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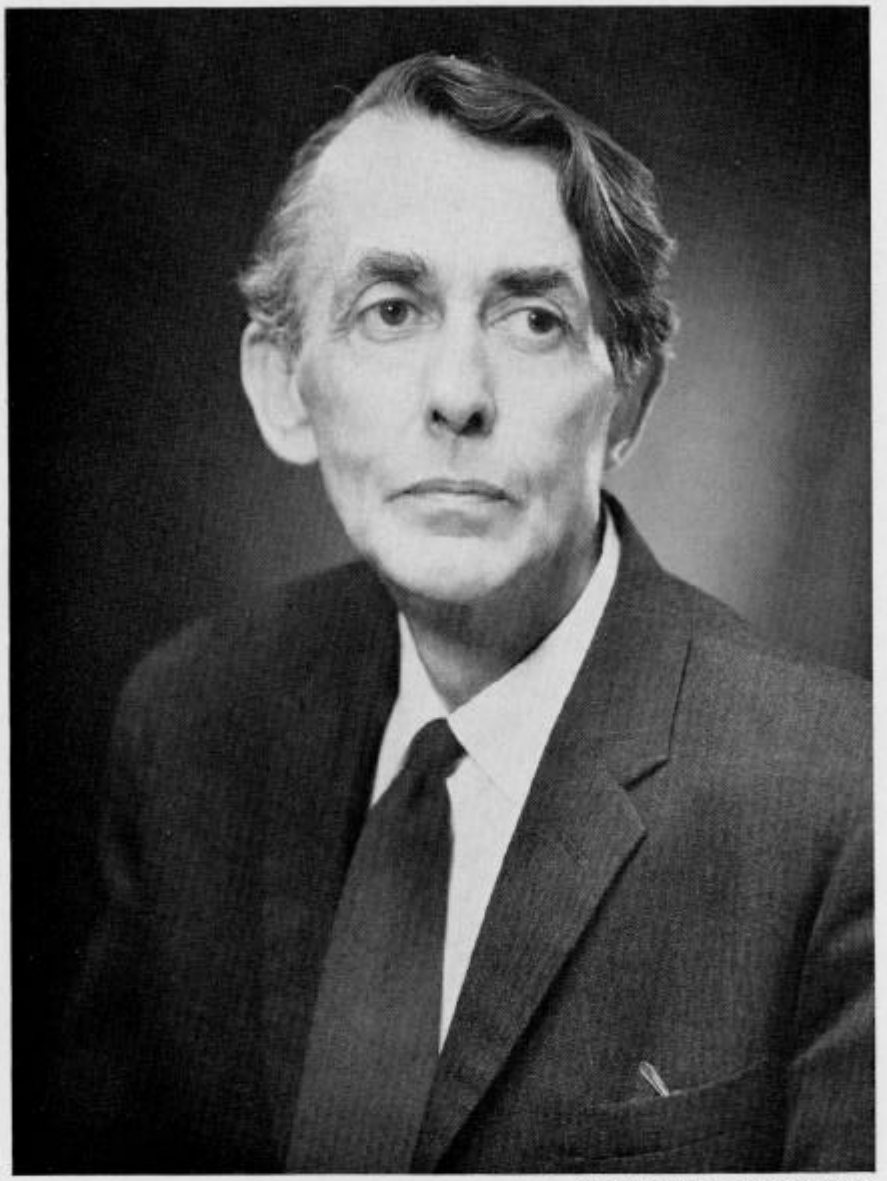

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RICHARD MORRIS TITMUSS

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1907–1973

BY 1973 when Richard Titmuss died he had created a new discipline and was one of the few truly original social scientists of his generation; his students and staff had spread his work to universities and social administrations round the world; he had shaped the whole concept of social policy and he himself had played a direct role in the British social services. Since his views were often controversial, he had inspired some antagonism. But he was greatly loved by most of the people who knew him—people in many walks of life and many countries. His name was not indeed popularly known, yet he was a man of immense influence in scholarship, politics, and government at home and abroad. Yet Titmuss possessed no formal academic qualifications whatever, not even the equivalent of an 'O' level certificate and until 1950, when he was 42, his name and his work were known only to a small circle. Then, in March 1950, his superb war history *Problems of Social Policy* was published and soon afterwards he was appointed to the London School of Economics' first chair in Social Administration which he took up that autumn and held for the rest of his life.

Titmuss's father, Morris, was a small farmer at Stopsley near Luton in Bedfordshire, like his father before him. Richard's mother's family farmed in a bigger way and lived in some style; she herself, married young and unable to adjust to a lower standard of life, was incompetent domestically. Richard, born in October 1907, was the second child, with a sister 5 years older and a brother 3 years younger, while the last child, a girl, died in childhood. The children lived an isolated life but roamed freely around the countryside from their pleasant, square, porched, farmhouse—now engulfed by a housing estate. Richard went to St. Gregory's, a small preparatory school mainly for farmers' sons at Luton. However, with illness and transport difficulties, he seems to have been frequently absent so that he was largely self-educated with a special interest in working out mathematical problems. The school sent pupils on to public schools but the Titmusses were never prosperous enough for that, even before the post-First World War depression hit them. In the early 1920s the family moved to Hendon, the London suburb, where Morris set up a haulage business, first with horses then with lorries,

which he could not master. Richard at 14 was sent to Clark's Commercial College for six months to learn book-keeping. Thereafter, he became an office boy in Standard Telephones and also helped his father with the accounts.

Richard never wasted time grieving about the inadequacies of his education. Indeed he said in later years that he was thankful that he had never sat for an examination in his life nor been forced to learn through book memorization. He was, he added, glad he had never been selected or rejected, nor acquired a sense of failure; he had learned from his fellows, on the job, from observation and from the excellent and free public library which he always regarded as one of the most important British social services. He was especially conscious of his freedom from the tyranny of the Ph.D., from the necessity to sit at the feet of a master, even though as a professor he marked hundreds of examination papers, had many Ph.D. students and admiring audiences around him. It is impossible to know what effect a formal education would have had upon him; it might perhaps have stifled his remarkable insight and creativity. He would not, however, have regarded his own lack of such education as a general prescription.

Even Richard's book-keeping could not rescue the haulage business. In 1926 his father died suddenly, leaving a mass of debts. Mrs. Titmuss wrote to the County Fire Insurance Office, where she had contacts, asking them to employ her 18-year-old son. The waiting list was long but Richard was soon engaged as a probationary clerk, and after passing a medical examination, he was established at £85 p.a. on a scale rising by £20 per annum to £265. He was to stay with this Office for 16 years.

The young and impecunious Titmuss was the family bread-winner with all kinds of anxieties. His aunt recalled his 'infinite patience with his poor neurotic mother'. Before Richard could settle in at night dead tired from hard and probably uncongenial work he had to listen to a long tale of all his mother's woes for the day. In spite of all this, he enjoyed life. He played well in chess tournaments, went to promenade concerts, and followed cricket and football enthusiastically; to the end of his life he listened to the Saturday football results. He also walked the countryside and youth-hostelled with an international group at home and abroad. A holiday round Welsh youth hostels in the summer of 1934 changed his life for one of the other walkers was Kay Miller, who worked in London clubs for the unemployed. She was more mature—5 years older—than Richard, who was a

tall, thin young man with a shock of dark hair, a delightful smile, holes in his shoes, and tattered shorts. They talked and talked and back in London went on meeting and talking. A deep love developed between them which was to be the mainstay of his life to the very end. Marriage was difficult because Richard's mother was dependent on him financially and emotionally. The financial dependence lasted until his mother won a modest football pool after the Second World War and the emotional dependence lasted until she died in 1972, just before Richard became mortally ill.

Kay and Richard married early in 1937 and lived most happily in St. George's Drive near Victoria Station. From the time they had met, and under Kay's influence, Richard's interests had become social and political. He had embarked on a thorough, rigorous process of self-education and he learned to speak in public by leading the Liberals in the mock parliament at St. Bride's Evening Institute. He ruthlessly pruned his former leisure activities and dropped chess because it had become too obsessive. Kay encouraged him to write and in preparation he kept carefully indexed notebooks of quotations, references, and thoughts. His first major effort was written under the name of Richard Caston in 1936. Caston was Kay's middle name and the book was written in the home of Kay's family. It was a shrill tract for the times, a denunciation of foreign policy and the drift to war which was in keeping with his new found radicalism. The book *Crime and Tragedy* had the alternative titles of *Government by Betrayal* or *Creation of Anarchy* and was dedicated to 'those who laid down their lives that others might uphold the divine right to use bombing planes'. One of the more endearing aspects of the book is Richard's love of country which he cannot define but explains by the quotation, 'I only know that she is England, I am English, this is Home'—an abiding sentiment with him. Publishers rejected the manuscript, but a growing stream of articles was accepted by various journals—insurance journals, *Truth*, the *Spectator*, the *News Chronicle*—on subjects where he was wholly professional, such as migration, age structure and insurance, the state of public health. The central problem from which his interests radiated was population—its quantity and its quality. The forecasts of an ageing and declining population were widely debated at the time. Quality too was debated but mainly in relation to the supposed decline in the mean intelligence quotient of the nation.

In 1938 Titmuss's first book, *Poverty and Population*, was

published by Macmillan. Its subtitle was *A Factual Study of Contemporary Social Waste* and it looked at the quantity and quality of population in a quite new way. He studied the disease and mortality figures for the different regions of England and Wales and calculated the excess disease and deaths in the poorer regions compared with the prosperous regions; some of the mortality figures for these regions were worse than the figures for 25 years earlier. He revealed a close association of high death rate, high sickness rate, and high inefficiency rate with malnutrition, which was due to poverty on a scale hitherto unrecognized. Titmuss's interest in the very unequal distribution of wealth and incomes—the subject of a book 24 years later—was already manifest. It was an important book, and had a foreword by Lord Horder, the physician, while Harold Macmillan wrote a special note of congratulation. This book bore the authentic Titmuss stamp. He asked questions of great conceptual importance which had not occurred to anyone else but which thereafter seemed obvious. His scholarship and knowledge of sources were impressive. His curiosity ranged widely. He showed deep analytical power, allied with a mastery of vital statistics and statistical technique which made his factual conclusion sunassailable. He was critical of the deficiencies of official statistics and highly sceptical of soothing, complacent beliefs based upon them.

Already two of the tributaries of his life had flowed into one another. Kay's influence had, as he acknowledged in his preface, made social values and concerns his central interest. But his long years in an insurance office, even though they had not stretched his intellectual capacity, had developed his statistical knowledge and skills. Titmuss wrote the book in the evenings after his day's office work and he now led a dual life. For his book brought him recognition and respect; Seebohm Rowntree called it 'important and startling'. It brought contact with a widening circle of 'liberal' intellectuals such as the Laytons, the Cadburys, Eleanor Rathbone (who acknowledged his help in her Family Allowances book), Mrs. Rhys-Williams, together with demographers such as Kuczynski, and he was in demand for articles and speeches. The Eugenics Society, which was just down the road in Victoria, was important to him and for a time he edited its review; however, he sometimes found the atmosphere too rarefied, with Fellows and members who had no conception of what it meant to live on unemployment benefit.

Through the 1930s, Titmuss's political spiritual home was the Liberal Party, of which he was an enthusiastic member. He

heartily disliked the Conservative Party and mistrusted only a little less both socialism and the influence of the trade unions in the Labour Party. In 1939 a later protagonist—Arthur Seldon —was discussing with him material for a pamphlet, *Labour M.P.*, showing the dominance of the trade unions. Titmuss attended Liberal Summer Schools and in 1939 gave an impressive lecture there. He became a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and of the Royal Economic Society and in 1939 he was given a Leverhulme two-year research grant for an analysis of differential mortality and the vital statistics in relation to economic indices. His sponsors were Professor A. L. Bowley and Lord Horder. He was part author with F. Le Gros Clark of *Our Food Problem*, a Penguin which was published in the spring of 1939 and had sold 30,000 copies before war broke out.

By this time Titmuss was a London Inspector in his office—at the unprecedentedly young age of 32: he seemed set to go far in the company. His health was good but when war came his job in war damage insurance was a reserved occupation. However, he sought other work. His name was added to the Ministry of Labour's Central Register of professional people by virtue of the books he had written and his fellowship of the learned societies. He informally advised the Ministry of Information on some social survey reports and was statistical adviser in a voluntary capacity to the Ministries of Health and Economic Warfare on wartime German vital statistics; he soon became convinced that the Germans had not been underfed for five years as was commonly supposed. For a time Titmuss was suspicious that his lack of formal education made the Central Register reluctant to place him. Was the Register, he wrote, not designed for 'one who has written books, indulges in statistics, is given a Leverhulme Fellowship and yet is still found in an insurance office?' However, in 1941 the Ministries of Information and Food both wanted to employ Titmuss but the County Fire Office refused to release him.

Soon afterwards there came another turning-point in his life. Professor Keith Hancock had been asked in the summer of 1941 to be Supervisor (later Editor) of the official civil histories of the war which the War Cabinet commissioned. This series, which was finally to comprise some thirty published volumes, was to describe and analyse the organization of the war effort. It was not easy to find authors in the middle of the war and Hancock made known his needs among his friends and acquaintances. In November 1941, at the suggestion of Eva Hubback, Titmuss

wrote to Hancock: 'although I am not quite clear as to the nature of the work I am sending you a note about myself'. Within a fortnight Titmuss had received an offer of appointment to write the history of the subjects focused on the Ministry of Health. This represented a change in income from £350 tax paid at the County Fire Office to £700 before tax. The County Fire Office still refused to release him but under new arrangements for reservation from military service, Titmuss would soon have been called up from his insurance post. In January 1942, therefore, he informed the County Fire Office that he felt free to accept the Cabinet Office post and he severed all connection with them, including his sixteen years of pension rights. The Office wrote frigidly that he would be free to apply to re-enter their service after the war. It was Titmuss's own knowledge and experience which left him with that strong mistrust of insurance companies which was to appear often in his post-war work.

The next six years were very happy ones for Richard and Kay. They had been bombed twice in Victoria and had moved to a small three-roomed modern flat in Chiswick where they stayed for ten years. In 1944 their only child Ann was born (later Ann Oakley, the sociologist) and Kay henceforth gave up any idea of professional work but devoted herself to creating a home life that gave comfort and security to them all. At first Richard experienced the terrible sinking feeling common to all official historians of the Cabinet Office. 'A million files. Whatever can I do with them?' It was Kay who calmed his anxieties and suggested a programme of limited objectives.

Soon Richard was producing historical work of first-class quality. Maurice Powicke, a member of the Advisory Historical Committee, told Hancock he had read the early drafts with 'much admiration . . . He seems to me to have a natural gift, cultivated and strengthened by his earlier experience, for the exposition of complicated facts in the manner of a historical student and when he finds scope he can write with much force and clarity . . . you are fortunate to have found Mr. Titmuss.' Hancock was a wonderful adviser and support but recognized that his own contribution was limited. In 1944 he wrote that Richard Titmuss had

> really creative insight into human problems within the sphere of health using that word in its fullest significance. The anatomy of his work is statistical. He has the most unusual gift for asking the right questions . . . During the past two and a half years I have watched his work growing and am convinced that it is not only industrious and

accurate but possesses real creative significance . . . He is an excellent learner and I have been able to teach him something. But his achievement is due fundamentally to the natural development of his own power . . . his volumes in confidential print will signify an enlargement of the governmental brain. If the volumes are published they will gain a great reputation for their author and for the Historical Section.

The war histories gave Titmuss the time to think, the richness and diversity of subject and of material, which he needed to develop his intellectual powers to the full. To the two tributaries that had fed his work so far—mastery of statistical technique and social concern—was joined a third. This was his insight in historical depth into the social services and into the processes and finance of both central and local government. He worked on the papers of seven Whitehall departments and talked to civil servants, town clerks, medical officers, directors of education, nurses, and social workers. He visited hospitals, nurseries, rest centres, poor law institutions, and so on.

Writing the war history was not his only occupation in these years. He was a member, with Hancock, of the famous St. Paul's firewatching squad. And he still worked on problems of population disease and poverty; he lectured widely, he wrote, and he belonged to research groups such as the Population Investigation Committee. This work revolved round the general concern about the low birth-rate. He felt convinced that the population would decline and even with the post-war rise in the British birth-rate he remained sceptical about a long-term future of expanding numbers. This concern led him in two directions—into speculating about the reasons why people did not have more children and into extending the work on social waste begun in *Poverty and Population.* Both moves helped to drive him politically leftwards. He saw the strike against parenthood not simply in terms of family economics but as a strike against the acquisitiveness and insecurity of capitalism, as a desire for a revolution in the way of life. In August 1941 he wrote an article, 'The End of Economic Parenthood', in the *New Statesman* which drew an admiring letter from Beatrice Webb and a request from Warburg, the publisher, for a short, popular book. Kay and Richard accordingly wrote a short, high-pitched book, *Parents Revolt,* which had a foreword by Beatrice Webb and drew many letters, reviews, and a B.B.C. discussion. Carr-Saunders, however, wrote to say that though the book was full of good points it took arguments about capitalism too far: teachers after all were a very infertile group but were blessed with security.

Meanwhile Titmuss had pursued his research among the Registrar-General's reports, feeling that these statistics might tell him more about the fundamental reactions of man to his environment than any number of subjective opinion studies.

When he went to the Cabinet Office in 1942, he already had another book in draft and it was agreed that although he was now a civil servant he might publish it. It appeared in 1943 as *Birth, Poverty and Wealth*, a slim but important book which analysed infant mortality and showed that the infant death-rates of the most and least favourably circumstanced classes were rather more widely separated in 1930–2 than twenty years earlier. As before, he marshalled his statistics as a stimulus to action, calculating that if all social classes in 1930–2 had had the same stillborn and infant death-rate as Class 1, probably 90,000 lives would have been saved. He also wrote articles on similar themes in collaboration with a doctor, J. N. Morris, who had written to him after reading *Poverty and Population*. Two of the articles—published in the *Lancet*—on juvenile rheumatism and peptic ulcers, which related morbidity and mortality to social background, aroused especial interest. While Morris was an Army doctor in India, they collaborated through the medium of the wartime airgraphs. From late 1944, with the permission of the Cabinet Office, Titmuss worked four days a month as statistical and demographic adviser to his old home-town Luton. Several publications resulted and he acquired experience of the day-to-day operations of local authority services.

By 1941 the pre-war Liberal had become a Socialist. Titmuss wrote to Kingsley Martin in July 1941 that the strike against parenthood led to one conclusion—socialism, but, he added, a socialism which derives from a moral not an economic impetus. This new faith did not mean the Labour Party for Titmuss but the fringe wartime political groups. Early in 1940 the young Liberal M.P. Sir Richard Acland had published a Penguin Special *Unser Kampf*, demanding that steps should be taken during the war towards a new order of society. Small groups of people formed an organization called Our Struggle which was renamed Forward March after another book published by Acland in 1941. A rather similar organization, the 1941 Committee, also existed and the two organizations collaborated in a Nine Point Group which supported candidates standing against the coalition government at by-elections. In late July 1942 the two organizations merged into the Commonwealth Party which was soon afterwards beset by squabbles.

Titmuss had been one of the first to write to Acland pledging support for Unser Kampf and enclosing £1 as contribution, and he signed Acland's Manifesto of the Common Man giving his occupation as 'writer and statistician'. Outside the House of Commons dining-room Acland and Titmuss tried to think up in a hurry one or two practical conclusions to which the first meeting might lead. Thereafter, according to Acland, Titmuss alone had remained steadily with the Forward March movement, giving the wisest advice, unfailingly doing all he promised, answering part of the flood of letters, speaking at local meetings. 'I do believe big developments are coming', wrote Acland in the summer of 1941, 'and I believe very heavy responsibilities are going to fall upon us in the near future. And when I say *US* I don't just mean vaguely the people who think in our way. I mean specifically Acland and Titmuss.' However, by the time the Commonwealth Party was formed, Titmuss was a civil servant in the War Cabinet Office and retreated from a public role.

The keynote of these Acland movements was Common Ownership, a revolt against 'an acutely acquisitive society', against the competitive nature of man. The movement showed a strong hostility to the Conservative Party and strong affinity for a Labour Party not shackled by the political truce. It became natural for Titmuss to drift to Labour. There was a strong 'Richard Caston' streak in his wartime radicalism. Something of this—the fulminations against 'the Conservatives, F.B.I. and the rest of the gang' remained with him to the end. So did his sense of outrage at the inequalities in society. He likewise retained an emotional attachment to the ideal of common ownership. However, his vision was not Marxist but a simple Utopianism with a profound belief in the individualism of human beings and families, and in cultural diversity. He had great faith in family life: he wanted to see a 'keeping up with the Joneses' in terms above all of happy family life—'gardens, creative work, public service and citizenship and all these things we mean when we use that dreadful word culture'. He contributed to a volume *Rebuilding Family Life in the Postwar World.*

Alongside this there went a growing intellectual belief in collectivism. His experience in the insurance industry had led him to doubt its efficiency—as well as, what seemed to him, its unbridled power. He was to remain a scourge of this industry which dominated the investment and capital markets, and yet was subject to so little public supervision or control.

Titmuss was to compare, with great effect, the idealized, individualized insurance model conceptually based on risk theory, with the behaviour of the actual private insurance market which hardly ever took the form of an individualized contract. His analysis of the shortcomings of the private insurance system was to play a key role in the nationalized insurance plans of Labour governments in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1940s his growing commitment to collectivism was also nourished by his historical work on wartime social policy. For his story showed that, although pre-war government planning had been wholly inadequate, after the fall of France and amidst the blitz, central government had shown enterprise, efficiency, and compassion in organizing services for the community. The last chapter of the book, 'Unfinished Business', was also his own declaration of faith in communal action through the government, offering services which were universal, free of social discrimination; faith in the pooling of national resources, and the sharing of risks. His formidable powers of historical analysis were encouraging him in these beliefs. For example, his study of the hospital services and the medical profession showed him that the antithesis between 'collectivism' and 'individualism' did not reflect the clash between equality and freedom. Thus he was to explain the National Health Insurance Act of 1911 not in terms of class warfare or egalitarian redistribution but of professional liberty and freedom of contract for the general practitioners. He was to explain that the National Health Service Act of 1946 was not the apex of 'welfare state' benevolence but the consequence of the advance of scientific knowledge and of popular awareness of issues of health and disease.

By late 1947 the war history, *Problems of Social Policy*, was in draft and was sent for comment to government departments. It had a mixed reception. The Ministries of Education and Health read it with very great admiration, but some people in the Treasury and the Cabinet Office took a different view. A Treasury official wrote 'it is a thoroughly bad book and the proper thing to do, in my view, is to tear it up and start all over again . . . It is a niggling production, written from a single very narrow point of view . . . the war as seen from the Ministry of Health Registry.' At this stage the procedures for obtaining comments on the official histories had not been formalized and in the confusion there was a fierce row over the publication of the book, with threats of resignation from Hancock, until his view prevailed and the historians' rights and obligations were clearly defined.

When the book appeared in March 1950, it was received with an enthusiasm which grew in subsequent years, so that T. H. Marshall has recently called it 'a flawless masterpiece'. At the time a rapturous review, several pages long, by R. H. Tawney in *The New Statesman* attracted most attention. Out of an analysis of the policies for wartime evacuation, the care of the homeless, and the emergency hospital service, Titmuss had produced a profound work of history, of the study of society. It carried lightly much scholarship and learning. It employed to the full his quantitative and qualitative powers of analysis while it demonstrated his humour and his humanity. It ranged from a disquisition on local government boundaries and finance to a description of the arrival of evacuees in reception areas, when the billeting resulted in 'every conceivable kind of social and psychological misfit. Conservative and Labour supporters, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians, lonely spinsters and loud-mouthed boisterous mothers, the rich and the poor, city-bred Jews and agricultural labourers, the lazy and the hard-working, the sensitive and the tough, were thrown into daily intimate contact.'

By the time the book appeared Titmuss was working as Social Economist and Deputy Director of the new Social Medicine Research Unit. His old friend, Dr. Morris, was Director and in fact the unit was set up by the Medical Research Council largely as a result of their joint articles. Now the book opened up academic employment. The first two chairs of social administration were being created, at Birmingham and the London School of Economics, and Titmuss was chosen for both of them. Indeed T. H. Marshall had been the first to urge the case for acquiring Titmuss for L.S.E. some time earlier, before a chair was created or the war history was published. The combination of practical sense with knowledge, research capacity and sensitivity far outweighed Titmuss's 'peculiar' history and absence of a degree.

Titmuss chose L.S.E. and soon the family moved to a capacious Edwardian house in Acton. At the end of his life he told a friend that he had been 'marvellously lucky' in three things—to work with Keith Hancock, to inherit such a department at L.S.E., and above all to marry Kay. L.S.E. itself and the department did, as time went on, inspire in him an intense devotion, and L.S.E. for its part grew very proud of him. This mutual affection was not so apparent in the early years. The new chair demanded of its holder—and received—a remarkable blend of

those three capacities which all university teachers are, improbably, expected to possess: administration, teaching, and research. Moreover, the load was exceptionally heavy for although the Department of Social Administration was larger than the average L.S.E. department, it had for many years few senior staff—the first Reader was not appointed until six years later.

The administrative work was especially heavy and difficult. Titmuss was, like other professors, on most of the key L.S.E. committees, as well as some University committees, but at first he felt alien in many of them. Warm friendships did develop—above all with Tawney (for whose *Equality* Titmuss later wrote a new introduction). Carr-Saunders, as Director of L.S.E., was also a pillar of support until he retired in 1956, while Barbara Wootton (at Bedford College) was especially helpful within the University of London. But Titmuss felt he had little in common with some of his colleagues in other subjects, especially 'the economists'. Some of the differences were in academic objectives. On the one side there was little sympathy between Titmuss, master of quantitative methods that he was, and those who laid great store on econometrics, while on the other side conventional scholars such as political theorists mistrusted the spread of applied studies in the University. Titmuss as a newcomer also observed with his usual penetration what he called the schizophrenias of academic life. As one of the forty or fifty professors of the School discussing academic policy he came to understand 'something of the dynamics of small group behaviour' and much else besides. He learned, for example, that the University knew little, and seemed to care less, about the consequences of its methods of admitting, teaching, and examining students and about their subsequent careers. He recalled that his most traumatic experience was to be presented with a statistical table, compiled on a faculty basis which was solemnly headed 'The Burden of Teaching' with appropriate references to (what was called) 'The Student Load'. He believed that the remarkable freedoms possessed by academics were to a great degree essential to their job but he feared that the personal possession of these freedoms, built into powerful hierarchical systems, militated against institutional self criticism.

Titmuss found himself in disagreements not only on top-level committees but also within his own department, whose history within the School went back to 1912.[1] Its function had been to

[1] A full account of the events in this paragraph is included in David Donnison, *Social Policy and Administration Revisited*, Allen & Unwin, 1975.

train social workers, who took various diplomas or certificates; there was no suitable degree. In 1950 when Titmuss took over there were only thirteen staff, who had only recently been given status and pay equivalent with their University colleagues. The chair in social administration had been created because in future there were to be social administration options in a B.A. sociology degree which would be suitable for social workers, and also because it was desirable to conduct academic inquiry in the subject. The training courses, the diplomas and certificates persisted and in the mid 1950s there was bitter controversy about the future of the four specifically professional courses. Some rationalization was necessary which involved a question of principle: whether students should be equipped to practise in all branches of social casework rather than in specialisms. The staff running the courses could not agree how to integrate them and Titmuss, who was himself not a trained social worker, had to impose decisions which were inevitably unpalatable—so much so that two of the staff resigned. Acrimony flowed within the department and hostility flowed from outside since all kinds of bodies were concerned with the courses and wished to bring pressure to bear on the new Director of L.S.E. Even when passions had cooled in the subsequent years, problems about the social-work courses persisted and the professional courses were not completely integrated until 1970. Titmuss himself was enraged by proposals that the School should drop vocational social-work education; he saw them as part of the tendency for universities to disengage from the life of the community which they were presumed to serve. Moreover, the vocational courses in the department benefited, as an integral part of the University, from the help of other disciplines. However, the desirability of retaining even the basic social administration diploma courses within the School was constantly questioned by some of the academic members of the department and by other people in L.S.E.

The School did not opt out of social-work training and the department grew in size and influence. In 1962, at the department's fiftieth birthday party, Titmuss spoke with pride of the predominance of ex-L.S.E. students in social-administration and social-work teaching both in British universities and field-work agencies and of their importance in many overseas countries. An increasing number of senior scholars as well as students came for study, consultation, or advice. The department was, in terms of total student numbers, easily the largest of its kind in Europe and roughly equal in size to the largest in North America.

The constant debates on policy, the sheer number of students doing different courses, the involvement of so many outside bodies in social-work education meant that administration of the department consumed a great deal of time. There was a constant turnover of staff as Titmuss's bright young men left to take chairs elsewhere in the expansionist 1960s. He could be unsympathetically tough with them, refusing to let them go in the middle of an academic year. In latter years, as the number of senior staff grew, the headship of the department rotated which brought relief to Titmuss, but to the end no important decisions were taken without consulting him; he could not easily throw off his 'faculty errand boy' functions. Moreover, even when the departmental work eased, problems crowded in from other sides. In particular Titmuss involved himself deeply in the L.S.E. 'troubles' of 1966–8.

In any questions of principle hitherto, Titmuss had usually been found on the 'left', but he was never automatic in his allegiances. He always weighed issues and arguments and he felt the fierce opposition in 1966 to the appointment of Walter Adams as Director of L.S.E. was quite wrong. He did not know Adams but was clear that the racialist jibes about Adams's university work in Southern Rhodesia were totally unfounded while he admired Adams's work in the 1930s for the refugees from Nazism; his loyalty to Adams was complete. As the troubles broadened out into other issues and disciplinary action followed, Titmuss appreciated the extraordinarily complex issues and was for a time a strong supporter of talking with people, an opponent of the hard line. However, as tempers worsened, with the occupation of the School and so forth, he saw law and order as paramount. Deeply devoted as he now was to the School, he grasped above all the big danger; the threat to the School's very existence. As a member of the standing committee of the governors which was in almost continuous session, he was in the eye of the storm. When the lecture of a colleague was broken up, Titmuss took the platform and told the mob that the last time he had been shouted down was by Mosley's blackshirts in the 1930s. This traumatic period brought a realignment of sympathies. He had developed a solidarity with, for example, some of the 'economists' whom he had once so strongly criticized, while some members of his own department opposed his views. Later there was a stormy episode when he castigated those among them who had signed a petition for the dismissal of Lionel Robbins as chairman of the governors. There were to be other

disagreements in the department as radical groups vehemently criticized Titmuss's role in the Supplementary Benefits Commission.

Titmuss was most conscientious in administration but much of it, especially the long committee meetings, was uncongenial to him. By contrast, he thoroughly enjoyed teaching and conformed well to the university model wherein teaching and research are inseparable. He quoted A. N. Whitehead's justification for a university—that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative excitement of learning. From the time he joined L.S.E. he feared that teaching was neglected in some subjects and faculties and that this was one cause of the School's troubles. He was convinced that in a world experiencing an information explosion, a population explosion, and a financial explosion there was in the universities a greater need for teaching than ever before and especially for those forms of teaching which educate for change.

The problems of teaching in his own department were tied up with the problems of policy on courses described earlier: practical training of social workers was combined with the academic study of social administration. Besides being convinced that the University should teach vocational work, Titmuss was also determined to admit older students without the necessary minimum academic entry qualifications. This policy too led to criticism inside and outside the department from those who put academic excellence first. Titmuss's own teaching nevertheless was mainly on the academic side of the department. He put much effort into his own lectures, constantly rewriting them since he could not abide dead knowledge, inert ideas. The posthumous volume *Social Policy: an introduction* reproduces the last introductory course he delivered at the School. He was no orator and spoke softly from a prepared script, yet his lectures were heard in a pin-drop silence. As a teacher, he excelled rather with intimate small groups. His interest in and concern for each student, his simplicity and approachability, his humour gave them encouragement and confidence. To be taught by him, said one, was to discover a whole new world of human significance and intellectual fascination. This was true of undergraduate and postgraduate students alike. Critical as he was of the cult of the Ph.D., the 'professorial degree' which aimed to produce academics, he attracted streams of such students and gave detailed comment on their theses. His personal influence as a university

teacher had a ripple effect through many countries of the world. In addition, he did more than a fair stint of examining at home and abroad.

Although Titmuss believed academic values were not the only criteria for admitting students and although he was critical of much graduate work in universities, scholarship and disciplined inquiry were the fulcrum of all his own activities. He became a magnet for young graduates anxious to do research in social policy almost as soon as he arrived at L.S.E. in 1950. Some of them recall the excitement of reading *Problems of Social Policy*, finding it the best book they had ever read and then seeking out Titmuss. Over the next twenty years, this younger generation and their successors produced a stream of articles and books which, in the Titmuss pattern, used academic methods to illumine practical policy. Some of these people and their books were also to be influential. The L.S.E. department itself sponsored a valuable series of Occasional Papers in Social Administration.

Titmuss's work-load after he went to L.S.E. was so great that he had to abandon his contribution to the second volume of wartime social policy. He wrote, as he continued to do to the end, many articles and special lectures, shedding new light on their subjects. He also wrote forty or more chapters, forewords, and prefaces for joint, or other people's, books. Two of the seven books which he produced during his L.S.E. years were collections of the most important of his articles and lectures—*Essays on 'the Welfare State'*, first published in 1958 and *Commitment to Welfare*, published in 1968. Two others were specially written books—*Income Distribution and Social Change* (1962) and *The Gift Relationship* (1970). The three other books were practical assignments. Two were government sponsored—*The Cost of the National Health Service in England and Wales* (1956) and *Social Policies and Population Growth in Mauritius* (1961)—and the third *The Health Services of Tanganyika* (1964) was produced by a five-man group, with Titmuss as chairman, for the African Medical Research Foundation. A joint author in all three reports was Brian Abel-Smith, one of the young men who had written to Titmuss about *Problems of Social Policy* and who remained his closest colleague. Tony Lynes, another of the young L.S.E. group, co-operated in the Mauritius report.

When Titmuss went to L.S.E., books on the social services were mostly confined to straightforward descriptive accounts of their structure and organization. There was almost no examination of the rationale of these services, the role they were playing

in society or the ends to which separately and in combination they were directed. There was rather a body of myth and assumption—that a common definition of a social service existed, that added together such services comprised 'the welfare state' (a phrase Titmuss dismissed as meaningless), that the social services were equated with social progress for those at the lower end of the hierarchy of poverty and wealth, that the aims of social policy had been achieved and that the nation was being ruined by excessive expenditure thereon. In a lecture of fundamental importance which he delivered at the end of 1955, called 'The Social Division of Welfare' (published in *Essays on 'the Welfare State'*) Titmuss propounded a very different theory. He demonstrated the complete illogicality of government definitions of social services. He also showed that it was necessary to consider not only cash welfare payments from the government for particular states of dependency such as old age or childhood but also fiscal welfare—tax allowances—and occupational welfare—fringe benefits of employment. Thus, for example, the cost of occupational pensions to the general body of taxpayers was far higher than the cost of national insurance pensions.

Titmuss was constantly deepening his analysis of welfare and the social services. He demonstrated that they were not simply the product of benevolence and egalitarianism but the inevitable concomitant of urbanized, complex, and highly organized societies, the necessary response to social, scientific, and technological change. He went back to Pigou's *Economics of Welfare* for the concept of 'uncompensated services and uncharged disservices' and saw the social services as partial compensation for them. He saw them in addition as providing protection for society, investment for future personal or collective gain, immediate or deferred increments to personal welfare, and as an element in 'an integration objective which is an essential characteristic distinguishing social policy from economic policy' (chapter XI of *Commitment to Welfare*).

All Titmuss's work, just like his first book, was based on measurement, for he found the 'conventional tablets' of public information about many of the questions which concerned him superficial, misleading, or wholly useless. In particular he had a remarkable capacity for social accounting of all kinds. He moved away from the shallows of income distribution or monetary costs and developed instead a concept of command-over-resources. This he used to analyse the distribution of resources whether between the different stages of an individual's life, between

individuals, between classes and occupations, between a nation's services or between nations themselves. This highly professional statistical method, allied with historical sense, acute perception, and an ability to ask fundamental questions, made him the most formidable destroyer of myths. Thus he showed that, contrary to popular belief, the welfare state had benefited the middle classes more than the working classes; that the deficiencies of the Inland Revenue statistics, and the artificiality of the division between income and capital, made the statement about decreasing inequality which were based on them, quite worthless (*Income Distribution and Social Change*); that the emigration of highly trained manpower meant that the underdeveloped countries gave more financial aid to the United States than they received from her; that the view of the pre-National Health Service era as a golden age for the general practitioner was a delusion.

Social accounting technique made one book in particular—*The Cost of the National Health Service*—a landmark in the history of public finance as well as a document of great political importance. In 1953 the Conservative Government had appointed the Guillebaud Committee to inquire into the cost of the National Health Service, which was seen as an insupportable drain on the economy. Claude Guillebaud himself asked the National Institute of Economic and Social Research to sponsor for his Committee an economic analysis of the costs of the Service, relating them to the size of the national income, analysing the causes of trends (including population distribution), and distinguishing between capital and current expenditure and expenditure on different real resources. The National Institute appointed Abel-Smith, as a Cambridge economics graduate, to do this work and asked Titmuss to act as supervisor and consultant. The analysis, apart from an appendix on the hospital population, was Abel-Smith's but Titmuss rewrote the report for publication. Hitherto the escalating costs of the Health Service had been calculated solely in terms of the sums shown in the Appropriation Accounts. When Abel-Smith and Titmuss analysed the cost in terms of national income at constant prices they showed that far from increasing it had declined and that after allowing for population changes the cost of the Service per head of the population was stationary. Apart from 'saving' the Health Service, this report was the first to apply modern techniques of social accounting to a major area of government expenditure. Titmuss's role in it deepened his own understanding of economics, and Abel-Smith encouraged him to read the classic works in the subject.

In the late 1950s Titmuss and his disciples, most especially Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, began to demolish another firmly rooted myth which held that post-war legislation, supposedly embodying the reforms recommended in the Beveridge report, had led to the abolition of poverty in Britain and that most social problems had been or soon would be solved. The L.S.E. group (with some others) showed (again with a wealth of statistical analysis) that this simply was not true. In this area of debate, academic inquiry merged with overt political argument, much of which was conducted through the Fabian Society. At the end of 1959 Titmuss delivered at the Society a lecture, 'The Irresponsible Society', which was not only about poverty and inequality but also about democratic power. The General Secretary of the Society hardly heard the lecture because he was trying to control the people who could not get in, and the subsequent pamphlet was considered to be 'a tremendous indictment'. Hugh Gaitskell took the press conference and the newspapers carried leaders about it. Social welfare had been brought back into politics.

Titmuss's contribution to social accounting and quantitative analysis showed that his earlier description of himself as a social economist was abundantly justified. It was also justified at a qualitative level, for another of the main themes in his work was a constant attempt to define what did, and what did not, belong to the free market. He was clear that complex modern societies require a large number of services that do not lend themselves to market production, purchase, and sale. These services must be provided for everyone if they are to be provided for anyone and they must be paid for collectively or they cannot be had at all. He believed that the services which must be rendered collectively increase in urgency more than proportionately with increasing wealth in modern societies. Some economists, for example James Meade, appreciated very well Titmuss's ability to re-examine economists' theories and assumptions. Others undoubtedly regarded him as a do-gooder out of touch with economic realities. Yet to him, social growth and economic growth were interdependent and social policy must constantly change in response to new problems. When he discussed in depth his five basic principles of welfare problems during an important visit to Israel, three of them were economic—not only full employment, but also the economic use of resources and the achievement of the optimum level of savings in the interests of present and future generations. He saw one of his two other principles as economic

as well as social: integration of minority groups irrespective of race, religion, or culture, was in the long run of profound economic as well as moral significance. Only the fifth of his principles—equitable distribution of income, wealth, and life chances—could be called purely social or political.

Titmuss's analytical work was unsentimental but he always related it to social and human values. He deplored the assumption that fundamental social debate was irrelevant, that only social engineering remained. He believed that radical choices still had to be made between conflicting social values. Thus he saw not only an economic rationale in collectivist provision of certain services, whether pensions or medical care, but also the lifeblood of a community. Common access to such services was a badge of citizenship, the only way of distributing social rights without discrimination and stigma. Beyond such arguments equality was to him fundamentally important for social and moral reasons and he believed that, without political direction, the equalizing tendencies in modern society were inevitably outweighed, that the operative principle was 'to him that have shall be given'.

His rigorous statistical method, his insatiable curiosity, his thoughts on markets and collectivism, his humanity, his belief in universal services and equality, his perpetual fascination with health services came together in his last book *The Gift Relationship: from human blood to social policy*. He demonstrated that the national-collectivist blood transfusion system in Britain was far more efficient than the market systems in other countries by almost any criteria—availability, cheapness, purity of blood, and economy in its use. Since British donors give blood entirely voluntarily with only a cup of tea as their reward, he proceeded to demonstrate a quite different aspect of man in society—his desire to give. Altruism had become an important part of Titmuss's philosophy. It may, he wrote, touch every aspect of life and affect the whole fabric of values. By failing to identify such social relations in their systems, the economists had, he believed, omitted a main motive power of man.

From Titmuss's writings through his life emerged the pattern of social services which he hoped for; universalist services, but with discrimination in a variety of forms in order to channel proportionately more economic and social resources to the poor, the handicapped, and other minority groups and to compensate them for bearing part of the costs of other people's progress. Latterly he added to the universalism and discrimination a

belief that, in addition to these professional services, voluntarism should harness men's altruism in giving to strangers.

Some critics unsympathetic to the whole Titmuss way of thought supposed that he had a kind of social services blueprint or kit ready to fasten on every society. Nothing could be further from the truth, for essentially he saw these services as integral with the individual societies of which they were part. This was especially apparent in the Mauritius and Tanganyika reports, which were geared not to an idealized system but to the actual needs and resources of those countries. The Mauritius report in particular (written in 1960) still reads today as a brilliant document and deserves to be far better known. It was directed to the practical problems of the island, which were enormous—a rate of natural increase nearly twice that of the world as a whole; the highest population density in the world; lack of natural resources; poverty dominated by the problem of large families. The island was overwhelmed by most urgent social and economic problems which were greatly magnified by two cyclones which ravaged it a few days before Titmuss arrived.

Titmuss's specific task was to advise the colonial government of the island on social security, and his two colleagues, Abel-Smith and Lynes, who went ahead of him to Mauritius, analysed in detail the social services. When Titmuss arrived he saw that it was futile to consider social policy without relating it to population control. He was the first expert visiting the island to obtain a thorough and careful analysis of the population trend (by Edith Adams) and it was Titmuss who provided the central point of the team's recommendations: social policies must be devised to popularize the three-child family and to put a social and psychological brake on the rearing of more children. Family-planning services became the first priority—in a community that was predominantly Roman Catholic. These principles, along with the work by Abel-Smith and Lynes on specific services, produced a complex of detailed recommendations which showed realism, ingenuity, and administrative sense. They were 'painfully stern' yet humane. They were cost, and efficiency, conscious; designed to assist economic growth rather than provide a benevolent welfare state. The team's criticisms of the colonial regime were severe, tactfully expressed yet interspersed with sardonic phrases. Thus the diet of the people 'is not so generous that it can be shared with the hookworm'. Or, since almost the only technical education was provided in the prison, 'selection for technical education is at present based not on aptitude but on delinquency'.

The team produced a report which combined Titmuss's demographic insight with historical understanding, social accountancy, an unerring grasp of detail, keen observation and, as always, the ability to ask new questions.

Following the report,[1] Mauritius launched a massive birth-control campaign which must have contributed to the sharp decline in the fertility rate so that the aim of popularizing the three-child family was achieved. Mauritians showed the level of 'tolerance and a high sense of moral conduct and unity' Titmuss hoped for: the population growth dropped to 1.3 per cent in 1971 compared with 3.5 per cent fifteen years earlier. Mauritius remained especially conscious of their debt of gratitude to Titmuss and the Prime Minister of the independent island went to visit him at his home in his last illness.

Both the Mauritius and Tanganyika reports dealt equally realistically with the health services; the proposed services were relatively simple, concentrating above all on preventive health and welfare services, and using different grades of auxiliaries for different purposes. There was no attempt to suggest Western-style medical services. There was frank speaking about the unethical behaviour of professional people who exploited suffering. The Tanganyika report had a long-term, but little immediate, effect, for the newly independent government of Tanzania felt it must devote its slender resources to education rather than health —a decision which Titmuss approved. He delighted in the two countries and their people. He visited Tanzania twice, in 1962 and 1968, and there was friendship and mutual admiration between him and President Nyerere. The emphasis on intermediate technology and the village community, the Ujamaa, especially appealed to him, so much so that there was a bequest to them in his will.

Titmuss was equally at home in the developed as well as the under-developed worlds. There, his name stood especially high in North America and Israel. To take Israel first. A lecture visit in 1963 brought great intellectual excitement on both sides and as a result a unique seminar was held in 1964 to discuss the future direction and objectives of social-welfare policies in Israel. This brought together for nearly a week Permanent Secretaries of all the relevant ministries together with university staff and social workers. The opening lecture was given by the Prime Minister while Titmuss, the only foreigner present, gave

[1] A team headed by James Meade made an important, simultaneous report on the economy of Mauritius.

the keynote address. Later he was saddened, *inter alia*, by the discrimination introduced in Israel's social services against Arabs, and against Jews who had not served in the armed services.

Titmuss's influence in North America was profound. He was a lecturer or visiting professor at ten United States and two Canadian universities and was a consultant to the Social Security Administration in Washington in three separate years. Eveline Burns 'discovered' Titmuss in America. She had an arrangement with Gilbert Walker of Birmingham whereby they sent each other books likely to be of special interest and in 1950 the 'dreary-looking' war history arrived. She writes,

> I wondered what had got into Gilbert to send me such a heavy tome but started to read. Before the end of the first chapter I knew something wonderful had happened. There was a new star in the social policy firmament. I doubt if I missed a single footnote. . . . I was annoyed that here was such an exciting personality of whom I had never heard, nor it seemed had anyone else . . . I shared my excitement with my friends at the Social Security Administration . . . later that year I had the great satisfaction of seeing that everyone who read the book shared my excitement.

In the North American academic community, Titmuss's influence was greatest with social-work practitioners—he turned their thoughts to social policy rather than administrative mechanics—but it was also powerful with sociologists, while he worked with some outstanding lawyers and economists. His interest in medical care and health programmes brought him into contact with medical economists and health statisticians all over North America. His discussions, indeed dialogue, with the Social Security Administration, influenced thinking and policy of governments in the United States. Titmuss advised informally on the development of the Administration's research programme and was impressed by its extent and by the officials' freedom to publish. He was also consulted by a number of leading Congressmen and Senators in Washington and London. Publication of *The Gift Relationship*, which was chosen by the *New York Review of Books* as one of the best books of the year, made Titmuss known to a much wider American audience and undoubtedly encouraged reform of the blood-transfusion arrangements.

This sketch of Richard Titmuss, administering, teaching, and writing at L.S.E. and of his work abroad leaves out his public work at home. He served on a great number and range of committees and advisory councils, and was punctilious in his

attendance at nearly all of them. Some of his public appointments were especially demanding. Thus in the late 1960s at the time of the L.S.E. troubles and when he was writing *The Gift Relationship*, he was at the same time deputy chairman of the Supplementary Benefits Commission and an active member of the National Insurance Advisory Committee, of the Community Relations Commission and of the Royal Commission on Medical Education. Subsequently, until his death, he was a key member of the One Parent Family (Finer) Committee. In 1969 he had been pressed to take on the chairmanship both of this committee and of the S.B.C. but he refused.

Besides these appointments he was politically committed to the Labour Party. Here, the link was most obvious in pensions policy. Already by the early 1950s it was becoming apparent that the National Insurance Act of 1946, supposedly based on the Beveridge plan, had not abolished poverty in old age. The Titmuss group—himself, Abel-Smith, and Townsend—set themselves to produce a new national superannuation scheme. The idea of a state system substituting earnings-related contributions and benefits for a flat-rate national insurance system was suggested by Abel-Smith in 1953. In 1955, somewhat accidentally, as R. H. S. Crossman relates,[1] the Labour Party adopted the plan worked out by the Titmuss group and others under Crossman's chairmanship; the Conservative Party denounced national superannuation as the product of 'the skiffle group of London School of Economics professors'. Titmuss saw the 1970 Bill which enacted Labour's plan lost with the general election. He was saddened by the Conservatives' Bill which succeeded it, which he regarded as wholly retrograde. He would have rejoiced at the new 1974 Labour plan which seemed at last after many vicissitudes likely to fulfil the aims set by his group nearly twenty years earlier.

Titmuss himself did not, like some of his group, enter Whitehall when the Labour Government was formed in 1964. He declined the peerage which the Prime Minister urged on him but his personal influence and moral authority over the Government were great; Ministers had immense respect for him and were loath to court his disapproval. Yet although he succeeded on some practical issues he failed on others such as increased family allowances, and he did not prevent the pigeon-holing of the national superannuation scheme in the first years of the Labour Government.

[1] *The Politics of Pensions*, Liverpool University Press, 1972.

To some the main administrative post Titmuss did assume—the deputy chairmanship of the Supplementary Benefits Commission—seemed alien to his faith which so strongly condemned means-tested benefits. As Crossman has related, the Commission was in a sense the substitute for an income guarantee, based on income-tax assessments, which the Labour Party's election manifesto had promised but which proved impracticable. The Commission replaced the old National Assistance Board but, says Crossman, 'it was the same thing only given a better name and much more tactful humane treatment . . . it was merely an improvement of existing institutions which still retained something of the old stigma'. Titmuss took the Commission post from a desire to do something for the Labour Government and in the hope that before long the Commission's work would cease. Once established there, he realized that, if only because of the problem of rents, let alone the government's budgetary problems, this hope was far distant. Moreover he saw the Commission's work as one way of exercising the positive discrimination in favour of the underprivileged which was necessary on top of universalist benefits.

Titmuss's interest and concern embraced the micro as well as the macro aspects of social systems. He had a very clear grasp of administration—for example who filled up which forms when—and an innate sense of the possible and the practicable. He was not afraid to get down to the difficulty of deciding what to do and take responsibility for it. At the Commission his eyes opened again to new problems—in particular to the appalling Dickensian offices in which the Commission worked and the public were served. He developed an admiration for the staffs, most of them low paid, who worked in these conditions, and he became their loyal champion, again to the dismay of some of his former academic supporters. He spent much time lecturing at the Commission's training schools, and in the process observed the spartan level of their amenities compared with those of nearby new universities. His social accounting went into action as he calculated with startling results the employee/student ratios for different educational establishments.

Loyalty to the S.B.C. and above all loyalty to the Labour Government drove deeper rifts between him and some former colleagues. He was fiercely critical of those who made damaging allegations before the 1970 election that the poor had got poorer under Labour. This was not just a matter of loyalty but of his superior statistical grasp and his capacity to demolish myths. He

could immediately see that in many of the calculations, pre-tax income was being compared with tax-free income. He demonstrated that between 1964 and 1970 the net take-home pay of a man with three children and with average industrial earnings showed a rise in living standards (adjusted for price changes) of 2¼ per cent, compared with a rise of 18 per cent for a similar family on supplementary benefits. He could see that the fundamental problem in the discussions on poverty lay in the tax threshold, the marginal tax rates and regressive National Insurance contributions. Indeed in 1972 he found so much muddle and misinterpretation in the debates that he felt it would be better to stop talking about 'poverty' and restart the debate about inequality. Meanwhile his loyalty to the S.B.C. and his conviction of his own usefulness had persuaded him to continue in office under the 1970 Conservative Government.

Titmuss also felt deeply involved with the work of the Community Relations Commission which he served (along with its predecessor the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigration) for six years. To him the development of harmonious community relations within a framework of tolerance, diversity, and social justice remained one of the great challenges to society. He was certain that racial discrimination had to be fought and discredited at all levels and that it was the modest, unglamorous, and immensely time-consuming efforts of many workers, paid and voluntary, that counted. He had no patience with the denigration of the Commission and its local councils and staff by the mass media and 'guilt ridden middle class intellectuals'.

Somehow Titmuss packed his commitments into a twenty-four-hour day, rising early to work and often working late. Somehow too he was a one-man information retrieval system. Printed material of all kinds poured into his house from all over the world and most of it was read, carefully annotated, and absorbed into his extraordinary mental storehouse. When his large downstairs study filled with paper he moved upstairs and began to fill up a bedroom. Yet in these L.S.E. years his health was not good. In 1957 he had tuberculosis and was treated with drugs which upset his digestion and later caused deafness. No sooner was he better than he was off to Mauritius but he picked up dysentery there and was ill again. Sometimes he had moments of depression—for example in the summer of 1969 when four of his L.S.E. staff were leaving on promotion and the chairman of the S.B.C. was leaving too. But for the most part he was, amidst everything, equable and essentially optimistic. He

was sceptical, even cynical sometimes, but was never a sceptic much less a cynic. He had faith in man himself and in the possibilities of social democracy. He could support the great weight of work and maintain his inner calm because of his happiness at home with Kay. Looking after Richard was her life work. She protected him as much as possible from the calls on him; she encouraged the visitors and committees to meet at Acton and provided endless hospitality; she listened to the day's problems every evening. His achievements might have been impossible without her. They lived simply but comfortably and rejoiced in their two grandchildren. Richard's interests were catholic but his only true recreation was, in latter years, his small garden and greenhouse which gave him enormous pleasure; every plant—some brought back from overseas travel—was known and tended, nursery catalogues were combed and this information too went into the retrieval system. Other than this no forms of conspicuous consumption interested him.

The last year or two of Richard's life brought anxieties. His sister died and there were acute problems with his mother while Kay's health deteriorated. Yet at their New Year's Eve party on the last day of 1971 he looked well and young for his years. After his mother's death in February 1972 he himself developed acute pain in his arm and shoulder. The X-rays of his TB-scarred lungs revealed nothing and the hospital thought the trouble was muscular. Physiotherapy made the pain worse and in the autumn Richard entered Westminster Hospital for an exploratory operation. Cancer was diagnosed but X-ray therapy failed. The pain was fearful and unremitting but drugs caused all kinds of unpleasant side effects. In spite of the pain, discomfort of all kinds, and growing weakness, he insisted on giving his lecture course at L.S.E. right through the spring term of 1973, revising his lectures carefully as a car took him to town. The chairman of the Finer Committee on One Parent Families and his chief colleague consulted Titmuss at Acton and the Committee recorded in their Report how comforted they had been by the knowledge that he regarded their work as 'worthy of his time and painfully husbanded strength in his last months when he knew that he was dying'. Visitors still flocked to talk to him about social policy. Kay, ill herself, nursed him devotedly. Finally, in April 1973, there was an operation in the Central Middlesex Hospital to try to relieve the pain but his lungs could not recover from the operation and he died peacefully. To the end his thoughts were less of the past than of the future—his garden, a

holiday in Suffolk, the manuscripts of his young staff and students. His mind was still, at this time, as someone said, leaping over theoretical and technical hurdles, always with his eyes firmly fixed on the larger goals that were the motivating force of his life.

Titmuss was indeed, as so many said, a giant in his field of study. This was, in some measure, acknowledged by his election to the British Academy in July 1972, his honorary degrees at Chicago, Toronto, Edinburgh, Wales, Brunel, decorations in England (C.B.E.) and Denmark. His professional colleagues and disciples would always remember him as one of the finest and subtlest minds of his generation. They remember him equally, perhaps even more, as a person and in this they are joined by countless others—such as porters at L.S.E., clerks in the Supplementary Benefits Commission, the nurses and physiotherapists who treated him in hospital. Various people remarked on his El Greco quality with 'his great eyes, emaciated face, long body and that indefinable air of what one could only call saintliness'. This soulful quality allows for his gentleness and sweetness but omits his cheerfulness, the impish humour, the laughter and the warmth which were so much part of him. It also hides his useful capacity for anger; he was not one to turn the other cheek. He did manage far more than most people to live according to his principles (although his daughter never attended a local-authority school). It was a quite remarkable quality to remain, as a friend said, a yardstick against which others measured their own integrity and commitment. He had an inexhaustible fund of kindness and friendship and treated everyone alike, with real interest and consideration; he was available to all and was the most patient of listeners. Rank was totally unimportant to him and at conferences he sought out very ordinary delegates for a quiet talk. He was modest, even humble, about his own achievements. At the thanksgiving service held at St. Martins in the Fields, every seat was full, and a friend wrote afterwards how exceptional it was that the majority present were young people or those in their prime—and how fitting.

I am grateful for the help given to me in writing this memoir by numerous friends and colleagues of Richard Titmuss at home and abroad. I am especially grateful to Kay Titmuss for giving me access to Richard's voluminous records which are in themselves a rich legacy for posterity.

MARGARET GOWING