

self-critical courage is another lesson, another utility for us that this anthology gives and provides. It also recalls not only the great names that we in the Anglo-Saxon world know, Gide, Valéry, Mauriac, Malraux, but such unduly deprecated men of great talent as Albert Thibaudet and Jean Schlumberger. It recalls Paul Nizan (victim of one of the very ugliest character-assassinations that even French Communists have indulged in). It makes us realise the greatness of what was, in its thirty years of life, *the review of the Western world*—at any rate as far as the arts are concerned. That day is over. There is the *Nouvelle NOUVELLE REVUE FRANÇAISE*, a most valuable ornament of the Paris literary scene. But the reasons that Jean Schlumberger attributed to Gide to explain his refusal to join the refloated ship seem valid: "*Il était trop botaniste pour ne pas savoir que toute plante a sa saison.*" Reading in this box of treasures (made humanly imperfect by some costume jewellery), we can wonder at the length and richness of the flowering. In his masterly introduction, Professor O'Brien has not overstated the case for the greatest of modern reviews and no one who cares for letters can fail to be moved by the sacred "*nrf.*" the emblem that, with so many other things, the review owes to its sole surviving founder, Jean Schlumberger. That was the *belle époque!* We live in a harder, less hopeful, probably less blossoming age.

## Conditions of Welfare

**Essays on the Welfare State.** By RICHARD M. TITMUSS. *Allen & Unwin.* 20s.

PROFESSOR TITMUSS and a group of able colleagues in London are engaged on a prolonged examination of social service needs and policies. This is a work of exceptional importance both from a practical standpoint, for it should yield definite lines of new policy which future Ministers can implement, and from a humanitarian standpoint, for it fastens attention on what is, in an age of full employment and rising real wages, the worst remaining area of poverty, squalor, and social misfortune.

This book gives an excellent idea of the sort of work which is being done. Like all collections of reprinted articles, it suffers from disunity and repetitiveness; it is not the comprehensive study which Professor Titmuss must one day write or edit. Nevertheless, besides providing important material for the student, it offers the layman a good introduction, humane, wise, and well-written, to that new approach to welfare problems which is justly associated with his name.

Two broad themes run through the essays. One is that the present condition of the "Welfare State" is very different from what is commonly supposed. We may pick out in particular the following widespread misconceptions.

First, that the enormous growth in social expenditure represents "a crushing burden" on national resources, and the main cause of post-war inflation and balance-of-payments crises. The *fact* is that as a proportion of the national income, social expenditure (properly defined) has shown only a modest increase since 1938; while the National Health Service, the most frequent target of such criticism, is actually taking a lower proportion than in its first year of operation.

Secondly, that the social services are redistributive as between rich and poor, and constitute a heavy fiscal burden on the middle and upper classes. The *fact* is that the working class pays in taxation slightly more than it receives in social benefits; and the heavier post-war taxation of the wealthier classes goes to pay for higher "un-allocable" benefits (Budget surplus, defence, administration, etc.). This does not mean that the fiscal system has no equalising effects on income-distribution—net incomes are significantly more equal than if there were no taxation and no government expenditure. But there is not a direct transfer of income from rich to poor.

Professor Titmuss goes still further. We must take account, he argues, not only of the government system of social services, but also of the parallel and increasingly important systems of fiscal welfare and occupational welfare. By the former he means allowances and reliefs from income tax—for wives, children, aged or infirm dependants, widowed mothers, etc.: by the latter, the benefits available to particular employees by virtue of their occupation, such as the super-annuation benefits, death benefits, health services, meal vouchers, cars, housing, holiday expenses, children's school fees, etc., provided by particular firms or industries. All the former and many of the latter benefits are, he maintains, precisely similar in kind, as judged either by their intention or their effects, to government social services.

These fiscal and occupational allowances of course accrue mainly to the better-off classes, who pay the most income tax and enjoy the most generous occupational benefits in industry. Taking the three systems together, Professor Titmuss argues that so far from leading to greater equality they are actually "enlarging and consolidating the area of social inequality"; and some of his disciples use even stronger language.

But here these writers (the acolytes more than the master) are often misleading, through a lack of economic sophistication. They tend to base statements about equality or inequality on an

examination of particular taxes or social benefits, without attending to the *total* structure of taxes and benefits. Their statements on this point should be treated with some reserve.

Nevertheless, they do well to draw attention to the often neglected fact that whatever the total effects of fiscal policy, the better-off classes (as a result either of tax-concessions or the terms of their employment) come off uncommonly well compared with the poorer classes in those periods of life (old age, sickness, heavy family responsibilities) in which needs rise sharply relative to income.

A third common misconception is that the Welfare State was "finally established" in 1948, and that "only minor" adjustments and improvements will ever again be needed. The truth is that even the limited Beveridge objective of establishing a national subsistence minimum for social insurance beneficiaries has scarcely been attained—indeed, such beneficiaries are now generally worse off relative to the rest of the population than they were in 1948, while some benefits are actually lower as a proportion of wages than they were before the war; that many smaller categories of dependent persons, such as mental patients, handicapped children, the blind, and the chronic sick, have been grossly neglected and are still living appallingly handicapped lives; and that *new areas* of social misfortune or stress, not visible in the distorting lens of Beveridge over-simplification, have subsequently come to light.

It is this last point which provides Professor Titmuss with his second underlying theme. As the material standard of living rises, primary poverty (or an "absolute" lack of means) will gradually become less important as a source of hardship and dependency than other, more subtle, social causes, which may operate well above a subsistence level of income—"secondary poverty," the smaller size and diminished cohesion of the family, changing attitudes to health and sickness, and the disharmonies between income and needs at different periods of the individual's life. But problems such as these do not yield themselves easily to solution by the "Beveridge" method of isolating broad categories where a purely financial need can be obviously presumed, and then meeting the need by subsistence cash payments. They require an investigation not just of straightforward economic factors, but of underlying socio-psychological factors; and here we need above all the insights of the sociologist and the field-work of the social researcher.

I take one example from this book of the type of new insight which is called for. Sixty years ago the working-class mother typically experienced ten pregnancies, and spent some fifteen

years either pregnant or nursing a child in its first year; to-day, the time so spent is on the average four years. Sixty years ago, her expectation of life at twenty was forty-six years; to-day it is fifty-five years. These two changes (of which that in the size of the family has certainly had a greater effect on her standard of living than the rise in real wages) mean that the mother of to-day has a far greater span of life in front of her after completing the cycle of motherhood. This should surely exercise a profound influence on our attitude to the retiring age for women, pension arrangements, employment opportunities, etc., yet social policy has scarcely begun to adapt itself.

In other cases we need patient social research to discover the nature of the new problems. Professor Titmuss gives us a model in his three penetrating essays on the Health Service. His colleagues have also made their contributions—Mr. Brian Abel-Smith again on the Health Service, Messrs. Michael Young and Peter Willmott on housing policy, Mr. Peter Townsend on the problems of old people, Mr. Peter Marris on those of widows, and Mr. John Vaizey on education policy.

If only these writers had been older and could have started writing earlier, we might have

avoided some of the mistakes of post-war social policy. As it is, some future government, provided it has the vision to find the money, will be able to construct its social policy on more reliable foundations.

C. A. R. Crosland

## Common Sense?

**Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare.** By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Allen & Unwin*. 7s. 6d.

FOR HALF a century, Lord Russell has discussed the issues of the age with lucidity, detachment, and consistent intelligence. As much as anyone in our epoch, he has been the voice of imperturbable rationality against the disorder, incoherence, and nonsense of life. Once again, in an essay of troubled and urgent argument, he appeals in the name of reason to mankind—this time to come to its senses before it blows itself off the planet.

His argument is brisk and straightforward. Given present policies, we are headed straight—inevitably—towards thermonuclear war. Such a war would be ghastly beyond description. Moreover, any war in the nuclear age would billow up into nuclear war; therefore the hope of escape through developing rules of limited war is an illusion. Even the prohibition of the bomb and the destruction of existing nuclear stocks are no guarantee against nuclear war; as soon as serious war resumed, the belligerents would rush to manufacture the forbidden weapon. The only way out is to end war itself. The political leaders of the world must develop a “new outlook.” The United States and the Soviet Union must begin by making formal renunciation of war. A Conciliation Committee should be set up, composed of Easterners, Westerners, and neutrals, to settle all the outstanding issues between East and West, without, however, disturbing the existing balance of power. Out of this should grow an International Authority which would forever eliminate war, without, however, impairing the rights and liberties of anyone anywhere.

There is little new in this argument, except the elegance (despite a certain repetitiousness) with which it is presented. But the vision is a deeply appealing one, as it always has been. More than that, Lord Russell is surely right when he suggests that something like this is, in the end, what the world must do if it is to abolish war. And he is surely right too in contending that, if we do not abolish war, war will abolish us. Why then does the case he presents seem so curiously threadbare and banal? The reason perhaps is that, for all the air of saying

things of great boldness and audacity, Lord Russell really skips the tough questions. The critical problem is not ends, it is means. As one reads *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*, one finds oneself saying: Of course, of course; we hardly need to be told that nuclear war would be a catastrophe or that perpetual peace would be desirable. The problem is not *where* to go but *how* to get there. How, in a world of envy and malice, vested reaction and revolutionary upheaval and raging fanaticism, are we to evolve towards a limited world government capable of suppressing war but not freedom?

Lord Russell's main answer to this question, in so far as he deals with it at all, is reason. As soon as people understand the full horror of the problem, stopping war will seem so much more important than anything else that solution will be almost automatic. Concerning details, he remains vague. In general, he reserves the tough nuts for the Conciliation Committee, though he does make some sketchy and superficial suggestions for Germany, China, and the Middle East. The point is that, given the change in outlook, everything becomes possible.

Many difficulties which now seem insuperable, or nearly so, would disappear. . . . Given a sane and sober consideration of what is involved, this harmony on the problems of nuclear weapons would inevitably [*sic*] result.

The power of reason in producing this happy outcome is to be reinforced by the growing sense of urgency. He supports his optimism by illustrations. If, for example, there were an outbreak of rabies among the dogs of Berlin, there would obviously be no problem; Eastern and Western authorities would instantly join forces to extirpate the mad dogs.

Would the authorities of East or West Berlin argue that “the other side” could not be trusted to kill its mad dogs and that, therefore, “our side” must keep up the supply as a deterrent?

If only the world could understand that nuclear weapons created for all mankind the same situation that rabies might create for the authorities of Berlin!

But surely Lord Russell's analogy betrays his argument. Mad dogs may go around biting people, but nuclear weapons don't go around setting themselves off. It is mad people, not mad dogs, which are our trouble; and, when it comes to human beings, diagnosis of madness is a little more difficult and controversial. In an age of ferocious religious wars, like our own, one man's insanity is likely to be another man's ideology. “It is a profound misfortune,” Lord Russell writes, “that the whole question of nuclear warfare has become entangled in the