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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Bureaucratic conceptions of citizenship in the voluntary sector (1919-1939) : the case of the National Council of Social Service.**

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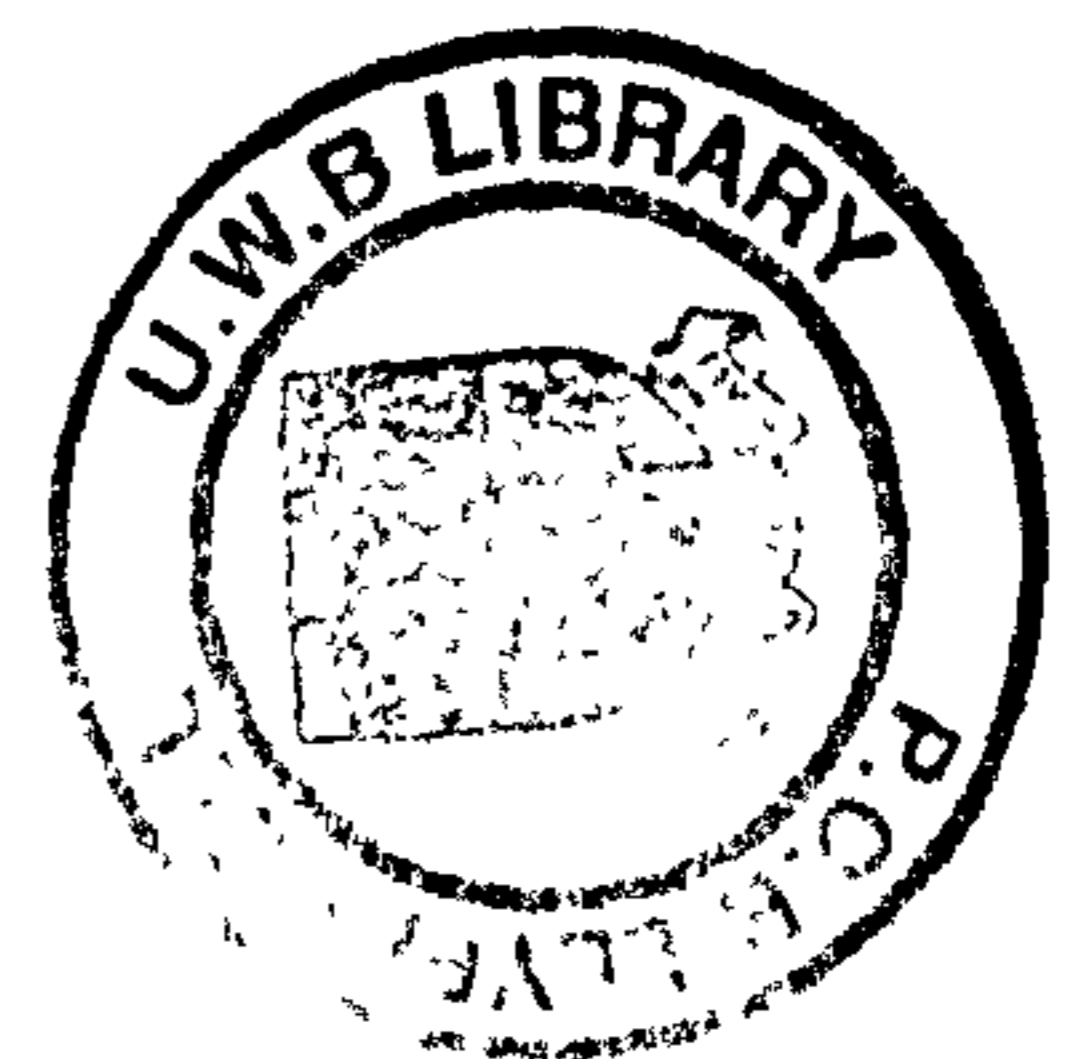
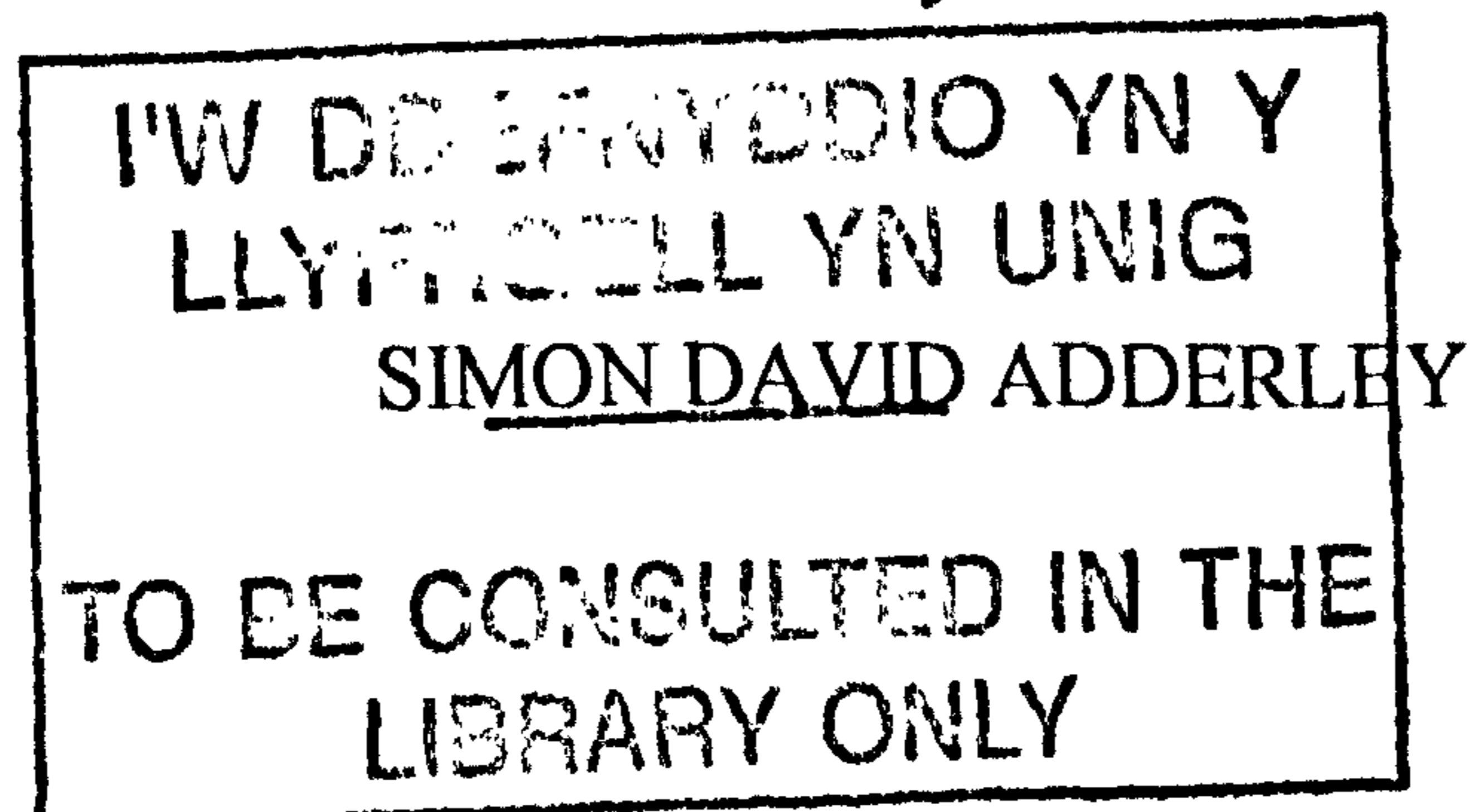
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**BUREAUCRATIC CONCEPTIONS OF**  
**CITIZENSHIP IN THE VOLUNTARY**  
**SECTOR (1919-1939): THE CASE OF THE**  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL**  
**SERVICE**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of  
Wales for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by



Department of History and Welsh History, University of Wales, Bangor

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Appendices 6, 7, 8; pages 355 – 357

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## **Summary**

This thesis examines the aims and work of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) between 1919 and 1939. The NCSS was a large charity, formed in 1919 with the express aim of promoting voluntary organisation in Britain. It worked closely with other charities, statutory agencies, and local and national government in a number of areas to support a series of reforms and schemes aimed at providing a more organised and efficient voluntary sector.

The thesis discusses the history and formation of the NCSS, its national aims and its work in rural and urban areas. It also analyses the development of local clubs specifically for women. It places a large emphasis on the work of the NCSS with the unemployed and contains two large case studies of such work in south Wales and the northeast of England.

The thesis discusses the extent to which the NCSS attempted to implement a policy of 'bureaucratic citizenship'. It shows that the policies of the National Council were based upon the notion that the state, individuals, charities and organisations could work together and, in so doing, enact the role of the 'good citizen'. The NCSS attempted to establish a bureaucratic system of welfare, which could encompass a wide and diverse range of social thought and action.

However the thesis also makes broader points about the way in which an idea can develop within a non-political organisation. It discusses the way in which the central tenets of NCSS ideology were manipulated due to local needs and circumstances and the effect this had on national policy. By examining the way in which an idea develops within a middle class, 'middle of the road' organisation the thesis sheds light on a much neglected group.

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This very little little is dedicated to Harry.

## Abbreviations

BCA	Birmingham City Archives
BCSS	Bradford Council of Social Service
CCSW	Chester Council of Social Welfare
CCRO	Chester City Record Office
<i>COR</i>	<i>Charity Organisation Review</i>
CPRE	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
CPRW	Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales
CRO	Cwmbran Record Office
CSW	Council of Social Welfare
EC	Executive Committee
ERCC	Essex Rural Community Council
ERO	Essex Record Office
HHS	Hampstead Health Society
LCC	London County Council
LCSS	London Council of Social Service
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
<i>LS</i>	<i>London Supplement to the Social Service Review</i>
MRCC	Monmouthshire Rural Community Council
NACCC	Northumberland Advisory Council for Community Clubs
NAGH	National Association of Guilds of Help
NCSS	National Council of Social Service
NCSS (MO)	National Council of Social Service (Midlands Office)
NLW	National Library of Wales
NRCC	Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council
NRO	Nottinghamshire Record Office
RCSS	Rotherham Council of Social Service
RLIS	Rotherham Library and Information Services (Archive and Local Studies Section)
SCSS	Salisbury Council of Social Service
SGSW	Stafford Guild of Social Welfare
SPCSS	St <i>Pancras</i> Council of Social Service
SRO	Staffordshire Record Office
<i>SSR</i>	<i>Social Service Review (includes Social Service Bulletin)</i>
SWMCSS	South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service
TCSS	Tyneside Council of Social Service
TWA	Tyne and Wear Archives
UPSC	Urban Policy Sub-Committee
WCSS	Wakefield Council of Social Service
WDA	Wakefield District Archive
WSSS	Welsh School of Social Service
WSRO	Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office



# INTRODUCTION

This thesis builds upon two interconnected themes within the recent historiography of British Welfare. Firstly it is concerned with the concepts of *citizenship* and *community* which have dominated the study of British welfare from Marshall to the present day, and which permeated the rhetoric and values of inter-war policy practitioners. The thesis will analyse the history of the concepts, their transformation into practical welfare policies for the voluntary sector during the interwar years and the eventual success and failures of those policies when faced with the economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s. Secondly this thesis builds upon the growing literature which challenges the traditional view of the voluntary sector as peripheral to the history of British welfare after 1919. Instead it will be argued that the decline of the Charity Organisation Society in the Edwardian period, so long regarded as a barometer for voluntary work as a whole, was in fact unrepresentative and that there was a strong and thriving voluntary sector in many areas of Britain. These concerns will be dealt with by an assessment of the work of the National Council of Social Service [NCSS] throughout the interwar period. As the premier inter-war voluntary group and an umbrella organisation for other charities, the NCSS makes an ideal case study of voluntary action in this period.

The NCSS was established in 1919 with the aim of ‘promoting, co-ordinating and supporting voluntary social service in Britain’. Despite becoming one of the most important voluntary organisations in Britain<sup>1</sup> it has received relatively little historical attention. The received

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<sup>1</sup> It still exists as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

wisdom concerning the NCSS has tended to follow the arguments laid down by its official historian Margaret Brasnett, who was commissioned to write a celebration of the Council's first fifty years. As a result she understandably wrote a somewhat glowing account of 'the great institution' whose 'record and programme of work... is so wide and varied that it touches some interest of every organisation and individual in this country and far beyond'.<sup>2</sup> The details laid down by Brasnett have almost universally been adopted without question by later historians. The NCSS was first discussed in recent historiography, albeit briefly, by Finlayson<sup>3</sup> who saw the NCSS as a 'government inspired creation', which as Rodney Lowe has pointed out in a review of Finlayson's work 'acted in a way the COS never could, as a general staff for voluntarism and as the provider of detailed information on government legislation and regulation'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly McKibbin simply assumes that the link between the state and the NCSS was dominated by the statutory partner and thus dismisses the work of the voluntary organisation.

The attitude of the unemployed to the [employment] exchanges was, therefore, almost wholly negative; *pro tanto* so was their attitude to similar government agencies and to philanthropic bodies such as the National Council of Social Service.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: The story of the National Council of Social Service* (London, NCSS, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> G. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain 1830-1990* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> R. Lowe, 'Welfare's Moving Frontier', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 3 (1995), p. 373.

<sup>5</sup> R. I. McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class: social relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 249.

Others are equally dismissive. Cahill and Jowitt argued in their article on the Bradford Guild of Help that the National Association of Guilds of Help 'was in 1919 the leading organisation which took part in the merger which created the National Council for Social Service'.<sup>6</sup> However if Finlayson has seen the NCSS as a quasi-government agency and Cahill and Jowitt have identified it as an evolution of the working class Guild of Help movement, Harris has seen its origins within a more philosophical tradition. Quoting the organisation's journal, the *Social Service Review*, she has argued that 'the National Council of Social Service, portrayed voluntary social work as "a means of governing in the Platonic sense... which will enable the state to become an aggregate of self-conscious, self-balanced and self-preserving units as it ought to be"'.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, Harris does not explore this challenging suggestion by discussing NCSS policies or actions, and provides no real evidence beyond the quotation above.

The National Council then has appeared only fleetingly in modern historiography. This thesis will attempt to provide a definitive history of the NCSS during the interwar years, from its earliest influences from government, Guilds of Help and Idealist philosophy. It will also attempt to address some of the exaggerations of Brasnett, who often ignored the failure of

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<sup>6</sup> M. Cahill and T. Jowitt, 'The New Philanthropy: The emergence of the Bradford City Guild of Help', *Journal of Social Policy*, 9, 3 (1980), p. 359. It is indicative of the lack of historical research into the NCSS that its name often alternates in historical accounts between the National Council of Social Service and the National Council for Social Service. The correct word is 'of'.

<sup>7</sup> J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An intellectual framework for British Social Policy', *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), p. 130.

certain policies and the extent to which the NCSS was forced to react to situations rather than lead the way.

In doing so she missed an interesting story of the way in which the ideology of an organisation can be shaped as much by the failure of its policies 'on the ground' as by its intellectual leaders. Indeed the fact that this thesis does address such issues is highly significant. Unfortunately it is not simply the case that the story of the NCSS has never been addressed in a scholarly fashion. The history of charities generally, and many other institutions, is written in a narrative manner which too often says little about ideological aims, internal divergences, the influence of events or changing circumstances on aims and values, or the ways in which individual groups accepted or reconstructed the leaderships strategies. We know that within political organisations such factors were significant. However other institutions are seldom seen as complex organisations, in which an ideological discourse can have a many-layered significance upon the way in which that institution functioned. This thesis is a case study of the ways in which an organisation can be shaped as much by failure as success, by the changing nature of events beyond its control as the ideology of its founders. It is the diffuse nature of ideology which is at the core of this thesis, and it is the diffuse nature of NCSS ideology which is seen as both its strength and its weakness.

The NCSS grew from a Joint Committee of charitable organisations and government agencies set up to organise wartime philanthropy in 1915 by the Local Government Board. Once established it attempted to facilitate the co-operation of various voluntary agencies establishing itself as a national forum with local co-ordinating committees across the United Kingdom. Furthermore it attempted to facilitate and encourage specific welfare schemes,

many of which are studied below. These were meant to encourage particular values, to encourage the values of participatory citizenship among the recipients of welfare. It will be argued here that these aims reflected an attempt to implement at a practical 'on the ground' level the Idealist conceptions of citizenship and community present throughout 'progressive circles' from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. It will also be shown that at a local and national level, in urban and rural areas, the NCSS consistently attempted to carry out a policy of bringing together voluntary organisations in order to promote and facilitate citizenship based welfare.

This policy marked the NCSS out as different from other groups within the voluntary sector. Unlike other charitable organisations, the National Council of Social Service was primarily concerned with enabling other charities to carry out policies, rather than actually implementing its own welfare schemes. Throughout the interwar years the primary aim of the National Council was not to provide welfare but to provide an environment in which other organisations could more effectively carry out plans with which the NCSS agreed. Such a policy will be identified here as 'bureaucratic citizenship'.

The phrase 'bureaucratic citizenship' is not one which was used regularly by key individuals or local social workers. Nevertheless it does sum up the attempt by the NCSS to create a situation whereby voluntary and statutory organisations enacted the values of the good citizen in a bureaucratic framework. In practical terms this meant that the NCSS encouraged the establishment of a series of Joint Committees, both nationally and locally, which consisted of representatives from a variety of organisations who 'came together for a common good'. It will be argued that such a policy, espoused by NCSS leaders, was not simply the result of an

ad hoc response to specific issues. Rather this role was itself an ideological construction. It will be shown that as a facilitator of welfare, dealing with both statutory and voluntary bodies, at local and national level the NCSS enacted the role of a welfare bureaucracy two decades before the development of the Welfare State.

This welfare bureaucracy was based on the interpretation of an Idealist discourse prevalent throughout much of the 'progressive' voluntary sector in the interwar years. As such it has important implications for our understanding of inter-war intellectual attitudes, for the study of British philanthropy, and also for the study of social policy after 1945.

It will be shown that this policy of bureaucratic citizenship was a continual factor throughout NCSS policy both nationally and locally. By examining the policies of the National Council of Social Service, of local Rural Community Councils, and of Councils of Social Service this thesis will show that the aim of facilitating such co-operation was achieved by individual Joint Committees acting as a forum for their members, rather than as a charity in their own right. In doing so these committees came to present a unified and effective voice which could work with statutory agencies and local government. The thesis will argue that such work, far from simply being a pragmatic development by a series of charities was in fact a deliberate attempt by the NCSS to organise welfare based on the *a priori* assumption that if individuals put their selfish interests aside and came together a rational 'solution' could be found. While this assumption may not have been the most radical of its day, it was incredibly powerful and popular amongst voluntary workers, local government officials and civil servants. As a result, far from being peripheral to the story of British welfare in the interwar period the National Council of Social Service brought together an extremely large number of

welfare providers and policy makers all of whom enacted the role of the good citizen in a bureaucratic setting. This is not to suggest that all members were Idealists, but that an approach structured in this way was functional to a broader number of community social workers. The thesis will show that throughout England and Wales the NCSS was able to use idealist language in order to attract a wide variety of individuals and organisations under its 'umbrella'.

However, the thesis will also show that while the strength of such a policy was that it appealed to an extremely wide audience, presenting values which many organisations felt able to 'sign up' to, this was also its weakness. By examining some of the failures of National Council policy it will be argued that bureaucratic citizenship was effective when dealing with a basic level of social deprivation and could even be influential in times of severe hardship. Yet, because it offered only a setting within which voluntarism could take place, and no real palliatives to the problems of extreme poverty, many local NCSS councils faced with problems such as high long term unemployment felt that they had no choice but to provide, rather than just facilitate, welfare. The extent to which local Councils of Social Service did this differed according to a variety of factors, such as their background and local circumstances. This thesis will show that many individuals and organisations could agree with the central tenets of the NCSS without accepting its desired end result.

This assessment of NCSS involvement in forming local joint committees of charities and encouraging welfare polices which advocated the values of citizenship and community, will cover four major themes. Firstly the role and nature of citizenship. This was one of the main concerns both of recent historiography and of the NCSS. This thesis will examine where

these values, which were so central to NCSS thinking, originated, how they were promoted and the extent to which they were able to provide relevant solutions to practical problems. The second theme to be discussed is the bureaucratic implementation of the ideas of citizenship. This will examine the extent to which the Idealist values held by those at the centre of the NCSS were transformed as they came into contact with different local organisations, circumstances and individuals. Thirdly the development of the National Council of Social Service was to have a great influence upon the relationship between charitable organisations and the state. It will be shown that the NCSS marked a turning point in that relationship and led to much greater co-operation than had been present before 1914. The fourth theme to be discussed throughout this thesis concerns the nature of philanthropy. Again, as will be outlined below, this has been the subject of much recent writing. It will be argued here that the now widely accepted notion of the philanthropist as a calculating actor within a 'gift relationship' is misleading when applied to the work of the NCSS in the interwar years. The exact nature of these four themes will now be analysed in some detail.

The concepts of citizenship and community have always been at the forefront of academic inquiry. Indeed as Marquand has stated:

The relationship between the market and the forum, between exchange and persuasion, between the public realm of the citizen and the private realm of the consumer, has been a central preoccupation of social thought since the days of Aristotle.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> D. Marquand, *The New Reckoning: Capitalism, States and Citizens* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1997), p. 37.



Nevertheless citizenship and community became increasingly widely used concepts throughout the 1990s. This has been the case for a number of reasons. Firstly, many have seen notions of community as representing a reaction against the rise of neo-liberal governments in the 1980s. Ruth Lister, for example, argued at the turn of the last decade that

As we enter the 1990s, we can sense a shift away from the narrow, individualistic ethos of the 1980s. An important element in this shift has been the re-emergence of the language of citizenship as a potential challenge to the dominant language of consumerism and enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

Paradoxically however, the ever increasing cost of welfare in Britain has led many concerned with the future of welfare to place a new emphasis on the concepts of self-reliance and individualism which characterise the good citizen. This political debate has consistently advocated the voluntary impulse, long associated with the good citizen, as necessary for Britain's future. For example during the late 1980s senior government figures felt able to put forward the idea that the voluntary sector created precisely the sort of 'active citizen' Britain (or at least England) needed.

The English tradition of voluntary service... Justices of the Peace from the fifteenth century to the present, the school and vestry boards of the Victorian age, councillors in modern local government represent a long outstanding tradition of public service. School governors are unpaid, so are jurors, so are residents; ratepayers and tenants leaders, so are neighbourhood watch co-ordinators, so are the thousands of people who give their time freely to the huge and thriving number of British charities... Schemes based on this tradition are often more flexible and more effective than bureaucratic plans drawn up by Fabian principles.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R. Lister, *The Exclusive Society: Citizenship and the poor* (London, Child Poverty Action Group, 1990), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> D. Hurd, 'Citizenship in the Tory Democracy', *New Statesman*, 29 April 1988, p. 14.

The demand for increased levels of citizenship was not limited to Conservative administrations. At the end of March 1998 a report commissioned by the then Education Secretary David Blunkett recommended that five percent of the school curriculum be devoted to 'citizenship studies'. In the same month Alun Michael, then a Home Office Minister, launched a three-year pilot scheme in London to bring citizenship lessons to 11,000 pupils. Furthermore Giddens, long associated with the philosophical underpinnings of the New Labour government, has clearly stressed the need for an involved citizenship whereby individuals feel they belong to a wider community.

Civic Liberalism... must be a basic part of an inclusive society at the top. How can this liberalism be renewed or sustained? The successful cultivation of the cosmopolitan nation is one way. People who feel themselves members of a national community are likely to acknowledge a commitment to others within it. The development of a responsible business ethos is also relevant. In terms of social solidarity the most important group are not only the new corporate rich but also the members of the professional and moneyed middle class, since they are closest to the dividing lines which threaten to pull away from public space. Improving the quality of public education, sustaining a well-resourced health service, promoting safe public amenities, and controlling levels of crime are all relevant... Only a welfare system that benefits most of the population will generate a common morality of citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the differences between the two parties, the discourse has clearly emphasised the obligations of the citizen rather than his or her rights. In time this filtered through to historians. As Lewis has argued

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<sup>11</sup> A Giddens, *The Third Way: The renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998), pp. 107-8.

Stimulated by the commitment of successive Conservative governments from 1979 onwards to promote voluntary agencies, together with the market and the family, as the preferred providers of welfare there has been a recent resurgence of interest in voluntary organisations and their relationships to the state among both policy analysts and historians.<sup>12</sup>

For example Biagini, introducing the influential collection of papers *Citizenship and Community*,<sup>13</sup> referred both to the prevailing political situation and the influence it has had on historians. In contrast with the neo-liberal image of 'Victorian values' which endorsed self help and individualism, the collection aimed to elaborate upon Pugh's comment that politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 'was not primarily about the individual's rights, but the representation of his community'.<sup>14</sup> This collection was indicative of a new and widespread approach among historians which stressed the importance of concepts such as citizenship and community at a time when, according to more traditional histories, identity was based on class, gender and nationality rather than more localised and specific notions of commonality. As Pugh has indicated, this was not new, but the collection focused on and celebrated social changes. To this end Biagini went on to provide an analysis of J.S. Mill and the extent to which he was influenced by Athenian concepts of the citizen. He argued that 'it was a version of the 'classical republican' model [of citizenship] which held the key position in Mill's liberalism, and had wide ranging implications for his attitudes to the issue of liberty

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<sup>12</sup> J. Lewis, 'The boundary between voluntary and statutory social service in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', *Historical Journal*, 39, 1 (1996), p. 155.

<sup>13</sup> E. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and community: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> M. Pugh *The Making of Modern British Politics, 1867-1939* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992).

and public control in a free society'.<sup>15</sup> Biagini typified the approach taken by many historians, addressing notions of citizenship by analysing the historical development of the idea rather than of the practical policy.

In doing this Biagini was actually building upon a long tradition of analysing a series of liberal notions and ideology rather than the impact of ideas on policies.<sup>16</sup> If some works have questioned the impact of Idealism, others have emphasised the importance of British Idealism to the conceptualisations of citizenship. This will be examined more closely in chapter one.

The relationship between citizenship and social policies has been examined at the theoretical level, especially by T. H. Marshall. For Marshall the history of welfare provision involved the state increasingly recognising and granting certain inalienable rights to individual citizens culminating, he believed, in the Welfare State.<sup>17</sup> However Marshall's views have not remained unchallenged. Indeed his Whiggish historical perspective of an ever improving and more benevolent state has attracted increasing criticism.

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<sup>15</sup> E. Biagini, 'J.S. Mill and the model of ancient Athens', in E. Biagini (ed.) op. cit. p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> See M. Freedman, *The New Liberalism* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986); R. Bellamy, 'T. H. Green and the Morality of Victorian Liberalism', in R. Bellamy (ed.), *Victorian Liberalism: Nineteenth century political thought and practice* (London, Routledge, 1990); A. Vincent, 'Classical Liberalism and its Crisis of Identity', *History of Political Thought*, XI (1990); S. Den Otter, 'Thinking in Communities': Late Nineteenth Century Liberals, Idealists and the Retrieval of Community, *Parliamentary History*, 16,1 (1997).

<sup>17</sup> Specifically Marshall argued that British society had seen three main phases. The granting of civil rights (freedom of speech and to a fair trial) followed by political rights (extension of the franchise) and lastly social rights (access to a minimum standard of living guaranteed by the state).

The first to attack Marshall's conceptions of the development of welfare were the Marxist writers of the 1970s and 1980s. These authors provided a different perspective by assuming that welfare reform has continually followed economic forces. For example, Gough stated that 'the development of the welfare state is based upon a central Marxist tenet: that the proletariat is both an element of capitalism and a group of human beings constantly concerned with their daily lives'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, that the working class must be seen not only as a concept within a theoretical Marxist framework, but also as real actors in everyday life; people who are concerned not with overthrowing the capitalist oppressors but with wages, pension rights and levels of health care. This false consciousness is according to Gough, central to an understanding of the origins of the welfare state. In Britain, he argued, this saw the organisation of the labour movement into both trade unions and political parties.

We have discerned two factors of importance in explaining the growth of the welfare state: the degree of class conflict... and the ability of the capitalist state to formulate and implement policies to secure the long turn reproduction of capitalist social relations.<sup>19</sup>

In other works, the role of welfare systems in sustaining other forms of non-class based prejudices was identified. This perspective argued that although values were more influential than politics those values belonged primarily to a white patriarchal capitalist system. Some maintained that women were deliberately marginalised by both state and collectivist ideologies because of an 'ideology of motherhood'.<sup>20</sup> Others stated that 'aliens' were

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<sup>18</sup> I. Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State* (Hampshire, Macmillan, 1979), p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> A. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal*, 5 (1978), p. 13.

excluded from many policies as a means of immigration control. For example Williams has argued that

The construction of the welfare state around the consolidating themes of Family and Nation, largely endorsed by powerful sections of the labour movement, served to marginalize the struggles and interests of women, Black and other immigrant workers.<sup>21</sup>

A different view emerged as the old radical ideas were challenged, and the value of more moderate ideological aims was finally recognised. Gradually this permeated historical writing. Analysing the concept of citizenship inherent in the cornerstone of the Welfare State, contributory National Insurance, Harris has argued convincingly that although both Beveridge and the Attlee government were interested in preserving elements of the capitalist state

That this was the main reason for their support for social insurance seems to me unlikely... And the notion that a Labour government which nationalised the steel industry and voluntary hospitals would have blanched at abolishing contributory social insurance simply out of a lurking tenderness for capitalism seems highly improbable.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly although she agrees that the notion of contributory insurance reinforced a predominantly male definition of citizenship Harris argues that

The various schemes for a tax-financed citizen wage regardless of gender or employment status that were promoted by PEP, the London Womens Parliament, Lady Juliet Rhys Williams and others, all

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<sup>21</sup> F. Williams, *Social Policy: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989), p. 150.

<sup>22</sup> J. Harris, 'Contract and Citizenship in Social Welfare: 1934-1948' in B. Palier (ed.) *Comparing social welfare systems in Europe: Proceedings of an Oxford Conference*, 1 (1994), p. 152.

suggest that contemporary thought was by no means so indifferent to the women's question as is sometimes supposed. Gender alone, therefore, cannot fully explain the political and moral ascendancy of contributory national insurance.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of this and similar research, modern historiography has tended to shy away from concentrating on the activity of government in explaining the nature and development of the Welfare State. Furthermore historians are increasingly recognising the role of the private sector and its pre-existing ideologies, which are no longer seen exclusively as an evil influence holding back the development of the state system but as providing a series of practical and pragmatic responses to situations in very specific circumstances. The responsibility for the shift from 'a vast ramshackle mass of voluntary, self governing, local, patriarchal and philanthropic provision... into the most rational and bureaucratic of Welfare States'<sup>24</sup> lies beyond political relationships. That is not to say that political organisations did not have a role to play in the development of British welfare but rather that the practical details of proposals could be, and were, based around strategies and values developed by others outside the political arena. This has meant an increasing concern with the role of the voluntary sector.

The historiography of charity has undergone a massive shift in the last decade. Gone is the idea of draconian charities being replaced by a liberal welfare state in 1906 and 1945. Instead Biagini, Harris and others stress the continuing values and ideas which linked Victorian

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* p. 154-5.

<sup>24</sup> J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State' *op cit.* p. 116.

philanthropy and twentieth century social policy.<sup>25</sup> Gone too is the idea that the state saw voluntary bodies as hindering efficient and reliable government led welfare throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In its place is a growing literature discussing the way in which state and voluntary sectors traded ideas, particularly in the years leading up to the Second World War.<sup>26</sup> This literature has rightly placed the ideas and values of 'citizenship' and 'community' at the centre of the development of welfare policies by both sectors.

Whilst this thesis builds on the work of Harris and Lewis, it takes it much further, showing how ideas influenced the activities of voluntary agencies, and their practical attempts to promote the values of citizenship. Policies based around the idea of citizenship had to be introduced at both national and local levels if organisations were to be effective. This proved a tough task for voluntary organisations attempting to define their place in a mixed economy of welfare, but it was one that the National Council of Social Service spent the first twenty years of its existence trying to achieve. The thesis offers both a study of ideas and their impact and also of their re-negotiation as they were dispersed through the institution, often becoming very different in the process.

This is an obvious departure from traditional histories of ideas, which often fail to look at the practical implementation of philosophical values. However it also marks a development from

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<sup>25</sup> E. Biagini, op cit.; J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State' op cit.; J. Harris, 'Victorian Values and the founders of the Welfare State', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 8 (1992).

<sup>26</sup> J. Lewis, 'Voluntary and Informal Welfare', in Page. M and Silburn. R (eds.), *British Social Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire, Macmillan, 1999), pp. 249-270; J. Harris, 'Victorian Values' op cit.



those histories of social policy or philanthropy which have dealt with the practical implementation of policies. In so far as the impact of Idealism and other currents have been discussed as an influence on politics, it has been through a focus on individuals, not agencies. Thus McBriar has examined the 'Edwardian mixed doubles', the conflict between the Bosanquets (representing the voluntary sector) and the Webbs (representing the Fabians).<sup>27</sup> There are also studies of the period after 1945, but again these contain little about how ideas evolved in the interim.

Traditional histories of charitable organisations show little sign of being influenced by these approaches. They have assumed that the policy devised at a national level, usually in London, was enacted throughout the country. However histories of political organisations have repeatedly shown that in many organisations central policy is often at odds with local circumstance. This thesis will attempt to maintain that the same fact holds true for charities. Throughout the thesis examples will be given of local organisations redefining, emphasising or even ignoring national policy for a variety of reasons. Furthermore it will argue that the National Council's executive committees not only knew of these differing interpretations of policy, but actively encouraged them as examples of local democracy in action.

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<sup>27</sup> A. McBriar, *An Edwardian Mixed Doubles: The Bosanquets versus the Webbs* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987). Examples of histories which deal with practical policies by examining the individuals involved are legion and many are mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. Apart from these and biographies of major political and academic figures a short list of such works would include J. Allan, *Berthold Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of Progress* (London, Royal Institute of British Architects Publications, 1992); J. Stapelton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics: The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994); I. Aitken, 'John Grierson: Idealism and the Interwar period', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 9 (1989); R. Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia. A critical biography of Ebenezer Howard* (London, Macmillan, 1988).

The third theme of this thesis concerns the relationship between the voluntary sector and the state. It is undoubtedly true that the interwar period perpetuated aspects of late Victorian and Edwardian social policy, in that state was prepared to use charity for its own means. Jane Lewis argues that the state even specifically set out to actively manage the voluntary sector. Lewis' position is critical of much American, British and comparative social policy which has traditionally argued that Britain has always had a strictly defined mixed economy of welfare which was reinforced by the Beveridgean Welfare State. However many European countries have a strong tradition of historians recognising a constant symbiotic relationship between the voluntary and public sectors. This thesis not only supports such a position but also enlarges it. It will be argued that as well as the state actively using the National Council of Social Service to fulfil specific policy objectives, the NCSS actively sought to be used in such a way. The thesis will show that such a relationship was useful to all parties. The state could attempt to address specific welfare issues at a time of increasing fear of social unrest without spending large amounts of money; the NCSS received financial support but also, and perhaps more importantly, official recognition as a facilitator of charitable bodies and a link between the various ministries of health and unemployment and charities 'on the ground'. Other charities had access to state funds through the NCSS, without actually committing themselves to state welfare. Furthermore the thesis will give many examples of politicians, in all parties, who recognised the strong moral value of this voluntary involvement in citizenship, even if they sought a greater role for the state.

Finally this thesis attempts to address the sociological action of giving, or the 'gift relationship' which has entered the historical arena through the groundbreaking work of Alan

Kidd.<sup>28</sup> The debate is centred on what Kidd has identified as ‘collectivist’ and ‘individualist’ giving behaviour.<sup>29</sup> Based on the anthropological works of Mauss and Levi-Strauss, among others, ‘collectivist giving’ emphasises the reciprocal nature of the gift. Placed in the context of western society, this is usually identified with a system whereby the recipients gain the gift itself and the donator gains status within his or her society. For example it is argued that the model villages established throughout the latter years of the nineteenth century ensured their founders a high level of status among, and the subservience of, those they supported. As Kidd has stated ‘a gift not yet requited creates an unequal relationship between people. It constrains the recipient to act deferentially towards the donor. Thus the giver of gifts to the many can ‘build a name’, become ‘a big man’, and acquire a personal following. This is ‘calculated generosity’.<sup>30</sup>

Individualist giving examines the same mechanism but instead of emphasising the direct relationship between donor and recipients it regards the donor as receiving specific recognition from a peer group. For example, as Shapely has commented, philanthropers in Victorian Manchester found it impossible to create a relationship with the many recipients of their ‘generosity’. Rather they gained power and status through acquiring a reputation among the city fathers as a generous individual.<sup>31</sup> As Kidd states ‘charitable giving by businessmen

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<sup>28</sup> A. Kidd, ‘Philanthropy and the ‘social history paradigm’, *Social History*, 21 (1996), pp. 180-192.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 183.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> P. Shapely, *Voluntary Charity on Nineteenth Century Manchester: Organisational Structure, Social Status and Leadership* unpublished D. Phil Thesis, Manchester Metropolitan University, 1994.

is seen as a self-interested activity in which accumulated status is a capital return on their investment'.<sup>32</sup>

However, this thesis will argue that these ideas of a gift relationship, impressive as they are for the Victorian period, are inadequate for an analysis of the idealist welfare of the interwar years. It will show that the development of values of citizenship and community marked a shift in emphasis, from the worthiness of the individual Victorian philanthropist or the 'collectivist' philanthropist to the co-operative nature of interwar charitable bodies. By focusing on the idea of geographically localised giving, notions of reciprocity ignore the development of truly national charities. When this change took place the recipient and the provider had no contact or even awareness of each other as individuals. Unlike the earlier Charity Organisation Society, the National Council of Social Service attempted to facilitate rather than control the work of other charities, thereby negating its own role as a philanthropic organisation. As a result the giver of assistance, now an office bound salaried social worker, received no noticeable increase in status.

It will be argued that Kidd's concepts ignore the evangelical nature of the founders of the National Council of Social Service. For many within the voluntary sector the concept of organised welfare, with decreased incidence of 'over-lapping', was of paramount importance in the development of a 'better life'. By reducing the notion of giving to one of reciprocity, Kidd ignores the real belief that many individuals had in their 'crusade'. Furthermore, because NCSS policy allowed charities to keep their independence and because it was often

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<sup>32</sup> A. Kidd, *op cit.* p. 184.

enacted with state money, voluntary organisations were quick to realise the benefits of increased co-operation. As a result the interwar years often saw charities withdrawing their individual welfare provision and taking a less high profile but more co-operative role. Again this is heavily at odds with the notion of giving in order to receive increased status.

These four themes; the conceptualisation of citizenship, its re-negotiation during the bureaucratic process of implementation, the relationship between charity and the state and the changing nature of charity itself are present throughout this thesis. However they will be examined by a chronological account of the history of the NCSS from 1919 until the outbreak of war in September 1939.

Chapter one sets out to explain the development of a concern with 'citizenship' throughout many areas of the late Victorian and Edwardian intelligentsia. It also highlights the way in which a specifically Idealist conception of citizenship influenced many within the voluntary sector. Furthermore it will describe the changing relationship between voluntary bodies and the state in 1914.

Chapter two will analyse the actual formation of the NCSS, through an assessment of the individuals who made up its first Executive Committee and its first annual conference held in 1920. It will also analyse the specific role played by the state in the actual formation of the National Council of Social Service in 1919.

Chapters three, four and five all deal with the way in which the NCSS or bodies affiliated to it attempted to implement policies which facilitated citizenship. They look at National

Council policy towards the recipients of welfare, but note also a growing concern with the providers of welfare, as examples of the 'good citizen'.

Chapter three details the story of the first large scale Council of Social Service in London under the organisational leadership of T. H. Nunn. It will show the extent to which pre-war ideas and organisations were transformed to meet the needs of the post war bureaucracy. It will also discuss the way in which ideas and concepts of citizenship had to be transformed in order to provide relevant solutions to the problems of health care and education.

Chapter four provides a general review of National Council activities in the interwar period. This will deal with the two main prongs of the NCSS attack on the problems of the inter-war period which are seen to be the collapse of communities and the increasing sense of social alienation among the unemployed. It will discuss the successful development of village halls and rural centres as well as the relative failure of urban organisations to counter the problems mentioned above, due either to a lack of interest, money or a strong ex-COS presence which remained hostile to working within the state. It will also analyse the impact of clubs for women.

Chapter five accounts for the change in NCSS fortunes brought about through the government's inability to combat high levels of unemployment in some areas of Britain in the 1930s. It shows that in those areas worst hit by unemployment the idea of charities uniting together in a co-operative effort provided a means for voluntary organisations to respond to crises which seemed to be escalating beyond their control. The conception of citizenship put forward by the NCSS proposed just such a plan. By developing the Idealist values present in

much pre-war welfare, the NCSS emphasised the need for charities themselves to act as good citizens i.e. co-operating in the interests of the whole rather than the individual. Chapter five contains two specific case studies of south Wales and the north east of England which clearly illustrate the symbiotic working arrangements of the NCSS and the Ministries of Health and Employment.

Whilst this thesis deals with the interwar years, and with a single, albeit loose, organisation, it is clear from other works that 'citizenship' was a concern for progressives in the 1930's and that this continued to be the case during the Second World War.<sup>33</sup> It is equally likely that those who were not on the moderate left were as concerned with such matters, although their activism and organisations have received less attention. This thesis is thus part of a growing trend, concerned with both the permeation of ideas into institutional action and with re-appraising and recognising the activities of 'moderates'. It is also a thesis which could have broader implications as a spur to the assessment of other voluntary movements.

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<sup>33</sup> S. Fielding, *"England arise!": The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940's Britain* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995); A. Beach, *The Labour Party and the ideas of citizenship, c. 1931-1951*, unpublished D. Phil thesis, University College London, 1996.

## **CHAPTER ONE:** **Citizenship, charity and the state in 1914.**

The National Council of Social Service was built upon values laid down before the First World War. This chapter will attempt to outline these values and assess their influence upon the emerging voluntary organisations and individuals which were to form the NCSS. It will be shown that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a widespread concern with the concepts of citizenship and community through the increasing influence of British Idealist thought.

The Idealism of the NCSS was composed of a synthesis of elements from five spheres of social thought. Firstly, there had long been a philosophical interest in the role and nature of the ideal citizen. In Britain many leading, early nineteenth century thinkers adopted, from Ancient Greece, an ideal of social duty which contrasted sharply with the tradition of political rights found in continental views of citizenship, expressed through an emphasis on Platonic values and present in debates upon the French revolution and the American Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly this tradition was built upon by later British academics disillusioned with Benthamite Utilitarianism. These individuals, such as T. H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, J.H. Muirhead and Edward Urwick, influenced a growing academic appreciation of the values of citizenship and community amongst the intelligentsia of the early 1900s. This appreciation, it



will be argued, was to influence much Edwardian political debate, not least that concerning the role of the voluntary sector.

Thirdly, the development of a philosophy of British Idealism had a symbiotic relationship with a simultaneous political development amongst the progressive left which was re-emphasising individual responsibility, rather than a reliance upon benevolent 'good government'. It will be suggested that the Edwardian political discourse concerning the aims and nature of philanthropy was heavily influenced by this political debate.

Fourthly there was a strong emphasis placed upon social duty and citizenship by religious groups. It will be argued that in the half century before the formation of the National Council of Social Service senior individuals of all Christian denominations placed increased prominence upon the values of citizenship.

Lastly these ideas, which all found their way into the voluntary sector, were reinforced by the rapid development of national charities in the later nineteenth century. These organisations, which were able to work at a national rather than simply a local level, were based not on individual philanthropy but on specific and coherent ideologies. This led to a debate within the voluntary sector, rarely discussed in the historiography, about the nature of philanthropic giving which was heavily influenced by Idealist conceptions of the citizen. It will be shown that this debate, often acrimonious, was to divide the voluntary sector and lead to the

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<sup>1</sup>See for concise yet excellent comparisons between the social duty of Greek citizens and the political rights of Roman citizens D. Heater, *Citizenship: The civic ideal in world history* (London, Longman, 1990); P.B. Clarke, *Citizenship* (London, Pluto, 1994).

emergence of groups such as the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare, which were to form the basis of the National Council of Social Service.

By analysing the ideas within these four sectors; the traditional concern with the nature of citizenship, its transformation into academic and political thought and its influence upon the voluntary sector, this chapter will attempt to outline the discourse which permeated and structured the development of the NCSS.

## **Traditional concerns with the nature of citizenship**

The debt which many British interpretations of citizenship owe to Ancient Greek philosophy is immense. Aristotle's work stressing the importance and role of the 'good citizen' was to influence social thinkers from Diogenes to Sartre. The extent to which British conceptions of citizenship have followed this tradition has been more than adequately shown by historians.<sup>2</sup> Turner has shown that the nineteenth century saw a 'demise in the appreciation of all things Roman',<sup>3</sup> which among other things meant increasing philosophical interest in Aristotle's *Ethics*. This was more than simply an intellectual change of emphasis. Both

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<sup>2</sup> See amongst others F.M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian intellectual life* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993); J. Harris, 'Platonism, Positivism and Progressivism: Aspects of British sociological thought in the early twentieth century' in E. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996); E. Biagini, 'Liberalism and Direct Democracy: John Stuart Mill and the model of ancient Athens', in E. Biagini, *Citizenship and Community*, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Turner op cit. p. 398.

implicitly and unconsciously those who took an interest in the Ancient Greeks confronted an Aristotelian view of citizenship completely distinct from the Roman conception, which had so influenced the eighteenth century.

These conceptions found their way relatively easily into nineteenth century Liberal thought. Biagini has shown how the concepts of ancient Athens were a central component of J.S. Mill's writing. For Mill the Athenian tradition of individuals having a social duty to their fellow men and the wider community provided a reconciliation of the apparent dichotomy between personal freedom and democracy.

However Aristotle was not the only classic author to have an influence upon later British thought. In the years following Mill, Plato began to be seen as increasingly relevant by many social thinkers. Indeed Harris has argued that Plato was 'the most influential, and certainly the most frequently cited, social and political thinker in the sociological and reformist writings of the early twentieth century'.<sup>4</sup> Plato's conception of society as an organic, spiritual community was attractive to those Idealists who believed in society as an expression of *geist*. This conception involved a society held together not by force but by social justice and 'a vision in which individual citizens found happiness and fulfilment not in transient sensory satisfactions, but in the development of 'mind' and 'character' and in service to a larger whole'<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy', in D. Gladstone (ed.) *Before Beveridge: Welfare before the Welfare State* (London, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1999), p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p. 53.

## **Academic concerns with the nature of citizenship**

The academic discourse concerning the nature of citizenship which took place from the late nineteenth century onwards borrowed heavily from the ideas outlined above. For example it was clear to Olivier, Hobhouse and Wallas (for whom Aristotle was still ‘the keenest observer who ever lived’)<sup>6</sup> that rather than concentrating on the political rights of the citizen (that is their freedoms from the state) Aristotle had seen the ideal citizen as a member of a ruling elite, with an inherited social duty to be both morally good and subservient to the best interests of the ‘polis’.

This is not to say that those who quoted Aristotle believed every word he said. Rather they gained from Aristotle a notion of ‘good citizenship’ as a pre-requisite of a good society. The fact that their ideas varied both from each other and from Aristotle does not mean that certain common preconceptions were not accepted. One of these was a core principle of British citizenship i.e. the stress on social duty being allied to the development of political rights. Indeed, although the dividing line between the two often blurred, many British social thinkers throughout the first half of the twentieth century (of whatever political persuasion) held a sense of social duty as the most important virtue any individual could have.

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<sup>6</sup>G. Wallas quoted by P.F. Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 11.

Nor was Aristotle's work transplanted directly from Athens to Hampstead without major restructuring. For example his belief that mass citizenship was impossible,<sup>7</sup> or that artisans could never have the time to vote responsibly, were not accepted. However Aristotle's notion of a good society being built by good citizens, rather than led by good government, was one which found plenty of supporters amongst the academic community.

Perhaps the most important philosophic representation of this new interest in citizenship was to be found in the work of T. H. Green. During the mid-nineteenth century many emerging social thinkers felt that their traditional Christian beliefs seemed to be under attack from Darwinian theories and from increasing criticism of the bible as a historical text. Green typifies an 'immanentist' movement which responded to such criticisms by inverting traditional theology. Instead of viewing the universe as a creation of an external transcendental God, immanentism placed God within the world. Thus evolution could be explained as God's method of creation, while seemingly inaccurate descriptions in Genesis were merely the result of an earlier stage in the evolution of man's understanding of God.<sup>8</sup> These immanentist beliefs shared similar ground to the continental Idealist philosophies of Hegel, which Green knew through his mentor Benjamin Jowett, and stressed the importance of a common *geist*. For Green, and many other social thinkers, this common factor in all things (or at least throughout humanity) was the basis for an ethical justification of welfare.

As Bevir explains

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<sup>7</sup>He thought Plato's suggestion of 5000 citizens per city as ridiculously high.

<sup>8</sup>See M. Bevir, 'Welfarism, Socialism and Religion: On T. H. Green and Others', *Review of Politics*, 55, 4.

because the divine exists in all things, everything forms a single whole. The inner reality of each thing is at one with the inner reality of all things... This belief in the universe as a single, spiritual whole encouraged the immanentists to call for a higher individualism proclaiming both that individuals must follow their own instincts in their progress towards God,<sup>9</sup> and yet that individuals are intrinsically a part of a wider community.

Green used the Idealist work of both Kant and Hegel to argue against the Utilitarian notion that man simply followed a hedonistic lifestyle, always choosing the most pleasurable route. He maintained that in fact man was only aware of himself through his relations with others. As relationships can only exist within the mind everything must depend upon a greater mind i.e. God. However, humans can think and are therefore not merely objects created by God's mind. As a result Utilitarian philosophies which involved each man following his personal greatest pleasure were flawed. Instead Green proposed citizens undertaking social duties which, by helping other people with practical concerns, helped themselves spiritually.

The universal which is the end, and which we have seen is concrete and does realise itself, does also more. It gets rid of the contradiction between duty and the "empirical" self; it does not in its realisation leave me for ever outside and what ought to be in the world is, but I am what I ought to be and find so my contentment and satisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

Green's work was to influence the future of philanthropic thought in Britain for three decades. Academics such as Bosanquet, Wallas, Urwick, Muirhead, Jones and Seth, many taught by Green himself, were to be highly influential in universities across the country. As Harris has stated 'it was they who designed the curricula, wrote the text books and gave the

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* p. 647.

lectures by which the first generation of academically trained social workers and social scientists were taught'.<sup>11</sup> For example Muirhead, who became Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at the University of Birmingham, outlined views on the administration of charity which owed much to T. H. Green's conception of society as a unified whole.

Society, we are told is an Organism. By this it is meant that a society, like an animal organism, is made up of individual cells. In a healthy society these cells co-operate in maintaining the life of the whole. Each contributes its share and in return receives back from society the nourishment appropriate to its services, and on the whole equivalent to them. This is of course an ideal. In no society we know does it wholly correspond to the fact. In all societies some of the cells are irresponsive to the calls the organism makes upon them, either owing to the natural process of decay or from local and temporary causes. The aim of the social Physician under these circumstances is to stimulate the health of the organism both as a whole and in the part affected, so that it may absorb what is no longer of use, and, on the other hand, reinstate the cells which are temporarily disabled in their position of normal efficiency, whereby in return for support they may continue to render service to the whole.<sup>12</sup>

Another academic influenced by Idealist values, and who had at one time shared a house with Muirhead, was Graham Wallas. As late as 1920 Wallas was arguing that social workers should be taught the value of co-operative effort to the development of the nation.

Since it is now necessary for us to co-operate on the scale of a modern industrial nation, and since that scale far surpasses the range of our senses, we should consciously aim at creating in our minds and in those minds whose training we influence, such an idea of our nation

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<sup>10</sup> T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1884), p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> J. Harris, *op cit.* p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> J. Muirhead, *Philosophy and Life and other essays* (London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1902), pp. 100-1.

as will form the most reliable stimulus to large-scale co-operative emotion and co-operative action.<sup>13</sup>

Bernard Bosanquet also accepted Green's idea of a 'General Will' which involved the concept of a 'collective' society. However he (like Green) differed from collectivists by stressing the importance of individual responsibility. Unashamedly expressing his admiration for ancient Greece, he argued that individual life was so complex that people had lost touch with their common interests. However, he maintained that citizenship was at the root of all social relationships.

The reason why we should recognise our position as citizens is in short, that it alone includes all other interests and associations, and makes them possible. The association to which we belong as citizens is the only one to which we ascribe the right of compulsion, i.e. the only one that we accept as having natural authority that is, again as fully representing our own greater self, or our whole conception of a common good. All the others are partial, and leave out whole provinces of our lives and whole masses of our fellow countrymen.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless Bosanquet's main influence was not as a philosopher but as a senior figure within the Charity Organisation Society (see below).<sup>15</sup> This pathway from Idealist philosophy to practical intervention in social welfare work was also taken by others. Perhaps the most significantly influential of the Idealists who followed Green was Edward Urwick. Urwick was the first head of the Social Sciences and Administration Department at the

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<sup>13</sup> G. Wallas, *Our Social Heritage* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1920), p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> B. Bosanquet, 'The Duties of Citizenship', in Bosanquet (ed.) *Aspects of the Social Problem* (London, Macmillan, 1895), p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> For an account of how Bosanquet juggled his political and reforming careers see S. Collini, 'Hobhouse, Bosanquet and the State: Philosophical Idealism and political argument in Britain 1880-1918', *Past and Present*, 72 (1976), pp. 86-111.



London School of Economics. While there he emphasised the need for 'social philosophy' leaning heavily on Aristotle, Plato and Green,<sup>16</sup> and had a major impact on a whole generation of social researchers.

Clearly then conceptions of citizenship had by the outbreak of the First World War permeated many levels of academic discussion and social discourse. This was to have a significant influence upon the individuals who established the NCSS and its local councils.

### **Political concerns with the nature of citizenship**

The academic arena was not the only one to be influenced by Idealist conceptions of citizenship. Many New Liberal politicians were later to show examples of its influence. Although Freedon and Clarke have argued that the New Liberals to varying degrees rejected Green's Idealism, this has been contested. Clarke has himself identified the way in which those educated at an Oxford still dominated by Green (even after his death) were concerned with concepts such as 'earnestness', 'character', and living 'the usefuller life'. Furthermore Collini has shown that even Hobhouse, often painted as a critic of Idealism,<sup>17</sup> actually maintained a strong allegiance to T. H. Green.

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<sup>16</sup> See J. Harris, *op cit.* pp. 43-64; J. Harris 'Platonism, positivism and progressivism: aspects of British sociological thought in the early twentieth century', in Biagini, E, *op. cit.* pp. 343-360.

<sup>17</sup> For example M. Freedon, *The New Liberalism* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 32-40.

Quotations from Green became a little less frequent in his [Hobhouse's] writing, but even in *The Metaphysical Theory* there is a long section which in effect exonerates Green's purely political theory from Hobhouse's general indictment of Idealism.<sup>18</sup>

Clarke himself has identified Hobhouse's recognition of 'an affinity in outlook'<sup>19</sup> between the two men. Indeed Hobhouse sympathised with Green's aim of 'appealing to temperament' if not his methods or reasoning.<sup>20</sup> Therefore it is not improbable to argue that while they differed on the 'big' questions of the nature of human mortality, metaphysics, and the role of the state in welfare provision, many social thinkers shared similar conceptions of the role of the individual. This common ground indicates a shared preconception of the importance of the responsible and free willed individual working for a general good.

Furthermore, Hobhouse was not the only New Liberal to expound these views. *In Human Nature in Politics* (1908) Wallas defined Utopia as a time when 'the politician will be able not only to control and direct in himself the impulses of whose nature he is more fully aware, but to assume in his hearers an understanding of his aim'.<sup>21</sup> In other words a 'good' society would be one in which individuals were intelligent and concerned enough to take an active part in a truly democratic process.

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<sup>18</sup> Collini, op cit. p.108.

<sup>19</sup> Clarke, op. cit. p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Wallas, quoted in P. F. Clarke, 1978, op cit.

Although the New Liberals argued over whether society should be seen as a collection of individuals (Hobhouse, Wallas) or as a collective organism with a life of its own (Hobson) their views were based solidly on anti-sectionalist, democratic, foundations. This was not their sole concern by any means<sup>22</sup> but it was an unchallenged assumption which they maintained. Through them and other progressive thinkers Idealism contributed to the intellectual climate experienced by those individuals with which this thesis is concerned.

Another important facet of progressive thinking which used and developed conceptions of citizenship was the issue of women's suffrage. Many have shown that for those concerned with the extension of women's suffrage, the idea of citizenship implied the right to participate in political decisions. However this was clearly not the only justification for supporting votes for women. Holton has identified three intellectual themes within the womens suffrage campaign; humanist liberal theory from Mary Wollstonecraft and J.S. Mill, utopian socialism from William Thompson, and the influence of 'middle-class women philanthropists and social reformers'.<sup>23</sup> Here one must beware of falling into what Skinner calls the 'mythology of doctrines'. One might expect to find in Mill's theory a justification for women's suffrage on the basis of their rights as citizens. In fact this is not the case. Both Mill and Wollstonecraft based their support for women's right to vote on much more traditional liberal concepts such as 'natural justice' and 'utilitarianism'.

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<sup>22</sup>Hobhouse and Wallas were particularly convinced of the need for a scientific understanding which had its roots in Darwin rather than Aristotle or Mill.

<sup>23</sup>S. S. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's suffrage and reform politics in Britain 1900-1918* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11.

These two early feminist theorists expounded what might be termed a 'humanist' case for feminism. Although they drew on quite different schools of social and political theory, they shared one fundamental basic premise, the common human attributes of men and women and the consequent social injustice involved in their unequal treatment.<sup>24</sup>

Although women charity workers are often seen as important only in so far as they reinforced the suffrage campaign's emphasis on a responsible feminine role, many women within the voluntary sector were influenced by idealist traditions and imported this into the suffrage movement or campaign for women's citizenship.<sup>25</sup> It has already been shown that Helen Bosanquet supported trade union and Friendly Societies because they involved individuals choosing to come together for a common goal. Bosanquet was just one of a number of middle class women who through their voluntary work stressed the importance of social (rather than political) citizenship in a way which also roots them in this tradition. Two points are important here; firstly, that women charity workers were attempting to inspire the working class to a certain understanding of citizenship; and secondly, that the women themselves understood their own actions as those of a responsible, dutiful citizen. Lewis<sup>26</sup> has shown that this second factor is vital to an understanding of the effect of citizenship upon female social actors. By emphasising their own role as citizens philanthropic women often

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> It is of course vital to note that many women who opposed the suffrage movement did, nonetheless, see a clear role for women within local 'community' politics through local government. Women, like Violet Markham, who supported such a role while dismissing the importance of national suffrage often used conceptions of citizenship very similar to those outlined above. H. Jones (ed.) *Duty and Citizenship: The correspondence and political papers of Violet Markham 1896-1953* (London, Historians Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> J. Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Hampshire, Edward Edgar, 1991).

unwittingly provided a concept of a feminine caring role in terms which were also used by the suffrage campaigners. This in turn meant that concepts of social citizenship entered the political discourse and, unchallenged, were taken up by both sides of the debate. For example many suffragists argued that women's feminine role would make them more responsible citizens than men.

We desire the right of voting not that we may cease to be women, but because we are women, and because Parliament, chosen by men alone, is making laws that must influence very closely our work, the training of children and the conduct of home life. It is our very womanhood, with its unborn instinct to childward care, not merely the human nature which we share with men, that makes many of us eager to be politically enfranchised.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly the suffragist leader Millicent Garrett Fawcett urged her followers,

Do not give up one jot or tittle of your womanliness, your love of children, your care for the sick, your gentleness, your self-control, your obedience to conscience and duty, for all these things are terribly wanted in politics.<sup>28</sup>

Note the way in which the philanthropic woman is here a political rather than a social citizen. Although women's charitable activities were obviously not the only source for Fawcett's comments, the fact that organisations such as the COS had grown so much by using female workers meant that there was practical evidence of women's citizenship, which all involved in the suffrage debate could call upon.

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<sup>27</sup> Mabel Atkinson, cited in Holton, 1988, op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> J. Butler (ed.) *Women's Work and Women's Culture*. (London, Macmillan, 1869), pp. xvii-xviii.

On the other hand some anti-suffrage campaigners who criticised women's ability to be political citizens did so by emphasising that women already had a feminine role in society as social citizens. Such people accepted the social definition of citizenship without challenge. Perhaps the best example is provided by Violet Markham. She repeatedly stated that women should concern themselves with practical 'good works' rather than political involvement. As such she was heavily involved in the settlement movement<sup>29</sup> and various other bodies concerned with citizenship (such as the Guilds of Help and Civic Leagues). This suggests an attitude to the poor more akin to the Barnetts than the Bosanquets. She embraced the religious values of her mentor Hilda Cashmore, who refused to accept the existence of the undeserving or unhelpable poor. To this end, Markham consistently stressed the importance of a community of citizens over and above the COS emphasis on individual self help.<sup>30</sup>

I am satisfied it is not the organisation of charity we want so much today as the stimulation of a higher sense of citizenship... We do not want to be taught our duties as individuals, we want to be taught to live worthily as members of a community - a point on which the COS lays relatively little stress. If we could get members of public bodies from Parliament downwards to take Aristotle's view that 'the end of the State is the production of virtuous action', would not the whole of our national life wear a different aspect.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> She started the Chesterfield Settlement in 1903.

<sup>30</sup> As has already been shown the COS hierarchy, including Helen Bosanquet were not as obsessed with individual responsibility as was often believed. However local organisations seem to have been stricter than the national principles allowed and particularly after the disastrous public relations of the 1909 Poor Law Commission the COS increasingly came to be seen as irreconcilable with the new type of welfare philosophy.

<sup>31</sup> 'Miss Markham on the COS', *COR*, 35 (March 1912), p. 138.

However she rejected Cashmore's socialist politics in favour of a strong classless and unified society. While Lewis is undoubtedly correct to cite Markham's support for New Liberalism as influencing this belief, there are strong similarities between Markham and Barnett. Firstly, it has already been shown that Markham came into close contact with societies such as the Guild of Help. This contact was reinforced by dealings with individuals such as S. P. Grundy and T. H. Nunn, both of whom were influenced by Barnett. Secondly, Barnett moved away from COS orthodoxy to promote local government welfare provision supported by voluntary organisations and Markham followed a virtually identical line. She maintained, despite her vigorous anti-suffrage campaign, that women should participate in local government, that it was through local government that social welfare should be addressed, and that social welfare was more important than suffrage.

I showed that the great field of Local Government lay open to them [women] and that it was practically negated... I then asked why as *ratepayers* women tolerated slums, insanitary dwellings, infant mortality, etc., and 'was it not humbug to say they were denied all share in the national life when a small minority excepted they had shown so little practical interest in causes concerning the sick, aged, destitute, etc'.<sup>32</sup>

Markham, then, is a good example of those women who did not consider the political aspects of citizenship to be as important as the social aspects.

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<sup>32</sup> Violet Markham to the Women's Local Government Society, 1912, in H. Jones (ed.), *Duty and Citizenship: The correspondence and political papers of Violet Markham, 1896-1953* (London, The Historians Press, 1994).

Less analysed than New Liberal political philosophy is the important role which the skilled working class movement had in bringing understandings of citizenship to the forefront of political discourse. Jose Harris, an exception to the rule, has correctly stated that

The social welfare values of the late Victorian and Edwardian skilled working class were... of crucial importance in shaping the principles and structure of the early welfare state.<sup>33</sup>

For Harris the skilled trade unions and Friendly Societies perceived themselves as miniature classical republics. This entailed a strong emphasis upon concepts of civic virtue and personal responsibility which were among the most stringent of their time.

an analysis of the terms and conditions by which trade unions managed their social welfare schemes reveals a network of minutely prescribed horizontal social controls that makes the late nineteenth-century Charity Organisation Societies look by comparison like veritable havens of libertarian behavioural permissiveness.<sup>34</sup>

Too little has been written about the impact of this movement, perhaps because legislation derived from other sources. Yet there were many labour people who played a role in charitable activity and administration, from Lord Harry Snell and Charles Ammon through to Arthur Greenwood. However, as few such people became active in the NCSS, this strand is not stressed in the following pages.

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<sup>33</sup> J. Harris, 'Victorian Values and the Founders of the Welfare State', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 28 (1992), p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p. 33.



Clearly, then, by the turn of the century there existed within Britain a conception of citizenship based upon concepts of democracy, individual responsibility and co-operation for the greater good. These values were reinforced philosophically from Mill and Green; politically from the Liberal intelligentsia; socially from the tradition of civic virtue amongst the skilled working classes and lastly from the fact that these three forms mixed and intermingled so thoroughly within Edwardian politics that they provided constant support for each other.

## **Religious conceptions of citizenship**

Religious conceptions of citizenship were highly influential in the development of NCSS ideology. Many social workers in local councils of social service had religious backgrounds and it is worth examining the way in which Christian conceptions of citizenship had permeated many charitable organisations in the years up to 1914.

In 1872 Thomas Barnardo embarked upon his first great reformist project when he converted the East End 'gin palace' the Edinburgh Castle, into a 'British workman's coffee palace'. The Rector of Limehouse, the Rev. S. Charlesworth, was invited to the opening. In his speech, full of praise for Barnardo's venture, he made it clear that in his view the Church had no place in providing direct welfare provision.

I am utterly astonished at what has been accomplished. It is a most grand idea, a most sublime scheme. In the history of Christianity in England there is hardly a fact to be compared with it – I had no hand in it... The Established Church of England is not fitted for it; this

work must be done outside of her; but I do feel the deepest reverence and admiration for those who have been engaged in it.<sup>35</sup>

Such attitudes were not confined to the Church of England. William Booth had abandoned his ministry in the Methodist church because he felt that his superiors did not recognise the need for direct action to turn around the lives of idle sinners.<sup>36</sup> Booth often went out of his way to express his disdain for the idea that the Church should concern itself with the 'good' and leave the 'sinners' to philanthropists. Instead he stressed 'social' and 'temporal' salvation as the true goals of Christianity.

The Scheme of Social Salvation is not worth discussion which is not as wide as the Scheme of Eternal Salvation set forth in the Gospel. The Glad Tidings must be to every creature, not merely to an elect few who are to be saved while the mass of their fellows are predestined to a temporal damnation... As Christ came to call not the saints but sinners to repentance, so the New Message of Temporal Salvation, of salvation from pinching poverty, from rags and misery, must be offered to all.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless although many religious figures, like the Rev. Charlesworth did feel that actual practical welfare was not their responsibility, it would be untrue to say that religious organisations did nothing. Indeed Booth's comments, while highly popular among his supporters, are perhaps more indicative of his own recurring ability to disregard the work of others in a field he regarded as his own. In fact the half century leading up to the formation

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<sup>35</sup> Rev. S. Charlesworth, quoted in G. Wagner, *Barnardo* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), p. 61.

<sup>36</sup> See J. Fairbank, *Booth's Boots: Social Service Beginnings in the Salvation Army* (London, Salvation Army, 1983); R. Collier, *The General next to God: The story of William Booth and the Salvation Army* (London, Collins, 1965); R. Whelan, *The Corrosion of Charity: From Moral Renewal to Contract Culture* (London, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1996).

of the National Council of Social Service saw a growing concern amongst many senior religious figures to meet the Biblical command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and tend the sick. This was apparent through a range of activities, including the settlement movement. However, given the emphasis of this thesis, the Church's involvement with certain charitable organisations will be briefly examined below.

In the years leading up to the formation of the National Council of Social Service, the Anglican Church, Methodist Church and Catholic Church were all concerned with social deprivation. All of these were to provide a form of welfare that stressed the responsibility of the individual and the need for virtuous citizenship. Such an emphasis is best seen in the policies which charity organisations, established under the auspices of the various churches, aimed at the 'rehabilitation' of children. By examining the values that these charities aimed to instil in children and young adults one can clearly discern the values which the churches felt belonged to the 'good citizen'.

Although Barnardo's homes, with their emphasis upon bringing up the child to be a full and involved member of society, were essentially protestant in nature they were not always Anglican enough for some reformers. Perhaps the most famous example of this is the often quoted case of Edward Rudolf, who as a Sunday School teacher at St Ann's church in Lambeth found two of his pupils begging rather than attending church. On discovering that the boys father had died and their mother had been forced into the workhouse, he attempted to place the children into care but found that only the Stepney Barnardo's would accept them.

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<sup>37</sup> W. Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London, Salvation Army, 1890), p. 36.

Feeling the need for a more specifically Anglican charity he persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Tait, for funds to establish the Church of England Central Home for Waifs and Strays in 1881.<sup>38</sup> By 1919 there were 113 such homes caring for 5,000 children.

The aim of the Waif and Strays homes was to provide a 'family environment' for homeless and impoverished children. This was to be achieved by the establishment of relatively small homes, as opposed to what was considered to be the impersonal workhouses. A typical home consisted of a fairly large house with a small dormitory, a communal dining room, and play and recreational facilities.<sup>39</sup> Such a structure was intended to place children firmly within the community by ensuring they had a 'normal' life. The children attended local schools and were encouraged to be active in local organisations. This emphasis upon the civic nature of the children's lives was reinforced by the provision of opportunities for training. Many homes specialised in specific training for employment. For example the Standon Farm Home in Staffordshire provided agricultural training and the St Mary's Home for Girls at Lowestoft offered training in domestic science. These may well have been class and gender specific forms of training which reinforced stereotypical roles but they also encouraged young adults to take an active part in their community when they left the home.

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<sup>38</sup> In 1942 the Home for Waifs and Strays became the Church of England Children's Society, and in 1982 simply The Children's Society.

<sup>39</sup> The amount of recreations available is staggering even today. Many homes had everything from toys and climbing frames for younger children through to table tennis and billiard tables for the older children. Some homes even had swimming pools.

The most successful of the Methodist attempts to protect and 'save' children was the formation in 1871 of the National Children's Home and Orphanage.<sup>40</sup> Initiated by Thomas Bowman Stephenson in Lambeth it had 1,150 homes by 1900 and was competing directly with Barnardo's. Again the homes were an attempt to move away from the austere image of the workhouse and Stephenson stressed the need to 'surround then [the children] with all the influences of a Christian home'.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore the aim of the homes to create good citizens by creating good Christians was made clear in a pamphlet published by Stephenson upon the opening of his first home. He stated that the home was

Commenced in humble dependence on the blessings of Almighty God, and it is hoped that its daily engagements will be pervaded by a religious spirit. For it is in the firm faith of its founders that good citizens can only be found in good Christians, and that Christian philanthropy should aim at nothing less than the conversion of the soul from sin to God.<sup>42</sup>

Catholic contributions to social philanthropy in the years leading up to the formation of the National Council of Social Service differed slightly from Anglicanism and Methodism in that there tended to be a concentration upon local rather than national schemes. Furthermore Catholic welfare schemes tended to be sectarian in nature and were established either exclusively for the Catholic poor or in areas which had extremely large Catholic populations.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A name change in 1994 means the NCHO is now the NCH Action for Children.

<sup>41</sup> T Stephenson in T. Philpot, *Action for Children* (Oxford, Lion Publishing, 1994), p. 23-24.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> R. Whelan, *The Corrosion of Charity: From Moral Renewal to Contract Culture* (London, IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1996).

Therefore despite the many organisations such as Bishop Butt's Southwark Catholic Children's Society (now the Catholic Children's Society) which took in a large number of the Catholic children the law required Boards of Guardians to place in specifically Catholic surroundings, the Catholic church was never as important a philanthropic movement as its Anglican and Methodist neighbours.

Nevertheless it is clear that there was a definite religious conception of citizenship based on basic Christian principles which, as will be shown, was to influence later conceptions of citizenship.

### **The voluntary sectors concern with citizenship**

The fifth area which added to the synthesis of ideas concerning citizenship in the years up to 1914 was the debate about the nature of citizenship which took place within the voluntary sector itself.

The years up to 1900 had seen the largest and most successful period of 'moral improvement' in British history. The 'demon drink' had been attacked by stricter licensing laws which virtually outlawed the gin palaces and severely reduced the number of public houses. Other moral crusades had succeeded in ending the practice of public execution in 1868, and caused the decline in such activities as fairs, street gambling, cock-fighting and bear-baiting. In their place came

four regular bank holidays... a growing number of parks, museums, exhibitions, public libraries and mechanics' institutes promoting a more improving or innocuous use of leisure time.<sup>44</sup>

These reforms had virtually all been originally initiated by a growing voluntary sector and Idealism was as important here as elsewhere. Indeed Green's influence had not simply been to supply a philosophical foundation for later political thought. His belief that society would be improved by the wider populace accepting his conceptions of citizenship was tempered by an awareness that those in poverty had more pressing and immediate concerns which hampered their 'development'. Despite a brief flirtation with the idea of state welfare,<sup>45</sup> Green maintained that citizenship had to be a journey of self-fulfilment. This belief meant that his works were used by and encouraged those who were working in philanthropic areas, particularly that bastion of late Victorian philanthropy, the Charity Organisation Society.

The COS, which has been described as a 'calculated attempt to weight the workers' felicific calculus in favour of middle-class norms of conduct'<sup>46</sup> had a long tradition of subdividing the poor into those deserving and those undeserving of aid. However, it is not true to assume, as many have, that the Charity Organisation Society was against all state involvement in welfare. Rather it was against the practice of indiscriminate giving, preferring instead individual case work which would attempt to improve the recipient's moral character and allowing him or herself to 'improve' without receiving any kind of material relief. For

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<sup>44</sup> G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 194-195.

<sup>45</sup> Clarke, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> G. Stedman Jones, op cit. p. 192.

example, in 1890 the Secretary of the London Charity Organisation Society, C. S. Loch recognised the State's interest in the relief of poverty.

Pauperism is the enemy of the State. The State wants citizens. It cannot afford to have any outcast or excluded classes, citizens that are not citizens. All are citizens in name; it must see that they are so in reality. It must do its utmost to change the dependent sections of the community into independent. It cannot be content with the chronic indigence and social feebleness of any great mass of citizens – with paupers, who are paupers indeed, whether they be classified as such in public returns or are the habitual recipients of casual bounty of the rich and of charitable institutions. Accordingly it becomes a duty of the State by some means to prevent pauperism, and of citizens to give their service to the State.<sup>47</sup>

The role of the state, however, was certainly not to 'prevent pauperism' through a system of doles. Instead it should go out of its way to ensure that moral rather than material relief was readily available. Loch continued 'there should be no such system of provision as will lead people to expect others to do for them, what, as citizens they should do for themselves'.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore if relief were to be given it should only be available to 'those who are incorrigible or past cure' and should take the form of 'institutions managed considerately, but in a manner that will not attract applicants'.<sup>49</sup> However within this draconian outline for relief many historians have ignored Loch's comment that 'it becomes a duty of the State by some means to prevent pauperism, and of citizens to give their service to the State'. This idea that citizenship was not simply to be pressed upon the recipients of welfare but was also

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<sup>47</sup> C. S. Loch, *Charity Organisation* (London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1905 Third Edition), p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* p. 36.



a value which entailed giving service to the state, meant that the COS regularly attempted to encourage the citizenship of charities themselves. For example Loch, stated the 'distinctive feature' of a local Charity Organisation Society was not its attitude to the poor but its 'co-operation with individuals and institutions'.<sup>50</sup> The emphasis on these values of middle class co-operation, although never attained by the COS, were to be its most lasting legacy for the future of voluntary effort in Britain and owed much to the ideas inherent within British Idealism.

These values were expanded upon by Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923), a one time pupil of Green's, a distinguished Idealist philosopher in his own right and the man who came to dominate COS thinking. This domination started very early in Bosanquet's career. His half brother (Charles Bosanquet) had been Secretary of the London COS until 1875 when he was followed by C. S. Loch, who had been a close friend of Bosanquet's at Balliol. Furthermore he married a District Secretary of the COS Helen Dendy (already a talented economist and well respected social worker). Although the COS was a 'broad church' of opinions its main policies stayed remarkably close to Bosanquet's philosophies.<sup>51</sup>

By 1916 the expansion of what he saw as indiscriminate giving was forcing Bosanquet to argue forcefully for the voluntarism of the COS. He stressed that the most important piece of

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>51</sup> For how Bosanquet managed to control the direction of the COS see A. McBriar, *op. cit.* and for an account of what happened to those who were seen to be 'out of line' see Lord Snell, *Men, Movements and Myself* (London, Dent, 1938), pp. 68-72.

advice for COS social workers undertaking case-work was to remember that they were dealing with individual rather than economic problems.

When you meet the incorrigible common place objector to our work... He says this sort of thing 'Suppose you meet with a case of hopeless unemployment and illness in the house, what are you going to do about it? You can't help except by brute force, i.e.. simply supporting the family, and that is what ought to be done, but only a State agency can do it for the numbers that need it.'

Now, if you allow that sort of statement to pass, I think the enemy has got you... I think you must answer, 'The assumption is impossible. A living person with his family, with the world about him, and myself as a human being interested in him, must have much more in him and open to him than the sort of x and y you offer me'.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly, then, Bosanquet was expressing the Athenian notion of self supporting individuals within a community framework. For practical purposes this meant that just as German Idealists such as Kant had stressed the importance of the individual mind, Bosanquet believed in the importance of the individual character. This explains the division of the destitute into the deserving and the undeserving poor.<sup>53</sup> Charity was only to be given to the deserving/helpable who had the 'personal character' to struggle for self maintenance. For the undeserving a strict Poor Law should continue to provide a deterrent against 'idleness'. Therefore COS policy encouraged a conception of citizenship based almost entirely upon notions of duty both to ones self and through this to society at large.

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<sup>52</sup>B. Bosanquet, 'The Philosophy of Casework', *COR*, 39 (March 1916), p.121.

<sup>53</sup>In fact Bosanquet preferred the terms 'helpable' and 'unhelpable' which were first propounded by his wife Helen in *Thorough Charity* (1893).

However the COS was not simply the expression of positive ideas and proposals. It must also be seen within a historical context which involved meeting a rising danger of Socialism and its emphasis on the collective rather than the individual. That many COS workers were concerned by Socialism is not in doubt. Collini has argued that Bernard Bosanquet was consistently on the side of what he saw as order over radicalism.<sup>54</sup> The Bosanquets constantly suspected socialism as being behind even COS charitable efforts. Charles Booth was treated by the Bosanquets mistakenly as a socialist on the strength of his advocacy of universal, non-contributory old age pensions<sup>55</sup>. Even those Idealists within the socialist movement were only prepared to go so far. Sidney Ball admonished the Bosanquets' attack upon Fabians on the grounds that 'scientific socialism' was not the old 'socialism of the street' but one which could be acceptable to the 'establishment'. In an essay which New Labour would be proud of Ball argued that

Modern socialism... recognises the moral continuity of society in its consideration for 'vested interests'... it is aware of the utility of capital... it is not concerned about inequality of property... it does not so much seek to minimise as to rationalise wants.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>S. Collini, 1991, op. cit. p. 30.

<sup>55</sup>A. McBriar, 1987, op. cit.

<sup>56</sup>S. Ball, 'The Moral Aspects Of Socialism', *International Journal of Ethics*, 6 (1896), p. 294.

However the hierarchy of the COS were not to be convinced and now it was Helen Dendy who went on the offensive. Her conception of 'social collectivism' outlined in 1902<sup>57</sup> argued that true collectivism could only emerge from within society rather than being imposed by the state. She maintained that only groups such as Friendly societies, Co-operatives and trade unions could truly represent the interests of their members. Borrowing straight from what she regarded as the acceptable part of J. S. Mill, she envisaged localised self-government as the best way to achieve social cohesion. This view was stated not as a personal philosophy (although it was) but as an attack upon Socialism generally and the Webbs in particular.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly then within the main voluntary sector organisation there was a conception of citizenship which owed much to the Idealist philosophies which permeated Edwardian Britain.

## **The formation of new charitable organisations**

The Bosanquets were not the only social workers to influence conceptualisations of citizenship. McBriar has identified a 'less strict' category of COS member typified by the Reverend Samuel Barnett and his wife Henrietta.<sup>59</sup> Indeed one author has gone so far as to state that 'Samuel Barnett and his followers... went on to achieve an understanding of

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<sup>57</sup> H. Dendy, *The Strength of the People: A study in social economics* (London, Macmillan, 1902).

<sup>58</sup> A. McBriar, *An Edwardian Mixed Doubles* op. cit.

poverty and its remedies which went far beyond the 'new feudalism' of the COS. The Whitechapel Art Gallery, the Worker's Educational Association and the modern Welfare State all owe a debt to the work of Samuel Barnett'.<sup>60</sup> Initially the Barnetts had been supporters of the traditional COS line. In fact Henrietta only consented to their marriage in order that they might continue working for Octavia Hill.<sup>61</sup> However, by the mid 1880s they had both moved away from the harsher elements of COS orthodoxy and towards a more generous assessment of the poor and particularly the unemployed. For Samuel Barnett this involved a perception of churchmen as holding a dual citizenship of firstly their temporal geographical locality and secondly of 'the city of God'. Eventually straddling New Liberalism and Fabianism, the Barnetts advocated such policies as work farms, old age pensions and even free access to health care. Importantly they came to believe that such policies, although needing the initial impetus of voluntary agencies, could only reach fruition through locally organised state intervention.

Local government is an instrument prepared and sharpened for the social reformers use. The churchman who feels called to make his city healthy attends therefore to his County or District Council. These bodies could condemn the houses... they could stop the smoke... they could provide open spaces... they could bring books, pictures and music within everyone's reach, and make it more possible for those

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p. 59.

<sup>60</sup> S. Inwood, *A History of London* (London, Macmillan, 1998), pp. 511-2.

<sup>61</sup> S. Koven, 'Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936): The (Auto)Biography of a Late Victorian Marriage' in S. Pederson, and P. Mandler (eds.), *After the Victorians: Private Conscience And Public Duty in Modern Britain* (London, Routledge, 1994).

buried in the brick tombs of the city streets to pass out to country sights.<sup>62</sup>

This was a major shift away from the COS line that state intervention was an anathema to good citizenship, but it maintained the emphasis upon the need for citizenship among the recipients of welfare. The Barnett's rejection of COS orthodoxy did not entail a rejection of such tenets of citizenship, democracy and small close knit communities. Their ideas were put into practice through Samuel Barnett's position at Toynbee Hall, where graduates interested in social work could get 'hands on' experience. Within these philanthropic circles, encouraging citizenship was widely stated to be a key goal.

In fact Barnett's criticisms of the COS were far from isolated. In the East End of London, for example, Charles Booth had found of the COS that 'its methods are disliked and its theories attacked... as regards this particular district, the reformed system of poor law administration and the attempted guidance of charity are, like the efforts of the missions somewhat disappointing'.<sup>63</sup> As a result the years between 1900 and 1914 saw the emergence of new national charities challenging COS policy and its position as the pre-eminent charity in many localities. The Guilds of Help, formed between 1904 and 1907, were still based still in part on COS ideas of case work, but now involved local civic authorities.<sup>64</sup> Based on the motto of

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<sup>62</sup> S. Barnett, 'The Churchman as Citizen', in J. Hand (ed.) *Good Citizenship: A book of twenty three essays by various authors on social, personal, and economic problems and obligations* (London, George Allen, 1899), pp. 418-9.

<sup>63</sup> C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, Religious Influences Series 3 (1902), p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> See Cahill and Jowitt, *op. cit.*; K. Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help and the changing face of Edwardian Philanthropy', *Urban History*, XX (1993), pp. 43-60.

'Not alms but a friend', the Guild of Help movement aimed to provide a working class welfare system to counteract the supposed elitism of the COS. By its first annual conference in 1907 there were Guilds in fifty towns. By 1911 it had formed a National Association of Guilds of Help under E. V. Birchall, whose legacy after his death in World War One was to pay for the formation of the NCSS. As Cahill and Jowitt have made clear

'Citizenship', a duty to help those less fortunate than oneself, lay at the centre of the guild's philosophy... men and women were urged to join the guild in order to undertake their full responsibilities as citizens by involving themselves in the welfare of the community in non-sectarian and non-political work.<sup>65</sup>

These ideas were to be a great influence in the foundation of the NCSS, many of whose staff first entered social work through the Guild of Help movement.

However, despite these differences with the COS the practical organisation of charitable giving was still a central notion for many social workers. One typical example of the way in which individuals working within the voluntary sector could be members of the new organisations, but retain their old values, was provided by the Reverend Lionel Lambert who wrote to the *Staffordshire Chronicle*.

Sir,

The admirable speech of Lord Lichfield [Vice President Stafford Guild of Help] at the meeting of the Guilds of Help, reported in your last issue, puts clearly before your readers the purpose of Guilds of Help, the Charity Organisation Society, and other like agencies... Their aim is the co-ordination and consolidation of charitable effort,

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<sup>65</sup> Cahill and Jowitt, op. cit., p. 378.

and not the addition of one more to the already too numerous existing agencies for giving relief. It was from a mistaken conception of its purpose that the so-called Charity Organisation Society, which worked for a considerable number of years in the town gradually degenerated into a medium for doling out coal, grocery, and soup tickets and from your report it looks very much as if the newly-formed Guild of Help would fall into the same snare...

Now that Lord Lichfield has laid down so clearly the real work of the Guild of Help in the town, and also the danger that exists of its degenerating into the same false position. I am perfectly willing, as representing some of the charities in the town, to reconsider my position [to resign from the Guild of Help] provided that in accordance with his advice the Guild of Help will devote itself first and foremost to the co-ordinating of already existing agencies of relief, and – and this is to my mind all important – will undertake henceforth to give *no direct relief* at all, but only act through the already existing agencies.<sup>66</sup>

This concern with the modernisation not only of case work but also of charitable organisation was the main aim of the Councils of Social Welfare (see chapter 2). These organisations, founded in 1910 by T. H. Nunn, stressed the need for statutory and voluntary bodies to work together in order to improve welfare provision. The main aim of these groups was to co-ordinate philanthropic organisations in such a way as to create a community of individuals with a greater regard for each other and therefore, it was believed, less susceptible to both abject poverty and the language of class warfare.

what each community needs is a co-operative civic body which will secure the organisation which makes all case-work effective, concentrate on social welfare, raise the whole standard of life and character by the development of social responsibility.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Staffordshire Chronicle*, 7 Nov 1910 (emphasis in original).

<sup>67</sup> TH Nunn, unreferenced speech in M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: A History of the National Council of Social Service 1919-1969* (London, NCSS, 1969), p. 11.



These organisations, which are examined more fully in chapters 2 and 3, were very much based on the work of Barnett and Idealist conceptions of citizenship.

By 1914 four trends had converged. The emphasis upon social duty from Ancient Greece had been incorporated into British intellectual thought J.S. Mill and later Idealist philosophers such as Green and Bosanquet. This in turn had influenced Liberal policy makers and the leaders of the skilled trade unions. It had also influenced philanthropic bodies through individuals such as Bosanquet and, more subtly through the fact that many individuals who moved in Liberal circles also took an active role in charity organisation. Citizenship then was a common concern throughout progressive thought, from the liberal left through to less well known writers. Although it was never a precise concept, as a general theme it was extremely prevalent and extremely accessible as a basic premise for interwar social thinkers.

## **CHAPTER TWO:** **The formation and concerns of the National Council** **of Social Service.**

The disparate elements which were to make up the National Council of Social Service were already moving closer in the years immediately before the First World War. However important differences still remained. The COS, for example, was still committed to the idea of a 'voluntary spirit' unhampered by state intervention. For Councils of Social Welfare and Guilds of Help, this view seemed out of step with what they felt to be the new spirit of co-operation between state and voluntary welfare provision. Furthermore the Councils of Social Welfare, although agreeing that the state had a vital and leading role to play as a welfare organiser, was still dominated by a hierarchical view of welfare. They preferred a system of experts engaged in bureaucratic organisation to direct case work. By contrast the Guilds of Help were based upon the notion that the poor should be helped by their own class through direct intervention. Clearly despite a common heritage these were quite distinct views and positions. Yet by 1919 they had been tentatively merged into one body with a single constitution. This chapter will examine the formation of the NCSS, from its war time conception, through its immediate post-war development to its first conference in 1920 and the emergence of a definitive structure in the following years.

Unfortunately, the precise nature of the events which took place in the very early years of the National Council's existence remain unclear. As a result of bomb damage to NCSS and Local Government Board papers in 1941, many of the original documents from the first years of the NCSS have been lost. Consequently, most of the information in this chapter has been

gathered from the writings of contemporaries, from what little records do exist elsewhere and from the official history of the NCSS written by Margaret Brasnett<sup>68</sup>.

The chapter pieces together the actual way in which the bureaucracy and structure of the NCSS emerged as a development of the ideas mentioned in the previous chapters. It will discuss what can be understood about the years immediately before the foundation of the NCSS and will give a brief description of some of the key figures in the Council's development. Although such descriptions are based on the best available sources, they are necessarily tentative about the precise significance of particular individuals.

One problem with the sources of this period is that those individuals who did write about the formation of the NCSS often did so to mark a specific occasion, such as an anniversary or their retirement. They offer nothing but praise for the work done by the founders of the charity. For example at the 1920 annual conference, Arthur Collins the Secretary of the Birmingham Citizens Society told an audience made up primarily of those not directly connected to the founding of the NCSS that

The first real and successful endeavour to weave the detached strands of voluntary service into stout cords which should survive any test came in June, 1915. Several national bodies then existing called a conference at Westminster of all voluntary workers, and at that conference the foundations were laid for the organisation of a

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<sup>68</sup> Although it seems even Brasnett found this period hard to discuss and her book only briefly touches the period immediately before 1919. By the time of her publication in 1969 virtually all the individuals mentioned in this chapter had been dead for at least a decade.

National movement, of which the possibilities were then only dimly seen.<sup>69</sup>

Despite the evangelical language this story is probably true. Records from the Chester Council of Social Welfare show that in 1915 the Local Government Board established a Joint Committee involving representatives of the Guilds of Help, Councils of Social Welfare, the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association, the Charity Organisation Society and Committees for the Prevention and Relief of Distress. This Joint Committee was itself formed into a 'Conference on War Relief and Personal Service' held between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1915 under the auspices of the National Association of Guilds of Help and with the nominal support of the Charity Organisation Society. The NAGH sent a circular to a number of voluntary councils inviting them to discuss 'the assistance of sailors and soldiers and their families and dependants... the development of Personal Service and the possibilities of future Co-operation in Social Work'.<sup>70</sup> However there was already a popular expansion of local representative committees, and the NAGH and COS may have simply wished to control this process from below. The Chester Council of Social Welfare replied by stating that prior to receiving the circular propaganda work had already been done to rouse greater public interest in the co-ordination of charities. They had already invited the local COS and Guild of Help to amalgamate for the duration of the war. By March 1915 they felt able to report that 'negotiations are in tow, but have not yet crystallised with the COS. The Guild, however, responded en bloc; and put their Register of Assistance at the command of the new Body.

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<sup>69</sup> NCSS, *Reconstruction and Social Service: Being the Report of a Conference called by the National Council of Social Service* (P.S. King and Son, London, 1920), p. 153.

<sup>70</sup> NAGH Circular B, March 1915, CCSW, CCRO, CR164/18.

The Guild is in suspense though not actually dissolved'.<sup>71</sup> Although the Chester Council initially acted primarily as an employment exchange, in some areas of the country at least the concept of inter agency co-operation took place through a bottom-up rather than a top-down process.

Whatever the facts of the case the Joint Committee continued to meet regularly between 1915 and 1919. However the exact process whereby the Committee was transformed into the National Council of Social Service is unclear. The official historian of the NCSS, writing on the organisation's 50th birthday in 1969, stated that

the roots of the enterprise stretch at least as far back into the last century. For the conception of a national council of social service evolved gradually according to the fashion of most of our great institutions, public and private, over a long period of time from the minds, and also from the hearts, of a few concerned people.<sup>72</sup>

In fact those 'few concerned people' were named rather mysteriously by the official history as 'six men - five leading social workers and reformers and one civil servant'. The names are not recorded and due to the destruction of original papers we can only guess at the precise details. However there are strong indications that the six were S. P. Grundy, Professor W. G. S. Adams, Thomas Hancock Nunn, Frederick D'Aeth, the Reverend James Pringle and Lionel Ellis. It is to these men that we now turn.

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<sup>71</sup> CCSW EC, to F. Bourdillon, 31 March 1915, CCSW, CCRO, CR 164/8.

<sup>72</sup> M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: The story of the National Council of Social Service* (London, NCSS, 1969), p. 1.

In 1943 an NCSS journal for rural areas entitled *The Village* carried an obituary which stated that 'Peter Grundy, if anyone, deserves to be called the Founder of the National Council of Social Service'.<sup>73</sup> S. P. Grundy<sup>74</sup> came into the voluntary sector through the Manchester League of Help.<sup>75</sup> Like many within the Guild of Help movement he felt that 'the new spirit of local patriotism' which had led to the formation of the Guilds was at odds with the work of the COS which 'was so often characterised by a meanness of spirit'.<sup>76</sup> Relatively little is known of Grundy's background, except that it was his friendship with another prominent Guild member, Edward Vivian Birchall, which was central to the foundation of the NCSS. In a joint paper given to the Guilds of Help Conference in 1913 they had stressed the need to form an organisation which would provide a synthesis of the casework and bureaucratic approaches prevalent within the voluntary sector. 'To labour at casework which does not affect policy is to plough the sands, while to shape policy except in the light of casework experience is to build on them'.<sup>77</sup> However the relationship between Grundy and Birchall was important for the NCSS for a much more sombre reason. On the 19th August 1915 Grundy received a letter from Birchall, now a captain in the BEF in France.

As to future of the war - I give it till end of October + then a sort of status quo (with what difference) ending - no sudden dramatic victory either way, just the exhaustion of men and money, we may make war

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<sup>73</sup> W. G. S. Adams, 'A Pioneer in Social Service', *The Village*, 35 (Spring 1943), p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> As far as I am aware Grundy's first names were never mentioned in a NCSS document until his obituary.

<sup>75</sup> The Manchester League of Help was part of the Guild of Help movement.

<sup>76</sup> S. P. Grundy, 'The relations of the COS and the Guilds of Help', *COR*, 35 (July 1912), p. 87.

<sup>77</sup> S. P. Grundy and E. V. Birchall quoted in M. Brasnett op cit. p. 13.

impossible for 20 years + by the deadlock we may even prove that every man out there would swear with his hand on his heart that war is absolutely the most futile undertaking ever invented.

Re, NAGH [National Association of Guilds of Help] here is a cheque which I should prefer to be anonymous: the one thing you do at this job is to save money. By the way if I get scuppered (tears all round + shouts of God forbid) I've left some money to be used for NAGH or any other new purpose in your absolute discretion: £1000 I think it is but don't mention it till I'm tuning my harp please.<sup>78</sup>

Edward Birchall died of wounds during the Battle of the Somme. Grundy was thus in possession of the money which was to finance the first year of the NCSS' existence. Grundy also had important contacts among senior civil servants, most notably Aubrey Vere (First Secretary of the Local Government Board) and Professor W. G. S. Adams (Head of Lloyd George's Secretariat). These figures not only gave increased respectability and credibility to the new venture, but in Adams provided personal support and his own active involvement.

Adams, who Brasnett identified as 'the man who was to shape the destiny of the NCSS as its chairman for over 30 years',<sup>79</sup> was born in Scotland in 1874. As the head of Lloyd George's wartime secretariat his background is perhaps the most well-known of the six men. Turner has placed Adams clearly within a tradition of educated men who felt increasingly concerned with 'the social question'.

the son of the headmaster of St John's Grammar School, Hamilton, Lanark... he had an intellectual and somewhat evangelistic upbringing. In 1893 he went up to Glasgow University and from there took a Snell Exhibition to Balliol. He took Firsts in Literae

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<sup>78</sup> E. V. Burchall to S. P. Grundy, 19 August 1915, NCSS, LMA; LMA/4016/IS/A/008/001.

<sup>79</sup> M. Brasnett, *op cit.* p. 17.

Humaniores in 1899 and Modern History in 1900. After going down he lectured at Manchester and Chicago, and somewhere acquired a mastery of social statistics.<sup>80</sup>

It was his statistical ability which earned him a position in the Department of Agriculture for Ireland between 1905 and 1910. There he helped to implement the policies of Sir Horace Plunkett and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, which had 'transferred the rack-rented tenants of the old days - half serfs, half outlaws - into prosperous self-respecting small farmers'.<sup>81</sup> In 1910 he returned to lecturing in Oxford and in 1912 he was invited to take up the Gladstone Professorship at Balliol in order to create the P.P.E. course.<sup>82</sup> There he established the *Political Quarterly*, a publication which as Turner has stated 'was sympathetic both to Labour and to Home Rule'.

In fact it was a concern for the 'Irish Question' which was to remain central to Adams during his time at Westminster. When Lloyd George's secretariat was established in 1917, Adams was originally given responsibility for advising the Prime Minister on agricultural and labour issues. However, between December 1917 and October 1918 he concentrated on attempting to maintain the Irish Convention set up by Asquith to administer Ireland after the Home Rule Act had been suspended for the duration of the war.

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<sup>80</sup> J. Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> R.C.K. Ensor, *England 1870-1914* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 450-51.

<sup>82</sup> Lectures notes taken from courses taught by Adams between 1910 and 1912 on European Governments and Parties since 1895 and The Principles of Political Sciences are available in the Morley family papers kept at Haverford College, Pennsylvania.



Adams was unsuccessful in his attempts to maintain a political dialogue between the increasingly extreme elements within Ireland and to secure Irish exemption from conscription. As a result he became increasingly disillusioned with the 'Irish question' and instead concentrated on domestic policy. Writing in the *Political Quarterly* he often expressed attitudes which were later to be a central part of NCSS ideology. It is important to point out however that these ideas were not unique to Adams. Rather they were ideas prevalent amongst many such men and women who were to come together in the NCSS. Although Adams saw the war as a justifiable defence of the democratic state against the imperialism of Germany and Austria, he advocated the future co-operation of states and political parties in a similar way that the NCSS was to advocate the co-operation of charities.

It is felt on every side that the man who puts private interests before public duty, or party interests before country, or self-indulgence before efficiency, is a traitor... If the different parties have learned to work together in times of war, some of this spirit of co-operation may be carried over to face the grave domestic problems of the near future. It will surely be a matter for regret if, after the war, we should fall back again into acute party controversy.<sup>83</sup>

As Adams increasingly concentrated upon domestic issues he was to attach these views of co-operation to the issues which had originally brought him into government: agriculture and labour. In fact he co-authored, along with Sir William Ashley, the *Final Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation* which was published in 1924.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> W. G. S. Adams, 'The Cabinet and the Nation', *Political Quarterly*, VI (May, 1915), p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> See chapter four. Ashley was an economic historian of some distinction, the author of numerous books on the development of medieval economics, the history of the trade union movement and a biographer of Arnold Toynbee, he was also the first British Professor of Commerce and a founder of the original BCom degree at Birmingham University. In the

Adams was also heavily influenced by Samuel Barnett and was involved in the establishment of Barnett House in Oxford which, after a delay caused by the war, opened in October 1919 to provide training in social service. Barnett House, now the location of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Oxford University, was established as a memorial to Canon Barnett. It aimed to be a centre for the study of social and economic problems, and the education and preparation of young men and women for social work or social research. Originally Barnett House was not intended to be formally attached to the university, but the involvement of many Heads of Houses and college fellows including Adams ensured close links between the university and Barnett House until 1946 when the university formally took over responsibility for the social training course.

The intention before 1914 was that Barnett House would have the joint objectives of research and education. This aim was realised after the war and Barnett House maintained a library, held lectures and conferences, published papers, taught a number of social work courses and carried out local surveys of social conditions.

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report he was the senior of the two authors. For information of Ashley's career see A. Ashley, *William James Ashley: a life* (London, P.S. King, 1932); W. Scott. 'Memoir: Sir William Ashley' in *The Economic History Review*, 1 (1927/28), p. 319; G. O'Brien, *An essay on Medieval Economic Teaching* (Batoche Books, Ontario, 2001); 'Obituary: Joseph H Keegan 1907-1998', *Research Libraries Bulletin* (No. 6, 1998). For a conspiricist and slightly less orthodox viewpoint of Ashley's place in the attempt by an elitist duopoly, apparently bent upon World Government, to 'hijack' Anglo-American parliamentary democracy see C. Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden* (New York, Books In Focus, 1981).

In fact, as will be shown, a Rural Council for Oxfordshire, later the Oxfordshire RCC under the auspices of the NCSS, was set up in close collaboration with Barnett House. This body had members from local government and other statutory and voluntary organisations, with the objective of promoting health, welfare, educational and leisure activities throughout the county. Although the Rural Council became independent after a few years, the general secretary of Barnett House, Grace Hadow,<sup>85</sup> also acted as its secretary.

Another highly influential figure to be present at the founding of the NCSS was Thomas Hancock Nunn. Although born in 1859 Nunn was a relatively late developer in the world of social reform (he stayed under the secure wing of Canon Barnett for 14 years, seemingly reluctant to leave the undergraduate common room atmosphere of Whitechapel and later Toynbee Hall). Nunn was later to become the dominant figure in the development of the largest body affiliated to the NCSS, the London Council of Social Service.<sup>86</sup> However at the age of 41, two years after leaving Toynbee Hall and taking up the role of Vice-Chairman of the Hampstead Charity Organisation Society (due to his new wife's insistence that they live in a more salubrious part of London) Nunn made his presence felt in no uncertain terms with a widely read annual report which was highly critical both of the Hampstead COS' Executive Committee and the Charity Organisation Society in general. The next two years saw Nunn win a local battle with the more traditional COS members in Hampstead. Over 40 years later his second wife, who had not known Nunn at the time, reported on the animosity caused by his reforms.

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<sup>85</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>86</sup> See chapter three.

It must not be supposed that Hampstead workers always welcomed these innovations which Nunn was gradually introducing... most of us do not welcome change and it was uphill work persuading many people to adopt his changes. "There's that tiresome Mr Nunn," one often heard, "why can't he leave things alone? We got on very well without him!" But he wouldn't leave things alone. He pegged away and often because of his importunity they gave in.<sup>87</sup>

Nunn's reforms had led to the establishment of a Survey Committee to inquire into the prospects for increased co-operation between charities. Nunn came to see this survey committee, which he chaired, as the catalyst for all his later work within the NCSS. In a long editorial in the *London Supplement to the Social Service Review* for September 1926 he wrote

From the outset they [the members of the committee] knew that the knowledge they wanted was not to be gained by sitting on a committee. One or another of them visited personally every leading social worker in the borough, and learned what their work was, training themselves to look at it from *their* point of view... learning at first hand what were the ideals, aspirations, methods and special difficulties, and the actual results achieved by their neighbours and fellow workers...

Their principle was that if a combined effort was to be made, those who were to act together should know not only one another's work, but one another. Indeed they felt that the friends of the poor should first be friends of one another...

At the close of the winter session they had gained more than the knowledge they coveted – they had gained a host of new friends. They felt that thenceforward there would be a fresh unity and understanding, a love and a power of a creative character, amongst an ever-widening circle of their fellow workers. Without, at that stage, making any attempt to secure uniformity of principle, they went forward in unity of spirit, reaching a plane of co-operation they had never realised before. They were becoming a large body of workers – some ministers, some municipal representatives, some Friendly

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<sup>87</sup> F. Nunn, *Thomas Hancock Nunn: The Life and Work of a Social Reformer* (London, Baines & Scarsbrook, 1942), p. 63.

Societies' men, some mere philanthropists, who were beginning to feel that upon their unity depended immediately the communion of a community.... It was indeed upon this personal foundation that the whole movement has fed and gained strength, upon the trust that those who stand together and seek unity, will see the same thing and see it in much the same way. Co-operation first. Principles after.<sup>88</sup>

By his 'importunity' and as a result of the report of the Survey Committee, Nunn gained complete control of the Hampstead COS by 1902. This control was so pronounced that in February of that year he was able to rename the Hampstead COS the Hampstead Associated Agencies Committee, which within a year was to become the first Council of Social Welfare<sup>89</sup>.

Nunn immediately set up sub-committee after sub-committee in an attempt to scientifically understand the problems facing the poor of Hampstead and to allocate relief on an organised basis. He was more than willing to work with the statutory sector in many areas and unlike the main body of the COS the Hampstead COSW involved representatives from county, town and parish councils. Significantly he also achieved the co-operation of major voluntary organisers from almost all of the big church organisations regardless of denomination. This gave the new organisation further links with more established bodies. The importance of his work was recognised by his place on the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1905-09. Historians have focused on the differences between the Majority Report (Bosanquet) and the

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<sup>88</sup> *The London Supplement to the Social Service Review* (September 1926), pp. 2-3.

<sup>89</sup> A member of the new organisation, T. H. Urwick suggested the name on the grounds that it accurately reflected both the COS background but was clearly more than its predecessor i.e. COSW.

Minority Report (Webb).<sup>90</sup> However Nunn, although a signatory to the Majority Report wrote a large memorandum (later published as 'A Council of Social Welfare') in which he argued that neither solution was adequate and that an implementation of welfare upon lines more akin to his own beliefs was essential.

Nunn's work at the Hampstead COS was revolutionary for its time. However he did not feel that he was making a decisive break from the COS itself. Rather, he saw his work in similar terms to those used by Barnett twenty years previously i.e. as a realignment of COS policy towards a more industrialised, urban poor while retaining the holistic Idealist values of T. H. Green which had been so important to C. S. Loch and the Bosanquets.

Nunn's belief in practical rather than theoretical action meant that he left few accounts of his philosophy.<sup>91</sup> It was left to his second wife to most clearly illuminate the principles which were central to the COSW and the later London Council of Social Service.

The reports of successive years show Nunn's constant effort to solve the three-fold problem which confronts all serious social workers- to secure (1) the well-being of those two inseparable parts of each individual, soul and body, with regard to (2) his dual relationship to the family and to the community, by means of (3) the two essential complementary forces, State or voluntary services.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> See for example K. Woodroffe, 'The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1905-09', *International Review of Social History*, XXII (1977), pp. 137-164.

<sup>91</sup> Nunn did write a large number of anonymous articles for the *London Supplement of the Social Service Review*, these are discussed in some detail in chapter three. His correspondence with his publisher, J. M. Dent, are held available in the J. M. Dent and Sons record collection held at the University of South Carolina, 3.1 – Folder 4205.

<sup>92</sup> F. Nunn, op cit. p. 92.

Throughout his career Nunn, like Barnett, felt that organisation (rather than condemnation) of indiscriminate charity was the best way for these three aims to be achieved. Local charities should meet and discuss casework in order that relevant and useful relief could be given to the local poor. He placed a large emphasis on what in more political circles was being called 'scientific' relief (although he used the word only very rarely). Firstly relief was only to be given to the 'deserving' poor, who would benefit by being brought back into society. Secondly relief was to be given according to a specified plan so that no two charities overlapped. These two points, which were later reflected in the London Council of Social Service motto 'Unity and Co-operation', show clearly the influence of COS thinking within a bureaucratic setting.

The fourth of the six men who guided the NCSS in its early years was Frederick D'Aeth. Like Grundy, D'Aeth had a background within the Guild of Help movement. As secretary of the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid from 1909 and latter the Liverpool Guild of Help, D'Aeth was a prominent advocate of greater co-operation between the voluntary and statutory sectors. Indeed D'Aeth's reputation amongst senior social workers survived well into the 1960's when he was identified as

Greatly endowed with the gifts of faith, hope and charity... had a great flair for leadership and although the last years of his life and work were marred by ill health he left a name in social service which will not easily be forgotten.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> D. Keeling, *The Crowded Stairs: Recollections of Social Work in Liverpool* (London, NCSS, 1961), p. 20.

In October 1914 D'Aeth outlined his position in an article in the *Economic Review*. He argued for a synthesis of the Charity Organisation Society, the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare. In language reminiscent of Grundy at the Manchester Guild of Help, D'Aeth stated that 'the three movements have been brought into being because of the need for organisation. This has existed in two directions - the organisation of CaseWork, and the organisation of Institutions. Serious mistakes have frequently arisen through confusing these two ends'.<sup>94</sup> D'Aeth believed that the organisation of casework was dependent upon the willing co-operation of the various agencies dealing with any individual case.

Organisation is now necessary, not only with regard to poverty, but also with regard to the thousand and one difficulties with which an individual in our modern large city finds himself from time to time confronted. Further, the co-operating bodies are not only the relief agencies, or even the organisation society and a particular relief institution, but they include co-operation with a much larger group of voluntary institutions, and also with the various Public Bodies, local or central.<sup>95</sup>

This was a notable development from the old fashioned COS notion of organisation which was dependent upon a top-down structure which saw a powerful local Organisation Society dominating smaller charities. In fact D'Aeth argued for a three-point plan for the organisation of a new body. Firstly it was necessary that in every town there should be a 'general case work body'. This was to 'organise friendly visiting in the home in connection with any form of need which may arise, and possessing, moreover, a body of visitors so varied in type and interest that some will be suitable for each particular form of visiting

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<sup>94</sup> F. D'Aeth, 'The Social Welfare Movement', *Economic Review* (Oct 1914), p. 405.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.* p. 405.



required'.<sup>96</sup> Secondly the visitors had to have a 'civic character'. For D'Aeth social work should be based upon the concept of individuals helping fellow members of their community. Indeed the most important aspect of case work was that 'it is the personal response of citizens to the claim made upon them for friendly help by their fellow citizens in conscious or unconscious need'.<sup>97</sup> Clearly these two points came from D'Aeth's background within the Guild of Help movement. However it is not the policy advocated but the concepts which lie behind his philosophy which made D'Aeth so important to the early NCSS. The cornerstone of D'Aeth's argument was the need for co-operation between equals for the benefit of all. He recognised that this was not confined simply to individuals but could also be applied to the behaviour of organisations. As the NCSS was later to stress organisations, as much as individuals, could also fulfil the role of the good citizen.

It is not the affair of any particular society, it is the affair of the town. Directly one society begins to take up this wider general work it provokes jealousies and misunderstandings with other societies. The Charity Organisation Society movement furnishes many unfortunate instances of this. To safeguard this citizens' work the body is frequently representative in character, with the Mayor as the head, and meeting often in public places. It is thus a body so constituted that any person can take part in it, and any body, public or private, co-operate with it.<sup>98</sup>

These sentiments were later to be transferred, almost word for word, into the original constitution of the NCSS.

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.* p. 406.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

The fifth man to be present at the inaugural meeting of what was to become the National Council of Social Service was the Reverend James Pringle. Pringle was the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society after C. S. Loch and his presence is a good indication of the important status the COS still held before 1919. Despite the fact that Grundy, Nunn and D'Aeth had specifically opted to join the Guild of Help movement and had openly criticised the patriarchal nature of the COS, it would have been impossible in 1919 to establish any national organisation without at least the acceptance of the COS. Pringle never had a large impact upon the NCSS. Indeed he only attended a handful of meetings between 1919 and 1921, but his initial presence was vital. The vast majority of early local Councils of Social Service were transformations of either Guilds of Help, Councils of Social Welfare or Charity Organisation Societies. At a local level these bodies were made up of many social workers who had at some time been part of the COS. To them the presence of Pringle meant that the new organisation had been given the blessing of the largest and most famous charity. Nevertheless the assessment of the National Council's official historian was correct when she wrote

He saw the part which a national body co-ordinating social service might have to play, but his deep distrust of state and municipal action prevented him from going the whole way and committing the COS unreservedly to the new movement. His policy was to offer friendly co-operation and await developments.<sup>99</sup>

The final figure, and the first secretary of the NCSS, may have been Lionel Ellis. However his presence as one of the mysterious six is at least contentious. Brasnett states that 'it was

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<sup>99</sup> M. Brasnett, *op cit.* p. 17.

natural and proper that S. P. Grundy... should have become its [the NCSS] first honorary secretary. But tremendous tasks lay ahead, calling in addition for a full time, paid officer. The choice fell upon a young man, Captain Lionel Ellis, newly returned from France'.<sup>100</sup> This would seem to imply that Ellis' was an appointment made after the NCSS had been established or at least after it had been able to organise job advertisements and wage budgets. Furthermore Brasnett's obscure comment about six men who 'met early in 1919' would seem to rule out Ellis unless he was demobbed remarkably quickly.

On the other hand, if Ellis was not one of the six it becomes extremely hard to say who was. Brasnett's only identification of the six men was 'five leading social workers and reformers and one civil servant'. Adams was clearly the civil servant which rules out the first Chairman of the NCSS, Aubrey Simmons, who was working at the Local Government Board/Ministry of Health. It also eliminates Sir Charles Stewart, the Honorary Treasurer. Stewart was a barrister who became Clerk of the London County Council between 1897 and 1900 and a Public Trustee between 1907-1919. Ellis had a background within social service, as secretary of the Southwark committee of the COS. Even if he was not at this initial meeting, as secretary he was to have a significant role in determining NCSS practice and aims in the years immediately after 1919.

Unlike the others Ellis had seen active service in the First World War. He was the first in a long line of NCSS workers for whom the comradeship of war, alongside the vision of organised action, emphasised the possibilities of organised charitable effort. As a captain in

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* p. 22.

the Welsh Guards he had won the Distinguished Service Order and the Military Cross. Over twenty-five years after his military life had ended, he was commissioned by the Welsh Guards to write their battle history for the Second World War and wrote another book about the British defeats of 1940.<sup>101</sup> This was obviously a major influence in his life, as it was for many other young officers. Brasnett's eulogy to him in her history of the NCSS indicates the high regard in which he was held.

He came to the Council when its work lay uncharted before it and no one knew the way ahead. He did not even know whether his salary could be met after the first year. His first office was a borrowed room. Co-operation in social service was still an unrealised idea. When he left, the Council stood at the height of achievement; its patron the King, its committees drawing on the wisdom of some of the most distinguished men and women of the day. It was the trustee of great sums of money from government and voluntary sources, enjoying the confidence of departments of state and of more than forty of the principle voluntary societies. All the branches of its work appeared to flourish.<sup>102</sup>

By 1919 the nucleus of the National Council of Social Service had begun to exist. Its first task was to attract sufficient attention. In order to do this it published a memorandum which was sent to a series of charities and government departments. The memorandum stressed two things. Firstly it indicated the bureaucratic tactics which were to be the hallmark of the NCSS and secondly it outlined the aims of the NCSS which were to remain central to every constitution drawn up by every council of social service throughout the interwar years.

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<sup>101</sup> L. Ellis, *Welsh Guards at War* (Aldershot, Gale & Polden, 1946); L. Ellis, *The War in France and Flanders 1939-40* (London, Imprints of War, 1953).

<sup>102</sup> M. Brasnett, *op cit.* p. 85-6.

- (a) To promote the systematic organisation of voluntary social work, both nationally and locally, with a view to seeing (i) the co-ordination of the voluntary agencies, and (ii) their co-operation with the official agencies engaged in the same sphere of work;
- (b) to assist in the formation for this purpose of organisations in each local government area representative of both voluntary effort and statutory administration;
- (c) to provide information, particularly as to legislation and the regulations of government departments, for voluntary social workers.<sup>103</sup>

This memorandum was the first official statement by the National Council of its aims and as such it is worth examining in some detail. The first of the three aims clearly reflected and combined the interests of the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare. The main aims were those of co-operation and co-ordination, reflecting a significant shift in thinking from the old COS line. Voluntary agencies were to co-ordinate their own activities rather than have co-ordination forced upon them. They were also to co-operate with statutory bodies rather than denounce the growing influence of state welfare. Similarly point (b) of the NCSS' stated aims divided its own regional organisations into the same geographic areas used by statutory authorities. Again this meant that local councils of social service were meant to co-operate with governmental bodies at a local level. The third aim of the NCSS was to promote the dissemination of information throughout voluntary societies. This aided the co-operation of charities if they were all aware of the situation. As importantly, the increased amount of information geared specifically to social workers was meant to increase standards within the profession. Both Adams and Nunn had been involved in the training of social workers at Barnett House and Toynbee Hall. As the interwar years progressed the NCSS was to play a major part in redefining the role and image of a stereotypical social

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid.* p. 23.

worker from the amateur 'busy-body' of the COS and the socially rising philanthropist towards a more organised, theory led, career. It was these three aims which were to guide the National Council of Social Service throughout the interwar years.

In fact the aims seemed to hit a chord with a large number of voluntary bodies, because the NCSS attracted the support of many other organisations. By 1920, when the National Council held its first major conference, it was able to publish a twenty-page list of 'Delegates and members of the Conference'. This list included some extremely influential names and is worth examining in some detail. The National Council itself was identified as being made up of Adams as Chairman, Sir Charles Stewart as Honorary Treasurer and Grundy as the Honorary Secretary. D'Aeth and Nunn were named as representatives of local Councils of Social Service<sup>104</sup> alongside eight other representatives from Chester, Oldham, Birmingham, Scarborough, Warrington, Halifax, Reading and Belfast. Some significant conclusions can be drawn from the make up of the various representatives who attended this first major conference. For example, Appendix 1 shows that although six of the eight 'representatives of local councils of social service' were men, the majority of 'representatives of local authorities and associations' were women (235 of 394).

The types of organisations who sent representatives are listed in Appendix 2. This identifies fourteen distinct groups. By far the largest of these was the Charity Organisation Society, which sent nearly one quarter of all representatives. This large number is indicative of the

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<sup>104</sup> D'Aeth represented the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid and Nunn represented the LCSS.

way in which the personnel of the COS was attracted to the NCSS as a result of Pringle's presence and in some cases because of the desire to move on to a new type of charitable organisation. Nevertheless the dominance of the COS is a slight illusion. The combination of the Guilds of Help, Councils of Social Welfare, the Councils of Social Service and the local versions of those groups made up a total of 130 of the 394 representatives.<sup>105</sup> Clearly, therefore, many representatives were part of organisations which would hope that the NCSS was not simply a novel experiment, but was rather a viable long term alternative to the COS.

The remaining organisations were fairly typical of the different types of charities active at the end of the First World War. However it is interesting to note the large number of councillors representing their Urban District or Borough Councils.<sup>106</sup> The aims of the NCSS, outlined in the memorandum of 1919, had attracted a large number of statutory and charitable bodies within only 12 months.

The geographical dispersion of those bodies who sent representatives to the 1920 conference is noted in Appendix 3. It shows that the National Council of Social Service was a predominantly English Council. Appendix 3 shows that over 370 of the 394 representatives came from England with only 9 from Wales, 8 from Ireland, and 6 from Scotland. Of the 371 English representatives, over one-fifth (90) came from London. This number may have

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<sup>105</sup> Many organisations were affiliated to one or more of the groups while not officially sharing a name. An example was the Liverpool Personal Service Society which was founded in 1919 by D'Aeth and shared offices and personnel with the Liverpool CSS.

<sup>106</sup> While it is true that many councillors took part in charitable organisations they usually represented that charity rather than their Council in an official capacity.

been slightly larger because the conference took place in London, but the primary reason for the proportion being so large was because of the preponderance of charities within the capital, particularly the Councils of Social Welfare and the Charity Organisation Committees. This is interesting because the NCSS was not destined to be dominated by its London committees, and as will be shown the provinces, particularly Wales, were to become increasingly important to the development of the National Council.

However a demographic description of the first NCSS conference tells only half the story. It is also worth examining some of the influential figures who were first brought into contact with the NCSS through their positions as representatives of other bodies.

One key figure was Dorothy Keeling. Born in 1881 Keeling came from a large academic family. Her father was headmaster of Bradford Grammar School while her maternal grandfather was the second master of King Edward's School in Birmingham. Furthermore three of her sisters became teachers in Bradford. However after an unsuccessful academic career, Keeling found herself drawn to social work through her work in a 'Ragged Sunday School'. She joined the pioneering Bradford Guild of Help in 1907, eventually becoming Honorary Assistant Secretary. Keeling's background was not a particularly wealthy one, partly due to the expense of nine children. However it is indicative of the type of social workers who founded<sup>107</sup> the NCSS that she was able to return her salary 'as my father said that he would continue my dress allowance'.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless after her fathers' death in 1916

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<sup>107</sup> But not those who were later to work for it.

<sup>108</sup> D. Keeling, *op cit*, p. 11.



Keeling accepted a £100 a year salary and became willing to work away from Bradford. In 1919 she was invited by Fredrick D'Aeth to become Secretary of the Personal Service Committee of the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid, which he was trying to establish. The main aim of this committee was to encourage friendly visiting, but the real reason for its inception was probably D'Aeth's desire to destroy the Liverpool Central Relief Society. In fact, Keeling's role in this plan provides an excellent example of the way in which the National Council of Social Service incorporated a new generation of social workers who attempted to replace old welfare philosophies.

The Liverpool Central Relief Society had close links with the Bosanquet 'wing' of the Charity Organisation Society. It advocated raising funds for the 'deserving poor' to be given after 'due investigation'. Even forty years on Keeling was unable to hide her distaste for this type of social work in her memoirs.

Our relations with the CRS [Central Relief Society] were never happy. We often disagreed strongly with their reasons for withholding relief, and with the amount of help given which often seemed to us to be inadequate and to be given without any constructive purpose. One of their rules - the reason for which we could not understand - was, that no application for help from deserted wives would be considered. Moreover, their machinery for making decisions was slow, and the fact that no women sat on their executive committee meant in our view their decisions were often one-sided.<sup>109</sup>

Keeling's refusal to accept the concept of the 'undeserving' poor was evident through her attempt to obtain monies to buy sewing machines for ex-prostitutes, a scheme which the CRS

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<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* p. 38.

refused to support. Eventually the growth of the Personal Service Society and the decline of the COS nationally meant that the CRS was amalgamated into the PSS in January 1932. This example of a new more co-operative type of social worker, acting as a good citizen in the interests of the whole community, was typical of what the first National Council of Social Service was attempting to promote.

Perhaps the most notable of the other representatives who attended the conference was the then Mayor of Stepney and later Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. Like many senior Labour party figures of that time, including Harry Snell the future leader of Labour in the Lords, Attlee had himself been a social worker in the COS before becoming disillusioned by its patriarchal attitude and had lectured in social work at the LSE in 1919-20. As a result Attlee, although not officially connected to the NCSS or giving a paper at the conference, was one of the most consistent contributors to the debates which took place during the conference.

The first conference itself was based on four main themes; Public Assistance, Health, Education, and the relationship between voluntary and statutory bodies.

The first session, entitled 'Public Assistance: The policy underlying Administration', was chaired by Ronald Norman. Norman was another highly influential figure to be attracted to the new organisation. Born in 1873, Norman's education at Eton and Cambridge had led to a successful career in the civil service. However, after serving as Private Secretary to the Earl of Halsbury while he was Lord Chancellor, Norman decided to forge his own political career as a Conservative member of the London County Council. Because of his position as Chairman of the London County Council, he was invited to become the first Chairman of the

London Council of Social Service in 1919. His later activities included being Chairman of the BBC and Vice-President of the NCSS. In his opening speech Norman typified the development of COS philosophy which the NCSS was to exemplify.

The whole population, indeed, might be divided into two classes - those who support the State and those who are supported by the State... When you consider the principles underlying administration of Public Assistance, you will agree, I think, that the aim should be always to render the family and the individual self-supporting at the earliest possible moment. This cannot be done by refusing or giving inadequate assistance. The doctor does not restore his patients to health by refusing to accept cases, but by giving his services adequately, sympathetically, wisely, and also, sometimes, by telling the patient that there is nothing wrong with him, and by some art best known to himself convincing him.<sup>110</sup>

This synthesis of a reliance on the family as the nucleus of welfare, but with a safety net supplied by the voluntary and statutory sectors, was exactly what the NCSS wanted to hear. That Norman could make such statements without a background within the voluntary sector indicates the extent to which these sentiments were prevalent among many individuals after the First World War. The papers delivered at the first session supported this view. The Mayor of Leicester, Alderman J. Chaplin, argued that

the policy of the administration of public assistance [should] be to ensure that the beneficiary should obtain the maximum possible benefit from all assistance given, that due economy be practised, that above all *the policy seek to promote the independence and self reliance of all those (who are of an age and physique for this to be possible) who in any way come under the Public Assistance care.*<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Reconstruction and Social Service* op cit. p. 27.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.* pp. 34-35 (emphasis in original).

However this 'promotion of independence' was not to be done through the draconian methods of the Poor Law and Workhouse. Chaplin, a member of the Labour party, felt that 'the Labour movement wants English workers to be men, citizens of a high order, and would shudder at the idea of those workers becoming dependants and paupers'.<sup>112</sup> He argued that

there must go, to complete this policy, thoroughness and adequacy, along with the most delicate personal attention to each recipient. Men are not made by deterrents. Pauperism and dependency are not checked by harshness and repellent methods... To think of deterrents and too rigorous investigation in these types of cases is abhorrent. They should be dealt with kindly and gently during the period of their enforced dependency.<sup>113</sup>

In the discussion which followed the papers, Attlee outlined the differences which were to mark the relationship of the NCSS and the leaders of the Labour Party. He felt that although the basic notions of charitable reorganisation and a more philanthropic attitude were laudable, they failed to adequately emphasise the need for state economic planning.

In opening the discussion Major ATTLEE (Mayor of Stepney) said that they had had three exceedingly interesting papers covering a very wide field, but, if he might be allowed a word of criticism, they were slightly pre-war in their outlook.... Consideration of the policy underlying public assistance had too often been based on a fundamental fallacy, and it was this : the assumption was made that the ordinary man was able to keep his wife and his family without public assistance. If we made this assumption we had to see that the

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

man was able to get work, and sufficiently well paid work, so that he might be able to support his wife and family.<sup>114</sup>

The second session, held that evening, was entitled 'The Place of Voluntary Effort in the Development of Public Health Work'. Chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Viscount Astor, the session initiated a link which was to have profound effects for the NCSS and the Ministry of Health. The National Council of Social Service was desperate to achieve the status which came from high level links with government departments. As the forerunner of the new movement to work with the state, the NCSS could not achieve its aims without government involvement. On the other hand, however, the Ministry of Health was itself a new ministry which had been in existence for less than a year. It too had a use for effective bureaucratic links with voluntary societies, both to enhance its own status but also to ensure that it could effectively pursue its own interests. This meant that the Ministry of Health had a vested interest in the organisation of charitable relief - one of the main aims of the NCSS. As Astor said in his opening address

Having established a central Ministry of Health, the immediate task should be the reorganisation among local public bodies at the periphery. In a single geographical area there may be... a large number of voluntary organisations, some dealing with special objects... but there is no unity of command or direction and no way of preventing overlapping and duplicating, or of filling up the gaps.<sup>115</sup>

Perhaps the most informative paper reflecting this perspective was delivered by Lieut.-Col. F. E. Freemantle (Hertfordshire Consulting Minister of Health). Freemantle was not destined to

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.* p. 71.

be a great name in social work, but his paper is important for the information it gives us about the ideas and concepts which those who attended the first NCSS conference accepted as basic truisms. Freemantle, along with other attendees, saw social workers as 'citizens' in the Athenian sense. Indeed he began his paper by stating

I rise to address you as a representative, like yourselves, of that growing army of citizens, male and female, paid and unpaid, who are devoting all their efforts to the improvement of the physical conditions of life, and are thereby laying the physical foundations which are essential to all the higher educational, commercial, moral aesthetic and religious activities.<sup>116</sup>

Freemantle also typified the way in which many of those who attended the NCSS conference had modernised the ideas expounded by T. H. Green. In fact Freemantle quoted Green's *Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contracts* (1881)

'It is the business of the State to maintain the conditions, without which a free exercise of the human faculties is possible'... but we in this Conference have to emphasise that State action, necessary as it is, is of little use without the cordial co-operation of the individual subject and of individual, private, unofficial enterprise and assistance.<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, for Freemantle as for many other figures within the voluntary sector, the war had convinced them of the effectiveness of organisation. Freemantle had served in Mesopotamia where as he put it 'a single medical authority had only to state his case to heads of other departments in the same area... to get what ever supplies or devices or regulations he

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.* pp. 78-9.

required'.<sup>118</sup> Clearly then the Idealist notion of individuals working together for a common cause could attract those who were concerned with increasing efficiency and organisation just as easily as it those of a more ideological persuasion. Again this highlights the fact that the strength of NCSS philosophy was that it could provide a very large umbrella for a number of different 'types' of social reformer.

The third session of the conference was entitled 'The Scope of Voluntary Effort in Education'. The Chairman on this occasion was A. D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol, who had recently chaired the Departmental Committee on Adult Education. Again similar attitudes were expressed concerning the need for co-operative effort. J. G. Legge, the Director of Education for Liverpool, stated that

The great work of reconstruction which is before us will call for the united efforts of all sorts and conditions of men and women if we are not to continue to live in a fool's paradise... Capital and labour have to appease their jealousies... bureaucracy has to accommodate itself to the stiff-necked community which ostensibly it serves.<sup>119</sup>

Meanwhile Arthur Greenwood, the Vice President of the WEA and later a senior Labour party figure, argued that Adult Education was 'essentially a co-operative process in which all are teachers and all are taught'.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid.* p. 79.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.* p. 111.

The last session of the conference was centred upon 'The Organisation of Voluntary Social Service in Relation to the Work of Statutory Agencies' and was chaired by the Chairman of the NCSS itself, Professor W. G. S. Adams. He once again outlined for the whole conference the aims which the National Council of Social Service had set itself.

Experience has already proved in some of our municipalities, how great an advantage it is to have a common Council on which are represented all the local voluntary agencies of social service. It makes possible a survey of the whole local field of work, it prevents avoidable overlapping, and it develops co-operation in aim and effort.<sup>121</sup>

His views were reinforced by the first speaker, Arthur Collins, Secretary of the Birmingham Citizen's Committee.<sup>122</sup> Collins was given the role of outlining for those present the way in which the National Council hoped to develop. After outlining the aims of the NCSS which we have already seen, Collins went on to stress that

the general idea of such a Committee is not new, but the conditions arising from the War have rendered such co-operation and co-ordination both more necessary and more practicable. The work of the Local Representative Committees of the National Relief Fund and the organisations engaged in the relief of military and civil distress have widened the outlook of thousands of voluntary workers. Not only in that field of service, but in every other class of social work, war has taught us to realise, and to translate into action, our obligation to our fellows, and the value of united effort, inspired by a common purpose. If the workers are to render the most effective service in the

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid.* p. 137.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>122</sup> The BCC was to all intents and purposes a Council of Social Service and was certainly constituted and funded as such.



future, simplicity and cohesion in organisation, and the fullest information on social subjects is necessary.<sup>123</sup>

If the war had led to a growing willingness of charities to work together Collins felt that the time was ripe for this to be developed by the NCSS. He told his audience that

It is not without hopefulness and confidence that the originators of the Council submit their record and reveal their vision. Hopefulness, based not only upon useful work done, but upon a great development of the will to co-operate amongst the representatives of so many agencies. Confidence that such a National Committee having been set up, its potential powers will be extended and consolidated, so that the spirit of mutual helpfulness already secured will never be allowed to disappear.<sup>124</sup>

and that

Before any systematic organisation can be attempted of the very numerous voluntary agencies which may be described as National, their classification has to be considered, according to the special aspects of the social problem with which they deal. When the principal agencies have been grouped in this way, representation of each group on the National Council should be secured, so that it would be possible to approach the constituent members of a group through the medium of their representatives on the Council.<sup>125</sup>

For Collins, the role of the National Council of Social Service was to be a central meeting place for various charities. Rather than act as the COS had three decades earlier by controlling local charities, the NCSS was to be a facilitator of more effective interaction between charities who would retain their autonomy. In fact Collins presented a theoretical

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<sup>123</sup> *Reconstruction and Social Service*, op cit. p. 156.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.* pp. 156-7.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.* p. 157.

structure for the NCSS. This was to be based upon dividing the organisation into five sections. These were to deal General Welfare, Health, Education, Distress, and Delinquency. These sections were each to be divided into various sub-committee's based on the interests of participating charities, for example 'General Welfare' was to be split between 'rural', 'women's' and 'juvenile' organisations.

This plan was never to be put into operation. Initially rural policy was the only NCSS success and its primary area of activity. Nevertheless the benefits of the conference were clear. The NCSS had attracted widespread interest from state and statutory bodies. It had been able to put forward a coherent and practical policy to its audience and it had ensured support from a number of senior figures. Indeed thereafter it continued to do so.

By 1921, fifteen of the fifty-one local Councils formed under NSS auspices felt able to send representatives to the second NCSS Annual Conference. The published report of this conference contained clear outlines of the ideals to which local Councils of Social Service were expected to adhere.

These local Councils are linked together through affiliation with the National Council, but they are independent and self-governing bodies; they vary in name, organisation and method of work but they are alike in their representative character and in their aim. They seek to spread the ideal of service, to make voluntary effort more effective by establishing the relation of the various associations to each other and to emphasise the common purpose of all.

Such Councils are needed more than ever to day. The financial position of this country requires that both public and private expenditure shall be reduced as far as possible, so that capital exhausted during the war may be accumulated and industry revived. Money and effort must be used to their best advantage, duplication and waste must be avoided, and above all *voluntary service must be*

*extended.* Councils of Social Service help to make these things possible...

It is recognised that no cut and dried scheme would ever be universally applicable but it is believed that co-operation in service, and the resulting growth of 'the community spirit' is needed in every locality from the smallest village to the largest city, and that on general terms this can be secured if the various bodies at work can be brought together in council, both locally and through a National centre.<sup>126</sup>

The scene was set then for independent local councils to facilitate voluntary action through Joint Committees.

The NCSS also continued to attract attention at a larger level. The 1924 conference for example was preceded over by John Whitley<sup>127</sup> the Liberal Member of Parliament for Halifax since 1900 and Speaker of the House of Commons from 1921. Whitley had become President of the NCSS in 1921 and replaced James Lowther who had also been NCSS President while Speaker of the House of Commons.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> NCSS, *The Report of the Second Annual Conference of the National Council of Social Service* (London, NCSS, 1921).

<sup>127</sup> Whitley was important to the NCSS because of his influential position as Speaker of the House of Commons. Born in 1866, Whitley was educated at Cambridge and had become President of Clifton College. His political career was also successful. He became Junior Lord of the Treasury in 1907, Deputy Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Deputy Speaker in 1911, Chairman of the Committee on the Relations of Employers and Employed between 1917 and 1918 and Speaker of the House of Commons between 1921 and 1928. Interestingly, like Ronald Norman, Vice-Chairman of the NCSS, he was on the board of the British Broadcasting Corporation, which he chaired after 1930. He also shared membership of the Athenaeum Club in London with Norman. Whether this influenced his decision to become President of the NCSS is unknown but his presence was certainly a coup for the new society.

<sup>128</sup> This tradition continued until 1932 when the then NCSS President and Speaker E. A. Fitzroy felt he should resign once the NCSS started to receive government grants which could be a matter of debate in the House.

If the appointment of Whitley was merely the continuation of the policy of attracting influential figures, the 1924 conference also showed elements that had not been present in 1920. The most important of these were the increase in representatives from local Councils of Social Service (21 rather than 8) and the complete lack of members representing statutory authorities. These changes represented the development of the NCSS into a facilitator of charities rather than a link between statutory and philanthropic bodies. This will be examined later.

Although precise details of the very early years of the National Council of Social Service are unclear, a number of themes had emerged by 1919 which were to carry on throughout the interwar years. Firstly the NCSS was attempting to attract high profile individuals and charities. Secondly it aimed not to control but to facilitate co-operation between its members. Thirdly it was to be based around locally organised Joint Committee's rather than being centrally organised from London. These three factors, which as we have seen came from a variety of influences, were to mark the NCSS out as different from any charitable body which had gone before. The extent to which it was able to achieve its goals is the subject of the following chapters.

The way in which local Councils of Social Service developed 'on the ground' immediately after the war is also obscure, although there are some indications in the few local archival deposits. Local organisations were, in many areas, simply a modernisation of old style case-work bodies. For example the Wakefield Council of Social Service was established in November 1920 by taking over the Wakefield Guild of Help's offices and staff on the

following conditions. Firstly, the Wakefield CSS would appoint a committee called the Wakefield Guild of Help Committee. Secondly, this committee would consist of the 1914 committee members for at least one year.<sup>129</sup> Thirdly, the Guild of Help Chairman, Deputy-Chair, and four 'Area Captains' were made to be members of the Wakefield Council of Social Services Executive Committee.<sup>130</sup>

Through such compromises many councils became established relatively quickly. However after Birchall's legacy had run out, funding this growth was becoming an increasing problem. By 1925, for example, the meeting of the National Council Urban Sub-Committee was dominated by questions of Carnegie Trust funding and NCSS qualification for charitable status and thus income tax relief. In April of that year some of the leading members of the National Council Executive Committee had to personally guarantee the organisation's overdraft. As the year progressed and the number of NCSS clubs around the country increased, more representatives attended conferences and the Council was invited to send representatives to Royal Commissions and other organisations.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless by the end of what must be seen as a year of growth, the NCSS was entirely dependent upon grants.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> The Wakefield Guild of Help had stopped meeting during the war.

<sup>130</sup> Wakefield Guild of Help EC Mins, 2 November 1920, Wakefield Guild of Help, WDA, C186/48.

<sup>131</sup> The NCSS refused the latter offer on the basis that as an amalgamation of charitable representatives it would be unable to speak with one voice.

<sup>132</sup> The NCSS received £30,321.15.11 in grants which met the vast majority of NCSS costs which equalled £34,031.15.8.

As a result the question of income tax relief and the charitable status on which it depended continued to be central to NCSS activities. This issue had come to the fore when the NCSS, attempting to follow in the footsteps of D'Aeth's Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid, declared that local Councils of Social Service could be identified, for tax purposes, as 'a general purpose charity'. This would have meant that under the 1922 Finance Act they could have taken private subscriptions for charitable purposes without paying tax on them. Furthermore those individuals who had donated subscriptions would receive back the tax they had already paid on that money as income. It was completely legal and within the spirit of the Finance Act for charities to do this, it increased their income and even the Treasury regarded it as unfair that individuals should pay tax on income which they were never going to receive. However, the NCSS went beyond the spirit of the act when they initiated a scheme whereby they took the subscriptions for a wide number of charities from individuals, who received a tax rebate because they were paying to the NCSS which was a charity. The NCSS then paid the money to the charity named by the subscriber. The NCSS received a tax rebate on this, as it too was donating money to a charity, even though as a charity it was exempt from tax. By 1925 this scheme meant that the NCSS was taking in £40,000 of subscriptions, tax free, and after distributing it received £6000 in tax rebates for money it had never spent.<sup>133</sup> Although the NCSS never actually made any money from this financial juggling, as they gave all the rebates to the charities, such large figures rarely escape the Treasury's notice. In 1925 Sir Ernest Benn wrote

we are busy encouraging the habit of legal tax evasion in a way that will cost us very dearly in the future. It is a regrettable thing from

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<sup>133</sup> M. Brasnett, op cit. p. 55.

this point of view that the National Council of Social Service, a body with the highest motives should be able to issue a circular containing elaborate instructions to tax payers as to modes and methods whereby they can so arrange matters as to double their subscriptions to charities at the expense of the Exchequer.<sup>134</sup>

This sort of criticism, which was read out by Ellis to the NCSS Executive,<sup>135</sup> had led the NCSS to put its case to the Commission for the Special Purposes of the Income Tax Acts. However, they were to be disappointed with the decision. This stated that because the constitution of the National Council identified its main aim as ‘assist[ing] the formation and development of local councils of social service, or similar local bodies, representative both of the voluntary agencies and situation’<sup>136</sup> rather than actually providing charity the NCSS could not be a registered charity.

Nevertheless the NCSS was not to be daunted. The vice-chairman of the NCSS, R. C. Norman led a representation to the Treasury to plead their case. This tactic worked and the government withdrew a bill which attempted to add a clause to the Finance Act prohibiting the NCSS’ action.

This guarantee of income seems to have spurred the NCSS to attempt a more organised urban policy. In 1927 Ellis suggested that an individual be appointed to organise urban policy. His recommendation of W. E. Dixon tells much of the middle class basis of the NCSS. Dixon, like Ellis, Grundy, D’Aeth and Nunn came from a professional but not exceedingly rich

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<sup>134</sup>E. Benn, *The Confessions of a Capitalist* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1925), p. 277.

<sup>135</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 27 May 1926, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/028.

background. Although his family could afford his private education at Archbishop Howgate's Grammar School, they were unable to fund his place at Oxford. As a result Dixon did factory welfare work with Rowntree in York. After completing a Social Service and Public Administration Diploma at Leeds University, he won a scholarship to read economics at Birmingham. His education was again interrupted, this time by the outbreak of war. Dixon served for all four years of the war, originally in the infantry but later as a pilot. After the war he wrote the advice column 'The Soldiers Friend' for North England Newspapers. He also worked for the Sheffield Guild of Help between 1921 and 1925, managing the Sheffield Council of Social Service until he became the NCSS first regional officer, covering the north-east of England. These educated men, with relatively small private incomes and military backgrounds, were indicative of many of the new generation of social workers who had established the NCSS as a modern synthesis of the COS and the Guilds of Help. In fact Dixon had already been concerned to emphasise the 'new' nature of the NCSS. On October 12, 1926 he had written to Ellis about the possibility of a Northeast Area Council. He felt that it was important for the National Council to keep control over local councils of social service some of which, he stated, 'are at present a menace to progress and to the goodwill of the National Council whose name they use without apparently realising any consequent responsibility'.<sup>137</sup> He warned that old-fashioned councils, which attempted to control rather than facilitate social services, would deter other villages and towns from forming their own councils of social service. Dixon had also found that town clerks were more amenable to NCSS overtures when approached with official letters of introduction from the Ministry of

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<sup>136</sup>NCSS EC Mins 8 April 1926, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/01/024.

<sup>137</sup>Dixon to Lionel Ellis, 12th October 1926, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/028.



Health. It is clear from this that not only was Ellis impressed with Dixon's organisational ability and his strong ideas, but also that Dixon, once in position, would stress both the NCSS role as a co-ordinating body and also its links with the state. Indeed, unlike COS or Guild of Help organisers, Dixon was positively proud of his ability to use the Ministry of Health as a reference. In this vein the 'co-ordinating' aspect of local councils was stressed repeatedly. In 1923 the National Council commissioned a report into the extent of 'overlapping' between charities.<sup>138</sup> After a four-week survey of two towns chosen at random (Halifax and Reading) the NCSS published the information shown in Appendix 4. These figures, which clearly indicate a great deal of inter-agency ignorance, horrified senior NCSS personnel. Throughout the country local Councils placed co-ordination of service at the head of their list of aims. Whether they were able to achieve such aims will be discussed in chapter four.

Nevertheless, during its early years the NCSS had already made significant strides. It had developed a centralised structure based around an Executive Committee made up not of people who saw themselves as members of the National Council, but of members who saw themselves as representing individual charities and groups on a large Joint Committee. It had also attempted to set up a number of sub-committees, most notably the rural committee, which would bring together various groups at a national level which would discuss and debate policy. It epitomised the ideals laid down earlier in this chapter, providing a facility for the various branches of the voluntary sector to work together rather than in competition. Furthermore by attracting high profile individuals and groups, and by holding large and well

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<sup>138</sup> 'Overlapping' was when the same case was dealt with by two charitable bodies without either being aware of aid given by the other. This was of course excellent for the recipient of welfare, but hardly matched the values of the NCSS.

publicised conferences, the National Council had encouraged the establishment of local Councils of Social Service throughout Britain. These councils were intended to be independent and only refer to the National Council for help and advice. It is the successes and failures of this project to which the next three chapters refer.

## **CHAPTER THREE:** **The London Council of Social Service.**

It is ironic, given the later dominance of the provinces on National Council of Social Service policy, that the first attempt to implement NCSS principles was in London. Furthermore the organisation which attempted to implement them was not actually affiliated to the NCSS until 1936. Nonetheless the London Council of Social Service had conspicuous success at increasing co-operation not only between charitable bodies but also with statutory agencies. This chapter will examine its success, seeing it as an example of the way in which the Idealist conceptions of citizenship that lay behind the philosophy of the National Council of Social Service were transmuted into policy. Nonetheless the conceptions of the Charity Organisation Society and the activities of the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare continued to influence the implementation of policy. Hence the chapter will examine the development of the London Council as the means through which a new generation of social workers developed the ideas they inherited from these earlier organisations.

The chapter will begin by examining the formation of the London Council, which took place much earlier than elsewhere. It will do so in an attempt to discern the way in which Idealist values could be subject to a multitude of pressures and yet retain their original emphasis upon joint working and co-operation. Such pressures will be shown to come from the practical problems of attempting to provide an umbrella society for the many diverse charities within the capital; from the relationship between the LCSS and the emerging National Council; from the problems of attempting to work with the largest and possibly most important local

authority in the world, the London County Council; and from the actual need for welfare provision to a large population. The chapter will show that despite these pressures the essential core values of the LCSS were able to be adapted and changed between its formation and its formal amalgamation into the NCSS in 1936.

It will also be argued that despite a difference of emphasis caused by the specific political and economic conditions of London, the ideas and values that were to be central to NCSS policy were also behind policies within the capital. This will be shown through an analysis of what the LCSS called their 'health' and 'youth' policies. It will be argued that these areas of specific welfare relief, which were rarely addressed by provincial Councils of Social Service, provide clear evidence of the way in which NCSS values and philosophy could be manipulated to provide area specific policies.

## **The formation of the London Council of Social Service**

Like the NCSS, the London Council of Social Service was established in 1919 with the aim of co-ordinating state and voluntary welfare. However, unlike the NCSS, the London Council was by no means a new development. Rather it involved the repackaging of a number of councils which had been developing since the 1880s as part of a general progression in the philosophy of the Charity Organisation Society.

Organised voluntary welfare provision was primarily an urban phenomenon until the interwar years. As a result the capital had a disproportionately high number of philanthropic

associations. This had led to a dominance of the Charity Organisation Society by the 'Old Society' in London.<sup>1</sup> It should come as no surprise, therefore, that it was the capital that saw the most pronounced philosophical challenges.

As a result the development of the LCSS between the wars can not be adequately understood without an awareness of the history of the COS before 1914. Although the COS had drawn increasing criticism throughout the nineteenth century, the most damaging critics emerged from within the organisation itself. People such as Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, mentioned above, were typical of COS members who felt that the society failed to address the problems of the 'modern' i.e. democratised and industrial, poor. Their criticisms of the COS were based on the belief that the COS was too dogmatic in its opposition to state welfare and as a result failed to organise voluntary aid sufficiently well.

The Barnetts ideas were put into practice through the establishment of the Whitechapel University Settlement, Toynbee Hall and the Hampstead Garden Suburb. As a result, although the Barnett's tried to address the problems within the COS, their work remained centred elsewhere. Nevertheless it should be remembered that the Barnetts never relinquished their membership of the COS and that the Canon's most stinging criticisms appeared in the COS journal rather than in the more public press.

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<sup>1</sup> See G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971); G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); A. McBriar, *An Edwardian Mixed Double: The Bosanquets versus the Webbs* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987).

The Council has not been free of this tendency to set value on the expression of the principle rather than on the principle itself. Its members have inclined to fall in love with the form of words, the mechanism, the dogmas in which honoured leaders have in past years stated the principles for which they strove. They have in a word become idolaters, and as other idolaters, they are less able to see a new fact or accept a new idea. Idolaters recognise no change. What was true fifty years ago in a world dominated by one set of ideas, is for them still true in a world dominated by another set of ideas. Idolatry is always out of season.<sup>2</sup>

This refusal to give up on the reformation rather than the abolition of the Charity Organisation Society was to have important implications for the main instigator of the London Council of Social Service, Thomas Hancock Nunn.

As has been shown in chapter two Nunn came into close contact with the Barnetts during his time as a resident in the Whitechapel settlement and later at Toynbee Hall. That Samuel Barnett was a major, indeed the primary early influence, upon Nunn is clear both from Nunn's writings<sup>3</sup> and from his close personal connection with the Barnetts. Indeed Henrietta Barnett regularly referred to her relief that she had 'Tummas', her pet name for Nunn, to share her problems with.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>S. Barnett, 'A Friendly Criticism of the COS', *COR*, 18 (August 1895), p. 340.

<sup>3</sup>In 1913 Nunn wrote a long and personal tribute to Barnett, identifying him as the perfect 'combination of knowledge and friendship, of love and power', who 'whilst he was a maker of some of our noblest institutions, was essentially a maker of men. He made men because he believed in men. And he believed in men because, more than any man I have ever met, he believed in God'. T. H. Nunn, 'One and All' (1913) cited in F. Nunn, *Thomas Hancock Nunn: The Life and Work of a Social Reformer* (London, Baines & Scarsbrook, 1942), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>Although Nunn's correspondence did not survive his death there is no reason to believe that this quote from his wife's biography of him is anything other than the truth.

The majority of Nunn's earlier work has been discussed in the previous chapter. A number of factors meant it was London that saw the first large-scale development of NCSS action. Firstly, in 1910 Nunn had established the London Social Welfare Association. This committee aimed to organise the charitable bodies of the capital as a whole in a similar way to that which was to be attempted in the north by the National Association of Guilds of Help a year later. By attempting to do for London as a whole what the COSW had done for Hampstead, Nunn was to lay the groundwork for the first Council of Social Service in 1919. Since these events took place in London, the actions of the COSW received considerable attention, and Nunn also received a great deal of immediate interest and support from charities and from the London County Council.

The war years, although very good for the voluntary sector as a whole, put an end to much of Nunn's work in London. Under Nunn's control the COSW had become primarily an organising rather than a directly philanthropic body. The major extension of municipal responsibilities caused by the war left the COSW to a large extent out in the cold. This meant that the council virtually ceased its activity during wartime and Nunn became instead involved in the formation of the Hampstead Volunteer Reserve, of which he was Commandant. Whilst not a great military force, this was probably the most cultural group of uniformed men in the war.<sup>5</sup> This meant that with the outbreak of peace the Councils of Social Welfare were easily reinvented as Councils of Social Service. Indeed many

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<sup>5</sup>Hugh Riviere, Edward Elgar and John Masefield were all members.

organisations simply changed their name while maintaining their locations, interests and personnel.<sup>6</sup>

These three factors allowed the LCSS to put its policies into action well before Councils of Social Service in other areas of the country. Indeed the inaugural meeting of the new council took place as early as the 20 March 1919 at the home of the London County Council, the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor. It outlined its objectives as

1. To promote throughout Greater London systematic co-operation in voluntary social work by aiding in the formation of Local Councils of Social Service, and by bringing into closer relations public departments, local authorities and societies and persons engaged in social work within that area.<sup>7</sup>
2. To secure general agreement amongst all the local Councils in Greater London without interference with their internal management.
3. To secure for London as a whole a means of intercommunication and interaction between groups of its social workers.
4. To co-operate with, and if requested by them to act for, official agencies in undertaking any particular social service within London.
5. To co-operate with the National Council of Social Service in order to secure the common object upon a national scale.<sup>8</sup>

By 1920, then, the London Council of Social Service was already an established organisation with aims which clearly reflected the National Council's aim to implement the Idealist conceptions of co-operation and co-ordination within the voluntary sector. Furthermore, the

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<sup>6</sup> See for example the case of the St Pancras Council of Social Service outlined in chapter four.

<sup>7</sup> The area of Greater London was defined as every parish the whole of which is was within a radius of fifteen miles from Charring Cross, or any portion of which is within twelve miles.



LCSS could point to the fact that it had twenty-one local councils of social service either affiliated to it or in the process of being formed.<sup>9</sup>

## **The structure of the London Council of Social Service**

The basic structure of the LCSS had already been established by the time of its first annual report in 1920. The aims laid down above made it clear that the LCSS was intended to lead and oversee policy from a lofty vantage point rather than actually engage in local welfare provision. It was intended to set up a number of sub-committees of the London Council, each of which would advise and inform local councils on a specific topic. In 1920 it was envisaged that these committees would report on the 'Health of the Metropolis', 'Adolescent Education and Recreation', 'Public Assistance' and 'Widows Pensions'. However these plans soon came to be rationalised into the four following standing committees; a Finance Committee, a London Squares Committee, a Public Health and Public Assistance Committee and what came to be known as the Mansion House Council on Health and Housing (see below).

These committees would report to the Executive Committee, which would in turn report to the full Council, four times a year. This system ensured that actual day to day running of the

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<sup>8</sup> LCSS, *London Council of Social Service First Annual Report 1919-1920*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> These were in Bethnal Green, Camberwell, Chelsea, Ealing, Greenwich, Hackney and Stoke Newington, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Hendon, Hornsey, Kensington, Lewisham, St Marylebone, St Pancras, Shoreditch, Stepney, Tottenham, Wandsworth, Westminster, Wimbledon and Woolwich.

council was placed in the hands of the Executive Committee. The Executive usually consisted of a President, a Treasurer, a Chairman, an Executive Vice-Chairman, and two Honorary Secretaries (although not all of these positions were always filled, any gaps were relatively short while new personnel was found).

In reality the actual distribution of power within the council was not even this complex. The Presidency of the LCSS was an honorary position held by the Lord Mayor of London.<sup>10</sup> The Honorary Secretaries, were just that; honorary. Minuted comments by any treasurer are extremely rare. The actual running of the LCSS came down to the Chairman and the Executive Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman was a senior political figure who had a concern with social work, but quite often was kept busy by more prestigious roles elsewhere. At first, the post was split between two people. Ronald Norman was Chairman of the London Council of Social Service while Willoughby Dickinson was Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Norman's later involvement with the National Council has already been touched upon.<sup>11</sup> However, immediately after the war his involvement in the LCSS may well have been an honorary role, due to his position as Chairman of the London County Council. It is worth noting that Norman's involvement may also have been due, at least in part, to his position as

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<sup>10</sup> This was often mirrored by local Councils of Social Service who were always advised to at least invite their local mayor to be honorary president, as it was felt this would enhance the links between the two bodies.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter two.

Leader of the Municipal Reform Party in the LCC between 1915 and 1918, and the fact that he was a senior figure in both the party and the Municipal Reform Society until his repudiation in 1922.<sup>12</sup> Young has speculated that although the informality of Conservative practices in London at this time means few written records of meetings were kept, Norman may well have been isolated by the party over his support for the Greater London plan.

It is no coincidence that R. C. Norman, the LCC [Municipal Reform] party's only renegade leader, was also the only holder of that office since the Society's foundation never to have been subsequently honoured by the Crown or advanced in its service.<sup>13</sup>

It would certainly be true to say that Norman resigned his position as Chairman of the LCSS in 1922, but actually increased his role by becoming Vice-Chairman of the National Council and chairing many ad hoc and standing committee meetings of the LCSS.

Willoughby Dickinson (later Baron Dickinson of Painswick) held the role of Chairman of the Executive Committee until its amalgamation under the NCSS in 1936. Again while the records reveal little, it is tempting to speculate that Dickinson represented an elder statesman of a separate LCC party to counteract the possible perceived bias of Norman. Dickinson had been a prominent Liberal MP for St Pancras between 1906 and 1918. With a reputation as an erudite and witty proponent of women's suffrage, he had combined his place upon Lowther's special conference on electoral reform (1916) with the position of Chairman of the London

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<sup>12</sup> K. Young, 'The Conservative Strategy for London since 1855', *London* (Spring, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> K. Young, *Local Politics and the Rise of Party: The London Municipal Society and the Conservative intervention in local elections 1894-1963* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1975), p. 219 n. 8.

Liberal Federation.<sup>14</sup> In fact his career had begun in London politics as the LCC member for Wandsworth between 1889 and 1895 and then as an alderman between 1895 and 1907. Dickinson was something of a 'centraliser' during his time on the LCC. He worked closely with Sir John Benn, the Progressive Party whip, against what came to be known as the process of 'tenification'.<sup>15</sup> This tendency to support a centralised vision of London was shared by Norman and indeed was vital to the whole conception of the LCSS as a separate entity from the NCSS.

As both Norman and Dickinson were seen as grandees and therefore above petty practical organisational matters, the day to day running of the Executive was the responsibility of its Organising Vice-Chairman, T. H. Nunn. Nunn organised meetings, was present on every standing and sub committee, wrote the *London Supplement* to the *Social Service Review* and generally acted as the 'point man' for LCSS activities. As Nunn's background and his importance to the LCSS has already been described, and because it was Nunn more than any other individual who took upon himself the task of presenting LCSS policy, the majority of this chapter will be, of necessity, concerned with his work. However it is worth briefly outlining some of the other figures who were present on the full Council.

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<sup>14</sup> For Dickinson's importance to the cause of women's suffrage during the first world war see M. Pugh, 'Politicians and the Women's Vote 1914-1918', *History* 59 (1977), pp. 358-74.

<sup>15</sup> 'Tenification' was a Progressive term used to refer, negatively, from the early 1890's to the process of dividing the capital into individual local corporations. Although, by the interwar period, there were many more than ten boroughs the term stuck.

The list of members of the full Council which the LCSS published in its annual reports contained the names of some of the most important social reformers of the day, including Henrietta Barnett, William Beveridge, J. C. Pringle and Arthur Newsholme. It also regularly listed the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster and the Bishop of London, as well as a variety of local Mayors and Councillors. However, only sixteen of the original eighty-one council members were present from its inauguration in 1919 to its merger with the NCSS in 1936. These sixteen members, who came not because it was an honorary part of their job but because they were committed to their work with the LCSS were:

Archibald Allan, JP

C. W. Burnes

Lt. General Sir Alfred Codrington

Sir Leonard Cohen

The Right. Hon. Lord Dickinson

Mr. S. L. Duff

Miss C. E. Dugdale

Arthur E. Franklin

Rev. A. E. Garvie

T. Ernest Jackson

Rev. J. Scott Lidgett

Sir Charles Mallet

Herbert Mount-Somerby

Ronald Norman

Thomas Hancock Nunn

J. M. Rendell

Of these names Dickinson, Norman and Nunn have already been discussed and little is known about several others. However some individual names do strike the reader as indicative of a certain 'type' of member. Alfred Codrington, for example, was Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Central Force (Home Defence) in 1914 and by 1918 had risen to be a Colonel in the Coldstream Guards. He was involved in the Scout movement and held the position of Scout Commissioner for London at the time of the LCSS first annual report. He is indicative of a group of social workers, which later chapters will show were strongly represented on the NCSS, and who saw their military experience as vital to the rationalising process of encouraging a mentally strong and able citizen in a paternalistic manner.

The Reverend Principal A. E. Garvie had a background within theological academia. However, during the interwar years he spent more time promoting church reform and had a strong concern for encouraging churches of various faiths to co-operate on social issues. In 1920 he was among the prominent leaders of an attempt by Anglicans and Free Churchmen to come together and 'consider the relation of Christ to the social order'. This resulted in 1924 in the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC). COPEC was to discuss such issues as 'the nature of God and His purpose for the world', 'education', 'home', 'the treatment of crime', 'politics and citizenship', 'the social functions of the church' and 'historical illustrations of the social effect of Christianity'.<sup>16</sup> However in 1920

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<sup>16</sup> A. L. Haddon, *The Coming of the World Church: A Brief Introduction to the Ecumenical Movement* (Melbourne, Austral Printing and Publishing, 1945).

he was best known as an emerging nonconformist theologian who both challenged the infallibility of the gospels<sup>17</sup> and promoted a 'kenotic' theory of God. Such a theory emphasised the need to retain a conception of Jesus as a man in and of himself and not simply as an abstract appendage of God. Garvie was certainly not the foremost thinker in this field (that honour was left to Whitehead) but many have seen his concentration on the humanity of Jesus, and thus the humanity of man, as indicative of the same Idealist movement which had influenced such thinkers as T. H. Green three decades earlier.

The work of A E Garvie in *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus* (1907) shows the influence of a conservative form of Hegelian speculation on the nature of the Trinity. Here there is seen to be a movement or dialectic within God between fullness (Father) and self - limitation / expression (Son) that finds its historic expression in the incarnation kenotically understood.<sup>18</sup>

Garvie wrote of the "omnipatience" of God, by which he meant that God had a divine sympathy with human experiences. Like Green he argued that God was shared human emotions, and because God was 'loving' in the human sense cruelty to other creatures, or to oneself, means contributing to divine suffering. As a result all individuals should care for each other, as any individual's happiness is equally significant for all individuals as all happiness is felt by God.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Most notably Garvie did this in his entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Beliefs*. A. E. Garvie, 'Christianity', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 588 (1910).

<sup>18</sup> S. M Smith, 'Kenosis' published at <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/kenosis.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> C. Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1983).

John Scott Lidgett was also a notable public figure before 1914.<sup>20</sup> Identified as the 'most eminent Methodist of the time'<sup>21</sup> and as having taken the 'leading part in the 'politics' of Methodism',<sup>22</sup> he has also been seen by Gordon Wakefield, the writer and Principle of Queen's College Birmingham, as the 'omnipresent figure' in all aspects of the Methodist Union. Like Garvie he took part in the influential conference between the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches of England and the Anglican Bishops in 1930. He was central to the discussions which preceded Methodist union in 1932, and was President of the Uniting Conference in that year. A one time supporter of Lloyd George, he came to see Baldwin's conception of Britain as the protector of individual faith and wrote to *The Times* in 1935 stating that 'like great multitudes of Free Churchmen, [he] welcomed the messages to the nation given by Mr Baldwin'.<sup>23</sup>

These observations give a brief but useful insight into the individuals who made up the London Council of Social Service. As with those who attended the first National Council conference, this was an economically well-off group<sup>24</sup> for whom social work was a duty (in

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<sup>20</sup> For Lidgett's earlier career see A. Tuberfield, *A critical appraisal of the Rev. Dr. John Scott Lidgett CH: 1890-1920* unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> P. Williamson, 'Conservatives and the Totalitarian Challenge, 1933-1940', *HER* (June, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> R. E. Davies, *Methodism* (London, Epworth Press, 1976), p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 19 June 1935. For Scott Lidgett's break with Lloyd George and declaration of support for Baldwin during the general election campaign, see S. Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (London, Routledge, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> Between 1910 and 1936 not one member of the LCSS, including Nunn, was paid for their work. Nunn did receive a small salary as Chairman of the Hampstead CSS but his work as LCSS Executive Vice-Chairman was entirely voluntary.



both the religious and the secular sense) and who were used to encouraging co-operation in others as a rational means to an end. The extent to which this emphasis upon co-operation stemmed from Idealist principles, as opposed to a rationalist response to specific problems, is impossible to tell. However the facts remain that they did choose to come together under the LCSS umbrella, they chose to stay under that umbrella for the entire lifespan of the LCSS, and that during that time T. H. Nunn, who was clearly influenced by Idealist thinking was, in effect, the primary influence upon LCSS policy and actions. Whatever the reasons for their personal adherence to the values of co-operation many, leading social thinkers were prepared at the very least, to work within an Idealist framework and that such a framework was the catalyst for bringing like minded organisations together. As a result Idealist inspired action was functional to other aims, even where it may not have matched the ideological conviction of NCSS supporters.

## **The policies of the London Council of Social Service**

The third part of this chapter examines LCSS healthcare policy towards 'juveniles'. It shows a slow evolution of policy and provides an excellent example of the way in which, although concepts of co-operation and co-ordination remained central, local circumstances and individuals effected the specific types of welfare offered.

### **Health**

The LCSS concern for health is interesting for two reasons. Firstly a concern with health care provision was atypical of councils of social service generally, as they tended to be more concerned with communitarian welfare reforms rather than direct aid to individuals. Secondly it led to the initial opportunity for T. H. Nunn's Hampstead COS and Council of Social Welfare to work with and within the state sector

As Nunn was the dominant influence on the direction of LCSS policy, it is important to see later LCSS activity within the context of his pre-war work. His interest in health care stemmed from his close relationship with the Chief Medical Officer of the London County Council. In 1902 he supported Nunn's formation of the Hampstead Health Society, after feeling that the London County Council's '[health]work was hampered by the apathy of the public and the inadequacy of staff'.<sup>25</sup> The policy of this society was heavily dependant upon the 1901 Report of the International Congress on Tuberculosis. This report stressed the need for reform in two areas; prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and the general improvement of housing and sanitary conditions.<sup>26</sup> These areas were to determine the LCSS' health concerns. They were addressed in what was rapidly becoming Nunn's 'usual style'. Committees were set up consisting of representatives from various voluntary agencies and other experts. These then worked with and within the state sector in order to provide immediate welfare relief. A typical example of this was the way in which the forerunner of the LCSS, the London Social Welfare Association, dealt with LCC provision of free school meals.

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<sup>25</sup> F. Nunn, op cit. p.87.

Because of the wide geographical area that it covered the London Social Welfare Association had always been involved in London County Council affairs. Their first conflict came in 1911/12 over the provision of free school meals to children. At first Nunn, and therefore the LSWA, followed a traditional COS line. They argued that state provision would simply lead to parents being unwilling to feed their children at home, a line which even Barnett had supported. However, Nunn's criticisms placed the main emphasis firstly upon the state's inability to adequately judge individual children's needs without an investigation of the family unit and secondly upon the lack of co-ordination between state and voluntary bodies. This meant that many children were being given free meals two or three times a day by different organisations. The most important factor here however is not Nunn's more 'modern' and critical approach, but the fact that he worked with the LCC rather than simply criticising the state's provision of feeding programmes. He even ensured the Hampstead COSW Executive Committee became the Canteen Committee of the LCC. This was a completely revolutionary activity for a member (indeed Vice-president) of a local COS committee. It can not be overstated how different it was for the COS not simply to work with the state but to place itself, as a body, entirely within the statutory framework.

This emphasis upon co-operation with the state was to be central to the policies of the London Council of Social Service. These policies centred on the two areas identified by the Hampstead Health Society, the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and the improvement of general sanitary conditions.

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

## Tuberculosis

The medical treatment of tuberculosis in the nineteenth and twentieth century is the subject of a growing literature. Much of this is extremely critical of 'specialists' and, by implication, the voluntary organisations and County Councils who 'had no consistent idea of challenging prevailing therapeutic methods and the allocation of resources which underpinned them, and no considered alternatives to advance'.<sup>27</sup> Typical is Inwood's statement that

For much of the [nineteenth] century doctors misunderstood and mistreated the disease, hospitals turned its victims away, and politicians ignored suggestions that the sale of infected milk should be controlled.<sup>28</sup>

However, while it is undoubtedly true to say that the LCSS did not challenge received medical opinion it is misleading to argue, as Smith has that,

Lay parliamentarians, ministers of health, philanthropists, local aldermen, Poor Law guardians and trade unionists, who from their own diverse experiences had much to question and to offer, remained passive throughout.<sup>29</sup>

This is misleading because the impression given is one of organisations such as the LCSS (who had members in all of Smith's categories) simply acting as the dogsbodies of 'a coterie

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<sup>27</sup> F. B. Smith. *The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850-1950* (London, Croom Helm, 1988), p. 245.

<sup>28</sup> S. Inwood, *A History of London* (London, MacMillan, 1998), p. 417.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 244.

of medical practitioners'. In fact the LCSS did not challenge the medical profession because it was never concerned with that aspect of tuberculosis care. Instead it saw the disease in more holistic terms, seeing its role as supporting the movement of those afflicted from initial poor sanitary conditions through sanatorium care to 'after care' provision of healthy employment and housing.

Such a perception of tuberculosis had, like so much LCSS policy, a base in T. H. Nunn's pre-war work in Hampstead. Tuberculosis had been a central concern of the Hampstead Health Society<sup>30</sup> and its policies were to be transferred almost directly to the LCSS. By using a 'scientific' methods of assessment, Nunn had followed traditional COS policy, with social workers<sup>31</sup> visiting the poor to offer 'helpful' advice. However, unlike more traditional Charity Organisation Committees and most certainly against COS policy, Nunn's committees encompassed the statutory sector. For example, the lack of Borough Health Visitors in Hampstead and Kilburn<sup>32</sup> led to a marked shortfall in patients receiving simple health instructions.<sup>33</sup> Hampstead Health Society volunteers were therefore trained and used by the LCC Chief Medical Officer to provide practical help to patients. The volunteer would

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<sup>30</sup> Although prefixed by Hampstead both the HHS, and the HHI operated primarily in Killburn, using volunteers from Hampstead.

<sup>31</sup> Throughout this thesis the term 'social worker', unless otherwise indicated, will refer to pre 1945 voluntary workers.

<sup>32</sup> There was only one who also the Sanitary Inspector. This meant that her T.B. care was usually limited to disinfecting the house and one or two visits. F. Nunn, op cit. p. 90.

<sup>33</sup> Tuberculosis sufferers often felt that their illness was hereditary and best treated by the closing of windows and doors and by steam baths.

investigate an area<sup>34</sup> and refer any cases which they felt needed to be assessed to the LCC Medical Office. This typifies Nunn's belief that it was only common sense for municipalities and voluntary organisations to combine their efforts in order to provide truly 'organised' welfare. The scheme was also fortunate to receive publicity within reforming circles through Nunn's appointment to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (1909). The funding which followed Nunn's discussions with the Countess of Aberdeen and Sir R. Douglas Powell meant that the HHS could build two open air wards at the Hampstead Infirmary, pay for country cottages and medical care for patients, and even in some cases pay a weekly 'wage' to women whose husbands had to enter hospital.

In 1913 the Hampstead Health Institute was opened, again in Kilburn rather than Hampstead itself. Typically it combined rooms for the HHS (which now changed its name to match its surroundings), the Borough Council, and the Wells and Camden Trust.<sup>35</sup> The Institute anticipated the village halls of the NCSS in that it provided a base where local people could receive advice and where what would today be called 'inter-agency' co-operation could take place.

However, Hampstead was not the only London based Council to have a traditional interest in tuberculosis care. In 1910 the Public Welfare Association for Southern St Pancras (the St Pancras Council of Social Service after 1919) published a 'Scheme for combating

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<sup>34</sup> Doctors were still notoriously reluctant to refer T.B. cases even to the CMO, let alone voluntary workers.

Tuberculosis'. As in the case of the Hampstead Council for Social Welfare they took a holistic view, advocating an attack on three fronts: educational work, individual work and auxiliary measures. The educational work was to consist of a tuberculosis exhibition in the local library (which involved such 'names' as Violet Markham and Mrs Bertrand Russell), a series of public addresses at which official literature would be disseminated and a series of monthly conferences involving the local Medical Officer. The 'individual work' reflected the case work nature of the organisation and consisted of local visitors who would take and refer patients to doctors, advise families and keep a register of any cases they discovered. Auxiliary measures consisted primarily of stressing the need for a 'healthy life'. This included the promotion of 'outdoor life, window gardening, backyard gardening' and the reopening of unused gardens and squares.<sup>36</sup> This work was to continue throughout the inter-war years.

After the formation of the London Council of Social Service matters of consumption became dominated by the LCC Tuberculosis Care Committee. In fact this committee was made up virtually entirely from the Hampstead Council of Social Service Joint Committee on Tuberculosis, which was listed in the first LCSS Annual Report as working 'in co-operation with the London County Council, the London Insurance Committee, the Borough Council, and the five Local Committees of Assistance'.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The Wells and Campden Trust was Hampstead's largest endowed charity and provided much of the funding for the building.

<sup>36</sup> St Pancras Council of Social Service EC Mins, SPCSS MSS, Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, JM10/20D 1.

<sup>37</sup> LCSS, *Annual Report 1919-20*, op cit. p. 23.

Co-operation between the LCSS and the Medical Office remained close. However the increasing public concern with health which followed the formation of the Ministry of Health under Addison in 1919 led to growing calls within the London County Council to place tuberculosis care under municipal control. In 1924 a scheme was unveiled by which the Honorary Secretary of the LCSS Tuberculosis Care Committee<sup>38</sup> was only to communicate with the Chief Medical Officer through the Ministry of Health's representative in the Borough Council. The LCSS campaigned against the decision through a series of letters to *The Times*, but not unnaturally the issue did not arouse great public interest. It is clear from this encounter that the policy of co-operation between state and voluntary sector was reliant upon the state being able to take overall responsibility. When the state was determined to take control of welfare provision there was little the voluntary sector could do. The changes were almost always bureaucratic and decided by minor adjustments to procedure, which went largely unnoticed by the population at large. However for the LCSS and Nunn's tuberculosis policy it was clearly felt to be a crushing blow. The *London Supplement*, an attachment to the *Social Service Review* for London based subscribers which although anonymous was usually written by Nunn, stated the objections:

The County Council has unintentionally twisted one more strand into the rope for hanging the voluntary worker in London... To those of us who are endeavouring to preserve some equipoise between the just municipilization of certain services and voluntary enterprise in other services, the new arrangement seems to have overloaded the scales in favour of Municipal Socialism.... there is little hope of their [local Medical Officers of Health] entertaining the spirit in which the

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<sup>38</sup> Nunn's first wife Katherine.



County officials have encouraged the responsibility of voluntary administration.<sup>39</sup>

Relations between the LCSS and the London County Council became fraught following accusations of mechanical municipilization which ignored the will of the community. Complaints about the health workers from the Ministry of Health continuing to disinfect the houses of people who had been 'cured', and the boarding out of patient's children, were common place. In reality LCSS fears were not borne out and it soon became clear that tuberculosis was not going to be a major concern of the LCC. In July 1925 the Standing Conference of Metropolitan Tuberculosis Care Committees (held in County Hall) saw representatives from the LCSS Tuberculosis Care Committees, the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis<sup>40</sup>, and from the Metropolitan Borough Tuberculosis Care Committee meet under Nunn's chairmanship. The weight of influence which the conference wielded is open to question, but it was undoubtedly a success for the LCSS. Rather than being sidelined by the formation of the Ministry of Health, it had managed to carve a role as facilitator similar to that being undertaken by the NCSS in rural areas.<sup>41</sup> The conference was able to put forward definite suggestions to both the LCC and the ministry thereby enabling the LCSS, through Nunn, to be seen as representative of the various agencies concerned with tuberculosis control. The actual proposals themselves are worthy of note for the extent to which they mirror the Nunn's concern with healthy individuals, local communities, and co-operation between state and voluntary sectors. The conference 'deplored' the attempt by the

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<sup>39</sup> 'Municipal Socialism', *LS* (February, 1924), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> The NAPT used the event as their Annual Conference.

<sup>41</sup> See chapter four.

London County Council to board out children of consumptives because of its 'disintegrating effect upon the family'. Instead it proposed the replacement of London's two large sanatorium<sup>42</sup> with 'small, local homes, not restricted to the use of dying patients... within easy reach of relatives and the homelike comforts'. Open air school classes were also suggested and attempts by the then Minister of Health, Neville Chamberlain, to establish a fund to employ ex-patients in parks and to extend open spaces met with general approval.<sup>43</sup>

However, this apparently high degree of co-operation did not go so far as to allow agreement on specific spending pledges. By 1928 the LCSS was bemoaning the lack of official movement towards organised welfare provision in no uncertain terms.

We are awaiting the advent of a great statesman who will do the great thing - conceive and carry out an adequate scheme for the government of the capital of the British Commonwealth.<sup>44</sup>

There was also a shift in LCSS policy away from the official government line. This had followed the Maclean Report, which saw a distinction between the sanitary and economic aspects of ill health.<sup>45</sup> The London Council of Social Service now came to regard this division and hospitalisation in two separate units as impractical and unworkable

the two huge establishments to which chronic and advanced infectious patients are now sent, are regarded ... as an administrative

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<sup>42</sup> Colindale and Grove Park, the two LCC run sanatorium which between them, covered the whole of London.

<sup>43</sup> 'The Care and Control of Consumption', *LS* (July 1925), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> 'The Care of Consumptives', *LS* (February 1928), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Maclean Committee on the Coordination of Public Assistance.

blunder equal to the breaking up of the house by boarding out the children... the system of stacking patients in these vast buildings, lonely and hopeless, far from home and friends, deprived of local and family interests, yet carked by family anxieties, cannot commend itself to our humanity; and by its deterrent effect too often drives the advanced patient home to spread disease amongst his own folk.<sup>46</sup>

Instead a more holistic perception of illness was proposed. This would take into account not only the patient's treatment, but also post-treatment employment and housing and the effects of sanatorium care upon the rest of the family. These proposals were never going to be achieved in the interwar economic climate, but the attitudes they represented were to remain central to LCSS health policy throughout the interwar years.

In 1934 the London County Council instigated a Revised Draft Scheme for Home Care and for the Dispensary Service, which re-emphasised the need for small scale and local residential treatments. Undoubtedly this scheme was based at least in part upon close co-operation between the LCSS and the LCC. While of little concern to the general public, the new scheme incorporated many changes which matched LCSS philosophy. Firstly it abolished the Care Committee's assessment of tuberculosis sufferers ability to pay for sanatorium treatment; secondly it reinforced the 1929 Local Government Act, which shifted responsibility for tuberculosis care from Poor Law Guardians to County Councils. Thirdly the Public Health Department of the LCC assumed the responsibility to provide the vast majority of domiciliary aids (beds, bedding, shelters, nurses etc.). Clause 42 of the scheme went further and guaranteed that the County Minister of Health would provide any equipment which the Care Committees (still voluntary) could not provide. Although at first sight it may

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<sup>46</sup>'The Care of Consumptives', *LS* (February 1928), p. 3.

appear that the LCSS would be disappointed with a scheme which put the vast majority of responsibility with the municipal authority rather than with voluntary agencies, in fact the LCSS applauded it. In a published leaflet on the subject the LCSS argued that the reforms had emerged from the Standing Committee which was 'an almost ideal organ for the fusion of ideas relating to the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis between the official and voluntary elements in the Tuberculosis scheme'.<sup>47</sup> It should be remembered that for both the LCSS and the NCSS, who provided welfare was not as important as who was involved in the decisions. For the LCSS it was enough that 'all the Care Committees regard it as one of their first duties to relieve the misery and boredom that result from the loss of occupation entailed by tuberculosis'.<sup>48</sup> That this often meant borrowing ideas from the NCSS and providing handicraft classes and country walks, rather than actually curing the disease, did not in LCSS eyes mean a diminution of their role. Rather, the fact that the LCSS could to a large extent withdraw from curative welfare and rely upon the state to be the central provider in a co-ordinated system, involving both municipal and voluntary organisations, showed how close the various bodies had become.

LCSS policy laid a continued stress upon the organisation of welfare in order to strengthen the family and the community. Here can clearly be seen the way in which the ideas and values of Idealist citizenship had led to practical welfare policies. By encouraging the increased co-ordination of welfare, whereby organisations themselves came together in a spirit of co-operation, the London Council of Social Service could implement practical

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<sup>47</sup>LCSS, *Tuberculosis Care*, leaflet No 21 p.1.

welfare reforms through a bureaucratic reorganisation of the way in which problems were dealt with. LCSS aims were best achieved by changing the perception of the relevant authority about who was responsible for welfare reform, from the traditional pigeon-holing of duties towards a more co-operative outlook.

Look at the Tuberculosis problem from a slightly different angle. Sanatorium treatment would appear at first sight to belong to the Medical branch of the service; and yet there are many questions of Policy, Finance and organisation involved which must be decided ultimately by laymen on the Board of Management of Sanitoria on County Councils and in parliament. But all these important Bodies may have something to learn from the direct personal contact, pooled knowledge, and long experience of members of Tuberculosis Care Committees.<sup>49</sup>

## Housing

Idealist values were not only to be found in the London Council of Social Service's attitude to tuberculosis. The second major element of LCSS health policy was the provision of better housing and the establishment of a cleaner and 'more healthy' environment. This was perhaps the area where the LCSS felt the least compunction to working not simply with but actually under the state sector.

Although the voluntary sector had full state support for its involvement in housing immediately after the war, once the state had withdrawn from welfare provision in the 1930s,

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p.2.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Care of Consumptives', *LS* (February 1928), p.1.

charities were expected to bear the full responsibility for the poorest elements in society. It will be shown that in these circumstances of reduced fiscal opportunities, the Idealist values of citizenship, community and co-operation became much more prominent.

Unlike tuberculosis, responsibility for housing provision under the Artisans Dwellings Act (1875) and the Housing of the Working Classes Acts (1885 and 1890) had been a major concern of the London County Council since its formation in 1889. The implementation of these acts was to mean that by 1914 there were two quite distinct attitudes to those who lived in the slums of London.

The traditional view was that bad housing was the root both of poor health and of a deficient 'moral character'. This view had been perpetuated by the multitude of books published on the subject<sup>50</sup> and through the reports of borough inspectors to the London County Council. In the mid-nineteenth century Macaulay had said that 'if people are forced to live in hog-sites they begin to behave like hogs'. Seventy years later one inspector, apparently unwittingly, linked housing, health and character in virtually the same way.

One of the serious risks of these... houses is the women... we have down there the dregs of the clearance of Kensington and Marylebone, and the old slums... they went down there and kept pigs and the County Council would not allow them to keep pigs, and the pigs were moved out of the County.

*Q.* And the survivors?

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<sup>50</sup> For example W. Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890); A. Mearns, *The bitter cry of outcast London* (1883); G. R. Sims, *How the poor live and Horrible London* (1889).

A. Became pigs themselves some of them.<sup>51</sup>

As a result the County Council had between 1890 and 1914 completed the six housing schemes started by its predecessor the Metropolitan Board.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore it had started its own clearance and rebuilding programme. This had involved the demolition of 58 acres of slum housing and the redevelopment of central London involving blocks of buildings containing 12,444 rooms predominately in two or three roomed flats. It had also built housing estates both in central London and, because of the improved tram services which linked outlying areas to areas of production, in the suburbs. As Inwood has noted 'by 1914 there were large LCC estates in Tooting (4,496 rooms), Hammersmith (1,079 rooms), Croydon (1,790 rooms), White Hart Lane, Tottenham (3,444 rooms) and smaller estates in Brixton, Islington and Deptford'.<sup>53</sup> These houses were intended to be 'a triumph of municipal enterprise, and the beginning of a new era in which working people could live in decent suburban accommodation without dependence on private charity'.<sup>54</sup>

However, this official perception of poor housing as linked to both health and character was paradoxically to lead to a more draconian attitude towards slum dwellers and eventually worse conditions for the very poor. The new houses were not cheap to build and they came

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<sup>51</sup> Testimony of William Crains, Chair of the Public Health Committee of the Borough of Kensington taken from S. Pennybacker, *A Vision for London 1889-1914: labour, everyday life and the LCC experiment* (London, Routledge, 1995), p.187.

<sup>52</sup> The following statistics are based on S. Inwood, op cit. pp 536-540.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.* p 537.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* p. 537-8.

to be occupied not by those whose slum houses had been demolished but by the skilled working classes who could afford the high rents. This problem was not appreciated at the time firstly because of a belief among many housing reformers and implicit in the Public Health Acts of 1875 and 1899 that housing was plentiful if only the poor would not live above their means. Secondly it was felt that once the new houses had been occupied the skilled working class would leave their houses empty and thus available for those leaving the slums.<sup>55</sup>

In practice however this was not to happen as the empty houses were both too expensive and too small for the normally large families of the very poor. Instead borough inspectors were required to evict families from 'unfit' properties forcing them to go to another borough where they could find houses they could afford. This, as one inspector said, meant that 'The poor are hunted from pillar to post, but the housing problem remains unsolved... We shift the position of the housing problem but never solve it'.<sup>56</sup> Understandably this led to extremely high rates both of overcrowding and homelessness.<sup>57</sup>

This phenomenon was understood not as a legislative problem but as a question of character. The Royal Commission on London Traffic which reported in 1905 and 1906 argued that the

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<sup>55</sup> See G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* op. cit. pp 198-199 for an outline of this 'levelling up' theory.

<sup>56</sup> Statement to the London County Council's Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904) taken from S. Pennybacker, op cit. p. 190.

<sup>57</sup> An LCC report timed to coincide with the Report on Physical Deterioration (1904) which followed the Boer War stated that 28,896 people lived in the 451 supervised houses and that one in every two thousand Londoners was homeless.



decline of central London industries caused by the suburban expansion meant that the surplus workforce would migrate to those areas of higher employment, leaving only the 'undeserving poor' behind. As Stedman Jones has explained

In social Darwinist terms declining industries were a demonstration of the theory of natural selection. Fit and efficient workers would move away in search of better economic opportunities... Thus the overcrowding of the very poor was attributed ...to 'criminal fecklessness' or the 'pauper taint'.<sup>58</sup>

By 1919, however, it seemed that the issue was at last to receive the government attention it deserved. Lloyd George had famously emphasised the need for 'Homes fit for Heroes', the King had stressed the need for reform in addresses to members of all the major Councils, including the LCC<sup>59</sup>, the Ministry of Reconstruction under Addison had accepted that state subsidies would be needed if the rent controls of 1915 were to be kept in place, and in 1920 the London County Council planned to build the largest housing estate in the world at Becontree.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore the Housing and Town Planning Act (1919) *required* local authorities to build housing and subsidised both council and private building. However, economic retrenchment meant that Addison's grand plans were never to be realised and after his ejection from the government in 1921, the local authority house building programme was

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<sup>58</sup> G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, op. cit. p. 329.

<sup>59</sup> P. B. Johnson, *Land Fit For Heroes: The planning of British Reconstruction 1916-1919* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 354.

<sup>60</sup> A. Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing in England between the Wars: The Becontree Estate* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997).

discontinued.<sup>61</sup> The LCSS housing policy must be seen in this light, as it presents a particularly good example of how interwar voluntary agencies went from working under a dynamic, socially minded government in the early 1920's to dominating welfare provision once the state had implemented a policy of retrenchment. In such circumstances it is clear that concepts of citizenship, community and co-operation, though always present, were emphasised much more strongly once state money had run out.

The Social Welfare Association for London<sup>62</sup> had first become concerned with the problem of homelessness as a result of Nunn's part in the campaign to centralise provision for the London homeless under the Metropolitan Asylums Board in 1911. This policy, although still championed by the mid 1920's,<sup>63</sup> was achieved through an extension of the Metropolitan Poor Act (1867) whereby 'vagrants' were now classed alongside the 'sick, insane and infirm' as needing asylum relief.<sup>64</sup> However, whilst housing had not even been mentioned as an LCSS concern in its first annual report of 1919/20, it became rapidly clear that a reclassification of the homeless was not going to be enough and a distinct policy would be needed.

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<sup>61</sup> Of the 29,000 houses planned by the LCC in 1919 only 8,799 were built to Addison's design. Those later built under the Chamberlain and Wheatley Acts relied on private enterprise after 1925. J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985* (London, Routledge, second edition 1986).

<sup>62</sup> To all intents and purposes the Hampstead CSW.

<sup>63</sup> 'The Saturday Man' *London Supplement* (January 1924); *The Salvage of the Homeless Poor*, LCSS leaflet 3 (1928).

<sup>64</sup> It is important to note that asylums for the homeless were centred around physical, rather than mental health.

The LCSS, like many other organisations, saw three inter-linked elements to the housing problem; homelessness, overcrowding and poor conditions. However, the latter of these was left almost entirely to the Municipal Authorities. LCSS activity was primarily centred around solving the problems of homelessness and overcrowding. These problems were addressed through the forum of the Mansion House Council on Health and Housing which was established in 1924 and on which the LCSS was heavily represented. There followed a large scale enquiry into the 'housing question', which entailed the LCSS publishing the major speeches of the Mansion House Committee and sending out requests for information to Borough Councils and relevant voluntary bodies. Yet again the LCSS was not simply working *with*, but was in fact acting *under* the auspices of, and, to all intents and purposes, doing the investigative work for the London County Council. As a result the Mansion House forum stated that it would concentrate policy in three areas: '(a) the conversion of empty houses into flats; (b) building by owner occupiers; (c) provision of houses or flats under the management of local authorities'.<sup>65</sup> This exactly mirrored municipal policy.

In fact such a policy grew out of the constraints put upon the London County Council throughout the interwar period. Although this was the first great period of suburbanisation of London, this was not due to the effort of the LCC. In Essex, for example, Ilford grew by 96 percent between 1921 and 1939 and even larger growths were seen in other suburbs during the same period: Barking (116 percent), Romford (163 percent), Billericay (179 percent), Chingford (295 percent), Hornchurch (335 percent) and Dagenham (a staggering 1,076

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<sup>65</sup>'The Present Position of the Housing Question in London', *LS* (March 1925), p.1.

percent).<sup>66</sup> Far from being a centrally planned development, the primary reason for this growth was the entirely profit orientated collaboration between property developers and transport companies. As Porter has made clear

It was regarded as certain, and it was nearly always the case, that good transport facilities on the outskirts of London would quickly attract suburban settlement. This was the assumption, based on many decades of experience, that persuaded the heads of the Underground group... to drive their electric lines into the countryside, and the calculation that encouraged landowners and developers to subsidise the building of new stations in their districts.<sup>67</sup>

Such rapid growth was never matched by the London County Council. The high building costs which immediately followed the war made the Addison scheme to house 145,000 Londoners unfeasible and the plan was abandoned in 1921. Furthermore, Conservative legislation after 1922 encouraged the building of subsidised private housing intended for middle class occupants with building society mortgages. Even when in 1924 the Labour government passed the Wheatley Act, which subsidised 64,000 LCC and borough council houses, the overall effect was that policy was dictated by the whim of national government rather than by the LCC itself. In 1933 subsidies for all types of suburban housing were removed, again by central government. The failure of the LCC to complete the flagship Becontree estate until 1935, and then without the necessary economic infra-structure, turned many potential supporters away from the idea of community orientated suburbs. As the senior NCSS figure Henry Mess stated

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<sup>66</sup> Figures taken from R. Porter, *op cit.* p. 716.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

To build 22,000 houses and to assemble 22,000 families does not in itself create a town; it creates a wilderness of puzzled and discontented persons.<sup>68</sup>

As a result although LCC, and indeed LCSS, policies did support housing which would foster community, and there was some comment that the unemployed should not stay in their community if they could find work elsewhere, the main emphasis was placed upon the revitalising of present communities rather than the building of new ones. Indeed the Committee's inquiry found that most boroughs expected inward, rather than outward, migration. The inquiry also found that the number of large empty buildings which could be converted into tenements had been over estimated and that 'there was no means of bringing about cheap housing except by encouraging competition'.<sup>69</sup> This meant increasing government incentives to builders to build houses and by encouraging a change in building conglomerate's attitudes to the provision of homes.

In Parliament, on the County Council, in the Borough Councils, one hears the laboured explanations of the shortage of working-class houses. It is the lack of labour; it is the lack of material; it is the restrictive action of the Ministry of Health. In the meantime one walks down Regent Street and witnesses colossal building operations "to heap the shrine of luxury and pride"; and the truth comes home that the building industry is in the hands of a powerful combine that corners building for its own profit without care for the community.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> H. A. Mess in W. A. Robson, *The Government and Misgovernment of London* (London, G. Allen and Unwin, 1948).

<sup>69</sup> 'Economic Housing' *LS* (June 1924), p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> 'Housing and Labour' *LS* (August 1925), p. 1.

The policies of the LCSS reflected the belief that the private companies, who dominated the building market, were not prepared to build tenements because of the economic risk involved. Moreover private building projects in other areas meant a lack of skilled labour, which in turn prohibited any LCC building projects.

As to a 15 years' programme, the purchase and progressive development by the Council of large estates, coupled with the Council's decision to provide 12,000 to 13,000 houses a year, gives a practical pledge of the continuity of their policy. [However] Sir Edgar Bonham-Carter and Major Barnes<sup>71</sup> estimate that to carry out this last decision, if only two-thirds of the houses were brick built, it would be necessary for the County Council to employ 7,000 skilled men. At present it can command only 1,700. And our unemployed youth are rotting at all corners, whilst their homes are too over-crowded for common decency.<sup>72</sup>

However the LCSS avoided directly criticising the council and instead criticised the 'situation'. In the editorial quoted above, the Bishop of Southwark and Herbert Morrison were both portrayed as individuals trying their best to get answers from the County Council's Housing Committee. Similarly the Chair of the LCC Housing Committee, a Mr. Levita, had given 'elaborate replies' but was faced with the seemingly insurmountable problem that 'labour organisations' and the building industry were only concerned with their own interests rather than the interests of those living in unsanitary conditions. The fault, then, lay not with those working with and for the LCC, who were portrayed as people searching for the best solution, but with self interest and a lack of co-operation elsewhere. Here is an excellent example of the way in which, in public at least, official LCSS policy was based on the

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<sup>71</sup>Both LCSS members with positions on the executive of the Mansion House Committee.

<sup>72</sup>'Housing and Labour' *LS* (August 1925), p. 1.

principle that if people worked together good could be done, but unless they worked together it had no chance.

The enquiry seems to have revealed more problems than answers and therefore, as so often in the interwar years, the emphasis shifted from practical welfare policies to changing the attitudes of welfare recipients. The various Housing Associations had always played the primary role on the Mansion House Committee, but by 1929 the talk had shifted from one of the LCC providing '12,000 to 13,000 houses' to the Housing Associations 'educating the Public on the Slum Problem... supplementing and stimulating the Local Authorities... providing to the limit of their scant resources dwellings for families unable to pay the rent'.<sup>73</sup>

It was no longer a matter of 'pointing out the (often disregarded) powers of their [Borough] Councils in this important matter'<sup>74</sup> rather

the authorities by themselves, unaided by voluntary effort and the public conscience, will never - I say *never* - free our civilisation from this octopus of the slums. It is too much of a human problem. It needs the close confidence and personal goodwill which these Housing Societies alone can provide. Without that - pull down slums here, they will grow up there.<sup>75</sup>

There was, then, on the part of the London Council of Social Service and the London County Council a distinct shift away from state provision and towards less expensive solutions. Obviously this phenomenon was not unique to housing in London after 1925, but it is

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<sup>73</sup> *A Broadcast Appeal*, LCSS leaflet 10, 1929 (my emphasis).

<sup>74</sup> F. Nunn, op cit. p. 162.

<sup>75</sup> *A Broadcast Appeal*, op cit. p. 2 (emphasis in original).

interesting in the sense that the provision of housing, perhaps more than any other area, was one in which the LCSS had felt no compunction whatsoever about working under the state. While the tuberculosis conference had been seen, at least by the LCSS, as a meeting of voluntary practice with municipal infrastructure, the Mansion House Committee on Health and Housing had always been seen as leading the way both in policy and in practice. The *London Supplement of the Social Service Review* announced in 1928 that 'a series of conferences, held since the Prime Minister refused a Royal Commission on the Housing of the poorest classes showed that the Housing Associations and kindred societies in the Metropolis desired to form a union by which their knowledge might be increased and their power strengthened'.<sup>76</sup> This was presented as the birth of a strong new organisation. In fact the Joint Committee which soon emerged only came into existence because the LCC was unable to make any serious headway and because the new houses were not to be forthcoming.

However, although the plans to build new houses did not come to fruition this does not mean that governments washed their hands of the subject. There was, throughout the interwar years, a continued emphasis from both Labour and National governments on solving the 'problem of the slums'. The Labour Health Secretary Arthur Greenwood passed the Housing Act (1930) which subsidised local authorities in accordance with the number of families they rehoused. Neville Chamberlain continued this policy for the National Government by passing the Housing Act (1935) which made it a criminal offence for a local authority to do nothing about overcrowding. However these acts were not sufficiently effective. Although the problem of the slums was undoubtedly given more publicity, and there was a noticeable

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<sup>76</sup>'A New Housing Body' *LS* (February 1928), p. 3.



change in attitude amongst voluntary societies and borough councillors to the poorest areas, very little was actually done.

In 1927 the LCSS published comments upon the annual reports made by fifteen out of the twenty-nine Borough Medical Officers of Health.<sup>77</sup> These all, with the exception of Westminster, complained of a lack of tenement housing, increased overcrowding and a shortage of funds. The LCSS remorselessly exposed these deficiencies noting 'no new houses have been erected in Bermondsey either by local authority or by private enterprise'.<sup>78</sup>

And in Camberwell in observed

In 1925 another seven acres of house, accommodating 754 persons living under insanitary conditions were marked out for clearance and for the erection of buildings to accommodate 2,020 persons. *In the middle of 1927 the decision of the Ministry of Health is not yet known.*

During 1926 an insanitary area containing 125 houses and 758 persons was represented to the County, by the Borough, Council. *The Ministry has not yet held the customary local enquiry.*<sup>79</sup>

Even relatively salubrious areas such as Hampstead were not immune

There is still a scarcity of housing accommodation, and the Housing Committee has not been able to bring to maturity any plans for further amelioration.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>The reports were published between May and August 1927 by which time only 15 were available to the public.

<sup>78</sup>'The Slum Still With Us III', *LS* (July 1927), p. 1.

<sup>79</sup>'The Slum Still With Us IV', *LS* (August 1927), p. 1.

<sup>80</sup>'The Slum Still With Us II', *LS* (June 1927), p. 2.

Nevertheless the concern with the environmental conditions rather than simply the standard of housing was clearly reflected in LCSS policy. In 1924 the LCSS became involved in the campaign to preserve and protect 'Open Spaces'. This meant parks and playing fields or, more often, 'squares' of cultivated land around which houses were built. Despite the policy of retrenchment, the campaign was given a surprisingly optimistic billing by the *London Supplement*.

Amidst the gloom of London misgovernment, the piecemeal legislation that blocks the road to unity, the dislocation of her transport, the barricading of her streets by a variety of incoordinate authorities, the inadequacy of her bridges, her careless sufferance of the pall of smoke that separates her from the sun, and the general mess and litter and ugliness which her citizens tolerate - to say nothing of her inner and deeper disgraces - there is at the present moment one bright spot upon which it is good to dwell. Public spirit and social enterprise have led individual benefactors and corporate Bodies to keep up a running fight for Open Spaces. This instinctive struggle for fresh air shows signs of ever increasing vitality.<sup>81</sup>

Again criticism of the way in which London was governed was quickly followed by a 'good news story' championing 'public spirit'. Although this campaign did little for those suffering from the worse housing conditions, it illustrates the failure of LCSS housing policy after an initially promising start. In March 1927 the *London Supplement* wrote that 'The attempt which is being made to secure the preservation of the Garden Squares of London is one which claims the earnest help of all social workers. It is no new attempt, but the present endeavour gives better promise of achievement than any made during the past fifty years'.<sup>82</sup> By July of that year the Supplement reported that 'The resolution appearing in our March

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<sup>81</sup> 'A Great Opportunity', *LS* (May 1924), p.1.

issue was forwarded to the London County Council... Before June was out the Government announced its intention to appoint a Royal Commission'.<sup>83</sup> However, although the Commission's findings were broadly applauded by the LCSS, the November 1928 issue of the London Supplement contained the ominous lines 'Mr. Neville Chamberlain says that no controversial bill can be passed this session; and we fear that a little cloud has arisen on the horizon which if it has time may prove a formidable menace'.<sup>84</sup> For the next ten years phrases such as 'no controversial bill can be passed this session' were to haunt the LCSS.

Nevertheless the 'health' work of the London Council of Social Service both providing relief for those suffering from tuberculosis and in housing reform tells us much about the ways in which the conceptions of Idealist citizenship were transmuted into practical policy. The LCSS had successfully organised the co-ordination of charitable effort through a policy of co-operation. This co-operation both with other charitable bodies and with the London County Council was a major development from the policies of the Charity Organisation Society. Rather than criticising state welfare and attempting to control voluntary work the London Council of Social Service evoked the Idealist concept that individuals had a duty to serve their community and created a series of bureaucratic systems where organisations took on those responsibilities. In this way the LCSS was able to place the values of Idealist citizenship at the centre of welfare provision.

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<sup>82</sup> C. Lake, 'The Garden Squares of London', *LS* (March 1927), p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> 'The London Squares', *LS* (July 1927), p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> 'The London Squares', *LS* (Nov 1928), p. 3.

It could be argued, however, that these were not the policies of Idealists but simply of pragmatists. By working with the County Council the LCSS was more likely to promote its policies than by working against it. However, it must be remembered that the London Council of Social Service was primarily attempting to increase co-operation rather than implement policy. Although it did have specific policies which it approved of, usually those which strengthened the family, its main aim was constantly the co-operation of voluntary and statutory sectors. As such its policy of working with the County Council was itself a success. It was able for example to bring together all the bodies who had representatives on the LCSS with the various departments of the LCC. It is this facilitation of health policy that should be regarded as the main aim of the London Council of Social Service and its main success. Furthermore this policy was consistent with Idealist aims, even if accepted for other reasons.

Nevertheless, the LCSS was not simply concerned with health issues. Unemployment came to dominate the activities of many charitable organisations from the late 1920's until the Second World War. Yet while many parts of the country saw the disintegration of whole communities as dominant large-scale industries collapsed, London was much less dependent on a single industry and its recovery after 1931-2 was more rapid. Although it suffered higher than usual unemployment levels, it did not see the massive upheavals which occurred elsewhere. The immediate post war slump saw unemployment among manual workers in London at similar levels to the national average (14 percent). However it fell to only five or six percent of insured workers during the later 1920's when the national average was over ten percent. This trend continued throughout the interwar period until, as Inwood has pointed out 'in 1932, the worst year of the world depression, Greater London's rate was 13.7 percent,

compared with the Midlands' 20 percent, the North's 27 percent, Scotland's 28 percent, and a national average of 22 percent.'<sup>85</sup>

This difference was undoubtedly reflected in LCSS policy. While the National Council concentrated upon the well-being of those suffering the effects of long term unemployment, the London Council of Social Service was more concerned with the transition from education to employment, and the effect which unemployment could have upon school leavers. This followed a traditional Edwardian concern which Bakan has identified as recreating the adolescent as a 'social fact' rather than an 'idea'.<sup>86</sup> Indeed it is studies of the pre-war period which give the best descriptions of the problems which the LCSS perceived throughout the 1920s.

Given the close relationship between the occupational behaviour of working-class adolescents and their 'personality', reformers faced certain difficulties: how to imbue them with approved ethical principles; how to turn them into efficient workers; how effectively to reorganise the labour-market for social and economic ends.<sup>87</sup>

As Hendrick has shown many social reformers before 1914 saw that the best way to achieve their ends

was actually to take control of the youth's entry into full time wage earning, in order to control the transition from school to work and, by

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<sup>85</sup> S. Inwood, op cit. p. 727. See also W. R. Garside, *British Unemployment 1919-1939: A study in public policy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 9-10.

<sup>86</sup> D. Bakan, 'Adolescence in America: From Idea to Social Fact' quoted in H. Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age Class and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1990), p. 251 n.3.

<sup>87</sup> H. Hendrick, op cit., p. 253.

offering vocational guidance and encouraging attendance at continuation schools together with an after care system, to set initial standards with regard to attitudes and behaviour.<sup>88</sup>

This was particularly true in London after 1918. For the LCSS there was a clear link between education, employment and morality, as a London Supplement entitled 'A Charter of Youth' made clear:

During the period of unemployment that has followed the war the London Council of Social Service and the local Councils in London have thought much on the means, by which the youth of England may be given a fairway to full development.<sup>89</sup>

This thought led to the conclusion that the 'youth of England' needed 'unity of action' on two fronts. Firstly children needed to grow up in a healthy environment, and secondly school leavers needed to know what employment was available to them. While the health of children was usually dealt with by those organisations already considering adult health (see above), school leavers were often the subject of quite separate campaigns by the LCSS. In essence the London Council of Social Service, like many other organisations, saw school leavers as particularly susceptible to both good and bad influences. As a result there was a concerted effort to encourage them to live the lives of good citizens. In this respect the LCSS incorporated three distinct strands of pre and interwar welfare thought, i.e. they campaigned for a higher school leaving age; they were concerned with finding 'suitable' employment for young people; and lastly they associated with the moral crusade against alcohol and gambling, which it was feared led many young people astray. These three campaigns came together within the LCSS to produce a formidable union.

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

The movement for 'Secondary Education for All', in the LCSS at least, owed a lot to the failure of an earlier crusade for day continuation schools. These schools have divided historians of British educational policy into two camps. On the one hand most histories have rather glossed over the whole business as a failed attempt on the part of reformers to increase the school leaving age by the back door. On the other hand a few commentators have seen the ideas, if not the policies, as indicative of a different type of progressive thought.<sup>90</sup>

The continuation schools had been brought into existence by the 1862 Education Code but attracted the greatest attention between the turn of the century and the First World War. For many progressive organisations, such as the Liberal dominated Education Reform Council and the socialist Workers Educational Association, the debate over continuation schools was central to their attempts to promote ideals consistent with the values of citizenship.

The promotion of 'service', mediated via citizenship, was a constant theme throughout the debate on part-time day continuation schools because more than any other single aspect it emphasised the moral value of working conscientiously in a given occupation in order to contribute to the welfare of the community... Reformers were seeking to integrate working-class adolescents into the 'common good' by means of an educational programme which it was hoped would lead them to internalise the community perspective.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> 'A Charter of Youth', *LS* (December 1925), p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> B. Simon, *The Politics of Educational Reform 1920-1940* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 16; H. Hendrick, *op cit.*, p. 214; D. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', *History of Education* (Spring 1975), pp. 36-50.

<sup>91</sup> H. Hendrick, *op. cit.* pp. 243-44.

Furthermore they were one of the means by which 'blind alley' employment could be addressed. It was felt that if the schools were made compulsory for all those who left education below the age of fifteen, there would be fewer unskilled juveniles entering an already overcrowded marketplace. These sentiments, despite slight watering down, were reflected in Fisher's Education Act of 1918<sup>92</sup> and as Hendrick has pointed out 'the part-time day continuation school looked set to become a permanent feature of the British educational system'.<sup>93</sup> However, as with most interwar welfare proposals, bright starts soon turned to missed opportunities. Ironically because the depression hit unskilled young workers earlier than those already in work, the economy was never able to support those who most needed help, and by 1922 all the schools except Rugby had closed.

This failure had great import in that it strengthened the hand of those campaigning for compulsory full time secondary education until fifteen. The LCSS to a large extent followed these lines, as its Charter of Youth made clear. Lamenting the failure of the Industrial Choice scheme<sup>94</sup> it called for reform in four areas. Firstly adolescents should not undertake an 'independent industrial life until the sixteenth year', secondly the Board of Education and the Ministry of Labour should have greater contact with voluntary organisations. Furthermore

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<sup>92</sup> Continuation classes for 16-18 year olds were postponed until 1925. Fisher stated in 1917 that the 'governing conception' of his Education Bill was to ensure 'the production of good citizens'. H. Hendrick, *op cit.* p. 245.

<sup>93</sup> H. Hendrick, *op cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>94</sup> A short lived scheme set up as part of the 1923 Insurance Act which allowed Higher Educational Authorities to take over the administration of unemployment benefits to young people 'and thus to secure the full supervision of adolescence that might have crowned its splendid educational output of twenty years'. The LCC refused the opportunity.



social workers should organise school and after-school clubs 'so that the befriender or mentor needed by some young persons be found in one who has already gained the confidence of the lad or girl'. Lastly guides should be published to give accurate information of progress. These show clearly the way in which the LCSS, like the NCSS, could amalgamate opinion from many different voluntary organisations. The call for education until sixteen was optimistic to say the least but it reflected informed left wing opinion.<sup>95</sup> However the co-operation of the Board of Education and Ministry of Labour was a reflection of the *Liberal* conceptions which had led to the Continuation Schools and saw bureaucratic reorganisation as the key to welfare reform. The demand for clubs and societies was typical of most welfare organisations, not least of which was the NCSS, and the call for publications is typical of Nunn's adoption of 'scientifically organised' welfare whereby all groups were constantly informed of latest developments. While the LCSS was never a major educational reforming body, and the Industrial Choice campaign was never truly influential, these four points do typify the extent to which both the National and London Councils of Social Service reflected opinion from a wide range of bodies concerned with welfare and attempted to find common ground for them to campaign on. As the introduction to *A Charter of Youth* makes clear

The following notes may serve to focus a few of the aims of Social workers. Without some concentration unity of action is impossible. Unity and co-operation will win all we want. We must first find out what we want.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Although the Labour Party failed to act decisively on the question Garside has shown that within the party an informed minority of educationalists led by Trevelyan at the Board of Education were stressing the links between juvenile unemployment and the school leaving age. W. R. Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', *Economic History Review*, XXX, 2 (1977), pp. 322-39.

<sup>96</sup> 'A Charter of Youth', *LS* (December 1925), p. 1.

For the next decade the LCSS continued to press for reform of juvenile employment through extended education and the instigation of clubs which would provide advice and instil the 'correct' values into young people.

The adolescent job market was a consistent concern of governments throughout the interwar years as they struggled to come to terms with two factors. Firstly those young people identified by the Board of Education who had been pushed into high wage temporary war work and later found themselves unemployed and untrained.<sup>97</sup> Secondly, that the depression seemed to have affected young people earlier and more profoundly than any other group.<sup>98</sup>

Hendrick has stated that 'Broadly speaking the interest of the State in vocational guidance, registration and placement, and after-care, marks the beginnings of its concern with wage-earning youth, which was to develop over the next twenty years with the formation of the Juvenile Organisations Committee in 1916'.<sup>99</sup> The LCSS were never going to allow themselves to be left out of this development and in 1924 representatives were sent by the

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<sup>97</sup> *Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in Relation to Employment After the War*, Cmnd. 8512 (1917).

<sup>98</sup> Juvenile Unemployment has not been the subject of large scale detailed statistical studies due to the paucity of Ministry of Labour figures which meant that there was no comprehensive index of the rate of Juvenile unemployment until 1934. K. Burgess, 'Youth Unemployment Policy during the 1930s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 1 (1995), pp. 23-55.

<sup>99</sup> H. Hendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

London Council to the Joint Council of London Juvenile Organisations.<sup>100</sup> Here they soon became involved in the provision of the Juvenile Unemployment Centres which had closed in February.<sup>101</sup> Amongst other reasons for the failure of the JUC's the LCSS lamented that the Board of Education refused to recognise teaching as a pensionable service. This meant a lack of teachers, which coincided with student lack of participation to produce poor results on their reopening. The London Supplement commented that

of 3,264 Juveniles on the live registers of the Employment Exchanges only 2,048 attended the Centres on their opening, and their numbers had decreased by almost 50 percent by Christmas.<sup>102</sup>

The General Strike sounded the death knell of these bodies. Staff had neither the time or resources to deal with juvenile and adult claims and the number of JUC's fell from 12 in 1925 to just 1 by August 1927.<sup>103</sup>

Growing state involvement in the employment and education of juvenile boys was echoed in the provision of clubs and societies. Organisations such as Local Education Authorities in 1902 and Juvenile Advisory Committees in 1910 were intended to allow local Councils to co-

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<sup>100</sup> Four LCSS members served on the Executive and a grant of £150 per annum was promised.

<sup>101</sup> For a brief but excellent discussion of the failings of the JUC's see W. R. Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', *op cit.* pp. 322-339.

<sup>102</sup> 'Report on Annual Report of the LCC (1923): Part IV Education', *LS* (November 1924), p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> 'The Third Annual Report of the London Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment', *LS* (August 1927), p. 3.

ordinate education and employment for young people. However as Hendrick has pointed out 'not only were these statutory bodies to work with the voluntary sector, but much of the day-to-day running of the new 'services' would continue to rely on volunteers from the youth groups for their time and expertise were essential if the new schemes were to be viable'.<sup>104</sup>

As a result the London Council of Social Service echoed the National Council's club policy, but applied it to juveniles instead of adults. In one of the first ever London Supplements Nunn stressed that

More leaders; more accommodation; more playing field - these are the three obvious needs. Less recognised is the need for a larger outlook, and for representative Council of Youth in every Borough, through which the clubs may federate and enter, first upon a larger life, and through that to the public life of the community of which their members will soon be citizens.<sup>105</sup>

Comments such as this are clearly indicative of the marked similarity between NCSS and LCSS philosophy which one would expect and which was mirrored in the parallel use of terms associated with good 'citizens'. One report of a not untypical speech by Nunn to school leavers gives evidence of this.

Mr Nunn reminded them that they had been born and that shortly after that a good deal of fuss had been made about them when they received their Christian names; the same would happen to them, after falling in love, when they came to be married; and again when they died the event would be equally marked by their remaining friends. Their Headmasters and Mistresses and the speaker and his friends on the Clubs Committee all felt that their leaving school and going out into industry off their own bat was an event of almost equal importance; so they had gathered them together to say farewell and good-bye to them... He wanted them to hold fast by two of the great

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<sup>104</sup> H. Hendrick, *op. cit.* p. 180.

<sup>105</sup> 'Club Development', *LS* (December 1924), p. 3.

things they had possessed themselves of at school, Knowledge and Friendship. He commended to them the Evening Institute next door and the various Clubs which they would be invited individually to choose from and join.<sup>106</sup>

The clubs were primarily concerned with those children who left school at 14 and who had been unable to find or keep work. However like so much welfare policy in London they were doomed to failure. As the depression worsened the clubs became less and less relevant to the lives of young people. In 1926 a LCC Education Committee Inquiry found that 67 percent of school leavers 'failed to secure either continued education, or continued recreation by means of clubs' and despite repeated attempts the clubs failed to take off.

## Morality

Clubs were not solely designed to provide employment. They were also intended to be a fraternity where young people could learn values which would make them better citizens. The work of the London Council in promoting 'morality' gives an excellent insight into the way in which organisations without a necessarily Idealist background could still be drawn in under the LCSS umbrella.

Aside from the interest of various denominations of religious belief the LCSS also dealt with groups and organisations which were established solely to promote 'morality'. These included the London Public Morality Council, the National Anti-Gambling League and some

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<sup>106</sup>'A School Leavers Party', *LS* (November, 1925), pp. 2-3.

of the many local Vigilance Committees which had been operating in London since the late 1880's. It is worth examining the work of some of these groups in order to understand the way in which the LCSS was able to facilitate their work, despite their lack of an inherently Idealist ideology.

The London Council for Public Morality (LCPM) had acted under a variety of names. It had superseded the National Vigilance Association of London in 1899 (although the NVA remained the National body until 1952), which, in 1885, had succeeded the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Although, for a short period it had been called the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality it was, by 1920 firmly established as the LCPM. The National Vigilance Association had originally been formed following W. T. Stead's articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which described the levels of 'corruption and vice' in London. After a series of public meetings the Association was formed 'for the enforcement and improvement of the laws [and] for the repression of criminal vice and public immorality'. Members of the General Council of the NVA included Mrs Fawcett, Mrs Percy Bunting, Rt. Hon J. Stansfeld MP, Mr W. T. Stead, Miss Ellice Hopkins, Mrs Mitchell, Mrs Lynch, Miss Bewicke, Mrs Bradley and Mrs Josephine Butler. As had been the case for the National Vigilance Association, the LCPM had a series of sub-committees which dealt with preventive, legal, organisational, parliamentary and municipal matters, and with registries, enquiries, the suppression of foreign traffic, finance and literature. Plagued by financial difficulties throughout the inter-war years, the NVA took something of a backseat in London leaving the

LCPM with a relatively free hand.<sup>107</sup> The LCPM had acquired fame of a sort before 1920 by bringing a private prosecution for obscenity against D. H. Lawrence over the publication of *The Rainbow* in 1915 and had succeeded in having the book withdrawn from sale. They had also been at the forefront of the campaign to stop the ‘immoral’ practice of ‘nude bathing’ on British beaches.<sup>108</sup> Its representatives on the London Council were its Secretary, Howard M. Tyrer and its Chairman, Rev. George Kendall.<sup>109</sup>

Another body represented on the full council of the LCSS was the National Anti-Gambling League. Although little historical attention has been paid to the League’s work in the twentieth century,<sup>110</sup> the *London Supplement* often quoted its representative John Gulland when discussing the issue of gambling, alongside the social reformer the Rev. Henry Carter.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> The records of the NVA are available in the Fawcett Library Archives, London Guildhall University GB/106/4/NVA2. The London Council for Public Morality papers can be viewed at the London Metropolitan Archives, under the National Register of Archives reference NRA 27171 PMC.

<sup>108</sup> G. Otten ‘Spies On Beachy Head’, *ScotsGay Magazine* (January, 1996). In fact the prohibitive nature of the LCPM was not always to Nunn’s taste. In a short review of their work in the *London Supplement* he wrote that ‘One hardly likes to suggest one line of action where so many are being followed up with energy, tact, and common sense; but, as the Council’s name suggests the promotion of morality rather than the suppression of immorality, would it be possible to draw the attention of the public to... factors in our social life that are not of evil?’, ‘The London Council for the promotion of Public Morality’, *LS* (August, 1924), p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> George Kendall M.A. was born in 1883 and became Headmaster of the London Orphan School after leaving Wellington College.

<sup>110</sup> For its work before 1901 see M. Huggins, “More Sinful Pleasures? Leisure, Responsibility and the male Middle Classes in Victorian England”, *Journal of Social History*, 33, 3 (2000).

<sup>111</sup> Carter did not sit on the LCSS but he was often mentioned in *London Supplement* editorials and was known to have worked closely with the Anti-Gambling League. Born in

These individuals and organisations all had very specific agendas which did not involve conceptions of Idealist citizenship. Why then did they come to work within the LCSS? The answer must be that the LCSS was not intending to promote Idealist based welfare provision in an evangelical way but was attempting to bring charities, organisations and the state together, embodying the concept of the Idealist citizen by agreeing to work together for a common good. The LCSS made no attempt to control the actual work of these organisations, it merely facilitated their co-operation through a form of bureaucratic citizenship.

For example in June 1926 the *London Supplement* carried an editorial under the heading 'Eggs and Omelettes' which discussed the Vigilance Committees in Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and the Present-Day Dangers Committee which had been established under the auspices of the Hammersmith Council of Social Service. The editorial followed an announcement by the heads of these organisations that they planned to merge their committees into one overarching body that would expand to cover all four boroughs. Whereas one might expect the editorial to welcome this example of increased co-operation wholeheartedly, it gave a very different response. Far from celebrating the merger the *Supplement* remarked that

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1874 he was a Methodist minister who served on a number of Government Commissions into such issues as alcohol abuse and gambling. He was also influential in the establishment of the Christian Citizenship Department of the Methodist Church and the Committee on Temperance and Social Welfare. He was an avowed pacifist and during the Second World War he organised and ran forest and agricultural services for conscientious objectors. For more information see the internet based database for the British Methodist Church in Germany at <http://www.bautz.de>.



There are always one or two matters of regret when, in human affairs, eggs are broken to make omelettes. Such excellent work has been done locally by the four bodies that now constitute a new one, that it seems not only a pity but a real loss that three of them should disappear.<sup>112</sup>

It was not suggested that the merger should be abandoned, but that the new body should not attempt to carry out patrols or 'rescue' work as the local organisations had done. Rather it should be a meeting place of like minds where general organisational principles could be laid out and 'large schemes of Reform may be planned in co-operation with the appropriate Statutory and Voluntary Bodies'. Meanwhile 'the quiet but persistent observation, the gentleness and the patience of the patrol' should be left to 'the rescue schemes already at work'.<sup>113</sup> Such an editorial is highly indicative of the work of the London Council of Social Service. It encouraged co-operation in planning and organising but not in actual provision. That was to be left to the local organisations, who could best respond to local situations. A similar policy of organising rather than practising can be identified in the Council's policy towards encouraging 'morality' among young people.

In 1923 the Charter of Youth stated that,

To purge the Press, the street, the open spaces, the places of amusement, of the worst temptations to intemperance, idleness and vice, is to free Youth from some of the slaveries that beset its rise into manhood. But we must do more than this. We must plant those strongholds along youth's upward path... Then we may leave the rest to God's guidance of youth's surpassing spirit.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 'Eggs and Omelettes', *LS* (June 1924), p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>114</sup> 'A Charter of Youth', *LS* (December 1923), p. 4.

Obviously this was not a new phenomenon but again the morality espoused by the LCSS emerged as an amalgamation of ideas from across the voluntary spectrum. Once again the LCSS was following policies which were not necessarily Idealist in origin, but instead came from, frequently, non-Idealist organisations through the framework of the LCSS. While this does not show that any organisation linked to the LCSS had entirely 'bought in' to the values of Idealism, it does show that they were not scared off by them either. Garvie, Lidgett and Codrington were examples of individuals committed to working within the LCSS even though they may not have shared its Idealist heritage. Equally organisations who expounded theories of morality found that the Idealist approach, the bureaucracy which made up the LCSS, was a way in which they could get their message across. In turn this meant that the LCSS was doing exactly what it had set out to do, bring voluntary organisations under a single co-operative umbrella, by stressing the way in which things should be done, not what actually should be done. This was, of course, a sleight of hand. It involved ignoring the COS style values of some constituent groups. However it also allowed the LCSS to develop its primary purpose, inter-agency co-operation, to support active citizenship and to 'convert' groups to aspects of its philosophy. For example the March 1924 edition of the London Supplement carried an article reviewing the work of the Hammersmith Council of Social Service.

*Its Juvenile Organisations Committee* has infused fresh life, and a common life amongst the lads' and girls' clubs and associations. The careful training of leaders, and frequent inter-club displays, have borne fruit in a *Council of Clubs* which has in its turn organised Music and Drama and other spheres of activity. *The Present Day Dangers Committee* has presented a Report of a long series of meetings... In this connection the Executive is co-operating with the

*Vigilance Committee* which is endeavouring to cope with the moral conditions of some of our leading thoroughfares and open spaces at night.<sup>115</sup>

Over the next decade the LCSS, in co-operation with the London Public Morality Council, published a series of articles and pamphlets, usually coinciding with relevant Private Members' Bills, which allowed members of affiliated bodies to expound their views on morality.<sup>116</sup> This meant that the London Council was able to facilitate a number of policies without actually proposing any policies in its own name. For example the *London Supplement* from April 1924 carried a leader which was highly sympathetic to the idea of a tax on betting in order that the government could more closely control gambling.<sup>117</sup> At the time this was quite a radical proposal<sup>118</sup> which may well have caused disagreements between the various representatives on the LCSS. Indeed the leader writer (probably Nunn as Executive Vice-Chairman) was quite clear that gambling was a 'danger to the state' in whatever form it took, 'from betting a pair of gloves on the boat race, a girl might pass on to the apparently innocent gamble of a newspaper competition and so develop and infect others

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<sup>115</sup> 'Poplar Again', *LS* (March 1924), p. 4 (my emphasis).

<sup>116</sup> In just one year the *London Supplement* carried such articles as 'John Gulland on Gambling', *LS* (April 1924); 'Communist Sunday Schools' *LS* (July 1924); 'The London Council for the promotion of Public Morality', *LS* (August 1924); 'Back to God', *LS* (November 1924).

<sup>117</sup> 'John Gulland on Gambling', *LS* (April 1924), pp. 1-2. For how middle class reformers saw the 'problem' of gambling see R. I. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 101-138.

<sup>118</sup> For how middle class reformers saw the 'problem' of gambling see R. I. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 101-138; G. Stedman, *Languages of Class*, op. cit. pp. 203-4.

with a life habit'.<sup>119</sup> However by placing the emphasis upon evidence given to a select committee rather than upon the views of the leader writer, moral issues could rarely threaten the unity and co-operation of which the LCSS was so proud.

One area of LCSS policy which could well have aroused moral contention was given a surprising amount of support, namely the issue of sex education in schools. Little research has been done into this subject, but it is clear from contemporary writings that among some circles at least sex education was seen as a vitally important part of a child's upbringing. For example J. Arthur Thomson, Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen University, argued in 1915 that

We give instruction to young people in regard to food and exercise, but 'sex' we scarcely mention. This cannot be because it is too sacred, for we give religious instruction; nor because it is something to be ashamed of, for we know that it is the physical basis of what may be the finest thing in life; nor because the conspiracy of silence is working well, for it is not.<sup>120</sup>

Calls for sex education were usually linked to eugenic concepts of racial health through good parenting. In *Towards Racial Health: A handbook for parents, teachers and social workers on the training of boys and girls* (1915) Norah March stressed that

When we have done our utmost in the way of instructing youthhood in normal sex phenomena, and our utmost to safeguard youth from the

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<sup>119</sup> 'John Gulland on Gambling', *LS* (April 1924), p. 1.

<sup>120</sup> J. A. Thomson, 'Forward', N. March, *Towards Racial Health* (London, George Routledge & Sons, 1918 Third Edition), p. vii.

pitfalls and risks of social life, and when we have sought diligently to lead the youthful idea into pursuit of the ideal and noble in conduct, there still remains a field of labour for us – and that the ultimate goal of sex education – education for parenthood. It is not for parents or teachers to say which boys and girls shall ultimately enter into the privilege of marriage and parenthood – that, in time, each shall decide for himself. But it is for parents and teachers, and all of those who may be in any way responsible for the care of youth, to realise that each boy and girl is a potential parent, that each may be called into the joy and responsibility of parenthood, and that therefore each is entitled to some instruction and guidance in regard to their highest possible responsibilities.<sup>121</sup>

Although never a proponent of eugenic theory the London Council of Social Service did regard the ‘modern wrld’ as fraught with moral dangers for the unprepared young person. In March 1925 the *London Supplement* stated that

The growth of our modern civilisation has brought with it new evils to be combated, new dangers to be faced, and it is now realised that if universal education is to be a benefit to the community it must be the handmaid of elevated moral teaching. In many Boroughs the Local Councils [of Social Service] have for some years turned their attention to the education of parents in Sex Hygiene, realising that for sex training to be effective it must begin, not in the gutter... but in the cradle, the nursery, and the home.<sup>122</sup>

A campaign, led unsurprisingly by the Hampstead Council of Social Service, typified the approach of Local Councils. As in other policy areas they formed a Standing Committee. In this case it involved representatives of the Public Health Committee, the British Medical Association, the London County Council and the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases. This committee organised a series of small local conferences aimed at the parents

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<sup>121</sup> N. March, op cit. p. 191.

<sup>122</sup> ‘Teaching in Sex Hygiene’, *LS* (March 1925), p. 3.

of children attending individual elementary schools. However they soon reported that middle-class parents were also in need of information. This led to a 'drawing-room' meeting for mothers addressed by Doctor Elizabeth Sloan Chester which soon became three meetings due to the large audience. A further meeting, aimed at fathers and held at the University College School, used speakers and films by the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases. This led to another three meetings (one for male audiences and two for female audiences) before the largest and last meeting which heard 'an address by Mr E. B. Turner, FRCS, whose reputation as an athlete, coupled with his labours amongst our lads in the Great War, qualify him so eminently for such a task'.<sup>123</sup>

Again it can be seen that the policy of the LCSS, when faced with what it considered a problem which needed action, was to form a committee of interested parties and promote joint action. By doing so it was facilitating welfare provision by encouraging the co-operation of charities, organisations and the state. Once more it was fulfilling its original conception of bringing such bodies together under a single umbrella organisation, thus according to the idealist philosophy of the LCSS, increasing the effectiveness of welfare policy.

Although the London Council of Social Service existed throughout the interwar period and beyond, it ceased as an independent body in 1936. A lack of specific sources leaves the reason for this change a slight mystery, but some tentative conclusions can be drawn from what material does exist. In her biography of her husband, Kathleen Nunn wrote that 'it was

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<sup>123</sup> 'Sex Hygiene', *LS* (April 1925), p. 2.

a matter of profound thankfulness to Nunn when, after prolonged negotiation, and largely owing to the efforts of Professor Adams... it was arranged... that the London Council should be handed over to become a department of the National Council of Social Service'.<sup>124</sup> This may not be the full story. It was certainly true that Nunn had been seriously ill for the year before the merger, and indeed was to die less than a year after it, but some problems still remain.

Relations between the two councils, although never hostile, were not always amicable. The NCSS was given to extol its own virtues, without reference to the London Council. Nunn's leaders in the *London Supplement* often gave only grudging respect to the National Council. Typical is the comment from the June 1924 issue that 'the Annual Report of what we suppose we should call our Parent Body, although it came into the world some eight years after the London Council is good reading.'<sup>125</sup>

This may have been little more than institutional rivalry but for Nunn at least, and probably for many within the LCSS, the formation of the London Social Welfare Association in 1910/11 had been the real foundation of the movement and not the National Council of Social Service in 1919.

On the other hand, Nunn's dominance of the LCSS had antagonised many of the leaders of the NCSS who wanted to control the obviously important London councils and possibly local

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<sup>124</sup> F. Nunn, *op cit.* pp. 168-9.

<sup>125</sup> 'The National Council', *LS* (June 1924), p. 4.

workers within London. At an NCSS executive committee meeting in 1934 which Nunn did not attend, the Chairman read out a letter by the Kensington Council of Social Service stating that their work was adversely affected by the fact that their relationship with the National Council was through the LCSS.<sup>126</sup> It asked for direct association with the NCSS. Lionel Ellis, the Secretary of the NCSS, stated that he had been in contact with Nunn who had told him that he (Nunn) would welcome this for the London Council of Social Service as a whole. Nunn had also supposedly said

that as he now desired to concentrate his own efforts in Hampstead and to be freed from responsibilities for the work of the London Council he would welcome assumption by the NCSS of a more direct responsibility of the development of the movement in London. Mr Nunn had further suggested that representatives of the executive might be appointed to discuss the matter with the London Council.<sup>127</sup>

Although not put forward as a motion, a vote was taken which agreed with the idea in principle and established a sub-committee of four members, including Dorothy Keeling, to examine what action should be taken. However the next meeting shows this to have been premature. Nunn was present at the meeting and had obviously had strong words with Ellis. The minutes note that at the opening of the meeting 'the secretary reported that he had apparently misunderstood Mr Hancock Nunn in reporting the conversation referred to'. It seems unlikely that the detailed plans which Ellis had referred to in July could have been a

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<sup>126</sup> Such letters were not rare. Nunn had been informed of attempts by both the East Ham and Leyton Councils of Social Service to directly affiliate to the NCSS in 1932. LCSS EC Mins, 28 July 1932, LCSS, LMA, ACC 188/75.

<sup>127</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 12 July 1934, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (i).



simple misunderstanding, or that it was simply a coincidence that a vote was taken and a sub-committee established when Nunn was absent.

Nevertheless Nunn's illness must have convinced him of the need for his retirement and it seems that the pressure from the National Council for amalgamation remained strong. Nunn had certainly dominated the LCSS to such an extent that when he came to retire he could find no obvious successor. As a result, once his retirement became unavoidable the merger became a necessity. When it came in April 1936, the London Council moved into rooms at the NCSS headquarters in Bedford Square. The new chairman was the senior NCSS figure Sir Wyndam Deeds (see chapter four). He readily agreed that the LCSS be forced to give an estimate of its future expenditure to the NCSS for approval, that the NCSS control LCSS finances, and that it be 'clearly understood that no independent effort be made by the London Council to obtain income from other sources'.<sup>128</sup>

One of the first acts of the 'new council' as it came to be called was to instigate a full report into the workings of the LCSS. This report was 'felt to be a *primary* step for a thorough social policy'.<sup>129</sup> For the remainder of the decade the actions of the LCSS, while continuing to be based upon Idealist conceptions, followed an agenda that was led by the Executive Committee of the NCSS rather than the perceived needs of the capital.

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<sup>128</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 16 July 1936, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (i). In fact the LCSS was given the right to campaign for money at a NCSS EC, meeting on 22 July 1937. LMA/4016/IS/A/01/045 (i).

<sup>129</sup> 'A Review of Certain Social Services', *LS* (September 1936), p. 2 (my emphasis).

## **Conclusion**

For the first seventeen years of its existence the London Council of Social Service was indeed a 'case apart' from the National Council. While the LCSS must be viewed within the context of an ever-expanding NCSS, the two councils were fundamentally concerned with different issues. The titles of LCSS pamphlets reflect a greater concern with issues such as homelessness, re-housing, and health issues than with unemployment, which became virtually the only issue for the NCSS by circa 1932. There were many reasons for this, ranging from the dominance of T. H. Nunn in its early development, the different economic circumstances of London, and the presence of the London County Council, at that time the largest municipal organisation in the world. Consequently the methods used by the LCSS to promote the values of Idealist citizenship reflected these differences. However, while the methods were different the values were strikingly similar.

There are two main reasons for this. The LCSS like the NCSS, reflected the values of its component organisations. Because the organisations were often similar, the values were also similar. For example, both the LCSS and the NCSS had representatives from the Y.M.C.A and the Y.W.C.A and therefore both reflected the values brought to them by these two Christian youth societies. The LCSS and the NCSS also both evolved from a common ancestor. Both Councils had been conceived by organisations expounding Idealist welfare, and both had been formed, in full knowledge of the other. S. P. Grundy, Fredrick D'Aeth, and the other social reformers who had first established the National Council knew T. H.

Nunn well, they agreed with his conception of welfare, they admired his reformation of the Charity Organisation Society in Hampstead, if not his domineering personality, and they created their organisation with that in mind. Similarly Nunn was well aware of the developments going on elsewhere and this is reflected in the fact that the Councils of Social Welfare changed their name to reflect not that of the COS but that of the NCSS. It is then no surprise that the values on which the LCSS placed so much faith '*Unity and Co-operation*' were also central to NCSS philosophy.

However the different conditions in London did lead to differences of emphasis. While it would be untrue to say that the failure of unemployment to dominate welfare provision in London meant the LCSS could develop along more 'natural' lines<sup>130</sup> it was certainly the case that the London Council could maintain a philosophical concern for Idealist welfare long after the National Council had been forced to put pragmatic policy over intellectual concerns. The differences between the two bodies then are clearly worthy of study.

Obviously the LCSS, like the NCSS, was consistently concerned with the concept of duty. Nunn considered citizenship to involve those who were well-educated and could sustain themselves by a private income having a duty to help the poor working class, and this was constantly stressed in his yearly letter to *The Times*.<sup>131</sup> Likewise LCSS leaders shared with

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<sup>130</sup> After all unemployment nationally led to retrenchment which effected the LCSS and London as much as anywhere.

<sup>131</sup> An appeal for social workers from Nunn appeared in Christmas week virtually every year of his life from 1919.

other Idealists<sup>132</sup> an evangelical element to their work. There was a marked emphasis on the notion of spreading citizenship throughout the classes, thereby creating a diverse but strong community which would stop class war thanks to the benevolent attitude of the scientifically organised philanthropist. However, for the LCSS there was also a strong element on voluntary bodies themselves acting as 'good citizens'. The emphasis placed upon co-operation between voluntary organisations and the state represented an Idealist vision which was very much Hampstead based. Just as Hobhouse and Wallas had identified the good society as one where individuals and governments both realised their duties to each other,<sup>133</sup> so the leaders of the LCSS saw voluntary societies (as the ultimate expression of the individuals concern for his fellow man) and the state as working in a necessary and desirable combination.

Although this idea came under a great deal of stress particularly in the 1930s within the NCSS, it remained paramount to the London Council of Social Service at the expense of other, more populist, conceptions of citizenship. The LCSS hardly ever used citizenship to refer to the idea of a greater amount of civic responsibility for the working class. They did not consider democracy to be under threat, nor do any such abstract political thoughts appear to have played a major part in their work. Undoubtedly there were political figures who had an important role within the LCSS. However they seem to have followed Nunn's apolitical

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<sup>132</sup> See S. Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1996); J. Stapleton, *Englishness and the study of politics: The social and Political Thought of Ernest Baker* (Cambridge, CUP, 1994).

lead when convening under the auspices of the LCSS. In fact the only reference to specific working class politics was an occasional reference to the problems the General Strike caused to the production of the *London Supplement*. This was due, once again, to the fact that the LCSS did not actually provide welfare and certainly did not endeavour to force its values onto ordinary people. Instead it was established and practised as an organisation which would bring together other welfare providers in acts of co-operative policy. These charities could be idealist in origin or not; they could be dominated by old style COS reformers or represent the most modern social thinkers; they could be religious or non-sectarian it simply did not matter. The important point was that they did come together and that they did so in a spirit of co-operation. Once that had been achieved the LCSS had fulfilled its role. Citizenship for the London Council of Social Service then was to be found in the bureaucratic co-operation of charities and the state in the organisation of welfare relief.

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<sup>133</sup> G. Wallas, *Human Nature and Politics* (1908). For Hobhouse's conception of the individual within the state see P. F. Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge, CUP, 1978) and S. Collini, 'Hobhouse, Bosanquet, and State', *Past and Present* 72 (1976).

## **CHAPTER FOUR:** **The rural and urban policies of the NCSS.**

As has been shown, one of the central tenets of the National Council of Social Service was that the implementation of citizenship and community among the voluntary sector should take place at a local level. Rather than continue the COS system, which had seen the London Society dominate much provincial activity, the NCSS allowed local Councils of Social Service a great degree of autonomy. This chapter will show that such societies based in towns and villages across Britain attempted to establish Joint Committees of local charities, dignitaries and representatives of statutory bodies. These committees were to be the practical implementation of NCSS ideas, involving each charity acting as citizens, voluntarily uniting together in a social welfare effort. As a result the vast majority of NCSS activity took place through local bodies and was organised through committees made up of representatives from local organisations. It will be argued that in rural and urban areas, from football matches to workshops for the unemployed, meeting in village halls and community centres, clubs founded by local Councils of Social Service were meant to actively facilitate schemes which involved the coming together of members of the local community, members of local charities and members of local statutory bodies.

This chapter will assess this policy by analysing the two different types of local councils established by the NCSS. Firstly it will analyse the actions of Rural Community Councils. These were the first groups to attract the National Council's attention. Based at a county rather than a city level, they attempted to form joint committees which would organise the construction and running of local village halls. This it was hoped would promote citizenship

both among charitable bodies, who would work together for a greater good, and the public at large, who would make use of the new halls. It will be shown that this policy was generally successful. In many rural areas Joint Committees consisting of various voluntary and state bodies were established and specific localised policies aimed at local needs were introduced.

The chapter will detail the less successful attempt by the NCSS to encourage the formation of Councils of Social Service at a city level. It will maintain that this attempt was a relative failure due to a number of interconnected factors. Highly urbanised areas often had a large number of charities already present hence there was often a distinct lack of interest in establishing what were seen as new and unneeded institutions. There was also a consistent lack of financial support for urbanised local Councils of Social Service which was not the case in rural areas. Lastly there was often a strong ex-COS presence which remained hostile to the concept of voluntary organisations working within the state. It will be maintained that the strong pressures placed upon local Councils of Social Service by these factors often led to a radical departure from NCSS policy. Policies were followed which helped local Councils justify themselves and retain support even if they departed from NCSS ideals.

However the most successful form of Council of Social Service action was the establishment of clubs for the wives of the unemployed after 1934. This chapter will examine these clubs as part of the urban development of the NCSS. It will show that women's clubs were based around activities and values which reinforced, rather than challenged, the domestic nature of women's lives. However it will also argue that such activities as dressmaking and 'household management' were extremely popular amongst many women, despite NCSS attempts to provide different activities. The chapter will maintain that although women's

clubs were never a major concern for the NCSS as a whole until very late in this period, they were often some of the most successful clubs.

Obviously the split between successful and unsuccessful organisations was not so simple that it can be defined as a split between rural and urban councils. Nevertheless the chapter will show that the development of NCSS ideas and values was greater in rural than in urban areas. It will also show that this differential success rate is highly informative about the way in which the NCSS implemented the concepts of citizenship and co-operation. In both areas the NCSS attempted to create an environment in which charities and local government could come together for the common good. This, it will be shown, clearly represented the bureaucratic implementation of the idealist concepts of citizenship and co-operation outlined in chapters 1 and 2. However these policies were only partly successful and the chapter will discuss the way the different pressures placed upon rural and urban councils led to different reactions by local councils and, in turn, different bureaucratic systems.

It is important to firstly stress that some of the local councils originally administered by the NCSS were not new organisations. Many of the individuals within the early NCSS felt that they had moved away from the Charity Organisation Society and the Guilds of Help to a higher level of philanthropic action. However the truth for councils at a local level was often much more prosaic. In the first years of its existence it was vital that the NCSS was not simply a centralised council with no representation 'on the ground'. To this end there was a concerted effort to bring many Charity Organisation Societies, Guilds of Help and Councils of Social Welfare 'into the fold'. However the fact that many Councils of Social Service had a background within other organisations should not be taken to mean that they had no history



of Idealist welfare. It has already been shown that the basic principles behind both the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare was Idealist in origin. Furthermore, although ex-COS Committees may have initially retained Victorian attitudes to welfare, it will be shown in numerous case studies that the new generation of social workers often challenged these ideas in local organisations that, by 1919, were part of an Idealist NCSS.

In fact the shift from Charity Organisation Society, Guild of Help or Council of Social Welfare was often virtually unnoticeable. Indeed when in 1937 a senior NCSS figure was given the task of checking the financial subscriptions of local councils since 1919, he was forced to report

Attached is a list of the Urban Councils and RCCs... Even in their individual files going back to 1922 or so, there is no indication of how they became affiliated, what the benefits of affiliation were or are and only spasmodic indications of the amount of any fee paid or demanded.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of how easily this shift took place are littered throughout this thesis, but it is worth looking at one early illustration. The St Pancras Council of Social Service was formed in 1909 as the South St Pancras Consultative Council. Based very much upon Nunn's Council of Social Welfare, it stated as its aim

That those present who represent charities and societies working in South St Pancras on the lines of mutual co-operation for the benefit of the poor shall meet together to consult on the charitable work in the district and generally for its public welfare.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Percy Watkins to Leonard Shoeten-Sack, 17 June 1937, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/05/007.

<sup>2</sup> SPCC EC Mins, SPCSS, Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, JM10/20D 1.

Furthermore the minutes of the first meeting stressed that the Council

Should aim at becoming a centre for the exchange of ideas where its members might economise time by transferring various cases from one represented body to another according as each was competent to deal with them.<sup>3</sup>

The similarity to Nunn's organisation was reflected in the committee's first name change to the Public Welfare Association for Southern St Pancras in 1910. This lasted until 1919, when the minutes for Tuesday 9 December appeared under the heading of St Pancras Council of Social Service. Neither this meeting or that held three weeks earlier under the auspices of the St Pancras PWA (or indeed any other meeting) made any reference to the name change. Indeed the minutes for a meeting in February 1920 referred to both the Council of Social Service and the Public Welfare Association. Furthermore in a letter to *The Times* two prominent members of the St Pancras Council indicated how for many social workers membership of the organisation went hand in hand with membership of another.

Increased State intervention on the social side requires voluntary co-operation if many of our laws are not to remain a dead letter... By organisation and co-operation, by the work that the Charity Organisation Society has been doing for the last 50 years, by the efforts of the more recent Councils of Social Service, the voluntary element in our social life is being strengthened and made articulate.<sup>4</sup>

The two authors of the letter, Hilda Oakelley and Edith Neville, referred to themselves as 'lecturer in Philosophy, Kings College (London)' and 'a member of the Administrative Committee of the Charity Organisation Society', respectively although they were also senior

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 5 October 1920.

members of the St Pancras CSS; indeed Neville was an Honorary Secretary. Clearly then the Council of Social Service was not felt to be as prestigious a body as the COS even by its own members.

It should be remembered that this attitude was not always typical. For example many later Councils of Social Service, particularly those set up to combat unemployment, saw themselves as new and dynamic bodies. In the early years however the majority of local councils, like that in St Pancras, were merely a redevelopment of past organisations. With this in mind this chapter will attempt to outline the two processes which made this redevelopment possible. Firstly the National Council of Social Service attempted to enforce an ideological and tactical reorientation upon those councils it inherited in 1919, trying to ensure they were better able to involve state and voluntary agencies in a much greater display of co-operation and co-ordination. Secondly the local organisations themselves had to subscribe to the concepts put forward by the NCSS, not in their everyday policy (because the NCSS allowed local councils to be autonomous), but in their overarching approach to welfare reform.

### **Part One: Rural Community Councils.**

The 1915 Joint Committee on Social Service had a background primarily within urban areas. This was due to the fact that both the Guilds of Help and Councils of Social Welfare had only been based in cities, while COS policies had become increasingly centred on London. However, the impact of war upon the rural economy meant that after 1918 voluntary organisations became increasingly concerned with provincial issues. Subsequently this

concern provided the NCSS with its first chance to achieve co-operation between various agencies.

NCSS concern with rural issues was brought about by three major factors. Firstly there was a growing awareness of the scale of economic decline in the agricultural sector which had taken place in the years up to 1914. This re-emphasised a common concern before the war regarding the consequences of rural depopulation upon the 'village community'. Secondly the latter years of the nineteenth century saw a romanticisation of the rural landscape by the urban middle class. This meant the growth of a number of charitable bodies who attempted to 'preserve' the rural community. Thirdly NCSS policy in rural areas was affected by the fact that many of these charities subsequently sent representatives to sit on the National Council's Executive Committee. Furthermore they were often present on the local Joint Committees established by the NCSS, and were thus able to influence policy.

The overall decline of the British agricultural sector from the late nineteenth century onwards took place in two distinct phases. Between 1870 and 1896 the growth of rival markets in America and Europe along with the increased pressure on farmers to both mechanise and to convert from cereal to animal husbandry meant high levels of rural unemployment. However because this was offset by the increasing demand for labour in the cities, any decline was only relative to the high position of British agriculture in the nineteenth century and did not mark out an industry in recession.

However the second phase of agricultural recession was much more serious. Between 1924 and 1939 every sector of the agricultural market was in decline during a time of high

unemployment in cities and a corresponding decline in levels of consumption. By 1936 the percentage of national income derived from agricultural production had fallen to 3.9 percent from wartime high of 6 percent.<sup>5</sup> The collapse of consumer demand following the growth of American and European markets was exacerbated by increased protectionism within those countries worst hit by the world economic crisis after 1929. In fact the same protectionism which denied exporters the profits they were used to also hampered the internal development of the agricultural sector. The movement towards meat and dairy rather than arable farming, which took place in the latter half of the nineteenth century, meant that Britain had ceased to be agriculturally self-supporting. Many farmers, particularly in the mountainous areas of Wales, relied heavily upon improved animal feeds which increased in price as wheat producing countries sought to maintain their own agricultural income. Similarly the development of refrigerated ships meant that competition from other countries for such produce as corned beef increased dramatically.<sup>6</sup> However while other countries became more protectionist, not until the late 1930's did any British government successfully challenge the free market ideas which had repealed the Corn Laws a century earlier. Instead they relied predominantly on subsidies and voluntary regulation to keep the British market stable.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> P. Deane & W. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 298-9.

<sup>6</sup> R. Wordie, 'A Triumph of Middle-class Idealism? Rural England and the Folk movement, 1850-1979, *Twentieth Century British History*, 7, 2 (1996), p. 265.

<sup>7</sup> M. Tracy, *Government and Agriculture in Western Europe 1880-1988* (London, Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1989).

Perhaps the most worrying factor in the decline of British agriculture, especially in the early 1920s, was rural depopulation.<sup>8</sup> Demographic trends had all been pointing towards an increasing urban population for at least a century by the time the war ended.<sup>9</sup> With the increased need for an urban population and the opportunities offered for unemployed agricultural labourers in overseas colonies, the fear of 'village communities [becoming] depressed or stagnant, dependent on struggling farmers or landowners'<sup>10</sup> was very real.

It was also felt that many of the men returning from the war would no longer be content to remain as low paid agricultural labourers and would instead become more militant. This was to prove a well founded assumption. Mansfield has conducted a series of interviews with First World War veterans which emphasize their newly found political nature.

They [The Labour Party] used to have these demonstrations everywhere... Just getting people to join and telling the people the facts of life, and all this that and the other. Tell the truth of how men worked and how they'd been treated. You'd march with a band from one end of Wroxham right down to the other end, over the bridge. I

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<sup>8</sup> Concern with rural depopulation had a long history within progressive circles. The conception of a 'golden age' of happy, peaceful rural communities emerged through William Morris' and John Ruskin's understandings of Carlyle and then through their influences upon such social thinkers as Hobson, Geedes and E. T. Cook all of whom wrote a biography of Ruskin. F. MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for our time* (London, Faber and Faber, 1994); H. Matthew, 'Hobson, Ruskin and Cobden', in M. Freedon (ed.) *Reappraising J.A. Hobson: Humanism and Welfare* (London, Unwin and Hyman, 1990), pp. 16-22; A. Beach, *The Labour Party and the idea of citizenship, c. 1931-1951* unpublished D. Phil thesis, University College London, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> 'Between 1801 and 1911 the proportion of the population living in urban areas rose from twenty percent to eighty percent' J. Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England from 1880 to 1914* (London, Quartet Books, 1982), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> J. Marsh, op cit. p. 4.

used to go round on an old bike weekends, Saturdays and Sundays, having meetings in different villages.<sup>11</sup>

This politicisation showed itself in the 1923 election results. Only thirty-eight of the most rural constituencies returned Conservatives. This compares with 54 in 1918 and 48 in 1922. Even the Minister for Agriculture, Sir Robert Saunders, lost his seat.<sup>12</sup>

The parishioners and vicar of St Mark's at Belgrave in Leicestershire made clear their newly found expressions of political action in the form of a stained glass window.

The subject of the window is 'Through sacrifice to freedom'. The men who fell, have not only intensified the hope that their sacrifice might bring about a better world, but by their deaths have actually brought to fulfilment certain ideals which represent aspects of the Kingdom of God on earth, e.g. the League of Nations, Reunion of Christendom, self determination of the native races, Co-operation in industry, Emancipation of women, Education of the poor, greater freedom for the worker.<sup>13</sup>

These resentments with their past lives and the feeling that those who had fought deserved 'something better' was clearly a threat to the traditional rural community. Many within the voluntary sector feared that the returning veterans would attempt to seek out the high wages and 'homes fit for heroes' in the cities.

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<sup>11</sup> Private Bill Curtis, 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Regiment quoted in N. Mansfield, 'Class Conflict and Village War Memorials, 1914-24', *Rural History*, 6, 1 (1995), p. 74. See also A. Howkins, *Poor labouring men: rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1872-1923* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) and D. Pretty, *The rural revolt that failed: farm workers' trade unions in Wales, 1889-1950* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> S. Miller 'Urban Dreams and Rural Reality: Land and Landscape in English Culture, 1920-1945', *Rural History*, 6, 1 (1995), p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> Connie Crofts in N. Mansfield, op cit. p. 74.

Along with economic decline and its subsequent rural depopulation there was a second influence on National Council of Social Service rural policy. From the 1880's onwards there developed what Marsh has called a 'Pastoral Impulse' among much of the urban middle class. This involved the resurgence, or more properly, the creation of an urbanised version of 'traditional' country life. Schools started to hold May Day parades, folk songs were collected,<sup>14</sup> bicycling and caravaning holidays became popular, as did the interior design of the arts and crafts movement led by William Morris.

It is hard to underestimate the importance which this conception had in the interwar years. From Baldwin's *On England and other Addresses* (1926) to the popularisation of Blake's *Jerusalem* and the novels of Mary Webb 'in a world where four-fifths of the population were urban, the principal function of countryside as an icon within the dominant culture was... to represent a timeless England of tradition and stability'.<sup>15</sup> Miller has argued convincingly that this image of rural England did not involve the agricultural economy.

The dominant discourse of English ruralism in the interwar period... established an icon of the countryside as a natural landscape in which agricultural production was at best incidental and at worst antagonistic.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See G. Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology, and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> S. Miller, *op cit.* p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> S. Miller, *op. cit.* p. 93.



Rather than trying to modernise a failing industry the policy of interwar governments was to rely on the imagery of a traditional English village controlled by paternalistic landholding gentry.<sup>17</sup> Indeed in a letter to a later NCSS President Lord Bledisloe in 1925 the Minister of Agriculture, Edward Wood, wrote

You think, don't you, that... the old English system of land tenure is not capable of meeting XX century needs and you are therefore prepared to move faster than I am at present disposed to do. As a Conservative, and as one who believes in the debt that the country owes to landowners, I don't want to accelerate the disappearance of the present system.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless despite discussions over the speed of policy, the imagery of a traditional 'village community' was one which was extremely relevant to the prevailing idealists concepts within British philanthropy by 1919. The Salvation Army, for example, set up farm colonies for the unemployed in places such as Hadleigh, Essex, while for the middle classes Cecil Reddie, the pioneer of the new 'progressive schools' movement, wrote of his newly established school at Abbotsholme,

In order to avoid the ill effects of modern town life, its unwholesome physical surroundings, with the distractions of its intellectual activity and the dangers of its moral atmosphere, a school should be remote from towns and placed amid the wholesome, beautiful, simple, and fundamentally instructive surroundings of the country. In this way our boys can see the world as it was before towns existed; and they can come into contact with the fundamental industry of agriculture, the pre-requisite of all civilised life.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See A. Cooper, *British Agricultural Policy 1912-1936: A study in Conservative Politics* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> Wood quoted in Miller, op cit. p 94.

<sup>19</sup> Reddie quoted in B. Ward, *Reddie of Abbotsholme* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1934).

Perhaps the pinnacle of the 'pastoral impulse' within the voluntary sector was the Garden City. As Marsh has said

The Garden City was the culmination of the back-to-the-land movement, the vindication of its ideas and aspirations. Here the impulse was not backwardly nostalgic but forward looking – not to repudiate the city and return to a pre-industrial way of life, but to build a new society incorporating all the features of the good life.<sup>20</sup>

From Port Sunlight, built in 1888, Bournville (1895) and Letchworth (1904) garden cities attempted to place the poorer working classes in an environment which approximated to the concepts of the traditional English village. Leafy streets, fruit trees and large gardens were all intended to encourage the healthy living and sense of community which Ruskin had identified as typical of rural life.

However the Garden City was an urban phenomenon. The charity which did by far the most to encourage the concepts of citizenship and community amongst rural communities in the years leading up to 1919 was the local Women's Institute.<sup>21</sup> The Women's Institute movement, which also adopted Jerusalem as its anthem, shared a startling number of

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<sup>20</sup> J. Marsh, *op cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>21</sup> The history of the Women's Institute Movement has only recently received the historical interest it deserves. M. Morgan, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism – The Women's Institute Movement 1915-1950* unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1992; C. Beaumont, *Women and Citizenship: A study of non-feminist women's societies and the women's movement in England, 1928-1950* unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Warwick, 1996; M. Andrews, 'For home and country': Feminism and Englishness in the Women's Institute movement, 1930-60, in R. Weight and A. Beach (eds.), *The right to belong: Citizenship and national identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (London, Tauris, 1998), pp. 116-135.

characteristics with the National Council of Social Service. Firstly it was formed during the First World War. Although it was originally established in Canada the WI was introduced to Britain by Mrs Alfred Watt in 1915.<sup>22</sup> The first Institute was set up on Anglesey on 25 September of that year. Secondly the WI, like the NCSS, expanded most rapidly during the interwar years. As Andrews has pointed out 'by 1925 it had a quarter of a million members, a figure it has never since dropped below'.<sup>23</sup> Thirdly the Women's Institutes were deliberately designed to be apolitical and non-sectarian in order to fully embrace the whole community. Fourthly the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the NCSS often shared senior staff members. Grace Hadow, for example, was a senior member of the NCSS rural fundraising committee, which dealt with government departments, while simultaneously being a member of her local WI and after 1933 the Vice Chairman of the National Federation. As a result of these links the two bodies remained on excellent terms throughout the interwar years, with the NCSS often facilitating those welfare proposals put forward by the WI by providing suitable venues for meetings or contacts in other organisations.

These three interlinked factors: the fears of rural depopulation, the growing 'pastoral impulse' and the growth of charities working in a specifically rural setting, influenced the National Council of Social Service very early on through its first chairman Professor W. G. S. Adams. As has already been shown in chapter two, Adams had served as a civil servant in the Department of Agriculture for Ireland for five years before becoming a member of Lloyd

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<sup>22</sup> C. Davies, *A Grain of Mustard Seed*, unpublished article available to view at <http://www.womens-institute.co.uk/memb-history.shtml>.

<sup>23</sup> M. Andrews, *op cit.* p. 116.

George's 'Kitchen Cabinet'. The interests he gained there were to be put into practice throughout the first years of the NCSS.

Adams was not a 'token' leader. He was also influential in the establishment of Barnett House in Oxford which trained social workers. Indeed Barnett House provided the fourth influence on NCSS rural policy. The secretary of Barnett House was no other than the redoubtable Grace Hadow, who ensured that Barnett House was made available to charities in the Oxford villages.<sup>24</sup> Lectures were held by and for members of such bodies as the WEA, the YMCA and the Women's Institute. In a scheme which the National Council tried later to emulate across England and Wales, the charities were able to communicate and interact with each other through the presence of a central meeting place. In 1919 a conference was held at Barnett House which aimed, successfully, to unite the various charities working in Oxfordshire under one umbrella organisation, the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. Clearly this tied in perfectly with the notions of inter-agency co-operation which were so influential in the war time Joint Committee of Social Service. Eighteen months later the London based Rural Sub-Committee of the NCSS held a conference at St John's College in Oxford to discuss the 'Oxfordshire experiment'. Again the emphasis was on co-ordination of welfare providers to encourage the co-operation of welfare recipients with the long-term plan of encouraging self-reliance. In a 'Memorandum on Rural Development', which bears all the hallmarks of the idealist philosophy it represented, the NCSS stated that

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<sup>24</sup> Among Hadow's other jobs was her role as a member of the General Advisory Council of the BBC. That made her the third member of the NCSS Executive Committee who, along with Norman and Whitley, was also a senior BBC figure.

The tendency has been on the one hand to give the village what was considered good for it and, on the other, to turn to somebody else for help on all occasions. The essence of the country problem is to find means to enable countrymen and women to help themselves, and to bring together all classes in co-operation for the common good.<sup>25</sup>

One particularly well documented example of the establishment of a Rural Community Council took place in the East Midlands. Small RCC's were set up in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire between 1919 and 1921. However in an effort to encourage co-operation these three committees decided to amalgamate in 1924. The first act was to carry out a survey of the area by utilising a number of different organisations. This had created information about the services available in the East Midlands; encouraged immediate co-operation between those organisations taking part and it involved graduates of the type which the RCC hoped to draw in as club leaders.

[The RCC will organise] collection and publication of information concerning the activities of constituent bodies, to which might be added the investigation of the social and educational needs of the area... It would be one function of the Community Councils to encourage Universities to undertake this kind of research work, and to accept it for their higher degrees.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed this link with bodies of higher education was already well established. The Joint Rural Community Council, as it came to be known, was based on the findings of a report by the Department of Adult Education at the University College of Nottingham.<sup>27</sup> This report

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<sup>25</sup> *Memorandum on Rural Development* (London, NCSS, 1922).

<sup>26</sup> Constitution of the Joint Rural Community Council of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, January 1924, NRCC, Nottingham Record Office, DD RC 1/1.

<sup>27</sup> University College of Nottingham Department of Adult Education, *Report of a committee of inquiry into the Educational Possibilities of Village Clubs* (Nottingham, UCN, 1923).

was itself based on sixteen meetings, interviews with witnesses and a questionnaire circulated to all YMCA Clubs in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.

The Committee recommended the establishment of Rural Community Councils in these four counties, under a central council in Nottinghamshire which itself would be under the NCSS. These Councils would be comprised of representatives of statutory, voluntary and university bodies. Funding of £1000 for the Councils was offered by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.<sup>28</sup>

At national level the NCSS also received aid from government bodies. In 1923 a further conference based in Oxford was held between those RCC's already established, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, the British Institute for Adult Education and the Development Commission. This conference discussed such issues as 'the general purpose of an RCC', 'the health work of the Rural Community' and 'Community Organisations in the village', but it was the funding issue which really concerned the NCSS. Without grants from some sort of state organisation, village clubs would be unable to pay for themselves. The conference decided the Development Commission should shoulder the majority of this cost. Despite being described as 'the earliest beginnings of state economic planning',<sup>29</sup> the Development Commission has received almost no historical attention. Set up in 1909 by Lloyd George's Development Fund Act, it was a permanent Royal Commission. Often

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<sup>28</sup> Although Lincolnshire had to pull out as the statutory County Council had not adopted the Rural Libraries Act on which CUKT funding was dependant.

<sup>29</sup> M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: The Story of the National Council of Social Service* (London, NCSS, 1969), p. 34.

perceiving itself as the 'trustees of the countryside', the Commission provided a constant supply of grants to the NCSS throughout the interwar years, which aimed at 'adopting means which appear calculated to develop agriculture and rural industries'<sup>30</sup>. The link between the Development Commission and the NCSS was reinforced when Adams became a member of the Commission in 1924.

In 1919 the Commission established the short-lived Rural Industries Intelligence Bureau. This bureau empowered local authorities to survey the 'traditional crafts' present in their area and report on what such industries needed for reconstruction. The NCSS started to work closely with the Development Commission in an attempt to create Rural Community Councils along the lines of that set up in Oxfordshire. The NCSS devised a six part plan which would be co-ordinated by a RCC. Village halls would be set up, rural industry would be protected, adult education would be enlarged, youth groups would be encouraged, public health would be investigated and the preservation of the countryside would be promoted. These points found themselves expressed in the constitution of many Rural Community Councils. For example the Essex RCC constitution, not untypically, stated its objectives as

[the promotion of] the general good of the rural community in the county of Essex by assisting the work of statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in advancing education, developing physical improvement, furthering health, improving the skill of country craftsmen, relieving poverty, distress and sickness.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Constitution of the Essex Rural Community Council, 1929, ERCC, ERO, DZ 113/1.

These tasks were designed to match the main aim of the NCSS – to create a community of welfare providers who fostered a spirit of citizenship amongst welfare recipients. Again, as has been shown in London, such an Idealist aim did not depend upon the organisations brought under the RCC umbrella acting on an Idealist basis. That they were acting together at all was the Idealist goal set by the RCC.

## The establishment of village halls.

Cohesion in rural areas was to be achieved primarily through the 'village hall'. Like their Oxford predecessor, the twenty-three Rural Community Councils set up between 1919 and 1931 were united in their belief that a central meeting place was vital to increasing a sense of community. By providing a village hall they could encourage the various clubs already established to share a building. This in turn, it was hoped, would lead to a sense of greater co-operation both between those organisations organising welfare and the recipients of that welfare. All groups would share a sense of ownership of the hall.

However the development of village halls was far from an NCSS idea. Post war problems had led many villages to either attempt to build a hall or to repair a neglected one. This had led to the establishment of a wide variety of local village committees throughout Britain, usually involving local dignitaries such as mayors, landowners and vicars. It was these groups which the NCSS advised Rural Community Councils to target as a primary aim for local action. By promising grants and much needed links to other organisations, local RCCs could manage the development of organisations which they very rarely visited. Favourable



reports in the local press were also used to encourage independent committees to come under the NCSS wing. By April 1937 the NCSS secretary was able to inform the Board of Education, in a private report, that four hundred village hall schemes had been established.<sup>32</sup> Indeed even as late as 1938 the *Northern Evening News* published an article under the title of 'Cultivating Social Life in Rural Notts.'

The Rural Community Council frequently steps in where no other organisation has made any progress and sets a village off on a new life of culture and entertainment when the days work is done... That is where a well-equipped, well built Village Hall of the type which belongs to the village as a whole can do so much. It becomes the home of all new enterprises, the command shelter from an uncertain climate, the hub of a new life which, far from bringing the town into the village, possesses a distinct character of its own and may be said often to have a far more stimulating and beneficial effect than some of the automatic pastimes adopted by blasé townsfolk.<sup>33</sup>

However, village halls came to offer other less ideological advantages. Most had been built using a combination of interest free loans from the Development Commission and, after 1922, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. For example the Essex Rural Community Council arranged a scheme whereby they received half of the cost of a village hall from the Development Commission through the NCSS. This money came in the form of a five year interest free loan and a grant from the Carnegie Trust for building materials.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, once the five years were up, these loans still had to be paid back and increasing economic

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<sup>32</sup> Leonard Shoeten-Sack to Mrs Williams, April 1937, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/04/038. Shoeten-Sack took over from Lionel Ellis in 1937.

<sup>33</sup> *Northern Evening News*, 7 January 1938.

<sup>34</sup> ERCC EC Mins, ERCC, 11 July 1930, ERCC, ERO, DZ 113/1.

hardship throughout the 1920s meant that cash strapped Rural Community Councils had to use village halls for money making 'events'.

Therefore, many RCC activities were based around attempts to emphasise idealist co-operation among charities and statutory bodies, while also ensuring an adequate income for local councils. As a later NCSS pamphlet was to point out these ideas were not mutually exclusive.

The work of the village halls... had results that were plain to see. It eased the claim for local financial support, and gave substance to the pursuit of the original co-ordinating and pioneering purposes of the rural community councils.<sup>35</sup>

For example, dances were often held by Rural Community Councils to encourage people into their local hall. Indeed there was a massive increase in organised dancing as a social activity for the working classes during this period. This was part of a truly national leisure culture which had begun with a national press and national sports in the nineteenth century, the perceived national effort of the war and most importantly the advent of radios as a national cultural factor. Licences for radios rose from 10,000 in 1922 to an estimated 2.5 million by 1927.<sup>36</sup> Indeed often the very factors which made radio so popular were mimicked locally.

Music. Does anyone to-day deny the influence and delight of music? If so, let him pause to consider a world with no music in it, no band to liven things up or march to, no songs and choruses in which to join and no singing in places of worship... And let him try making music friends and companions. Can any deny the pleasure and satisfaction

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<sup>35</sup> *The Story of Rural Community Councils* (London, NCSS, 1963), p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> R. Blyth, *The Age of Illusion: Some glimpses of Britain between the Wars 1919-1940* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 43.

derived from it, even though the performances be far from perfect and a long way below the standard to which we are all accustomed in these days of wireless.<sup>37</sup>

No wonder then that dances and orchestras were regularly perceived by the NCSS as ideologically correct forms of raising money. Indeed without such schemes many Rural Community Councils would have ceased to exist. In 1932 Ellis wrote a confidential memo to the NCSS Executive Committee in which he stated that there was a distinct lack of money, as the Development Commission had received a smaller budget from the Treasury,<sup>38</sup> whilst Local Authorities were simultaneously cutting back in the wake of the depression. This forced the NCSS to decide that no new Rural Community Councils could be established for the next four years, so that the grants already received could be spent on ensuring that the present councils stayed open.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless Appendix 6 shows the extent to which village halls assisted by the NCSS were prevalent throughout Britain by 1938.

Furthermore one should not underestimate the propaganda purposes of such populist activities. As late as 1939 the Essex Rural Community Council was reporting that

The projector purchased at the end of November is an unqualified success. It has been used now in twenty villages and thirteen more engagements are booked. This method of getting the people together provides exactly the opportunity we needed for promulgating the aims and objectives of the Council. At each of these villages, in addition to

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<sup>37</sup> J. Bavin, 'The Village Band', *SSR* (October 1931), p. 201.

<sup>38</sup> The commission only felt able to give the NCSS £20,000 of the £40,000 it had asked for.

<sup>39</sup> Memo to EC, NCSS, 8 February 1932, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/029.

Mr Meadows the operator, either myself or Mr Spurrell has attended and spoke about different aspects of our work in the county.<sup>40</sup>

## The protection and promotion of rural industries.

Improving the skill of country craftsmen was often a stated aim in the constitutions of Rural Community Councils.

As co-author of the *First Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation* (1924) Adams had stressed his belief that the countryside was in need of 'reconstruction' and that the best way to achieve this was through 'better farming, better business, and better living'. As J. A. Venn stated in his review of the report for the *Economic Journal*

The importance they [Sir William Ashley and Professor WGS Adams] attach to education, using the word in its widest sense, will be seen when it is stated that, out of the forty-four recommendations contained in this part of the Report, no less than twenty-five are concerned with the means of organising the farmer and of improving his knowledge, not only of industry itself, but also of its surroundings.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> ERCC Executive Minutes, 6 February, 1939, ERCC, ERO, DZ 113/1.

<sup>41</sup> J. A. Venn quoted in H. Morris, *The Village College: Being a Memorandum on the provision of Educational and Social Facilities for the Countryside with special reference to Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1924). There are three versions of this memorandum. This quote is taken from the first edition printed at Morris' own expense and presented to councillors for discussion in February 1925 and reprinted by the Informal Education Community on their website <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~infed/e-texts/morris-m.htm>.

Adams concerns were reflected in NCSS policy. For the NCSS the most important factor in its aim to develop local industry was its link with the Rural Industries Intelligence Bureau (RIIB) of which Adams was a member. The RIIB was established by the Development Commission to help local craftsmen and women trade information in order to maintain their rural way of life. As a result of the cross membership of people like Professor Adams, local Social Councils came to fulfil a vital function by informing rural people of the RIIB's work. To this end it was usual for local RCC's to establish Rural Industries Committees. However these committees were not universally successful. By March 1933 Essex RCC's Rural Industries Committee, which had been established since January 1931, was announcing a 'great improvement' but this only meant forty craftsmen, mostly blacksmiths, attending a four day programme. Eight months later, although the NCSS had funded a full time rural industries organiser, the scheme was no larger and the committee was reporting difficulties in persuading wheelwrights that pneumatic tyres were here to stay.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore the budget records for the Rural Industries Committee, although incomplete, show very similar levels of income and expenditure (approximately £770 and £750 respectively) every year from 1933 to 1938.<sup>43</sup> The 1933-34 annual report of the National Council of Social Service seems to indicate that at a national level at least they had rather given up on the idea of promoting the rural craft industry.

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<sup>42</sup> ERCC Rural Industries Committee Mins, 10 October 1933, ERCC, ERO DZ 113/1.

<sup>43</sup> These figures include a grant from the Development Commission which increased from £300 to £400 sometime in this period. ERCC Rural Industries Committee Mins, ERO DZ 113/1.

Unemployment is not, happily, the main concern of those who would give voluntary service in the countryside. Their imagination and energy are chiefly needed in constructive attempts to promote "better living" in the countryside, while the Government are endeavouring to ensure the necessary conditions for "better farming" and helping the agricultural community to organise for "better business".<sup>44</sup>

However one area of policy that was successful was the development of competitions for county shows, which the Essex Rural Community Council used as an advert for their own lectures and workshops. These competitions, in part funded by a grant from the Development Commission, gave prizes in four classes of awards; outdoor and indoor metalwork and outdoor and indoor woodwork. A similar undertaking was adopted by the Joint Rural Community Council based in Nottingham. Here a Rural Industries Committee was established in June 1926, made up of a wide cross section of interested bodies. The RCC itself had five representatives while the Central Land Owner's Association, the Farmer's Union, the Master Farrier's Association, the County Agricultural Committee and the Transport and General Worker's Union all had one member each. While this may, with the possible exception of the TGWU, seem to be a rather conservative grouping it should be remembered that the vast majority of bodies concerned with rural welfare were conservative by their nature. The Joint RCC made it clear that its job was to facilitate the co-operation of existing organisations rather than to set out a distinctive policy of its own. In fact it was the more militant organisations such as the Agricultural Worker's Union who consistently refused to participate with the Joint Council rather than the other way around.

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<sup>44</sup> NCSS, *Voluntary Service: The Fourteenth Annual Report of the National Council of Social Service for 1933-34* (London, NCSS, 1934).

Furthermore the methods actually undertaken by the Joint Council's Rural Industries Committee owed more to the co-operative movement than to traditional bourgeois philanthropy. Following the usual surveys, classes and exhibitions in 1927, the Council used a Development Commission grant of £500 to establish a co-operative society 'in order that modern plant, tools and equipment may be supplied to country craftsmen within the County of Nottinghamshire on credit terms'.<sup>45</sup>

The aim of this scheme was that each member of the co-operative would buy at least one share at £1 each. The total income would go, along with the Development Commission's grant, into buying equipment. Individual members could then borrow or buy on extended credit the tools they needed to modernise their business or to advertise in other villages. With forty-nine members buying seventy-eight shares in the first six months, the scheme was initially successful. However the chairman's minuted comments that although the membership figures were impressive they were 'nevertheless, totally inadequate if the Society is to function with any real effectiveness'<sup>46</sup> proved prophetic. Rather than increasing four fold as the Committee had hoped, membership rose extremely slowly. By 31 December 1929 sixty-one shareholders owned ninety-three shares. By the same time next year these figures had only risen to sixty-eight shareholders owning one hundred shares. The scheme seems to have run along similar lines for the remainder of the decade, for although the minutes do not record any more figures there is a letter from two solicitors recording that

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<sup>45</sup> NRCC Rural Industries Co-operative Society Committee Mins, 9 April 1927, NRCC, NRO DD.RC 5/1.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, 28 January 1928.

when their now deceased clients' affairs were settled the shares, initially valued at £1 each were now classed as a 5 shilling liability.<sup>47</sup>

## The enlargement of adult education.

Another activity facilitated by the village hall was adult education classes. It has already been shown that bodies concerned with adult education were actively involved with the establishment of the Joint Rural Community Council for Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. This concern was mutual. An NCSS application for Carnegie United Kingdom Trust grants stated that

The mere fact of bringing these bodies together over so large an area had imported a stimulus to Rural activities which can scarcely yet be calculated... The sharing of information between constituent bodies on a large scale has been one of the most striking achievements so far. The educational activities which have developed, or are on the point of developing will prepare the way for a general awakening to the needs of the village population.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed education generally had often been cited as a means to encourage citizenship by T. H. Green himself<sup>49</sup> and by idealist social workers such as Raymond Unwin.<sup>50</sup> Arthur

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<sup>47</sup> NRCC Rural Industries Co-operative Society Committee, Correspondence and Ephemera, 1939, NRCC, NRO DD.RC 5/1.

<sup>48</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 16 Jan 1925, NCSS, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/028.

<sup>49</sup> 'It is well known that the belief in citizenship was derived from the writings of T. H. Green, the Oxford idealist philosopher, who more than any other figure made the connection between philosophy and educational theory and reform' H. Hendrick, *Images Of Youth: Age Class And The Male Youth Problem 1880-1920* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990) p. 235.



Greenwood, the prominent Labour figure and long time supporter of the NCSS, wrote in 1920 that what made adult education worthwhile was,

Not so much the development of the intellectual powers of individual students, as the desire to 'lay the foundations of more intelligent citizenship and of a better social order.'<sup>51</sup>

Greenwood quoted the 1918 Report of the Adult Education Sub-Committee to the Reconstruction Ministry, of which he was a co-author. This report specifically recommended that for rural areas,

The establishment of village institutes is essential. The rural problem, from whatever point of view it is regarded - economic, social or political - is essentially a problem of recreating the rural community, of developing new social traditions and a new culture... The institute should be the headquarters of organised local activities of all kinds. Trade Union branches, friendly societies, pig clubs and bee clubs, and agricultural and horticultural societies of one sort and another, adult schools and classes arranged by voluntary organisations, women's institutes, schools for mothers, chess clubs and so forth should be encouraged.<sup>52</sup>

The report went on to suggest that Local Education Authorities make monies available for voluntary organisations both to set up 'institutes' and employ teachers. However, from 1924 onwards the NCSS began to co-ordinate various organisations such as the National Adult

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<sup>50</sup> Although Unwin is often referred to as a Socialist he was heavily influenced by idealist thought. Educated under T. H. Green at Oxford he complained of a 'depressing lack of Socialists who have no faith in man' S. Meacham, 'Raymond Unwin (1863-1940): Designing For Democracy In Edwardian England' in S. Pederson, and P. Mandler, *After the Victorians*, op cit., p. 82.

<sup>51</sup> A. Greenwood, *The Education of the Citizen* (London. National Adult School Union, 1920), p. 12.

School Union and the Workers Educational Committee. While a lack of money handicapped any attempts at a wide range of courses (Oxfordshire RCC sponsored a school for music conductors, Kent RCC sponsored play procedures) the LEA's soon noticed the development. In 1925 Gloucestershire and Somerset RCC's secured grants from their LEA's to pay the salary of a local university tutor. Stories of 1,100 people at a single lecture with farmers riding six miles on horseback are commonplace in the writings of contemporaries.<sup>53</sup> When the Secretary for Education in Cambridgeshire County Council wrote his memorandum for councillors outlining the future development of 'village colleges' he assumed that there would be a village hall which held

Broadcast programmes at stated hours, concerts, performances by the village dramatic and musical societies, exhibitions by the travelling cinema of the Cambridgeshire Rural Community Council, lectures, dances, whist drives and public meetings.<sup>54</sup>

Clearly then for some councils the work of the local Rural Community Councils was an integral part of their educational policies.

Nevertheless the provision of adult education brought a number of unforeseen legal problems. In May 1930 letters passed between Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council and Messrs Reynolds, Sons and Gorst, solicitors. The Council were pursued for copyright infringements after two plays 'The Romantic Age' and 'The Dover Road' both by Mr Samuel

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<sup>52</sup> Final Report Of The Adult Education Committee Of The Ministry Of Reconstruction, Cmnd 321 (1919), p. 143.

<sup>53</sup> V. Nash, 'The revival of village life', SSR (November, 1931), p. 217.

French had been performed without permission by the drama class. After over a month of sabre-rattling, in which the Council attempted to get special exemption for charities, the NCSS was forced to pay thirteen guineas to the solicitors.

The Essex RCC was also forced to consult its lawyers when it attempted to introduce classes in drama, music and folk dancing. Essex County Council was reticent to grant a licence for dancing until the village hall had undergone architectural changes which the RCC could not afford. Between 1931 and 1934 continued letters were sent from the Rural Community Council but the County Council was intractable.<sup>55</sup>

However there were some success stories. In Monmouthshire the Rural Community Council established a Drama League with an inaugural membership of five societies across the country and an income of £14 in 1930. By 1950 it had an income of over £1000 and involved 139 different bodies. Again the League was based on grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, without which it would not have survived the first four years. Indeed in a twentieth anniversary report the Monmouthshire RCC was so proud of its Drama League that it wrote 'The RCC produced and nurtured the Drama League, in turn, the Drama League has brought strength and has added status to the Rural Community Council'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> H. Morris, *The Village College*, op cit.

<sup>55</sup> ERCC Drama, Music, Literature and Folk Dancing Committee minutes, ERCC, ERO, DZ 113/6.

<sup>56</sup> MRCC Drama League Report 1930-1950, MRCC, CRO, D69 (20).

Even Nottingham, despite their legal costs, were by March 1926 able to establish thirty-four lectures spread between eighteen villages. The Rural Community Council had been able to increase co-operation. The lectures were arranged by an Adult Education committee with the co-operation of University College Nottingham, Manchester University, Sheffield University, local technical colleges and Nottinghamshire County Council's Education Committee, despite the fact that at the meeting for that month only the Chairman and Secretary had turned up. However this is not an example of apathy among constituent bodies. Rather the number of classes shows that it was possible for the RCC to rely on the support of various organisations without monthly affirmations of support.

The opportunity to use these lectures to support other areas of RCC work was not lost on the NCSS executive in London. In 1934 the Rural Policy Sub-Committee suggested that adult education be used to aid industrial rejuvenation. It was hoped that the RCC could increase local craftsmen's awareness of the market situation through lectures on subjects such as 'The meaning of the Agricultural Marketing Acts of 1931 and 1933', 'The registered producer and his responsibilities', 'The London wholesale market and how it works', 'The importing and exporting countries of Great Britain'.

One area connected with adult education which seems to have been popular in virtually all RCC's was local history. A 1934 NCSS executive memorandum stated that

It fosters a sense of pride in the village and a desire to preserve its beauties and plan its development... It provides a source of study and interest always available on the spot, not remote, and easily grasped by people whose lives are bound up in it. It makes for a sense of continuity and gradual evolution. It has the educational value of a

serious study and provides an attractive hobby for those who go in for it.<sup>57</sup>

The memorandum went on to advise the executive that local history groups had been established in Kent, Derbyshire, West Riding and most impressively in Cheshire, where thirty villages were compiling their own local histories. It proposed that information about possible avenues of research be made available to local councils by a 'group' based in London. However, financial constraints meant that the NCSS had to confine itself to local advisory officers in those areas which could contribute towards their salaries.

### The establishment of youth groups.

The fourth activity common to most RCCs was the facilitating of youth groups within villages. This was usually done by following the example of the Kent RCC, which held regular meetings of various organisations in order to co-ordinate groups, advise village leaders and promote training. By 1932 the organisations within the NCSS included The Girl Guides, The Boys Club, The Boys Brigade, The Church Lads Brigade, The Jewish Lads Brigade, The British National Cadet Association, The Boy Scouts, The YMCA and the YWCA as well as local groups for smaller children.<sup>58</sup> When the National Association of Boys Clubs was first formed it shared its headquarters and secretary (Captain Ellis) with the NCSS.<sup>59</sup> National Council involvement also achieved high level support from the Prince of

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<sup>57</sup> NCSS EC Mins, October 1934, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (i).

<sup>58</sup> NCSS, *The Story Of Rural Community Councils* (London, NCSS, 1963).

<sup>59</sup> Brasnett, *op cit.*, p 41.

Wales and popular support from writers such as A. A. Milne, who attempted to attract new youth club leaders in his customary style.

I have never yet met a man capable of distinguishing the note of the chaffinch who did not insist on calling attention to it even at moments when interest in chaffinches was obviously at its lowest ebb. I have never met a man capable of tying a double-breasted reefer (or whatever it is called) who did not strive to lead the most unpromising conservation round to knots, so that he might produce a piece of string and say, "By the way, this is rather an amusing little fellow". The one thing which we all want to do is to show somebody else how to do the one thing which we can do. And now you are being given a chance to do it. Almost it seems incredulous voice ask, "that I can show boys my stamp collection?" Certainly. "And tell them all about it?" Rather! Just what we want. Feverishly the voice gasps: "The address! Quick! and give me the telephone."<sup>60</sup>

Youth work was seen as serving two purposes; firstly it helped to maintain the rural population thereby calming fears of a future 'Malthusianesque' food crisis and secondly it was seen to help the moral development of young people. In a tribute to the work of the Youth Hostel Association an editorial in the NCSS journal, the *Social Service Review*, stated that

The claim of the Youth Hostels Association to be a spiritual movement is a vital one... The health of body and mind to be derived from walking or cycling, an increased joy in and gratitude for our countryside... all these, and more are rich gifts which the YHA is trying to bring within the reach of those who have eyes to see them.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> NCSS, *Work With Boys* (London, NCSS, 1932), pp. 5-6.

<sup>61</sup> 'An Escape From Materialism', *SSR* (September 1931), p 174.

These spiritual goals were to remain of paramount importance for Rural Community Councils throughout the 1930s and beyond. During the Second World War the NCSS was to re-emphasise just these values

It is true, of course, that the young people of today will very soon have to take their part in the great task of "winning the peace". That is why it is so important to remember that the individual boy or girl shares our common life... What a magnificent opportunity lies here for the voluntary youth organisations. There are plenty of them and varied as they are, all unite on the common principles of self-government and service – to the community and often to a deeper spiritual end. Their members join freely; here is no standard pattern of Hitler Youth... There is real unity in diversity and a harmony stronger than unison, is perhaps the key to the future of our work for the young people of our land.<sup>62</sup>

Clearly then the values of citizenship and co-operation amongst charities were as relevant to the NCSS in 1943 as they had been in 1919.

Despite such idealist arguments the work of the NCSS with young people was rarely to have much practical benefit. Again lack of investment by Local Authorities and the failure of the Physical Training and Recreation Act meant that few areas saw successful policies initiated. Not until the outbreak of war was the National Council's attempts to organise effective welfare for young people to bear fruit. After the Munich crisis of 1938 the NCSS had been approached by the government and asked to create a series of committees which would be able to advise people what to do in case of war. These committees, which were to become Citizens Advice Bureaux, were put into operation in September 1939, when 200 opened.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> 'Spotlight on Youth', *TV*, 35 (Spring 1943), p. 11.

<sup>63</sup> See M. Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (London, NCSS, 1964).

The initial aim of the CABs was to aid Local Authorities to facilitate the evacuation of young people away from major cities. Once in rural areas it was usually the work of the Rural Community Councils to ensure that children were adequately billeted. This often meant a renewed interest in the work of Rural Community Councils.

A good example of this is north Wales, an area which took many children from the manufacturing towns of the midlands and the north west. Here the NCSS Regional Officer, Owen Parry, was unable to attend a meeting in London to discuss the situation and thus wrote a full report on the activities which had taken place in his area. There had been an effective Rural County Council in Anglesey under the name of the Anglesey Union of Village Halls since 1923, but its work had become dominated in the 1930s by the provision of 'technical classes for women'.<sup>64</sup> Caernarvonshire too had seen an initial interest in the building of village halls, followed by a decline in organised county wide activity with each village simply acting in isolation. Meanwhile Montgomeryshire had established a Recreation Association and had been one of the few success stories for the Physical Training Act. However this had been to the detriment of virtually all other schemes. Parry, who organised the area west of Bangor, had been working with very little support:

You will appreciate at once what a handicap the absence of any social service organisation, in our sense of the term, has been. Bringing together sectional organisations in various places has been a tedious business and not always successful... In these circumstances one has

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<sup>64</sup> Report of further visits to region number 8 (North and South Wales) January 6-18 1941, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/06/010.



tried to exploit the new relationship that has arisen between local authorities and social problems out of evacuation.<sup>65</sup>

His initial efforts were 'disappointing', due to the relevant Local Authorities 'preoccupation with other emergency matters such as food control etc. but partly also owing to their tendency to regard evacuation as a material problem only'.<sup>66</sup> However, by early November Parry could report that the evacuations were to be organised on a county basis by a series of committees. Furthermore, that the executives of the Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Montgomeryshire RCCs were, 'with a few co-options' to become the committees for their counties and joint committees between themselves and Local Authorities were to be established by the Welsh Board of Health. For Parry this was not simply a wartime expedient but a chance for the NCSS to show the effectiveness of its message to the 'unconverted'.

I attach greater importance to these changes than that of mere speed of results. In brief, they are creating favourable conditions for establishing something bigger than an organisation for Social Service work for the Emergency period only. We always hoped, of course, that whatever was set up at the moment would provide the basis of a peace-time organisation in future. Now, it seems to me, we can think much more in terms of our peace-time ideas than we anticipated. Evacuation has brought a new understanding of voluntary social work in North Wales and this understanding tends to be directed more and more, not on the evacuees only but on the residents themselves. Evacuation also, inasmuch as it is regarded by influential sections of opinion to hold a threat to some of the chief national characteristics of Welsh Wales, has raised the interests of certain national societies in the cultural aspect of social service work; in the normal course of events their interest would be difficult to secure.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Owen Parry to Leonard Shoeten-Sack, 6 November 1939, NCSS , London Metropolitan Archive, LMA/4016/IS/A/06/010.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

Parry may well have been correct. Later that year the Anglesey Union of Village Halls formed itself into a fully affiliated Rural Community Council, which by 1941 was being identified as being one of the most 'efficient agents of the National Council in the country'.<sup>68</sup>

## The investigation of public health.

Rural health and public health often went hand in hand. For example, the Cambridge RCC planned a regional survey with detailed maps of every village in order to maximise their ability to promote healthy disposal of waste and drainage. Such surveys also served another useful function in that as funding from local authorities dried up during the depression, the NCSS found it useful to stress their work in improving health in order to attract government funding. It was argued that this was more likely to achieve support than adult education or boys clubs. Therefore the National Council's journal produced descriptions of the salient points of acts such as the Housing (Rural Works) Acts (1926/1930), as well as summaries of the views of government departments such as the Ministry of Health<sup>69</sup>, or the Development Commission.

At local level many Rural Community Councils established Public Health Committees with aims which reflected the NCSS concern with co-operation. For example, the Essex Public

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<sup>68</sup> Report of further visits to region number 8 (North and South Wales) January 6-18 1941, *op cit.*

<sup>69</sup> 'Rural Housing', *SSR* (June 1931), pp. 118-20.

Health Committee was established in September 1932 with the aim 'not to trespass upon the work of the statutory medical health authority [rather] we want to be of help to them, and our idea is to further the health work of the county by organising the voluntary resources of the area'.<sup>70</sup>

This aspect of NCSS work was never particularly successful. A 1934 confidential 'Memorandum on Rural Policy', written by the NCSS Executive Committee, commented that in 1932 only three RCC's 'were doing any considerable amount of health work'. Although the 1924 Annual Conference of Rural Community Councils had seen eight representatives from Health Committees, the Conference Group on Health issues had ceased to operate. The memorandum again recommended that a Health Group be formed to collect and make available reports on the existing health work of RCC's and co-ordinate work with statutory bodies; but there was no significant increase in NCSS activity.

Nevertheless there was one area in which the NCSS, while not instigating policy, was carried along by it. The 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act has been largely ignored by historians. It was listed by Taylor as one of the reforming acts by Chamberlain which 'in quieter days... would have rated a paragraph'.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless it was to have far reaching consequences for NCSS clubs in rural and urban areas. In essence the act gave Local Authorities the ability to provide playing fields, gymnasiums, swimming baths and sports centres which it was hoped would increase the general health of the nation. Local Authorities

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<sup>70</sup> ERCC Public Health Committee Mins, 27 September 1932, ERCC, ERO, DZ 113/1.

<sup>71</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, *England 1914-45* (London, Book Club Associates, 1979 edition), p. 406.

who took up the opportunity did so primarily through grants from the newly established government body the National Advisory Council on Physical Training (later the National Fitness Council) which allocated funds for the provision of fields and for a variety of equipment.

However the National Association could also give grants directly to voluntary bodies. That it chose to do this through the NCSS was very probably due to the fact that the first secretary of the National Advisory Council was non-other than Lionel Ellis who resigned as secretary of the National Council in order to take the position. This led to an extremely close relationship between the two bodies, especially in rural areas where fields were readily available. The National Council of Social Service's executive committee reported Ellis' resignation at its meeting on 23 February 1937.<sup>72</sup> At its next meeting exactly two months later on 23 April it reported that it had received an extremely friendly letter from Ellis at the National Advisory Council, asking how much money Rural Community Councils wanted to provide playing fields and when would they be able to spend the funds.<sup>73</sup> For many RCC's this must have been where co-operation really paid off.

Once again, and despite this, the scheme was not to be a long-term success. Even before the outbreak of the war effectively ended the National Association, it had alienated many Local Authorities by providing monies directly to charities rather than to County Councils. Its procedures were often complicated and failed to take local circumstances into account.

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<sup>72</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 23 February 1937, LMA LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (ii).

<sup>73</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 23 April 1937, LMA LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (ii).

Nevertheless, for its short lifetime the National Association did provide local Rural Community Councils with at least some success in encouraging healthier citizens.

## Countryside planning

Alongside the publication of information regarding government legislation in relation to concerning health and education issues, the *Social Service Review* regularly kept its readers informed about acts which affected the development of the countryside. The publication of the details of the Town and Country Planning Act (1932) and the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act (1935)<sup>74</sup> led to such a debate in the pages of the *Review* that from 1927 rural planning was constantly the main topic of discussion at the RCC annual conferences.<sup>75</sup>

The emphasis which many Rural Community Councils placed upon countryside planning was a direct result of the previously identified 'pastoral impulse'. Jeans has shown that as the countryside modernised it moved further away from the traditional romantic notions of village life.

In the 1920s social and economic change in England hastened the demise of the countryside as the preserve of a privileged few. Rising incomes, the growth of a *nouveaux riches* group and white collar groups in employment, a new mobility in the form of the motor car, new technologies such as electricity, and a desire for new and better housing on the margins of cities, all threatened the countryside as an arcadian alternative to the world of modernising industry and urban

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<sup>74</sup> T. Middleton, 'Co-operation In Rural Life', *SSR* (October 1930), p 209.

<sup>75</sup> Brasnett, M, *Voluntary Social Action*, op cit. p. 49.

growth. This was seen as a threat by those who had hitherto enjoyed a relatively undisturbed run of the rural environment.<sup>76</sup>

The largest single organisation which rallied against these changes was the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. This was an organisation founded in 1926 which united a variety of bodies representing the 'traditional countryside' including the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the Central Landowners' Association, the Country Gentleman's Association, the Land Agents' Association, the National Trust and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. However many of these organisations merely wanted to be represented on the new Council and did little to instigate policy. As a result despite the wide variety of interests, the CPRE was dominated by a few elitist intellectuals, notably C.E.M. Joad. Joad

Sneered at the cackling insanity in the woods, fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties, girls in pyjamas dancing to the sound of the gramophone... [cars] that decant their contents of whining children, nagging mothers and bored fathers. The children play, the mothers sit and knit, and litter the beach with the debris of meals, and the father reads the paper on the rocks. All this compared with proper people, who walk, ride, hunt and shoot in the countryside, leaving no litter beyond the odd cartridge case.<sup>77</sup>

Such an organisation was unlikely not to be represented on the Joint Committees established by the local Rural Community Councils. It was members of the CPRE who forced the Essex RCC to take down the adverts it initially put up to advertise its presence. Indeed even when

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<sup>76</sup> D. Jeans, 'Planning and the Myth of the English Countryside, in the interwar period', *Rural History*, 1, 2 (1990), p. 250.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* pp. 259-60.

the National Council sent a stark memo stating that more adverts equalled more publicity which equalled more chance of receiving financial grants, the CPRE representative, Col. Gibbon, conceded that one hundred advertisements could go up but insisted that no more should be planned 'without detailed consideration by the standing committee'.<sup>78</sup> Similar problems existed for the Monmouthshire Rural Community Council, when the member representing the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales forced them to remove all their adverts for a forthcoming county show.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless the campaigns to increase rural planning were not all petty and unconstructive. Again in Monmouthshire, the CPRW members encouraged the completion of an extremely detailed survey into the geology, history and economic infrastructure of the Wye Valley.<sup>80</sup> This report, released in February 1933, consisted of 126 large pages detailing 12 individual acres between Whitchurch and Gloucester which can have been of very little use to club leaders on the ground. Rather the survey represents the extreme of a shared belief between the CPRW, the NCSS and many other rural charities: that to be able to work within an area you must first survey it.<sup>81</sup> The CPRW felt that it would only be able to adequately protect the environment if it could clearly state what that environment consisted of. Similarly the Monmouthshire Rural Community Council, like Councils elsewhere who created smaller

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<sup>78</sup> ERCC EC Mins., 9 May 1930, ERO, DZ 113/1.

<sup>79</sup> MRCC EC Mins., undated (prob. early 1930s), CRO, D69 (25).

<sup>80</sup> *Report into the Wye Valley Regional Planning Scheme* (Monmouthshire, Monmouthshire Rural Community Council, 1933).

<sup>81</sup> Although for the CPRE and the CPRW this could well read – 'that to be able to be able to effectively stop work within an area you must first survey it.'

surveys, felt that an assessment of what facilities were available in an area was essential to any group that was attempting to bring the providers of those facilities together. Appendix 8 shows an example of the results of a survey undertaken by the Warwickshire Rural Community Council in 1937. As late as 1945 the NCSS handbook for Rural Community Councils, *Village Halls and Social Centres*, was stressing that

Planning is based upon the patient accumulation of ascertainable facts and conditions and it is therefore a necessary preliminary for every village to review its existing social facilities in the light of modern standards and to make a comprehensive survey of all land and buildings in its locality offering facilities of any kind which can be utilised for social purpose.<sup>82</sup>

The NCSS developed its rural activities primarily by facilitating meetings between other societies or between societies and the public. This was done through maintaining contact between these groups, either in written form through the *Social Service Review* or more usually by the creation of a meeting hall which the whole village was encouraged to see as 'theirs'. By this method the NCSS could promote the idealist concepts previously mentioned whereby charities came together in a co-operative effort, each one enacting the role of the good citizen and working together for the good of the community. In rural areas this was reasonably successful. Although more ambitious plans for 'socially useful' activities often failed Joint Committees were formed, village halls were built, lectures, music groups and drama classes were provided. For the NCSS, at least, which was more concerned with the

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<sup>82</sup> NCSS, *Village Halls and Social Centres: A handbook of information* (London, NCSS, 1945), p. 7.



providers of welfare rather than the recipients, this was an area of definite growth.

Unfortunately this was not to be the case in urban areas.

## **Part Two: Councils of Social Service.**

The second part this chapter will detail the attempts by the NCSS to encourage the formation of Councils of Social Service in urban areas. Due to a variety of factors these attempts were relatively unsuccessful. The large number of charities already present, a lack of financial support and a strong ex-COS presence all combined if not to stall the urban development of the NCSS then at least to hamper it. As a result local councils were often forced to deviate from official NCSS policy because of practical problems at a local level. It is the nature of this shift from ideology to policy which will be discussed here.

Local Councils of Social Service were established immediately after the First World War. As has already been shown they were designed to be independent organisations, which would form a Joint Committee as a forum for local voluntary and statutory bodies and would place increasing civic co-operation as their primary aim. The Halifax Council of Social Welfare stated its motto as 'nisi Dominus rustodierit ribitatum',<sup>83</sup> while the Bradford Council of Social Service stated in almost as classical a vein:

Every community is made up of smaller groups or communities in which like minded people associate for particular purposes. We begin

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<sup>83</sup> According to the Halifax CSW this translated as '*To know something about everything is good. To know everything about something is better.*' Halifax CSW, *Institutions of Charitable Agencies in Halifax* (Halifax, Halifax Council of Social Welfare, 1929).

life as members of a family; in school we form part of a class or a team, or a less formal group of friends, and it is the same as we grow older. The groups to which we belong are only more numerous and more varied. Some are formally constituted, while we are hardly aware that others exist. Their purpose may be worship or business or pleasure – public service or private interest, or a hundred and one different aims. For we have long since discovered that we cannot realise individual life except in association with others.

We are discovering now that by association of groups we can realise a community life in which different and seemingly conflicting aims form, not a mere tangle, but a pattern which is the more beautiful because of the variety of its threads. In Bradford, as in other places, the many groups engaged in social service have associated themselves in a representative Council, thereby showing that they recognise behind their separate aims a common purpose which all share. If anything were needed to prove the wisdom of such a course the first fruits, represented by this survey, should be more than sufficient.<sup>84</sup>

The need for a survey of local voluntary agencies was also felt in Edinburgh, where the Council of Social Service paid a Marjorie Rackshaw to edit 'A Social Survey of the City of Edinburgh'.<sup>85</sup> If the number of surveys completed was an indication of success, the NCSS would have had an extremely promising start to its urban work.

However money continued to be a problem. A case study of the Rotherham Council of Social Service provides a good example of this. Unusually the Rotherham Council of Social Service developed not from a local Charity Organisation Committee or a Guild of Help but from the Rotherham Rotary Club. Its first meeting (on 15 October 1930) was inauspicious to say the least. The minutes, on Rotary Club stationery, record that although 28 people attended the meeting at the Masonic Hall, 22 had been at the Rotary Club meeting earlier in

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<sup>84</sup> BCSS, *The Texture of Welfare: A Survey of Social Service in Bradford* (Westminster, P.S. King & Son, 1923), pp. 3-4.

<sup>85</sup> Privately published edition in British Library BL828 7d50.

the evening. Nevertheless, Wyndham-Deedes a high-ranking member of the NCSS and later head of the London Council of Social Service and President of the NCSS, travelled to the meeting to give official advice. Despite being identified as 'probably a member of the Executive Council in London'<sup>86</sup> he suggested a preliminary survey of existing social services followed by a public meeting to consider the formation of a Community Council. Again the emphasis was placed on the 'new' aspects of the NCSS rather than any financial promises.

I suggest that in organising our actual work and programme, that we co-op and claim the ASSISTANCE of our elders amongst us but as they already hold so many voluntary and responsible positions only in an advisory or guiding capacity WE YOUNGER ones to take on the running about and actual work, submitting the information gleaned and the worries and stumbling blocks we meet, to the council of our elders at a general meeting monthly or bi-monthly.<sup>87</sup>

However there was no upsurge of activity by a group of 'Young Turks'. With no new money the new committee relied on goodwill: but to no avail. By the third meeting only five people turned up and they could not organise a survey. However they called a public meeting which 58 people attended. Although only seven arrived at the next meeting, the success of the public meeting imbued them with a new confidence. As a result they followed the advice of the NCSS booklet 'Co-operation in Social Service' religiously. They also wrote for advice to their nearest established Council of Social Service in Sheffield.

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<sup>86</sup>RCSS EC Mins, 15 October 1930, RLIS, Ind/Ly/D2/ALS3 1/T 1/1.

<sup>87</sup>RCSS EC Mins, undated (probably late 1930), RLIS, Ind/Ly/D2/ALS3 1/T 1/1 (emphasis in original).

By March 1932, nearly eighteen months after their foundation, the Rotherham Council of Social Service had achieved nothing. It had a constitution, a few regularly attending members, but no money. It was established that they needed £450 to meet costs: but could only raise £200. Not until August were they able to appoint a secretary and by February 1933, despite the claims to be a 'new' society, activity was limited to personal service, interviewing applicants for assistance, arranging physical training classes at the YMCA and free tickets for the unemployed to Rotherham Cricket Club's home matches. Nevertheless optimism was high. 1933 saw a series of favourable reports in the local press. The *Sheffield Evening Star* wrote that

The Council of Social Service is gradually approaching the desired stage of organisation at which it will be in a position to render something like the measure of public benefit aimed at by the promotion and in the mean time its officers are striving to fashion schemes of utility to that end.<sup>88</sup>

Again this was unjustified optimism. In December 1934 the usual £200 grant from the Feoffees of the Common Land of Rotherham was cut to £20. Two months later an appeal to the Mayor for money was refused on the grounds that the Council of Social Service had too little public or financial support. As a result on 14 March 1935 the Rotherham Council of Social Service was disbanded through lack of money.

Similar situations were occurring throughout the country. In February 1934 the honorary secretary of the London Council of Social Service reported on the Hackney and Stoke

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<sup>88</sup>*Sheffield Evening Star*, 21 March, 1933.

Newington CSS, one of the first local Councils of Social Service to be formed in 1917, two years before the NCSS. It had over 100 local workers,<sup>89</sup> but it was reported that

Mr Saundersen is the COS secretary and acts as Hon. Sec of the Council of Social Service merely because no one else will do the work... The Council only spent £8 last year, and the people still on the Council are there in a personal capacity. The Council meets occasionally when an address is given. There is an unemployment centre in the Borough, but the CSS has nothing to do with it.<sup>90</sup>

Failures such as those experienced in Rotherham and elsewhere led to a rethinking of NCSS policy. When Wyndham Deedes, then an assistant secretary to the NCSS, had visited Rotherham in 1930 it had been part of a tour of the country which saw him visit virtually all local Councils of Social Service. Deedes, like Ellis and Dixon, was a successful military man who had turned to charity after World War One. Born to a wealthy family in 1874 he joined the army aged 17 after leaving Eton and was stationed in Constantinople before the war. His knowledge of Turkey and Turkish meant that he was placed on General Ian Hamilton's Staff during the Gallipoli campaign (which Deedes had advised both Kitchener and Churchill against). According to one old school friend, Lord William Percy, the experiences of Gallipoli were a key point in Deedes life.

It was in 1916 that, coming out of Church Service one Sunday morning, he turned to me and said that he had made up his mind that, when the War ended, he would leave the Army and devote himself to social service.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> LCSS *First Annual Report 1919-1920*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>90</sup> LCSS EC Mins., 22 February 1934, LMA, ACC 1888/52.

It is certainly true that Deedes re-evaluated his view of the abilities of the ordinary man while in Gallipoli. He placed the headquarters for his division on the West Beach within easy reach of the shells, while the majority of the staff remained in Lemnos. He wanted to be closer to his men. From 1916 to 1918 Deedes served with Military Intelligence in Egypt and Palestine and from 1920 to 1923 served under Sir Herbert Samuel, the first Chief Secretary, in Palestine. Here he mediated between Jews and Arabs while gradually becoming more sympathetic to the Zionist cause. Nevertheless despite rising to Brigadier-General and despite the protestations of Samuel, Deedes left the Army in 1923 having arranged a position for himself as a social worker in Bethnal Green. It was here, representing the Federation of Residential Settlements, that he came into contact with the NCSS. By 1930 negative 'family circumstances' compelled him to take a small wage from the NCSS.<sup>92</sup>

The report which he submitted to the National Council's Executive was perhaps the most influential internal document the NCSS ever produced and certainly radically altered the urban councils. The report was intended to focus on how the NCSS should be re-organised, rather than on its policy aims. However, the new framework proposed by Deedes reveals much about how the values of citizenship and co-operation were buried deep within the NCSS' structure. It reveals that even individuals who had not had specific training in the philosophy of British idealism felt the need for co-operation on moral as well as

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<sup>91</sup>Lord W. Percy, 'School, Turkey, Gallipoli and Egypt' in E. Elath, N. Bentwich & D. May (ed.) *Memories of Sir Wyndham Deedes* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1958), pp. 9-10.

<sup>92</sup>William Deedes MP, 'London Social Work: The Kent Square in Bethnal Green' in E. Elath et al. op cit. p. 43. William Deedes, the nephew of Wyndham, gave no more details of what 'family circumstances' meant but it is true that Deedes had lost much of his families 3000 acres in Hyth and Ashford while abroad.

organisational grounds. For those social workers like Deedes who had taken no part in the formation of the NCSS but had joined an already existing society, the benefits of co-operation did not need philosophical assessment. Rather they were factors which lay unconsciously behind organisational policy. Deedes report reflected what were by now consistent NCSS values derived from just such an unconscious acceptance of the values of idealist citizenship among the providers of welfare. As such this thesis makes no apology for discussing the report at some length for it is illustrative of the way in which general philosophical points could become the basis of an institutional and operational ideology.

The report itself started out in optimistic fashion. Deedes said that NCSS work was being carried out by expert people who were efficiently laying good foundations. Nevertheless he identified many problems. He noted that Registers of assistance were rarely fully used and hardly ever included religious charities. He concluded, as Dixon had done four years earlier, that most local councils were more concerned with personal casework rather than charitable organisation. This, Deedes felt, must change - 'new' charities were needed for the post war world.

I refuse to subscribe to the view that society is morally 'sick' and is unable to rise to a high standard of taste and values - there are vital forces and to spare in society if we did but know how to liberate them. This is the supreme task of the Voluntary Organisation but in order to discharge it, it must change its methods and its philosophy. Many Voluntary Organisations are deeply rooted in ancient traditions of thought and method. They have not changed with the times. What was done in the eighties, they do today. Of the truth of this indictment the settlements furnish a good example. Just as the British

Salesman is out of date in his methods so are these organisations. The 'goods' which they offer to their clients are out of fashion.<sup>93</sup>

Furthermore relations with other charities were not at all good, especially when compared to rural areas. Under the heading 'Churches' Deedes wrote

I believe it is true to say that the clergy are very apt to mistake means for ends. They are assiduous in Church services and tending the 'little flock', but of the needs of the city and the stranger beyond the gates they take too little cognisance.<sup>94</sup>

Of the TOC. H.<sup>95</sup>

I have evidence of many useful policies of work being undertaken. But there is little continuity of policy - nay more - there is no policy of social work at all.<sup>96</sup>

And of other voluntary societies generally he was equally critical.

As regards charitable and relief societies I feel justified in saying this: their number is great, is getting greater and should surely be diminished. The amount of time money and energy which in the aggregate, is expended by each separate society must be quite out of proportion to the results achieved. To ask these societies to sink their

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<sup>93</sup>*Report to NCSS Executive Committee, 18 June 1930, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/029.*

<sup>94</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> The TOC. H. was established on the Western Front by an army chaplain, 'Tubby' Clayton. Based in the Talbot House, Poperinge, Belgium (hence its name in signallers code) the TOC. H. aimed to cater to soldiers 'body, mind and spirit' in an atmosphere devoid of rank or class. Following the war the surviving members succeeded in keeping the movement alive during the inter-war years. By the time of Deedes report the TOC. H. had received a Royal Charter, has established clubs throughout Britain and had instigated a similar movement in Canada.

<sup>96</sup>*Report to NCSS Executive Committee, 18 June 1930, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/029.*



identity and to amalgamate probably to ask too much [lit]. But it seems desirable that they should effect some economy by all coming under one roof. Difficult as it might be to accomplish. I can imagine no more laudable aim for a council to work for them to try and persuade these charities to take at all events this first step in the process of rationalisation.<sup>97</sup>

Deedes also blamed other charities for the lack of young workers within the NCSS. He refused to simply condemn the younger generation.

It is said that the younger generation is more pleasure loving and less self-sacrificing than it used to be. But this complaint, I believe, has been heard in every age. For the lack of response to social service I am rather disposed to blame not those to whom the appeal is made, but those who make it. Their gospel is apt to be uninteresting and their prophets - we must admit - are oft-times distressingly dull.<sup>98</sup>

Deedes went on to tell the story of a headmaster of 'one well-known Public School' who had decided not to discuss the unemployment in the coalfields lest he should upset his pupils.

However on a positive note Deedes did find that relations between local councils and statutory bodies were generally good, albeit too dependent on personalities rather than bureaucratic links. As a result he made recommendations which again reveal the middle class nature of the NCSS Executive Committee.

Indeed so important is it that cordial relations should obtain between the Council [of Social Service] and the Corporation that more attention might perhaps with advantage be paid to social qualifications when selecting secretaries of Councils. This remark

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<sup>97</sup>ibid.

<sup>98</sup>ibid.

may lay me open to misconstruction - or worse - but I feel bound to record it.<sup>99</sup>

The main aim of Deedes' report was to emphasise what needed to be done in order to improve the ability of local Councils of Social Service to form and sustain Joint Committees. As a result Deedes was at great pains to again stress the needs for a complete social survey of the facilities available in an area before work was undertaken. This he argued would benefit both local councils and government ministries.

If an analysis of cases referred to secretaries of councils were made at the end of a twelve-month, a flood of light would be thrown upon obscure aspects of the lives of human beings and a very interesting report could be furnished on 'where the shoe pinches' for the perusal of those who 'make the shoes' at Westminster.<sup>100</sup>

However he was particularly concerned that too much emphasis was being placed upon personal casework, and that this was hampering the effective development of surveys.

The work at present done by Councils is, even within the limits of personal service which they set themselves, unduly restricted in scope. Their work should have a subjective as well as an objective value but the former is in large measure ignored. There seems to be a general tendency for Councils to be exclusively occupied with rendering assistance to individuals and to ignore the conditions of which the individual is the victim. They fail to generalise from their own information... Their evidence cannot lightly be set aside; the facts they can deduce in support of it are facts discovered 'in their own habitat' - in the lives of the people and in their homes not merely facts cited in blue books. But little action of this kind is taken. This failure to 'go one step further' is, no doubt, in some measure due to pre-occupation with the daily round and common task and to the

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<sup>99</sup>ibid.

<sup>100</sup>ibid.

shortage of personnel. But it is at present a serious defect and an attempt should be made to remedy it.<sup>101</sup>

Deedes' report was not simply aimed at re-organising the initial stages of urban work. Rather the new policies which Deedes suggested placed greater emphasis on the need to encourage citizenship among welfare providers. Indeed Deedes' conclusions typified the level to which the shift between the attitudes of the Charity Organisation Society and the National Council had progressed. Like the COS, and many within the NCSS during its early years, Deedes believed that voluntary effort was far superior to state charity.

There is much 'public-assistance' to be rendered which is of a purely personal character. It is often moral and not material support of which the individual stands in need. In a word the antithesis between 'the dead hand of the state' and 'the live hand of Fellowship' will always remain more or less true.<sup>102</sup>

Indeed state activity could only hope to be effective if it came to organisations which were under the charitable umbrella of the NCSS.

A council really representative of all Voluntary Organisations therefore is essential if co-operation with the state is to be effective. I would go further and express the hope that the day will come when government departments, national and local, will be willing only to make grants to, or otherwise to assist the work of, such voluntary organisations in the towns as are members of and are recommended by the Council. Such a procedure would be an incentive to co-operation, would tend to raise the standard of the work of voluntary

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<sup>101</sup>ibid.

<sup>102</sup>ibid.

organisations, and would ultimately lead to the elimination of the superfluous or 'unfit'.<sup>103</sup>

Unlike the COS and many of his contemporaries in other charities, Deedes was at pains to stress the impact which the co-operation of voluntary and statutory bodies could have on people's lives. Deedes put less emphasis upon the recipients of welfare than on the givers of welfare. By fulfilling the role of the good citizen and working with others to improve the state, Deedes argued, individuals could improve their own lives. This was a lesson which he felt had to be learnt by both the upper and working classes. In true idealist fashion, Deedes was not concerned with the promotion of certain values among one class by another. Rather he saw the benefit of all people working together for the 'common good'.

In the case of the upper class, for example, Deedes argued that it was noticeable that there was 'wide-spread and in many cases quite excusable ignorance amongst well to do people on such subjects as housing, wages, the 'dole' and Poor Law benefit'.<sup>104</sup> He argued that among the 'the rich' three attitudes towards charity were prevalent.

Firstly there were those who disliked all charities in any shapes or form. These people, Deedes argued, usually felt that the working class were too well off already thanks to the excessive taxation burden placed on the rich. Deedes felt such people were beyond the reach of the NCSS and should be ignored.

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<sup>103</sup>ibid. See Chapter 6 for how such a policy developed in the South Wales coalfields.

<sup>104</sup> ibid.

However a second attitude saw many of 'the rich' fulfil the role of the good citizen and give time or money to the NCSS or their local Councils of Social Service. It is interesting that he did not cite those who worked for other voluntary bodies. Presumably these only became good citizens when they started co-operating with other charities. Rather than provide personal casework, it was to be the role of local Councils of Social Service to convince other charities of the need for this co-operation.

As regards charitable and relief societies, I feel justified in saying this: their number is great and is getting greater and should surely be diminished. The amount of time, money and energy which in aggregate is expended by each separate society must be quite out of proportion to the results achieved. To ask these societies to sink their identity and to amalgamate is probably to ask too much. But it seems desirable that they should effect some economy by all coming under one roof. Difficult as it might be to accomplish, I can imagine no more laudable aim for a council to work for than to try to persuade these charities to take at all events this first step in the process of rationalisation.<sup>105</sup>

For Deedes the 'rationalisation' of charity was a 'laudable aim' which went hand in hand with conceptions of citizenship and co-operation

Thirdly, Deedes identified those who saw charities as a 'bulwark against the Reds'. He felt that such people misunderstood the aims of 'social service'. He stressed that the NCSS did not simply stand for the provision of material benefit in order that the poor could be dissuaded from moving to the political extremes. Rather they stood for a country where everyone played a part in their local community and therefore in which there was simply no need for extremist political parties. To this end local social workers had an important duty to

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

advertise what services were being made available to local communities, both to attract recipients and also new social workers.

A strong affection for and pride in their 'home town' is a marked characteristic of British people and if it can be shown that there is something to be done for the town and if leaders can be found who are willing to do it, they will not fail, I think, to inspire the whole body of citizens.<sup>106</sup>

Paradoxically Deedes argued for the application of similar tactics in areas where the criticism of the NCSS came from 'the Reds' themselves. He regarded it as a paradox that 'although the greater part of social service is devoted to the welfare of the working classes... their leaders are at best indifferent and at worst hostile to it'.<sup>107</sup> He stated that the leaders of labour<sup>108</sup> saw charity as usurping the function of the state, patronising the poor, and creating a sense of false consciousness by 'perpetuating evils and postponing the day of radical change'.<sup>109</sup> He accepted that the National Council was primarily a conservative grouping made up of professional social workers, civil servants and civic leaders and that 'co-operation between, on the one hand those who are whether voluntarily or professionally, social workers (who belong to the middle classes) and, on the other hand, the leaders of Labour, is going to be extremely difficult'. As a result he thought that the main problem faced by local Councils of Social Service was that many Labour party members had an instinctive dislike for the NCSS 'type' no matter how they tried to ingratiate themselves at a local level.

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Deedes interchanged between the general term and the proper noun.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

It is not class hostility, but class consciousness which faces us [locally]. The Labour party in this country is more than a political party, it is for large numbers of its members a Movement, a Religion. Artificially, you can place yourself "in" the Movement, but to be "of" the Movement you must be born in the ranks of Labour.<sup>110</sup>

However, again Deedes placed the fault not with those who shunned the NCSS but with local Councils of Social Service. It was typical of much NCSS philosophy that he felt that if only the NCSS and the Labour party could sit down together they could resolve all their difficulties in a spirit of friendly co-operation. It was for the NCSS then 'to prove itself a constructive force in society' if it were to 'enlist the sympathy of the leaders of the masses'.

Again the emphasis was upon attempting to draw people not into the schemes facilitated by the local Councils of Social Service, but into the Councils themselves. For Deedes, and the NCSS, citizenship was not a value you picked up at a local club – it was a value you exhibited by helping to run a local club.

Sir Wyndham Deedes' report was highly influential and led to the establishment of an Urban Policy Sub-Committee in October 1933. Unsurprisingly this committee involved representatives from a number of voluntary organisations. It identified its main aim as being 'to consider what should be the constitution and terms of reference of a committee to further community effort in urban areas'.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> NCSS UPSC, Mins 12 October 1933, NCSS, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/104.

However it was not long before the sub-committee came up before the harsh reality that for all the 'terms of reference' they wrote they still lacked financial support. The committee visited many local Councils of Social Service and attempted to establish a strategy whereby Joint Committees, made up of collections of various charities, could cheaply meet the criteria involved in NCSS philosophy. While the Joint Committees in rural areas were clearly under the auspices of the National Council, with NCSS chairmen and organised through grants from the NCSS, urban Joint Committees were to be much more autonomous. In November 1933, only one month after its first meeting, the sub-committee recommended that it would be difficult to obtain the necessary financial support for a body engaged in co-ordinating rather than providing charity. As a result they decided that as a temporary expedient NCSS policy would be to encourage local councils to establish Joint Committees and then withdraw.<sup>112</sup> This provides an excellent example of the pressures of political reality forcing a change upon NCSS operational policies.

In February 1934 the sub-committee submitted a draft report to the NCSS Executive Committee, formally laying out the points which were now NCSS urban policy. Firstly they stressed the need for towns to have a Joint Committee of voluntary and statutory agencies. Secondly it was hoped that such committees would include co-opted members who would primarily consist of local dignitaries, usually mayors or aldermen. This, it was hoped, would mean 'a sufficient number of people with influence who recognise the importance of the 'community' ideal and are prepared to work, on the Council, for the adoption of an all-round

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<sup>112</sup>NCSS UPSC, Mins 27 November 1933, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/104 .



view of community needs'.<sup>113</sup> Thirdly, and again with finance in mind, the sub-committee stressed that local Councils of Social Service should not attempt to be involved in too many tasks. Limited action was justified on the grounds of 'increased effectiveness'. However it is indicative of the financial problems faced by urban councils that NCSS representatives had their actions radically curtailed. This is in marked contrast to their rural counterparts who could host craft competitions alongside their usual activities.

The fourth point raised by the urban sub-committee was that the NCSS should restrict affiliation to those local councils which 'can be regarded as truly representatives of local forces and not confined to any particular field of work'. Although this seems to contradict the points raised above, the committee was particularly concerned with organisations calling themselves Councils of Social Service but dominated by a small unrepresentative clique. This seems to have been a constant problem for the NCSS. Between 1926 and 1934 Dixon, Deedes and the official sub-committee had all made it clear that some councils were based on local oligarchies rather than representative Joint Committees. As will be shown, this was far from a rare occurrence.

Closer examination of the Chester Council of Social Service, one of the first and biggest provisional councils to be established, provides an excellent example of the failure of the National Council to ensure that local organisations followed its principles.

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<sup>113</sup>NCSS UPSC, Draft Report, February 1934, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/1/04.

The Chester CSS was established as The Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund on 12 August 1914. As has already been shown, the start of the First World War saw a general attempt to co-ordinate relief which culminated in the 1915 Joint Committee on Social Service. The Relief Fund followed this movement by emulating Nunn in Hampstead and forming a Council of Social Welfare.<sup>114</sup> However it was a key element of the Relief Fund that it not only organised charitable effort but also distributed alms. To a large extent this was due to the involvement in the Relief Fund of Chester's three biggest charities; the Charity Organisation Society, the Guild of Help and the Soldiers and Sailors Family Association.<sup>115</sup> These bodies all had a history, in Chester at least, of providing as well as organising welfare and all three were dominated by a political oligarchy who used overt charitable acts to reinforce their political positions. By 1915 the Chester Council of Social Welfare included the Mayor, as Chairman, the Mayoress, the Lord Bishop, the Sheriff, the Dean of the Cathedral and the Deputy Mayor. Furthermore the Council became dominated by practical welfare.

Its original concern was primarily unemployment. The Council acted almost as an employment agency, matching individual relief applicants to known job opportunities. The co-ordination of charitable effort was further hampered by the failure of local voluntary

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<sup>114</sup>Nunn gave a lecture to the fledgling Relief Fund outlining the actions they should take in 1915.

<sup>115</sup>The first Secretary to the Council of Social Welfare, appointed in 1914, was a Miss Doulton Edwards who had formerly been Secretary to the Scarborough Guild of Help. Furthermore the original Relief Fund was based in the same offices office as the Charity Organisation Society and the Guild of Help.

organisations to participate. An Executive Committee report from February 1916 complained that

the work of Mutual Registration of Assistance has been conducted with regularity but there are still Agencies which fail to apprehend the value which the scheme would certainly prove to them were they to associate themselves therewith.<sup>116</sup>

Nevertheless this inauspicious beginning was still subject to the co-ordinating impulse. On 18 February 1919 the Council of Social Welfare received a circular letter from the National Association of Guilds of Help concerning the Joint Committee on Social Service, its alteration in title to the National Council of Social Service and its proposed programme. The letter suggested that each Guild of Help should summon its Executive Committee to discuss whether it could support the Council's proposed scheme. The Chester Council resolved that they should write to the National Association of Guilds of Help expressing their 'great interest' in the scheme. Interestingly however they stated that just such a scheme 'had been made effective in the City of Chester in 1914'.

This was an outright lie and indicative of an attitude which was to be prevalent in the Chester Council of Social Service. While maintaining a style of charity which largely involved the provision of alms either in welfare payments or in the form of a face to face service such as finding employment, the Council continually talked in terms of charitable organisation.

However this contradiction did not stop the Chester CSW from being highly influential on the National Council. For example, at the NCSS first conference held in Oxford during 1919, the

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<sup>116</sup>CCSW EC Mins, February 1916, CCSW , CCRO CR164/2.

Chester Council of Social Welfare was invited to send two representatives. It was resolved at the conference that the Council should affiliate with the NCSS and that the new secretary, B.E. Astbury, should be a representative on the NCSS Executive 'as often as possible'.<sup>117</sup> In January 1920 the Chester COS gave all financial control and all its relief cases to the new body,<sup>118</sup> and by May 1921 the Council of Social Welfare was providing unemployment benefit of between six and nine shillings per head, based on the number of the applicant's children.<sup>119</sup> Clearly then the Chester CSW was an important local agency, but there was a failure to implement the policies of co-operation which were central to the National Council's philosophy. Instead individuals and cases which had been based within the Charity Organisation Society or the Guild of Help were simply moved to the new organisation. In 1921 the Council was refused access to a £500 grant from the Mayor for not providing enough relief for the unemployed. Astbury replied that 'I explained that we could only attempt to deal with a certain number and that we selected those who had been in a somewhat superior position before the present trade depression'.<sup>120</sup> This process of personal relief work was to continue throughout the interwar years although it directly contradicted NCSS policy.

Not only was the Chester Council involved in COS style casework, but they were implementing COS concepts of the deserving and undeserving poor. On 28 March 1922 the Council received a letter from the Public Trustee Office with reference to a Mrs Booth, who

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<sup>117</sup>CCSW Relief Committee Mins, 3 March 1919, CCSW , CCRO, CR164/5.

<sup>118</sup>The COS kept control of pension provision.

<sup>119</sup>CCSW EC Mins, 21 May 1921, CCSW , CCRO, CR164/3.

<sup>120</sup>H. F. Brown to Astbury, 10 February 1921, CCSW Correspondence, CCRO, 164/25.

received an allowance of three shillings a week for each of her two children. The money had originally been paid after the death of the children's father Mr Smith. Since Mrs Booth had now remarried and her new husband had legally adopted the children, the Public Trustee wanted to cease payments. However Mr Booth had become unemployed and the Public Trustee had continued the weekly payments. He was writing to the Council of Social Welfare because they knew local employment prospects, asking whether it was better to continue the payments or whether the allowance should be stopped and the funds accumulated 'for the children's future advancement on leaving school'. On the copy of the letter which remains in the Chester County Council Archives there is a hand-written note. It reveals the degree to which councils of social welfare workers continued to hold beliefs which owed much to their roots in the Charity Organisation Society.

25/4/22: Interviewed Mrs Booth, and her husband. Most respectable people living in a good home. Children very well cared for. Husband now in work; + Mrs Booth agrees to pension for David & Albert Smith [the children] elapsing, and being allowed to accumulate. Stipulates, however, that if at any time her husband comes upon 'hard times' she should be allowed to draw pension again for her children. Children being educated at Council School; and being taught music with aim of making that their livelihood. When old enough being sent to local Grammar School.<sup>121</sup>

Undoubtedly this type of casework was not what the National Council Executive expected from their local organisations. It must be said, however, that the worker involved had also expected something different. In a statement that was certainly not what the NCSS desired to see the visitor to the Booth family (only identified as Abbot) wrote to Astbury that if he

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<sup>121</sup>The hand-written note appears in the margin of a letter from the Public Trustees Office to the CCSW, 28 March 1922, CCSW Correspondence, Chester Record Office CD164/25.

wanted anyone else to go out to 'the dratted poor' he should 'get some other smelly visitor to do it'.<sup>122</sup> Again the difference between the concept of a co-ordination of charitable effort through a Joint Committee and the practice of the Chester Council of Social Welfare is vast. However, neither in Chester nor in London was there any attempt to rectify this position. By 1929 the majority of the Council's actions were concerned with casework or 'personnel service'.<sup>123</sup> Ten years later, at the survey of Chester's Voluntary Agencies, negotiations on the subject of mutual registrations of clients were still taking place.

Chester was not alone in this respect. A similar situation developed in Salisbury, again an area without high levels of unemployment. Here the Council of Social Service was not established until December 1937 and had no previous history as a Charity Organisation Committee, a Guild of Help or a Council of Social Welfare. Nevertheless the first act of the Salisbury CSS was to implement a card system, which allowed them to keep track of the case payments they were making to the poor. Unlike the Chester Council of Social Welfare, the staff of the Salisbury CSS were well aware that their actions were not those expected of them by the NCSS. However their minutes record that they felt forced into giving monetary donations by the fact that there were relatively few other charities in their locality, and because the local Public Assistance Officer was unwilling to work with the CSS.<sup>124</sup> More importantly local people expected that charity involved dole and not 'schemes'. The minutes of the Council report that

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<sup>122</sup>ibid.

<sup>123</sup>In that year the CCSW took 366 new cases.

<sup>124</sup> SCSS EC Mins 8 February 1938, 2 June, 1938, September 1938, SCSS , WSRO, 2849.

The Secretary asked for a grant of money which would be used only in proved cases of distress where the need was immediate... He also reminded the committee that £25 of the Council's funds had been voted them from the Major's fund, and that the City Council and the general public would certainly expect that some of it at least would be used in this way.<sup>125</sup>

These examples indicate clearly the way in which the local situation and local individuals affected the ways that NCSS policy was implemented. This is not to say that local Councils of Social Service refused to accept the ideas upon which the NCSS was based, but that in many areas those ideas were sacrificed in the face of local circumstance.

In 1936 Lionel Ellis complained in an Executive meeting that 'with a few notable exceptions almost all of the old established councils have of late years become little more than case work bodies, and so have become associated in the public mind with care work only'.<sup>126</sup> By the late 1930's the state of NCSS urban policy was a long way from the optimistic address by Lord Bledisloe, the NCSS President, at the 1937 Annual Meeting.

we must bear it constantly and unceasingly in mind that the *raison d'être* of our corporate existence, the very essence of our future success, is the factor of close, harmonious, and mutually trustful co-operation - 'the happy marriage' as it has been aptly called - between Government and public bodies on the one hand and voluntary agencies on the other, in the sphere of social effort.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> SCSS EC Mins 8 February 1938, SCSS , WSRO, 2849.

<sup>126</sup> NCSS EC Mins, 22 October 1936, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/030 (ii).

<sup>127</sup> NCSS EC Mins, June 1937, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/006.

While Rural Community Councils were expanding and unemployment clubs in South Wales and the Northeast were gaining increased importance,<sup>128</sup> the Councils of Social Service were simply continuing policies first established by the Charity Organisation Society and Guilds of Help at the turn of the century. Their concentration on individual case work rather than charity co-operation was due to two factors. Firstly many local councils were made up and led by individuals who had began their careers in the older organisations. Secondly, and most importantly, the NCSS lacked money for its urban activities. Whereas the RCC's had been able to use Carnegie United Kingdom Trust grants, these had been intended to fund tangible services such as libraries or village halls. Urban councils, however, could not take advantage of such funding. They were not meant to actually provide a service or to provide benefits for the poor. Hence it was virtually impossible for them to qualify for anything but small local funds.

It was this lack of money which caused the urban sub-committee to stop meeting in 1934. In fact the committee did not re-establish itself until July 1937, when increased funding for unemployment clubs meant the NCSS could siphon off £2,500 for urban work 'not connected with unemployment or new housing estates'.<sup>129</sup>

This financial backing was the cause of some optimism. The minutes of the new sub-committee recorded that 'there is reason to believe that the practical value of the co-operative machinery provided by such Councils is now more widely recognised than was the case three

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<sup>128</sup>See Chapter 5.

<sup>129</sup>NCSS UPSC, Mins, 15 July 1937, NCSS , LMA/4016/IS/A/01/104 (i).



or four years ago'.<sup>130</sup> The committee also appointed a 'travelling officer', W. E. Fox with a brief to visit local councils and report on their development to the executive committee in London. In this way the NCSS Executive hoped it could influence the actions of local councils in a much more effective way.

The travelling officer's reports began between November and December 1937, following a series of visits to twenty-seven towns and cities. They did not make pleasant reading for the NCSS. Appendix 5 shows extent to which Fox was able to categorise the different type of local organisations he met, differentiating between 'full Councils of Social Service' and the, far more common 'Case work organisations'. It should of course be pointed out that the new urban committee had had little time to become fully effective. Moreover the groups mentioned did not form an exhaustive list of bodies affiliated to the NCSS. Many of the organisations were geographically concentrated and therefore likely to have developed in similar ways at similar times. Nevertheless, the report shown in Appendix 5 was only one of many submitted which pointed out the failure of the NCSS to ensure that organisations it supported financially fulfilled 'their part of the bargain'. Interestingly the fact that the Chester Council of Social Welfare was identified as a 'full' council of social service may well mean that Fox underestimated the scale of the problem.

As Fox was beginning to compile his reports, the NCSS held a conference on urban work at the YMCA Headquarters in London. To an audience of representatives from thirty four local

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<sup>130</sup>ibid.

Councils of Social Service and five 'national organisations',<sup>131</sup> the NCSS Secretary, Shoeten-Sack, stated that 'the National Council of Social Service realised that during recent years they had not given the help to urban Councils of Social Service and kindred bodies that these bodies had the right to expect.'<sup>132</sup>

Sacks admitted that the National Council had received criticism for devoting so much time to work for the unemployed. However, he argued, that the severe nature of unemployment had forced the NCSS to concentrate its efforts. Now, however, the National Council was at last able to focus on building a network of organised Joint Committees. The conference had been called to 'offer this frank explanation of the position and to find out from the delegates how, in their opinion, the National Council could best serve them and on what lines the movement should be developed'.<sup>133</sup> It came to four conclusions which show clearly how the issues which had originally concerned the NCSS in 1919 had still not been dealt with twenty years later.

Firstly, and most importantly, the conference made clear that the NCSS 'should make an effort to obtain funds for assisting the development of Councils of Social Service and general urban work in the same way that funds had been obtained for the development of its other principal Department'. As has already been mentioned, the one overarching theme

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<sup>131</sup>The report of the conference used 'Councils of Social Service' as a collective noun to refer to the variety of organisations listed by Fox. The five 'national organisations' who sent representatives were the NCSS, the YMCA and three other unidentified bodies.

<sup>132</sup>NCSS UPSC, *Report on Conference on Urban Work*, 4 December 1937, NCSS, LMA LMA/4016/IS/A/1/104.

throughout the National Council's interwar efforts at urban social work was a lack of funds. The conference called for long term loans to purchase buildings, an administrative fund, fully trained paid social workers and links with businesses who would be prepared to sponsor voluntary activities. These tactics, which had already been employed in rural areas, were not new to the NCSS and had been discussed by Ellis and Dixon in 1927. Nevertheless the fact that in 1938 the National Council was still discussing financial backing and not implementing policy shows how little had been achieved.

The other three conclusions which the urban conference drew were primarily designed to increase NCSS control over local councils. These were the development of a national information service, the introduction of regular conferences and a re-definition of the role of local organisations. These policies would undoubtedly have helped the National Council to be sure that organisations using its name would form Joint Committees and follow the co-operative policies which had been intended from 1919.

### **Part Three: Women's clubs**

Although the National Council of Social Service established clubs for women, during the interwar period, this work was never a major priority. It should be remembered that the Women's Institute was only one of many thriving organisations which attempted to provide

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<sup>133</sup>ibid.

clubs for women.<sup>134</sup> This meant that in many rural areas the NCSS saw no reason to antagonise members of its Joint Committees by establishing its own, competing, clubs. To do so would have gone against the whole philosophy of co-operation between charities. However in urban areas where women's clubs which affiliated to the NCSS were not so prevalent,<sup>135</sup> the needs of women - and particularly the wives of the unemployed were - sometimes addressed after the 1934 Special Areas Act allowed state money to be spent on schemes not solely for unemployed men. This section will show that the NCSS attempt to facilitate the development of clubs for women saw them as 'citizens' with a role to play in building future communities, but assigned a role that was one dominated by domesticity. It will also show that this concentration upon domesticity, far from representing patriarchal welfare, was in fact a response to the demands of the female members of the clubs themselves.

In this respect the NCSS represented views commonly held within the voluntary sector. Bernard Bosanquet had argued that the co-operative individual could only be created by the

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<sup>134</sup> See C. Beaumont, *Women and Citizenship: A study of non-feminist women's societies and the women's movement in England, 1928-1950* unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Warwick, 1996.

<sup>135</sup> Of the main organisations concerned with women's interests in this period the Mothers Union never officially affiliated itself to the NCSS. The Young Women's Christian Association did affiliate in some areas, but had a falling membership throughout the interwar years which took up most of its time. The National Council of Women in Great Britain and Ireland, though closest to the NCSS in terms of its constitution, was primarily concerned with campaigns for more equal working rights for women and uninterested in establishing local clubs. The Catholic Women's League and the National Union of Townswomen's League, while important in some areas, were too small to be the basis of a national policy.

family.<sup>136</sup> It was, he stressed, a man's responsibility to his family that ensured he was responsible at work and therefore in society. Helen Bosanquet described the role that this left for women, stating that the nature of the family was that of an equal partnership between two citizens under a system of 'benevolent patriarchy'.<sup>137</sup> Despite being referred to as 'sentimental armchair anthropologizing',<sup>138</sup> this view was extremely popular among many influential women, such as Arrabella Kenealy and Vera Brittain, and lasted throughout the inter-war period.<sup>139</sup>

Women were often perceived as 'citizens' whose role was within the home as a housewife and mother. This was supported by many prominent female social reformers such as Eleanor Rathbone. Rathbone has been seen as following a tradition from Barbara Bodichan and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, which demanded suffrage on the basis of a female commitment to altruism. For these feminists, women's rights were conceived in relationship to a duty or responsibility to others'.<sup>140</sup> While this is undoubtedly true, Rathbone's notion of 'responsibility' was also influenced by her acquaintance with T. H. Green while at Oxford. Indeed Albertini has stated that Green's idealism, which 'emphasised an ethical individualism based on the moral imperative of the development of a more complex human nature', was

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<sup>136</sup> A. McBriar, op cit. p. 127.

<sup>137</sup> H. Dendy, *The Family* (London, Macmillan, 1906).

<sup>138</sup> A. McBriar, op cit. p. 70.

<sup>139</sup> M. Pugh, *Women And The Women's Movement In Britain 1914-1959* (London Macmillan, 1992), p. 79.

<sup>140</sup> J. Rendell, 'Citizenship, Culture And Civilisation: The Language of British Suffragists 1866-1874', in C. Daley and M. Nolan (eds.), *Suffrage And Beyond* (London, Pluto Press, 1993).

'the starting point' of Rathbone's feminism.<sup>141</sup> It was these values which caused her to be highly influential in the establishment of Women Citizens Association in 1913 and its enlargement in 1917. The primary aim of the WCA was to 'educate women as citizens by means of lectures and discussions'.<sup>142</sup> By 1918 the WCA was acting as an umbrella organisation, incorporating many of the groups who aimed to increase women's political participation. Although the WCA never affiliated to the NCSS it typified the attitude to women held by many within the voluntary sector.

The NCSS reflected these values. The vast majority of its work concerning women was aimed at the wives of unemployed men.<sup>143</sup> This was firstly because local councils found that the number of unemployed men greatly outnumbered unemployed women. The Organiser of the Women's Committee of the Tyneside Council of Social Service, Miss E. Dinah, reported for example that 'of the 90,000 unemployed men on Tyneside only 3,000 were women, work would therefore be chiefly among the wives of the unemployed'.<sup>144</sup> Secondly the concept of an unemployed woman was still hard for many social reformers to accept. Although NCSS surveys, such as *Unemployment and Social Service* and *Out of Adversity* accepted that some women were looking for work, it did not allow for married women to be among their number.

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<sup>141</sup> J. Alberti, *Eleanor Rathbone* (London, Sage Publications, 1996), p. 18.

<sup>142</sup> M. Stocks, *Eleanor Rathbone: A Biography* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1949), p. 68.

<sup>143</sup> However in certain areas without especially high unemployment this included the wives of men on short time or men who had recently returned to work but whose wives wanted to stay on at the club.

<sup>144</sup> TCSS EC Mins, October 1933, TCSS, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/1.

Thirdly it was felt that those women who were unmarried and unemployed would have quite different interests than wives and mothers.

On the one hand, their [unemployed women] numbers are comparatively so small and they are so scattered that it is often difficult to find a sufficiently central place in a town for them, and on the other hand there is some evidence to show that they do not mix readily with women whose interests are centred round their home.<sup>145</sup>

While such views were undoubtedly well intentioned, unmarried and older women were often subject to barely concealed disapproval from NCSS activists. The leader of one of only two clubs specifically established for unmarried and unemployed women showed her limited and negative views of such people,

Most of our members live alone in rooms and are very lonely and without interest in family life... Some of them do not get enough to eat and consequently a cheap meal is always a great attraction... Their lives are so lonely and they have practically no outlet for themselves.<sup>146</sup>

This concern with the wives of unemployed men was to dominate NCSS policy towards women from 1934 onwards. At a conference of the Gloucester RCC<sup>147</sup> concerning occupational clubs for men, the proceedings of which appeared in the local press, it was made clear that such clubs depended upon adequate provision being available for the men's families.

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<sup>145</sup> *ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>147</sup> The Gloucester Rural Community Council was also responsible for urban work in the county.

In the discussion which followed it seemed generally agreed that while some form of occupational work was necessary, the success of clubs depended ultimately on the development of the club spirit, which included social and physical recreations and *the care of the families of their members*.<sup>148</sup>

The wives of unemployed men often had few social institutions to fall back on during poverty.<sup>149</sup> Although as one Council of Social Service report put it, women whose husbands were unemployed suffered from 'permanent worry, overwork and overstrain, and with it all a sense of loneliness and fear',<sup>150</sup> they were unable to attend the Working Men's Institutes, pubs, sporting events or even NCSS clubs, all of which provided escapism for men.<sup>151</sup> As a result, there was a great demand amongst such women for clubs at which they could relax away from the pressures of the home.

The first women's clubs for urban areas were founded in that bastion of collective help the Rhondda valley. During the 1926 coal strike, sewing groups had begun, formed here

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<sup>148</sup> *Gloucester Citizen*, 17 September 1934 (my emphasis).

<sup>149</sup> The notable exception being the Women's Co-operative Guild, which claimed to have 51,000 members in 1923. See B. Blaszak, *The Matriarchs of England's Co-operative Movement: A Study in Gender Politics and Female Leadership, 1883-1921* (Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1999); G. Scott, *Feminism and the politics of working women: the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War* (London, UCL Press, 1998); W. Thompson, *Filling The Basket: The Women's Co-operative Guild and self-help Consumerism 1920-1955*, unpublished paper given at the Social History Society Conference January 1993.

<sup>150</sup> SWMCSS, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>151</sup> Those leisure activities which it was socially acceptable for women to take part in such as cinema going and municipal swimming pools were mainly popular amongst unmarried single women. S. Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The history of women in Britain and the United States* (London, Viking, 1997), pp. 190-2.



amongst wives of miners. These soon spread to the coalfields of Lancashire and elsewhere in Britain, and grew to involve a concern with budgeting, cooking, use of sewing machines and,

above all the warmth of companionship for women whose poverty segregated them in loneliness; the bliss of doing nothing for a while; or, for some, the chance to find new worlds through music and singing, drama and play reading.<sup>152</sup>

While some women's clubs grew quite considerably, even occasionally becoming larger than the local men's club,<sup>153</sup> there was a distinct geographical difference in the membership levels. The income from 'subs' for English women's groups was highest in the north, where yearly totals of over £30 were not uncommon. These figures declined slightly in the north Midlands but decreased dramatically in the east and south. Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, London and Somerset brought in only £37 between them.<sup>154</sup>

In Wales, however, the story was very different. Women's clubs proved to be extremely popular. After 1932 the structure of the NCSS in Wales was different to that in most of Britain, with the South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service supplying government grants to clubs which had been formed by a variety of charities. Although the precise nature of this structure will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter the

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<sup>152</sup> M. Brasnett, *op cit.* p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> For example from 1 April 1934 to 31 March 1935 the Northumberland Men's club took £33 from members subs and £489 from 'other sources' while the Women's Group took £43 and £766 respectively. Figures derived from NCSS, *Unemployment And Social Service*, *op cit.*

<sup>154</sup> Figures derived from NCSS, *Unemployment And Social Service*, *op cit.*

SWMCSS was able to ensure that the women's clubs established in South Wales followed the general policy principles which it agreed with. The growth from 74 clubs in 1935 to 123 clubs in 1936 and 180 clubs by 1937 can be attributed to the appeal which NCSS policies had for ordinary women. By 1939 there were 260 women's clubs compared with only 227 clubs for men.<sup>155</sup>

The uneven growth of women's clubs did not mean that they were only partially popular. The fact that women's clubs existed in so many places shows that although they were relatively small they were extremely widespread. However, outside of autonomous areas with large budgets, such as Wales, the NCSS in London gave little help. Those conferences which were formed tended to be provincial and unorganised. For example the *Nottingham Journal* reported of a joint conference held by the Nottingham RCC that

There are in Notts. 17 social centres for unemployed men, but only eight of them have a women's section and yesterday the Marchioness of Titchfield expressed a desire to see a women's club in connection with all the unemployed centres in the country.

She was presiding over a conference of representatives of women's clubs in connection with the County Unemployed Workers Committee of the Rural Community Council. Nottingham, Loughborough, Derby, Lincoln and Grimsby were all represented.

Lady Titchfield said she had had no actual experience of the work of these clubs and had come there to learn.<sup>156</sup>

That the presiding officer of a conference on clubs for the wives of unemployed men 'had no actual experience of the work' says much about the ineffectiveness of such conferences.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> A. Burge, op cit. p. 137.

<sup>156</sup> *Nottingham Journal*, 4 December 1934.

However, by the late 1930's this lack of organisation became anathema to the NCSS executive, which in 1938 commissioned a 'survey of the clubs for men and women which have grown out of the needs of unemployment'. This survey, published in 1939 and entitled *Out of Adversity*,<sup>158</sup> contained a large section detailing the nature and work of the women's clubs which had been set up since 1934.

The clubs met on average two or three nights per week, although some met only once and some on all five week nights, usually for one or two hour sessions.<sup>159</sup> They charged 1d or 2d a week to their members and aimed at encouraging activities that would benefit the women as wives, activities such as sewing or housekeeping. These classes were aimed at keeping the women mentally active and the NCSS were at pains to point out that a 'dressmaking class covers a wide range of industry and ingenuity' while 'cheapness need not mean dullness'.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, 'homecraft' classes proved to be consistently more popular than the 'romantic activities of drama or music'.

The emphasis on domesticity meant the atmosphere at the women's clubs seems to have been much more relaxed than at the men's clubs. While the majority of men's work was aimed at

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<sup>157</sup> In fact women's clubs were founded in 1936 in Nottinghamshire by the Nottinghamshire County Association of Social Service Centres which had been founded in 1935.

<sup>158</sup> NCSS, *Out of Adversity: A Survey of the Clubs for Men and Women which have grown out of the needs of unemployment* (London, NCSS, 1939).

<sup>159</sup> The authors of *Out of Adversity* found that clubs which met more than twice a week rarely had the same people every night.

<sup>160</sup> NCSS, *Out of Adversity*, op cit. p. 50.

keeping them employable, the women's activities aimed merely at providing a place for women to escape the drudgery of the home. *Out of Adversity* reported that

The requirements [of a women's club] do not vary much in different parts of the country. They are :-

- (I) A cheerful and pleasant room in which, at a subscription she can afford, a member can enjoy comradeship and relaxation, at least once a week.
- (II) The opportunity to do some of the work needed for her home in congenial surroundings, with the help that the club gives in the way of advice and tuition from expert dressmakers and craftswomen, facilities for joining in co-operative buying of materials and the use of sewing machines and other equipment.
- (III) The interest of collecting new ideas with which she can experiment in her home, and often improve her household management, and on which she can compare notes with her neighbour and fellow member.<sup>161</sup>

Relations between men's clubs and women's clubs varied considerably throughout the country. The majority of women's clubs had begun by sharing accommodation with an already established men's club. This had not unnaturally led to disagreements over room allocations. The authors of *Out of Adversity* found that

The weakness in the majority of these arrangements for sharing premises is that the men are regarded as the owners of the building. Even where a joint committee of men and women is now operating, this does not in all cases alter the fact that the building is vested in the men's club, and that the women occupy certain rooms, at certain times by their permission.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> *ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.* p. 55.

The committee felt that this problem would be solved by the establishment of committees of men and women who would jointly share ownership of the club. However, they warned against the potential problems such a scheme could have;

It is important to remember that such an ideal cannot be realised in advance of public opinion. There are still districts where it is a new thing for women to have interests outside their homes, and where few have had the opportunities their husbands have had to take an active part in social organisations. It is not easy for the equal partnership of a community club to develop between a group of women who are slowly acquiring the art of managing their own affairs, and a group of men who have not yet fully accepted the possibility of their ever being able to do so.<sup>163</sup>

For those Councils of Social Service which did establish clubs, the National Council at least attempted to facilitate schemes similar to those applied to men. Just as men were to use their clubs to be retrained for work, so women were to be trained for the home. The Beeches, a training centre in Birmingham, was established in 1934. While not qualifying for Ministry of Labour grants due to the infamous edict that wives could not be unemployed, the Beeches did receive help from the Mansion House fund for 'distressed areas' after 1932 and from the Ministry of Education after 1934. Courses here consisted of a two-week residential stay<sup>164</sup> and continued to follow the conventions of the time including cookery, nursing and child welfare on the syllabus. They were attended not by all members of local clubs but by those who club leaders felt would be able to teach classes once they returned. The costs were relatively high, being six shillings for those receiving benefit and three shillings for those

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<sup>163</sup> *ibid.* p. 56.

<sup>164</sup> 'for most women cannot be away from home for a longer period' NCSS, *Unemployment and Social Service*, *op cit.* p. 20.

who were unemployed but not eligible. However these costs, as well as that of travelling, seem to have been met by either local charities or by the women's club itself. Furthermore and despite the cost, the courses proved extremely popular. The thirty-four courses run in the first year were all fully subscribed by their starting date of July. Numbers increased steadily and in 1936 Margaret Bondfield opened a new wing of the college to accommodate larger classes. However, it should be pointed out that again the NCSS did not attempt to control 'the Beeches', but merely to facilitate its development. As a result, although they gave a large grant to the college every year, they had only two representative on the Executive Committee which was responsible for its day to day running.<sup>165</sup>

Despite the concentration upon domesticity at the Beeches, by 1939 National Council surveys were showing an increasing awareness that 'women do not always want to do useful things'.<sup>166</sup> Instead of training, informal meetings were emphasised simply to allow women to relax. As a result of practical experience many local clubs advocated allowing women to do whatever they wanted within the club - so long as it kept membership numbers up and made the women happier.<sup>167</sup>

However, and as with men's clubs, many of the clubs established for women ceased to exist on the outbreak of the Second World War. As unemployment declined and government and charitable funds for areas of high unemployment dried up it was impossible to keep the clubs

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<sup>165</sup> The Beeches College EC Mins (incomplete due to bomb damage), NCSS (MO), BCA, MS 396/14.

<sup>166</sup> A 'Lancashire lady' in NCSS, *Out Of Adversity*, op cit. pp. 48-53.

financially viable. What promised to be one of the most NCSS' most popular programmes ended only five years after it had begun.

Women had a specific place in NCSS policy which came about through a mixture of idealist philosophy, lingering Edwardian values and practical welfare. Just as Edwardian idealists such as Eleanor Rathbone had stressed women's role as citizens within the home, so the policies of the NCSS saw women as fulfilling a valuable job as wives and mothers. Activities which led to them being better wives and mothers were activities which increased their role as citizens. These values, however, were not simply projected upon working class wives by middle class philanthropers. Rather they reflected genuine interests amongst the wives of the unemployed themselves. Women's clubs were on the whole much more successful than those established for their husbands. Their widespread development and rapid growth testifies to this. Although they were based primarily around the notion of women as wives and mothers this was often popular amongst female members who were indeed wives and mothers and wanted help and support in that role rather than activities which led to their 'social betterment' or discussed greater political emancipation. This may well have been due to the hardships faced by many women attempting to run a household on small budgets. As the economy improved in the latter years of the period, with the general decline of unemployment, there is evidence that the members of women's clubs were interested in branching out into new fields. Unfortunately however the outbreak of the Second World War meant that they had little opportunity and the matter of what could have been must be left to historical speculation.

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<sup>167</sup> *ibid.* p. 54.

## **Conclusion**

The qualified success of the Rural Community Councils and the relative failure of the Councils of Social Service reveals much about the way in which the concepts of citizenship and co-operation were implemented by the NCSS.

In both rural and urban areas the NCSS attempted to implement a form of citizenship which depended upon the co-operation of welfare providers. Local Rural Community Councils and Councils of Social Service were both intended to develop policies which would bring together a wide cross section of interested organisations and individuals in order to plan and organise community activities. This clearly represented the bureaucratic implementation of the idealist concepts of citizenship and co-operation outlined in chapters 1 and 2. However these policies were only partly successful.

In rural areas Joint Committees were easily formed or assimilated and became centred around the provision of village halls rather than becoming bogged down in personal case work. Although they were often heavily dependant upon grants from the Board of Education and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, they did manage to bring together a large number of charitable bodies in a co-operative effort. However in urban areas the lack of grants meant that many new committees could not acquire the status to form adequate Joint Committees and as a result simply could not stay solvent. Rotherham was far from being the only Council of Social Service that failed to prosper during the interwar years. The fate of the women's



clubs shows the extent to which even popular clubs were dependant upon external grants. Furthermore, where financial support was present it tended to a consequence of already established local organisations. The events in Chester were typical of the way that such organisations were extremely reticent to sign up to NCSS philosophy. Rather, they continued with policies based on ideas and concepts which had seen them prosper in the years before the First World War, only changing their name to attract the monies given by the NCSS. Such work did nothing to improve the status of the NCSS, because it neither involved other charities or corresponded with the sentiments coming out of the National Council executive. The fact that Chester was an extreme example and the NCSS was aware that such Councils existed merely compounds the fact that they were unable to do anything about it, except write un-heeded sub-committee reports.

Thirdly the interwar rural and urban policies of the NCSS saw the birth of a growing relationship between the NCSS and the state. The growing size of the NCSS meant that this in turn has implications for the notion of the 'gift relationship' between 'givers' and 'receivers' developed by historians of the nineteenth century. During the interwar years it was no longer practical for individual philanthropers, whether concerned with their own individual status or genuinely altruistic, to dominate charity. Instead the interwar years saw the 'coming of age' of national charities, often based in London with local or area committees, attempting to implement national policy 'on the ground' through the Joint Committees of the NCSS. This 'muddied the waters' considerably. Nevertheless, the NCSS was a charity and was defined as such by the Treasury. The NCSS gave a considerable amount of money and time to facilitate other charities' policies. It provided important bureaucratic contacts, a village hall or club-house, lecturers, drama equipment, and musical

instruments. Furthermore the NCSS social workers on the ground implementing welfare reforms were never the providers of welfare, they simply organised Joint Committees. However it also received large amounts of money and always referred to itself as a charity

Historical questions aside, the main problem for the NCSS throughout the interwar period was how to ensure that those clubs which followed NCSS philosophy could be adequately funded. This was particularly hard for the National Council of Social Service, who never intended to implement any actual welfare provision. Funding bodies were extremely reticent to give money to charities which did not show any practical return. The next chapter, however, will show that as unemployment became an increasingly serious concern the NCSS was suddenly able to fulfil a role as a welfare co-ordinator.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:** **Unemployment and social service.**

This chapter will account for the change in NCSS fortunes brought about through the failure of successive governments to combat high levels of unemployment in the 1930s. It will show that in those areas worst hit by the problems of unemployment, the idea of charities uniting together in a co-operative effort provided a means for voluntary organisations to respond to crises which seemed to be escalating beyond their control. It will be argued that the conception of citizenship put forward by the NCSS proposed just such a plan. By developing the Idealist values present in much pre-1914 welfare the NCSS was able to emphasise the need for charities themselves to act as good citizens i.e. co-operating in the interests of the whole rather than the individual. This will firstly be done through a general assessment of the policies of the NCSS at a national level and those activities which the NCSS attempted to facilitate among clubs at local levels. The second and third parts of this chapter contain specific case studies of south Wales and the north east of England, which clearly illustrate the symbiotic working arrangements of the NCSS and the Ministries of Health and Employment.

By the late 1920s, the National Council of Social Service had grown at a startling rate. Not only had it developed Joint Committees throughout the country, but it had also been able to advocate the idea of inter-agency co-operation to many in government. The Development Commission and the Ministries of Health and Agriculture had all to a greater or lesser degree used the NCSS as channel between central government and charitable organisations. By accepting the presence of the state in welfare provision, the National Council had been able to achieve a status within the voluntary sector that had never been possible for the COS. However, these links were not permanent. At any time the state could change policy or turn

to other organisations. Similarly the voluntary organisations who had affiliated to the National Council, were in the main, powerful groups such as the YMCA and the Women's Institute Movement. These organisations were proud of their autonomy and saw themselves as independent groups, rather than as part of a united whole. At any time the state *or* the charities could have 'pulled out' and left the NCSS stranded. The idealist philosophy of the NCSS was able to allow such independent organisations to work together, because its core ideal was flexible, limited, and yet indicative of widely supported beliefs. However, keeping such independent organisations together took a lot of effort. Even by the early 1930s, the NCSS felt compelled to repeat this message

Put simply, the Council has three principal objectives in view. It believes that "the good life" can only be achieved in a modern community if the spirit of voluntary service can be developed and made more effective. It sees that this involves systematic collaboration between both voluntary associations and public authorities engaged in similar services and it seeks to promote this team through a simple form of organisation.<sup>1</sup>

What the NCSS needed was an issue which would unite the state and the voluntary sector in such a way that they became completely reliant upon one another. It was the National Council's good fortune that such an issue was not simply present but completely dominated the welfare debates of the 1930s: unemployment.

For over a decade unemployment was a major area of social concern for policy makers, voluntary organisations and economists. At various times parliamentarians feared for democracy itself, whilst sociologists and social psychologists across Europe described a

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<sup>1</sup>ephemera, NCSS , LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/08/001.

growing class of disillusioned ex-workers only too willing to steal, gamble and - because this was the age of eugenics - to lower the standards of the population. For many social workers the plain truth was impossible to miss: if ever 'citizenship' was needed it was now. NCSS idealism seemed highly pertinent to many involved.

The problems of unemployment in the interwar years were not met with radical changes in economic policy. Despite the calls of Hobson, the Independent Labour Party and many prominent Liberals for the working class to be given a larger percentage of the national income, successive interwar governments refused to move from the path of economic orthodoxy and continued a policy of retrenchment. Similarly, despite the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in 1929 and the failed attempts of the Treasury to cut payments to local authorities, these payments were substantial.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, many Local Authorities were unable to do more than address the worse cases of poverty, while awaiting the natural rise in economic fortunes. As a result the role of the voluntary sector was to be paramount in addressing the needs of the long term unemployed.

This chapter will examine the growing relationship that developed between the National Council, as a representative body of voluntary action, and statutory agencies' attempt to deal with the practical problems of long term unemployment. It will be argued that this

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<sup>2</sup> Although the block grant was intended to cut Local Authority spending the need for 'economy' was always underestimated by the Treasury which meant that in its first phase, from 1933/34, a subsidy was paid to local government of something in the region of £6-7 million and its second phase from 1936/37 this figure was £5.3 million. J. Bradbury, *The 1929 Local Government Act: The formulation and implementation of the Poor Law (Health Care) and the Exchequer grant reforms for England and Wales (outside London)* unpublished D. Phil Thesis, University of Bristol, 1990, pp. 252-260.

relationship developed because the concepts of inter-agency citizenship and co-operation prevalent in the voluntary sector and embodied by the National Council of Social Service matched the need for many government departments to address the problems of unemployment, whilst simultaneously maintaining economic orthodoxy and avoiding major policy upheaval. It will be argued that as this relationship developed, the National Council of Social Service became increasingly dependent upon state rather than voluntary funding. While the concepts of citizenship and co-operation were morally justifiable and popular amongst many social workers, without adequate funding they could achieve little lasting success. Yet while some perceived NCSS efforts as a plaster placed on a huge and gaping wound, this should not underestimate the significance of the concern expressed by those involved, nor undervalue the significance of the NCSS approach for future development.

## **Part One: The unemployment policies of the NCSS**

The unemployment policies of the National Council of Social Service can not be understood in isolation. The high levels of co-operation between the NCSS and other state and voluntary bodies means that it is firstly necessary to examine the policy context within which the NCSS worked. This section will briefly outline the government legislation which was to concern the NCSS. It will discuss the attitudes which many within the voluntary sector had to the provision of unemployment relief.

Fraser has identified the problem which British governments believed they faced between the wars.

No Government of the interwar years could escape the dilemma imposed so acutely by unemployment : to throw the unemployed on to private charity would be socially and politically impossible, yet to help the unemployed might bankrupt the nation.<sup>3</sup>

The vast majority of civil servants, MPs, and ministers alike believed in the primary importance of balancing the books.<sup>4</sup> However, this was a forlorn hope and in 1927 Baldwin's administration accepted the recommendations of the Blanesburgh Committee and passed the Unemployment Insurance Act. This act replaced uncovenanted benefit with a new benefit, unlimited in duration and to be earned by a minimum of thirty contributions in two years. For those unable to pay the thirty contributions there was a 'transitional benefit' which they could draw at the same level as standard benefit.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless the Baldwin government argued that the insurance scheme should remain solvent and therefore cut the standard benefit by 1s to 17s and made the 'genuinely seeking work' test universal. Rather than helping stem the problems caused by unemployment, this simply allowed for increased spending<sup>6</sup> without any sort of organised plan.

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<sup>3</sup> D. Fraser, *The Evolution of the Welfare State* (Hampshire, Macmillan, 1984 edition), p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> The following discussion is based on a number of works. F. Miller, 'National Assistance or Unemployment Assistance? The British Cabinet and Relief Policy, 1932-33', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9 (1974), pp. 163-84; W. R. Garside, *British unemployment 1919-1939: A study in public policy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); N. Whiteside, *Bad Times: Unemployment in British Social and Political History* (London, Faber and Faber, 1991); S. Glynn, *No Alternative? Unemployment in Britain* (London, Faber and Faber, 1991); N. Whiteside & J. Gillespie, 'Deconstructing unemployment: developments in Britain in the interwar years', *The Economic History Review*, XLIV, 4 (1991), pp. 665-682.

<sup>5</sup> This was payable to those who had paid eight contributions in the last two years or 30 at any time.

<sup>6</sup> By the time Ramsey MacDonald became Prime Minister in June 1929 the Unemployment Fund was £37,170,000 in debt.

The Labour government of 1929-1931 appointed a Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance in October 1930 and a Committee on National Expenditure (the May Committee) in February 1931. It also increased the borrowing powers of the Unemployment Fund by £30 million. The resulting report by the May Committee, the government's reaction to it and the subsequent formation of the National Government saw unemployment benefit cut by ten percent, standard benefit limited to twenty six weeks and a strengthening of the means test through locally administered Public Assistance Committees.

This did not solve the problem. The world slump of 1931 to 1933 caused a huge drop in the demand for precisely those labour intensive industries which were already suffering most, notably coal and shipbuilding. Thus in areas which were solely dependant upon one or both of these industries the number of men in long term unemployment continued to increase. Paradoxically however the early 1930s saw the rapid growth in Britain of new industries, such as electronics and chemicals. The National Government looked to regional rather than national palliatives.

Initially regional policies had taken the form of 'transference', which entailed encouraging men from the most depressed areas to migrate either to expanding areas in the East Midlands or the South East, or to the various nations of the Empire. As the Industrial Transference Board set up by Baldwin's government in 1928 stated

Until recently national policy has assumed that industries and areas would return, broadly speaking to the position they held before the war; and unemployment policy has been largely one of 'tide over', the aim being to maintain the labour force required for the industries in the areas in which they were normally conducted in a state as free as



possible from demoralisation... However... our considered opinion is that from now onwards the first aim of policy should be the dispersal of the heavy concentration of unemployment by the active encouragement of movement from the depressed areas to other areas, both in this country and overseas.<sup>7</sup>

However, it soon became clear that this plan was impractical on a large scale due to the prohibitive cost of moving for many unemployed people and the fact that the expanding industries were much less labour intensive than those suffering hardship and were therefore unable to make up the shortfall.

The government also entered into a series of limited schemes to relocate successful industries to the depressed areas. This was an extension of a policy outlined by the Labour government in 1929, which had commissioned the universities of the worst hit areas to report on the suitability and viability of their area to industrialists. These reports, published in 1932, were almost unanimously negative. Industry was on the whole declining and those firms that did expand did so at a slower rate than the national average. Furthermore, high unemployment meant a lack of demand for many goods, which itself prohibited large-scale manufacturing. However, as Garside has pointed out, these pessimistic responses did not lead to new legislation.

In the event, neither the press nor the House of Commons paid much attention to the survey reports, whose almost fatalistic acceptance of prevailing economic conditions merely reinforced the conventional belief that regional recovery could follow only in the wake of national economic revival.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Report of the Industrial Transference Board, 1928, quoted in W. R. Garside, *op cit.*

<sup>8</sup> W. R. Garside, *op cit.* p. 250.

Garside may have been overly harsh on the report. At least two of the senior figures involved in the creation of the reports, P. M Stewart (Northumberland and Tyneside) and H. Marquand (South Wales) complained that their calls for positive action fell on deaf ears.

In 1931 the Universities in the four largest areas were invited to make Surveys of the situation of industry in their localities... They were expected to be a preface to action. But nothing more was done.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed Marquand had made clear, almost as soon as the reports were published that only through a change in popular opinion would the government alter its policy of retrenchment.

It is no use waiting for the government to act.... No government will act unless it is moved to do so by some compelling expression of the popular will. Suggestions of some further government enquiry are futile.<sup>10</sup>

In fact public opinion, which had originally been against the unemployed, now swung in their favour. Publicity grabbing hunger marches on London were organised by Trade Unions, the Communist Party, or the National Unemployed Workers Movement.<sup>11</sup> These had the intended effect of attracting attention in the south to the problems of the north and west. Furthermore in 1934 *The Times* published a series of highly popular and shocking articles

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<sup>9</sup> H. Marquand, *South Wales needs a plan* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1936), p. 11. Stewart's most notable criticism came in his first report as Commissioner for 'special' areas in Tyneside, in which he stated that all government action up and the powers given to him to promote positive reforms were 'woefully insufficient', *First Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas (England and Wales)*, Cmnd. 4957 (1936).

<sup>10</sup> *Western Mail*, 23 January 1932.

<sup>11</sup> Most famously from Jarrow where the unemployment rate was 67 percent.

under the headlines '*Places Without a Future*' and '*The Derelict Areas*', detailing the problems faced by those out of work. *Places Without a Future* argued that

England is beginning again to think of itself in terms of prosperity, and may even deceive herself into imagining that at home, if only she holds to what she has gained, everything is going to come right. That is not so. There are districts of England, heavily populated, whose plight no amount of general trade recovery can ever cure, because their sole industry is dead. It would be a failure of humanity to forget them, a failure of statesmanship to ignore them.<sup>12</sup>

An increased sympathy with the unemployed was also evidenced by the attitudes of many Local Authorities, particularly in Labour controlled areas. Many of these attempted to mitigate the impact of government policies, while some actually refused to implement the more stringent means tests.<sup>13</sup> This provided a major problem for the government. On the one hand ministers saw their policies of financial frugality going astray. However, on the other hand, if the government took control of the situation by removing unemployment relief from the hands of the local authorities, it would then control both insurance and benefit payments. This would be akin to accepting in principle that the state was responsible for compensating those without work. Adding to the problem was the Minister of Labour's insistence that any reorganisation of responsibility should only concern unemployment relief and leave the

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<sup>12</sup> *The Times*, 20 March 1934. These articles, written by an anonymous 'Special Correspondent' actually followed a much less successful series printed in 1924, which focused on South Wales under the title '*A Stricken Area*'.

<sup>13</sup> C. Williams, 'Labour and the challenge of local government 1919-1939', in D. Tanner, C. Williams, D. Hopkin, *The Labour Party in Wales, 1900-2000* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2000); F. Miller, op cit. p. 167

remainder of the Poor Law in the hands of local authorities.<sup>14</sup> This meant that some distinction would have to be drawn between those destitute as a result of industrial economic problems and those suffering from other forms of poverty. With this problem in mind the government was even more loath than usual to implement new policies. As a result, there was ample scope for voluntary action, and an equivalent government desire to show that it was compassionate towards those who would help themselves.

This then was the context in which the National Council of Social Service operated. Increasing regional unemployment dominated their work, but government aid was limited to acts which as Chamberlain said had the benefit of not 'spending a great deal of money, but of showing that the matter had not been pigeonholed'.<sup>15</sup> In practical terms this meant that government departments gave individual grants to voluntary bodies aiding them to implement their own relief schemes. However, in November 1932 the large demand for grants in the areas of extreme long term unemployment led the Ministry of Labour to invite the NCSS to distribute a block grant. In effect this meant that the Ministry would make a certain sum available for charities within an area and that the NCSS would control how this money was distributed. It will be shown that this was a considerable power for the NCSS to possess. Firstly it conferred a high degree of status upon the NCSS in the eyes of other charities, making local Councils of Social Service in south Wales and the north-east of England the paramount welfare organisation in their areas. Secondly it meant that other charities were forced to co-operate with the NCSS, thus removing the concern that they may 'pull out' and

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<sup>14</sup> Memorandum by the Minister of Labour, 30 May 1933 quoted in W. R. Garside, *op cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Neville Chamberlain quoted in F. Miller, *op cit.* p. 168

destroy the NCSS project. There was a powerful practical incentive to adopt the NCSS' increasingly functional approach. However the National Council of Social Service did not attempt to control other charities with its newly acquired powers. It continued to facilitate policies based on the decisions of Joint Committees. It did so in the belief that many shared its views on the causes and consequences of unemployment.

Whatever the true nature of interwar unemployment,<sup>16</sup> contemporaries regarded extraordinary high regional unemployment rates as unexpected and without an available solution. It is not possible to understand later NCSS policies without first addressing how contemporaries understood the impact and significance of this problem on individuals and communities.

During the 1920s the attitude of the 'middle classes' towards the very poor was dominated by fear of the political threat which the poor presented. At an extreme level this could manifest itself in a fear of the potential for revolution. This was due partly to the Russian Revolution and the growth of continental communism and partly to traditional fears of an alienated underclass bent on revenge. Nor did this disappear. Of his experiences between 1928 and 1931 George Orwell stated that

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<sup>16</sup> The most commonly used statistics have been produced by C. H. Feinstein, *National Income, Expenditure and Output of the UK, 1855-1965* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972). See for an example of Feinstein's influence S. Glynn, and J. Oxborough, *Interwar Britain: A Social and Economic History* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1976); A. Booth, and S. Glynn, 'Unemployment in the Interwar Period: A multiple problem', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 10 (1975). However Feinstein's statistics have been criticised by W. R. Garside, op cit. For a more radical, New Right interpretation of the nature and causes of interwar unemployment see K. Benjamin, and L. Kochin, 'Searching for an Explanation for Unemployment in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Political Economy*, 87, 3 (1979).

This is particularly the attitude of intelligent, cultivated people... Very few cultivated people have less than (say) four hundred pounds a year, and naturally they side with the rich because they imagine that any liberty conceded to the poor is a threat to their own liberty. Foreseeing some dismal Marxian Utopia as the alternative, the educated man prefers to keep things as they are... From this ignorance a superstitious fear of the mob results quite naturally. The educated man pictures a horde of submen, wanting only a days liberty to loot his house, burn his books, and set him to work minding a machine or cleaning out a lavatory.<sup>17</sup>

In truth this was an extremist viewpoint. Although middle-class stereotypes of the working classes and the unemployed were 'constantly hostile' and 'specifically *political*', the main fear was of the destruction which a well organised trade union movement could inflict upon the economy.<sup>18</sup>

To people who had no trade union of their own, would not have wished to join one, and felt themselves struggling against life, it must have seemed inevitable that all trade-union action would in the end be at their expense. And not simply at their economic expense; at the expense of their social dignity and standing. It was this which made the developing political stereotype of the working class so negative.<sup>19</sup>

However, by the late 1920s senior parliamentarians were stressing not the political radicalism of the very poor, but their apathy and demoralisation. The Liberal Industrial Inquiry Report of 1928 stated that

Unemployment is the gravest of the social maladies of the day - a disease incalculably harmful in itself, and symptomatic not only of

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<sup>17</sup> G. Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (London, Penguin Books, 1971 edition), pp. 107-8.

<sup>18</sup> R. I. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, op cit. p. 271 emphasis in original.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

the deep seated malaise from which British Industry is suffering, but also of fundamental defects in our economic organisation... Both the physique and the moral of the nation's manhood and womanhood will deteriorate, rapidly and often irreparably.<sup>20</sup>

These findings, drawn up by an executive committee which included Lloyd George, Keynes and Seebohm Rowntree among its many prominent members, were echoed in a number of studies which were to become influential at this time. In Austria Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel studied the psychological effects on the inhabitants of Marienthal after its main form of employment, a textile factory, was closed. The expected poverty was surpassed by a lack of social cohesion as clubs and cultural activities closed down. The research indicated that the immediate psychological reaction to unemployment was shock followed by an eager, but unfruitful, search for work and eventually apathy.<sup>21</sup> This in turn led to a decline in the sense of community. These findings were supported by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, who compared numerous similar studies from around the world. They found lowering morale, feelings of inferiority, submissiveness and increased fascist tendencies.<sup>22</sup>

Although the situation in Britain was never an exact parallel with the European or American situation, these reports became accepted 'almost to the point of being the received wisdom'.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> D. Lloyd George, Marquess of Lothian, B. Seebohm-Rowntree, *How to tackle unemployment: The Liberal plans as laid before the Government and the Nation* (London, The Press Printers, 1930).

<sup>21</sup> M. Lazarsfeld-Jahoda, and H. Zeisel, *Marienthal: The Sociography Of An Unemployed Community* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1938).

<sup>22</sup> P. Eisenberg, and P. Lazarsfeld, 'The Psychological Effects Of Unemployment', *Psychological Bulletin*, 6 (June 1938), pp. 358-90.

<sup>23</sup> J. Burnett, *op cit.* p. 228.

Sociological studies in the early 1930s found that the British male was incredibly ignorant of the cause of his unemployment, often blaming 'women' and 'youths' for 'taking his job'.<sup>24</sup> Primarily, though, the unemployed became materialistic because of the limited nature of benefit provision. Autobiographical sources published at the time produced comments such as 'I needed a job, any job that would pay better than the measly dole',<sup>25</sup> or as one skilled engineer stated 'The one important thing is to get hold of money'.<sup>26</sup> Social investigators became increasingly concerned that long term unemployment led, almost inexorably, to a level of social deprivation, stress and boredom which left the unemployed man disaffected and excluded from society. British social surveys of the unemployed carried such conclusions as; 'people were too worried to develop social interests, and often too tired to seek entertainment',<sup>27</sup> 'inertia and lack of vitality among the unemployed are a common story',<sup>28</sup> and 'from the bright, keen youngster eager to work and make his way in the world, he [the unemployed man] rapidly declines into a lazy, livery street lounge'.<sup>29</sup> While McKibbin has shown that many of these surveys were flawed, and that they are actually more indicative of middle class constructions of the 'unemployed' rather than the actual situation, it is hard to underestimate the impact such thinking had on organisations such as the NCSS.

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<sup>24</sup> E. Bakke, *The Unemployed Man: A Social Study* (London, Nisbet and Co, 1933), pp. 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> J. Loftus, 'Biography Of Lee Side' (unpublished) cited in J. Burnett, op cit. p. 232.

<sup>26</sup> H. Beales and R. Lambert (eds.), *Memoirs Of The Unemployed* (London, Garland Publishing, 1934), p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> R. Durant, *Watling: A Social Survey: Life on a new housing estate* (London, P.S. King, 1939), p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Save the Children Fund, *Unemployment and the Child* (London, Save the Children Fund, 1931), p. 72.



It was this concern to stop the decline of the unemployed into the unemployable which dominated National Council policy. Indeed for those voluntary societies, like the NCSS, concerned with promoting the values of citizenship the moral degradation brought about by unemployment was to be combated at all costs. As unemployment rates rose a large number of voluntary organisations began to provide relief. The increase in voluntary activity meant that the NCSS felt it should promote its conception of Idealist co-operation in an ever more crowded 'market place'. In 1928 a conference was called at which the National Council tried to facilitate a co-operative effort. By 1932 the National Council was able to publish *Work with the Unemployed*, a large pamphlet outlining their suggestions for dealing with the problems of unemployment. Written by a John Buchan, but amended by a general meeting of the National Council's Executive, it clearly lent itself to the attitudes prevalent in Westminster.

We are far too apt today to slip into meaningless generalities. We think and talk of the "masses" and the "workers" and the "proletariat" till the words become empty counters, and we lose touch with the facts behind them. The State must of course deal with people under large categories; for it there is the problem of the unemployed, but the private citizen who wishes to help should keep his mind fixed on John Jones and William Smith who are out of work and whom he knows all about.<sup>30</sup>

The idea that mass unemployment should be dealt with at an individual and spiritual level, rather than through macro economic policy, was one with obvious appeal to those who propounded the virtues of economic orthodoxy. Obviously, however, the unemployed were

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<sup>29</sup> S. Hatton, *London's Bad Boys* (London, Chapman & Hall, 1931), p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> NCSS, *Work with the Unemployed* (London, NCSS, 1932), p. 3.

not simply to be ignored. Rather the aim of aid should be to stop the unemployed becoming unemployable. The pamphlet continued

The tragedy of the position lies less in the meagre livelihood to which hundreds of thousands are condemned than in the fact that they are losing their technical skill through idleness, and having their minds dulled and soured. They are deeply malcontent with the situation, and are only too eager to find a way out...  
We can save honest men from unwilling deterioration – better still, we can enable them to save themselves.<sup>31</sup>

The conference and pamphlet also attracted the support of the Prince of Wales, who in 1932 made numerous speeches and visits to promote the Council's ideas of citizenship.

There evolved an ambitious plan for establishing throughout the so-called 'depressed areas' social centres for unemployed working men. Financed by voluntary contributions it became one of the activities for the National Council of Social Service. One of the prime movers of this scheme was a remarkable character, Commander J.B. Adams. With him as my guide I made several extensive tours of coal mining villages and industrial centres.<sup>32</sup>

Here is a prime example of the way in which the ideological impartiality of the NCSS meant that it could appeal to individuals from across the political spectrum. The growth of interest inspired by the Prince and a radio series 'Question Time for the Unemployed' was one of the primary reasons that in November 1932 the National Government cited the Council as a major advisory body which would have access to Ministry funds.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* pp. 4-5.

<sup>32</sup> The Duke of Windsor, *A Kings Story* (London, Cassell, 1951), p. 62.

<sup>33</sup> M. Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: The story of the National Council of Social Service* (London, NCSS, 1969), pp. 70-1.

Surprisingly, however, this was not a plan wholeheartedly welcomed by many charities affiliated to the NCSS. Indeed, there was almost immediate criticism from those voluntary organisations who had only agreed to act within the NCSS on the grounds that it would facilitate rather than instigate action. This criticism led the NCSS to establish a Committee of Unemployment in December 1932, made up of representatives from numerous charitable organisations and various government ministries. In 1933 this was extended by the creation of Regional Unemployment Councils under the NCSS, which would act as advisory and financial bodies to the local Councils of Social Service, whose work was now proving too much for one central office.<sup>34</sup>

The main aim of the Regional Unemployment Councils throughout the 1930s was to stem the decline from unemployed to unemployable. Because this was done through voluntary effort, rather than state expenditure, there was considerable moral support from governments of all persuasions. In August 1930, Arthur Greenwood (then Minister of Health) wrote in the *Social Service Review*.

‘The real tragedy of unemployment is not that we are spending millions of pounds a year on it - the real tragedy of unemployment is that it is killing the souls of men and women - it is a tragedy to see boys standing at the corners of streets in the mining villages, who have never learnt the value of steady work’.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>The Committee of Unemployment remained and by 1936 had 29 members and 5 Government representatives from the Ministries of Labour, Agriculture and Fisheries, Health, the Board of Education and the Commission for Special Areas. Perhaps justifying socialist concern was the fact that 8 members were nobles and a further 4 held military rank above captain.

<sup>35</sup>A. Greenwood, ‘A Plea For Voluntary Service’, *SSR* (August, 1930), p. 3.

The NCSS shared this concern and developed a series of measures in order to address the 'tragedy'. The most commonly promoted activities were those which were seen as increasing a sense of self-worth and self-reliance i.e. workshops, allotments and sports.

## Workshops

Workshops had two aims. They were primarily intended to preserve the skills of men who had become unemployed. By making and repairing objects, it was hoped that unemployed men's skills would not be 'dulled' by long periods of enforced idleness. Such activities could have a consequential and positive impact. Because men were building amenities for their own clubs, they would be working together to improve their surroundings. This would enhance their sense of citizenship. In 1933 this policy received more state support when the King donated a hall at Kings Standing in Staffordshire. Used as a demonstration centre, where fifty unemployed men at a time could learn practical skills, it was followed by clubs at Wincham Hall (Cheshire), Hardwick Hall (Durham) and Coleg Harlech (North Wales) and The Beeches (Birmingham).<sup>36</sup> However it should be emphasised that the NCSS were only in direct control of the training centre at Kings Standing. Other centres had been established or enlarged with NCSS money and in many cases the NCSS had been the catalyst for the formation of executive committees.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless they remained, both in name and spirit, independent organisations. Again this emphasises the fact that the NCSS saw themselves as

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<sup>36</sup> NCSS, *Out Of Adversity: A Survey Of The Clubs For Men And Women Which Have Grown Out Of The Needs Of Unemployment* (London, NCSS, 1939). See also above, chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> This was not true for Coleg Harlech' which was already an established adult education college. NCSS money here paid for an enlarged syllabus and more equipment.

facilitators rather than providers of welfare. In 1934 an NCSS press release to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of their founding emphasised the importance which the Council placed on workshops or 'occupational centres'.

There is no present likelihood of unemployment disappearing altogether in any modern industrial society, and however prosperous trade as a whole may become, re-adjustment, re-organisation and fluctuations in the demand for goods will result in large numbers of workers experiencing shorter or longer periods of unemployment. Since industry cannot guarantee protection against recurrent periods of unemployment, provision must be made to enable men and women, when compelled to idle against their will, to preserve their integrity by using the time at their disposal for constructive self-development. Herein lies the significance of the work of the occupation centres.

They are more than an expedient to tide over a temporary period of abnormal unemployment. They are also testing grounds for experiments in the use of leisure for the development of initiative and personality. In this sense they have a part to play which may be of real value even to industry itself, for it cannot be in the interests of industry that men and women normally employed should experience periodically conditions which reduce their physical and mental efficiency.<sup>38</sup>

However occupational activities for the unemployed were often difficult to implement as the participants were prohibited from earning money from their work. Unemployed men could not officially sell what they had made without the fear of losing their entitlement to benefit. Furthermore, many councils received severe criticism from trade unions for allowing men to make goods which they later sold, thus undercutting local firms and increasing the likelihood of further job losses. Consequently stern warnings were given that councils should check that no profit was being made from NCSS facilities.<sup>39</sup> As a result by 1935 many Welsh centres

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<sup>38</sup> This press release occurs in both the *Birmingham Mail*, 4 August 1934 and *Nottingham Guardian*, 6 September 1934 among other local papers.

<sup>39</sup> NCSS, *Unemployment And Community Service* (London, NCSS, 1936).

were reporting that the men had repaired all their own boots and broken furniture and thus had nothing left to do.<sup>40</sup> By 1936 senior NCSS figures such as Percy Watkins (see below) were arguing that workshops could not maintain the interest of the unemployed. The *Western Mail* reported Watkins as saying that

The occupation centres were doing good work but he had already seen enough to force him to the definite conclusion that these centres would not for long hold the interest of large numbers of their members unless they could offer them something more permanent and progressive than say, the repairing of boots and furniture.<sup>41</sup>

This provides an excellent example of the way in which NCSS policy was altered in the face of changing circumstances. The original policy of protecting the skills of the unemployed was shifted to a policy of encouraging craft-work as a hobby. The South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service stressed the need for 'some new channel for the free flow of man's joy in creating, building, making with his own hands. A joy that was once found naturally in work and is now denied to so many'.<sup>42</sup> Similarly a report by the *Gloucester Echo* concerning a display by an unemployed men's club at the 1934 Gloucestershire County Show indicates the way in which the men's efforts were presented as 'craft' display rather than skilled artisanship.

The vegetable section was, of course, the strongest, although the handicraft department was equally as interesting, showing the practical utility of the club and the excellent craftsmanship of the club

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<sup>40</sup> SWMCSS, *A Social Approach to unemployment in South Wales: First Annual Report 1934-5*.

<sup>41</sup> *Western Mail*, 31 July 1934.

<sup>42</sup> SWMCSS, *op cit.* p. 29.

members... There were some well-finished examples of boot repairing.<sup>43</sup>

By 1938 the National Council's annual report stated that although there had been no expansion in the number of workshops there had been almost seventy 'schools'<sup>44</sup> which had taught weaving, bookbinding, toy-making, stage design. The report admitted that

Technical standards and equipment at these schools are elementary, and no attempt is made to give instruction of a vocational character; but experience shows them to have a real educational value.<sup>45</sup>

Clearly then the emphasis had been shifted away from the skills of the unemployed to their education and their 'fellowship' in sharing a common activity.

## Allotments

One of the most strongly advocated 'remedies' for the psychological damage of unemployment was the provision of allotments. On a very basic practical level this was because working an allotment was one of the few forms of work which could be done that did not affect entitlement to benefits. However there were also specific ideological reasons for supporting such schemes, which allowed the unemployed to practically enact many of the values of the good citizen.

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<sup>43</sup> *Gloucester Echo* 24 July 1934.

<sup>44</sup> A travelling instructor would visit a large club for 4-5 days while groups from surrounding clubs came daily to him.

<sup>45</sup> NCSS, *Annual Report 1937-38*, p. 45.

Allotment schemes had been put forward as a way in which the poor could develop the values of hard work and self-sufficiency as early as 1892, through the Small Holdings Act. However such schemes were still rare until after the First World War due to few organisations or Local Authorities being willing to provide plots.<sup>46</sup> This was an area in which the NCSS enjoyed great success, bringing together the relevant bodies and providing plots and equipment. However, their work has gone largely unnoticed even by those historians who have discussed allotments in some depth. For example, McKibbin has argued that allotments were an extremely popular pastime for many working class men who wanted to assume the back garden of the skilled artisan or simply to get away from their families but has dismissed the role of the NCSS.

The attitude of the unemployed to the [Employment] exchanges was... almost wholly negative; *pro tanto* so was their attitude to similar government agencies and to philanthropic bodies such as the National Council of Social Service.<sup>47</sup>

It is hard to reconcile the apparent disdain many unemployed men had for the NCSS with the popularity of NCSS allotment schemes, such as that which took place in Sheffield.

In 1929 the Sheffield Council of Social Service formed a representative committee to initiate a scheme of allotments for unemployed men. With aid from the Local Federation of Allotment Societies, the Employment Exchange, the Board of Guardians and the City Council the committee was able to secure 'a sufficient number' of plots, each 300 square

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<sup>46</sup> Miners and rail workers were the notable exceptions to this rule but then only in specific areas. F. Talbot, 'Those amazing allotments', *The World's Work*, 33 (1919), pp. 130-3.

<sup>47</sup> R. I. McKibbin, *op cit.* p. 249.



yards, at a rent to the allottee of 2d a week. Tests were made after a few weeks to see if the allottee had 'carried through the initial working of his plot satisfactorily'. If he passed, he could apply for seeds which were given on 'repayment terms' or as a 'free issue' depending on a form based means test. By 1931, two years after conception, 1,303 plots had been established. This scheme typified the National Council's aim to stop unemployed men becoming unemployable. The feelings behind this were perhaps best expressed by F. M. Osborne (Joint Chairman of the Sheffield CSS).

We now have nearly a million and a half unemployed who each receive £75 a year for doing nothing. Not only are they doing nothing, they are doing worse than nothing. Often disgruntled and dissatisfied, many are deteriorating physically, losing in a large measure their capacity to work and becoming less valuable as citizens and to the State.<sup>48</sup>

Allotments, it was argued not only increased fitness but also had a spiritual quality encouraging a zest for life as well as providing a regular supply of healthy food for a family. The NCSS ideal could be supported by many voluntary groups, not just because it was functional but because it employed or used ideas long recognised as important by the voluntary sector, and used language which many voluntary groups were familiar with.

## Sport and Leisure

Sport was often stressed as a way for men to retain the fitness needed for heavy work. This was reinforced late in the period by the introduction of the 1937 Physical Training and

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p. 101.

Recreation act. This took two paths, firstly local gymnasiums, football and cricket teams involving large numbers, and secondly smaller groups going on summer holiday camps. It was hoped that these activities would increase members' personal self-confidence and their 'team spirit'. The Unemployment Club of the Stafford Guild of Social Welfare<sup>49</sup> stated that

[Recreation and Indoor Games] were provided during the winter months with the object of weaning the men from the habits of the streets and bringing them into useful community service through the club.<sup>50</sup>

In this vein the Blackburn Council of Social Service built a gymnasium from 1934 onwards and encouraged the supervision of an archery club. The Skelby Social Service Club laid out a football pitch, a cricket pitch, and bowling greens in 1935. Support for these schemes was intended to come from the local community. The Swansea Council of Social Service enlisted Swansea Athletic Football Club, who arranged a match between 'present' and 'past' players which raised £70.<sup>51</sup> In a similar vein the sports grounds themselves were to be built by members of the unemployed men's clubs. Although this was not always the case, particularly in South Wales (see below), some club leaders were extremely pleased with the scheme. For example E. J. Flewelling, whose unemployed men's club had cleared a 'debris strewn' field to create a playing field, told his local paper that

The zest of comradeship shown by the people is amazing. We are a united village and happy as sandboys. There were Jeremiahs who

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<sup>49</sup> Formed from the Stafford Social Welfare Association 29 June 1917, affiliated to the NCSS from 1919. It changed its name to Council of Social Service in 1945.

<sup>50</sup> SGSW, *Annual Report 1932*, Papers of SGSW, SRO, D3289/3.

<sup>51</sup> NCSS, *Unemployment And Community Service*, op cit. p. 8.

said it would never materialise but the word 'impossible' is not in the Lydbrook dictionary.<sup>52</sup>

Obviously these policies of workshops, allotments and sports facilities were implemented to differing degrees in different areas depending on local circumstances, individuals and the availability of equipment. For example the Smethwick Council of Social Service was surprised to find that it had to repeat a series of lectures 'Behind the scenes at the Post Office' due to its popularity<sup>53</sup> while the Church Army Club,<sup>54</sup> overseen by the West Bromwich Council of Social Service, had access to billiard tables and was able to start a league.<sup>55</sup> These seemingly isolated examples show the extent to which local Councils of Social Service implemented their own policies, based on what they felt would attract members while still 'saving' them from becoming unemployable. It is worth therefore examining one example of the way in which local councils implemented the principles of the NCSS 'on the ground' in greater depth. This shows that the 'unity' and aims perceived and expressed in its propaganda was not the 'unity' identified by the left. For some critics of the NCSS, it was little more than an apology for capitalism.

The Council of Social Service in Newcastle-upon-Tyne was actually called the Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee (NUWC) but began life as the Unemployed, Recreational

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<sup>52</sup> *Gloucester Citizen*, 25 August 1934.

<sup>53</sup> Undated report of visiting officer to NCSS (MO) EC (between January 1933 and 28 March 1934), Papers of the NCSS Midland Office, BCA, MS 396/25.

<sup>54</sup> So called because it borrowed a room the Church Army Club Hut and not because it was a religious organisation.

<sup>55</sup> Report of visiting officer to NCSS (MO) EC, 3 April 1933, Papers of the NCSS (MO), BCA, MS 396/26.

and Educational Committee of Newcastle. However due to the failure of that initial committee to enlist popular support, it had attempted to reinvent itself. At a General Meeting held on 25 October 1932, chaired by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, the NUWC 'emerged from the old committee looking for new life'.<sup>56</sup> The meeting decided that work was needed in three areas; land for allotments, 'occupation centres' (workshops) and recreational centres. By January 1933 they had made the first steps to establish a football league, land had been chosen for an allotment scheme and education and entertainment committees were being formed. By July of that year allotment fields had been prepared by arranging for local farm machinery companies to demonstrate their products on NUWC land, lectures had been organised by the WEA and the University Extension Courses Authority, the football league had seven teams and so did a newly established cricket league. Clearly, the practical application of the NCSS values of inter-agency co-operation were paying dividends.

However one of the most interesting aspects of the work of the NUWC was the way in which political attitudes crept in. Local leaders were very concerned to stop the unemployed 'falling victim' to left wing ideologies, which were seen as negating all the key elements of 'citizenship'. One speaker

Reminded the meeting that on Tyneside there was 90,000 men alone out of work and he saw no hope of improvement in any direction. He was of the opinion that unless such a Committee as the present one, provided some hope of a way out, for some of the unemployed at any rate they [the unemployed] would eventually find their own solutions.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee Mins, 25 October 1932, Papers of the Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee, TWA, CH/CSS1/5/1.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

Indeed, as Deedes' report into urban policy had found, relations with the left provided a source of conflict for Councils of Social Service throughout the country. Labour figures such as Greenwood and Bondfield had been attracted to the NCSS ideal of co-operation and community provision. The Parliamentary Labour Party and some Labour councillors were also often favourably disposed to the NCSS, seeing them as people whose civic spirit matched their own. It is notable that many senior Labour figures active towards the end of the period discussed here had a great deal of experience of dealing effectively with the voluntary sector at local level. Many were actually members of voluntary organisations. For example, Herbert Morrison could hardly have avoided the London Council of Social Service during his time as leader of the London County Council. Of the Labour government formed in 1945, at least 14 of its members had at some time been either a student, a tutor or a member of the Workers' Educational Association which, as will be seen, had worked closely with the NCSS in many areas.<sup>58</sup> It would be an exaggeration to state that there was any direct ideological link between such figures and the NCSS. The 'Labour' conception of citizenship was based on the values of the individual in relation to his fellows,<sup>59</sup> rather than the idea of organisational co-operation which influenced the National Council. However it is

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<sup>58</sup> R. Fieldhouse, 'Adults Learning – for Leisure, Recreation and Democracy', in J. Fyrrh (ed.) *Labour's Promised Land? Culture and Society in Labour Britain 1945-51* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1995), p. 267.

<sup>59</sup> J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State' op cit.; M. Francis 'Economics and Ethics: The Nature of Labour's Socialism, 1945-51', *Twentieth Century British History* 6 (1995).

not untrue to say that influential Labour figures shared some of the idealist preconceptions of the NCSS.<sup>60</sup>

Despite this the more militant trade unions and local party activists remained hostile. Such critics had three main complaints about the NCSS, all of which were at least to some extent justifiable. Firstly a minority of the older NCSS activists still presented the COS line of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. The NCSS journal carried such arguments as,

Let us begin at the bottom. At this level are those who suffer from personal deficiencies... Now and again an odd job may come their way but from the national point of view nothing is gained from coaxing them into industry.<sup>61</sup>

Again it noted, using a war time analogy,

We can not effect a cure unless the individual wants to get better. We can bandage the wound and supply crutches to a man but only the man himself can walk. Self-help or self-adjustment is a principle requiring the most emphatic re-statement.<sup>62</sup>

Secondly the NCSS was often accused of patronising the poor. Although this will be discussed in some detail later in the thesis, it did not help when local papers produced such patronising and self-congratulatory accounts of events organised by unemployed men's clubs as that which appeared in the *Burton Daily Mail* in December 1934.

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60 A. Beach, *The Labour Party and the idea of citizenship, c. 1931-1951* unpublished D. Phil Thesis, University College London, 1996, pp. 210-244.

<sup>61</sup> R. Davison, 'Unemployment Insurance: Suggestions For A New Policy', *SSR* (May 1931), p. 95.

<sup>62</sup> B. Astbury, 'A Re-Statement Of Case Work', *SSR* (October 1931), p. 9.

Scenes of great jollity and animation were witnessed at Burton Town Hall last evening at the tea and entertainment which the Mayor and Mayoress of Burton, Alderman and Mrs T. Jenkins gave to unemployed people and their wives. In addition to providing a red letter day in their otherwise uneventful lives the occasion was also a triumph of organisation, brought about by the skill of the caterers and the splendid way in which a large body of voluntary workers co-operated.<sup>63</sup>

Not only would this report not have appeared without the acquiescence of the local Council of Social Service, of which the Mayor was a member, but the Council felt so proud of the piece that they saved it in their 'cuttings' book. The attitude of the unemployed may have been less positive.

Thirdly the NCSS was often accused of attempting to ingratiate itself with the working classes, about which it knew very little. Many NCSS workers were, like Deedes, conscious that their middle-class backgrounds were held against them. However, some like Commander Satow of the NCSS Midlands Office, created working class credentials for the NCSS which were complete fabrications. The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Ironbridge Unemployed Fellowship, a club established and run by unemployed men, show that Satow attempted to convince them to affiliate to the NCSS.

Commander Satow dealt with the activities of the National Council of Social Service and made a full statement of its history and aims for the information of those present. He emphasised that the movement originated with unemployed men themselves.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *BSM*, 4 December 1934.

<sup>64</sup> Ironbridge Unemployed Fellowship EC Mins, 21 February 1936, BCA, MS 396/25.

As a result of these faults, many members of both the Labour and Communist parties saw the policies of the NCSS as shifting the blame for unemployment away from the Capitalist system. They saw the NCSS as at best treating symptoms rather than causes, and at worst preventing the creation of a united proletariat by sustaining a sense of false consciousness.

Here is 'fellowship and sacrifice' run riot... a 'Swiss Community Robinson'... Beginning in many cases as emergency measures to meet the local problem of unemployment, they have lately become in many people's minds the substitute for any genuine political attempt to abolish unemployment.<sup>65</sup>

The perception of the NCSS as an extension of the state was maintained by the continuation of Ministry of Labour influence.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Labour activists were often hostile to National Council of Social Service volunteers as they believed (often correctly) that they were inadequately trained and (often incorrectly) that they were taking up jobs which a man could be paid for. Relationships were not helped by many independent and Conservative councillors vocally identifying the NCSS as a 'bulwark against the Reds'.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> H. Stovin, *Totem: The Exploitation Of Youth* (London. Methuen, 1935). Similar attitudes were expressed by E. Wilkinson, *The Town that was murdered* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1939), pp. 233-4; A. Hutt, *The condition of the Working Class in Britain* (London, Martin Lawrence, 1933).

<sup>66</sup> From the 1 January 1933 to the 31 March 1935 Ministry of Labour grants made up £79,415 7s 1 d of NCSS urban expenditure; over a third of the total expenditure of £208,130 24s 3d. Figures derived from NCSS, *Unemployment And Community Service*, op cit.

<sup>67</sup> M. Brasnett, op cit. p. 62.



However by 1939, a NCSS survey was able to state that there 'was evidence... that these suspicions although still prevalent in some places, are abating'.<sup>68</sup> Concern was also expressed at the difficult position which many working class leaders found themselves in if they worked for the NCSS. This was only to be solved, it was thought, by increasing the number of trade union members on local Councils of Social Service. Thus, if 'unity' could be helped by the fact that some NCSS members expressed 'traditional' and conservative views, it was the more 'progressive' ideas that were stressed by NCSS leaders.

Throughout the interwar years the values of 'citizenship' and 'community' were not only present but central to the thinking of the National Council. These values, popular with informed opinion, made the NCSS an attractive option to policy makers, civil servants and local government officials anxious to be 'doing something' about unemployment but unwilling or unable to increase spending. In two areas especially, South Wales and the North East of England, the National Council of Social Service was to work with the state to such an extent that it became what would now be identified as a quasi-autonomous government body. It will be shown that this could have radically different effects upon the way in which NCSS policy was implemented.

The South Wales Council of Social Service was made up of figures appointed by the NCSS. It retained a close working relationship with the NCSS and carried out policies based on the beliefs and values of the NCSS. It received monies from various government ministries and forwarded them to other charitable organisations which it regarded as encouraging the values

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<sup>68</sup> NCSS, *Out Of Adversity*, op cit.

of citizenship. In other words, it fulfilled the criteria, discussed in the introduction to this thesis, which Lowe had placed upon the NCSS in general by acting 'as a general staff for voluntarism and as the provider of detailed information on government legislation and regulation'.<sup>69</sup>

This was not true for the Tyneside Council of Social Service. Although this organisation was based on the values of the NCSS, and saw itself as part of the same movement, it found that the co-operative ideology which brought it into a close working relationship with the state was increasingly hard to maintain once that relationship started. Instead it provided state funded welfare schemes directly, rather than facilitating the schemes of other organisations.

These case studies will reveal the extent to which local circumstances and individuals could effect the way in which the national policy of the NCSS was interpreted and enacted at a local level.

## **Part Two: South Wales**

In the years between 1880 and 1914 south Wales was rivalled only by the German Ruhr and the eastern United States as the most buoyant centre of economic growth in the world. Linehan has shown that in 1913 the region accounted for almost 20 percent of Britain's coal

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<sup>69</sup> R. Lowe, 'Welfare's Moving Frontier', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 3 (1995), p. 373.

production and for almost one-third of the entire world exports for coal.<sup>70</sup> However, in the decade and a half between 1921 and 1936 the area saw a sharp decline both in its share of coal production and in employment levels in other heavy industries, such as steel. The over-extension of the coal industry during the First World War meant that it had employed more workers in uneconomic conditions. After the war it was unable to respond to the competition from America and Germany and lost a large share of the world market for coal. Furthermore, as Britain's other heavy industries declined, so the internal market for competitively priced coal was being increasingly squeezed. The problem was further exacerbated by the fact that unlike the Lancashire coalfields, the mining towns of South Wales were not near any other major industry which could accommodate some of the unemployed. In practical terms this meant that if a mine 'laid off' some of its workforce, or in many places simply closed, there was little or no prospect of employment for redundant men who remained in their village.

These facts were noted with increasing alarm in contemporary studies. Linehan has identified the way in which Wales was not only the subject of social surveys already discussed, but was described in such surveys in a particularly negative way.

Often portrayed as dark, enclosed or isolated, these portrayals [social surveys] could picture the condition of the environments of the valleys as the very antithesis of a modern, healthy and progressive nation.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> D. Linehan and P. Gruffudd, unpublished papers from the ongoing project *Reconstructing the Coalfield: Moral Geographies in South Wales, 1918-1945* available at <http://sunset.swan.ac.uk/personal/dl/project.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> D. Linehan, '*Christ in the Valley of Unemployment*': *landscape, anti-places, and the environmental politics of the charitable solution in the South Wales Coalfields, 1911-1939*, published at <http://sunset.swan.ac.uk/personal/dl/charity.htm>.

A linguistic analysis of various surveys of south Wales in the interwar years shows that the geographical properties of the south Wales valleys with their high walls of rock, shale and coal were often used as metaphors for the men 'trapped' in unemployment. Thus social reformers such as Emma Noble spoke of the 'black area' around Maes-yr-haf, whilst Pantywuan was described as a village 'shut in a like a walled stronghold, except that its walls are shale and mining rubbish, all grey and infertile... the stream of life's interests and stimuli do not flow that way'.<sup>72</sup>

Such dramatic imagery could be highly effective when attempting to portray the unemployed as disaffected and disillusioned. NCSS surveys continued the theme

Psychologically the effects of mining depressions on individual and community alike have been disastrous... Everywhere men's minds are concentrated on the material side of life; political idealism is at a discount and religious ideas are widely thought to have failed in 'the testing time'.<sup>73</sup>

It was this loss of idealism which most worried NCSS activists.

Unemployment damages the mind and spirit even more than the body. It cuts its victims off from the normal life of their fellows, torments them with a consciousness of frustration, undermines their self-respect.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> unreferenced quotes, *ibid*.

<sup>73</sup> H. Jennings and P. Scott, 'Reconstruction In The Coalfields: An Experiment In South Wales', *SSR* (March 1930), p. 46.

<sup>74</sup> NCSS, *Unemployment And Community Service*, *op cit*. p. 3.

However as in so many areas the NCSS did not initiate voluntary action. Rather they saw themselves as facilitating the development of what philanthropy was already present. While a number of studies have assessed the impact of clubs on the unemployed of South Wales,<sup>75</sup> no study has yet addressed the impact that the NCSS had upon the way in which charity was organised. This case study shows that although the clubs may not have been as effective as the NCSS leadership hoped, its policies did bring the voluntary sector and the state together to provide a co-operative approach. Its main aim is to develop an understanding of aims not outcomes. It is worthwhile therefore examining the nature and development of charitable thought in Wales in the earlier years of the century.

Although there were many philanthropic bodies in Wales before the First World War, it is noticeable that it was one of the few places outside London where the COS had been able to exert some influence. Indeed, calls from Idealists such as Bernard Bosanquet for university trained, professional social workers had led to the establishment of a social sciences course at the new Welsh university. For Bosanquet this meant that

The educational institutions of Wales are the envy of the educationalist in England. He sees in them a realised conception – the living machinery – which focuses the life of the people into an intelligence that all may share. Such an organised intelligence, a popular mind, supported by a duly graded system of schools and colleges, and a University in touch with the life of the people, is an enormous social force... It is not surprising that those who are immediately connected with the centres of this great social force

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<sup>75</sup> See P. Stead, 'The Voluntary Response to Mass Unemployment', in W. E. Minchinton (ed.) *Reactions to Social and Economic Change 1750-1939* (Exeter Papers in Economic History, 1979); B. Naylor, *Quakers in the Rhondda 1926-1986* (Chepstow, 1986); A. Burge, 'A 'Subtle Danger'?: The Voluntary Sector and Coalfield Society in South Wales 1926-1939', *Llafur*, 7 (1998-9), pp.127-41.

should to-day be turning their attention systematically to social work.<sup>76</sup>

As a result of these courses the staff and graduates of the Welsh universities dominated the majority of COS activity. Thus in 1911, when the leaders of local societies decided to follow the ideas outlined by Nunn in Hampstead and modernise their committee, they chose to retain their academic status in the title of the new organisation: The Welsh School of Social Service. This organisation was largely made up of academic staff from the constituent colleges of the University of Wales, who were to meet yearly and discuss various aspects of Welsh cultural and social development, as previously debated in their monthly journal the *Welsh Outlook*. Although they were as likely to publish poetry as social commentary the School did publish in 1913 a collection of essays under the title 'Social Problems in Wales'.

Although the Welsh School of Social Service owed much to its counterparts in England, there were noticeable differences between this movement and the Councils of Social Welfare which Nunn was developing in London and with the Guilds of Help in the North. Firstly religion was not simply a source of moral guidance in the Welsh School; rather it was perhaps the dominant influence. Of the four sections in 'Social Problems' the first two are entitled 'The Church and Social Questions' and 'The Christian Philosophy of Life'. Furthermore of the twelve essays contributed no less than seven are written by clergymen, one of whom - the Reverend Gwilym Davies - also had the largest regular monthly column in the *Welsh Outlook*.

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<sup>76</sup> B. Bosanquet, 'The Meaning of Social Work', *International Journal of Ethics*, XI (1901), p. 291.

A second difference was that the Welsh School of Social Service was indeed just as its title implied, a school. There was never an attempt by the school to actually implement policies. Rather it acted as a forum in which different policy ideas could be discussed. This was expressed by the WCSS member, Reverend Principal Owen Prys from the University College of Aberystwyth.

We want the School for the study of social problems. The conditions of a permanent, prosperous fabric are not to be learned from any street orator you may hear. They require thinking out, and they must be thought out in the light of the great ideal which presents itself to our mind as alone satisfying. Where are we to get that ideal - our true thought of society - our true philosophy of life?...

I think we all agree that religion and religion alone can supply us with this ideal... It is a Christian doctrine we need - a Christian philosophy of human life.<sup>77</sup>

Thirdly, the Welsh School was much more orientated towards rural welfare than its urban counterparts. For at least one speaker at the WSSS conference, the success of Welsh industrial areas and internal migration to the cities had raised the price of agricultural labour. As such 'the general rule' was that

the agriculturists are only too ready to re-trench on the labour bill by conversion of arable land to pasture... and, worst of all, by the neglect of various operations like hedging and ditching and also by the utilisation of machinery wherever possible.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Rev. Principle Owen Prys, 'The need for a Christian base for Social Reform', WSSS, *Social Problems in Wales* (Swansea, Morgan & Higgs, 1913), pp. 34-5.

<sup>78</sup> G. R. Carter, 'Survey of Possibilities of Improvement', WSSS, op cit. pp. 111-12.

This in itself is not surprising, but it is significant when one bears in mind the later development of social service in Wales, which was totally dominated by a desire to challenge urban rather than rural unemployment.

These differences, although important, should not be allowed to overshadow the strong similarities between those individuals who established the NCSS and those involved in the Welsh School of Social Service. The Welsh School in the years before the First World War was part of a distinct movement within the Welsh intelligentsia, embracing those who refused to ascribe either to the anti-socialist liberalism of Clem Edwards and the Young Liberals,<sup>79</sup> or to calls for a return to an anti-industrial and anti-Anglican Welsh Utopia, as proposed by Owen M. Edwards.<sup>80</sup> Instead they aimed for a 'middle ground', which emphasised the harmonious and democratic system which they perceived to have existed in rural Wales. By stressing the benefits of such a culture, these 'progressives' could encourage values and traits which were central to the 'good citizen' and thus aid the development of a true community, 'spiritually, politically and socially at peace with itself'.<sup>81</sup> In fact these ideas struck a distinct cord with many academics and social thinkers, so much so that Lewis has stated

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<sup>79</sup> For details of Edwards' shift from Newport ILP to an anti-Labour campaigner see D. Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 207-8; C. Howard, 'Reactionary Radicalism: the Mid-Glamorgan by-election, Mar. 1910', *Glamorgan Historian*, 9 (1973), pp. 29-42.

<sup>80</sup> E. Sherrington, 'O.M. Edwards, Culture and the Industrial Classes', *Llafur*, 6 (1992), pp. 28-41.

<sup>81</sup> R. Lewis, 'The Welsh ideal of a democratic popular culture', in E. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 327.



It is this group of social radicals, usually academics and public servants, operating in an ill-defined 'progressive' twilight zone encompassing the most radical wing of popular liberalism, organised labour and ethical socialism, which provided the most consistent attempt to invest the Welsh radical tradition with a new sense of purpose in the Edwardian era.<sup>82</sup>

Although this group, identified by Lewis, were not all members of the Welsh School, the WSSS did emerge from exactly this 'progressive' movement. Indeed it came to reflect exactly the values mentioned above, but from an academic and Idealist perspective. There is evidence throughout the Edwardian writings of members of the Welsh School of a concern with an idealist citizenship. In 1911 the Reverend Herbert Morgan, of the Extra-Mural Department of Aberystwyth, wrote that

Character is not an abstraction. It has to be expressed and developed in the concrete situations of the practical life - during work and leisure alike, in the sanctuary and the shop. Now this connects very closely with the modern emphasis of the organic nature of life and society, and with the doctrine of solidarity. Man's life is an organic whole, and should be treated as such. Not only is he organically connected with his fellows within the same Society, but all parts of his life are organically related.<sup>83</sup>

The fact that Morgan had a teaching position at Aberystwyth is telling. Aberystwyth was central to Welsh Idealism and the base of the Idealist philosopher Henry Jones. The majority of those men who led the Welsh School of Social Service, and indeed the whole movement outlined by Lewis, were academics based at the University College Aberystwyth.

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Rev H. Morgan, *The Church and The Social Problem* (Carmarthen, W. Spurrell and Son, 1911).

The University College Aberystwyth made up one third of the University of Wales.<sup>84</sup> It was famous for its close knit community approach to teaching, which often saw staff and students mix as equals,<sup>85</sup> the presence of the National Library of Wales and an unmatched catchment area that drew students from all over the Principality. The University College also had a strong tradition of appointing academics who had successful careers in the civil service. As a result it had a number of highly qualified staff who believed in the value of carefully formulated legislative policy, rather than radical action. These values, from both an educational and an administrative perspective, were to be strongly represented on the Welsh School of Social Service, not least by two of its key members, Percy Watkins and Thomas Jones.

Watkins was born in Llanfyllin on 3 December 1871.<sup>86</sup> His family could not afford to send him to university. Instead he became a local journalist, specialising in taking shorthand notes of official meetings. In such a small community, Watkin's ability was put to a number of uses. He gained unofficial experience of being a clerk before applying and becoming the first clerk of the Central Welsh Board for Intermediate Education in 1897. His success in this post saw him take the relatively prestigious job of Chief Clerk of the West Riding of Yorkshire Education Committee in 1904, before he returned to Wales as Registrar at the University College Cardiff in 1911. In 1913 he took the role of Assistant Secretary to the Welsh

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<sup>84</sup> Cardiff and Bangor were the other two colleges at that time.

<sup>85</sup> Even as a not overly promising student at the college in the 1890's, its future President Thomas Jones had still been asked his opinion when a new principal had been appointed.

<sup>86</sup> The following information is taken from P. Watkins, *A Welshman Remembers* (Cardiff, William Lewis, 1944).

Insurance Commission, which was to become the Welsh Board of Health in 1919. This was one of Watkins' longer appointments lasting twelve years. In 1925 he was offered the position of Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Department of the Board of Education. He held this post until 1933, when he joined the National Council of Social Service (see below).

The uncrowned 'leader' of the Welsh School movement was undoubtedly Thomas Jones. Even Lewis, who has complained that the historiography of this subject 'has been too focused around the personality of Thomas Jones',<sup>87</sup> has recognised this. He writes: 'Of the main personalities associated with this movement, only one is well known outside Wales',<sup>88</sup> and argues that Jones was an 'extraordinary man'.<sup>89</sup> Watkins himself wrote a lengthy account of his first meeting with Jones in 1913 which gives an excellent impression as to his character.

I was sitting meditatively in my room at the College one afternoon when a man something in the nature of a whirlwind came through the door and spoke thus: "I am Tom Jones, the Secretary of the Welsh Insurance Commissioners. I presume you are the Registrar?" Being a comparatively slow-moving person myself, I replied mildly: "That is so. I am the Registrar. I am very pleased to meet one of whom I have heard so much. Won't you take a seat, Mr Jones?" This he declined, preferring to move about the room restlessly. I even went so far, in my innocence, as to offer him a cigarette. This he declined with, I felt, a little unnecessary petulance. Without more ado, this urgent person then came straight to the point of his visit, and said: "We, at the Welsh Insurance Commission, have been advertising for an Assistant Secretary, and I am authorised by the Commissioners to tell you that, if you care to apply for the post – it is yours." Then a very slight pause, followed by a staccato phrase: "And I want your answer *now*." That was my first introduction to one whom I came, in time, to

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<sup>87</sup> R. Lewis op cit. p. 327.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* p. 328.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* p. 328 *n* 8.

know and to respect as the greatest man and the most vivid and many-sided personality it has ever been my lot to meet.<sup>90</sup>

Jones, almost the same age as Watkins, was born on 27 September 1870 in Rhymney to relatively humble parents.<sup>91</sup> However his father was successful in his work and was able to afford a private education for his son, who eventually won a place at the newly established University College of Aberystwyth. From here Jones was to go on to an academic career in Glasgow and Belfast before being tempted into the civil service. Jones was to rise quickly. He made his name as the influential Permanent Secretary to Lloyd George and confidant to Baldwin. He also developed a personal political sympathy with those on the right of the Labour party. However, he had a singularly unsuccessful career under MacDonald. This was partly due to the Prime Minister's belief that Jones had assisted Baldwin's 1923 election campaign<sup>92</sup> and partly due to Jones' personal dislike of MacDonald's personality. Indeed Jones was to write of the first Labour Prime Minister that 'I used to call him MacDonald but after he became P.M. I felt he expected me to say "Sir". His sensitiveness sticks out six feet all round him and one is afraid all the time of treading on his "aura"!'<sup>93</sup>. Nevertheless he shared with MacDonald, and others on the right of the party, the 'gradualist' belief that class antagonism should be eliminated through a legislative attack on poverty.

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<sup>90</sup> Percy Watkins, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>91</sup> His father David Benjamin Jones worked in a shop owned by the Rhymney Iron Company while his mother, Mary Ann Jones, had made straw hats. For a full biography of Thomas Jones see E. Ellis, *T.J. A Life of Dr Thomas Jones* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1992). There is also a less revealing autobiography T. Jones, *A Diary with letters* (London, Oxford University Press, 1954).

<sup>92</sup> E. Ellis, op cit. p. 261. In fact Jones did write many of Baldwin's speeches throughout all three of his terms as Prime Minister. P. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative and national values* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

However, as this thesis has shown, the interwar years were a time when it was quite possible for a progressive civil servant and an educational reformer to share the concepts of the NCSS. Jones had inherited the idealist conceptions of citizenship from his education under the Welsh Idealist philosopher Henry Jones.<sup>94</sup> These ideas were brought to the fore by his application for the post of Principal of the University College of Aberystwyth in 1919. Jones always regarded this post as more important than any of the high positions he held in Whitehall. In 1916 he had written that 'nothing is more urgent than the attempt to moralise our economic relationships and to reshape society on a more co-operative basis'.<sup>95</sup> He saw Aberystwyth as the perfect place to attempt this. For Jones this was the perfect opportunity to promote the values of citizenship among Wales' elite. He envisaged the development of a 'great centre of humanist education', involving a deliberate policy of stressing the 'training of character and personality' over examination success. Furthermore he emphasised the need for continuing the close and relaxed relationship between students and staff, which would be facilitated by shared common rooms and refectories. He also based his application on a scheme to introduce a multi-disciplined degree course in Social Sciences, which would have preceded Oxford's PPE degree scheme. Despite the fact that Jones narrowly lost the election to the post, he typifies the emphasis which many Welsh academics placed on the values of co-operation and citizenship.

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas Jones, *op cit.* p. 103.

<sup>94</sup> Henry Jones, who was himself influenced by Edward Caird, has been seen as the catalyst for the revival of Welsh radicalism amongst academics and administrators willing to 'use the state as an agency to control the free market and bring about a more just society' D. Lewis, *op cit.* p. 328-329.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Jones in E. Ellis, *op cit.* p. 170.

Jones was not linked to the NCSS merely through shared intellectual conceptions. He was also a close personal friend of the President of the NCSS, W. S. Adams. Jones had been extremely influential in the choice of Adams as Principal Secretary to Lloyd George's 'garden suburb' in 1917, and was to remain close friends with him throughout the period covered here.<sup>96</sup>

If the personalities behind the Welsh School were similar to those within the NCSS, then so were many of its ideals. The WSSS was committed to the concept of 'uniting' the various philanthropic bodies, not into one body but under one organisation. As the school's President, D. Lleuffer Thomas, stated in his 1913 inaugural address

Our hope is that the School may so influence the leaders of religious thought in all Churches that they will see to the establishment, within each denomination, of a strong, active Social Service Union, with branches throughout the whole of Wales. Thus we may expect to see, in course of time, a circle for social service and study in connection with every Church or congregation.<sup>97</sup>

These factors were eventually to come through after the war, as is clearly evidenced by the WSSS 1919 Annual Report.

In the year 1900 a few people in Hampstead moved by a desire for unity and co-operation, started what has come to be known as the 'Hampstead Council of Social Welfare'. By this time the organisation has reached a stage of perfection which must be the envy of other towns that are attempting to follow the Hampstead model.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> For their many correspondence see T. Jones, *op cit.*

<sup>97</sup> D. Lleuffer Thomas, 'Wales need of Christian Social Service: a Retrospect and a Programme', WSSS, *op cit.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>98</sup> WSSS, *Annual Report of the WSSS 1918-19* (Cardiff, WSSS, 1919).

In a similar vein Gwilym Davies, the Secretary of the Welsh School, wrote in their journal, the *Welsh Outlook* that,

Our greatest, most crying, need in Wales is for some centres - non-political, non-sectarian - for the creation of leaders of men who will be trained to think and to speak and to act... But we must aim for more than that. Fellowship is the magic word of today. It is the key-word of any real endeavour for the public good and of any genuine social advancement.<sup>99</sup>

Sentiments such as these were clearly written with similar aims and objectives to those of the NCSS. Conceptions such as 'fellowship', 'unity' and 'co-operation' were widely shared beliefs that united social workers and social thinkers long before the organisational links had been put in place.

Nevertheless, the School still maintained its religious values, stating their belief that 'the reformation of Society can only be effected by the application of Christian principles' and adding this was 'at once the justification and the basis of the School.'<sup>100</sup>

There was also a much greater emphasis within the Welsh School on citizenship and the necessity of democracy. Whilst the Councils of Social Welfare organised on the Hampstead model saw citizenship as a class unifier, they soon became too embroiled in the 'nitty-gritty' of social service provision to continue this line of thought. However, the Welsh School did not provide, or even facilitate, welfare schemes. It saw itself in almost Fabian terms, as a

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<sup>99</sup> G. Davies, 'The YMCA and the future', *Welsh Outlook* (January 1919), p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> WSSS, *Annual Report of the WSSS 1918-19*, op. cit.

forum for ideas in which educated men and women could formulate plans for others to carry out. As late as 1933 Percy Watkins defended the School from WEA criticisms that those who attended the school 'have so drugged themselves with talking that they are asleep and are never likely to awake again'.<sup>101</sup>

John [Secretary of the WEA] won't see that the School is a "School" just as much as the WEA is a "School" and that it exists only to "talk" - if that is an adequate word for thinking and researching and discussing social service problems.<sup>102</sup>

One result of 'talking' was that the Welsh School was much more able to develop a clear and concise social philosophy. Citizenship therefore remained a central component of WSSS thought in a way not possible for the LCSS in London. As a result, those individuals who were later to play key roles in the voluntary organisations in the depressed areas of South Wales were well versed in exactly what a 'good citizen' was meant to be.

The links between the personalities of the WSSS and the emerging National Council of Social Service continued to develop. In 1921 the Secretary of the NCSS, Grundy, wrote to Jones at 10 Downing Street stating that

Adams wants you to know how we are progressing with our move to connect unemployment and individual responsibility in spending... We can see the country being led on the economy question by selfish

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<sup>101</sup> John Davies to Thomas Jones, 1 March 1933, Thomas Jones Papers, C(14), NLW.

<sup>102</sup> Percy Watkins to Thomas Jones, 6 March 1933, Thomas Jones Papers, D (3), NLW. Watkins himself was a member of the WEA and on other occasions worked closely with John Davies.



motives to a class fight. We can also see them united on a moral appeal, based on the individual's conscience.<sup>103</sup>

At the time the NCSS was stressing the need for individuals to save in order to strengthen the economy. In a pamphlet published in the same year, and circulated amongst the members of the WSSS, the National Council stated that

Savings Certificates no longer mean weapons of destruction, but new houses, new schools, new baths - in fact the extension of both public and private enterprise. This is the truth which the Press, the Cinemas and every agent of public education should be teaching today. Were this fully appreciated there would be no difficulty in raising sufficient new money to provide immediately employment on a very large scale. The sense of civic responsibility and the power of the community conscience are only in the early stage of development, and must be stimulated by those who have the spirit of service.<sup>104</sup>

However, as has been shown, the nature of the Welsh School prohibited it from organising any direct action. Indeed extracts taken from the *Welsh Outlook* reveal the WSSS to be, as Gwilym Davies had probably hoped it would be, the Oxford Debating Society for Wales.

The day after the League of Nations Demonstration we had as the subject for our evening meetings *Citizenship and the Church*. Herbert Morgan, trenchant and fearless in his outspoken denunciation and negligence of the Churches of the day, his vivid imagery and quick nervous utterings fitting well with his essentially Celtic personality. The next night brought us to earth with a good and wholesome bump. *Citizenship and Public Health*, a meeting chaired by a robust figure who could have been the jovial miller escaped from our childish picture books, and seasoned with much laughter. Next night we had *Citizenship and Industry* - one of the best speeches of the week, from Stephenson, the Parliamentary Correspondent of the Labour Party, a young man into whose mind early privations and hardships have bitten deep.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Grundy to Thomas Jones, 16 December 1921, Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, C(11).

<sup>104</sup> 'NCSS, *The Individual Contribution to National Welfare: Pamphlet No. 17* (London, NCSS, 1921), p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> G. Davies, 'Wales and Work: A Social Diary', *Welsh Outlook* (May, 1921).

Whilst the Welsh School of Social Service continued to be a forum where various voluntary groups and experts could meet, the personalities within the school were free to move into more direct social action. In 1927, as the Blanesburgh Committee was bringing the problems of unemployment to a wider audience, Thomas Jones made proposals to A. D. Lindsay. Lindsay was the Master of Balliol and a supporter of Quaker relief schemes for the unemployed. Jones forwarded an offer of money from the Davies sisters<sup>106</sup> to the Society of Friends in Tonypany. Lindsay replied including a copy of William and Emma Noble's article, 'A Proposed Experiment in the Rhondda'. The Nobles were Quakers who had established a series of clubs and societies in the Rhondda valley, including 52 boot repairing centres and 20 women's groups. Lindsay stressed that

The Friends who had most to do with this work have for some time felt that it would be a great pity if when the immediate need for relief is over, these centres, inspired as they have been by so deep a spirit of service should disappear, and have suggested that they might form the nucleus of a spiritual and educational movement.<sup>107</sup>

Jones maintained a strong interest in the activities of the Quakers through his correspondence with Lindsay. As a result he brought news of their actions and philosophy to others within the Welsh School of Social Service. In November 1928 he wrote to Miss Annie Ffoulkes<sup>108</sup> at the University of Wales Appointments Board

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<sup>106</sup> Margaret and Gwendoline Davies were the spinster granddaughters of the millionaire builder David Davies of Llandinam. They were great philanthropers, giving vast sums to various Welsh charities, the University Colleges of Wales, and funding other 'good deeds' in the Principality.

<sup>107</sup> Lindsay to Thomas Jones, 4 March 1927, Thomas Jones papers, NLW, C(11).

<sup>108</sup> A one time student at Aberystwyth, teacher of French at the Barry Intermediate School, and very much part of Thomas Jones' coterie in Wales. See E. Ellis, *op cit.* p. 154.

I have to-day learnt that while we were talking the Quakers were acting. They have sent down a man to live in Brynmawr for the winter and with him a young woman to do educational work. They have taken a shop for distribution of clothing and are setting up a "Service Committee". I hear also that probably St Martins Church will "adopt" Merthyr and that the Quakers are moving in Aberdare with a "Service Committee". I feel ashamed that with all our Schools of Social Service, etc., etc. when it comes to action and not talking, we have to be helped by Quakers as if we were a foreign mission field.<sup>109</sup>

In fact Jones had also heard from the Educational Settlements Association on the same day. Horace Hemming, the Chairman of the ESA, had suggested a scholarship for ex-miners and their families for up to three terms in one of the four ESA colleges.<sup>110</sup> Again this was aimed at stopping the unemployed becoming unemployable.

Such a period of training should make the miner more adaptable, and better equipped for looking outside his own specialised industry for jobs, and it is, of course, a scheme which is only suitable for the more intelligent of the unemployed.<sup>111</sup>

The 'talking' did not last long. Only fifteen days later Lionel Ellis, Secretary of the NCSS, wrote to Hemming stating that a number of associations were planning measures for helping ex-miners and furthermore the NCSS had been asked to arrange the meeting and had agreed.<sup>112</sup> These associations became the constituent members of a 'Joint Committee', formed on similar lines to local Councils of Social Service elsewhere in Britain. Membership

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<sup>109</sup> Thomas Jones to Miss Annie Ffoulkes 14 November 1928, Thomas Jones papers, NLW, H (7).

<sup>110</sup> These were Fircroft, Avoncroft, Coleg Harlech and Hillcroft (women only).

<sup>111</sup> Hemming to Thomas Jones, 14 November 1928, NLW, H (7).

<sup>112</sup> It is not known if Ellis knew of Jones 'shame' but it is certain that he was well aware of the work of the Nobles in South Wales and Hemmings' plans.

included twenty-seven organisations ranging from the various religious groups to the National Union of Teachers and Save the Children. This committee gave itself the name of 'Coalfields Distress Emergency Committee'. Thomas Jones became Chairman. Percy Watkins represented the Board of Education. The remainder of the Executive Committee was made up of Lt Col J. M. Mitchell (Carnegie UK Trust), Sir Walford Davies (National Council of Music), Miss Davies (Gregynog), Mr J.C. McLean (National Council of Music) and Joseph Owen (HMI).<sup>113</sup>

The committee advanced numerous suggestions, but soon found that the methods used by the Nobles, such as educational lectures and clubs, were more effective than some of the more specific proposals. With a grant of £5000 from the Carnegie UK Trust, the Emergency Committee set up the following proposals. Musical schemes, including combined singing meetings, concerts by choral societies and 'listening clubs' were to be established by the National Council of Music under Walford Davies, with £1000 for an intended 20 groups. Drama groups also received funding of £1000 in order to 'stimulate recreative activities in the South Wales coalfields'.<sup>114</sup> The University of Cardiff acting in conjunction with the WEA and the YMCA was to receive £750 for educational projects. Wireless clubs were to be established with a further £200 and an extra £100 for gramophones.

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<sup>113</sup> Davies and McLeans presence reflected not only the emphasis which the NCSS placed on the importance of music as an activity (see chapter four) but also their prominent role in many charitable endeavours. Davies in particular is noteworthy as he gave up a promising career as a composer (he was a 'favoured son' of Elgar and followed him as Master of the Kings Musick upon Elgar's death) and a BBC music presenter to devote his time to social welfare.

<sup>114</sup> Coalfields Distress Emergency Committee Mins, 12 April 1929, Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, C14(9).

By June the Emergency Committee had been able to assess the needs of the coalfields. The central 'Coalfields Committee' stated that two clear conclusions could be drawn from the work: firstly there was a large demand for educational activities and secondly there was an infra-structure of 'miner's halls' which could be used as a base for a co-operative policy.

These conclusions were to be the basis for much of the future work of the National Council of Social Service until the outbreak of war in 1939. For the next ten years the NCSS was to see its contribution to the solution to the social problems caused by high levels of long term unemployment in the Special Areas as the establishment of Joint Committees. These would oversee a series of smaller clubs who were actually providing specific welfare schemes. This was a slight but notable shift in policy, and is indicative of the way in which the problems caused by unemployment could not be addressed by bureaucratic co-operation alone. Instead it had to be augmented by practical welfare reforms which, while rarely actually involving the 'giving of alms', did involve the provision of equipment and opportunities not to other charities but to the unemployed themselves.

This shift suited two purposes. For the members of the National Council of Social Service it meant a synthesis between three elements; their original philosophy, the understandable desire to be the overarching body that linked the state and the voluntary sector, and the practical need to 'do something' for the unemployed. For the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education it meant 'solutions' could be found that did not involve high levels of spending or national policies. This meant a concentration not on the economic causes of unemployment but on the ideas and values of the unemployed

themselves. Indeed the phraseology used by the NCSS suited precisely what the relevant government departments wanted to hear.

Such a movement in the mining areas might have far reaching consequences for good, and it is relevant here to refer to the part that Settlements may play in such a movement. The development of a “community spirit” depends in the end on leadership and by training of leaders and the creation of a tradition, a Settlement can exercise great influence.<sup>115</sup>

Leading figures in the Coalfields Emergency Committee were aware that their actions were dominated not by their original philosophy, but by the need to be seen doing ‘something’. On August 5 Percy Watkins wrote to Thomas Jones that

...there is some danger in rushing in with treatment and remedies before we have completed the diagnosis, and I should have thought that the Settlement [Merthyr] could do no better work during its first year than apply all its resources to study and research in the hope of discovering the best lines of approach for future action. I recognise, of course, that the case is desperate and that we are late already, but is not that always the state of affairs when you call in the researcher? He has to shut his eyes to present waste and damage, in the hope that he may find what will be, for the future “a better way”.<sup>116</sup>

It was certainly in keeping with the policy of the NCSS to organise a survey before attempting to organise casework. However it is also clear that even a pragmatist like Watkins, when faced with the enormity of the task ahead of the Emergency Committee, felt he had to justify their failure to enact immediate change.

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<sup>115</sup> Coalfields Distress Emergency Committee Mins, 5 June 1929, Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, C(14).

<sup>116</sup> Percy Watkins to Thomas Jones, 5 August 1930, Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, V2 (emphasis in original).

This letter is not, somehow, like me. Am I getting old ? I certainly am getting more and more suspicious of short cuts and half measures, and more and more in despair about our capacity to do the big and well considered things which after all are the only things that will matter in our endeavours to retrieve the ground that has been lost in recent years. And so I am driven to this position: we can only do a little, but let that little be dead right.<sup>117</sup>

However if those actually in Wales felt despondent at the task ahead of them, in London men and women within the NCSS who had seen a decade of relatively minor works now saw the opportunity they had been waiting for. In March 1930 the *Social Service Review* published an account by Hilda Jennings and Peter Scott of their Quaker activities in Brynmawr, stressing that

An increasing tendency to-day to depend on political action, on technical improvements, on efficient reorganisation in industry seems to be more and more obscuring the most important thing of all - the human factor... Encouragement comes when it is realised that it is only by the painful working out of these difficulties that the new spirit can be born, the Creative Spirit without which any scheme... is bound to fail.<sup>118</sup>

In the same month the Secretary of the NCSS, Lionel Ellis, wrote to Thomas Jones recommending proposals which compare starkly with Watkin's down beat attitude. Firstly, Ellis stressed the need for a combined effort by voluntary and statutory agencies in order to 'attempt a general "appreciation" of the situation and to see whether their continued efforts are leading towards a common goal'.<sup>119</sup> While Watkins had also pointed out the need for a

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<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> H. Jennings and P. Scott, *op cit.* p. 46.

<sup>119</sup> Lionel Ellis to Thomas Jones, 17 March 1930, Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, WW(26).

'survey' of the problem, Ellis' schemes were much grander. He believed <sup>120</sup> that Britain as a nation had a moral obligation to 'solve' the problem of unemployment.

From the international polity view this is serious for it is this country which inaugurated the modern industrial order and we may therefore justly be held responsible for its social consequences. Science and discovery are daily increasing the speed with which national affairs react internationally for good or evil. We who have led political and industrial development should lead in the development of a good social life.<sup>121</sup>

Rather than simply 'research', Ellis stressed the need for the great and the good to assess social tendencies 'by a spiritual standard' and to 'expose lines of action calculated to develop good tendencies and to thwart bad ones'.

The NCSS set about its task in the usual way. Local groups were called together in community based Joint Committees; these groups were then given the task of organising an initial survey of the problem and assessing the feasibility of organised activities. However, these schemes had to be radically altered after 1932. As has been shown, the Kings speech of that year stated that the government intended to set up a committee of public men and women to promote training and 'useful occupation' for the unemployed. The expense of this was to be met out of grants, primarily from the Ministry of Labour,<sup>122</sup> but the organisation was to be down to voluntary groups which the government would deal with through the NCSS. For

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<sup>120</sup> As presumably did the Executive Council of the NCSS as the letter is on headed notepaper. Ellis, as a zealous military man, was consistently 'proper' in all his official actions.

<sup>121</sup> Lionel Ellis to Thomas Jones, op. cit. For Ellis' earlier views and background see chapter two.

<sup>122</sup> Smaller grants were also received from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health for specific schemes.



many of those working 'on the ground' in Wales, this was finally what they had been waiting for. Major W. J. Burdon Evans wrote to Thomas Jones that

with regard to the Governments Unemployment Scheme which will operate through the National Council of Social Service. It seems to me that this might be a good time for making the South Wales Joint Committee what we thought it should be.<sup>123</sup>

Ellis and Thomas thought so too. After a brief spell of negotiation between the major charitable organisations involved, Percy Watkins became Chairman of the Coalfields Distress Committee and Secretary of the Welsh National Council of Social Service. Whether this appointment was due to Watkin's belief that 'I had to answer the call of our stricken little country',<sup>124</sup> or to the fact that, at the age of 62 and having recently received a Knighthood and an Honorary doctorate, he was coming towards the retirement age of the Board of Education is unclear. It is certain, however that Watkins was neither the preferred option for Ellis in London or for the influential Welsh Workers Education Association representative, John Davies.<sup>125</sup> Rather Watkins represented a link with the Welsh School of Social Service. His past roles as a Registrar of Cardiff University and Vice-Chairman at Coleg Harlech, and his constant contributions to the *Welsh Outlook*, meant that he fitted in with the Welsh idealist tradition which had been so important in the past. He was presumably the choice of Thomas Jones.<sup>126</sup> His connections served both the NCSS, who got a 'dependable' man in Wales, and

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<sup>123</sup> W. J. Burden Evans to Thomas Jones, 29 November 1932, NLW, H(7).

<sup>124</sup> Percy Watkins, *op cit.* p. 143.

<sup>125</sup> Ellis was in favour of W. J. Williams a member of His Majesties Inspectorate of Schools while Davies preferred R. R. Williams the ex-Director of Education in Rhondda.

Watkins himself (who was able to retire to a part-time job with a £600 a year salary). Whatever the reason, Watkins soon showed that he could contain the more progressive members of the committee.

On Friday night we made everybody known to everybody else informally and had a first session with Sir Percy in the Chair... There has been a feeling since the P.M.'s Lossiemouth speech that the Government were trying to fob off the unemployed with a miserable grant of a few thousand pounds to Ellis' show. We were all at one in holding that these occupational clubs should not be allowed to mislead the public into thinking that a solution of the unemployed problem had been found. Dennithorne and John Davies were equally emphatic about this and more than once we were on the edge of plunging into a discussion of the Social Revolution, - but the Chairman steered us away from these deep waters.<sup>127</sup>

Clearly there was widespread cynicism in relation to the National Government's true motives in its use of the NCSS, but it must also have been obvious to the Coalfields Distress Committee that now was not the time to look a gift horse in the mouth. Indeed in his autobiography Watkins wrote that the new Committee had two objectives.

- (1) To provide the unemployed with clubs of their own in which they could pursue such forms of cultural occupation as appealed to them, and do so in the spirit of fellowship which they all sorely needed....
- (2) To set up, in key positions, educational settlements manned with officers qualified to render services in the forms of advice and of

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<sup>126</sup> Jones abilities as a 'fixer' of positions is legendary. Watkins himself later noted that 'he always gloried in never letting his left hand know what his right hand did. All that he has done unobtrusively in helping lame dogs over stiles, whether the lame dogs were personal friends, or movements, or even the most highly placed and responsible leaders of the British Empire, will never be fully known. For the only person who knows all will never tell.' P. Watkins, op cit. pp. 166-7.

<sup>127</sup> T. Jones, op cit. pp. 85-6.

the various kinds of instruction which the clubs in their immediate spheres of influence most needed.<sup>128</sup>

The various clubs and educational settlements<sup>129</sup> would be organised along the lines mentioned above. Their grants were allocated by the Minister of Labour, which responded to recommendations and appeals made on behalf of the clubs by Watkins and the Welsh NCSS.

Just as in the rest of the country, the growth in NCSS power in Wales brought criticism from the organised Labour movement. The *Daily Worker* in particular wrote a series of scathing editorials stating that

On top of that almost incredible barbarity [increasing unemployment figures] is piled the sickening hypocrisy of the Social Service schemes - schemes of empty philanthropy that cover a sinister manoeuvre to split and demoralise the workers ranks.<sup>130</sup>

Along with hampering the development of class conscienceless the NCSS was consistently criticised because most unemployed men were not paid for their work in building facilities for the clubs. Furthermore, if not paying the unemployed was not bad enough, the clubs regularly used volunteers from Quaker schools and the various constituent colleges of the University of Wales.<sup>131</sup> This was often perceived as patronising. It was felt that those clubs established under the auspices of the NCSS would rival the trade unions' own attempts to

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<sup>128</sup> Percy Watkins, op. cit. p. 147.

<sup>129</sup> By 1938 there were 250 clubs in South Wales and 9 Educational settlements.

<sup>130</sup> undated cutting in Thomas Jones Papers, NLW, H(7).

<sup>131</sup> These comments appeared in a letter dated 1999 by Michael Barratt Brown who as a schoolboy had helped to create a football field. A. Burge, op cit. p. 131 n 23.

provide relief schemes and that this in turn would undermine the workers' attachments to workers' institutions. In fact the comments by one ex-public school social worker that 'it was really only what we called "slumming" and, as I now see it, appallingly patronising' would seem to support this. Nevertheless at the time these criticisms stung deep. Watkins over a decade later wrote that

Some individuals among them [the Labour movement] co-operated heartily, but even their efforts did little to redeem one of the least creditable chapters in the history of the organisations I have named. I sometimes wonder whether there is any hope for the real progress of humanitarianism or of humanity itself, for that matter, so long as men tie themselves up - mind and soul - in parties and groups and then put the tenets of their particular parties or groups before their Christian impulses. Nazi-ism has shown us very clearly where this sort of process ends.<sup>132</sup>

Nevertheless NCSS expansion in the coalfields of South Wales continued. With the link between central government and local charities now firmly established, the National Council decided to establish a local Council which could more easily be placed within the 'English' framework. In 1934 the South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service was founded with the Bishop of Llandaff, Timothy Rees<sup>133</sup> as President; Captain Geoffrey Crawshaw<sup>134</sup> as Chairman; and to ensure a consistent link, Sir Percy Watkins as Secretary. These three were all members of the Joint Committee<sup>135</sup> and all had a history of social work within the Welsh School of Social Service.

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<sup>132</sup> Percy Watkins, op. cit. p. 150.

<sup>133</sup> Swansea Education Committee.

<sup>134</sup> MRCC.

<sup>135</sup> Indeed every person present at the 1932 Conference of Social Service held by the Joint Committee became a member of the SWMCSS two years later.

The South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service, like other Councils of Social Service, did not attempt to run or control clubs for unemployed men. Rather it continued the policies of the Coalfields Distress Committee in supporting and facilitating those clubs established by other organisations. This fact is important because the SWMCSS started new minute books which, unlike those of its predecessor, no longer exist. Those few historians who have analysed the policies of the South Wales and Monmouthshire CSS focus on its annual reports. As a result their work has centred on a discussion of the policies and effectiveness of the clubs when dealing with the problems of the unemployed. They have not analysed the effectiveness of the SWMCSS in achieving co-operation between state and voluntary bodies. For example Burge has argued that

It [the SWMCSS] represented all the principal social and educational agencies for 'the betterment of the cultural, physical, recreational and occupational interests of the adult and adolescent population of the stricken South Wales coalfield.' The placing of its occupational role fourth after cultural, physical and recreational, whether intentional or not, highlights the limits of what could be achieved occupationally.<sup>136</sup>

It is certainly true that the effectiveness of the clubs is open to debate. On the one hand the clubs were unpopular amongst many unemployed men and virtually irrelevant to the majority of women. They were unable to offer real palliatives to the economic hardships faced by the unemployed, and only attracted at most 30,000 of the approximately 160,000 unemployed males in South Wales.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand 30,000 men is still 30,000 men. Furthermore NCSS involvement in South Wales saw the number of clubs increase from approximately

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<sup>136</sup> A. Burge, *op cit.* p. 135.

<sup>137</sup> The following statistics are based on A. Burge, *op cit.* p. 136.

100 to 257 in 1936. Lastly it should be remembered that the relief from boredom and apathy offered by the clubs should be compared with the complete lack of organised facilities being offered by statutory bodies. Moreover, the Council succeeded in its original aim of bringing voluntary bodies and the state together in a co-operative effort. Although increased emphasis had been put on the actual provision of schemes to help the unemployed the main theme of this thesis is that the policies of the NCSS, and its local organisations, were primarily intended to encourage inter agency co-operation in order to allow other bodies to encourage citizenship amongst the poor. As a result it is futile to criticise the South Wales and Monmouthshire CSS for the 'failure' of the clubs, as the council was concerned with establishing rather than running such clubs.

The development of the Coalfields Distress Committee and the South Wales Council of Social Service provide excellent examples of the practical and bureaucratic implementation of the ideas and values concerning citizenship and community. The South Wales Council of Social Service was made up of figures appointed by the NCSS, it retained a close working relationship with the NCSS and it carried out policies based on the beliefs and values of the NCSS. By establishing the Coalfields Distress Committee it received monies from various government ministries and forwarded them to other charitable organisations which it regarded as encouraging the values of citizenship. It fulfilled the idea, spread by the National Council of Social Service of local bodies working with voluntary and state welfare providers in order to improve local communities. Furthermore it enacted, more than was possible elsewhere, the concept of a Council of Social Service as a facilitator rather than a provider of welfare.

Secondly this system was beneficial for all parties. It was obviously beneficial for the NCSS who received government recognition, increased status and the power that went with handling large sums of money. However it also benefited government departments who could efficiently allocate money to local schemes without the need for a national plan, and charities who, by uniting together in a co-operative effort, found a response to a crisis which seemed to be escalating beyond their control.

Thirdly the NCSS were able to build on a strong idealist framework already present. In Wales at least the presence of an academic and administrative community with well developed notions of citizenship and community was a major boost to NCSS activity. The NCSS then was far from an interfering English organisation untypical of local social work. Rather it developed local ideas, using local personalities and allowed local policies to be drawn up which met local needs. In this respect it again stressed the importance of a community helping itself.

By developing the Idealist values represented within much pre-war welfare, the NCSS in Wales could attract charities, religious groups and individuals from a variety of civil service and reform backgrounds to come together within a framework which saw them acting as good citizens i.e. co-operating with each other and the state, in the interests of the whole rather than the individual. This was achieved in a number of ways. The use of pre-standing organisations as a framework and as a source of personnel meant that many influential figures were involved from the very beginning. Miners' Halls brought charities together in a single place, Unemployment Committees involved representatives from numerous agencies, lectures and workshops too meant the co-ordination of charitable effort both at national and local

level. Just as Idealist philosophy identified the needs for individuals to act in co-operation for the common good, so the organisations and individuals which the Welsh Councils of Social Service brought together unified their efforts in order to enhance welfare provision.

### **Part Three: The North East of England**

Like South Wales, Tyneside saw some of the worst long term unemployment in Britain during the interwar years. However although the levels of unemployment were similar the way in which local Councils of Social Service attempted to deal with the problems created by unemployment differed considerably. This case study will discuss the policies of the Tyneside Council of Social Service. It will argue that although this organisation shared the values of the National Council, and saw itself as part of the same movement, its actions were precisely the opposite of what was expected. It increasingly reverted to providing rather than facilitating relief when faced with high levels of unemployment. The TCSS found that the co-operative ideology which brought it into a close working relationship with the state was increasingly hard to maintain once that relationship started. As a result it became a casework body, not only directly managing clubs for unemployed men but also providing direct material welfare. However, it will be shown that the TCSS was not simply an old-style local charity giving alms to the deserving poor. Rather, it was established as a facilitating Council of Social Service, but found that the facilitation of inter-agency co-operation was not enough when faced with the extreme poverty of the unemployed. As a result it made a series of distinct policy choices whereby it deliberately chose to abandon NCSS philosophy. By providing state funded welfare schemes, rather than facilitating the schemes of other organisations, the Tyneside Council of Social Service provides an excellent example of the



difficulties local Councils of Social Service had in attempting to create a 'co-operative' atmosphere in areas which clearly needed material relief.

Perhaps the most important difference between the Welsh and the Tyneside Councils of Social Service was that unlike its Welsh counterpart the TCSS was established specifically as an affiliated body of the National Council. While the Welsh School of Social Service, as we have seen, infused the values of co-operation between bodies based on religious and academic values, the Tyneside Council had no such history. In fact the TCSS owed its existence to the work done by the Bureau of Social Research for Tyneside. Under its director, Henry Mess, the Bureau published a famous social survey of Tyneside in 1928.<sup>138</sup>

The main recommendation of this survey was the establishment of the Northumbria and Tyneside Council of Social Survey. Like the Welsh Council, the Northumbria and Tyneside CSS was made up of representatives of various local councils of social service. Representatives came from Newcastle upon Tyne, Wallsend, Tynemouth, Whitley and Monkseaton, South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, Felling, Gateshead, Whickham, Blaydon,

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<sup>138</sup> H. A. Mess, *Industrial Tyneside. A social survey made for the Bureau of Social Research for Tyneside* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bureau of Social Research for Tyneside, 1928). It should be noted that this was not a new idea. Indeed Dixon had suggested such a thing in 1926. Dr. Henry Adolphus Mess was a well respected social investigator who published a number of such surveys and 'social administration' books throughout the first half of the twentieth century. These works betray a progressive Christian standpoint similar to that of A.E. Garvie (see Chapter 3) but with a strong emphasis upon the need for a 'scientific' and 'rational' understanding of the problems faced by the poor. Apart from *Industrial Tyneside* a short but representative bibliography includes *Casual Labour at the Docks* (London, G. Bell and Sons, 1916); *The Facts of Poverty* (London, Student Christian Movement, 1920); *Factory Legislation and its Administration, 1891-1924* (London, Studies in Economic and Political Science, 1926). From circa 1940 Mess' books concentrate less upon actual social change instead taking a more reflective tone and are clearly aimed at an undergraduate audience.

Newburn, Gosforth and West Line. The number of representatives was decided by the population of the town (1 representative per 25,000 people). Mess was made director, a title he kept from his position at the Bureau. Initially his work was dominated by publicising the new council through speeches, talks on radio and approaches to business and local government. Although the new council was supported by the NCSS, even to the point of being based on a constitution drawn up by Lionel Ellis, there was little initial support from local authorities. As in Wales the Council was simply overseeing the work of local bodies.<sup>139</sup> This was typical of many Councils of Social Service and as in other cases it was based on a temporary Carnegie United Kingdom Trust grant (as was Mess' wage of £650 p.a. the largest of any NCSS worker including Ellis). However unlike many of the Councils, and perhaps because of Mess' dominance, the Northumbria and Tyneside Council of Social Service soon developed a strategy and identity of its own, almost independent of other major charities. Indicative of this attitude was the establishment, in February 1930, of a Department of Personal Service. This Department was to work along Guild of Help lines in the poorer Tyneside towns and was to collect and present information on existing philanthropic and statutory agencies. So seriously did the TCSS take this work that they attempted to 'head hunt' one of the leading organisers of charity work in Britain, Dorothy Keeling,<sup>140</sup> from the Liverpool League of Social Service with an extraordinary offer of £350 per year.<sup>141</sup> When

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<sup>139</sup> By October 1929 the local councils had the following number of representatives. Newcastle upon Tyne (17), Wallsend (3), Tynemouth (4), Whitley and Monkseaton (3), South Shields (3), Jarrow (2), Hebburn (3), Felling (2), Gateshead (7), Whickham (1), Blaydon (2), Newburn (1), Gosforth (3), West Line (2), plus 12 co-opted members.

<sup>140</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>141</sup> The normal wage for an NCSS Secretary was only in the region of £200. Nevertheless the offer was refused.

W. E. Dixon<sup>142</sup> the NCSS organiser for the North East, visited from London three months later to open the re-furnished Gateshead Council of Social Service, he found the work of the Tyneside Council still dominated by organising the casework of local organisations. Indeed in January 1931 a Personal Service social worker was on hand at the Gateshead Council of Social Service on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Tyneside Council of Social Service continued to get actively involved in the activities of local councils of social service. Throughout 1929 the Felling Council of Social Service had complained of poor housing in Felling Shore and Heworth Shore. They commissioned a report by a Miss Jennings and made it available to the local Urban District Council. After numerous letters and one meeting had received the unsatisfactory answer 'we are trying', the Council of Social Service 'reported that efforts were being made to obtain the support of some of the more influential residents in Felling'.<sup>143</sup> Such residents included the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and the Reverend Spencer Wade who would shortly be preaching before the King. Mess also contacted a personal friend at the Ministry of Health, with the information that although notice had been served on those landlords responsible for unfit housing, accommodation had not been forthcoming in which to place the tenants. In 1930 the Felling Urban District Council was granted, along with all other UDC's, the right to claim land under the Acquisition of Land Act in order to implement the 1930 Housing Act. However, by December there had been no answer from Felling Shore UDC. Indeed, they even refused to give an interview to Miss Jennings. At this point the Council of Social

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<sup>142</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>143</sup> TCSS EC Mins, December 1930, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/1.

Service wrote that they were passing the details to the Ministry of Health. Although the TCSS admitted defeat over this it is clear that less than twenty-four months after the formation of the Tyneside Council of Social Service, senior individuals were actively involved in local issues and rather than simply facilitating the co-operation of other organisations were actually dominating policy 'on the ground'. This would become increasingly important as the TCSS attempted to come to terms with mass unemployment.

The most important factor in the Tyneside Council's approach to unemployment, as it was for the NCSS as a whole, was the Prince of Wales speech of 1932. Broadcast in the locally run CSS clubs on specially purchased radios, it inspired many Councils of Social Service to increase their efforts. South Shields CSS saw an attendance of one hundred people while Hebburn Council held classes, lectures, a play, boys and girls clubs and a musical society meeting on the same day. Not all societies were so successful. Gateshead and Jarrow both made urgent requests for funds, in Jarrow's case because they could find no one willing to volunteer as secretary and therefore had not been able to establish a Council of Social Service. Nevertheless, in April the TCSS received notice from the National Council to arrange an address by the Prince of Wales. The event took place at the City Hall on 27 April and was attended by all the Mayors in the district. It greatly improved the standing of the Tyneside Council, as the Prince asked for a guided tour of the various clubs. The TCSS immediately established an appeal to take advantage of their new status, hoping to raise £5,000. Strangely, Felling Urban District Council suddenly offered a hut and tools to their local Council of Social Service for unemployed men's workshops. Although by January the Felling Council had arranged land from the Chapter at Durham and organised plans for the

hut and a football pitch, the club organiser reported that the building had been at a standstill for a week due to 'Communist propaganda'.<sup>144</sup>

The appeal, which was to form the basis of the TCSS strategy to provide solutions to the problems caused by unemployment, did not accumulate the initial £5,000 which was hoped. Rather it soon levelled out at an almost constant level of between £800 and £1,500, as new donations were received and new schemes financed. This put the Tyneside Council in an unusual position: unlike the majority of its contemporaries elsewhere it could afford to meet the costs of its local councils. As a result it was able to experiment.

In March 1933 the appeal fund attempted to raise £10,000 in six weeks under the organisation of a local advertising agent, Mr H. Thornborough, who would receive 10 percent commission on anything raised after a minimum of £100. By this point the Council's work had become completely dominated by work with the unemployed. In March 1933 Mess declined to give a grant to the School of Physical Culture at Whitley Bay but 'intimated that if the School should be taken over by a responsible Whitley Bay Unemployed Welfare Committee, the question might be re-opened'.<sup>145</sup> Local charities were faced with the fact that funding depended upon adequate provision for the unemployed. Indeed it was a constant complaint that work with the unemployed detracted from other areas. At the 1933 annual meeting executive committee expressed the hope 'that the coming year would see a return to the more

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<sup>144</sup>TCSS EC Mins, January 1933, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/1.

<sup>145</sup>TCSS EC Mins, March 1933, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/1.

normal work of the council'<sup>146</sup> but this was not to be. One year later the Executive Committee was forced to admit that

local Councils of Social Service had not got very far in creating a common outlook or in co-ordinating social work in their localities, and that there was a danger of their becoming only one competing social agency among many.<sup>147</sup>

Twelve months later the situation had not altered

the Tyneside Council [has] firmly established itself, and proved itself worthy of support. Owing to force of circumstances, it had had to devote much of its time to unemployed welfare work, thus being less able to develop the work for which it was founded'.<sup>148</sup>

Although the original work 'was by no means lost sight of' the remainder of the speech was entirely concerned with unemployment relief. Even by May 1938 a financial report presented to the executive committee stated that 'the greater part of the Council's energies and finance had for some years been devoted to unemployment work... but the other sides of the Council's work, which had been somewhat neglected of recent years, were in still greater need of support'.<sup>149</sup> These comments give a good indication of the extent to which

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<sup>146</sup>ibid.

<sup>147</sup> TCSS EC Mins, December 1933, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/1.

<sup>148</sup> Statement by TCSS EC to the TCSS Annual Meeting, December 1934, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/2.

<sup>149</sup> TCSS Financial Report, May 1938, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/2.

unemployment relief came to dominate TCCSS work and explain why it provides such a useful case study to the historian.

By July 1933 the Tyneside Council of Social Service was up and running. The final copy of 'Industrial Tyneside' had been sold (no more were being printed), and support from the Ministry of Health and Unemployment meant the National Council was able to grant more money. Moreover the Prince of Wales' appeal (now called the Special Appeal as the Prince felt unable to attach his name to a money raising organisation) reported a balance of £2,222, from which it felt able to give a revealing series of grants. Firstly a £100 grant to a camp for unemployed men at Sparta Lea; another £100 towards the capital cost of a Nursery School at North Shields; £25 to the Blaydon Unemployment Welfare Centre; £20 towards a handicraft class for unemployed men at Leamington Adult School; £25 to Gosforth Adult School for unemployed welfare work; £75 to the Welcome Mission at Gateshead; £400 to the Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee.<sup>150</sup> Even the briefest glance at these grants, taken from one single day, gives the lie to the original purpose of the Council of Social Service. Whereas the main role of the archetypal CSS consisted, as has been shown, in the creation of Joint Committees, the Tyneside Council was increasingly acting as 'only one competing agency among many'. This development away from collective action and towards being an independent charity did not detract from the Council's respect for the National Council or its policies. In fact the reverse was the case: the TCCSS was able to assert National Council's principles over local councils with greater authority. By July 1933, when Thomas Jones from

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<sup>150</sup>Actually the Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee shared responsibility for raising appeal funds with the TCCSS on the condition that it would receive a guaranteed £100 and a preferential attitude from the appeal committee.

the Welsh Council visited the Tyneside Council (wearing his Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust hat) he must have been surprised that in only four years 27 Unemployed Welfare centres had been established and that these centres were being charged 2/6 to affiliate to the Tyneside Council. Indeed Mess' report to the executive, which presumably Jones heard, stated that although there were some concerns, all the local Councils were to a greater or lesser extent dependent on TCSS grants from the Appeal Fund. Indeed two thirds had staff whose wages were entirely dependent on the fund.

As a result of the growing importance of the fund, it was decided at the end of 1933 to divide the Tyneside Council's money into five distinct groups. The 'First Appeal' was made up of those monies left over from the Prince of Wales visit. Although no more money was to be added, and no actual number was mentioned, this was seen as adequate to cover at least the immediate costs of Boys Clubs, Housing and Unemployment. The 'Joint Appeal Fund' was to take over as the main source of money for local councils and also for the 'Unemployed Welfare Fund'. This consisted of contributions from funds one and two, the Pilgrim Trust and National Council of Social Service grants. There was also a 'Women's Fund' which paid for the growing number of clubs catering for the wives of unemployed men.<sup>151</sup> Lastly a 'general-purpose' fund would be made up of any monies left.

This reorganisation was a symptom of the development of the Tyneside Council as an independent charity. Soon it took a step that no other Council of Social Service, including the National Council, would take. In February 1934 the TCSS sent Charles Owen, a member

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<sup>151</sup>See Chapter 4.



of its executive, to act as a representative on a Joint Committee established by the League of Nations Union (Tyne District Council) to organise a 'Pageant and Procession of Witness to Peace'. Although this may seem a trifling act, it must be remembered that the primary role of a Council of Social Service was to be a Joint Committee representing the interests of its constituent bodies. It was for this reason that as early as 1925 the National Council refused to send representatives to any other organisation 'because the National Council is itself an amalgamation so no-one can speak for it'.<sup>152</sup> Obviously, however, the Tyneside Council was not concerned with such pleasantries. By sending a representative to the League, even if only for a pageant, it publicly endorsed another organisation and its policies without establishing how its constituent bodies felt. In the same month, the Tyneside Council gained even more control of the new funds by taking over responsibility of all the appeals and giving the Newcastle Unemployed Welfare Committee one third of the net amount raised.

Another indication of the extent to which the Tyneside Council was growing can be seen from an incident that took place in August 1934. The National Council sent the following letter to various organisations and individuals around the Northeast.

No one who has followed closely the recent developments in work with the unemployed can fail to have been impressed with its significance and possibilities for the future...

One of the great needs in new work of this kind is for the constant pooling of ideas and experience between different areas and Towns: Excellent as are many of the schemes of work with the unemployed, the fullest and best developments cannot be expected from them unless co-operation is made possible between the various units of activity. To meet this need, area conferences and interchange of visits &c., between different Towns have been arranged, but it has been suggested that something more than this is required...

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<sup>152</sup>NCSS EC Mins, 10 September 1925, NCSS papers, LMA, LMA/4016/IS/A/01/028.

It is felt that the time has now come for the formation of an advisory committee for the Northumberland area which will be able to assist in the further development of the many interesting experiments now being conducted in the area.<sup>153</sup>

This new body, the Northumberland Advisory Council for Community Clubs, was simply meant to be a tool for local organisation, run through an area office organised by the NCSS under an officer paid for by the NCSS. However, behind the scenes leading figures within the National Council were planning to give overall control to the Tyneside Council. An undated memorandum on the 'Proposed Extension of Services over East Northumberland Industrial Towns', circulated amongst high ranking members of the Tyneside Council, remarked that

The proposition has been made verbally by Captain Ellis, Secretary of the National Council of Social Service, on more than one occasion that the Tyneside Council of Social Service should assume responsibility for developing social services, especially unemployment work, in the area north of its present area.<sup>154</sup>

Although the scheme never developed, the simple fact that Ellis thought about it in such terms clearly shows that the TCSS had developed a great deal. It was no longer, as it had been in 1929, a committee to consider the implications of Mess' *Industrial Tyneside*. Rather, between 1932 and 1934 it had become an almost independent and extremely wealthy philanthropic organisation. Although few of the organisations kept records which survive today, the later personal letters of some of the TCSS leading figures indicates that this had

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<sup>153</sup>NCSS circular, 22 August 1934, NACCC papers, TWA, CHX44/1/1/1.

<sup>154</sup>NACCC EC Mins, 5 September 1934, NACCC papers, TWA, CHX44/1/1/1.

not always been an easy movement. In 1936 the new Director of the Tyneside Council, J. W. L. Adams<sup>155</sup> received a letter advising him that

I do not think you can press too hard the importance of retaining Newcastle as an essential part of the area. The National Council know what a difficult time we had with Nixon [head of Newcastle Unemployed Workers Committee]. The grant of £1000, of which the Newcastle Committee was to retain £500, was an integral part of the bargaining by which they agreed, and then only after difficult and protracted negotiations, to come and play with us... if the National Council are difficult about it - you know Nixon! That's an argument in itself.<sup>156</sup>

The TCSS also had similar problems with organised labour to that experienced by other areas introducing workers' clubs. In January 1937, W. C. Locke, the handicraft instructor employed by the Tyneside Council to visit various clubs, resigned on the instructions of his trade union. The Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers had informed him that in working for the Council he was not working in the best interests of the society. In a letter to the TCSS Executive Committee they stated that

week by week our National Organisers report that men of all ages, and who have received so called craft training in Social Service Centres and Ministry of Labour Training Centres, are being employed as carpenters at considerably less than trade union rate of wages, which is to the detriment of our members, and we have therefore no other option but to insist on the discharge of such persons who are not qualified craftsmen. If we allow members of our Society to act as Instructors, the fact would be used against us, because we could not

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<sup>155</sup>J. W. L. Adams, the son of NCSS President W. G. S. Adams became Director of the TCSS in 1935 after Mess became a Reader of Sociology at the University of London. Adams was born in Donegal, read PPE at Oxford and joined the TCSS with a wage of £500 after a 2 year Commonwealth Fellowship in America.

<sup>156</sup>Illegible to J. W. L. Adams, 16 February 1936, TCSS correspondence, TWA, CH/CSS1/14.

logically acquiesce to persons being given craft instruction and thereafter object to their employment.<sup>157</sup>

Nevertheless craftwork continued without the instructors, while the TCSS continued to grow increasingly independent from the National Council. In July 1937 the Tyneside Council made its first real attempt to unify the various 'Personal Service' (casework) organisations under one body. This was advocated for four reasons. Firstly it stated categorically that personal service was closely related to other forms of social service work and therefore was worthy of organisation. Secondly, overhead expenditure would be minimised. Thirdly, one personal service organisation would be more able to attract representatives from statutory bodies as co-opted members. Finally it was felt that the general public 'would be more attracted to support a unified organisation', not least because they would be subject to fewer appeals for money.

This unification of personal service is indicative, yet again, of the growing independence of the Tyneside Council of Social Service from the National Council. The fact that the TCSS was attempting to organise social work as late as 1937 indicates the importance that had been placed on practical unemployment relief rather than an adherence to NCSS principles. Furthermore the organisation of casework was just that: organisation rather than co-operation. The structure the TCSS established was never designed or intended to allow the formation of a Joint Committee; rather the Tyneside Council would keep complete control of the new body. In addition the obvious fact about the organisation of casework was that it was based on practical reasons rather than ideological. When the Personal Welfare Committee was

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<sup>157</sup> Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers to TCSS, January 1937, TCSS papers, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/3.

established in September 1937, the need to minimise overheads was more influential than the ideas of co-operation.

At the end of 1937 the situation came to a head. The National Council, under the influence of the Ministries of Health and Labour, requested more control over the money which the TCSS allocated. In an urgent letter they stated that

- (a) that the National Council shall have the right to be represented by an assessor at meetings at which applications are considered;
- (b) that copies of the minutes of meetings of the committee authorising payments from the block grants should be forwarded to the NCSS after each meetings;
- (c) that copies of financial statements, minutes and reports should be forwarded to the National Council'.<sup>158</sup>

These demands clearly indicate the importance which the National Council placed on the Tyneside CSS and the large amount of money it spent. However the TCSS now attempted to assert its independence from the very organisation which founded it. Although recognising the pressure being brought to bear on the NCSS, it refused to grant them access to minutes, confidential documents or to have any NCSS representative sit in on TCSS meetings. This refusal was intended to serve two purposes: to show the NCSS that the Tyneside Council intended to keep its independence, and to 'encourage the NCSS to resist Ministry of Labour demands'.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>NCSS to TCSS, December 1937, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/3.

<sup>159</sup>TCSS EC Mins, December 1937, TWA, CH/CSS1/4/3.

This note of defiance and independence brought an end to a decade of growth for the Tyneside Council of Social Service unrivalled by any other local organisation. The success of the visit of the Prince of Wales, and the subsequent monies the TCSS was able to raise, gave the Council more opportunity to fulfil the ideals of citizenship and co-operation than was experienced almost anywhere else. However that opportunity was not fulfilled. The relatively large amounts of money and the desperate need for unemployment relief meant that the Council became immersed in providing and funding actual relief. Although workshops and unemployed men's clubs were part of the traditional NCSS philosophy, the aim was that the Council of Social Service would create the conditions which would enable other groups to co-operate to such an extent that they would be able to create and run the clubs. In Tyneside, however, the clubs were paid for, and run by, staff who received their wages from the Tyneside Council. In its last annual report before the war the Council wrote

Briefly, it is the aim of the Council to encourage men and women to take a wide interest in the life of their community, and to aspire by a co-operative effort with their fellow citizens to build a richer, happier, more enlightened, more self-reliant communal life... It is not always easy for those not actively associated with the day-to-day work of the Council fully to understand our aims and activities... The Council is sometimes criticised on the grounds that so much of its expenditure is on personnel. Almost all our staff are, however, employed in rendering services directly to individuals as instructors and advisors, and in many other capacities.<sup>160</sup>

Even at this late date phrases such as 'community' and 'co-operative effort' went hand in hand with casework. This situation was not to survive the war as the decline in unemployment meant a corresponding decline in funding for the Tyneside Council, but it is

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<sup>160</sup>TCSS, *Annual Report 1937-1938*, pp. 6-7.

clear that throughout the interwar years the autonomy given to the TCSS by its high income was as much as a problem as too little money when it came to applying National Council principles to the problem of unemployment.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the 1930s unemployment dominated NCSS policy in many urban areas. This focus was to have profound effects upon the development of Councils of Social Service throughout Britain. In many of those areas worst hit by unemployment, the idea of charities uniting together in a co-operative effort provided a means for voluntary organisations to respond to crises which seemed to be escalating beyond their control. In such areas unemployed men's clubs were established by local Joint Committees. These clubs fulfilled many of the roles envisaged by the NCSS. Just as village halls had done in rural areas, so the provision of playing fields, workshops, and allotments brought local charities, statutory bodies and unemployed men together in a co-operative effort. For unemployed men, the types of welfare programmes offered by the NCSS were based on individuals taking personal control rather than simply the provision of material benefit. Furthermore, by developing the Idealist values present in much pre-war welfare, the NCSS was able to emphasise the need for charities themselves to act as good citizens i.e. co-operating in the interests of the whole rather than the individual. They also saw the development of local policies based on local need and put into place by local organisations. For the NCSS this was an extremely successful bureaucratic implementation of those policies which had marked it out from the COS and the Guilds of Help in 1919.

However this success was not universal. This was particularly true in those areas worst hit by unemployment where, as we have seen, inter agency co-operation was often sacrificed in favour of practical casework with the unemployed. Furthermore, as this chapter, has shown the development of citizenship based policies depended almost exclusively on adequate funding from government departments. The values of 'citizenship' and 'community', which emphasised personal morals rather than economic rejuvenation, were an attractive option to policy makers, civil servants and local government officials anxious to be 'doing something' about unemployment but unwilling or unable to increase spending. In South Wales and Tyneside the NCSS became the leading provider of grants to other organisations. In a sense then it developed from a charity to what would today be called a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation.

This development leaves uncomfortable questions. Because the Joint Committee's (in the various forms they took) involved representatives from a number of charities, because those representatives were paid social workers, and because they operated with state support which often took the form of direct grants, it becomes difficult to describe them as anything other than a charitable bureaucracy. Although it would be wrong to conclude from this that the NCSS saw the real germ of the welfare state it can not be ignored that the professionalisation of philanthropy, in terms of a rationalisation of the provision and distribution of welfare, certainly did take place.

Furthermore, such a rationalisation was at least partly successful. The National Government was able to defer responsibility to charitable bodies, who could be dealt with at a bureaucratic level without the need for a specific welfare policy. The National Council of Social Service



undoubtedly gained a higher status among other charities and importantly funding bodies through their new responsibilities. The charities who received grants through the NCSS also gained access to government money which simply did not exist before 1919. In fact only one group did not do particularly well: the unemployed themselves. It is virtually impossible now to tell how many people attended NCSS run clubs, how many also attended other clubs, what values, if any, they received from their activities. It is probable however that unemployed men and women used NCSS schemes and clubs which appealed to them. Nevertheless it remains that on an organisational level, the NCSS arranged its activity around the idea that charitable bodies could personify citizenship and community by working together for a common good. In doing so the recipients became less significant for the NCSS than those engaged in the charitable act. Those conducting charity were becoming the 'good citizens'.

## **CONCLUSION**

This thesis has shown how the National Council of Social Service attempted to facilitate social welfare provision during the interwar period. It has shown that this was done by creating an idealist bureaucracy which involved charities, statutory bodies and other agencies coming together in a process of co-operation. The thesis has supplied evidence of such a policy at national and local levels. It has examined the impact of this policy of bureaucratic citizenship in five units; London, rural areas, urban areas, south Wales and the north east of England. It has also examined the impact of this policy in areas with differing traditions of welfare provision. In so doing the thesis has shown that local factors often caused radical differences in policy 'on the ground'. However the thesis has also shown that, despite these differences, there was a commonality of policy between the various 'faces' of the National Council of Social Service. From the Executive Committee in Bedford Square to the smallest and least effective local Council of Social Service, the conception of an idealist bureaucracy, where representatives from differing organisations could meet, was consistently central to whatever policy was being espoused, even if only because it had yet to be achieved.

It is this idealist, bureaucratic, citizenship which marks the NCSS as different from voluntary societies of the same period and allowed it to work much more closely with the state than voluntary organisations that preceded it. Because it could appear to be an umbrella organisation it was able to oversee and supervise state welfare schemes in South Wales and actually work as a local government committee in London. These very simple, yet dramatic points, have been shown in the following ways.

By examining the philosophical development of the Charity Organisation Society, chapter one showed that the dominating factor of pre War voluntarism was one of discriminative alms giving. It created a theory of society that described the poor in terms of 'helpable' and 'unhelpable', dismissed the concept of a state which actively challenged poverty through positive and inclusive policies, and saw voluntary effort as best organised through a central committee made up of COS members.

Chapter one made clear that although the conception of an idealist based bureaucratic citizenship for the voluntary sector was never fully outlined before 1914, the elements which the NCSS were to build on were present in political, philosophical, and philanthropic arenas. It demonstrated that there was a discourse which was based heavily on the classical philosophies of ancient Greece. This in turn had influenced and merged with a specifically British interpretation of the Idealist philosophies of Kant and Hegel, through J.S. Mill and T. H. Green. In particular, the chapter emphasised the influence Green had on political and philosophical thinkers. Important and influential academics such as Muirhead, Wallas and Bernard Bosanquet were all shown to owe, to differing degrees, a debt to Green's Idealism. Furthermore political writers such as Hobhouse were also influenced by Green's conception of individuals working together for a 'common good'. The chapter also discussed how this discourse did not take place within any one arena. Rather it flowed to and fro from politics to academia thanks largely to the fact that the individuals who most keenly espoused its core conceptions of citizenship and commonality often themselves moved from one arena to another. This discourse was made richer by the impact of writers and political actors concerned with the question of women's citizenship and by those whose religious convictions saw them espouse the commonality of mankind.

The vibrant and multifaceted nature of this discourse was shown to have been reflected in rapid development, by a number of key individuals within the voluntary sector, of a variety of national 'strategies' for the provision of welfare. By examining a number of secondary sources and the literature of contemporary social workers and philanthropers, the chapter outlined how such strategies had also been based on Green's work and were influenced by the various interpretations of Idealist citizenship which already existed.

Idealists made such progress because many social observers felt that COS policies were too draconian in nature. Individuals such as Samuel and Henrietta Barnett and Charles Booth in London and E. V. Birchall in the north of England were indicative of a 'new type' of social worker. These 'new' social workers not only put less emphasis upon the subdivision of the poor in terms of 'helpable' and 'unhelpable', but more importantly they were prepared to work with other charities and local government to achieve their aims.

Chapter two discussed the way in which the ideas and values which had been central to the discourse outlined in chapter one were merged after the First World War to form the National Council of Social Service. It stressed that the differing positions held by the Charity Organisation Society, the Guilds of Help and the Councils of Social Welfare made total agreement untenable. However the chapter argued that far from splitting into three different factions, in true idealist fashion the antithesis created by the diversification of the organisations found a synthesis in the form of the National Council of Social Service.

Although a large number of NCSS records have been destroyed, the chapter pieced together the main events and instigators behind the synthesis of approach which took place to form the NCSS. It outlined the way in which local governments and municipal authorities were given, or were forced to take upon themselves, increased responsibility for welfare provision during the First World War. The chapter showed that the National Association of Guilds of Help had encouraged local councils to form Joint Committees consisting of relevant statutory agencies and local voluntary organisations. Furthermore the Association had been a primary force behind the development of a national Joint Committee following a conference on 'War Relief and Personal Service' held in 1915. The chapter was unable, due to a lack of records, to state conclusively how this committee had developed but it did show that NCSS writers, looking back on the development of their organisation, had seen a direct link between this committee and the formation of the National Council of Social Service. The aim of this chapter was to show how circumstances increased the purchase of idealist notions, hence drawing a wider range of social workers into their ambit.

The chapter then went on to show the nature of the ideals which NCSS founders believed in, through a brief biography of some of the key individuals who were influential in the establishment of the National Council. It discussed the careers, influences and philosophical orientation of S. P. Grundy, W. G. S. Adams, T. H. Nunn, Fredrick D'Aeth, James Pringle and Lionel Ellis. These biographies outlined a commonality of interests between these individuals (with the exception of Pringle). They all, it was argued, placed a strong emphasis upon the organisation of charitable effort, the importance of co-operation between individuals, and the opportunities to be gained by the voluntary sector working closely with the state.

The chapter then discussed the way in which the emerging National Council had set about publicising itself. It analysed their attempts, which were largely successful, to attract a wide and divergent attendance to the National Council's first conference in 1920. Furthermore, the chapter discussed both the demographic distribution of that audience and the conclusions which were reached, as a way of ascertaining the types of individuals who were attracted to the new council. These conclusions were compared to another conference four years later in order to discuss who they had managed to keep. The chapter argued that although the original conference was dominated by the voluntary sector, it had seen a large number of individuals representing local councils and statutory agencies. These individuals were from a cross party background, although there was a large number of labour figures including such individuals as Clement Attlee. However, it was shown that this influence had not been maintained. By 1924 the vast majority of those attending the NCSS annual conference did so as representatives of a charity.

Nevertheless such individuals were often committed to the new organisation. The chapter detailed the background of Dorothy Keeling and Ronald Norman as typical of the 'types' of people who were later to hold significant positions in the National Council of Social Service. The conference also helped to define the policies of the NCSS. Speakers such as Arthur Collins of the Birmingham Citizens' Committee, J. G. Legge, Director for Education for Liverpool and members of the original NCSS executive committee such as Adams all made statements which attempted to bring together the different views of the constituent elements of the National Council in to a unified policy.

The chapter also discussed the way in which the NCSS very quickly attempted to develop links with statutory agencies both for practical and for prestigious reasons. R. C. Norman and Viscount Astor were two extremely influential political figures who chaired sessions of the first conference, building lasting links with the London County Council and the Ministry of Health respectively. Furthermore the tradition, inaugurated in 1920, of giving the honorary title of President of the National Council to the Speaker of the House of Commons was illustrative of the NCSS' status and of its neutrality.

Lastly chapter two outlined the development of local charities in the years immediately following the formation of the National Council of Social Service. In its early years the National Council often attempted to 're-brand' already existing local charities rather than establish new bodies. Furthermore a discussion of early reports commissioned by the NCSS executive committee showed that many early Councils of Social Service retained their pre-war COS outlook and concentrated on dominating local welfare rather than facilitating a bureaucratic citizenship. However the chapter also outlined the fact that the NCSS executive was aware of the problems, but saw them as a necessary evil if the National Council of Social Service was to 'get off the ground' successfully.

Chapters three, four and five discussed the way in which, after successfully launching itself, the NCSS attempted to deal with the problems outlined towards the end of chapter two. They also examined the way in which different responses by different local organisations to their different circumstances affected the way that they interpreted the concept of bureaucratic citizenship.

Chapter Three made clear that for the first seventeen years of its existence the London Council of Social Service was indeed a 'case apart' from the National Council. It began by describing the formation of the LCSS and the way in which this was influenced by T. H. Nunn's Hampstead Council of Social Welfare. It emphasised the direct links between the Idealist conceptions of Barnett and Nunn, his one time pupil. The chapter stressed the importance of Nunn's work in London, both as a reformer of COS policy and as the key individual in the establishment of the London Council of Social Service. By doing so it made clear that Nunn's work was based on the same conceptions of a bureaucratic citizenship as the National Council.

The second part of the chapter examined, in some detail, the actual policies of the London Council of Social Service. It was shown that in a variety of arenas the LCSS attempted to form a series of committees including both the representatives of voluntary organisations and statutory bodies. This was done in an attempt to foster the values of 'unity and co-operation' and was based very much on a bureaucratic implementation of the idealist conception that individuals should come together for a common good. The chapter discussed the way such a policy was put into action with regard to the organisation of municipal health care, the provision of tuberculosis treatment, the policies of public housing and planning and the promotion of public morality. It was made clear that although differing circumstances saw slightly different policies, in each of these arenas the London Council of Social Service had successfully managed to create joint committees which acted as umbrella organisations for a variety of different voluntary bodies.



Furthermore those committees were to work extremely closely with the London County Council. The chapter emphasised the way in which the emphasis placed upon co-operation between voluntary organisations and the state represented an Idealist vision of social welfare. The London Council of Social Service maintained an evangelical standpoint which saw voluntary societies (as the ultimate expression of the individuals concern for his fellow man) and the state working in co-operation with each other as an example for 'ordinary' people to follow.

The chapter made clear that the London Council of Social Service was often concerned with different issues than many local branches of the NCSS in different parts of the country, and often than the NCSS itself. However, it was shown that despite the fact that the LCSS showed greater concern for homelessness, re-housing, and health issues than issues that dominated discussion elsewhere, such as unemployment, the values of bureaucratic citizenship remained as important to the LCSS as they were to its national counterpart.

The chapter outlined two reasons for this. It was maintained that the London and National Councils of Social Service, reflected the values of their component organisations. Because the organisations were often similar, the values were also similar. The shared heritage of the two councils gave them a series of shared pre-conceptions with regard to 'good' and 'bad' voluntary practice. However the chapter went on to argue that because the levels of social depravation faced by the LCSS in London were not as daunting as those faced by smaller and less well developed Councils of Social Service elsewhere, the LCSS could remain more firmly fixed upon a specific NCSS might than was possible in other areas. As a result the

chapter argued that LCSS policy gives an excellent indication of the 'types' of policies which the NCSS would have wished to see elsewhere if opportunity had allowed.

Despite this, relationships between the London and the National Council were often strained by a clash of personalities, thanks largely to Nunn's inability to delegate tasks and his continued personal dominance of most committees. Nevertheless within London the LCSS formed an effective and efficient umbrella organisation which linked the voluntary and the statutory sectors together in a form of bureaucratic citizenship.

The difference between 'metropolitan' and 'provincial' approaches is a further theme within the thesis. Whilst one might expect councils based on COS organisations to take a different line, the nature of the tasks tackled themselves had a significant impact.

The split, between rural and urban areas, reflected in chapter four, was one which the NCSS itself devised. The chapter examined the policies of a number of Rural Community Councils and the more urban Councils of Social Service in order to ascertain what common themes were present and what local circumstances had made some councils move away from these themes. It was shown that the majority of local councils, whether based in towns or the countryside had followed the ideas and suggestions given to them by the NCSS when they first affiliated. However, because the National Council was willing to give local bodies a large degree of autonomy local Councils had been able to respond to local circumstance. The most important 'local circumstances' was the availability of grants to fund the policies of Joint Committees. In rural areas, where grants were initially forthcoming, Joint Committees were easily formed or assimilated and became centred around the provision of village halls

rather than becoming bogged down in personal case work. Although they were often heavily dependant upon grants from the Board of Education and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, they did manage to bring together a large number of charitable bodies in a co-operative effort thereby enacting a form of bureaucratic citizenship.

However, the chapter compared this success in rural areas to the situation in urban areas where monetary aid was not so easily obtainable. Here a lack of funding meant that many new committees simply failed to get going despite the earnest efforts of their staff. In such a situation local councils had to choose between two options. Either they could disband and hope to be able to reform at a later date, as Rotherham Council of Social Service did, or they could return to the old style case work which they knew. This later option took the form of either a direct change of policy towards alms giving or, more usually, the reversion by some of the older Councils (who had a history as a Charity Organisation Society or as a Council of Social Welfare) to the values which had served them successfully in the past. Such a reversion, as in the case of the Chester Council of Social Welfare, is interesting because it indicates that while individual social workers may have espoused the importance of the conception of bureaucratic citizenship, they had not fully relinquished the ideas of the COS. In retrospect such a scenario seems hardly unlikely: individuals cannot after all reinvent themselves overnight. Studies which trace the impact of ideologies often make this point. However, what is most interesting is the way that NCSS values and rhetoric were embraced initially, and retained at times, despite the shift of emphasis in the practice of organisations. The values of citizenship were easily accepted by some groups and individuals. These were malleable values which some individuals could apply to casework and alms giving as easily as they could to representative Joint Committees. This is indicative of the way in which the

values of the NCSS were often acceptable to social workers and the organisations they represented, and indeed those individuals felt able to affiliate to the National Council even before it obtained the status it was later to have. Thus, whilst they may have accepted the values of the NCSS, and understood themselves to be NCSS members, they did not adopt the approaches or sympathies of the idealist founders. This is most evidenced from an analysis of the policies they enacted. In this vein the chapter was forced to conclude that while bureaucratic citizenship had been a success in rural areas, it had been a relative failure in towns.

One reason for 'success' in rural areas was the availability of money, a second was the notion that rural areas had a community life which could be recreated, a third was the very real need in rural areas for the facilities which the NCSS proposed. The third section of the chapter discussed the development, aims and achievements of the clubs established by the NCSS and local Councils of Social Service specifically for women. This structure was in no way intended to relegate the question of women's involvement in the NCSS to a sub-section of the thesis. Rather it reflected a split which the NCSS had itself created. The clubs were often run in parallel with men's clubs but were controlled by a separate sub-committee of the NCSS and separately organised in their localities.

The section showed that these clubs were not only successful, but that they often drew more members and grew at a faster rate than the clubs aimed at male contemporaries. However such results were often achieved by a form of welfare scheme that reinforced prevalent gender stereotypes. It reflected the expectation that women would respond, and that they needed to respond. The clubs identified women as citizens fulfilling a valuable role in

society as wives and mothers. This may well have reinforced sexual stereotypes, but this should not detract from the fact that it was also extremely popular amongst the women who attended these clubs. Furthermore there is evidence that many of the women's clubs wanted to branch out into other non-gender specific areas once the economy improved towards the end of this period. Further historical research is needed to study the role such clubs played in the war and the effect which the post war re-organisation of the NCSS had upon their success. However, it is clear from this analysis that a combination of expectations and need combined and that once constructed, facilities could be used in a variety of ways that may or may not have reflected the original aims. The role of circumstances as an influence on the direction of the NCSS in the localities it served should therefore not be underestimated.

Chapter five discussed the policies of the National Council of Social Service with respect to the biggest single social problem facing the voluntary sector in the interwar period; the rise and consequences of long term unemployment. It stressed that in many areas where levels of unemployment were particularly high the concept of bureaucratic citizenship provided a framework which a number of different individuals, charities and statutory agencies could use to 'solve' the problem. Hence circumstances could, and did, develop an idealist aim into a practical necessity.

The first part of the chapter discussed the policies of the NCSS at a national level and their implementation by local Councils of Social Service 'on the ground'. It showed that the National Council had stressed that only the formation of Joint Committees at a local level could deal with the 'crisis'. By a series of publications, pamphlets and visits by regional officers it encouraged local CSS groups to develop policies which would stop the

unemployed becoming unemployable, i.e. becoming lethargic and apathetic. In following such a policy, the NCSS was in fact building upon a wide discourse which included many from both the philanthropic and political arenas and was informed by the new science of social administration. The chapter demonstrated how the NCSS was able to secure the help and support of a number of significant figures including the Prince of Wales, and how this support eventually led to the National Council being the primary voluntary 'contact' for the Ministry of Health.

This was perhaps the zenith of NCSS philosophy in the interwar period. The chapter showed that on the issue of unemployment the National Council was actively engaged as a bureaucratic citizen. It encouraged a large number of charities, individuals and statutory agencies to co-operate for a common good, thereby fulfilling their duty as citizens.

Of course individual rivalries often dispute the operation of all organisations. The NCSS managed to appease those charities who thought they might lose their independence in such a scheme, by refusing to dominate the provision of state grants and maintaining its position as a bureaucratic facilitator of welfare. However, it was unable to appease a large section of the trade union movement and many within the Labour Party, who saw the NCSS as a state puppet. Despite repeated attempts by the executive committee of the National Council of Social Service to win over these 'doubters' the ideological differences were often too wide. As a result, while some senior Labour figures did support the NCSS and many Labour councillors played prominent roles within local Councils of Social Service, these were the exceptions rather than the rule. What mattered here was not necessarily the outward rhetoric of the NCSS, but the perceived, and sometimes real, values which were behind local action.

'Ideology' re-entered local social provision, becoming a key influence on the extent to which full collaboration could proceed. Perception was as important as reality.

The second and third parts of the chapter concentrated on two specific areas; south Wales and the north east of England. These areas were chosen because they were both designated as Special Areas of high unemployment in 1936. Moreover, they indicate two radically different responses by local NCSS organisations to the problems of unemployment, both of which started from the same premise of bureaucratic citizenship.

That such a divergence of policy could take place reinforces the statements made throughout chapters three, four and five that the values espoused by the National Council of Social Service were acceptable to a wide range of social workers with a wide range of conceptions regarding the best way to implement bureaucratic citizenship. As elsewhere, the latter two sections of chapter five reveal that this was both the strength and the weakness of such values.

The first of the two case studies described the development of NCSS policy in south Wales. It argued that this policy emerged as the result of a dynamic and developing discourse, concerning a specifically Welsh interpretation of Idealist welfare provision, typified by the work of the Welsh School of Social Service. Once the NCSS was working closely with the Ministry of Health and was able to concentrate its attentions upon south Wales it found that key individuals and concepts were already in place. The formation of a Coalfield Distress Committee involved personnel who had links with the Welsh School of Social Service, the National Council of Social Service and the government itself. Many had 'progressive' views.

It was shown that all of these organisations and individuals had, for a variety of reasons, a belief in the importance of co-operation and bureaucratic citizenship. The section emphasised that the South Wales Council of Social Service, which effectively oversaw the Coalfield Distress Committee, was an excellent example of the concept of bureaucratic citizenship. It involved the creation of a Joint Committee which had representatives from state and voluntary bodies. It supported and advised local schemes on the best way to achieve and spend funds, without ever imposing restrictions other than those forced upon it by legislation. As such it acted as a facilitator rather than a provider of welfare.

The second of the two case studies dealt with the formation and policies of the Tyneside Council of Social Service. Although this Council shared many of the values of the NCSS, and attempted to form representative Joint Committees, it became a not simply a facilitator but an actual provider of welfare. The section demonstrated that although the Tyneside Council originally attempted to act as an umbrella organisation for a number of different charities, it found it increasingly hard to resist using the control which the power to allocate state funds gave it. As a result it carried out specific policies which, while falling short of actual alms giving, moved it increasingly away from the philosophy of the National Council.

The section outlined a number of reasons for this development. The Tyneside council had its origins in a specific social survey. It was not based on previously laid foundations or commitments. However, a main factor in the shift in policy was simply the inability of the National Council's conception of bureaucratic citizenship to provide a conclusive answer to the social problems faced by the long-term unemployed.



Such a conclusion is typical of those found throughout this thesis. Once more the strength and weakness of NCSS ideology had been one and the same thing. Bureaucratic citizenship was able to encompass a wide variety of opinions and to bring together a number of different organisations and individuals, who would normally not have been able to co-operate. However, because such a philosophy depended on emphasising the bureaucracy rather than the actual welfare provision, it offered little in the way of actual palliatives for the poor. It could stress the need for co-operation and unity of action both within the voluntary sector and between the voluntary sector and the state; it could facilitate the development of actual schemes by bringing groups together; and it could promote and disseminate information throughout England and Wales. However it could not actually alleviate poverty. It could not help unemployed men find work, it could not increase the amount of money their wives could spend each week, and it could not directly improve living conditions. Nor did it 'convert' all its members to the 'progressive' views of its founders. However, these things were not seen as a failure by the NCSS, because it had never set out to achieve them. Rather the failing was with the philosophy itself which - while normally immensely attractive to a great number of organisations and individuals - was unable to match the simple, yet heartfelt, desire to 'do something' about incredible levels of poverty. It permitted some change and established structures, but it provided no policy 'solutions', and failed to destroy the bad name that 'charity' had amongst many of the poor.

If we return to the four themes outlined at the beginning of this thesis certain key conclusions can be drawn. These themes were the nature of citizenship, the NCSS use of a bureaucratic conception of citizenship, the relationship between the voluntary and political sectors in the interwar years, and the nature of philanthropy.

The values of citizenship were clearly re-evaluated by the NCSS through the medium of a bureaucratic citizenship, involving individuals and organisations acting the parts of citizens, in a classical model of divergent interests coming together for a greater good. This thesis has shown this to be the case time and again both at a national and at a local level. The thesis has also consistently shown the various ways in which the NCSS facilitated co-operation between the state and the voluntary sector, and the success and failures of such facilitation. Lastly the changing nature of philanthropy away from individual giving and towards the bureaucratisation and professionalisation of social work as a career has also been well indicated throughout the preceding pages. These themes have been constants, although the thesis has always shown how ideas developed by an elite leadership did not necessarily permeate the organisation in the way that was intended. There were variations and developments, instances of 'true' adherents, non-adherents, and those who came to accept a core strategy because it provided much that they themselves believed in (even if they did not see differences between themselves and the leaders). In this respect this thesis provides an important study, not just of a charity, but of an institution. Few other institutions have been examined in this way, although many – from political parties to pressure groups – could display a similar pattern. Moreover the thesis has examined the often maligned values of moderate liberals, and has sought to redefine the idea of a charity. The notion of the 'gift relationship' cannot hold for the twentieth century. Charity has to be seen more favourably, as a professional concern of professional individuals.

The National Council of Social Service is in no way peripheral to the story of British welfare between the wars. The lack of attention it has received from serious historians is an

oversight. The reasons are clear. The NCSS was never a political organisation in any sense which affected policy. Like other voluntary organisations it has suffered from preconceptions. *True*, it was made up of individuals drawn predominantly from a specific social class, but that class was one of an increasingly professional social worker whose political allegiances were as varied then as they are today. *True*, certain contemporaries did see the NCSS as a puppet of the state, merely perpetuating the capitalist system, but such arguments misunderstood the true nature of the National Council. Because it was concerned with facilitating the welfare of others, and because it did so in a bureaucratic way, the NCSS was never as prominent as it could have been. However it was influential. It mediated the discourse between voluntary organisations and the state. It disseminated literature and information between the two arenas. It formed Joint Committees made up of members from the two arenas and it did so in a way that was not simply an ad hoc response to circumstance but was based on a very specific set of ideological values inherited from a synthesis of voluntary, philosophical, religious and political ideas. As such it based its mediation of the discourse upon specific principles and *a priori* conceptions, namely that there was a rational solution to the problems caused by mass unemployment, poor housing, bad health etc and that if individuals and organisations could come together and work together they could find and enact such a solution. That desire – and that human faith in man's capacity to alter circumstances – merit both academic attention and our respect.

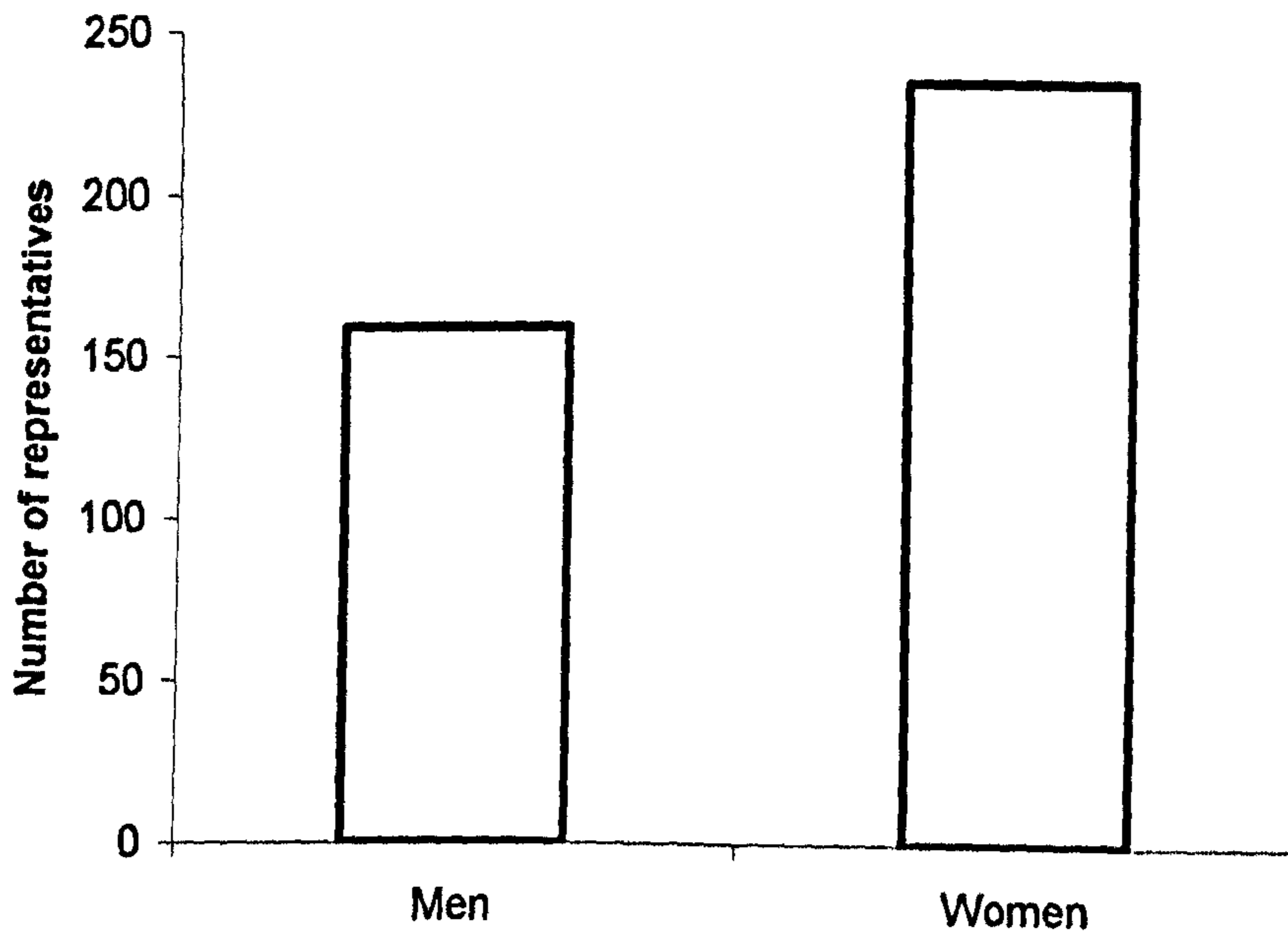
Such assumptions were not always correct. Some groups could not be persuaded to cooperate, some problems were too great for the NCSS alone to deal with, but its attempts should not be underestimated. From rural villages in the south east of England to the coalfields of south Wales and the dockyards of Tyneside, voluntary effort was 'organised, co-

ordinated, and supported' by the National Council of Social Service. That effort was to become ever more significant – and more central to, and more consistent with, a desire to reconstruct Britain – in the later stages of the war. It may therefore be the case that the moral desire for change – the idealist conception of organised bureaucratic moralism – was consistent with the aims of a much broader group within the left, even if they saw the state's actions as a more effective means of providing a sense of community, and state resources as essential. In this respect – and as a study of an institution and its ideology – this thesis may have a broader significance, for it shows the emergence of professional carers whose actions and combination became a policy end in its own right. Bureaucracy with a purpose, the belief in the role of the professional rather than the individual, could be a progressive force when backed by the state, but it also contained within itself a variety of problems – problems that were to dog the welfare state for many years.

# APPENDICES

Appendix 1

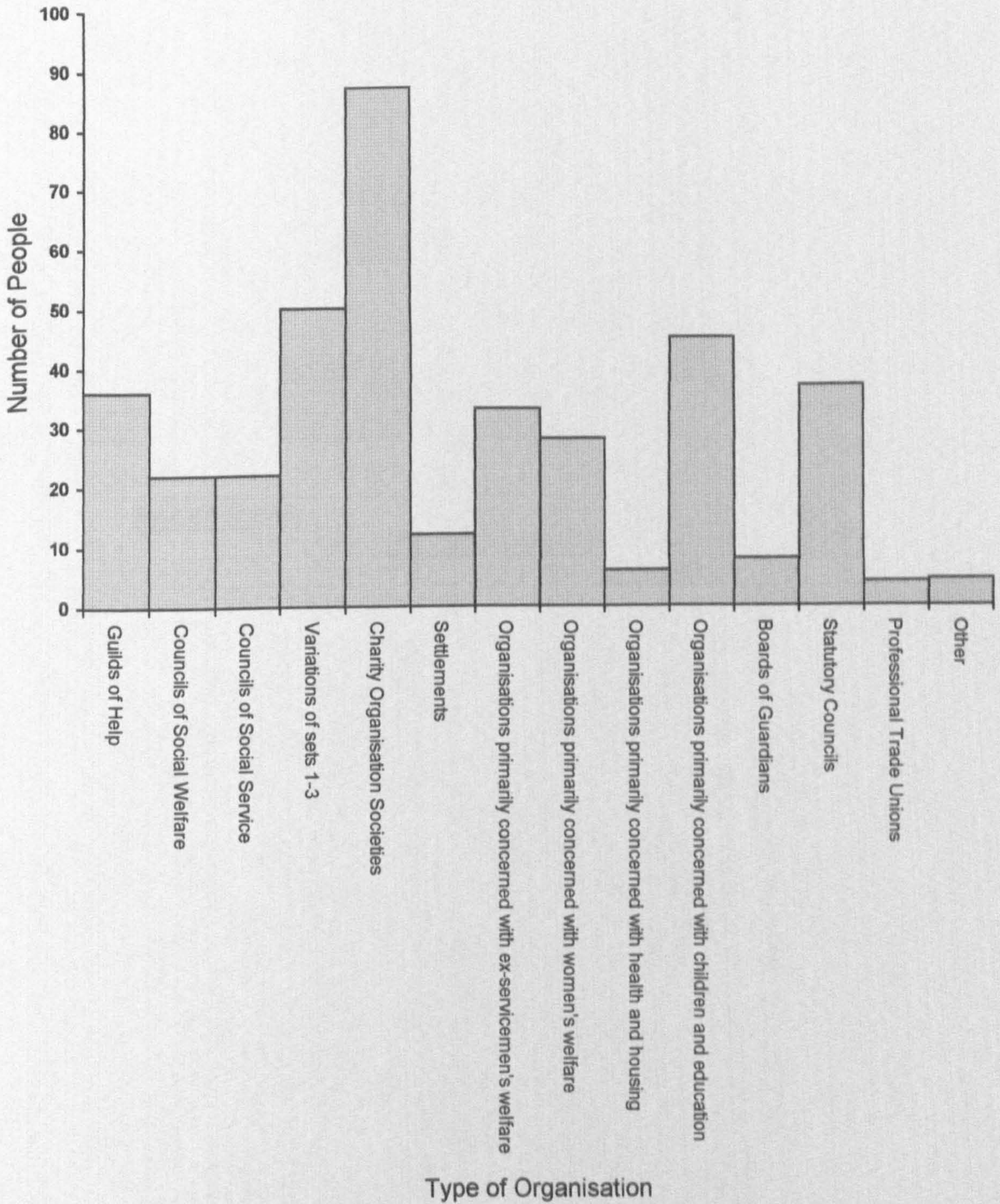
Gender breakdown of representatives of local authorities at the NCSS 1920 conference



## Appendix 2

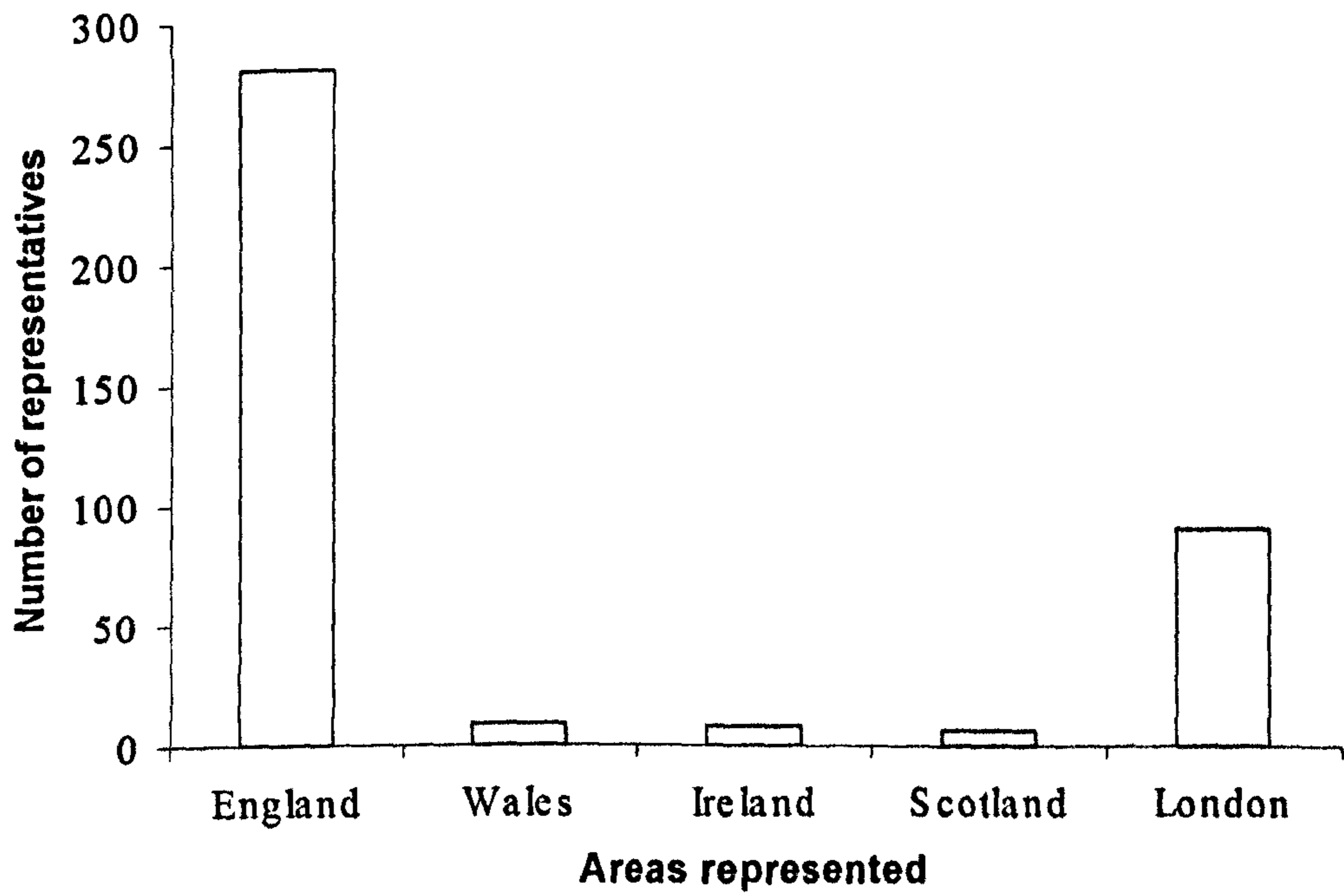
Number of people representing various organisations at the NCSS 1920

### Conference



## Appendix 3

### Geographical distribution of representatives of local Authorities and Associations at the 1920 NCSS conference





## Appendix 4

### Extent of overlapping discovered by an NCSS survey of Halifax and Reading<sup>1</sup>

	Agencies	Halifax	Reading
Poor Law Guardians were unaware of assistance given by the following agencies in the following number of cases.	Maternity and Child Welfare Committee	29	133
	Education Authority	12	23
	Old Age Pensions and Blind Pensions <sup>2</sup>	1	1
	Unemployment Insurance Benefit	39	50
	Health Insurance Benefit	2	1
	Voluntary Agencies	50	47
The Education Authority were unaware of assistance given by the following agencies in the following number of cases.	Poor Law Guardians	24	7
	Maternity and Child Welfare Committee	8	35
	Unemployment Insurance Benefit	16	9
	Health Insurance Benefit	2	0
	Voluntary Agencies	3	10
The Maternity and Child Welfare Committee were unaware of assistance given by the following agencies in the following number of cases.	Poor Law Guardians	6	8
	Unemployment Insurance Benefit	13	9
	Education Authority	7	28
	Voluntary Agencies	8	21

<sup>1</sup> Table based on one which appeared in NCSS, *Report on a test of Mutual Registration of Assistance carried out in Halifax, Reading and Liverpool* (London, NCSS, 1923). The information from Liverpool was primarily anecdotal and not collected in this way.

<sup>2</sup> Pensions information is incomplete because despite the fact that the survey was assisted by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Pensions refused information. It instructed local Pensions Committees to do the same as the Treasury felt that they could not give information without the recipient's written consent. R. Home to S. P. Grundy, 30 November 1921, NCSS, LMA, LM/4016/IS/A/08/001.

Appendix 5

Visits by Travelling Officer W. E. Fox between November and December 1937<sup>3</sup>

Town	Organisations Visited	Fox's 'Rough Classification'
Birmingham	National Council Area Office	} CW
	Citizens Society	
	Council for Community Associations	
Coventry	Civic Aid Society	CW
Northampton	Council of Social Service	CW
Leicester	Community Council	
Nottingham	Social Service & COS.	CW
West Bromwich	Council of Social Service	Co-ordinating Council
Walsall	Civic Guild of Help	CSS
Stafford	Guild of Social Welfare	CW
Wolverhampton	Council of Social Service	Co-ordinating Council
Chesterfield	Borough Welfare Committee	CSS
Wakefield	Council of Social Service	CSS
Leeds	(Personal Interviews Only)	
Huddersfield	COS. & Guild of Help	CW
Bradford	Council of Social Service	CW +
Blackburn	Mid-Lancs Unemployment Assistance Committee	} Unemployment +
	Council of Social Service	
	COS.	CW +
Bury	COS.	CW
Bolton	Guild of Help	CW +
Manchester	SELNEC	} CW & CSS
	Council of Social Service	
	City League of Help	
Salford	Civic League of Help	CW
Norwich	Council of Social Service	CW +
Chester	Council of Social Welfare	CSS
Godalming	Council of Social Service	Co-ordinating Council
Reading	Council of Social Service	CSS
Southampton	Central Council of Social Service	} CW
	Juvenile Occupations Centre	
Portsmouth	COS. & Council of Social Service	CW
Worthington	Council of Social Service	CSS
Brighton	Social Service Centre	CSS
<b>KEY:</b>	CSS	Full Council of Social Service
	CW	Principally Casework Body
	CW+	Casework plus some other large general activity
	Co-ordinating Council	Formed primarily to bring all local bodies together and not for any special activities.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a report given by Fox to the NCSS UPSC., LMA/4016/IS/A/01/104.

Appendix 6:

Village Halls in England and Wales assisted through the NCSS (March 1938)

3<sup>rd</sup> party copyright material excluded from digitised thesis.

Please refer to the original text to see this material.

**Appendix 7:**

**Regional bodies affiliated to the NCSS by March 1938 (England and Wales)**

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Appendix 8:

Social Survey of Warwickshire Villages (November 1937)

3<sup>rd</sup> party copyright material excluded from digitised thesis.

Please refer to the original text to see this material.

## **Bibliography**

This bibliography is arranged in the following sections: archival material; contemporary reports and surveys; newspapers and journals; theses; memoirs and biographies; electronic resources; contemporary books and articles; modern books; modern articles and chapters in edited collections.

### **NCSS Archival Material**

The British Library is in possession of a number of publications from various Councils of Social Service. This collection primarily consists of individual copies of local journals and annual reports. Although information from these sources was utilised in writing this thesis, there are many much larger and more useful collections which are currently scattered across the country.

**Chester Council of Social Welfare, 1914-1960, committee minutes, correspondence, account books and case papers held at Chester City Council Archives, CR164.**

**Essex Rural Community Council, 1929-1988, committee minutes and annual reports held at Essex Record Office, D/Z 113.**

**Gateshead Guild of Community Service, 1932-1981, executive committee minutes and reports held at Tyne and Wear Archives, CH/CSS4.**

**London Council of Social Service committee minutes, annual reports, publications and correspondence held at the London Metropolitan Archives LMA/ACC/1888. There is also a smaller quantity of LCSS reports and ephemera kept at the British Library.**

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National Papers

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## **Electronic Resources**

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