THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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The roots of present day social work education can be traced back to the Charity Organisation Society's (COS) School of Sociology which was established in London in 1903. In the School of Sociology a programme of social work education was developed which in its form - a two year course divided between practical placement experience and academic courses - was remarkably similar to the social work courses of today. The similarities are further heightened when one examines the content and intentions of the courses, for in the School of Sociology intending social workers were taught social policy, sociology and psychology with the intention of producing trained, generic, family social workers. Thus, an examination of the foundations of social work education is not merely interesting in itself, but it can throw some light on the nature of current social work education.

The foundation and development of formal social work education can only be understood adequately by examining the nature of social work practice, which in this case involves looking at the activities, ideologies and aspirations of the COS. Social work education programmes have never developed in isolation from the practice of social work, and it would be absurd if they had, for from the very origins of social work education at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were seen as vocational and leading to the production of 'efficient' social work practitioners. The explicit vocational nature of social work education has meant that the content and form of the courses have been largely determined by the practical concerns of the social work enterprise. This paper, therefore, sets out to examine the character of the COS's social work activity and the reasons why it should decide to establish a School of Sociology to educate social workers.

The COS was established in 1869 amid a welter of bourgeois philanthropic activity. In London, between 1861 and 1869 the number of charities grew from 640 to 1143, and it was estimated in 1871 that their combined income was around £8 million. This explosion of bourgeois philanthropy in London was largely due to the fear among the ruling class that the separation of the classes - the working class in the East End, and the middle and upper classes in the West End - and the gross inequalities of wealth between the classes, could lead to an uprising of the working classes in the East End and an attack on their property. The vast amount of bourgeois philanthropy was intended to bridge the gap between Disraeli's 'two nations' and pacify the working class poor. E. White, in the 'British Weekly' in October 1895, captured the ideology which underpinned the philanthropy of this period:
'Let the working man and the capitalist be taught that they are members of one another, and let the relations between them be based on brotherly considerations of the common needs of life, and there will then be no cause for the rich man to 'howl' or the poor man to conspire and confiscate, under the pretence of social equality.'

The dominant mode of philanthropy which was intended to create a 'golden bridge' between the classes was alms giving. This took a number of forms, from the setting up of soup kitchens in the East End, the provision of clothes and bread, to the handing out of small sums of cash to the proletarian poor. Up until the first world war it was estimated that between £8 and £10 million was given out in alms every year to the working class poor of London alone. The handing out of alms was intended to show the poor that the bourgeoisie did care about them and that they were not their enemies; as Samuel Barnett wrote in 1895, the 'personal touch' of philanthropy "breaks down the barriers made strong by fear and suspicion".

The Charity Organisation Society was established in 1869 to control and curb this alms-giving philanthropy. Although the COS was concerned about the consequences of working class poverty it argued that alms-giving philanthropy was making the situation worse and was completely mis-guided. The members of the COS, many of whom were drawn from the clergy, the legal profession and civil service, regarded themselves as 'experts' on the issues of working class poverty. Many of them had been members of the Social Science Association in which they had studied, debated and developed theories about the causes of working class destitution, and it was on the basis of their 'scientific' appraisal of the condition of the working class that they established the COS as a society to combat the 'emotionalism' of alms-giving philanthropy and to establish and promote 'scientific' charity.

At the core of the COS's theory of working class destitution was the belief that destitution and pauperism were a consequence of an individual's lack of morality, and not due to a poverty of material resources.

'There can be no doubt that the poverty of the working classes of England is due, not to their circumstances (which are more favourable than those of any other working population of Europe); but to their own improvident habits and thriftlessness. If they are ever to be more prosperous, it must be through self-denial, temperance and fore-thought.
(Charity Organisation Review (COR), 1881, vol.X, p.50)
Helen Bosanquet, a leading theorist of the COS, wrote that:

'the amount of money which passes through their hands is not insignificant. I speak confidently, with full knowledge of all the difficulties of a small income, when I say that there are comparatively few families in London through whose hands there had not passed in the course of the year sufficient money and money's worth to have made a life free at any rate from hunger and cold, and with much in it of good. (Helen Bosanquet; 1902, pp.101-2)

The squalid housing of the working class in the East End of London, was, like their destitution, attributed to a lack of morality. Octavia Hill, another of the leading members of the COS, and a 'great friend of the poor' wrote:

'The people's houses are bad, because they are badly built and arranged; they are tenfold worse because of the tenants' habits and lives are what they are. Transplant them tomorrow to healthy and commodious houses, and they would pollute and destroy them.' (Octavia Hill, 1884, p.10)

And, as Helen Bosanquet noted, the right type of character could overcome such 'trivialities' as over-crowded houses:

'If the narrow home makes family life impossible, it is because the family life is already weak; where the deeper relations are strong they find a way either to ignore or control the difficulties arising from want of space. (Helen Bosanquet; 1902, pp.201-2)

These arguments about the causes of working class destitution were, according to the COS theorists, based upon observations of working class life, and of the economy. There was no reason, they argued, why a family should not be able to maintain itself in reasonable comfort, or at least free from hunger or cold. Up until the periods of high unemployment from the mid-1880's to 1914, it was their contention that every able-bodied man could find work if he so desired, and from the wages of that work be self-supporting. However, they did concede that to be self-supporting on such low wages demanded strength of character and particularly the virtue of thrift. Nevertheless, the COS maintained that it was the duty of every individual or family to be self-reliant, and that it was only upon this duty that society could develop and survive. C.S. Loch, the influential secretary of the COS wrote:

'The individual should provide against hunger, nakedness, and want of shelter; the father against these things both for himself and his family. The ordinary contingencies of life, which fall within the range of ordinary foresight, should for the individual's own sake, and for society's sake, be met by the efforts of the individual. (C.S. Loch; 1906, p.97)
Following on from their belief that working class destitution was very often due "to moral causes, to a weakness of will and poverty of spirit", the COS launched an attack against alms-giving charitable activity. Such material assistance to the poor they maintained was inappropriate given that destitution was caused by a 'poverty of spirit'. Moreover, it was not only inappropriate, but they argued it further undermined the need for notions of independence and self-reliance, for the poor could receive alms without making any effort other than going out on the streets with a begging bowl. According to their view, individuals were expected to engage in honest productive labour in return for which they received a wage on which they were expected to survive. Society, the COS theorists argued, depended on all able bodied males to engage in such productive labour, and it was on the basis of such labour that the economy could continue to expand. In return for productive labour the individual could expect the State to safeguard his property and person through the legal system; the safety of the country via the armed services; and a certain standard of health through the sanitation system. Moreover, with the extension of the franchise the adult male population were in receipt of certain political rights. Citizenship, which the COS proclaimed as the goal toward which it was working, rested upon this reciprocal relationship between productive labour and the State. However, alms-giving was the very antithesis of citizenship for it involved the distribution of doles to the destitute without any reciprocation and was instead a 'payment for idleness', and allowed able-bodied individuals to survive without having any recourse to labour:

'Indiscriminate alms-giving is a crime against society. It is opposed to the divine order. It saps the very foundation of the self-respecting home. It destroys the best elements of true society. It destroys citizenship and those active powers of the human soul that put it in sympathy with the divine ideal.'
(Slocum, 1892, pp.10-11)

Such alms-giving charity was also exacerbating the problem of destitution the COS argued, because it was weakening the character of those workers who were self-reliant through productive labour, for these respectable workers could see in their neighbourhoods whole families who were able to survive on a similar basis as their own, without having to work or to save on their miserable wages.

'What a man sees done for his neighbours, he thinks he is entitled to himself, and he yields to self-indulgence, well aware that there is charity in the background'.
(Charles Loch, 1906, p.11)

'The mischief spreads down the street like an epidemic'.
(Helen Bosanquet, 1896, p.73)
Thus the COS claimed that the widespread alms-giving philanthropy which had blossomed in London in order to placate the proletarian poor and bring about social harmony between the classes, was in fact sapping the morale of the working classes, increasing the numbers of destitute and subsidising their continued immorality.

'No one is richer for all the thousands of pounds which are squandered in the parish... It has even been suggested that the amount of charity which comes into the parish bears a certain fixed relation to the amount taken by the public houses; but it would be difficult to prove any causal connection'.
(Helen Bosanquet, 1896, p.37)

The Charity Organisation Society's Strategy

The COS believed that the condition of the working class poor could only be permanently improved by inculcating in that the class the 'morality of citizenship'. That is, the working class poor had to develop the virtues of self-help, self-reliance and independence and come to see that it was only through their own efforts on the labour market that this could be achieved. For those who failed to be independent there already existed, the COS pointed out, the Poor Law and the workhouse, which had been established in 1834 to deal with this very category of individuals. If an able bodied person could not be self-reliant then there was no better place than the Workhouse, with its harsh regulations to bring home to the pauper the error of his ways. Thus, the COS argued, mis-guided charity should be curtailed for it prevented the destitute from being forced to have recourse to the workhouse where it was possible that the destitute might reform their character, and, at least demonstrate to the labouring population as a whole that society would not tolerate idleness.

Despite the COS's belief in the efficacy of the Workhouse as the principal method of dealing with the destitute, they did believe that there was a necessary role for charity, properly constituted and directed, which would enhance the work of the Poor Law and eventually lead to a permanent improvement in the condition of the working class. According to the COS the legitimate domain of charity was in assisting the 'deserving' destitute, while leaving to the Poor Law the 'undeserving' destitute.
'All were agreed that charity ought to take care of the deserving poor ... and that the profligate and the improvident should be left to the stern rule of the Poor Law and the workhouse test.'
(Lord Thring; C.O.K. vol.XI, p.25)

This division of labour in the relief of working class destitution, which was accepted by the Poor Law authorities, was based on the notion that among the destitute there were those who, through no fault of their own, were no longer self-reliant. Initially, the largest elements in this category of 'deserving' poor were those who had lost their means of livelihood through illness or accident and prior to this misfortune had been respectable, moral workers who had shown evidence of thrift and sobriety. Another large category were widows who had exhausted their life savings and yet had also demonstrated moral strength during their lives. From the 1880's onwards a further large category joined the ranks of the 'deserving' poor; these were the able-bodied and respectable workers who had lost their jobs due to the trade depressions. All of these categories were deemed to be deserving of non poor law relief from the COS, for all of them had shown evidence of the right moral virtues of self-reliance, thrift, and prior to their misfortune. The Poor Law was deemed to be inappropriate for this class of destitutes for they were clearly not in need of the punitive moralisation of the workhouse. Moreover, it was argued by the COS and by other bourgeois social reformers, that if these 'deserving' poor were sent to the workhouse they would become contaminated and demoralised through their association with the disreputable poor. And further, that they would become disenchanted with society in being treated the same way as those who had never made any attempt to be self-reliant and independent of relief.

Following on from their definition of the 'deserving' poor as constituting the legitimate and only client group for their assistance, and from their theories of the causes of destitution, the COS developed a 'social work' method and extended a 'body of knowledge' which was coherent, and congruent with their basic assumptions.
'The principle for which our Society has always stood is to make a man or woman self-supporting. We do not approve of a system of doles or indiscriminate charity. We think that where a distressed person still has some character left in his nature and is neither deprived nor completely broken down by adversity he should be helped in so adequate a manner as to render him independent of all help for the future. But we feel that those who have passed beyond this category can only be dealt with by the State'.
(Stoke Newington and Dalston District Committee's Report in the Annual Report of the COS, 1910-11, p.5).

The very goals of the COS demanded that charity, or as it increasingly became known as, social work, had to be conducted in a completely new way. Under the aegis of the COS, charity work was transformed from the simple task of handing out doles to the destitute to an activity which demanded specific methods, including case-papers, case-conferences and a bureaucratic system to process and file all the subsequent documents. Central to the COS's intention of discriminating all applicants for relief into 'deserving' or 'undeserving' categories was the investigative procedure. In the 'Welfare State' of the present day which is dominated by an incredible number of means tests and inquiry procedures prior to the allocation of relief, it is very easy to overlook the importance of the COS's approach. The 'dossier' method of the COS was novel in the field of relief policies, and not only was it central to the COS's own strategy, but as a Fabian critic of the COS conceded, it came to dominate the whole field of social reform strategies:

'It [COS] may lay claim to initiating in England the reign of the enquiry form and the 'dossier'. Even the country parsons and the district visitor are falling into line, while many of the paid investigators for Royal Commissions and the London County Council have owed their efficiency to its training.'
(Mrs. Townshend, 1911, p.5).

Investigation was a crucial aspect of the COS's relief strategy, and according to their annual report in 1909 it played 'the same role as diagnosis of disease by a physician'. Given that the distinction between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' was based on the character of the applicant, the investigations which were conducted by the COS's charity
workers had to examine in some detail the personal life of each applicant. In that investigation, the charity worker was expected to inquire into the family of each applicant. The family was, according to the COS, the basic social institution; it was in the family that the children were "trained to the habits of labour, and obedience, as well as being strong and capable" (H. Bosanquet, 1906, p.6); and it was only through the family that self-reliance could be maintained.

'We take it that the family is the civic unit. A sweet and wholesome family life is the first condition of good citizenship.'
(Charles Loch; 1890, p.10).

An important reason why the charity worker investigated the family of each applicant was to ensure that there were no hidden resources which could be used, and that the applicant and his/her family were truly destitute. The home visit was also emphasised as a particularly useful way of getting to know and gauge the morality of a destitute family, especially "if the visits were unexpected" as Miss Hunt of the Gloucester COS advocated. The cleanliness of the home, the amount of furniture and personal property owned were all considered to be important indices of a family's morality. Bernard Bosanquet, yet another influential theorist of the COS, noted that evidence of thrift in the family was a further indice of its morality, and consequently stressed the importance of thrift as one criterion of moral strength;

'We the advocates of thrift, have always insisted on the value of constructive saving - saving embodied in the health and well-being of the family and in the niceness of the home ... Thrift is, for us, the germ of the capacity to look at life as a whole and organise it.'
(B. Bosanquet; 1893, p.vi.)

Through inquiring into all aspects of every applicant's home life, their work records, their combined incomes and expenditures, and cross checking this information with reports from employers, landlords, neighbours and the parish priest, the COS charity workers drew up a moral balance sheet from which the applicants were categorised as either deserving of non-poor law relief, or as 'undeserving' and left to the poor law.

Once the appropriate 'clients' had been selected the 'treatment' could begin. Deriving from the COS's definition of the causes of
destitution as being primarily a consequence of defective character, the
thrust of their relief programme was towards 'educating' their 'clients'
in the 'correct' moral attitudes. Any material assistance that was
offered was always in the context of a moralising relationship between
the 'client' and the charity worker, and carefully supervised to ensure
that it was directed towards the destitute family's independence and
future self-reliance. As Loch explained:

'Treatment would take the place of mere relief.
The class 'applicant' would become a supervised
class, treated in connection with the home.'
(Loch, 1910, p.445).

In order to carry out this objective every 'client' of the COS was
allotted a charity worker who would visit the family in their own home.
On the basis that "the only way of helping a man is to strengthen him by
education, timely assistance, opportunities, what you will, to meet his
own difficulties and organise his own life", the activity of the charity
worker, and the relationship he/she developed with their 'clients', was
the crucial element of the COS strategy. The COS argued that the mere
distribution of money doles to the destitute, whether they were 'deserving'
or 'undeserving', could never lead to a permanent solution to the problem
of destitution. A permanent solution involved the destitute coming to
embrace the values of citizenship, and realising that they had a social
duty to be self-reliant and independent on their own efforts. To achieve
this end the charity workers of the COS penetrated the families of the
'Deserving' destitute, and set about inculcating the values of thrift and
self-help. As in present day social work, the potential for effecting a
change of attitude in the 'clients' was seen to rest on the quality of the
relationship between the 'client' and the charity worker. Thus the leaders
of the COS (Loch, Hill and the Bosanquets) placed great emphasis on the
need for each charity worker to develop a 'friendly' and 'trusting' rela-
tionship with the families they visited. Once the families had come to
see the charity workers as their 'friends' then it was possible for the
charity worker to begin to work on the families' attitudes, and to exert
their "strong personal influence" so that a "radical cure of those fallen
low can be effected."13

The Charity Organisation Society firmly believed that their philosophy
and approach to the relief of destitution (in close co-operation with the
Poor Law authorities) constituted the only correct strategy for dealing
with working class poverty. Thus from their origins in 1869 the COS
actively attempted to persuade all those who were interested in, or involved with other charitable organisations, that their theories and methods were the only ones which could permanently solve the problem of working class destitution and avert the potential social disruption and class conflict which had given rise to the proliferation of bourgeois charitable activity in the first place. To spread the message that "efficient casework should be the basis of all true charity", the COS mounted an active propaganda campaign through publishing their own journal, the 'Charity Organisation Review', writing numerous letters to the 'Times', lobbying the Houses of Parliament, sending delegations to a variety of government ministers, and conducting many lectures throughout the country and in all types of institutions. Through all these channels the message was proclaimed that the COS had developed the only legitimate approach to charity, and that as the 'fountainhead' of 'scientific' charity, and as experts in its administration, all non poor law relief should be organised along their lines, and preferably under their auspices.

Initially, the main thrust of this propaganda was directed towards those individuals and organisations involved in indiscriminate almsgiving. As early as 1869 the Poor Law Board gave its support to the COS, and the Goschen Minute of that year recommended that all poor law unions should develop close links with their local charity organisation society and pass on to them those destitute deemed to be 'deserving', while they should expect to receive from the COS, the 'undeserving' destitute. However, from the mid 1880's onwards, with the increased numbers of unemployed due to the trade depressions (and changes in technology) the COS became subject to increased criticism both from the working class and sections of the bourgeoisie.  

Many of the skilled and unskilled workers who were made unemployed, and consequently destitute, because of the trade depression, were bitterly opposed to both the Poor Law and the Charity Organisation Society. They were particularly critical of the COS's inquiry procedure which was implemented prior to any relief being offered, and of the underlying assumptions that it was their defective character and inadequacy which had given rise to their unemployment and subsequent destitution. These criticisms were also taken up by the trade unions, especially those which
were established in the 1880's and '90's for the unskilled working class, and the new working class political groups such as the Social Democratic Federation. "Work not charity" became an important and widespread slogan of the unemployed in this period, and some went further and agreed with the SDP that poverty and unemployment could only be eradicated by overthrowing capitalism and working toward a socialist society.

This growing discontent of the unemployed working class, and their increasing disaffection, was one of the factors which led some sections of the bourgeoisie to criticise the existing relief measures, namely, the Poor Law and the COS. Physical degeneration and the seeming collapse of a viable reserve army of labour, were two other factors which gave rise to alternative methods of poor relief being proposed both by the State and sections of the bourgeoisie. The dominance and influence the COS had achieved in the 1870's and 1880's on all the issues pertaining to the relief of destitution among the working classes became increasingly challenged; at first from sections of their own class, particularly the Fabian Society, and then from 1906 onwards by the government (Liberal) itself.

The debate between the Fabian Society and the COS on the issues of social reform was of especial relevance in terms of the COS's development of social work education. This debate between the 'left' and 'right' wings of the bourgeois intelligentsia, was among other things, a dispute about which group and philosophy was the more 'correct' and 'scientific' in the field of social reform. (N.B. While this paper is only concerned with the debate between the Fabian Society and the COS, the discussions of social reform strategies were considerably more complex and involved other important groups, and a cluster of ideological disputes, both within and between classes.) The differences between the Fabian Society and the COS are exemplified in the Minority and Majority Reports of the Poor Law Commission; the Minority Report being largely the works of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and the Majority Report the work of Loch, Hill and the Bosanquets of the COS. Stated crudely, the main point of dispute between the two groups was over the role of the State in social reform policies. The Fabian Society, particularly the Webbs, argued for State intervention and policies to replace the Poor Law, which they argued was no longer adequate to meet the problems of widespread destitution caused by unemployment. The COS, however,
influenced by the idealist philosophies of T.H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet maintained that the State should not involve itself with relief policies as the State was incapable of imbuing the destitute with the morality of citizenship.

'It is the business of the State, not indeed to promote moral goodness for that from the very nature of moral goodness it cannot do, but to maintain the condition without which a free exercise of human faculties is impossible.'

On the basis of their belief that citizenship could only be strengthened through a casework relief policy and not by the State, the COS consistently criticised all policies which advocated State relief measures, and from 1906 onwards, were critical of the Liberal government which introduced such policies as Old Age Pensions, and relief works for the unemployed. Such policies as these, the COS maintained, had the same effect on the poor as indiscriminate alms; the poor would come to rely on the State for relief and this would undermine any sense of self reliance and independence. As Loch explained:

'To shift the responsibility of maintenance from the individual to the State is to sterilise the productive power of the community as a whole .... It is also to demoralise the individual.'
(Loch; 'Manufacturing a New Pauperism', COR April 1895).

Despite the incursion of the State in promoting new relief measures the COS did not admit defeat, but continued to assert the superiority of their methods and philosophy. One of the methods which they used to assert their influence was to provide the personnel who were required to carry out the new State relief measures. In this way they hoped to avert what they considered to be the deleterious consequences of the relief policies by ensuring that they were operated along COS lines, that is, that the relief should only go to the 'deserving' destitute after the inquiry procedure had been completed. The COS had considerable success in this strategy and their charity workers were used extensively in administering the relief works which were conducted by the local authorities following the Unemployed Workmens Act 1905, and on the Child
Care Committees which were established a few years earlier to provide
medical assistance and free school meals for destitute children. In
terms of the relief method the COS achieved considerable influence,
for their approach became generally adopted by all those involved in
relief work. Miss Morkham, who was the first woman member of the
Unemployed Assistance Board wrote in 1912 that:

'So far as the actual work of relief is concerned, case
papers, investigation, dealing with the family as a
whole, building up self-respect of the individuals,
etc., it seems to me its /COS7 principles are on a rock.
Whoever administers relief, to administer it helpfully
must do it on these lines.'
(Cited by U. Cormack, 1968, p.87)

An equally important strategy of the COS in its efforts to retain
influence was the development of social work education.

Development of Social Work Education

There were two phases in the COS's development of social work
education. In the first, up until the formation of the Joint Lectures
Committee in 1895, the COS had not paid much attention to the training
and education of their charity workers. Thus, although they demanded
certain skills from their charity workers in terms of being able to
carry out thorough investigations of all relief applicants and in
establishing an effective moralising relationship with the selected
'deserving' destitute, the COS maintained that these skills could be
picked up in the field under the supervision of an experienced COS worker.
Moreover, they believed that most of their volunteer workers, who were
predominantly middle-class women, already held the requisite moral
character which was needed to engage in effective casework. Octavia
Hill in 1893 noted what she considered to be the prime attribute of a
good charity worker:

'In my experience, those who are deeply imbued with
the spirit of family life are those who best help
the poor; in this spirit they meet on the great human
ground, older than the theories of equality, safer than
our imaginations of fresh arrangements for the world, and
fitter to inspire the simplest and the noblest sense of
duty...... I will say that the deep honour for home
life is essential to the best kind of work for the poor
now.'
(Octavia Hill, 1893, pp.37-38).
As far as the COS was concerned the middle class women who constituted the largest section of their volunteer charity workers, were well imbued with the 'spirit of family life' and the associated virtues of thrift, fore-sight and self-reliance. The shift in the COS's position on social work education and training after 1895 which led them to establish a formal institution - the School of Sociology - in 1903 was due to two factors. Firstly there was a growing concern about the efficiency and calibre of the charity workers. The COS sub-committee on training noted in its first report in 1898 that:

'there still prevails amongst some of the members of the District Committees, a want of grasp of the principles for which the Society exists, and a want of enthusiasm for their fulfillment ... This want of principles was not confined to the new recruits only, but extended itself to those who had been working for the Society for a considerable period.'

Closely connected with this concern over the quality of the charity workers was the principal factor which accounted for the COS's development of social work education, which was their desire to reassert their claims of expertise in all the fields of social relief. Bailward, a council member of the COS explained:

'For many years past it has been becoming more and more clear that the work of the Society will never make any progress proportionate to the labour bestowed upon it unless it can create a definite public opinion upon the subjects with which it deals. For that reason increasing attention has been paid of late years to what may be called its educational work. For the last thirty-five years the district committees have been the centres for the study of practical sociology for all who care to avail themselves of the opportunity. But it has been gradually perceived that more than this is necessary, and that a definite attempt must be made to attract students to an organised system of study. It is to this end that some four years ago, the lecture system of the Society was re-organised under a new name as the 'School of Sociology' with a direction of studies and a regular curriculum.'
(W.A. Bailward, 1907, pp.70-1)
Through the School of Sociology the COS set out to demonstrate that their casework methods and underlying philosophy were truly scientific and deserved authority. E.J. Urwick, who was the director of the School of Sociology made this objective quite explicit:

'I do not think I shall be contradicted if I assert that the charitable and social workers of today have not the authority which they ought to have ... There must be the confidence which comes with knowledge... To do this, his methods must be made more scientific, his practice must be founded upon a knowledge of principles and laws; and he - the practitioner - must himself acquire that knowledge and be trained in those methods.' (E.J. Urwick, 1903, p.254).

Through its educative functions the COS launched a campaign "with the idea of dealing with Fabianism and strengthening the Society", above all it wanted to impress upon 'public opinion' that they were the true experts in the organisation of relief. They believed that "the authority of the specialist is inevitable in the long run", and that in order to gain that authority they had to be seen to be committed to producing trained and educated social workers.

Inextricably related to the COS's development of a formal institution for the education of social work was their development of a scientific 'body of social work knowledge'. One of the principal criticisms of the COS, particularly from the mid 1890's onwards, was that their so-called scientific charity was based on no more than a set of bourgeois value judgements. John Hobson, who was an articulate critic of the COS noted:

'...the statement of principles which these writers [COS] make will be discerned as the clear and conscious expression of the repugnance and distrust strongly but mistily conceived by the great majority of the 'propertied' classes, when their attention is directed to the claims which the poorer classes are making for a larger support in their efforts to attain decent material conditions of life.' (Hobson, 1909, pp.194-5).
To counter such criticisms the theoreticians of the COS set about to demonstrate that the moral values which underpinned their casework strategy constituted man's "natural morality" and were the "very stuff of which we ourselves are made". In the work of Loch, Octavia Hill and Helen and Bernard Bosanquet, we find the major 'theories' which were taken to constitute the 'body of knowledge' and scientific principles of the COS's casework approach. Common to most conservative social theory, the theoreticians of the COS took the existant social system and hierarchy as unproblematic and as 'natural'. Instead, they were concerned to explain and categorise the existing social arrangements, and in particular, to explain why some sections of the working class poor were destitute. According to these theorists, poverty was a natural condition of society; "every group of competing men is continually producing it" (Loch, 1910, p.393), but destitution, and the inability of an individual to be self-reliant, was pathological and unnatural. In order to present their strategy as scientific (and therefore 'neutral') it was necessary for them to go beyond a mere description of the destitutes' moral bankruptcy, and to construct a set of explanations which could locate the causes of destitution while leaving intact the sanctity of the existing social relations. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into all the aspects of the theory of destitution which were laid down by the COS intellectuals, and the following example from the work of Helen Bosanquet will have to suffice.

In an important paper in 1897 titled the 'Psychology of Social Progress', Helen Bosanquet presented a 'psychological' explanation for the existence of destitution. This was an important paper for it marked the origins of the COS's attempt to use the emerging social sciences and their 'scientific' vocabularies to clothe their moral judgements. In her paper Helen Bosanquet argued that destitution was caused by a blockage in the character of an individual during childhood. According to Bosanquet there were two phases in the development of the 'moral' human personality; the first phase which was during infancy was primarily concerned with the satisfaction of basic, biological desires. The character of the infant during this stage of development was solely directed towards achieving immediate gratification of instinctual needs, which Bosanquet termed the 'principle of association'. The next phase of development involved the over-coming of the principle of association, and the individual's acquisition of 'progressive interests'. "The acquisition of 'progressive interests' was, said Helen Bosanquet "largely a question of early training" and the ability of the child's parents to inculcate the right social habits. These 'progressive interests' included of course the virtues of self-help, thrift, etc., which were
taken to be the key elements by which an individual was able to organise his/her life and participate as a citizen with full responsibilities and 'rights' in society. Destitution, according to this theory, was due to the individual being locked in the first phase of development in which:

'day drifts after day in the same aimless fashion, all is ordered by habit, chance, nothing by purpose. Theirs is the very type of character formed by the great principle of association, for at every moment they sedulously avoid the immediately unpleasant and seek the immediately pleasant.'

Such a conception of the causes of destitution could easily be substantiated by reference to the lives of the destitute, who were commonly seen as spending the greater parts of their lives in the public houses or music halls, had an apparent aversion to work, and would only move themselves in order to obtain some money, in the easiest way possible, so as to be able to resume their hedonistic way of life. Moreover, this 'psychological theory' supported the COS's assertion that the workhouse was the most appropriate form of relief for the 'undeserving' destitute whose character was 'formed by the great principle of association'. For before it was possible to re-educate such individuals it was essential that they should come to realise the error of their ways, which according to Bosanquet and the COS, could only be achieved through the punitive and stigmatising policy of the workhouse. If the workhouse experience managed to change the attitudes of the 'undeserving' destitute - and this was regarded as by no means a certainty, due to the belief that 'bad social habits' were deeply ingrained in the personalities of the paupers - then they would be eligible to join the ranks of the 'deserving' destitute for re-education and the inculcation of 'progressive interests'.

'Theories' such as this underpinned the COS's claim that effective charity work, which was capable of permanently improving the condition of the working class, was a skilled activity, and, that they were the holders of the requisite expertise. It is important to remember that in this period there was no general consensus among the ruling classes that relief work should be the sole domain of 'experts'. The large number of individuals and organisations engaged in all varieties of relief work, and the fact that poor law guardians were elected to office rather than being appointed by the Local Government Board, reflected the widely held opinion that expertise derived from formal study was not a necessary pre-requisite for engaging in relief work. Both the Fabian Society and the COS, albeit from different perspectives, decried this 'amateurish' approach to the issues of social reform, and both of these organisations were powerful advocates of the 'rule of experts' in the field of relief work.
'Perhaps the greatest obstacle to getting a sound public opinion on matters of social policy lies in the general ignoring of the fact that scientific principles are as much involved in them as chemistry or architecture, or any other of the arts of life.'
(H. Bosanquet, 1902, p.138)

Similarly Sidney and Beatrice Webb ruefully noted:

'Our governing classes... do not seem yet to have realised that social reconstructions require as much specialised training and sustained study as the building of bridges and railways, the interpretation of law, or the technical improvements in machinery and mechanical progress.'
(S. & B. Webb, 1911, p.331)

For the middle class intelligentsia of both the Fabian Society and the COS, science and expertise were regarded as providing the key to the solution of social problems. The industrial and economic progress of Britain was noted as being in part a consequence of the developments and contribution of the natural sciences, thus the middle class intellectuals believed that the emergent social sciences could have an equally beneficial effect on improving the quality of social life. For this group, science became imbued with magical, ameliorative potential for creating a harmonious society. Consequently, both the Fabians in their School of Economics, and the COS in their School of Sociology, looked towards the social sciences, especially sociology, social economics, social philosophy and psychology, as providing the conceptual tools and expertise necessary for their work in the social policy field.

The COS approached the social sciences from a pragmatic concern to enhance the status of their casework approach and thus to establish their caseworkers as 'scientific' experts. The efficient practice of charity work based on the methods which have been outlined above was the goal of social work education. This objective provided the corner-stone around which the courses without which Loch argued, "no education of the character and thoroughness which they desired could be provided' were developed. Thus for the COS 'science' was used in the loose sense to signify thoroughness and efficiency, and to illustrate the difference of their approach to charity from the "haphazard and ill-considered methods" (ibid) of the indiscriminate alms-givers.

The School of Sociology was, however, intended to be more than an institution for the training and education of the COS's own charity workers; it was hoped that it would gain a "commanding position in relation to social science to enable it to exercise much influence upon those responsible for our social legislation." To achieve this
objective the School of Sociology opened its courses to all interested Poor Law officers and 'friendly visitors' who were engaged in social and charitable work. The origins and development of formal social work education was thus an essential part of the COS's strategy to extend its hegemony over the entire field of relief policies. The leaders of the COS were convinced that they had an important mission to fulfill in extending what they considered to be the only correct method of relief work through which social harmony between the classes could be 'achieved'.

Formal social work education and the concomitant development of a 'body of knowledge' were two crucial factors in the COS's attempt to gain this influence. Both of these functioned to disguise the underlying bourgeois moral values of the COS by elevating them to the status of 'objective' and 'neutral' science. Similarly, the charity workers of the COS, either through the formal courses at the School of Sociology, or the informal educational scheme of occasional lectures and journal articles, were elevated from being amateur moral entrepreneurs to skilled 'social physicians'. The sophistication of social work theories and social work education, and the consequent masking of its core moral assumptions, is a continuing theme of the social work enterprise today, and it has the same objective which was clearly delineated by the first director of the School of Sociology in 1904:

'The trained workers of today must be more than mere administrators; they must be the apostles of true doctrines and they must preach in the language of their generation. They may grasp and hold firmly enough the very essence of the principles outlined above, and yet may seem too negative and too old fashioned to make converts. The terms in which our truths are expressed often belong to a past age; have we not all been at times uneasily conscious that the mere appeal to fundamental principles of self-help, independence, thrift and the like, has lost much of its force, and that these principles must be recast, brought into new connections with current ideas and ways of thinking, clothed in new language? For it is unquestionably true that the new generation is receptive enough, but, as always, demands a new preparation of its food.' (E.J. Urwick, 1904, p.182).
Conclusion

The COS's campaign to enhance the image of social work as a skilled and professional activity in which the development of social work education was intended to play such a decisive role, exhibited a considerable degree of sophistication. It would be mistaken to see the courses which were established as simply concerned with jargon. The attached syllabus (Appendix) for example, gives some indication of the structure and content of the courses. What is clearly evident from the headings and the recommended booklist is, as one would expect, that the course was concerned with transmitting the bourgeois, individualistic philosophy of the COS. This is particularly borne out in section four of the syllabus, and by the heavy reliance on books produced by leading members of the COS - Loch, Bosanquet, Mackay, and Mary Richmond (New York COS) - and its supporters, - Brabrook and Marshall. Thus, these early social work courses constituted an important initiative by the COS to mobilise and organise its 'theoretical' works for the purposes of producing an enlarged cadre of trained social workers, who, it hoped, would come to have a major determining influence on social reform developments.

It has been the contention of this paper that the origins and foundations of social work education have to be understood in the context of a widespread debate over the 'condition (political, economic, social and physical) of the working classes' in which the COS was the representative of a conservative section of the middle class and bourgeois intelligentsia which was suffering a relative decline in influence. Social work education was one aspect of their strategy to regain influence and power in the administration of relief policies and to achieve the vision which was outlined by Loch in a private and confidential paper which he delivered to the COS Council in June 1903;

Such an organisation, I thought, could do more than Parliament or preaching, or books, or pamphleteering... such an organisation might bring to bear on the removal and prevention of evils a combined force that would far exceed in weight and influence any yet existing. It could make legislation effective, and could see that it was enforced. Apart from all legislative interference, and with the use of means and influences more far-reaching it could renew and discipline the life of the people by a nobler and more devoted, more scientific religious charity. It could turn to account all that
newer knowledge would bring to the help of charity. It could eventually provide out of all classes and sects a great army of friendly and by degrees well-trained workers.
(Loch, 'The Development of Charity Organisation' p.6.)
APPENDIX

Syllabus

At a meeting of the COS Council on January 20th 1908 the following syllabus was discussed and accepted as being suitable. While the mere listing of course headings and bibliographies cannot fully indicate the nature of the course, they do illustrate in a limited way, the type of concerns and philosophy, of the early social work educational programmes.

Outline of a more complete course of study

To Extend over 6 to 9 months. Subject always to modification in individual cases.

a) Actual Life and Conditions Today

1) Normal and Healthy Life (Self support and independence)
   Earning power and spending power of the working classes.
   Normal self support in sickness and old age.
   The home and the family.

Books

The Standard of Life H. Bosanquet
The Family H. Bosanquet
Progress of the Working Classes Ludlow and Lloyd Jones
Board of Trade Reports on Wages and Prices

2) Abnormal or Unhealthy Life (Inability to live without support of others)

Physical Causes of failure:
   a) sickness
   b) old age

Moral and industrial causes and accidents
Incapacity through drink or neglect
Unemployment and irregular work
Underpayment and sweating
Widowhood
Vagrancy
Crime

Books

Rowntree's York H. Bosanquet's criticism
Report of the Committee on Physical Deterioration
Edinburgh COS Report
The Temperance Problem Rowntree and Sherwell
Board of Trade Reports on Unemployment, 1893 and 1902
3) Explanations of Present Conditions in the Light of the Past
   a) Social and Industrial History
   b) Social and Industrial Theory

Society and the Individual
The Individual and the material environment

Books

The Industrial Revolution Toynbee
Social England (selected sections) Traill
Economics of Industry A. Marshall
Man v The State Spencer
Plea for Liberty T. Mackay
Principles of State Interference Ritchie
Quintessence of Socialism Schöffle
The Strength of the People H. Bosanquet

4) Methods of Social Progress and Devices to Alleviate Distress, Considered in Reference to Social History and Social Theory
   a) Normal Social Progress
      Education - general and special
      Self help and Mutual help.
      Interdependence of earners and spenders
      Individual stimulus and guidance
   b) Alleviation of Distress
      Legal or public relief of the poor
      Charitable relief; institutional and private
      Organised Charity; Aims and Methods
      Various disputed questions

Books

Methods of Social Advance C.S. Loch
Charity and Charities Loch
Public Relief of the Poor T. Mackay
COS Occasional Papers
1834 Poor Law Report (the first 88 pages)
The English Poor Laws Lonsdale
Institutions for thrift E. Brabrook
Friendly Visiting M. Richmond
Education H. Spencer

Source From the Minutes of the Council, 20th January 1908, pp.8-11.
NOTES

1. I would like to acknowledge the generous help I have received from Tony Novak who has patiently offered his comments throughout the production of this paper, and from Philip Abrams for his constant encouragement.

2. C. Woodard, 1961, p.64.


5. M. Richmond, 1899.


7. In line with their critique of indiscriminate charity the COS also consistently argued for a strict application of the 1834 Poor Law principles, and were very critical of those Poor Law Unions which were lax in the administration of the 'House and in the distribution of out-door relief. For further details on the ideology and policy of the Poor Law, see T. Novak, 1975.

8. The relationship between the COS and the Poor Law was established by the Coschen Minute, 1869. Goschen, who was President of the Poor Law Board, recommended to the guardians that they should redirect the 'deserving' destitute to the COS, and concern themselves solely with the 'undeserving'.


10. It is impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the family to the Charity Organisation Society. For the COS the family was the basic social institution upon which social stability rested. Many of their criticisms of State policies during this period, were on the grounds that such legislation would undermine familial responsibilities. For example, the COS attacked the introduction of old age pensions on the basis that they would undermine the responsibility of the young to maintain and care for their aged relatives. (See H. Bosanquet, 1906, p.99.) Similarly, the Society argued that free school meals to destitute children would further demoralise the parents of such children, and discourage them from taking responsibility for their families. (See C.S. Loch, 1910, pp.413-4.)


15. For more details on the economic, social and political conditions in this period, see, Harris (1972) and G.S. Jones (1971).

16. For details of the reform strategies and related debates of the period, see, C. Jones, 1975.


18. G. Salter, reported in the Charity Organisation Review, April 1901, p.217.

20. C.S. Loch, 1895.


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