtsmen. On the permanent Poor Law Commission to implement the Act, the Noetics were again in the driving seat. Chadwick was secretary, but other important figures tended to be Noetics. Noetics and Benthamites agreed on the starting point established by the 1834 report, but differences surfaced thereafter. Scientific government was the Benthamites' creed, and poor laws were powerful engines of improvement.

The permanent Poor Law Commission could be the nucleus of a 'preventive police' whose aim was to scour out evil influences whenever they reared their head . . . For the Noetics much of this was utopian and impious. Happiness and security could only be earned through the performance of virtue . . . The workhouse was to deter, not to improve; it would work best if it remained empty. Improvement was to be left to individual character. (Mandler, 1990: 101)

Accompanying English reform was a debate over whether a poor law should be introduced in Ireland and, if so, of what sort. Here another well-connected Noetic, Richard Whately, played a large role.[2] An Oriel Fellow, Whately tutored Senior (Levy, 1970). He became a professor, departing in 1831 for Dublin as Archbishop. Unavailable in England, Whately, on Senior's recommendation,[3] chaired the Irish inquiry established in 1833.

Senior wrote to Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, broadly endorsing Whately's third and final report of 1836 (Senior, 1837: 4). While he now believed workhouse-based relief for the able-bodied was appropriate to England because the standard of subsistence in the country was high and so relief could be below that of the independent labourer, standards were so low in Ireland that any state provision would be superior and thus workhouses were inappropriate. Whately knew Senior's position. He argued Irish provision must differ from English. In Ireland, the labouring class are eager for work but there is no work: they are, therefore, 'and not from any fault of their own, in permanent want. This is just the state of circumstances to which . . . the workhouse system is not applicable' (*Third Report*, 1836: 5).[4] The impotent should be relieved, but the able-bodied without employment 'should be secured support only through emigration, or as a preliminary to it' (*Third Report*, 1836: 8).[5] The report categorises the impotent poor, indicating that public institutions and also external attendance are needed. Further provision is specified in connection with emigration, deserted children and the relief of casual destitution. Implementation requires a Commission and elected Boards of Guardians. However, the effectiveness of remedies 'under Providence' depends in the main

upon those who possess power and influence in the country. It is only through these that the poor can be put into proper courses of industry, taught the value of comforts, or animated to exertions to procure them . . . they are endowed with wealth and intelligence, not as means of self-indulgence, or for effecting any sordid object of ambition, but as trusts for the good of their fellow-creatures. (*Third Report*, 1836: 31)

G. C. Lewis responded critically in *Remarks on the Third Report of the Irish Poor Inquiry Commissioners* of July 1836, according to the title page 'drawn up by the desire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer'. Lewis demanded a test of indigence for the impotent as a condition of relief, and criticises the category 'casual destitute' as indistinct from able-bodied indigence, which the report excludes from relief. 'On what ground,' Lewis asks, 'is a man in real want to be denied relief, because he is able-bodied, while a man whose want is no greater, receives relief because he is

not able-bodied' (Lewis, 1837: 7). It does not follow that less eligibility cannot be applied simply because the standard of existence among the labouring population 'is already the lowest upon which life can be sustained' (1837: 9). This argument had been used by Senior. Compulsory labour and confinement, not the quantity of food, enforces less eligibility. Hence workhouses are practicable, and they ascertain destitution. Without workhouse provision for the able-bodied there is 'a manifest hiatus in their system' (1837: 27). Lewis disparages proposals to improve the land and roads. Limited intervention where there are no private proprietorial efforts is permissible, but a scheme in which government manages 'everything for individuals . . . very captivating and plausible at first sight . . . invariably ends by producing lethargy and helplessness in the people, and by counterworking the very end which it is intended to promote' (1837: 29).

Lewis, then, advocated an English-style poor law for Ireland, workhouse-based and affording relief to the destitute: a conclusion reached by August 1834 (Lewis, 1870: 35) while in Ireland as an assistant commissioner to Whately's inquiry.[6] Lewis's father, Thomas Frankland Lewis, of Noetic sympathies and a founder member of the permanent English Poor Law Commission, no doubt discussed matters with his son. When Whately's third report appeared in April 1836, the young Lewis spied 'absurd projects no sane Government will ever think of introducing' (Lewis, 1870: 48). By July he submitted the *Remarks* to government.

There was, indeed, 'a difference of opinion on Ireland within the Noetic camp' (Mandler, 1990: 101), partly over whether or not to allow a *right* to relief to the able-bodied. However, Whately had also described the labouring population as 'not from any fault of their own, in permanent want'. Even Senior found this statement unpalatable.

If the Irish labourers allow their numbers to increase without any reference to the means of subsistence, a portion of them must every year . . . perish from want . . . And as this state of things would be the necessary result of their own previous conduct, I cannot admit that it would occur *without any fault of their own*. (Senior, 1837: 4)

Orthodox Noetic belief was that Providence reinforced the duty to be virtuous and industrious through Malthusian pressure on population: to deny to labouring people any responsibility torpedoed that belief. Here, perhaps, lay the origin of the dispute.

The whig government turned to George Nicholls, a member of the permanent English Poor Law Commission. On 22 August 1836, Russell wrote requesting Nicholls to visit Ireland to examine Whately's views. He reported within three months favouring a workhouse-based system of relief covering *all* destitution, with no outdoor relief, and warning that emigration would debase the population, with the strongest leaving (Nicholls, 1837: 31). Population excess was 'an evil'; prudential habits must prevail. Nicholls may not have been an Oriel man, but this was music to conventional Noetic ears.

On essentials Nicholls concurred with Lewis; his report determined the Act of 1838.[7] Legislation bypassed Whately's reports. Senior excepted, their proposals lacked sympathisers close to government. The English Report of 1834 painted generous outdoor relief to the able-bodied as the taproot of imprudence and dependency: removal was of paramount importance. In Ireland, there was no 'old' poor law to blame, though there was over-population. Senior and Lewis thus blamed the destitute for their suffering. Whately refrained (as did a fellow commissioner, J. E. Bicheno: 'their vices have sprung from their situation, not their situation from their vices', Bicheno, 1836: 13). Government demurred: an orthodox law on the new English lines proved the option of choice. Given the Noetic context, Whately is less displaying a 'deeper understanding' of poverty (Burke, 1987: 37) than a genuine difference with intellectual sympathisers over impediments to virtuous conduct. Moreover, Lewis, Nicholls and the Act offered relief to the able-bodied destitute. Whately did not: a manifest hiatus indeed.[8]

The discussion so far has reappraised the social theory underpinning reform of the English poor laws and the origins of the Irish provision. Through the Noetics, liberal tories acquired a theory of how virtue could be rewarded and vice punished, with implications for poor laws. Conflict over Ireland displays the English reform in its full context of Noetic concerns. In terms of agency, and Le Grand's analysis, the able-bodied poor appear less as 'pawns' than 'queens', but 'queens' who have lapsed. Remove the impediments, on which agreement was unavailable in Ireland, and queenly and virtuous conduct should flourish. The fractious relationship between Chadwick and the Lewises, father and son, on the permanent Commission was at bottom a clash of social theories, not personalities (Finer, 1952).[9]

'Citizen character' and 'social environment'

Poor laws came under renewed scrutiny from 1870 to the outbreak of the First World War. New thought crystallised in the Royal Commission appointed in 1905. It divided, issuing separate majority and minority reports in 1909, not only for England and Wales but also for Scotland and Ireland.

The majority reports largely reflected the social theory of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) with which many commissioners were associated, while the minority reports represented the Fabian socialism of Beatrice Webb (and her husband Sidney, not a commissioner). Vincent (1984) has shown that neither the COS nor the majority reports had a social theory that was 'individualist' in a 'selfish' or 'atomic' sense.[10] Their social theory is more accurately represented as idealist.

Harris (1992) assists in interpreting the social theory of the reports. In the years 1870–1940, Harris argues, a predominantly idealist framework of social thought was established. Harris (1992: 123) uses 'idealist' in 'a very broad sense'

to extend beyond idealist philosophers to anyone who viewed society and/or the state as having a real corporate and organic identity, and who took social science to be primarily concerned with the interpretation of 'meaning' and 'purpose' rather than causal laws. The organic view of society and the obligations of individuals to others in Plato's *Republic*, the idea from Rousseau that a people possessed a 'general will' – a national character – which government could embody, and the concern with 'mind' and 'history' in Hegel, all contributed to an idealist turn in philosophy at British universities, with T. H. Green at Oxford the doyen. To an extent, logical relations became confounded with contingent relations: idealism faded from professional philosophical respectability under criticism from Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, among others. As social theory, however, idealism established itself in new university departments of social science. Reform and idealist thought were self-consciously entwined.

Brutally condensing complex thought, idealists focused on the moral unity of a society with individuals organically related to each other. Freedom and fulfilment were impossible unless individuals, and families, a powerful moral force, recognised that they were citizens of this wider society towards which they had responsibilities to act according to the general will, and which itself had responsibilities to them. The more these reciprocal moral ties were fulfilled, the greater the moral growth of the whole society. Bernard Bosanquet, a leading idealist, wrote of a 'defect in the citizen character' revealed by the existence of destitution, ignorance and dependence. Idealist thought subordinated, observes Harris (1992: 136):

the analysis of specific social problems to a vision of reconstructing the whole of British society, together with reform of the rational understanding and moral character of individual British citizens. Social policy was not viewed as an end in itself, nor were the recipients of welfare ends in themselves; on the contrary, both policies and people were means to the end of attaining perfect justice and creating the ideal state.

The Noetic focus on a natural order and atonement here yielded to the empowerment of incarnation; orthodox Noetics would have blenched at the attempt to second-guess Providence and to front-load how specific virtues might best be expressed (see Hilton, 1988). In practical terms, many idealists insisted that reform processes had to treat the individual as a 'whole' person, acknowledging his or her ensemble of social and moral relationships. Rich and poor could have a defect of the 'citizen character', although the poor had no cushion of affluence to soften the consequences of their social shortcomings. Painstaking personal work was required, given the uniqueness of each individual, to empower expression of an individual's capabilities in full citizenship. Through example, tutelage and supervision, personal independence and a sense of responsibility could be achieved, and society as a whole progress. Merely awarding relief omitted from the transaction the vital ingredient of personal service; worse, it perpetuated

a dependent state of mind. Organised correctly, charity could do this work, state officials not.

Bernard Bosanquet, his wife Helen, and Charles Loch shared this view of charity as the engine of social progress, delivering 'tutored' democratic citizens who understood that fully free persons acted *in certain ways*. All three were prominent in the COS, which pursued the vision through the casework method and a division of labour between charity and the poor law, attending to the 'helpable' but shunning the intractable 'unhelpable'. It was natural that many of the Commissioners of 1909 had experience of COS work, including Helen Bosanquet, the main author of the (English) majority report.

The majority called for a strong voluntary sector, co-ordinated with publicly provided services provided by a poor law remodelled as public assistance, with geographically larger units (county councils) replacing unions and guardians. Their recommendations on the aged poor help to give the gist of their views. The first line of defence for the aged poor of good character should be voluntary aid, coupled with an assurance of adequate public assistance to support them at home. When relatives and friends were unable to give support, indoor relief was required, adapted to their characters and separate to that for the able-bodied. The majority explicitly rejected medical testimony that indoor rather than outdoor relief was always preferable, arguing instead for a better supervision of out-relief.

The minority report paired abolishing guardians with a new structure of specialised committees and experts dealing with specific categories of problem among the poor; generic public assistance would overlap with established public health provisions. This structure, though, risked another form of overlapping, where problems presented by one person or family would involve several workers from differing specialist departments. Voluntary action as an 'extension ladder' would provide aid beyond that required of the state to guarantee a minimum of civilised life, the tasks of both evolving as that minimum rose. On the aged poor they give greater prominence to those of 'bad conduct': 'old men and women whose persistent addiction to drink makes it necessary to refuse them any but institutional provision' (Poor Law Report [PLR], 1909, III: 279). They cannot be reformed, but they can be rendered 'unable to contaminate the rest of the community' (PLR, 1909, III: 280). Persons of good conduct should be known to a public health authority, which would exercise 'guardianship over the citizen falling into second childhood' (PLR, 1909, III: 278). On becoming 'a nuisance to the public' (PLR, 1909, III: 285) they should be found accommodation according to need, characteristics and conduct: 'into these the old people would be sorted' (PLR, 1909, III: 280). There is a focus on the risks of 'elder abuse' from children, and the financial probity of relationships between relatives and public agencies rather than on the support of relatives providing home-based care. Confidence in public health and medical personnel to frame the appropriate form of life for

those at home, and in institutional care, eclipses concern for individual autonomy, independence and morale.

There are thus differences in the schemes and sensitivities of the reports. For the minority report where moral failings (what it calls the 'moral factor in destitution') are the root of dependency, whether for the aged of bad character or those unwilling to work (the 'born tired'), compulsory remedial or at least palliative measures are to be applied. But, as is clear in the Scottish minority report, most destitution is regarded as caused by the 'social environment', with 'moral defect' absent. This is an explicit response to Bernard Bosanquet's argument that where there is 'a failure of self-maintenance' there is 'a defect in the citizen character, or at least a grave danger to its integrity', and that cases of this kind raise problems that are 'moral' in the sense of 'affecting the whole capacity of self-management, to begin with in the person who has failed, and secondarily in the whole community so far as influenced by expectation and example' (PLR, Scotland, 1909: 274). However, as Vincent has suggested, Bosanquet is not pointing to the values of economic *laissez faire*, but to a 'failure' to be an ideal citizen, to lose sight of the common good in facing up to predicaments, in which it is always possible to choose to act one way rather than another, and display rational, independent will. Incapacities could be willed or unwilled, but the quality of the individual response was an intrinsic element. Voluntary action, practising casework guided by social therapeutics could assist citizens to regain control of, rather than fall victim to, circumstances. Bosanquet, the COS and the majority report did not believe destitution was the sole product of moral inadequacy, except in circumstances where 'willed incapacity' arose, and here they agreed on a coercive role for the state with the minority. They were prepared to accept economic causes of temporary destitution and a wide range of 'environmental' ones (McBriar, 1987: 300). Whatever the problem involved was, the majority sought preventive, curative and restorative treatment of the whole person: to this 'whole person' dimension, the minority, they felt, gave too little attention.

The idealist thought of the majority report and the material difference from the minority report should now be apparent. However, idealist thought also has an intimate connection with the minority report. Many social idealists

dissented radically from the Bosanquets in their assessment of the desirable practicable relationship between the citizen and the state. The Webbs, for example, wholly shared the Bosanquets' belief that private and public virtue were interdependent, that 'state-conscious idealism' was the goal of citizenship, and that social-welfare policies should be ethically as well as materially constructive: indeed Sidney once described himself as aiming to do in the social sphere what Rousseau had done in the political. But they claimed that the deviant or needy individual could far more easily be provoked into self-improvement from within the context of state social services than if left to his own unaided efforts. (Harris, 1992: 133)

The Webbs sought to realise 'social health' (Webb and Webb, 1910: 319) and believed that the opening of the twentieth century 'finds us all, to the dismay of the old-fashioned individualist, "thinking in communities"' (Webb, 1948: 221–222). Moreover, towards the end of the Scottish minority report (written after the English and Irish[11] reports and hence informed by the public reaction to them) idealist aspirations are evident. The minority scheme of reform has a 'deeper significance' than economy or simplicity:

> The reform that we advocate, by emphas[is]ing everywhere the Principle of Prevention, and especially by systematically searching out neglected infancy and childhood, preventable sickness, uncontrolled feeble-mindedness and uncared-for epilepsy, unwanted vagrancy and that hopeless worklessness that is so demoralising to mind and body, brings with it the sure and certain hope that we may, at no distant date . . . remove from our midst the intolerable infamy to the Christian and civilised State of the persistence of a mass of chronic destitution, spreading like a cancerous growth from one generation to another of our fellow citizens. (PLR, Scotland, 1909: 274)

To point to idealism in the Webbs is not to deny their Fabian socialism but to affirm fundamental continuities in theoretical disposition. However, a further matter needs consideration, the relationship between idealist and *non*-idealist social thought, a contrast left implicit by Harris.

Idealist and non-idealist social thought

The crux of the matter is whether or not interventions associated with social policy (voluntary and statutory) should seek *directly* or, at best, *indirectly* in their interaction with individuals to promote an end state of social life such as the 'good' or 'healthy' society, as perhaps indicated by the 'general will'. There is ground here shared with Oakeshott's distinction between the state as a civil association protecting individual liberties by the rule of law, and an enterprise promoting the common welfare (see Eccleshall, 1990: 16). Idealists are committed to using policy directly as a means to such an end; non-idealists may (or may not) hope for some such result indirectly, but leave it to be achieved by individuals as far as possible freely choosing and fulfilling *their own* projects in life,[12] rather than through organised projects for the 'good of all'. The enlightened charity worker (for the majority reports) and the well-trained professional (for the minority) better understand the 'social good' than ordinary people. Non-idealists reject this position on philosophical and political grounds: empowering individuals to pursue well-being as defined by they themselves in their own lives is their objective. The reality of altruism means that solipsistic selfishness is not inevitable; social relations ensue from uncoerced consent, not manipulation inspired by assumptions about 'the good'. In Le Grand's categories, for non-idealists individuals were 'queens' not 'pawns'.

Non-idealist social thought was epitomised by Herbert Spencer. Spencer's sociological analysis reached deeper than his coining of 'the survival of the fittest' (in 1862) might suggest. *Principles of Ethics* (especially Vol. 2, 1893) described and advocated 'private beneficence', now familiar as informal care, supported non-bureaucratic voluntary organisations, and demanded comprehensive and accessible administration of justice, to secure greater well-being (Offer, 1999a). His *The Man versus The State* (1884) chastised Liberals for 'unjust' interventions in social life and neglecting 'justice', hence compromising individual happiness. Weinstein formulates Spencer's definition of 'justice' as 'Act such that you receive what you deserve without denying others the like freedom to receive what they deserve' (Weinstein, 1998: 62). What is 'deserved' is the consequence of conduct – a principle operative throughout nature. Because sociality imposes constraints, the equal liberty proviso is required. 'Justice' limits the duties of government to ensuring enforcement of equal freedom. Critics today of the state's 'swelling ambition to engineer the social sphere through energetic legislation and the adoption of a highly directive "audit culture"' (Peel, 2004: 145) have a doughty friend in Spencer. Acts of justice along with acts of private beneficence (individually and socially desirable but not matters of 'justice') make up altruism, for Spencer increasingly present in 'civilised' societies. The pursuit of 'justice' in social life leads to progressive evolution, just as the desert element does in nature. His position on the nature of evolution is distinct from Darwin's: Spencer mostly relies on the now discredited Lamarckian mechanism of inheritance of acquired characteristics as organisms adapt, rather than Darwin's 'natural selection' of variations, as the cause of change (see Taylor, 1992).

Spencer thus articulated a non-idealist form of welfare pluralism. His individuals are social and altruistic (Offer, 2006: ch. 3). Spencer's thought, well-known by the 1870s, was a target of idealist philosophers, including T. H. Green, and of the Webbs, although Beatrice was an admirer in her youth and close to Spencer. Shortly after Spencer's death, one idealist philosopher adopted a triumphalist tone: 'the conception of man as essentially social, and of the state as the organ of the general will, has so firmly established itself that Spencer's pamphlets during the last twenty years sounded like a belated echo, and he had the air, even to himself, of one crying in the wilderness' (Pringle Pattison, 1904: 256).

Spencer's principle of justice indicated that a poor law was unjust: relief of the poor was a matter for private beneficence, not a legitimate concern of government. Abolition, though, was impractical as Spencer admitted in the *Ethics*. Indeed, one of his very earliest publications championed the 1834 reform, pointing to 'man's responsibility, and . . . his future reward or punishment, depending upon his being "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"' (Spencer, 1836: 181).

Spencer was then sixteen, studying with his uncle, Thomas, who was a Cambridge graduate, poor law pamphleteer, and Perpetual Curate of Hinton Charterhouse, near Bath (see Hilton, 1988). The nephew's Noetic tone is unsurprising. Spencer seldom quoted from other theorists. Whately, though, is an exception. The unplanned and remote but eventually beneficial outcome of co-operative acts for mundane purposes (how London gained its supplies was the example) was a shared emphasis, alien to both the Bosanquets and the Webbs (Spencer, 1871). Undue pressure on individuals to behave differently accorded neither with 'justice' nor how progressive adaptation to circumstances could be securely achieved.

Support for people in their own resolves and thus in exercising their own liberty, rather than subjugation to idealist tutelage, had a wide appeal. Beyond Spencer Individualism became a significant movement of ideas; figures include Auberon Herbert (championing 'voluntaryism' to achieve mutually shared goals), Thomas Mackay (poor law historian and COS office holder) and the philosopher Henry Sidgwick (who reviewed Spencer critically but constructively; see Greenleaf, 1983, ch. 8; Taylor, 1992). Working-class choices about savings at this time, it has been noted, permitted the maintenance or improvement of personal status. 'Although the means adopted were sometimes mutual and collective, the goal was personal and competitive; self-help sometimes, self-interest always' (Johnson, 1983: 232). Both the Old Age Pension Act of 1908 and the National Insurance Act of 1911 delivered cash benefits to people without serious supervisory conditions. Health insurance jarred with Beatrice Webb: 'I fear the growth of malingering and the right to money independently of the obligation to good conduct. I cannot dismiss my rooted prejudice to relief instead of treatment' (Webb, 1948: 474). She deplored the 'insistence on free choice of doctors by the beneficiaries of state insurance – an obvious administrative absurdity': it favoured 'the pecuniary interests of the worst type of medical men' (1948: 472). Financial partnership between state, employer and employee in National Insurance fostered idealist concerns; cash benefits without social obligations did not.

The Liberal Government politely declined the invitation to change the poor law, either on majority or minority lines. It was largely left alone until 1929. But, lacking any idealist-inspired revolution, it had been quietly changing and the guardians mounted a credible defence, through the National Committee for Poor Law Reform (for which Sir William Chance wrote *Poor Law Reform – Via Tertis – the Case for the Guardians*). Two members of the commission, Charles Booth and Dr A. H. Downes, rallied to this cause, as did Mackay. Asquith opined (in McBriar, 1987: 330) 'I think you will find the Boards of Guardians will die very hard . . . they after all represent an enormous amount of gratuitous and public spirited service . . . we could ill spare from the sphere of local administration'. Already use of poor law infirmaries no longer entailed the label 'pauper'. More considerate relief was in place for older people. The English majority report

attributed increases in old-age pauperism since 1900 to the 'growing attractiveness of Poor Law institutions' (PLR, 1909, I: 232). Dr Stephens, Medical Officer for North Witchford Union in Cambridgeshire, when asked by Downes[13] if the workhouse is as deterrent as formerly, replied:

Not nearly. The workhouse has got a bad name very often, I think, from the fact that the inmates of the workhouse go outside and they are very anxious to get money, and they say how badly they are treated in the workhouse, in order to get people to give them 2d, and that quite gets around in the place. (PLR, Evidence, 1909, 34808–10)

Stephens adds that the bad name is undeserved, and to Booth's question about dislike of the workhouse he replied, 'Yes, it is decreasing a great deal, I am sure of that.'

Other evidence includes what has become known as 'Poplarism' because of 'the defiant example set by the Poplar Board of Guardians both in the Edwardian and in the post-war period' (McBriar, 1987: 365). By the mid-1920s up to 200 boards were administering outdoor relief during high unemployment on scales of relief extravagantly high, in the view of officials at the Ministry of Health, and in a lax manner. Basic financial security on a largely non-deterrent basis was available. The policy has been attributed to Labour initiative, but it was not confined to boards with majorities of Labour members (McBriar, 1987: 365). In 1926 the Conservative government secured the Board of Guardians (Default) Act empowering the Minister of Health to replace any board not fulfilling its legal obligations: powers turned on guardians at West Ham, Chester-le-Street and Bedwellty.

In short, it may be that well before the poor law was officially abolished, it was by no means as loathed as we are led to believe. 'Where workhouses evolved into quiet and comfortable old people's homes, cottage hospitals, and high-quality infirmaries, then in some areas at least people began to "queue up" to get into them' (Harris, 2002: 436). In the absence of majority-style tutelage towards ideal citizenship, or Webbian surveillance, an approach accepting people as they saw themselves – thus non-idealist – became practical social theory. The picture of the poor law as no more than a soulless mechanism, either consigning people to the market or humiliating them, does not do justice to its social reality: it may be seen as representing Noetic and hence liberal tory social and moral theory, which fused later with non-idealist social thought, theory which survived, unsung, as poor law philosophy into the twentieth century. Quelling idealist inspired onslaughts, it helped the poor law to appear less manipulative than the radically reformist options and secure a degree of popular support. In the process this analysis illustrates that 'ideas about "social welfare" can migrate unexpectedly across the political spectrum, such that preconceived assumptions about the left/right implications of particular policies are often false' (Harris, 1992: 119).

Idealist thought today

A clearer understanding of the intellectual context of the poor law results from examining Noetic social theory in the 1830s, the idealist thought pattern shared by the 1909 reports, and the contrasting non-idealist position, illustrated by Spencer and with affinity to Noetic thought, which sustained it in the twentieth century. As stated at the outset, the analysis helps in interpreting three more recent policy-related matters: the status of agency in the writings of Titmuss; the significance of the rediscovery of informal care in social policy studies in the late 1970s/early 1980s; and the nature of the present Labour government's thinking about aspects of welfare.

Harris describes Titmuss's social philosophy as 'full of muffled resonances of the idealist discourse of the Edwardian age' (1992: 137). Idealist thought influenced Tawney, whom Titmuss read closely, and others, including A. D. Lindsay, who founded what became Keele University in 1949 with an idealist and holistic educational philosophy. Inconsistencies and nuances in Titmuss's understanding of agency have been reviewed (Welshman, 2004), but not its distinctive resonance with idealist social thought. To describe Titmuss's thought as 'idealist' captures and explains his accentuation of 'social growth', the NHS as enhancing 'the texture of relationships between human beings' (Titmuss, 1974: 150, see also Titmuss, 1970: 225), social policy (British) as 'expressing the "general will" of the people' (1974: 24), doctors as 'centres of moral life' (1968: 250), the 'social market' as morally superior to the economic market, and of social policy as possessing 'an egalitarian and moral purpose' (Pinker, 1993: 58), encouraging social unity and requiring a dedicated academic subject of 'social administration', uniquely in tune with its 'moral' nature and reminiscent of Bernard Bosanquet's 'social therapeutics' (see Vincent, 1984, and, on Bosanquet's criticisms of orthodox sociology and psychology, den Otter, 1996).

In this setting, non-idealist perspectives on welfare struggled for a hearing: they were presumed guilty, of a flawed understanding of social life, and of the place of the state in ascending to the 'good society'. They dropped out of the history of social policy, except as exemplars of 'failure'.

Reading Titmuss as an idealist highlights two matters neglected alike by Titmuss and Edwardian idealists. First, choice among service users was a low priority: doctors and others with the appropriate 'moral' expertise trumped user choice. In practice, in Titmuss's time the NHS set objectives for performance in accord with the 'social good': the pursuit of 'territorial justice' (Davies, 1968) through the Resource Allocation Working Party (Allsop, 1995: 62–88) diverted resources from certain geographical areas, reducing provision to individuals in them. It may be that idealist thought in and about the NHS in respect, say, of the promotion of 'social growth' in the 'texture of relationships' between people, provided (and still provides) underlying theoretical 'respectability' to prior conditions attached to treatment (such as weight reduction or changed

lifestyle), conditions presented as clinically essential, but possibly 'moral'. A patient-driven non-idealist NHS could not invoke these justifications for delay when illness presents: unexpected twists to policy can ensue when a social theory such as idealist thought is embedded in it.

Second, informal care was sidelined. Titmuss points to the need for *more* service provision for older people; their wishes are not explored (1968: 98–99). None of the 1909 reports gave it serious attention; differing simply over whether its deficiencies were of a 'moral' or 'inadequately professional' nature (see Offer, 1999b, 2004, 2006). Spencer, the non-idealist, drew attention to it.

This leads to the 'rediscovery' of informal care in social policy studies in the 1970s. There were now non-idealist dissenters within the subject which Titmuss had done much to establish (Pinker, 1993). Pinker himself signalled a radical shift, declaring that we 'lack adequate explanations of . . . why individuals define their needs as they do, and why these definitions so often appear to be at variance with those of the social scientists' (Pinker, 1971: 108). Policy reports, such as the Wolfenden Report (1978) and the Barclay Report (1982) gave sovereign status to informal carers, absent from the Seebohm Report (1968). Parallel expansion of research in the 1980s and 1990s is well documented (Parker, 1990; Offer, 1999c). Reorientation within social policy studies pre-dated Mrs Thatcher's premiership and, while feminist concerns about the burdens of care falling disproportionately on women certainly swelled the research effort immensely, its origins were in a critical dissatisfaction with idealist normative assumptions about social policy and how it should be studied. With any paradigm certain questions are central, not others. Shift the paradigm and new (or old) concerns come into view. The changes appeared so new 'because they were taken against too short a historical framework; one in which it was felt that all welfare issues had finally become inextricably linked to the state' (Finlayson, 1994: 17). Rejection of idealist thought accounts for the change, freeing the conceptual space for informal care to be rediscovered.

In reflecting on Labour government thought on voluntary action, citizenship and social solidarity, speeches by Brown and Blair echo idealist thought (Lewis, 1999; Offer, 2003). Voluntary action, for Blair, rebuilds 'a sense of community' and creates a 'just and inclusive society' (in Lewis, 1999: 265).[14] Bevir and O'Brien (2003) reveal theoretical connections between Blair, the idealist John Macmurray, emphasising action to promote social solidarity and enhance our common life, and the earlier idealist, Henry Jones, who taught Macmurray's tutor at Oxford, Lindsay. Prideaux (2001) identifies sociological sources behind New Labour's social policy in general, implicitly complementing the argument here (on Jones and T. H. Marshall see Low, 2000). The practical expression of idealism in Labour thought is that social policies should enable people 'to develop themselves through their own activity', but be so directed as to enhance interdependence and community (Bevir and O'Brien, 2003: 327). Bevir and O'Brien note that ethical

socialist and communitarian critics could call this position 'a capitulation to the individualism of neo-liberalism' rather than a recipe for vibrant community (2003: 328). Into this jungle the combination of Le Grand's analysis and the contrast between idealist and non-idealist social theory penetrates: individual agents are pawns here, still to be constrained, in knightly fashion, by the designers of the 'good society'.

Conclusion

Approaching the poor law aware of the fundamental division between idealist and non-idealist modes of social thought and the contrasted conceptions of agency as described by Le Grand illuminates many topics. The decisive Noetic and liberal tory emphasis on virtue, not utility, clarifies Victorian poor law thought on agency. Whately differed with Senior, Lewis and Nicholls on when poor people were responsible for circumstances: living virtuously was unlikely to triumph over the destitution accompanying an excess of population. But they agreed it was impious for government to seek directly the 'good society'. Individuals could be 'freed up' to learn the values of virtue, but not made virtuous. In most circumstances, to need poor relief when able-bodied signalled a lapse: less eligibility would rekindle in the 'lapsed queen' the desire to strive again for prudence and industry as a 'restored queen' (the adoption of Whately's Irish scheme would have made this, according to critics, a protracted process).

The broad conception of idealist social thought pinpoints underlying unities in the structure of the majority and minority reports of 1909. In idealist thought the 'social good' was something substantive to be directly promoted whether by charity or the state. Champions of both agree that service providers would be knightly, whether because of their awareness of the 'moral' interdependence of people, or their professional expertise. Users of services are pawns: insufficiently moral to make choices, or inadequately knowledgeable. They may become queens tomorrow, but tomorrow is deferred indefinitely; it is by definition hard to be ideally 'moral' or 'rational'. They require tutelage and superintendence to become responsible citizens, recognising their membership of a moral organism. Social policy was thus a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Non-idealist thought, exemplified by Spencer's emphasis on private beneficence, access to the administration of justice, non-bureaucratic voluntary action and freedom from coercion, encapsulates a different route to welfare. However, as for the Noetics (non-idealists, but chronologically distorting to describe them thus), so for Spencer: people needing support are 'lapsed queens', though sometimes hope is abandoned. Spencer's thought has affinity with Noetic analysis: both resonated in the practical theory of the poor law in the twentieth century, with some popular support. Guardians were knights for governments, but knaves in the eyes of idealists, and then of government itself faced with

Poplarism (for those receiving relief guardians would newly acquire knightly status). Idealism as the prism through which policy was approached entailed that non-idealist thought became neglected.

In respect of more recent topics, close similarities between idealist thought and Titmuss on agency emerge. And a decline of idealism in policy analysis parallels renewed interest in informal care, ending the eclipse of a key topic for non-idealists: carers gained queenly status, able to curb the knavish proclivities of providers. Lastly, idealist thought evidently informs New Labour's expectations of the voluntary sector, through a line from Blair back to the early idealists.

Policies embody diverse political theories; however, in their conceptions of social life, policies and theories are predominantly either idealist or non-idealist, with related contrasts over agency. The past is not mere 'background': making explicit the struggles over time in and between non-idealist and idealist thought, and their differences over policy and agency, should add bite to our grasp of ideas influencing present policy debates.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1 Of the others, Henry Gawler was a lawyer with views on the poor law which 'perfectly accorded with those of the Noetics' (Mandler, 1990: 99), James Traill made no apparent contribution, and the Benthamite Walter Coulson was an old pupil of Senior.

2 His brother Thomas, rector of Cookham, Berkshire reformed parish relief along Noetic lines, commended in the 1834 report.

3 See Macintyre (1965: 211). Macintyre provides a useful discussion of Whately in the context of thought on Ireland's 'problems'.

4 Legislation to help improve the country, increasing the demand for free and profitable labour, was essential 'for ameliorating the condition of the poor' (*Third Report*, 1836: 8).

5 Emigration is not a permanent panacea: it is 'an auxiliary essential to a commencing course of amelioration' (*Third Report*, 1836: 17). A Board of Improvement will bring land into cultivation, provide road and drainage, improve land under cultivation, and establish an 'agricultural model school' (1836: 22).

6 Finer (1952: 146) in his assessment of G. C. Lewis, omits the important *Remarks* as an achievement.

7 Finer (1952: 142) apparently confuses the reports on Ireland by Whately and Nicholls.

8 Spring Rice, Chancellor of the Exchequer, described the proposed reforms as 'draining everything including patience' (in Macintyre, 1965: 213). Whately, the Noetics and Malthus are discussed further in Offer (2006).

9 Chadwick's memorandum, probably of 1841, entitled *Practical Christianity vs. Professing Christianity but practical infidelity* contrasts James Kay's practical contributions to reform with the 'false pharisaical charity which creates the misery it pretends to alleviate' (in Finer, 1952: 151). G. C. Lewis, who had by now succeeded his father as a permanent Commissioner, was in repeated conflict with Chadwick and marginalising him as the Commission's Secretary.

10   Herbert Spencer's social theory was seen thus by Bernard Bosanquet within the COS (see below), although this underplays his emphasis on altruistic sentiments in civilised life. The only prominent COS figure owing a debt to Spencer is Thomas Mackay.

11   The Irish reports record notable majority exasperation with the minority. In a Memorandum from the Bishop of Ross and Sir Henry Robinson, minority criticisms on the ground of its being the result of an inquiry as hasty and perfunctory as that which they describe as Sir George Nicholls' 'celebrated scamper' through Ireland in 1837 are roundly rejected. 'This criticism comes somewhat badly when accompanied by an alternative scheme prepared by four members of the Commission, two of whom did not visit Ireland at all, while the time spent in the country by the only member who accompanied the Commissioners on their visits was even shorter than that occupied by Sir George Nicholls' visit, which, on account of its brevity, has called forth such a severe condemnation from the minority' (PLR, Ireland, 1909: 87).

12   On this conception of society as catallaxy, see Gray (1995: 67) and on its implications for ideas of distributive justice see Millar (1989: ch. 2).

13   Downes was Senior Medical Inspector for Poor Law purposes to the Local Government Board for England.

14   How voluntary organisations theorise about themselves, as idealist or non-idealist in orientation, is important in understanding them and their appeal to governments, given governmental dispositions towards, or against, idealist social theory (Offer, 2003, 2006).

References

Allsop, J. (1995), *Health Policy and the NHS*, London: Longman.

Barclay Report (1982), *Social Workers: Their Role and Tasks*, London: Bedford Square Press.

Bevir, M. and O'Brien, D. (2003), 'From idealism to communitarianism: the inheritance and legacy of John Macmurray', *History of Political Thought*, 24: 2, 304–329.

Bicheno, J. E. (1836), *Third Report of the Irish Poor Law Inquiry Commissioners*, Appendix H, Part 2, London: HMSO.

Burke, H. (1987), *The People and the Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, Dublin: WEB.

Davies, B. (1968), *Social Needs and Resources in Local Services*, London: Michael Joseph.

Deacon, A. (1982), 'An end to the means test: social security and the Attlee government', *Journal of Social Policy*, 11: 3, 289–306.

den Otter, S. (1996), *British Idealism and Social Explanation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Dunkley, P. (1982), *The Crisis of the Old Poor Law in England*, New York: Garland.

Eccleshall, R. (1990), *English Conservatism Since the Reformation*, London: Unwin Hyman.

Finer, S. E. (1952), *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick*, London: Methuen.

Finlayson, G. (1994), *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gray, J. (1995), *Liberalism*, 2nd edition, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Greenleaf, W. H. (1983), *The British Political Tradition, Vol. 2, The Ideological Heritage*, London: Routledge.

Harris, J. (1992), 'Political thought and the welfare state 1870–1940: an intellectual framework for British social policy', *Past and Present*, 135: 116–141.

Harris, J. (2002), 'From poor law to welfare state? A European perspective', in D. Winch and P. K. O'Brien (eds), *The Political Economy of British Historical Experiences 1688–1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 409–438.

Hilton, B. (1988), *The Age of Atonement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Johnson, P. (1983), *Getting and Spending*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Le Grand, J. (2003), *Motivation, Agency and Public Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levy, S. L. (1970), *Nassau W. Senior, 1790–1864*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

Lewis, G. C. (1837), *Remarks on the Third Report of the Irish Poor Inquiry Commissioners*, London: HMSO.

Lewis, G. F. (ed.) (1870), *Letters of Sir George Cornewall Lewis*, London: Longman, Green.

Lewis, J. (1995), *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Lewis, J. (1999), 'Reviewing the relationship between the statutory sector and the state in Britain in the 1990s', *Voluntas*, 10: 3, 255–271.

Low, E. (2000), 'Class and the conceptualisation of citizenship in twentieth-century Britain', *History of Political Thought*, 21: 1, 114–131.

McBriar, A. M. (1987), *An Edwardian Mixed Doubles: The Bosanquets versus the Webbs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Macintyre, A. (1965), *The Liberator: Daniel O'Connor and the Irish Party, 1830–1847*, London: Hamish Hamilton.

Malthus, T. R. (1798), *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, available edited by A. Flew, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.

Mandler, P. (1990), 'Tories and paupers: Christian political economics and the making of the New Poor Law', *Historical Journal*, 33: 81–105.

Millar, D. (1989), *Market, State and Community*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nicholls, G. (1837), *Report of Geo. Nicholls, Esq. to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department on Poor Laws, Ireland*, London: HMSO.

Offer, J. (1999a), 'Spencer's future of welfare: a vision eclipsed', *The Sociological Review*, 47: 1, 136–162.

Offer, J. (1999b), 'Idealist thought, social policy and the rediscovery of informal care', *British Journal of Sociology*, 50: 3, 467–488.

Offer, J. (1999c), *Social Workers, the Community and Social Interaction*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Offer, J. (2003), 'Idealism versus non-idealism: new light on social policy and voluntary action in Britain since 1880', *Voluntas*,14: 2, 227–240.

Offer, J. (2004), 'Dead theorists and older people: Spencer, idealist social thought and divergent prescriptions for care', *Sociology*, 38: 5, 891–908.

Offer, J. (2006), *An Intellectual History of British Social Policy*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Parker, G. (1990), *With Due Care and Attention*, London: Family Policy Studies Centre.

Peel, J. D. Y. (2004), 'Spencer in history: the second century', in G. Jones and R. A. Peel (eds), *Herbert Spencer: the Intellectual Legacy*, London: Galton Institute, pp. 125–149.

Pinker, R. (1971), *Social Theory and Social Policy*, London: Heinemann.

Pinker, R. (1993), 'Social policy in the post-Titmuss era', in K. Page and J. Baldock (eds), *Social Policy Review*, 5, Canterbury: Social Policy Association.

Poor Law Report [PLR] (1909), *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws* (3 vols.), Cd. 4499, London: HMSO.

Poor Law Report [PLR] (Evidence) (1909), *Minutes of Evidence, Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, Appendix Vol. III*, London: HMSO.

Poor Law Report [PLR] (Ireland) (1909), *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws: Report on Ireland*, Cd 4630, London: HMSO.

Poor Law Report [PLR] (Scotland) (1909), *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws: Report on Scotland*, Cd 4922, London: HMSO.

Prideaux, S. (2001), 'New Labour, old functionalism: the underlying contradictions of welfare reform in the US and the UK', *Social Policy and Administration*, 35: 1, 85–115.

Pringle Pattison, A. (1904), 'Life and philosophy of Herbert Spencer', *Quarterly Review*, July, 240–267.

Seebohm Report (1968), *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services*, Cmnd 3703, London: HMSO.

Senior, N. W. (1837), *Letter from Nassau W. Senior Esq. To His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department on the Third Report from the Commissioners*, London: HMSO.

Spencer, H. (1836), 'Poor Laws – Reply to "TWS"', reprinted in J. Offer (ed.), *Herbert Spencer: Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 179–181.

Spencer, H. (1871), 'Specialised administration', reprinted in his *Essays*, Vol. 3. London: Williams and Norgate, pp. 401–444.

Spencer, H. (1884), *The Man versus The State*, reprinted in J. Offer (ed.), *Herbert Spencer: Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 61–175.

Taylor, M. W. (1992), *Men versus the State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Third Report of the Irish Poor Law Inquiry Commissioners (1836), London: HMSO.

Titmuss, R. M. (1968), *Commitment to Welfare*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Titmuss, R. M. (1970), *The Gift Relationship*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Titmuss, R. M. (1974), *Social Policy*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Vincent, A. W. (1984), 'The Poor Law Report of 1909 and the social theory of the Charity Organisation Society', *Victorian Studies*, 27: 343–363.

Webb, B. (1948), *Our Partnership*, London: Longmans, Green.

Webb, S. and Webb, B. (1910), *English Poor Law Policy*, London: Longmans, Green.

Weinstein, D. (1998), *Equal Freedom and Utility: Herbert Spencer's Liberal Utilitarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Welshman, J. (2004), 'The unknown Titmuss', *Journal of Social Policy*, 33: 2, 225–247.

Wolfenden Report (1978), *The Future of Voluntary Organisations*, London: Croom Helm.