Early Innovations in Social Research: The Poverty Survey of Charles Booth

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by Kevin Bales

Department of Social Science and Administration
London School of Economics and Political Science
University of London

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Preface

The research carried out by Charles Booth would be within the capabilities of few individuals today, just as was the case in 1886. The research that began on September 1, 1886 continued for seventeen years and produced the seventeen volumes of the Life and Labour of the People of London. This work is often referred to as 'monumental', and it is a monument to Charles Booth - but monuments are cold and lifeless things, and Booth's work was just the opposite. Life and Labour changed the way people saw their world.

The size of the research project which became the Poverty Series (the first four volumes of Life and Labour of the People of London) is analogous to projects conducted today by government agencies. Few modern social surveys exceed in size the number of households surveyed by Booth. His methodology has rightly been studied at length, both at the time that he published his research and after. From the turn of the century until the 1930's it served as a template for the developing social survey movement, and for the research carried out for the growing number of politicians and civil servants who used social research to guide the formation of social policy. More recently Booth's methods have been examined by those who wish to understand the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of social science, and by those who feel that Booth's work may have been flawed by bias or methodological failings.

Obviously a work as ambitious as Life and Labour and the Poverty Series in particular, may be considered from many angles. My own interest in Charles Booth and his work began while looking into the way mental illness was diagnosed and treated in the Victorian period. Case histories collected by Booth of the inmates of asylums and workhouses provide one of the very few insights into the details of the lives of those institutionalised. These case histories opened up many new avenues of inquiry, but at the same time I was struck by the volume and detail of the data held in the Booth archive, of which these case histories formed only a small fraction. The more I delved into the poverty notebooks, the interview schedules, the religious influences notes, the more I felt that the usual brief introduction and treatment given to Booth in the social sciences was inadequate. There was more to be learned from what Booth had written, still more from the data he had collected which stood ready for modern analysis.

To pursue that analysis I applied for support to the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, and with their help came to the London School of Economics to begin an exploratory project which, as one of its products, generated the computerised Poverty Study data used in this thesis. After the completion of this exploratory work, I prepared a grant proposal with Dr. Michael Hughes of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to the U.S. National Science

Foundation to prepare another, larger, computer data set from the Poverty Study notebooks. In addition to supervising the data conversion team, I produced for that project a monograph which would accompany the finished data set detailing the methods used by Booth and the role of the School Board Visitors. This larger data is now at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, but was not, unfortunately, available for analysis in this thesis.

The support of the Rowntree Trust and the U.S. National Science Foundation reflected an increased interest in Booth and his work, which was also shown in the large attendance at a conference to mark the centenary of the Poverty Study in 1986, which I helped to organise at Queen Mary College. Booth's work and the materials he left behind still have a great deal of potential for modern researchers. I seek to provide in this thesis a further and needed interpretation of his work and his role in the development of the social sciences.

As my research on Booth developed it grew to have several aims. Some of these aims derived from the existing literature on Booth. There exist two key debates over Booth and his work in the literature, one methodological and one political and philosophical. The methodological debate focuses on the reliability of the information that Booth collected. Some historians and sociologists (Hennock 1976, 1991; Marsh, 1982) have argued that Booth's data, particularly that collected for the poverty study, was

flawed and misleading. The political and philosophical debate concerns Booth's motivations and the impact of his own ideological and philosophical orientation on his work. In this debate some historians (Williams, 1981) have claimed that Booth's ideological conservatism introduced a fatal bias to his work. I found none of the arguments in these debates convincing, and in this thesis have set out to resolve them.

But in addition to resolving these debates I believe that a great deal more needs to be said about Booth and his impact on the development of social science and social research. The more I looked into Booth's life and work, the more I became convinced that his was a pivotal role, one that had, for a number of reasons, been devalued over time. There are three themes which I develop in this thesis in order to reinstate Booth. The first concerns the way in which Booth placed the study of poverty on a scientific basis, and the implications of this in the political and social context of the 1880's. The second explores Booth's originality in studying an entire city and studying it from several different aspects. The third deals with Booth as an originator of modern research practice, as an investigator who created an effective ongoing research team of substantial size when investigations had never been done on such a scale.

To address these five broad issues required significant original research of several sorts. To resolve

the debate on the reliability of Booth's data required going back to the original data collection notebooks, to the diaries, letters, and records kept by Charles and Mary Booth, Beatrice Potter, and others, to the 1881 Census enumerator notebooks, to the records of the School Board for London, to elderly people who could still remember the part played by School Board Visitors, and the establishment of new computerised databases which could be re-analysed and subjected to modern statistical techniques. This statistical re-analysis is, I believe, the only way to resolve the ongoing methodological debate. Previous critics and commentators have made a number of assertions about the quality and nature of the data collected in Booth's survey of poverty in East London - but they have not analysed the data themselves. A modern social scientist would expect the possibility of replication of their research if it became controversial; I believe we should expect no less of the research accomplished by Charles Booth.

To address the debate on Booth's philosophical stance required looking closely into his letters and writings, back to the poetry and stories he wrote as a young man, and the interviewing of his grand-children, and the consideration of his wing of the Comtian 'church', and the exploration of the writings of those who knew him and his work.

The three themes I wished to develop also required considerable new research. To understand how Booth placed the study of poverty on a scientific basis called for a

close examination and analysis of the documents planning the research, the original research materials, and the letters between the Booths, Beatrice Potter, and others as the research programme was developing. To place the research within the 1880's meant coming to understand the nature of the city Booth confronted - from the impact of the weather found in the meteorological records to the effect of immigration found in the archive of the Jewish Board of Guardians. The scientific study of poverty also had policy implications and Booth was drawn into both campaigning and policy formulation. The records of the Old Age Pensions campaign held some surprises about Booth's role in the achievement of universal pensions in Britain. The transcripts of several Royal Commissions, particularly the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (1905-1909), contain both the contributions of Booth as Commissioner and the evidence he had ordered and brought.

To consider how Booth studied London _in toto_ meant going back to the seventeen volumes of _Life and Labour_, and to the many more volumes of archived research materials behind them. It meant charting through his personal papers the evolution of the research on London, as well as its side-turnings: research on public transport, on the elderly, and on trades unions.

To understand Booth as an organiser of research meant looking closely at his planning and especially his research team. Twenty people served on Booth's research team, and

each of them has a personal history that needed searching out. For several of the team members the time spent working on the 'Inquiry' was a formative part of their careers. This was particularly the case for Beatrice Potter (Webb). In addition, the data collection instruments that survive were designed by Booth to meet the needs of a research project that had few precedents, and studying their make-up gave insights into the logic of the research exercise.

What follows is an analysis of Booth's growth as a social scientist and the manner in which Booth came to conceptualise and execute his research project, as well as an exploration of its impact on his contemporaries, and a re-analysis of the findings. The debates and the themes mentioned above are dealt with both in the review of literature and at the points at which they touch upon the larger history of Booth and his work. The first chapter opens these questions in more detail and looks closely at the modern literature on Booth. The second chapter is a biography of Booth. The third looks closely at the context of London in the 1880's and how Life and Labour fit within that context. Life and Labour is a very large document and the fourth chapter describes its component parts, as well as looking closely at Booth's research team. The fifth chapter examines the results of the poverty study. The sixth chapter explores the impact of Life and Labour on Booth's contemporaries, and the seventh chapter is concerned with Booth's role in the development of social policy. The eighth chapter explores the research methods

which Booth used in the poverty study and the important role of the School Board Visitors. The ninth chapter is a re-analysis of the data collected for the poverty study, both in terms of its reliability and in the classificatory schemes for which Booth used it. A tenth chapter holds conclusions drawn from the thesis as a whole, and an appendix provides much greater detail on the research materials held in the Booth archive. I hope that within these chapters I also convey the excitement I felt in exploring Booth's work, and the importance which I feel Booth should be granted both in terms of his contemporary impact and his influence on the development of modern social science. Nowhere is this more the case than in the conceptualisation of poverty.

In the 1880's a chaos of divergent opinions on the nature and causes of poverty confronted Booth, but the camps of opinion leaders were becoming more clearly polarised. On one side were those whose diagnosis of poverty focused on problems of morality, on the other were the growing numbers who interpreted social distress as indicative of structural problems in the economic organisation of society. Booth's wife Mary explained in her Memoir that when she and her husband settled in London they found 'People's minds were very full of the various problems connected with the position of the poor, and opinions the most diverse were expressed, remedies of the most contradictory nature were proposed. The works of

Ruskin, the labours of Miss Octavia Hill, the principles and practice of the Charity Organisation Society, all contributed to the upheaval of thought and feeling' (1918:14). At the beginning of the poverty survey Booth explained that he believed that the '*a priori* reasoning of political economy, orthodox and unorthodox alike, fails from want of reality. At its base are a series of assumptions very imperfectly connected with the observed facts of life' (1887:7). By uncovering these facts of life Booth hoped to bring some resolution to the questions that poverty raised. The debate on the 'poverty question' continued long after the publication of *Life and Labour*, but the nature of that debate was fundamentally changed, as was the agenda for social policy and social change.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Britain in the 1880's was at the peak of its technological and economic superiority. The United States and Germany were rapidly closing the gap, but of these three Britain was far ahead in translating its power into 'mass' benefit. While much of America was still the 'Wild West', London was demonstrating what the twentieth century city would be: underground railways, electric lighting, a spreading telephone network, flushing toilets, and a relatively free and competitive press. Museums and hospitals, great orchestras and the Royal Academy, a dockland drawing goods from across the planet, all these demonstrated the fruits of the industrialised society. This application of technology and the growth of industry, it was believed by many, also brought social elevation to the working population.

For those who enjoyed the rewards of empire, the extension of social and political privileges to the working classes helped to prove the pre-eminence of the British system. The extension of the franchise (though still limited in this period), the state provision of schooling, the committees which enquired into the conditions of the poor, were all seen as indicators of the enlightened benevolence of the upper classes. Yet there was another perspective to be taken on these privileges and the power which supported them, one which highlighted not achievement but failure.

Many felt that the failure of Britain, and especially

of London, was in the suffering of the poor. The actual number of people who were poor constituted a controversial question from before the 1830's up to and through the 1880's. It is very difficult to make estimates of the extent of poverty before the 1880's. Before 1848 the Poor Law Commission published returns of paupers twice per year, but it was unclear at the time, as well as today, whether, for example, a person who was relieved twice was counted as one pauper or two (Rose, 1972:15). Very little was recorded which might help discriminate indoor (institutionalised) from outdoor (help or funds distributed in the home) relief. As far as they did record the number of paupers the result was one which seemed to show a regular decrease in poverty. The Local Government Board's 31st Annual Report (1901-02) (1902) gave the following information:

Table 1-1

Mean Number of Paupers Relieved, 1850 - 1885, In England and Wales

Year End: Lady Day	(Indoor) Mean Number	(Outdoor) Mean Number	(Total) Mean Number	% of Population
1850	123,004	885,696	1,008,700	5.7
1855	121,400	776,286	897,686	4.8
1860	113,507	731,126	844,633	4.3
1865	131,312	820,586	951,898	4.5
1870	156,800	876,000	1,032,800	4.6
1875	146,800	654,114	800,914	3.4
1880	180,817	627,213	808,030	3.2
1885	183,820	585,118	768,938	2.9

1. The mean number is the mean of the number relieved on 1 January of that year and those relieved on 1 July of the previous year.
2. Lady Day is 25 March.
3. These data did not include casuals or insane paupers.
Adapted from Appendix E, p.312.

The apparent decline was actually more of a reduction in provision rather than poverty. Other sources continued to note evidence of greater numbers in poverty; Henry Mayhew noted that in 1848 less than two million people were estimated to be in receipt of poor relief, but two and a quarter million had no gainful employment (Mayhew, 1861:III:398). And the work of Charles Booth would prove a serious challenge to these estimates. By the 1880's a worsening economic climate also called into question the offically pronounced decline in poverty.

The 1880's began troubled and were to become worse - on the first of January 1880 the Times stated in an editorial:

'We leave behind us in 1879 a year which has combined more circumstances of misfortune and depression than any within general experience ... War on two continents ... Commerce stagnant ... Agriculture has suffered from an adversity so severe as to impose a heavy burden upon all the classes connected with the land ... party spirit in politics has displayed a bitterness which the most experienced politicians confess to exceed anything within their remembrance'.

The economic growth which had granted a certain stability to class relations in the 1860's and 1870's ended in what contemporaries would come to call the Great Depression after 1879. The population had grown rapidly, almost doubling to 35 million between 1821 and 1881. Now a large working class, some three-quarters of the population, which had provided labour during the process of industrialisation, was the first point of friction as the economy cooled and slowed. And if rural England was

succumbing to the 'slow and muted strangulation' of foreign competition (Lynd, 1945:28), the cities were facing turmoil generated by the same cause. London was the centre of the British economy and would bear the brunt of foreign competition and the problems it brought. Unemployment burgeoned, but it was (and is) impossible to know to what extent across the working population. One indicator is that the word 'unemployed', used as a noun, first appeared in the Oxford Dictionary in 1882 and 'unemployment' in 1888. Jose Harris explains that the economic crisis of the 1880's pressed unemployment to the fore and 'by the end of the decade was seen by many writers on social problems as the root of crime, vagrancy, and prostitution, and as the "sphinx of the age"' (Harris, 1972:4).

As the economic depression of the 1880's began to take its toll on the livelihood of the poor, new voices were raised against both the inequities of the economic system and the dark and unclear knowledge of the suffering it caused. Thomas Binning in the new Socialist Platform wrote in accusation: 'What a satire upon our boasted civilization that plenty should bring misery to many and that people should actually starve because of the very abundance' (1886). Brought up short by the recognition of this suffering, but without understanding it (or sometimes not wishing to understand it) the upper classes felt certainty evaporate. 'It is the consciousness of not seeing their way on the part of the people that is new' explained the economist Cliffe Leslie in 1879. Yet however these

questioning voices rose they did not drown out the dominant view which placed the poor within a right and natural order.

'The causes of the inequality of wealth lie deep in the foundation of human nature and the constitution of the world, and no laws can essentially alter them' wrote Samuel Smith in 1883. The year before Mallock, a pamphleteer for the Liberty and Property Defence League, explained that a dislike of suffering was common to all classes, but that the wish for equality often coalesced with this dislike in the popular mind, and from this came 'endless confusion and falsehood' (1882:195). This viewpoint held that the wealthy provided a crucial service to society, creating employment, serving as an example, offering reward for achievement, and, at times wrongly, dispensing charity and sympathy. In any event, it was argued as an irrefutable fact that the working classes were enjoying ongoing material improvement. Sir Robert Giffen, in his first speech as president of the Royal Statistical Society in 1883, explained that:

' ... while the individual incomes of the working classes have largely increased, the prices of the main articles of their consumption have declined; and the inference of their being much better off ... is fully supported by statistics showing a decline in the rate of mortality, an increase in consumption of articles in general use, an improvement in general education, a diminution of crime and pauperism, a vast increase in the number of depositors in savings banks

...' (1904:419-420). The philosophy which under-pinned these assertions was also accepted with a hearty, if increasingly brittle, assurance. Today the best remembered ideas of the 1880's are the new, and very much minority, views of the decade's reformers and revolutionaries, such as William Morris and Karl Marx. But at the time these had little volume and less force. Clear assumptions about society and human nature were shared by a majority of those with a say in governing society: people are naturally lazy; the desire for improvement is not natural and must be inculcated; and poverty is a person's own fault. For those who achieved power, achievement was seen as natural - success crowned the striver with authority. Against these ideas and their many and vocal supporters ranged the relatively silent but inescapable fact of worsening poverty (cf. Lynd, 1945:61-112; Rose, 1972:10; Himmelfarb, 1991:3-18).

Before Charles Booth would bring an empirical certainty to its measurement, the evidence of increased suffering was mounting. In 1884 John Rae, economist and Provost of the University of Edinburgh, republished a series of articles which drew on government reports to show that 'In the wealthiest country in the world, almost every twentieth inhabitant is a pauper... one-fifth of the community is insufficiently clad; ... large classes of working people are too poorly fed to save them from what are known as starvation diseases; ... one-third, if not indeed one-half, of the families of the country are huddled

six in a room ...' (1884:57). At one level there was little dispute, the basic arithmetic of poverty could be counted with reasonable assurance. Those giving evidence to Royal Commissions, most employers, and indeed the poor as well, all agreed that a minimum weekly budget for a family of four required between 20s. and 30s. income, and that a significant number of families (for whatever reason) failed to achieve this level of income year round.

As will be described in more detail in Chapter 3, the worsening crisis of human suffering and political will in the mid-1880's pressed many individuals, through a growing perception of the attendant problems, to undertake a search for new approaches and policies. Charles Booth, through work which synthesised much of what he had learned in business, provided one new approach. It was an approach which would be more significant over the long term in the development of the social sciences and social policy, than in the immediate relief of human suffering. While not conceived as such at the time, it was a strategic breakthrough. And though many of its initial tactical advances were ill-conceived and futile, the basic strategy remained sound.

The Experience and Influence of Charles Booth

This thesis will closely examine Charles Booth, his work as a social scientist, the strategies for social policy he developed, and the information that he collected and its analysis in the course of that work. It is my argument that Booth's work was pivotal in the development of modern empirical social science. This key influence was derived from his methodologies as well as his published works in a number of ways: Firstly, Booth placed the study of poverty on a scientific basis, work which had an important impact in the economic and social context of the 1880's. Secondly, Booth studied an entire city from several perspectives, and the originality of that approach had a significant influence on the direction that subsequent social science would take, particularly in the development of the social survey movement. Thirdly, Booth, without an institutional location, organised an effective ongoing research team of substantial size when such investigations had never been done on such a scale. In doing so he provided a template for subsequent large-scale social researchers.

It is important to remember that Booth was a social researcher but not an academic. By carefully examining his intellectual development it is hoped that some understanding might be gained of how a Victorian merchant, ship-owner, and manufacturer came to make a crucial contribution to the social sciences. Abrams (1968:136) has

called Booth a bridge that unites the positivist and reformist traditions of nineteenth century political economy with the empirical social sciences of the twentieth. It was the intractable problem of poverty that motivated Booth to ask basic questions and to synthesise many research techniques in an attempt to answer those questions. Booth called poverty 'the problem of all problems' and he felt a moral obligation to seek its solution. Where he differed from most of his contemporaries was his inherent pragmatism - problems could be solved, he believed, only on the basis of sound information. He applied rigorous analytical standards in investigation, and constructed policy recommendations from the resulting evidence. In Booth's opinion, personal beliefs, whether religious or political, could only cloud the understanding and interpretation of his research. This is not to say that he was not influenced by the belief systems of his class and his times, for he was; what is important is that Booth was, at least in part, aware of this influence and acted to counter it.

Within his personal philosophy was a compelling sense of social obligation that led him to devote years of his life and a fortune to seeking answers to the most serious social problems of his time. Beatrice Webb described him as 'perhaps the most perfect embodiment of ... the mid-Victorian time-spirit - the union of faith in the scientific method with the transference of the emotion of self-sacrificing service from God to man' (1926:220). It

would be insufficient, however, to think of him as merely a social philanthropist, because Booth saw his `service to man' in the introduction of the exactitude of the natural sciences to social research, and to the resolution of confusion in social policy and opinion. By introducing statistical methods to social policy he effected a break with the social philosophers of his time and opened a new line in the evolution of the social sciences. Early in his research on poverty he wrote that policy could 'be built out of a big theory, and facts and statistics run in to fit it', but this was not the way he wished to work. Instead he sought to construct through research 'a large statistical framework built to receive an accumulation of facts'. When this framework was filled with all the available data and evidence, then from it might be 'evolved the theory and the law and the basis of more intelligent action'. Carried into practice the construction of this framework and the collection of information to fill it would consume the efforts of Booth and his research staff for seventeen years. To achieve this `accumulation of facts' aggregate statistical analysis was combined with observation and participation to present a balanced and human portrait of the life of, what was then, the largest city in the world.

Booth's work was a search for factual information, his orientation essentially inductive and positivist. Viewed from a temporal distance that allows his work to be placed in its historical context, it becomes recognisable as a

response to the deductive and grand theoretical approach of many of his contemporaries. These grand theories might be divided into those which had broad, but incoherent followings, such as the conservative and moralist view which blamed poverty on the moral failings of the poor; and those which had very small but engaged followings such as the evolutionary theories of Herbert Spencer. One of the most obvious proponents of the former was the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (Abrams, 1968:45). In the struggle, still going on, between inductive and deductive approaches to social science, Booth was a turning point. The predominating deductive grand theories of his time were balanced by his empirical and inductive research. While he did not explicitly argue for the adoption of this approach, he moved the social sciences toward the inductive analysis of complex and unique events. It was an approach which has certain resonance and parallels in the late twentieth century. Several modern scholars have put forward manifestoes which argue against deductive general theory and favour empirical inductive analysis (Bendix, 1984; Skocpol, 1984; Tilly, 1984); their common theme is that theory must become balanced through an interaction with data. This balance in turn admits the possibility of multiple causation, not restricted to a specific theoretical orientation. As Skocpol put it 'How are we ever going to arrive at new theoretical insights if we do not let historical patterns speak to us, rather than always viewing them through the blinders, or the heavily

tinted lenses, of pre-existing theory?' (1986:190).

Booth, for better or worse, leaned strongly toward letting the historical patterns speak, and leaving the theoretical interpretations of these patterns to others. If he had a theoretical interpretation of the social system of nineteenth century London it is implicit in the structure of his research project. The sheer breadth of his work, relating deprivation to the structure of the city's economy and the social and religious influences which affect both, sketches the outlines of society as he conceived it. The seventeen volumes of The Life and Labour of the People in London hold a mirror up to English urban society, concentrating, but not reducing, the field of vision. But reproduction is not distillation, and theory unstated has been assumed to be no theory at all. As the Simeys put it:

> As things were, his unwillingness to discuss the theoretical implications of his work had the unfortunate consequence of leaving his philosophical position suspended as it were in mid-air, between the 'science' of Comtism and the revelation of the Christian religion in one dimension, and in another, between the individualism of the classical economists and the socialism of his supporters in the campaign for old age pensions. (1960:253)

Between Christianity and Comtism, individualism and socialism, deductive theory and inductive analysis, Booth took the middle path, recognising and using what he felt were the best of each. Equally important, he placed individual human experience in the middle of his analysis. His work was built up from the collection of information from individuals, whether the object of study was poverty, industry, or religion. If there was a unifying theoretical

concept it was that the life of an aggregated society might be understood by examining the lives of its component individuals. Addressing the social issues of his day, Booth looked to the individuals who were most affected by those issues, and, in his best known work, searched among those individuals who lived at the heart of poverty.

Booth's Role in Developing Social Science

By the 1880's the question of poverty had exercised English society for well over one hundred years. The industrial revolution had brought with it marked changes in social organisation and a fundamental shift in the economy. For some parts of society these changes led to, or added to, their impoverishment. From before the time of the Napoleonic wars a debate had continued over the exact nature of poverty, and over what should be society's response. Contributions to this debate included the work of Adam Smith, Malthus, Bentham, Godwin, Comte, Martineau, Engels, Marx, and Spencer, as well as other religious, political, or social commentators of many persuasions. Booth's part in this debate was to address two simple questions which were at the base of the ongoing controversy - how many people were poor, and why were they poor? His intention was to show that the incidence and causes of poverty could be accurately measured.

He achieved this goal and in doing so began a new chapter in the social sciences with two important themes. The first was to demonstrate the efficacy of social

research and the 'survey method'. The concept of the social survey is now so universally accepted that it is difficult, but important, to remember that many of Booth's contemporaries regarded him as its inventor, and acclaimed this invention as a milestone in scientific progress. The impact of this invention was perhaps greater on the development of the social sciences in America than in Britain. Within twenty years of the publication of the first volume of Life and Labour of the People of London hundreds of surveys had been accomplished in the cities of the United States, including the Hull House study of Chicago (1895), DuBois' study of Philadelphia (1899), and Kellogg's study of Pittsburg (1909). The first two of these studies, in particular, closely approximated Booth's techniques. In Britain social investigation also followed Booth's lead; both Rowntree's study of York (1899) and Bowley's broader research (1915) adopted and improved Booth's methodology.

The second important way in which Booth's research changed social science was its influence on the way in which social policy was formulated. By determining the actual number of people in poverty, and by indicating the frequency of various causes of poverty, he helped to make possible the development of policy designed to meet actual and measured needs. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Booth's finding that old age and its problems were the greatest single cause of pauperism and

institutionalisation. Strongly affected by this finding, Booth threw himself into the campaign for what was considered at the time to be a radical policy - universal old age pensions. Twenty years passed before the provision of old age pensions became law, by which time the government was more receptive to using social research as a basis for the development of social policy - though still not particularly so in the area of poor relief (Davidson, 1991:360).

Modern Questions of the Research Record

The research which supported the published works which made up the Poverty Series and the other volumes of Life and Labour of the People of London lasted over seventeen years and required a large staff. It has often been assumed that Booth must have used virtually all of the information he collected to fill the seventeen volumes, but this was not the case. He was, in some respects, more successful at collecting data than at analysing it. In an attempt to build up a complete picture of London his team amassed thousands and thousands of pages of notes, records, and evidence. In the First Volume (1889) he wrote that "Of the wealth of my material I have no doubt. I am indeed embarrassed by its mass". Booth was also methodical in filing and storing the information he collected; for each sub-set of research notes, for example, there is usually a hand-written index or directory. Standard notebooks were printed for his staff so that information would be

collected in a uniform manner. Through his own foresight and that of his family the bulk of his research materials were preserved after the closure of his research office in 1903. In time a large section of these was deposited with the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Later more materials were added to this collection, and his personal papers were given to the Library of the University of London. A full account of these materials is given in Appendix A.

Over the years some researchers have used these raw materials. For the most part, however, they have been ignored as researchers preferred to use the printed volumes of _Life and Labour_. With the advent of new techniques for data capture and manipulation it became clear that this wealth of information could be made available to modern social science researchers. But this 'rediscovery' brought with it many questions: how representative were Booth's subjects? And if his subjects were not representative of what value are his findings? What were his motivations for undertaking the research? How far can we trust his findings today as valid and reliable? What did he hope would be gained by this research? Were his policy suggestions examples of his bourgeois moralism or an attempt at objective and constructive change?

Many of these questions were raised with particular force in the 1960's as social science in Britain re-examined its past, and re-evaluated many of its founders.

As empirical and statistical approaches to society were being criticised as inherently conservative, Booth's analytical methods came under special scrutiny (Hennock, 1976; Marsh, 1982). Unfortunately, in many cases, the debate around Booth's work centred only on isolated and specific sections or chapters, and the integration of his career and research over time were left unclear. Comprehension of Booth's career as a social scientist is confounded by its curious ordering - he did not embark on his research until he was forty-six years old and he accomplished the great majority of his research and writing by the time he was sixty-five. He became in the process a public figure. In spite of his tremendous output, and the concomitant evolution of his own ideas, most of the modern discussion and criticism of his work has focused on the first 100 pages of his first major work, the first volume of Life and Labour. Yet in this period he produced the seventeen volumes of The Life and Labour of the People of London, a series of articles in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, two other books, and several pamphlets (and continued to oversee and manage the Booth Steamship Company).

In the following chapters these questions of motivation, representativeness, validity and reliability will be taken up in detail. Before most of them can be answered a further consideration of the historical context is necessary. And despite the fact that Booth the social

scientist appeared on the scene aged forty-six, it is the young Charles Booth who can most easily point to answers on questions of motivation and personal philosophy, as will be addressed in Chapter 2. But before taking up Booth's own history it is important to examine how he has fared at the hands of modern historians and social scientists.

Reviewing the Modern Literature on Booth

In reviewing the many writers who have examined the work of Charles Booth one is struck by a clear demarcation of opinion. On one side are those who see his work as a great contribution to the social sciences: the phrase 'his monumental survey' echoes again and again. This side accepts his findings with little or no criticism, preferring to accept the caveats that the cautious Booth attached to every volume. On the other hand are those who find the cumulative critiques of his research to be damning, the resultant analysis to be hollow, and come to agree with the British historian who remarked to Hanan Selvin: 'Charles Booth's greatest contribution to social science was to spend £30,000 pounds of his own money' (Selvin, 1979:47). Between these two poles is a middle ground which may be more fruitful, and which in recent years has gained more support. It is also important to remember that while discussion and criticism of Booth's work are of interest, the volumes he wrote and data he collected are also useful - for both a further understanding and criticism of his work, and as source

material for the historian and social scientist.

Any history of British social science, any introduction to the study of the city, any discussion of the development of social research methods will touch on the work of Charles Booth. In the history of social research Booth is usually given 'founder' status. Caradog Jones places Booth at the point of the invention of the social survey: 'conceived and executed by Booth, the social survey was a procedure for transposing impressions ... into objective evidence' (1941:818) T.S. Simey, who would later write Booth's biography, in an article summing up the difficulties faced by social researchers in the 1950's harked back to 'the achievements at the turn of the century' which were 'very impressive indeed, so much so that the work we are now attempting is not strikingly greater in quantity than theirs' (1957:125). Simey asserts that if the promise suggested by Booth's work for the developing social sciences was not achieved, it was in part due to its cooptation by policy makers. 'The dawn of the new empirical sociology turned out to be a false dawn, partly because the system-builders went on building systems, and to a large extent crowded the empiricists off the stage' (1957:125). In an article which accompanied Simey's, McGregor also refers to Booth as 'the founder of the new empirical sociology' though he also emphasised that 'many hands laid the foundations on which he built' (1957:156). Easthope calls Booth 'the first empirical

sociologist' (1974:57). While this is a difficult claim to substantiate, it is clear that Booth was the first to combine the accounts of first-hand observers, the use of informants, the utilisation of government statistics, and descriptive investigations into one study. This crucial synthesis was also remarkable for its sheer size and points up the truth of Ruth Glass's observation that Booth has always been 'more admired than read', (1955:46). The accounts of Booth's survey in histories of social research are remarkably similar. All outline Booth's early life as a businessman with philanthropic interests. Most repeat that bit of academic mythology which locates Booth's motivation to study London poverty in a highly charged interview with the socialist organiser H.M. Hyndman, an interview that supposedly ended with Booth's declaration that he would conduct his study to disprove Hyndman's assertion that 25 per cent of London's populace lived in poverty. The accounts go on to emphasise Booth's aim of giving quantitative meaning (and balance) to the sensational stories of 'starving millions' in 'outcast London', and how he accomplished this through the 'wholesale interviewing' of the School Board Visitors. Special attention is paid to the use of the information gathered from the School Board Visitors to develop 'classes' of social condition and a poverty line, and the translation of these 'classes' into the graphic presentation of poverty and well-being in Booth's maps of London. For many (Bulmer, 1982; Jones, 1958) the

contribution of Booth ends here - with the provision of the first real statistics on the incidence of poverty. Others go on to a brief description of the 'Industry' and 'Religious Influences' series. Finally, the fact that Booth's work served as an exemplar is highlighted and the next paragraph usually introduces Seebohm Rowntree. This is the introduction which is, for most historians and social scientists, the extent of their contact with Charles Booth; and it is from the basis of this introduction that some look more closely at Booth's work.

Those who do look more closely find a great complexity to man and product, and for some, the 'founding father' falls rapidly into disrepute, though the work of Harold Pfautz (1967) takes a very positive view as discussed below. Through the 1950's and early 1960's Booth retained, in the estimation of most critics, his mantle of 'social scientist'. From the late 1960's Booth underwent a reinterpretation. At a time when many Marxist social scientists were pressing indictments of empirical social research, Booth came to be seen as the originator of an oppressive and reactionary method of research, a form of research which both carried into operation what were perceived as his own prejudices and operated as a new tool in the state's control of the underclass.

One of the most extensive indictments of Booth's work is John Brown's 'Charles Booth and Labour Colonies, 1889-1905' (1968). In this article Brown asserts that the

validity of Booth's work is hampered by the preconceptions and moral judgements he held. He offers as an example quotations from Booth which purport to show that he 'resorted to moral judgements' and that 'the poorer his classes, the more harshly he dealt with them'. (1968:352). Brown also sees Booth's plan to alleviate unemployment by the provision of labour colonies for class B as 'impracticality and sober authoritarianism' (1968:353). (A statistical test of Booth's use of 'value judgements' follows in Chapter 9). A close examination of this article casts very serious doubts on Brown's thesis. Lummis (1971) has already shown that 'Brown fails to make the necessary distinction between "value" and "moral" judgements; that Booth is remarkably free from moral judgements; and that his suggestions on labour colonies are firmly rooted in his scientific approach', (1971:100). While it is true that Booth often acknowledged the crushing impact of poverty on the lives he studied, it cannot be said that he completely exonerated the poor for their poverty. As a successful businessman he believed strongly in economic virtue expressed through friendly societies and thrift. These personal beliefs were tempered by a sincere effort at statistical objectivity, and almost in spite of himself 'Booth finally destroyed the notion that poverty was the outcome of individual failings', as even Brown admits (1968:353).

Another view of Booth's conceptions and preconceptions is the work of Hennock (1976), which corrects a number of

widely held views. It is here that Hennock, following on the research by Rubenstein (1968), lays to rest the myth of the Hyndman-Booth interview; and he shows that Booth was not greatly surprised to discover that his figures showing 30 per cent. in poverty were higher than earlier estimates as is often reported. But the major point that Hennock makes is that Booth's classification of the population into classes was not innovative but based on 'a familiar set of assumptions about the composition of society and the nature of social progress' (1976:79). By doing so Hennock was attempting to 'restore Charles Booth's survey ... to its own historical period' (1991:189). These preconceptions were coupled with, in Hennock's view, a major methodological failing. The collection of data from the School Board Visitors was, after all, the collection of impressions, even with cross-checking. In light of the fact 'that there were no figures of income or expenditure generally available' (Hennock, 1976:79), the impressions could not be verified and the resultant classification system, as termed by another writer, was 'hopelessly subjective' (Marsh, 1982:17). It may be, however, that Hennock is mistaken in writing off the value of these 'impressions'. In Chapter 8 we note that the School Board Visitors were empowered by legislation to question employers and landlords to determine income and rent, as well as interviewing the poor themselves. In an analysis of a random sample of Booth's household data assembled for

this work (N = 1576) income is reported for 16.8 per cent. of scheduled households and rent is known for 94 per cent. In addition, the job held by the head of household is reported for 87 per cent, and wage rates for most jobs were well known. Booth may have allowed his own ideas on poverty to influence the development of his classification system, but he did so cognizant of income and expenditure. The classification itself is subjected to close statistical scrutiny in Chapter 9.

At the same time Hennock is quite right in pointing out that Booth's work reflects the social theory of his day - one that believed 'that careful classification of "the constituent elements of this unemployment class" was essential before a remedy could be provided', (1976:77, quoting A.H. Hill, 1868). That Booth set himself just this task and later explored the relationship of poverty to crowding, marriage rates, the birth rate, and death rate tends to belie those who term his work atheoretical (Glass, 1955; Marsh, 1982). Booth accomplished these tasks, but in ways which were not completely satisfactory (least of all to himself). These accomplishments point up and temper Hennock's assessment that 'Booth's genius lay not in analytical and conceptual originality, but in perseverance and a lively curiosity for the world around him' (1976:76).

Hennock returned to Booth's work in 1991 in a study of the conceptualisation of poverty in early social surveys. In this article Hennock continues to argue that the data

collected by Booth could not have supported the generalisation he made in describing the poor of East London:

The reliability of this information, even when it was available, was open to grave doubt, as was pointed out to Booth when he presented his first interim report to the Royal Statistical Society, and as he had himself admitted when planning his operations. 'At the end it is only an opinion and I hesitate to make it the basis for our classification', he had written. (Hennock, 1991:190)

While the exact quality of the data Booth collected might be debated, it is important to attend to what Booth himself said on the subject. The quotation above, which was in a letter to Beatrice Potter written just after the first School Board Visitor had been interviewed, but before the data used in the Poverty Study had actually been collected, concerned not the general information available but the amount of wages each worker received. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, in the absence of wage data Booth used the known wage rates for the different occupations, tempered by his knowledge of the regularity of employment for each wage-earner. To continue the quotation Hennock selected:

I feel at the end it is only an opinion and I hesitate to make it the basis of our classification. The character of employment is at any rate a fact and I think that we may so arrange and deal with this information as to this as to make it yield the facts as to Earnings in a way that can be proved if disputed. I should like to have the School Board Visitor's view as one item of evidence. (Booth to B. Potter, Sept. 1886)

One of Hennock's aims to distinguish Booth's work from that of Rowntree whose measures did include wages, and who, Hennock feels, 'freed himself from Booth's pre-occupation

with classifying and enumerating' (1991:199).

Garraty (1978), in his history of unemployment, also takes Booth to task, but curiously, Garraty also colours Booth with a number of emotions which are hard to justify from the historical record. Garraty's interpretations of Booth's work are so at variance with recorded and verifiable information, and are so often based upon conjectures, that it is difficult to attempt a clear review and criticism. When Booth wrote in Life and Labour that he had attempted to gather facts 'with no bias or distorting aim', Garraty states he 'boasted' (1978:110). Confronted with Booth's statements that many 'good men are now walking about idle' due to economic depression, Garraty explains that Booth was 'complacent' (1978:112). Garraty also asserts that Booth 'did not trouble to count' the unemployed (1978:112), though it is difficult to see how he could have failed to do so in a general survey which sought to record employment, and, in any event an examination of the data collection notebooks shows that Booth recorded unemployment as well as under-employment. Garraty explains that even though Booth was 'unfamiliar with the writings of Marx ... he subscribed to the reserve army thesis as a matter of course' and yet 'found no reason in his statistical summaries... to blame unemployment' (1978:111). It is hard to know what to make of these assertions when we know that Booth was perfectly familiar with Marx's work, and that he clearly named the main cause of poverty as

'questions of employment' meaning under-employment and unemployment. Finally, Garraty writes that Booth 'thought' that relief 'would "unnerve the suffering poor" and "habituate" the unemployed to idleness' (1978:113). How Booth was to have 'thought' this, when the quoted phrases are actually from a historical reference to the Lord Mayor's fund of 1886 made within the essay written by Margaret Tilliard and Booth on 'Homeless Men' (1892:230-1) is unclear. What is more clear is the nature of revisionist interpretation applied to Booth. Garraty has a number of valid points to make about the perception of unemployment in the 1880's, a time when unemployment was becoming an ineluctable part of London life. But unfortunately these points are obscured by the treatment of Booth's work which seems to imply that if he was a Victorian he must have been reactionary, and that what fails to meet the requirements of 'modern' interpretation must bend to its weight.

There is another reinterpretaion of Booth's work by Karel Williams (1981) which is both a textual analysis of Life and Labour and an analysis of the 'misleading' historiographic descriptions of Booth's work by the Simeys, Brown, and Stedman Jones. Williams argues: 'first, that the text [Life and Labour] is not simply about poverty or some such master-theme and, second, that reference to poverty or unemployment cannot be abstracted from a longer chain of reference' (1981:309). He explains that the historians' description of Booth's work has 'completely miscarried', this has occurred because:

> The basic problem is that ... empiricist epistemology provides a set of categories that dominate historiographic analysis of the texts of social investigation. This epistemology constructs how Life and Labour works, because it provides the concepts of the key operations and components of the text: 'fact', 'hypothesis', 'theory', and 'test'. (1981:312)

But the 'empiricist epistemology', according to Williams, 'has already been demolished' (1981:312). Life and Labour particularly suffers, according to Williams, because: 'At the level of epistemological credo, Booth subscribed in a naively empiricist way to the importance of accumulating facts and suppressing bias' (1981:314). Williams also identifies, as have other commentators, the inherent ambivalence of much of Booth's work; he notes 'a quality of prevarification in Life and Labour, which accounts for the text's chronic uncertainty about what had been discovered, when it came to the summing up at the end of the poverty and industry series' (1981:337). This ambiguity is the reason Williams feels that some historians can 'fabricate a progressive Booth' and others 'fabricate a reactionary Booth' (1981:337). For all this, Life and Labour 'must be judged an unsuccess' (1981:339).

The criticisms which Williams brings to Booth's work are, perhaps, useful when considering Life and Labour as a text, an entity in some way removed from its historical moment. But the criticisms also rise from a number of assumptions which are at variance with the majority, and my own, interpretations of the reality of both social research and the social world. If it were the case that the

'empiricist epistemology' had been 'demolished', and that the concepts of 'fact' and 'hypothesis', 'theory' and 'test' were now known to be chimeras without agreed meanings, inherently false and misleading, then Williams' critique begins to hold ground. (Though, of course, its relativist attitude also prescribes that any other critique holds an equally 'valid' claim to understand the 'text' of Life and Labour.)

To fully discuss Williams' ideas requires returning to first principles. There are (at least) two philosophical positions in opposition here. One states that factual reality has inherent meaning, the other states that all 'facts' are relative to the perception of the viewer or reader. It is an interesting debate, but one which exists only on the edge of most historical and sociological work which considers Booth. It is also an irreconcilable debate, for any 'factual' arguments pressed as 'proof' by empiricists are denied generalisable meaning by the relativists. Suffice it to say that I reject the phenomenological and relativist philosophy, and while I accept that some facts do have relative interpretations by viewers and readers, I do not believe that that alters the basic reality of the fact itself. In short, I believe things exist whether we are there to perceive them or not. For that reason it is not useful to go deeply into a critique of Williams' work; to do so would simply extend an already overlong philosophical debate.

Statistical Reanalysis of Booth's Data

There are four further writers who do firmly believe in the efficacy of fact, and address Booth's work on that level. The first two, W.K.D. Davies (1978) and Michael Cullen (1979), apparently independently, explore Booth's classificatory schemes through correlation reanalysis. Cullen's discussion is the more complete, for he takes up the questions of Booth's different classifications, and the amount of error caused by the skew in the distribution of those families reported by the School Board Visitors because of their imperfect knowledge of families without children. His analysis demonstrates that 'even the small error of 0.8 per cent which Booth's method appears to have introduced is probably an overestimate of the actual error' (1979:163). Both Davies and Cullen turn particularly to Booth's 1893 paper, his presidential address to the Royal Statistical Society. In this paper Booth charted the distribution of six variables (poverty; domestic crowding; rate of early marriage; an index of the 'surplus unmarried'; the birth rate; and the death rate) by 27 geographic areas of London. This multivariate approach, Davies states, demonstrates 'technical achievements in interrelating several variables to produce a summary measure of social condition [and] can be considered to be a breakthrough' (1978:293). Both Davies and Cullen then use these six variables in a correlation analysis which they

compare to Booth's interpretation of the same data. They agree that Booth's analysis is substantiated by this correlation study: 'the results of his study are very similar to those that can be produced from a factorial analysis of the same data set' (Davies, 1978:294); 'it can be argued that Booth succeeded in applying a reasonably consistent standard of poverty' (Cullen, 1979:172). For Cullen the statistics 'conform to expectation and common-sense and strengthen the case for regarding Booth's poverty index as a valid one' (1979:171). Davies goes one step further and performs a principal component factor analysis on the data. He finds:

> These results demonstrate that Booth was quite accurate in his opinion that the six variables measure the same thing, in this case 'social condition'. In terms of factor analysis, therefore, the study has shown that the variability in the data set can be accommodated by a single general vector which only loses 20% of the original variation. (1978:294)

Both of these studies use the 27 geographical areas as the units of analysis, rather a different question than that often put to Booth's household level data collected for the original inquiry into poverty. On the other hand, both studies go some way toward testing Booth's classificatory schemes, and presage, especially Davies' factor analysis, the discriminant analysis used in Chapter 9 to explore the social class codes of the Poverty Study.

In the criticisms of Booth's methodology there are also some academic myths to be laid to rest; these are much more recent, originating in the work of the second two writers, Hanan Selvin (1976) and Raymond Kent (1984).

Selvin develops an extensive argument which seeks to explain why Booth (or Emile Durkheim for that matter) did not adapt correlation as a statistical technique in their research, when the statistic was very much available to them through the work of George Udny Yule. Unfortunately the argument is based upon, in the case of Booth, several misconceptions. Selvin introduces Booth with a short review of the Poverty Series and the role of the School Board Visitors. He then notes that 'sometime in 1895 Booth's work came to the attention of ... Yule'. The unhappy implication is that Yule was concerned with Booth's research on poverty in the East End. In fact, Yule's discussion concerned Booth's <u>The Aged Poor in England and Wales</u> (1894), a now less-known collection and analysis of official statistics described in more detail in Chapter 7. From this book Yule had selected one sentence: 'The proportion of relief given out of doors bears no general relation to the total percentage of pauperism', (Booth, 1894:122). Yule then tested this by computing a correlation coefficient on the data provided in Booth's tables for pauperism and out-relief for 1871 and 1891. The result is a computed correlation between pauperism and out-relief of .26 for 1871, and .38 for 1891. He concluded that 'total pauperism ... is positively correlated with the proportion of out-relief given', (Yule, 1895:608). From Yule's research note Selvin is led to ask how it was that Booth never 'acknowledged the existence of these

analytical techniques that could have been so useful?' (1976:44). His answer is the product of baseless conjecture which has, regrettably, been accepted by other writers.

His arguments are especially curious: that Booth's cognizance of Yule was blocked by Booth's disapproval of Beatrice Potter's marriage to Sidney Webb; that Booth might not have been able to understand Yule's note - but that 'he must have known many men who could have explained Yule's ... papers to him'; that Booth 'was a man of limited intellectual powers', who was 'unlikely to see much value in the arcane mathematical symbols of Yule's work'; and finally, that Booth was 'under-integrated into the scientific community', but oriented 'to the world of newspaper editorials', (1976:46-48). In fact, Booth was perfectly aware of Yule's work and published a reply in the same journal only four months later (Booth, 1896). In his reply Booth regrets his choice of words - 'I must in fairness say that the sentence in my book to which Mr Yule's note mainly refers is in some degree misleading' (1896:71). He then goes on to make his own statistical critique of Yule's work by pointing out that Yule 'takes no account of difference in character, but also gives an equal value to his averages to every union whatever its size', in modern terms that his cases are unweighted, which lessens the confidence one might place in his calculations. He further explains that Yule, in discussing his calculations, 'omits to observe that the eleven [per

cent] is obtained by comparing sixty-one and fifty [per cent], while the three [per cent] results from comparing six and three [per cent]. Mr Yule's sentence might leave the incautious reader under the impression that the drop in out-relief was nearly four times as great as that in pauperism, while in effect the drop in pauperism was nearly three times as great as that in out-relief', (Booth, 1896:73). While he concedes the statistical relationship Yule found, Booth feels that this is but a small part of a much larger issue - 'The real question at issue is the influence on pauperism of the giving or withholding of out-relief', (1896:71). This larger question, Booth points out, is much more complex than may be explained by correlating two variables. He admits that the 'contention that I have not sufficiently isolated the influence of out-relief is perfectly true', but also notes that there is extraneous variation affecting the relationship - 'it is also true that other unconsidered causes may explain the irregularity of the upper curve'. Clearly, Booth understood Yule's statistics, a capacity one might expect from a man who had stepped down the previous year from his position as President of the Royal Statistical Society.

The fourth writer that reanalyses a portion of Booth's work is Raymond Kent (1984). Kent's work is very different to that of Davies and Cullen, and more like Selvin's in its misinterpretation. Kent is concerned with Booth's explanation of the causes of poverty. He recasts Booth's

analysis into 'modern format' to produce the following table:

Table 1-2
Degree of poverty by cause, in modern format (%'s)

Degree of Poverty	Cause			(in %)
	Employment	Habit	Circumstance	TOTAL
Great Poverty	55	18	27	100
Poverty	68	13	19	100

This table, though altered in format, is essentially that which Booth produced in explaining the causes of poverty. Kent believes that Booth has omitted a key category from the variable 'poverty' - those not in poverty. He states that 'this analysis is largely vitiated because Booth did not measure (or at least did not present the figures concerning) how far each of his causes prevailed amongst those who were not in poverty, but were in comfort' (1984:65). Put another way, Kent is suggesting that Booth should have delineated the amount and sorts of unemployment, underemployment, 'habits', and 'circumstances' among those whom he did not place below the line of poverty. In fact, Booth did. The descriptions, both qualitative and quantitative, of his social classes E through H are based primarily upon just these measures. Booth did not, however, place them within the analysis as Kent suggests, and would not have done so. Booth's research question, answered by the table above, was 'what are the causes of poverty?'. The research question posed by Kent is a different one: 'what are the relative distributions of

possible causes of poverty among those classified as poor as well as those classified as not poor?'. In order to answer this question Kent changes the table above to:

Table 1-3
Degree of poverty by cause, repercentaged

Degree of Poverty	Cause		(in %)
	Employment	Habit	Circumstance
Great Poverty	34	47	48
Poverty	66	53	52
TOTAL	100	100	100

In this table the percentages are given <u>within</u> causes of poverty, even though Booth's question sought to determine the distribution <u>between</u> causes of poverty. Kent states that analysing the data in this way shows that 'questions of habit are <u>more</u> important than questions of employment as far as great poverty is concerned, thereby reversing Booth's original conclusion!' (1984:64). Of course it does nothing of the sort. It <u>does</u> demonstrate that among those whose 'habits' or 'employment' characteristics might be precursors of poverty, a larger proportion of those whose 'habits' lead to poverty end up in greater poverty than those whose employment characteristics lead to poverty. It is a somewhat interesting re-casting of Booth's data, but it sheds little light on the questions which Booth asked about the causes of poverty.

Kent also repeats the assertion of Selvin that Booth failed to use correlational techniques even when Yule went

'to the trouble of calculating a correlation coefficient for one of Booth's tables' (1984:66). And Kent adds that 'there is no evidence that Booth even acknowledged Yule's article' (1984:66). It is very difficult to understand why Selvin and Kent are pressing these assertions, when as noted above, Booth did more than acknowledge Yule's article, he published a reply in the same journal a few months later!

A final question remains - if Booth was a competent statistician why didn't he use correlation in the 'Poverty Series' or the *Aged Poor*? Quite simply, he couldn't have unless he had discovered the formula himself. Karl Pearson began his investigations of bivariate distributions in 1890, after most of the 'Poverty Series' was written, and published the results in 1895, two months after the publication of *The Aged Poor in England and Wales*. If Yule brought correlational analysis to bear more quickly than others, it is because he would have known about it *before* Pearson published his results. In the early 1890's Yule was Pearson's student and research assistant. In the Summer of 1895 he had just finished a series of lectures on the new correlational technique with Pearson, and Yule used the data from Booth's book to test his new knowledge. The article he published was important in that it demonstrated the usefulness of this new statistical technique in analysing a social question (Stigler, 1986:346).

Another part of the literature that should be assessed is the use of Booth's work as source material. Booth has

been criticised for not knowing when to stop (Glass, 1955), for never bringing his research to a unified conclusion, and this was certainly one of his failings. But it is a failing from which many have profited. Booth's inquiry ranged so widely that few facets of London life were omitted. It would be impossible to search out and list all those who have used the seventeen volumes of Life and Labour of the People to inform subsequent research. A pertinent example of the diversity of uses, however, may be found in Dyos and Wolff's The Victorian City (1973). In this collection of articles Booth's work informs a wide variety of research: Banks' study of increasing quantification; Briggs' exploration of the 'human aggregate'; the article by Dyos and Reeder on slums and suburbs; Harrison on pubs; Keating on the East End; Kent's work on working class religious attitudes; Lees' insights on 'metropolitan types'; Samuel on migration and movement; and the article by Thompson on urbanisation.

Another use of Booth's work has been to offer it up in excerpts with analysis. The two best examples of this use are Pfautz (1967) and Fried and Elman (1968). Pfautz sought to place Booth in the development of sociology, in particular community studies, and went on to review the content of Life and Labour from that perspective. He examines how Booth's methods were translated by American imitators, such as Robert Park, to re-emerge in the practice of urban ecology. Pfautz explores Booth's concern

with the city as a 'physical fact as well as with the centrality of social class in its social organisation' and demonstrates Booth's role as a link between the 'philosophical concerns of an earlier social science and the more limited empirical interests of a later sociology' (1967:170).

In the rapid growth of social survey methods Booth was an exemplar of new methodologies, spurring the transition to a more empirical and rigorous social science. In the United States the survey based community study following Booth's model became a major weapon in the growing Progressive Movement which had originated in and sought to reform cities. Some of the earliest and best of the American researchers, such as DuBois and Addams, present in their work maps of poverty and ethnicity which are clearly inspired by Booth's poverty maps, though DuBois was not himself part of the progressive movement. Given the local autonomy of American cities the political implications and potential for policy change guided by community research were more potent than for British cities which were, and are, controlled to a much greater extent by central government. If an American city were controlled by a political 'machine', the impact of community research was lessened, but the research itself was often a key weapon in the arsenal of progressives in their attack on corrupt machine politics. This greater likelihood of action and policy implementation based on community research was, in part, an explanation for the much larger amount of research

which was carried out in the United States following Booth's demonstrations and popularisations of community research techniques. It cannot be said that Booth was responsible for the growth of this rapid increase in research. But what cannot be denied is that following the publication of Booth's work there was an explosion of community studies on both sides of the Atlantic, something around two thousand examples having been published by the 1920's.

Booth's work came after the beginnings of the investigative journalism in Britain and the Muckrakers of the United States and offered up a new anti-sensationalist and policy orientated form of research and publication. If the investigative journalists raised issues, the new social surveyors attempted to resolve them. As Pfautz put it: 'However unplanned and often implicit, the questions, both theoretical and methodological which such an [Booth's] approach raised, became central to the sociology which emerged, primarily in America, a generation later' (1967:170). For Pfautz this emergent sociology was one which had a strong policy element; he feels that Booth's work strikes a 'very modern note' because it combines an 'abiding concern to bring about reforms' with 'a very sophisticated sociological eye and scientific attitude toward "social facts" (1967:170).

In an important recent work on Booth, Himmelfarb devotes a significant portion of her <u>Poverty and</u>

Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians (1991) to a consideration of his life and work. Himmelfarb treats Booth as an exemplar of the Victorian 'time-spirit', of a unique social consciousness, which Beatrice Webb has described as the 'union of faith in the scientific method with the transference of self-sacrificing service from God to man' (1926:221).

Himmelfarb dismisses the 'moralist-social scientist' debate of some historians, for it fails to understand Booth's role among his contemporaries:

> Comtemporaries appreciated what some later historians have not: that Booth's "scientific method" did not preclude moral characterizations. His schema of classes and analysis of poverty were all the more credible because they took account of "values" that most people recognized as an essential part of reality - the reality of social problems as well as of social policies... It was because Booth's "science" was of a piece with the moral sensibilities of his generation that he was so highly regarded. (1991:164)

Further, Himmelfarb explains that 'Booth would have been bewildered by this controversy' since he would have 'rejected the antithesis between morality and science implied in this debate' (1991:149).

For Himmelfarb Booth's main contribution was in the delineation of the sub-groups of the 'poor' - the social classes he identified, in spite of the fact that these class divisions were not exact. In an ongoing shift of opinion which was reconceptualising the social problem of 'pauperism' into one of 'poverty', Booth supplied the necessary evidence to fix the viewpoint on 'poverty'. Himmelfarb explains: 'It was this differentiation of classes that radically altered the terms of social

discourse ... to take a vague and diffuse idea and give it precision and substance: precision by means of statistics, and substance by the distinction and definition of classes' (1991:133). For his contemporaries it was the illumination of the sub-divisions of the 'poor', both those 'in comfort' and those not, which then made possible the thinking out and planning of approaches to the question of poverty.

The question of Booth's proposal of labour colonies for the very poor is also taken up by Himmelfarb. In one of the broadly based historical discussions of the topic she points out that:

Unlike modern commentators who find the proposal "retrograde," "Doctrinaire," "Draconian," and "social imperialistic," most of Booth's contemporaries, including socialists, were all disposed to it, some welcoming it as a "heroic" remedy for an unfortunate problem. It was, in fact, a familiar and respectable idea. (1991:125)

The basic idea of labour farms or industrial villages had been in circulation since the 1860's, and would continue to be pressed by groups as divergent as the Salvation Army and the Labour Party. Socialists tended to look favourably on the proposal; the more conservative and devoted to laissez-faire, such as C. S. Loch of the C.O.S., opposed it. As Himmelfarb shows, even Sidney Webb, in a Fabian tract, was pleased that 'even "individualistic reformers" like Booth were seeking to eliminate from society the "chronic cases of sturdy vagrancy, idle mendacity, and incorrigible laziness" ' (1991:127). The key for many commentators was that the scheme would 'provide humane care and a decent standard of material comfort' for

the poor.

Himmelfarb's overall treatment of Booth is sympathetic. She also places Booth at a critical juncture in social history and in the history of social thought. Part of her introduction to Booth captures her approach, and serves well as an introduction to the next chapter which looks closely at the life of Charles Booth:

> Late-Victorian England was a time less of social malaise than of social ferment, of an extraordinary plenitude of ideas, theories and activities. At the centre of this ferment was Charles Booth, one of the most interesting and admirable individuals of the time, as well as the author of one of its most enduring memorials. Booth did not so much 'rediscover' poverty as 'discover' the poverty unique to that time. And he communicated that discovery in a work that is still the single best source for the social history of late-Victorian England - and not only its social history but its moral history as well. (1991:75)

Chapter Two - The Life of Charles Booth

The sheer scale of Charles Booth's endeavours are remarkable: the establishment of a major steamship line and the accomplishment of one of the largest social research projects ever done. Surprisingly, there was nothing of the magnate in his visible personality. His contemporaries consistently described him as a quiet, self-effacing person. A fascinating portrait is offered by his wife's cousin Beatrice Webb, describing Booth in about 1880 not long after he had recovered from a serious breakdown and before either of his large scale endeavours had been accomplished:

> Nearing forty years of age, tall, abnormally thin, garments hanging as if on pegs, the complexion of a consumptive girl, and the slight stoop of the sedentary worker, a prominent aquiline nose, with moustache and pointed beard barely hiding a noticeable Adam's apple, the whole countenance dominated by a finely-moulded brow and large, observant grey eyes, Charles Booth was an attractive but distinctly queer figure of a man. One quaint sight stays in my mind: Cousin Charlie sitting through the family meals, 'like patience on a monument smiling at' - other people eating, whilst, as a concession to good manners he occasionally picked at a potato with his fork or nibbled a dry biscuit. Fascinating was his unselfconscious manner and eager curiosity to know what you thought and why you thought it; what you knew and how you had learnt it. And there was the additional interest in trying to place this strange individual in the general scheme of things. No longer young, he had neither failed nor succeeded in life, and one was left in doubt whether the striking unconventionality betokened an initiating brain or a futile eccentricity. (1926:219)

His family and co-workers found him warm and interested, very open to suggestions and new ideas, with a tremendous capacity for hard work. An over-powering curiosity drove him, and this was blended with a strong sense of moral

duty. In her diary Beatrice Webb recorded another view of Booth - 'as a man who has his nature completely under control; who has passed through a period of terrible illness and weakness, and who has risen out of it, uncynical, vigorous and energetic in mind, and without egotism' (1926:221).

But before Booth's large achievements came large disappointments. His mother died when he was thirteen years old, the woman he loved as a young man also died suddenly. The ideas and causes to which he devoted his greatest energies in his twenties came to nothing. In a strain of overwork and depression his health broke, and at the age of thirty-three he had to retire from both his business and social life for nearly two years. Coupled with these defeats, and in part inspiring them or growing from them, was a sense of intellectual isolation. Philosophically Booth was not always in step with his class or his times. Yet in his orientation to work and family life he was essentially Victorian. He was agnostic, yet deeply spiritual; scientific, but motivated by a distinctly philanthropic notion of service to humanity. And it was this sense of service that led him to attack the problem of poverty, and it was his sense of isolation that shaped the strategy of that attack. But if we are to understand how the poverty survey and the work which followed it came to be, we must turn first to the young Charles Booth.

Early Life

Booth was born in Liverpool in 1840; he was the next-to-oldest of five children, having two brothers and two sisters. His father was a successful corn merchant there (biographical details on Booth are drawn primarily from Simey and Simey, 1960; Norman-Butler, 1972; M. Booth, 1918; and the Booth materials in Senate House). His mother was herself the daughter of a less successful merchant and banker. Both parents came from solid Unitarian non-conformist backgrounds. When he was thirteen Booth's mother died and four years later his sister Emily's governess became his step-mother. His school reports show a diligent student who is roundly unexceptional save for once coming top in a school-wide arithmetic competition even though he was in a lower form. At the age of sixteen Booth left school and visited London, Heidelberg, and Appenzell in that sort of educational touring which was regularly practised by the middle and upper classes in the mid-Victorian period. On his return to Liverpool he was apprenticed to the shipping firm of Lamport and Holt. Lamport was second cousin to Booth's father. In his four years at Lamport and Holt Booth became an enthusiast of steam engineering while assisting Alfred Holt, who was to become a noted steam engineer. Two years later, in 1860, Booth's father died after a short illness. Though both parents were now dead, Booth, his two brothers and one of their sisters continued to live in the family home. The elder Booth left each of

his children £20,000, a considerable fortune in the 1860's when a family might live comfortably on £100 per year.

About this time Booth fell in love with Antonia Prange, the daughter of a German merchant who had settled in Liverpool. At the beginning of 1862, now aged twenty-one, Booth left Lamport and Holt for a year's tour of the Holy Land and Europe. After six months he arrived in Germany for a period of study with Francis Prange, Antonia's brother and Booth's school friend. There he learned that Antonia Prange had contracted 'sudden consumption' and was seriously ill. Three weeks later she was dead. The death of Antonia Prange affected Booth deeply and for the rest of his life. His wife, Mary Booth, wrote after his death that his feelings toward Antonia Prange 'developed into ardent and adoring love. To her, with an intensity of feeling all his own, he gave his heart', (M. Booth, 1918:7). His grand-daughter (Peri, 1986) has described how fifty years after the death of Antonia Prange the first thing one saw upon entering Booth's home was a large portrait in oils of Antonia Prange. Charles and Mary Booth's first child, born in 1873, was a daughter who was named Antonia.

This personal loss was compounded by a crisis in business. Booth had left Lamport and Holt intending to join his brother Alfred in the import-export commissioning business that Alfred shared with an American partner. In order to examine the American side of the business he left immediately for America upon his return from Germany. He

arrived there to find the elder, American partner in the firm seriously ill. He proved to be permanently so and Booth, now twenty-two, and his brother Alfred were left sole partners. The result was that an inexperienced young man had to struggle very quickly to find a sound footing in business.

Shortly afterwards, and more out of opportunity than predilection, Booth with his brother Alfred expanded their business to include the importing of hides and leather. In the first few years this business suffered several set-backs which Booth attributed to his and his brother's inexperience in business. In an effort to counter these set-backs Booth developed a style of doing business which involved rigorously collecting every piece of information that was in any way relevant to their business pursuits. He inspected the tanneries, met the ships, talked with the graders, and in the process he learned the industry from the inside out. Booth wrote at this time that 'To learn how to talk to people is an excellent thing, and I am putting myself into training...I am determined to break down this stupid "Booth Reserve" in myself' (quoted in Simey, 1960:23). Using the information which he collected Booth wrote out on very large sheets of paper all salient situations reduced to basic facts and figures. Mary Booth in her Memoir and Booth's grand-daughter Mary Peri (Personal interview, 1986) have described the development of Booth's system of data collection in business. For every

project a large sheet of paper would be divided and sub-divided into all possible topics which might be relevant. When Booth was considering instituting steamship service to Portugal, for example, he carefully catalogued all shipping to all Portuguese ports, their cargoes, number of passengers, seasonal variation in ship movements, and all other information that might prove relevant. The exercise required extensive archival research and work with the statistics of the Board of Trade. It was only after every possible fact was gathered and worked into the large outline assembled for a project that Booth would make his decisions and chart his strategy. Booth felt that any success he might achieve in business would be the result of this form of methodical research, and though he became very successful he never considered himself a businessman capable of intuitively knowing the best strategy for his company.

Shipping and Steam

Leathers and hides were not to remain the Booth family business, however; it was shipping that took the interest of Booth and his brother Alfred. In 1862 Booth's older brother Tom died while on a holiday in the Near East. His brother's death altered Booth, who now felt responsible for the welfare of his sisters, and he took on many of Tom's ambitions and concerns, including Tom's desire to expand into shipping. In what became a repeated family story, Booth met with the Holts (who were already involved in

shipping) and they agreed that since the Holts had shipping interests in the East and Far East, Booth should look West to the Americas.

By entering the shipping business Charles Booth took a great gamble. Despite his methodical calculations of possible shipping routes, and his collection of information on the shipment of goods to and from the Americas, in the 1860's shipping was still a highly competitive and volatile industry. This was especially so since it was in the grips of a technological revolution. By the mid-1860's steam power was rapidly displacing sail, but the steam engines available in this period were the primitive, troublesome and terribly inefficient engines using 'low pressure' steam technology. Several refinements in steam engineering occurred in the 1860's and by mid-decade the more efficient 'high pressure' steam techniques had been demonstrated, but not proven in long application. Booth's personal gamble was to place all of his resources, as well as those of his sisters and brother, into the construction of two ships using 'high pressure' steam engines.

In February, 1865 he contracted with a Liverpool yard to build the two ships at a cost of £16,000 each. Over the next year Booth was completely absorbed in the construction of the 'Augustine', making himself personally responsible for planning, supervision, and virtually every detail of the engineering (Simey, 1960:24). In November 1865 the 'Augustine' was launched, and Booth supervised the sea

trials, in which the new engines repeatedly broke down, and at the same time continued to arrange the new South American business and oversee the construction of the second ship. By the end of 1865 this crushing workload was telling, his health was deteriorating, and he was showing signs of collapse. But a breakdown was staved off when Booth took on the enforced rest that came with sailing with the 'Augustine' on her first voyage to South America in February 1866.

Despite the constant repairs and refinements required by the new engines, their greater speed and efficiency paid off and the 'Booth Line' prospered. Just twenty-six years old, Booth led the new company, and it was he who 'conceived and initiated new ventures, who coaxed and persuaded and argued with the other partners, travelling incessantly from office to office and country to country' (Simey, 1960:26). The pace of business set by Booth was furious, so much so that others in the partnership would occasionally withdraw as they cracked under the pressure. Booth himself suffered several 'breakdowns'. His staff complained of his insatiable demand for facts and figures. One wrote to Booth from the New York office that 'the endless array of statements you want...statistics and statements and tabular figures are all very well...[but] if all the energies of the office staff are to be concentrated in trying to put you who are in Europe in actual possession of every detail, twisted into every variety of figures, I think the result would surely tend to our having less and

less business to tabulate and theorize about' (quoted in Simey, 1960:27). Yet despite his large demands his staff seem to have been happy to work for him. Booth translated his personal principles into his business practices, and two telling points illustrate his divergence from the common business practice of the 1860's. Firstly, was his insistence that high wages must be paid, no matter what the going rate. He believed that if his employees were not able to live with at least a minimum of comfort and security then he was, in a sense, stealing their work from them. Secondly, though clearly related to the first, he instituted one of the first profit-sharing schemes known in this period.

Politics and 'The Colony'

In politics, the Booth family was Liberal but not particular active. Charles Booth had grown up among a restricted sort of elite - a group of Non-conformist families who were enriched by business and sound investment, and who practised an ethic of hard work and personal responsibility which applied equally to struggling offspring and wealthy parent. They were the improving 'nouveaux riches' of the mid-Victorian period.

A window opens onto their lives because the youth of Booth's circle produced a yearly 'magazine' entitled The Colony (the title indicating, in part, the intellectual isolation they felt). The magazine was begun on Booth's twenty-fourth birthday as a form of letter to his brother

Alfred who was living in America in charge of the New York office; Charles Booth was the editor. The Colony was reproduced holographically and contained short stories, poems, and essays. These were written by the Booths and their cousins, the Fletchers. To Booth's biographers, the Simeys, the personal and candid writing in The Colony was 'a revelation of what lay behind the outward facade of Victorian middle-class life' (1960:34). For the most part the vague and amateurish writing, redolent with Victorian sentimentality, reflects the preoccupations of youth in comfortable circumstances: flirtation, love, a fascination with melodrama and death, and gentle domestic gibes between the enamoured. But there is something peculiar in The Colony, for above this harmony sounds the shrill rant of the young Charles Booth. In the first collected volume (1866) he included an essay he had written entitled 'A Voice from the People - On Landlords', it begins 'I would have you consider what is rent? I mean ground rent, the rent of land. I maintain that it is robbery'. After a few paragraphs, warming to his task, he writes:

> The rent for land is wrong. The power of the rich is caused by this - the misery of the poor is caused by this. God gave the land to us all and we will have it. Injustice shall be suffered no longer. No longer shall the poor man starve. No longer shall the rich man enjoy the fruits of unrighteousness. Our fathers were weak and were robbed, we are strong, and the children of robbers shall restore even to the uttermost farthing. (The Colony, Vol. 1, Senate House)

Strong words indeed from a well-off provincial Victorian of twenty-six, especially one that others might consider to

be one of 'the children of robbers'. In subsequent volumes he considers history, religion, and status, and in each is the emergent theme that poverty, cruel and degrading, must be met with action - 'poverty is the curse of modern society' he wrote, 'it is a social evil and not a natural evil'; 'the method [to achieve welfare and progress] is the scientific study of all phenomena of mental and social life'. In these essays there is a foreshadowing of Booth's delineation of the problems of poverty: 'I am constantly impressed with the different aspect of our life compared to those who live on daily wages, from day to day, from hand to mouth. Some say "You mean the difference between the thrifty and the unthrifty" but I do not think so'.

It is hard to say what Booth's friends and family made of this radicalism. Only once does anyone answer in the pages of The Colony his pronouncements for radical social change, his support for Darwin's theory evolution, and for universal political suffrage, and that followed his attack on the Unitarian faith held by his family. In that one instance his views were rebutted by his brother and his cousin. Two themes may be seen in this youthful radicalism and intellectual deviance. One is the sense of intellectual isolation so marked in Booth's later life, the 'distinctly queer figure of a man' described by his young cousin Beatrice Potter (1926:226). The second was a fundamental concern with poverty and the belief that its amelioration was possible through social action based on 'the scientific

study of social life'.

The concern that Booth felt about poverty was shared with his family and friends, who had not failed to see the stark contrast between the ideal presented in their liberal Unitarian beliefs and the reality of industrial Liverpool. Nor had they failed to recognise the failure of the benevolent philanthropy in which they had played some part. As Unitarians, especially, they were profoundly influenced by the destitution and suffering which existed side by side with their own flourishing and comfortable lives. This central issue of poverty, its causes and possible cures, was often discussed by this tightly knit group of young people. Booth took a leading role in these discussions. What separated Booth from his friends and family in this regard was his growing conviction that the answer to the question of poverty lay in 'the scientific study of social life'. Yet there existed for Booth a separation of the study of life and the action necessary to change life. The reconciliation of these two was to be a long and painful process for Booth. Throughout the period The Colony was being produced, in the late 1860's, Booth attempted to put into effect the liberal and Unitarian values which he shared with his peers and had, in some ways, radically extended. The first of these attempts was his participation in the general election of 1865.

One of the great debates of the mid-1860's concerned the extension of the franchise to working men. For Booth this proposal was an obvious method by which pressing

social problems might be remedied. The pages of The Colony had already carried an essay by Tom Fletcher supporting the extended franchise, arguing that if 'self-interest governs the state, it is but fair that all people should have a chance of taking care of their own'. So compelling was this logic that Booth and his friends decided to work for the Liberals in the election of 1865. Their chosen electoral battlefield was the Toxteths, two working class wards in South Liverpool. Booth knew this area well, sitting as it did on the edge of the ship-building yards. The Toxteths were a classic slum. The housing was cheap and crowded, most of it having been built forty to fifty years before to house the workers building the extensive systems of docks and railways which would become the commercial centre of the city. In the 1840's the area had become even more crowded as Irish famine refugees flooded Liverpool and crowded into the Toxteths. Disease and destitution were common in the pressing human density. The people of the Toxteths lived in the same conditions which Henry Mayhew was describing at this time in his articles on urban poverty in London. Mayhew's newspaper accounts shocked London, Booth's first-hand experience of these conditions shocked, moved, and changed him.

The suffering he found there was beyond any condition which might have been justified by the common political creeds of the day. His reaction was an emotional and moral condemnation of any creed that attempted to do so. His

shock evolved into a realisation of how ineffectual and hypocritical most ameliorative work really was, work which took much of the time of his sisters and other relatives in Liverpool. That his own family had chosen to be active in what he now saw as a gravely misguided effort merely piqued his sense of failure. The community of liberal and Christian values, which had seemed so advanced compared to the prejudice and smug complaisance of political conservatism, now seemed a sham of sympathy and action.

Booth threw himself into the campaigning with even more than his characteristic intensity of effort, and the disappointment and exhaustion were also greater after the Liberals' electoral defeat. There were no ready answers for Booth as to why the very people that he believed would most profit from progressive Liberal government would return a corrupt Conservative administration. But the experience of the Toxteths set him off on a new period of philosophical inquiry as he attempted to come to grips with what he had seen and learned. The discussions within the group of The Colony became that much more heated and somewhat shocking to their elders. As the Simeys have pointed out, the publication of Darwin's Origins of the Species in 1859 had provoked a long round of debates as Booth and contemporaries considered what was perceived to be a threat to the basic religious beliefs they had been taught. The experience of the Toxteths was much more disruptive. Evolution had been a challenging concept, the poverty of Liverpool was an affront.

Booth's reaction was mixed. On one level he continued to seek logical laws which might be used to understand, and ultimately aid in the amelioration of, poverty. On another he reacted badly, lapsing into pandemic intellectual rebellion, adopting an 'attitude of derisive flippancy towards all accepted customs or ideas' (Simey, 1960:37). His essays in The Colony become shrill and acerbic. He concocted charades which lampooned 'Lady Christian Consolation and the Reverend Ebenezer Fanatic'. His intellectual turmoil was stimulating him to new forms of expression - he wrote at this time a series of ghost stories which treated the phantasms of the supernatural within a context of natural laws, a theme that might be interpreted as dealing with the frustration of his inability to likewise site poverty and its suffering within a rational framework.

Parallel to his intellectual disequilibrium were recurrent bouts of ill-health. But both physical and mental difficulties were subsumed under a heavier and heavier work load in the business. And other events were pushing into his life. The first of these, in early 1868, was to meet Mary Macaulay, who would become his wife. Mary had come to Liverpool to visit her cousin and was taken into the world of The Colony. For her the affairs of Booth's Liverpool set seemed stilted, provincial, and trivial. Her life was more urbane and academically intellectual, centring on the Clapham Sect of which her uncle, Thomas Babington

Macaulay, later Lord Macaulay the historian, was an important member. Her easy assurance in attacking the hypocritical nature of philanthropic work in Liverpool was magnetic to Booth, who had few allies in his newfound cynicism. In this intelligent and critical young woman he found someone who agreed with his condemnation of the forces which engendered and perpetuated poverty. The feelings and ideas which he had questioned in himself as divisive and isolating, he found to be common to the world in which Mary Macaulay lived. This sense of shared outlook moved him to carry forward his conceptualisation of poverty and to express greater condemnation of the perceived causes of poverty. He passed through the religious explanations of poverty, and the patented liberal explanations which replaced divine providence with the strength of the invisible hand. He came to conclude that greed and exploitation were central explanatory components of poverty, and that there was a personal and individual role to be played in its prolongation or eradication. Yet the form of action he should take against poverty was still unclear to him. What <u>was</u> clear was that inaction was unacceptable. He was given a chance to act upon these new principles in the election of 1868.

The election of 1868 was the first to include large numbers of workingmen in the electorate. The contest was also thought to be of special local importance; the major national issue of the moment was the Irish land question, and the Toxteths were home to thousands of newly

enfranchised Irish workers. The question of land ownership was one on which Booth had very strong and radical ideas as can be seen by his essay in The Colony quoted earlier. The same energy and organisation which Booth applied to his business, he now turned to organising the Toxteths, but the result, in spite of his and others' dedication, was a serious defeat. Booth was left shattered and ill, and was away from work for some time. Neither logic nor organisation had won in the Toxteths, and when the municipal elections were called a year later Booth and his friends tried a new tack. Splitting off from the Liberals they ran Francis Prange as a local candidate on a platform of local issues. Again Booth devoted his skills to organising and again the result was a grave disappointment. This was the last time Booth would attempt any form of direct political participation in pursuance of his goals and he turned to other forms of action.

Trades Unions and Education

In 1870 Booth sought to move closer to the causes and problems of economic well-being, and taking a lead from his cousin Henry Crompton, he became involved in the Trades Union movement. In particular, he became involved in a project to build and equip a Trades Hall in Liverpool which would be a centre for union activity and education and release unions from their reliance on public houses as meeting places. As a director of the project he worked diligently but failed to secure the necessary support from

unions or other sponsors. In the end the project devolved into the maintenance of a news- and reading-room where lectures could be held. Booth also attempted to establish a service for arbitration and conciliation. This, however, was not supported by the employers or the trades unions. In fact, one meeting called to discuss this was broken up and ended in fighting. Once again an attempt at direct involvement and action was a disappointment for Booth. In his own shipping firm he inaugurated a number of programmes for workman's insurance and bonuses, but these had no impact on working conditions in general. In considering the causes of this failure and the political failures which preceded it, Booth concluded that a key element in the unwillingness or inability of workers to vote in, or organise for, reform was their lack of education.

To forward the cause of education for the working classes Booth joined Chamberlain's Birmingham Education League and applied himself to its campaign for universal secular education (M. Booth, 1916; Simey, 1960:45-47; Norman-Butler, 1972). At the time legislation was pending which would provide for an expansion of secular education. Booth and his friends decided to organise a scheme for secular education in Liverpool, motivated in part by Booth's estimate that there were 25,000 children in Liverpool not in school or work. A society was to be organised which would convert contributions and subscriptions into a system of small grants which would

keep the children of the poor in regular schooling. The grants would be paid to the schools the parents chose for their children to attend, and in this inclusion of parental choice lay the society's downfall. At the time all schools in Liverpool were denominational, which meant that a protestant's subscription <u>might</u> be used to support a Catholic school as well as the other way around. Because of this eventuality the meeting which was to be the launch of the society in May 1869 was something of a fiasco. William Rathbone had agreed to attend and support the society from the platform, and Booth worked to organise a meeting which would give the society's plan a fair hearing. In the end the sectarian conflict reached such a pitch that the police had to be called in to restore order. The resulting publicity was damning. Backing away from this attempt to secure universal education, Booth devoted his efforts to aiding the Birmingham League; again the work culminated in a great meeting and again the meeting was disrupted. The disappointments of this uphill battle were compounded by the passage in 1870 of the compromise Education Act which failed to enact most of the reforms Booth so strongly supported.

These setbacks checked the enthusiasm for reform among many of Booth's immediate circle. His sister returned to charitable work and was ultimately elected one of Liverpool's first women Guardians of the Poor. Alfred Booth turned to dreams of a happy rural life. Charles Booth was not deflected in his resolve, but his tactics were revised.

Now political action and educational reform were set aside as ineffective and piecemeal. What he now needed was a method for understanding and influencing the broad themes in public life and public opinion. This method would fulfil that need that Booth had often expressed, to uncover the natural laws which underlay human behaviour. Booth had been met and defeated several times when he felt he had brought logic to battle with ignorance. Only a better understanding of human relations would serve. In the same way that he might approach a business problem, the quest was now to discover a scientific study of social life which would explain these defeats and prevent any further ones. As it happened Booth found this 'scientific study of social life' in the work of Auguste Comte.

Positivism

Auguste Comte's philosophy of Positivism had been taken up by a small number of adherents in Britain in the 1840's and 1850's. Harriet Martineau's shortened translation of Comte's Positive Philosophy was published in 1853. The Martineaus, while not Liverpool residents, were another Unitarian family moving in roughly the same circles as the Booths (one of Charles Booth's aunts was a Martineau, and his grand-daughter would marry a Martineau). While Abrams rightly points out that Comtian Positivists 'remained an isolated, slightly incoherent group within the broad ameliorist tradition' (1968:54), it is important to note their contributions to the developing debates on

social issues as well as the emerging social sciences.

Comte's Positivism was very appealing to those who were experiencing the same sort of philosophical questioning in which Booth and his peer group were engaged. It provided a mechanism by which knowledge and conscience could be focused and directed into action. Harriet Martineau explained that she had translated Comte's work because of her 'deep conviction of the need of this book in my own country, in a form which renders it accessible to the largest number of intelligent readers. We are living in a remarkable time, when the conflict of opinions renders a firm foundation of knowledge indispensable...' (quoted in Abrams, 1968:54). The 1850's were slow to accept Comte's writings, but by the 1870's popular consensus was that the economic and social crisis which had motivated Harriet Martineau had worsened and a second, 1873, edition of Positive Philosophy sold briskly. By this time as well there were a number of prominent intellectuals who clearly professed the Positivist philosophy. Notable among these were John Kells Ingram, who was president of the Economics and Statistics Section of the British Association in 1878, and many of the men who would become founders of the Sociological Society at the turn of the century.

For intellectuals, and for those who were grappling with the social issues of the 1870's, Comte offered an overarching conception of society which served to organise and rationalise the thorny problems of industrialisation (Abrams, 1968:57). Positivism was indubitably tautological

in its evolutionary explanation of the growth and change of human society, but in the all-encompassing power of that explanation was the set of answers which Booth sought. Comte defined a clear area of intellectual pursuit, setting aside the previous religious explanations of behaviour and setting up a quasi-scientific and logical approach. This led on to a method of analysis, the 'scientific study of human society' that captivated Booth. And equally important to those who felt that something must be done to meet the terrible problems of poverty and want, Comte offered a scheme of education and action. The Unitarians had offered liberal and Christian explanations for the conditions that industrialisation had brought to Liverpool, but the concomitant paths of action were futile. The logical extension of his family's beliefs had led Booth to the political work and social action projects which had disappointed him so thoroughly. In Comtian Positivism Booth found an antidote to the bitterness of his failure to affect the changes which were so needed, nor was he alone in this 'conversion' to Comte's creed.

Booth's cousins Albert and Henry Crompton were active Positivists and followers of Comte's British disciple and translator Henry Congreve (Simey, 1960:48). Albert Crompton moved to Liverpool in 1873 to work for Philip Holt and quickly formed a Positivist Club of which Booth became an early member. Booth read extensively in the works of Comte and his followers. Positivism sought to unite natural laws

and the rational approach of the natural sciences with principles of moral action and social endeavour. In doing so it appealed strongly to Booth's desire to find logical and rational answers to the problems which the poverty of Liverpool represented. In the pages of The Colony he explored in several essays possible applications of Comtian theory to current social problems, essays that often took on an evangelical fervour. He organised discussions of Comte's work, and was, to a small degree, involved in the internecine conflict within the Positivist 'church'.

With this involvement came a rejection of the close circle of The Colony, and an increasing isolation from his extended family. The Positivist principles he adopted helped him to deal with his inability to reduce poverty through political action, yet the resultant inaction left him lonely and depressed. The Simeys describe Booth at this time as 'exhausted by his long agony of indecision in the face of moral dilemma with which he was confronted, and cut to the heart by the realization that he was no longer at one with those whose affection and esteem he so highly valued' (1960:49). Booth wrote that depression 'now takes effect at once in my head and so prevents me from working altogether, being past fighting against' (1960:49). His isolation from his family was becoming palpable and the gulf between Booth and his contemporaries broad. The company received his attentions in frantic bursts and, finally, in June 1870 he decided to withdraw from all forms of social action.

Marriage and Breakdown

Booth turned again in his search, now from the philosophical to the romantic. He had spent time with Mary Macaulay on the two occasions when she had come to Liverpool to visit relatives. After her second stay there Booth had asked his sisters to aid him in courting her. They refused, doubly put off by her overly sophisticated ways, and the scathing satire of life in Liverpool she had provided when asked to contribute to The Colony. Undaunted, Booth set out on this courtship with his characteristic intensity, enlisting a female cousin to assist him. Together they called on the Macaulays in London, and when they discovered that Mary had gone with her father to Brighton, they followed them there. Booth did not have the address where Mary and her father were staying, but by chance met her father walking on the sea front. The courtship was abrupt and intense. Her grand-daughter would later relate that Mary always stated that Booth overwhelmed her with the urgency of his pleading. They were married in April 1871, the honeymoon 'was spent driving around Cornwall in the dog-cart, arguing about everything' (Norman-Butler, 1972:41). Though they made their first home in Liverpool, Mary Booth was never to gain the deep affection of her in-laws, who suspected her of contributing to Charles' increasing alienation from them. Years later he was to write that at this time his thinking was running 'in different channels from those of my brother and sisters'

and in this memorandum he regretted that he had 'allowed Mary to bear the brunt of the difficulties' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:43). Given his agitated state, the early years of their marriage were unsettled.

Booth's physical condition continued to deteriorate as he pressed ahead in business. In time his 'nervous indigestion' became so pronounced that he was barely able to eat, was losing weight, and was often incapacitated. Finally, Booth decided to leave Liverpool in December 1873 with Mary and their ten month old daughter Antonia, and attempt recuperation in Switzerland.

Their removal to Switzerland marks the end of Booth's first attempts at social action and social science, none of which were successful except in the sense that hard lessons were learnt from each failure. It is hardly surprising that Booth decided at this time to simply stand at the side and watch. Yet it was during the hiatus in Switzerland that the invalid Booth began to form and crystallise the ideas that would grow into the Poverty Study. There is very little known of Booth's thinking during his recuperation in Switzerland. The usual stream of letters and diary entries stops in this period. But in her Memoir Mary Booth records that 'Any mental exertion brought on the miseries of his disorder... but though he could not grapple with the ideas of others, he could lie and brood, and during the time he spent abroad the ideas which he developed later grew and took shape' (1918:11). Booth never fully recovered his health after this breakdown; if

anything were gained from his period as an invalid in Switzerland it was the warm working relationship that developed between Booth and his wife which would be so important in the production of Life and Labour. In Switzerland their second child was born, a boy named Tom.

After eighteen months the Booths' returned to London, Mary Booth taking a fifteen year lease on a house in Grenville Place, just near the intersection of the Cromwell and Gloucester Roads. Booth was still considered to be incapable of the demands of his company and the work in the office, but it is probable that they chose to return to London rather Liverpool for other reasons as well. London was Mary Booth's home, and it was also important as the centre of the intellectual debates and controversies in which Booth had previously immersed himself. It may have been pertinent that London was sufficiently distant from the closed world of The Colony as to effectively end regular involvement with his family and their circle in Liverpool. In any event an independent and comfortable life in London could be supported by Booth's firm which had been making solid but not outstanding profits in his absence.

The Booths in London

After their return Mary Booth at first tried to publish her own works of literary criticism, but redirected her efforts after some rejections. In London she became more and more involved in managing and ordering their household and social obligations and, especially, in

working with Booth on his own social and economic research. She was his collaborator, critic and editor, as well as complete confidant in the running of the shipping firm. It was said by her children (the Booths had seven children altogether) that she knew more about the firm than Booth's partners (Simey, 1960). Mary Booth also provided an entree for Booth into the intellectual life of the capital. The Macaulays were part of that group that Annan (1955) has called the 'Intellectual Aristocracy' of the period. To Booth the intellectual challenge and debate of this circle were a stimulant. He found among them people of a like mind to himself, and ceased to feel some of the isolation which had marked him in Liverpool. One family that he came to know at this time were the Potters, including the young Beatrice Potter, who would become first his research assistant, and later would become well known in her own right as Beatrice Webb. As she describes him at this time:

> And there was the additional interest in trying to place this strange individual in the general scheme of things...one was left in doubt whether the striking unconventionality betokened an initiating brain or a futile eccentricity. Observed by a stranger, he might have passed for a self-educated idealistic compositor or engineering draughtsman; or as the wayward member of an aristocratic family of the Auberon Herbert type; or as a university professor...(1926:219)

To the young Beatrice Potter he looked like anything but what he was: 'a great captain of industry pushing his way along by sheer will-power and methodical industry'.

It was after the Booths had spent a year in London that Booth rejoined his firm - but on his own terms. He would live and work in London, he and his wife felt

strongly that this should be so. His first task was a trip to Brazil with Mary, experimenting with reduced speed cargo shipping. The findings of the trip were of little use, but the journey and the work greatly revived Booth's spirits and energies. Upon his return he began to reorganise the company, consolidating and fixing its routes and custom. By 1878 he was sufficiently recovered to take over when a crisis occurred. Tom Fletcher was managing the New York office when he and his family were stricken by scarlet fever. Booth went to New York to replace Fletcher and found that the leather glove factory upon which much of the skin and hide importing business depended had fallen into chaotic disrepair.

Booth's visit lasted for seven months. During this time he completely reorganised the factory and set the American side of their firm on a new and sound footing. According to the letters he wrote to Mary his only recreation was driving trips about the countryside which he took with one of his employees named Kuttner, a German who was very interested in working class movements, including the works of Marx, which they discussed at length. From the time of Booth's resurrection of the firm in America, the company began to expand, with Booth taking more and more of a lead in administration. By 1880 Booth was fully recovered in spirit, and was in firm control, primarily from the London office, of a rapidly growing business. Beatrice Potter recorded in her diary at the time

that Booth was someone who had 'passed through a period of terrible illness and weakness, and who has risen out of it, uncynical, vigorous and energetic of mind, and without egotism. Many delightful conversations I had with these two charming cousins [Mary Booth was Beatrice's cousin], generally acting as a listening third to their discussions' (Webb, 1926:211). As the Simeys point out it is significant that at this point in his life Booth also gave up his participation in the 'Positivist faith' (1960:60), and settled into what he called 'reverent unbelief'.

From 1880 until 1885 Booth was primarily involved in the management of his businesses and reaping the rewards of his industry, becoming wealthy in the process. The Booth Steamship Company grew from the two ships (the 'Augustine' and 'Jerome') that Booth originally built with his brother, to a fleet of twenty-six vessels at the time of his death. Under Booth's leadership the line established service to Northern Brazil and the Amazon River. The trade in the Amazon was very profitable and in the 1880's the Booth Line had to fight a trade war with the German shipowner Ballin who insisted the Booth Line must share the trade. It was a close run thing for Booth, who lost a quarter of a million pounds before Ballin gave in. In the first years of the twentieth century the Booth Line absorbed three other steamship companies, and built, as an important innovation in their tropical trade, the first mosquito-proof freighter (Chandler, 1960:157). His new wealth allowed him to devote part of his energies to interests outside the business. One

of these interests was to find and refurbish in 1886 a large country house, Gracedieu Manor in Leicestershire, which would be the family home for many years. But more consuming was a renewed interest in social issues.

· After 1885 Booth became much more interested in public affairs, finding a new fascination in public debate on social issues, and delegating more of the running of the Booth Line to others. It was a time when people were preoccupied with the 'poverty question'. Mary Booth wrote that 'people's minds were very full of the various problems connected with the position of the poor, and opinions the most diverse were expressed, remedies of the most contradictory nature were proposed' (1918:13). The economic depression of the late 1870's had thrown these issues into sharp relief, and Booth used his enhanced position in London society to meet with those leading reformers whose information was first-hand: Octavia Hill, the housing reformer; the Barnetts, who managed the East End Settlement at Toynbee Hall after its establishment in 1884 but were friends of the Booths before taking up that post; and, later, the many middle and upper class workers at Toynbee Hall who did educational and relief work in the East End. He also began attending meetings of the Social Democratic Federation (the main working class socialist organisation), having talks with H. M. Hyndman its leader, and he organised a small symposium in his home to debate socialism. Here we find refutation of Hyndman's claim to

have started Booth on his research into poverty. Mary Booth writes of the period, 1881-1883, 'He had talks with Mr. Hyndman of the Social Democratic Federation, attended meetings of that body, listened eagerly to addresses, and on one occasion giving one himself...'. Contrast this with Hyndman's assertion of an interview (dated by the Simeys as early 1886) beginning, 'One day, Mr. Charles Booth, then quite unknown to me...' (Hyndman, 1911:173). It is perhaps best to accept Booth's word that it was a discussion with Canon Barnett which was the original inspiration for the Poverty Study (Simey, 1960:64). Mary Booth records in a letter a visit to the Barnetts in 1878 and their discussion of immediate social action versus fact-finding and planning. In addition, as Hennock (1976) has pointed out, Hyndman had probably confused the research by the S.D.F. in unemployment with a survey undertaken by the _Pall Mall Gazette_ in the aftermath of the riots of 8 and 9 February, 1886. It was here that a writer did assert that a 'quarter at least of the population was always on the verge of distress' (15.3.1886). Booth was beginning his research as these articles were published, and he did not refer to these articles when he wrote up his research. Hennock could not find that 'anyone else referred to it at the time that Booth's work appeared' (1976:71).

Exactly who or what might claim to have sparked off the Poverty Study is, in most ways, immaterial. This complex research exercise was the product of a complex man - simple, single causes do not apply. A rehabilitated

Charles Booth had learned what would work and what would not. Direct social or political approaches to the question of poverty, the social problem he deemed most urgent had, for him, ended in frustration and failure. Yet an ordered system of data collection and analysis was supporting many successes in his business. In one sense he had discovered his own limitations and strengths. This strength of analytical ability combined with a firm belief in the potential of Science to improve life led to an empirical approach to a pressing social issue. As noted above Beatrice Webb wrote that Booth was the 'most perfect embodiment of ... the mid-Victorian time-spirit' (1926:122), this trend of thought she described as:

> There was a current belief in the scientific method, in that intellectual synthesis of observation and experiment, hypothesis and verification, by means of which alone all mundane problems were to be solved. And added to this belief in science was the consciousness of a new motive; the transference of the emotion of self-sacrificing service from God to man. (1926:130)

It is clear from his writings at the time that the Charles Booth of the mid-1880's was interested first and foremost in the methods by which poverty could be alleviated. The moral questions which had consumed him in his youth, which had led him to question and ask for the underlying explanation for the reality of poverty, were transformed into questions concerning the practical applications of his moral concerns. His call was for the active employment of science in the eradication of poverty.

It must be remembered that the issue was one which had

preoccupied Booth from adolescence. The failure to successfully confront the issue of poverty had shaped, in part, his personality and contributed to his breakdown. The history of Booth's personal involvement with the question of poverty has two parts: the increasing rarefaction of his intellectual approach; and the increasingly direct engagement of his social actions. What began as philanthropy motivated by idealism and altruism, evolved into direct political action (as in the Toxteths) fuelled by Comtian Positivism. The growing abstraction of his thought in this period diverged rapidly from the physical realities he encountered in his social and political activities. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the tenuous and widening distance between thought and action led to inner conflict. As the difference between the idealised Comtian state and the social and political realities became more and more difficult to reconcile, Booth's own mental health began to suffer. The result was the suitor described by Mary Booth (1918) as agitated, intense, almost feverish in his behaviour. With the added burden of commercial affairs the ultimate outcome was Booth's physical and mental collapse. Rising from this nadir Booth jettisoned the intellectual baggage of Comtian Positivism - its grandiose schemes and hierarchies - and began to develop his own strategy for the confrontation with the 'poverty question'.

In the early 1880's Booth had begun to 'study the ways of the people' as he wrote to his wife. In London,

Liverpool, and in America he would spend his free time roaming and observing in the working class neighbourhoods, attending religious meetings, and the meetings of trades unions and social groups. He was, however, as the Simeys point out, doubtful and distrustful of the sensational revelations of working class life which had come into vogue through the publication of works such as _The Bitter Cry of Outcast London_ (Mearns, 1883), or the pamphlet _Squalid Liverpool_ (noted in Simey, 1951:99). This sort of expose he regarded as 'erroneous and potentially dangerous' (Simey, 1960:66). Continuing to make his ethnographic investigations, Booth began to search for an additional method with which he might confront the 'poverty question'.

Life and Labour

The confrontation with the 'poverty question' and the subsequent study of London and the plight of the elderly would occupy the next seventeen years of Booth's life. Beginning in September 1886 Booth and his staff began collecting the information which would support his best known work, the study of London's poverty. The information for the Poverty Study was collected through the Autumn, Winter, and Spring of 1886-87. Chapter 8 will examine the methodology of the Poverty Study in detail. The full coverage of _The Life and Labour of the People in London_, however, is much larger than the initial study of poverty. The seventeen volumes of _Life and Labour_ may be divided

into three distinct parts or series. The first four volumes (which were originally published as two volumes) make up the Poverty Series. The first volume was published in April 1889 and the second in 1891. The Poverty Series made Booth famous. From 1892 he must be seen not as a private person undertaking social investigations, but as a public authority. In that year he was elected President of the Royal Statistical Society and awarded its Guy Medal, he led a group pressing the government to form a permanent office for social statistics and the establishment of a quinquennial census, and moreover, he was chosen as a member of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor. He had achieved public acceptance as an expert both on social research and poverty. He was not, however, convinced of his own expertise. He wrote at the end of the Poverty Series that studying 'the whole of London has enlarged the wilderness of figures, but has not done much to make the path more clear' (1891:591).

To make the path more clear he elected to explore further two lines of research; the first was the information he had uncovered concerning pauperism in Stepney. The second was to establish a baseline of information on the industrial character and occupations of London. He explained that his aim was 'to review the people as they work, trade by trade, in their factories, warehouses or shops, or pursue their avocations in the streets or on the railways, in the markets or on the quays; to consider their relations to those whom they serve,

whether employer or customer, and the remuneration they receive; and finally, to examine the bearing which the money earned has on the life they lead' (1892:522). The following five volumes made up the Industry Series. Like an encyclopaedia of employments this series repeats for each group a study of their conditions of employment, their organisation (both within firms and in trades unions), and describes the social conditions which are normal to each group. When he had finished the Industry Series Booth had been at work on Life and Labour for ten years. In many ways the work had little more to offer than it had at the end of the Poverty Series; the vast descriptions of industrial London were in place, but no clear answer had emerged to the nagging problems of poverty which had originally motivated the research. Yet Booth announced that 'I shall still attempt no answer' (1896:338), since he saw one more area which needed understanding, the area of the powerful and yet quantitatively intangible influences of religion and philantropy.

In the Religious Influences Series Booth explained that 'there are other social influences which form part of the very structure of life, and some account of them is necessary to complete the picture of things as they are' (1902:4). To accomplish this required a further six years spent in research and observation. In 1902 and 1903 the Religious Influences Series was published in seven volumes, bringing the total of Life and Labour to sixteen; a concluding final volume followed shortly after. Altogether

it had taken seventeen years to produce the seventeen volumes; at the end of this project Booth was aged sixty-three. His remaining years were to be equally demanding as he entered other areas of research and policy reform.

At the beginning of his research Booth was a little known businessman whose abilities were questioned by the scholars he first approached for consultation. By 1903 when the last volume of Life and Labour was published he was a well-known public figure. Because of his reputation Booth was often called upon to sit on public bodies. His work to secure general provision of old-age pensions is described in Chapter 7, and in addition he was active in the development of city-wide plans for the development of transport services. The proposals in his published pamphlet on public transport and housing were taken up by both political parties in the London County Council and led to the setting up of the Royal Commission on the Means of Locomotion and Transport in London in 1903. These activities overlapped with the publication of the final volume of Life and Labour and the disbanding of his research team in 1903. While Booth had hoped for a period of leisure, instead he received more and more requests to fill public positions and was appointed to government commissions on the Post Office (1903) and on Tariffs (1904). He was also receiving public honours in this period for what he had accomplished, including honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, and Liverpool; a Fellowship of the

Royal Society; and an offered knighthood which he declined in favour of a Privy Councillorship.

Booth's last major role was his appointment to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in December 1905. The Commission became a heated battleground fought over by the political parties and within which Booth came into conflict with his cousin Beatrice Webb and the Fabian socialism she and Sidney Webb now espoused (MacBriar, 1987). In 1908 ill health forced his resignation, and he returned to the subject only in 1910 to publish three pamphlets giving his views which varied in some respects from both the Majority and Minority Reports of the Commission. His last work was a return to one of his early interests, Trades Unionism, resulting in a pamphlet on industrial unrest.

There was another dimension to Booth not apparent in the narrative above - a love of art. From a very young age his holidays and spare time were spent sketching, drawing, and painting. Among his personal papers are many water-colours and washes snatched in odd moments as he travelled on business. Just after the turn of the century he was mentioned in the press for buying Holman Hunt's painting 'The Light of the World' and then sending it on a tour of the empire, his wife explaining that he did so 'that our fellow-subjects in those distant lands should have better opportunities of seeing great art' (1918:28). In Australia large crowds flocked to see the picture. When the painting returned to England, Booth presented it to St. Paul's Cathedral.

With the outbreak of the First World War Booth returned to manage the Booth Line, from which he had been retired for several years. Now seventy-four, he worked with real energy and for long hours, but writing especially was becoming more and more difficult. In the Summer of 1916 he suffered a stroke, and after an autumn of partial recovery, he suffered another on 16 November, 1916, and died aged seventy-six.

This was the man who accomplished the great survey of London. And while the underpinnings of his personal philosophy and history are more clear, it is important to place Booth's work in its historical and economic context, as well as within the context of other investigations of life in the metropolis.

Chapter Three - Context: London in the 1880's

London Poverty Research before Booth

London is one of the most studied cities in history, and the descriptive works on London or set in London are especially rich. The works of writers such as Pepys, Boswell, Johnson, and Dickens add depth and colour to our understanding of London in the past, and all deal in some way with the poverty and disease of the metropolis. Poverty, disease, and overcrowding is a regular and repeated theme in works on London from the seventeenth century, explored both descriptively and through quantification.

An early writer whose work addresses this theme is Daniel Defoe. What separates his *Journal of the Plague Year* (1665) from other works of the period is that it includes his transcriptions of the Bills of Mortality (the listing of the dead in each parish) and a rough analysis of these records, thus adding statistical weight to his portrait of London in the grip of epidemic. Preceding Defoe by a few years was one of the first pieces of statistical research concerned with London. In 1662 John Graunt and William Petty published their *Natural and Political Observations on the Bills of Mortality*. These *Observations* linked social and economic measures and included a crude life-expectancy table (Jones, 1948; Cullen, 1976). Their work established the relationship between mortality and measures of social position such as occupation and location of housing. Petty

was the more active of the two. He urged that a general registry of demographic information should be set up during the Commonwealth and after the Restoration, but this was never accomplished. He coined the term 'political arithmetic', but from about 1680 there was little in London that might be counted as social research until the mid-eighteenth century. Demographic record keeping did, however, expand over this period; Edmund Halley, who is best known for the comet he discovered, constructed life expectancy tables from some of this information and from 1762 they were being used to support actuarial life assurance in London. In the work of Halley and Gregory King the reformist quality of Petty's political arithmetic was transformed into demography (Cullen, 1976). A greater emphasis on demography, with the impetus of the population debate of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in turn spawned new areas of research. One of these was the application of demographic methods to medical questions in the work of Gilbert Bane motivated by the ongoing problems of disease, another was a broad surveying of localities which was generally termed 'statistics'.

It was in 1797 that the Encyclopaedia Britannica first defined the word 'statistics', listing it as 'a word lately introduced to express a view or survey of any kingdom, county or parish' (Kent, 1981). This growing acceptance in the late eighteenth century of the need for social surveys and demographic information, coupled with

the efforts of John Rickman and the need to assess the shortfall in foodstuffs as well as the human impact of the bad harvest of 1800, led to the establishment of the Census in 1801. A retrospective Census was collected from parish records going back to 1700 along with the first census, after which a regular census was performed every ten years. From 1841 important improvements were introduced, and from that time the details of all individuals were recorded by the enumerators (Bulmer, Bales, and Sklar, 1991:7).

From the early nineteenth century, and in Britain especially, new viewpoints emerged on society. In one sense this could not have been otherwise, as society itself was changing markedly and with increasing speed as industrialisation and urbanisation transformed British life. Traditional patterns of settlement, employment, social integration, and relief were significantly altered (Mathias, 1969; Rose, 1972; Bedarida, 1979). The cities, and especially London, were no more densely settled than previously, but their size and total population had undergone dramatic increase. Sheer numbers overwhelmed and aggravated social problems. In London, as one small example, the number of people using the essentially medieval sewage system multiplied by five over the course of the nineteenth century. The resulting public health problems included chronic and appalling cholera epidemics (Stedman Jones, 1971). The pressure of these social problems gave rise to a new concern and curiosity about the conditions under which people lived. One expression of this

curiosity was the 'statistical movement'.

The 'statistical movement' which grew up in the 1830's produced a rapid expansion in the collection of statistical and survey information (Cullen, 1976). In 1833 Richard Jones, T.R. Malthus, Charles Babbage, Adolphe Quetelet, and Adam Sedgewick formed the London Statistical Society, which would in time become the Royal Statistical Society. Originally, its aims were 'procuring, arranging, and publishing Facts calculated to illustrate the Conditions and Prospects of Society' (Hill, 1984:147; Goldman, 1983; Elesh, 1972). Quetelet, more than the others, was applying statistics to social phenomena. From this work he posited 'laws' of human behaviour based on the regularity of events such as suicide or illegitimacy (Lazarsfeld, 1961). In the same period Edwin Chadwick and William Farr, who both had medical backgrounds, would expand research on London while examining poverty, health, and demographic questions (Eyler, 1979:30). Chadwick was an important force behind the formation of the Poor Law Report of 1834, a significant step in bringing social inquiry into the mechanism of government policy-making (Checkland and Checkland, 1974). Later Chadwick was appointed Secretary of the Poor Law Commissioners, and as such he prepared the Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population. This report focussed on those crowded and unsanitary urban areas which were suffering the many social problems of industrialisation.

The *Journal of the Statistical Society* also reflects this change in viewpoint. Just over half the forty-nine articles published on London in the Journal's first twenty-five years concern health, poverty, or population. The majority on mortality and disease occur in the first fifteen volumes; from the mid-1850's more articles appear on poor relief or the 'character of inhabitants' of various parts of the metropolis. From the 1850's the research on London's social conditions published in the *Journal of the Statistical Society* decreases. This is due, in part, to the increase in the other types of social investigation in London, especially by Parliament. From this time more Parliamentary committees and Royal Commissions looked into social conditions. Chadwick, and other government workers such as Sir John Simon, also studied social conditions (Goldman, 1986). None of these were social surveys of the sort which Booth would accomplish, but they shared some traits, such as first hand observation and the use of knowledgeable informants who might be interviewed at length. All of this, however, did not add up to a great deal of social research on London. The Statistical Society, though based in London, never concentrated its efforts there. At no time before 1888, for example, do articles concerning London in the Journal outnumber those on India. Still all of these emphases, on disease and poor relief particularly, shaped future research, including that of Charles Booth, and helped to establish what Abrams called the 'peculiar pattern of British empirical sociology' - a concentration

on poverty, health, and life in cities (1968:17). Coincident with the growth of the Statistical Society was an increase in journalistic and qualitative explorations of social conditions. The best remembered practitioner of this sort of work is Henry Mayhew.

Booth has often been compared and contrasted to Henry Mayhew, whose articles in the Morning Chronicle, appearing from 1849, were assembled in book form as London Labour and London Poor from 1861. Mayhew was an investigative reporter and his work has been described as the 'most impressive survey of labour and poverty at the mid-century which exists' (Yeo and Thompson, 1972:23). The failure of Parliament to adopt the Charter in 1848 concluded a period of controversy and concern for the condition of the working classes. Of greater note to most Londoners in 1849, a plague of cholera fell on the city. The death rate exceeded 400 people a day at its peak, and the deaths were concentrated in the poorest areas of London. The first of Mayhew's articles in this series was 'A Visit to the Cholera Districts of Bermondsey' (24.9.1849). Over the next year Mayhew published eighty-two pieces in the Morning Chronicle averaging 10,500 words each, and in this qualitative work explored the lives of the labouring poor of London occupation by occupation. Mayhew made a noteworthy addition to the arsenal of social research - 'he went out and talked to ordinary people about their lives and experiences as a disinterested observer' (Bulmer, Bales

and Sklar 1991:11). Others had used this approach to good effect, Friedrich Engels being a prime example, but for the sheer breadth of his exploration Mayhew was unique; especially so in his lack of moralising about the lives of his subjects. This last attribute stood in contrast to others who were also expanding the use of social research, but whose approach was distinctly moralistic.

From the 1850's there was 'an extraordinary growth of voluntary bodies concerned with policies of moral improvement' (Abrams, 1968:38). These bodies shifted the emphasis from social aggregates to the individual as the preferred unit of analysis and their characteristic concern was an analysis of 'moral statistics', meaning the demography of sin and its consequences. For these voluntary bodies the social problems which had preoccupied previous researchers - public health and illness, education, crime - were seen as a sub-set of overarching moral problems. The new groups which pursued this form of ameliorative research also worked to translate their findings into legislation. To do this required central organisation, and the resulting umbrella organisation was the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS).

The NAPSS was founded in 1857 and from that time until the 1880's it was the paramount body in the practise of social research, controlling to a large extent the Statistical Society as well (Goldman, 1984; 1986). The Society carried tremendous power through the social and political positions of its members. Abrams notes that in

1880 'its Council included thirty-one Peers of the Realm, forty-eight M.P.'s, nineteen Doctors of Law or Q.C.'s, fourteen Fellows of the Royal Society and numerous Baronets, Knights, Ministers of the Church of England, Professors, and Fellows of the Statistical Society' (1968:45). It was more the latter than the former that actually accomplished research, and research was only a part of its overall programme. The ameliorist method it practised consumed tremendous amounts of public and private energy, conferences were organised, legislators pressurised, and many research projects were carried out. The stated aim of the organisation included the promotion of 'healthier and purer morals among the people' (Abrams, 1968:39). By this measure drink was seen as the preeminent social problem; it was thought of as the problem which caused the majority of other problems. This moralistic paradigm served private charity well enough, but as a conceptual base for social research it was sterile. The complications of urban society were reduced to abrupt and patent explanations of moral behaviour. On the other hand, the point of NAPSS research was not to uncover new information or to open debates on the nature of urban society; instead it sought to influence legislators and to strengthen belief in its moral principles by others. With moral measurement as a primary tool, the clearest insights the NAPSS offered were that among the poor there were steady and moral deserving poor on the one hand, and the

drunken and feckless undeserving poor on the other. In a sense the members of NAPSS had a single answer, no matter which question was put to them. This narrow-mindedness was ultimately ineffectual in accomplishing useful social research.

By the 1880's the NAPSS was losing both its sway in public policy and its broad popular influence. In the face of the social unrest which grew in the 1870's and 1880's the ameliorist explanations the NAPSS offered were shown to answer few questions and solve even fewer problems. In addition, a number of other groups began to compete with the ameliorists for the right to pronounce and prescribe on social issues. The radical wing of the Liberal Party saw itself as more advanced and progressive in interpretation and action than the now 'old fashioned' NAPSS. Trades Unions had grown rapidly in the 1870's and, while they declined somewhat in the 1880's, their answer to the needs of the unemployed centred on economic structure and organisation rather more than morality. In many ways distinct from the Trades Unions in the 1880's was the political left, best represented by the Social Democratic Federation. The socialist ideologies of the left not only contradicted the ameliorist explanations of poverty but condemned them. Socialist leaders such as George Lansbury came into direct conflict with Poor Law Guardians like A.G. Crowder, who followed the strict policy of the C.O.S. (Rose, 1985:12). All of this discord reflected the growing importance of poverty and its relief as a political issue

from 1860. The treatment of the poor provided the context in which the discussion surrounding their fate took place. Distinct from, but closely related to, attempts to research and debate London's poverty were the various agencies and policy-makers who sought to control the relief of poverty.

The Poor Law, Poverty and Politics before 1885

The New Poor Law of 1834 was an imperfect instrument for the relief of urban poverty. By the time of its passage there were many who believed with the assistant commissioner in Lancashire that 'in this commercial and manufacturing country, the condition of the towns is more important than the condition of the rural districts' (G. Henderson, in Rose, 1985:2). The New Poor Law though designed to be primarily a response to the difficulties of rural poverty, was set within a context of constantly increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. As Treble has noted, many contemporaries saw urbanisation and the new industries as the 'twin pillars upon which working class improvement was based' (1979:14). But these almost immediately proved to be insecure foundations, in the industrial depressions in the North in 1842 and 1847, and in the prolonged misery caused to the cotton industry by the American Civil War from 1862 to 1864. In spite of higher rates of pay, the irregularity of industrial employment prevented most urban workers from ever escaping the threat of poverty. The impact of longer term business cycles was superimposed upon the seasonal variations in

employment with often disastrous effect. Most workers, even highly skilled workers, would be pressed toward dependence from time to time. As Katz put it, 'periodic dependence was a predictable structural feature of working class life' (1983:9).

The response of the working class family to this periodic poverty called on several sources, few of them official. When Charles Booth would show one-third of London's population at or below the line of poverty, only two or three per cent of England's population were receiving official relief (Rose, 1985:3). It was much more likely that families fell back upon their own resources - pawning possessions, placing children or wife into the peripheral job market, or exploiting the family economic unit by selling its normal services of laundering, child-minding, or taking in lodgers. Behind this first line of defence came the aid of private charities. From church, chapel, or private charity might come the small help in clothes, food, or cash which both helped a family pass through a difficult time, and kept it away from dependence upon the Poor Law. And some suffering coupled with private charity was much preferred to recourse to official relief. Descent into the workhouse rarely offered a return to working life, and often required the sacrifice of liberty and the dissolution of family bonds. And if the working classes would avoid turning to the Poor Law at almost any cost, this was seen as a blessing by those paying for

relief through a complex and unequal system for the allocation of costs.

While it established Poor Law Unions the 1834 Act had left the parishes as the basic unit in the raising and disbursing of relief. The parish was responsible for setting a rate based on property and collecting the funds. The parish was responsible for the costs of its own poor, as well as to the central budget of the Union. Inequalities occurred because 'a parish's share of the common fund was calculated in proportion to its relief expenditure over the past three years. Thus the parish with the highest relief bill paid the most into the common fund' (Rose, 1985:7). The poorest inner-city parishes carried the highest rates, and the richer suburban parishes contributed far less then they might afford. The yoking together of these various parishes in the Unions led to disagreements and disruptions in the provision of relief. In periods of economic depression, as the need for funds increased, the abilities of the small businesses in the poorer parishes to pay their rates decreased, causing shortfalls in payments to the common funds and further disagreements. The relations of the parishes within the Unions and of the various Unions to each other were further complicated by the complexities of the laws of settlement. The laws of settlement tied families to parishes of origin, and newcomers to any parish who called upon the Poor Law for relief could be forcibly removed and sent back to their original settlement. For the urban parishes, which experienced a tremendous influx of

population with industrialisation, this power of removal was seen as preventing the overwhelming of the cities by the rural poor. It also served to discourage the rural migrant family from applying for help, lest they be sent back. Rose (1985:8) has shown that 'the mere threat to apply for an order of removal might result in a potential pauper desisting in his application for relief and seeking to keep himself and his family by other means.' If the application did continue it might not lead to removal, since the parish of settlement might agree to refunding the cost of any relief paid by the parish of residence. For the rural parish this arrangement was preferable as it was more likely to be a temporary expense rather than a potentially continuous problem of resident but redundant labour, in spite of the fact that the family would have contributed nothing to the funds of the rural parish by what work they did accomplish before impoverishment. A large number of non-resident relief agreements grew up between parishes through the 1830's and 1840's, centring on those urban areas, like London, which were receiving large numbers of rural workers.

The 1846 Act of Parliament made a significant change to this system. In what was another of the stages in the struggle between rural and urban Poor Law Unions, Sir Robert Peel introduced the concept of irremovability. This exempted from removal those with five years continuous residence in a place, recent widows, and the children of

parents who were irremovable. The legislation was aimed at appeasing rural interests smarting from the repeal of the Corn Laws. But, coming at a time of economic downturn and increased Irish immigration, it alarmed urban Unions. In the cities the families which had completed the required length of residence were not granted settlement; instead, if found chargeable to the parish they entered a new category of pauper: the irremovable (Rose, 1985:9). The prospect of greatly increased parish expenditure on poor relief was lessened the next year by compromise legislation which placed the expense of relieving the irremovable poor onto the common fund of the Union rather than upon the individual parish. While it spread the burden of relief, this new law also heightened tensions between the urban and suburban parishes, the latter now forced to increase their contribution for the support of the former's paupers. Altogether, while attempting to increase the efficiency of relief, the legislative changes of the 1840's and their impact on both ratepayers and the poor also raised the issue of poverty higher in the public awareness.

The legislation also generated volumes of supportive and hostile evidence. As Rose explains: 'Enquiries both official and unofficial, blue books, reports of statistical and visiting societies, novels and newspapers, piled up evidence and concern about the condition of England question' (1985:9). Several of these publications, such as Mayhew's reports, studied poverty in London, and helped shift attention from the industrial towns of the North to

the metropolis. After the somewhat more quiet decade of the 1850's, London would again take centre stage in the significant economic and legislative events of the 1860's.

It has been argued by several historians that there was a crisis in the relief of the poor in the 1860's, and that the response to this crisis shaped the form of relief through the 1880's (Rose, 1981, 1985; Hennock, 1976; Stedman Jones, 1971). This crisis was precipitated by economic depression and the accompanying human suffering, which had two centres: Lancashire and London's East End. As mentioned above, the large Lancashire cotton industry was nearly brought to a halt by the outbreak of the American Civil War and the resulting 'cotton famine'. Downturns in trade, both national and international, affected the shipping industry of London's East End. In addition, weather played a significant part in the increase in suffering. Most working class families walked an economic knife-edge in winter - a decline in available work and wages coupled with an increase in the cost of living meant small problems could have disastrous effects, pushing the family over the line into pauperism. An especially hard winter further diminished the available work and further increased the cost of living for a large proportion of families. The winter of 1860-61 was particularly severe and pushed large numbers of families into destitution. Bread riots broke out in London's East End (Stedman Jones, 1971:241). The number of applications for relief mounted

rapidly, exceeding the capacities of the Unions, and private philanthropy began to step in to fill the gap. Among the public and politicians was a sense that the Poor Law system had broken down, and investigative committees were mounted both inside and outside government to determine what should be done.

On the government side a parliamentary select committee was established on the motion of the president of the Poor Law Board in 1861. This committee examined the workings of the Unions around the country for three years, and uncovered many defects, particularly in London. An immediate response to the crisis, and result of the first investigations, was legislation passed in 1861 which changed the assessment system for parish contributions to the Union common fund. Each parish would now be charged for the common fund on the basis of its property values rather than on previous relief expenditure. The next year another Act shifted the responsibility for assessing property values from the parish to the Union itself, which provided an opportunity for a general reassessment of properties. This Act also lowered the time requirement for irremovability from five to three years.

Changes were also occurring within the parishes as the result of non-governmental inquiries. In 1864 and 1865 public opinion was aroused by newspaper reports of the deaths of paupers in workhouse infirmaries in London. There had been a growing dissatisfaction with the state of the workhouse sick wards, which led to the founding of the Poor

Law Medical Reform Association in 1856 and the Workhouse Visiting Society in 1858. A commission appointed by The Lancet to examine the workhouse infirmaries reported in the Summer of 1865, and demonstrated widespread and serious problems, particularly in London. In response the Poor Law Board appointed its own commission and named a special Medical Inspector (Rose, 1981:58).

The young were also coming under special scrutiny in the workhouse. An increased public awareness of the plight of children confined to workhouse schools or institutionalised in the large 'barrack schools', brought calls for change. Morally the schools were seen as training grounds for crime, and physically the close quarters led to the rapid spread of disease.

Two further pieces of legislation completed the large changes to the Poor Law system brought on by the crisis of increased demand in the 1860's. In 1865 the Union Chargeability Act finally shifted responsibility fully from the parish to the Poor Law Union for relief. Settlement was now linked to Union rather than parish, and irremovability occurred after one year's residence. Two years later the Poor Law Board was made a permanent department of state, rather than existing on five-year renewals by Parliament. Altogether these changes in the adminstration of relief in the 1860's created a system much more adapted to urban poverty - centralised, permanently administered and inspected from the top level of government, and more

equitable in its funding. But the very acts of parliament which institutionalised and centralised relief were criticised for breaking down the close link which existed between the needy and the relieving at the parish level.

Stedman Jones draws on the work of Marcel Mauss in explaining the link between giver and receiver: 'a gift is a relationship between persons. If it is depersonalized, the gift loses its defining features: the elements of voluntary sacrifice, prestige, subordination, and obligation' (1971:252). The Poor Law and its ongoing elaboration and institutionalisation reflected this transition from personal to collective policies for relief. And it was the loss of the defining features of the personal relief of poverty which so concerned many Londoners in the 1860's and 1870's. Further bread riots in January and February 1867 worried London's middle and upper classes; the successful invasion of Hyde Park by some 100,000 East Enders in May 1867 alarmed them. One outcome of this alarm was a general outflowing of individual and loosely organised charity not linked to the Poor Law.

This outflowing of charity also caused concern. As Rose explains: 'There was at the core of the poor law an ideological system. This consisted of the belief that only those in the direst need could be relieved by public provision. All others must be forced into the ways of self-help and support.' (1985:10). The increase in philanthropy had led in the estimation of many observers to the creation of 'clever paupers', who played off one Union against

another, and presented identical appeals to a number of charities. Their example of successful mendicity was thought to demoralise the honest poor, and draw still more into the fraud. One answer to this was the founding of The London Society for Organizing Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity in 1868. Two years later it changed its name to the Charity Organization Society (COS). Following the Scottish commentator Thomas Chalmers, they argued for the need 'to reconstruct in towns the small-scale paternalist system of the ideal country parish' (Rose, 1985:11). The COS would attempt to rectify what they saw as the confused provision of relief for the next thirty years.

The official policies of the newly centralised authority for the relief of the poor reflected this ambiguity and discord. In 1869 G.J. Goshen, then President of the Poor Law Board, published a minute to the boards of guardians deploring the lax nature of outdoor relief and calling for a close co-operation with charitable organisations (in Rose, 1971:225). He stated that boards must 'make preparations as may enable Boards of Guardians and charitable agencies to work with effect and rapidity ... so as to avoid the double distribution of relief to the same persons'. Cutting the overall costs of relief was an important goal of the Poor Law Board, who feared that local boards would be rapidly taken into great expenditure by the supplementation of low wages. In an attempt to stem this

flow Goshen was very clear: 'relief should be given only to the actually destitute, and not in aid of wages'. Goshen admitted that this was 'difficult', even 'harsh' when widows with families and insufficient incomes were refused help, but he insisted that the rule must be maintained - the board should 'take upon themselves the entire cost of maintenance', in other words place the entire family in the workhouse, or 'hold aloof and refuse to supplement the receipts of the family' (in Rose, 1971:227). Goshen suggested that it was the charitable agencies, and only the charitable agencies, who might help 'those who have some, but insufficient means, and who, though on the verge of pauperism, are not actual paupers'. But the response of these charitable agencies was widely variable. In London's East End the Unions of St. George's in the East, Whitechapel, and Stepney adopted a strict COS regimen also refusing to supplement low wages, while the unions of Mile End and Poplar regularly granted outdoor relief (Ryan, 1985:145-50).

The harsh economic and social conditions of the 1860's and 1870's had brought about the centralisation of poor relief, and had placed urban poverty at the top of the political agenda. These conditions had also spurred the growth of private philanthropy and interest, and rapidly brought some of these interests into conflict with the Poor Law Board and the 'scientific philanthropists' of the Charity Organization Society. Aimed at resolving a crisis in poor relief, these two decades of changes in both law

and practice established a framework within which the next crisis would be met. Within this context occurred the economic, political, even climatic events which would shape and influence research into poverty.

The Economic and Social Context of the Poverty Study

Booth's original Poverty Study was based, for the most part, on data collected in the Autumn, Winter and Spring of 1886-87. As a cross-sectional 'survey' it provides an especially graphic snapshot of the East End - but as a snapshot it excludes any view of the immediate past or future. Booth was well aware of the social and economic context of his research, as were most of his readers, and for that reason he did not see any need to explain the events and trends which surrounded his study in time. From the distance of more than one hundred years we enjoy greater breadth but suffer diminished detail in our view.

Booth was careful to view the objects of his research (households, businesses, industries, churches, etc.) closely and at a distance, that is, in the aggregate. For more than a year before the 'Inquiry' began Booth experienced first-hand the lives of his research subjects by taking up lodgings in the East End, soaking up the 'feel' of the place, making notes, following the lives of other lodgers, and getting a notion of their life-styles and life histories. Booth lived for weeks at a time in several different boarding houses, taking care to live in

diverse neighbourhoods and in various grades of lodging. He recorded the smallest details of diet, social life, and work, while carefully avoiding any prying or interference. He wrote that:

> For three separate periods I have taken up quarters, each time for several weeks, where I was not known, and as a lodger have shared the lives of the people...Being more or less boarded as well as lodged, I became intimately acquainted with some of those I met, and the lives and habits of many others came naturally under observation. My object, which I trust was a fair one, was never suspected, my position never questioned.
> (Life and Labour Vol. 2 p. 158)

At the other end of the methodological continuum was Booth's analysis of the census to determine aggregate shifts in the labour market. But between these two points of view, and surrounding the 'Inquiry' in time, were important contemporary events. What follows is a brief review of the important issues and events that would have occupied the minds of Booth and other Londoners in 1886-87. These are the issues and events that Mary Booth described when she wrote that in that period 'people's minds were very full of the various problems connected with the position of the poor', and which she described as pressing Charles Booth to 'seek an answer to the question' (1918:13-14).

Following on the Goshen Minute, in the 1880's Local Government Boards and the Poor Law Unions launched a campaign against outdoor relief (that is, the giving out of money or food to needy families) (Rose, 1981:62). Under the particular conditions of the mid-1880's this campaign would

have significant effects. Four areas would have a special bearing on the results of Booth's 'Inquiry': the extreme Winter weather of 1886-87; the location of this year in the trade cycle, and the seasonal cycles of trade in London; the political context; and the availability of, and the change occurring in the system of, social welfare and relief.

The Winter of 1886-87

The Winter of 1886-87 was severely cold. There were days of record cold temperatures, all the more remarkable because the preceding Winter had been the coldest for thirty years. Record cold brought extreme distress to many in the East End. Outdoor work, in particular the building trades, and work at the docks, all but stopped completely in freezing weather. The previous Winter of 1885-86 has entered the historical record as one of extreme cold and distress primarily due to the riots in Trafalgar Square of the unemployed which occurred in February 1886. Meteorologically, the Winter of 1886-87, the period of the 'Inquiry', was not significantly better. The record lows of the 1885-86 Winter yield a three month (December, January and February) mean of 37.3 degrees F. (2.9 degrees Centigrade); the three month mean for the 'Inquiry' Winter of 1886-87 is 37.7 degrees F. (3.2 degrees Centigrade). Extreme swings in temperature were experienced. In the *Times* of 3 December 1886 there is a letter from the meteorologist at the Botanical Gardens in Regent's Park; it

begins: 'Seldom have we to note so sharp a fall in temperature as that of last night, the lowest registered here being 20.8 deg....'.

The impact of this weather was to throw many residents of the East End out of work. Treble points out that in the building industry 'the key determinant of the amplitude of fluctuations in output and employment was the climate rather than the current state of the housing market' (1978:218). Booth later recorded that on building sites labourers, bricklayers, masons, plasterers, and painters were dismissed with falling temperatures (Life and Labour, Vol 5, p 115). At the docks severe cold led to widespread 'lay-offs'. Even in normal winters there was little or no work in the Millwall and Surrey Commercial Docks after the Autumn peak in the importation of timber and grain.

The weather had serious consequences for the lives and livelihoods of the people of the East End, and indeed for all the people of London. The Winter of 1885-86 had been severe and the suffering caused by the cold and loss of work had in part led to the riots of February 1886. The Winter of 1886-87 was only slightly less severe and had the effect of increasing unemployment and distress in the period of Booth's research. In short, it was a hard winter, one that would have increased the poverty found by Booth. Dockworkers for example, who made up a significant portion (something in the order of 20%) of those working in the East End, were out of work for weeks at a time due to occasional freezing of the river, made worse by the annual

winter downturn in shipping traffic. These annual cycles in employment, while not necessarily dependent on the weather, could easily increase the impact of bad weather.

Trade Cycles and Seasonal Cycles

The East End of 1886-87 contained a wide variety of industries and occupations (the docks were the largest employer, followed by casual labouring, furniture making, construction, boot making, and retailing), but its diversity did not ensure regularity in the demand for labour. The British economy as a whole experienced a deep depression between 1884 and 1887. This depression was the nadir of a general decline which had begun with the crisis of 1873. This period was known to the people of the time as the Great Depression (Crouzet, 1982:47). There was, after 1873, a fall in prices, interest rates, and profit margins. The supply of money remained steady and those who received wages were able to show a certain improvement as prices fell. But for the working classes across Britain unemployment was a widespread and prolonged problem; it was to remain so until the beginning of the First World War.

The rapidly growing economy of the industrial revolution slowed markedly in the last twenty-five years of the 19th century. Deane and Cole (1967:42) using Hoffmann's index, have calculated the growth of British industrial production for the entire 19th century. The decades which include the 'Inquiry' record the lowest annual average growth rate for the economy as a whole

between 1810 and 1909. The annual growth rate for 1877-83 was one-sixth that of the previous sixty-five years. Statistics on national unemployment are lacking except for the records kept by trades unions. These show unemployment rates of 5 per cent. between 1851 and 1873, a rise to 7.2 per cent. between 1874 and 1895, and a fall to 5.4 per cent. between 1896 and 1913. Crouzet points out (1982:61) that the moving average actually rose to the highest level of unemployment in the 'Inquiry' period of 1884-87. In all of Great Britain the economy remained depressed throughout this period until a modest recovery took place from 1896, with slow improvement until 1914.

Superimposed upon these long term shifts in the economy were the business cycles identified by Rostow (1953). While Rostow's explanation of the Great Depression and his 'four period' explanation of the Victorian economy have been criticised by subsequent economic historians, his description of business cycles is generally accepted. Eleven major cycles have been identified between 1815 and 1914. Their average length, with virtually no variation, was nine years from peak to peak, or from trough to trough. These cycles were generated by the imperfect nature of foreign trade. Massive exports would flood overseas markets leading to a downturn in orders, the speculation which fueled these export drives would cease, and a contraction of production and shipments would follow. Improved communications meant that inventory cycles smoothed in the

last part of the 19th century, but the underlying investment cycles continued. That these cycles were driven by foreign trade is important for an understanding of their effect on the economy of the East End. Though lacking major export industries, the East End, through the Docks, was buffeted by any downturn in shipping, shipbuilding, haulage, or warehousing, in short, by any swing in international trade. The peaks of these cycles occurred in 1818, 1825, 1836, 1845, 1854, 1866, 1873, 1883, 1890, 1900, and 1913. Measuring these cycles from peak to peak, the trough of the 1883-1890 cycle coincides with the 'Inquiry' in 1886-87. The total amount of work to be found in the East End would therefore have been reduced at the time Booth was collecting the information for the Poverty Study.

Given that the 'Inquiry' took place primarily in the Autumn and Winter of 1886-87, the seasonality of production must also be understood in order to grasp the economic context of Booth's research. As Stedman Jones has shown, London 'as a centre of production of finished consumer goods...was particularly subject to the dictates of seasonal demand' (1971:34). Compounding this vulnerability was the fact that seasonal fluctuations were 'grotesquely attenuated by London's position as a centre of conspicuous consumption' (op. cit.). Two factors mitigated the effects of seasonality in London; the first was that much production was regularised when firm size was large or when two or more types of seasonal production might be successfully alternated. Booth noted that in cabinet-making

and carriage-building large firms would hold workers year round, but small masters had to follow the London 'season' (Booth, op. cit., 2nd series, Vol. 1 p. 240; 1st series, Vol. 4., p. 197). Unfortunately, the industrial character of the East End was marked by its preponderance of very small firms.

The second mitigating factor was that the seasonal variations of different industries were not coincident. Booth noted that 'there is no general convergence of streams be they large or small' (Life and Labour, 2nd Series, Vol. 5, p. 256). Despite these mitigating factors Stedman Jones has outlined three distinct ways in which seasonal variation would operate in London's economy.

Firstly, was the effect of the fashionable London 'season'. In the Spring the English elite would converge on London for the social 'season', which was originally co-ordinated with the summer parliamentary session. The well-to-do would begin to return to London in February and March, and by mid-April the 'season' would have truly begun. This congregation of the upper classes served several economic, political, and social functions, not the least being the cycles of balls, parties, and events which provided opportunities for conspicuous display and the forging of matrimonial alliances between families otherwise separated geographically. All of this significantly increased the population of the West End, and from April until August the social life of the upper classes increased

demand in a number of industries and services. Mayhew listed tailoring, shoe-making, cabinet-making, milliners, dressmakers, artificial flower makers, saddlers, harnessmakers, coachbuilders, farriers, cooks, confectioners, and cabmen as affected by the London season (Mayhew, 1861). Stedman Jones adds that coachmen and servants were taken on in the Spring and dismissed at the end of July. Bakers, printers, the building trades, waiters, upholsterers, dyers, carvers, and gilders also showed the characteristic June peak and August slump in employment that accompanied the 'season'.

The second major cause of seasonal variation highlighted by Stedman Jones is the seasonal variation in the supply of raw materials (1971:36). As mentioned above, timber and grain arrived in great amounts from September until the end of December and then all but completely stopped until April. Tobacco workers often suffered from the exhaustion of stocks in July, August and September. And Booth noted the extreme fluctuation in the income of workers in the fruit and vegetable markets (Life and Labour, First series, Vol. 1, p. 201), as well as the tendency of undertakers to take on extra help at the beginning of the Winter to deal with the increased supply of corpses (Booth Collection, notebook B87, BLPES).

The third seasonal effect identified by Stedman Jones was the interruption of the production process itself. The building trades, as mentioned above, were especially hard hit in this way. Virtually all outdoor work was curtailed

or halted by rain or snow, and the diminished number of daylight hours further shortened the working day. Taken together, seasonal variations in the economy could have a profound impact on the lives of workers in the East End across the population. Using the 1891 Census classifications of the population by occupation for the East of London, the categories most likely to suffer seasonal variation total to 48.6% of all workers over ten years of age. (Those included are: personal service; transport and storage; building trades; wood and furniture; shipbuilding; food and drink; textiles; clothing trades; and boot and shoe trades). Other trades, retailing being an obvious choice, would feel the catenate effect of unemployment in the occupations listed above.

From an examination of the weather as well as the economic climate, it is clear that the physical conditions of the Winter of 1886-87 would have been harsh and the employment prospects bleak for East Londoners. With the exception of those jobs which increased in number in the Winter, such as gas workers and coal lumpers, the coincidence of long-term economic depression with the trough of a nine-year trade cycle and the 'normal' impact of seasonal variation must have reduced the total number of available jobs to far below the number of those seeking work. For the employers it was more than ever a buyers' market.

George Bernard Shaw later described the late 1880's as

a time when 'the mass of manual workers...were literally worth nothing: you could get them for what it cost to keep them alive' (Shaw, 1928:194). These physical realities were reflected in the political concerns of the day; the amount of distress caused by this confluence of economic and climatic events became the subject of popular and political debate. If Booth found the condition of the inhabitants of the East End at low ebb, this can not be considered to be the result of the weather and economic depression alone. The preceding twenty years had seen a worsening housing crisis in London and the failure of the government's response to this crisis. The increased political polarisation caused by the housing crisis and the controversy over the plight of the poor had been one of the spurs to Booth in undertaking his research, and in increasing his hope that his Inquiry might help to answer the 'Poverty Question'.

The Political Context

Poverty in the Winter of 1886-87 must have been, for the reasons noted above, pervasive and acute in the East End. The watchwords of the day were 'exceptional distress' and a great debate raged as to whether or not the working classes, especially in the East End, were actually suffering 'exceptional distress' in the Winter of 1886-87. The notion amongst those taking part in this debate was that if there were 'exceptional distress' then exceptional remedies were in order. The campaign against outdoor relief

following on the Goshen Minute stood strongly against the resumption of any such exceptional remedy, such as relief given as a supplement to wages. The question, at least for those who were not suffering, was apparently never resolved.

The articles and letters in the Times in December 1886 give a picture of this debate and the 'distress' which prompted it. On the second of December there is a brief article giving the latest figures on 'Metropolitan Pauperism'. According to this the number of paupers is only slightly higher than previous years, an argument against any exceptional measures, and designed to prevent the definition of the winter of 1886-87 as a crisis lest there be another outpouring of private charity. It gives a 'census of metropolitan paupers exclusive of lunatics in asylums and vagrants taken on the last day of the week named here under (enumerated inhabitants in 1881, 3,815,000)'. The figures are given for the last day of the third week in November:

Table 3-1

YEAR	Indoor	Outdoor	Total
1886	56,104	37,906	94,010
1885	55,268	37,442	92,710
1884	56,194	35,100	91,294
1883	54,294	36,549	90,843

(From the Times 2.12.1886)

The article gives no source for these figures, which place

the proportion of paupers to the population at two and one-half per cent., though they are likely to have come from the Local Government Board. The day before an appeal had appeared for winter clothing for children; it described in part '60 mothers of absentee children [from the schools] of these half at least have pleaded husbands out of work...visitors of the Board state these are the facts.' The School Board Visitors were in the Times again on the third of December in a report taken from the minutes of the latest meeting of the School Board for London. The interviewing of parents had been criticised; the Board noted that 'the form of questions put to parents under the new rules for recovery of fees [had been] denounced in the Press generally and the Saturday Review in particular as "not only inquisitorial, but grossly meddlesome and insolent"'. These new rules allowed the collection of employment and financial information and thus proved both helpful and intrusive. The appeal for children's clothing mentioned above was justified by the information collected in this way, and the data collected by Booth benefited by the ability of the Visitors to gather these details. To the out-of-work parent, however, these questions must have, indeed, seemed 'meddlesome and insolent'.

Because of information gained in this way the Board went on in this meeting to cancel 'arrears in fees in 18 schools in Finsbury, Greenwich, and Marylebone to the amount of 547 pounds'. That the Board was cancelling

arrears in the fees owed by parents to the School Board shows that its information, probably passed up through the Visitors and teachers, had led the members of the Board to the conclusion that there was 'exceptional distress'. The fee amounted to one to two pence per week. The £547 in cancelled school fees also gives an indication of the large numbers of families which were unable to pay. Even at the higher rate of two pence per child per week, this sum represents 65,640 unpaid 'pupil-weeks' in three boroughs alone.

There were a number of people, on the other hand, who were convinced that poverty was no worse that it might normally be, and might well be decreasing. On the fourth of December the Times carried a letter from a man named J. Llewelyn Davies in reply to a criticism of one of his public statements; he writes:

> Lady Alford complains that I 'suggest no remedies'. I ask, 'for what?'. Your correspondents and others have been considering what exceptional measures should be adopted to meet exceptional distress. I do not say that there is no distress. I am too well aware that in all parts of London painful distress is to be found. The poor we have with us always. But if distress is not exceptional, there is no call on any one to suggest exceptional remedies.

He then goes on to quote recent statistics showing stable wages and falling prices, and an increase in the per capita consumption of meat, these, he believes prove that there is no exceptional distress. Nor should it be assumed that his was a unique interpretation of the current question of 'distress'. On the ninth of December the Times reports the

meeting of the Poor Law Guardians, who had been called to discuss remedies for the exceptional distress. The chair is taken by the Reverend W. Bury whom the <u>Times</u> relates has stated in his opening remarks, 'the conference is by no means pledged to the opinion that exceptional distress which is the subject for discussion exists at all (Hear, Hear)'. After his remarks he reads out the telegram from Mr. Bryce M.P. who sends his apologies and points out that the recent preoccupation with poverty in the press 'confirms the impression I have been disposed to form - that those who hunt for exceptional distress are sure to find it, and there is a serious danger of making it, by injudicious treatment, normal and permanent (Cheers)'. Later in the meeting the Rev. Bury took to the podium again and put the case which had been so well developed by the Charities Organisation Society - 'It is a fact that a great many people come to London at a time of industrial distress because they know there is always a Mansion House fund to fall back upon. It seems to me that in this 19th century there is being developed the very worst possible kind of charity, fashionable charity, charity a la mode.' This meeting of the Poor Law Guardians ostensibly organised to discuss exceptional distress considered the destructive affect of charity upon the poor and the misguided intentions of many who would be charitable, but no description, information, or testimony is given on the prevalence of distress, nor are any 'remedies' put forward except one. 'The remedy for exceptional distress' one

speaker states, 'is exceptionally hard work!' Four days later the Lord Mayor's Committee on Exceptional Distress published its recommendations: if there was any distress it should 'be met by strengthening existing agencies' (*Times* 16.12.1886).

The question of distress as a political issue was, in the Winter of 1886-87, 'old news'. It was the previous Winter that had brought rioting unemployed men into the West End and placed the issue in the fore. The conditions which had led to the riots in February 1886 also contributed to the distress of 1886-87, and had been building up over the previous twenty years. These economic and industrial conditions preoccupied politicians of the period. One of these, the economic depression which occurred after 1873, has been discussed already. Two more have to do with the nature of London as a centre of industry and as a growing metropolis. The first of these was the demise of London as an industrial centre, the second was the housing crisis of the 1880's.

The demise of London's industries occurred as London enjoyed phenomenal growth in the financial and commercial sphere with the Industrial Revolution. Industrialisation itself was accomplished more cheaply in the provinces, nearer the supplies of iron and coal. The growth of London as a financial and commercial centre pushed rents and overheads too high for many of its traditional industries, and after 1870 there was a steady exodus of manufacturing

firms from the city. Booth noted another face of the problem: 'that Trades leave, people stay' (Booth, op. cit. 1rst series, Vol. 4, p340). As Stedman Jones describes, 'the inner industrial perimeter (which included the East End) developed into an area of chronic male under-employment, female sweated labour, and low paid, irregular artisan work in declining trades; an area associated with small dealing, petty criminality and social desolation so graphically portrayed by Booth in his Poverty Survey' (1971:154).

In addition to the general economic depression and the decline of London industry, all London and the working classes especially were suffering a housing crisis of serious proportions in the 1880's. London had undergone a major transformation in the fifty years between 1830 and 1880. The population had more than trebled, but the amount of housing available in central London had seriously decreased. As Stedman Jones describes:

> Large and packed residential areas had given way to acres of warehouses, workshops, railway yards, and offices. Wide streets had been cut through the dangerous and semi-criminal slum rookeries of the 1840's. Only pockets of intense poverty testified as vestigial remnants to what were once extensive aggregations of the urban poor and 'the dangerous classes'. (1971:159)

For the middle classes displaced in the great depopulation of central London the suburbs offered improved housing serviced by an ever enlarging transport network. For the working class and the poor who needed to live within walking distance of their employment the results were

higher rents, greater crowding, and displacement to those 'pockets of intense poverty' mentioned above - pockets more than likely to be in the East End. Price-Williams assembled statistics for the number of persons per house in London over the period 1841 to 1881. The increased crowding in the East London parishes is clearly shown in Table 3-2:

Table 3-2 Persons per House

YEAR	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
Whitechapel					
Artillery and	8.05	8.88	8.97	9.72	> 11.28
Spitalfields	8.75	9.91	10.24	10.07	
St. George's-in-the-East					
St. Pauls	6.71	7.39	7.52	7.77	7.84
St. Johns	6.18	10.14	9.77	10.13	10.28

(adapted from Price-Williams, 1885:350)

Attempts at rehousing and the construction of 'model dwellings' dealt with only a fraction of those displaced. As one of the chief proponents of rehousing Octavia Hill originated a 'system' by which tenements were taken over and improved physically while a resident landlord or lady rent collector (Beatrice Potter was one in the years just before the 'Inquiry') would work to improve the habits of the residents through inculcating punctuality, thrift, and respectability. By insisting on punctuality in the payment of rents Hill managed a five per cent. return on the

tenements run by her system, but the same insistence effectively excluded those whose income was irregular. The part played directly by the government in an attempt to alleviate the crisis only intensified the problem. Responding to the dire situation caused by the economic restructuring of London and the increasing pressure on housing, the Cross Act was passed at the end of 1875. The Act provided that the Metropolitan Board of Works be given powers of compulsory purchase over slum areas. The Board would clear the slums and sell the sites to commercial dwellings companies for the construction of tenements. The aim of the legislators was that the Act would pay for itself, in accordance with the liberal economics of the day. But within five years it was agreed that:

> ...the operation of the Act was disastrous. Instead of alleviating overcrowding, it intensified it. Instead of penalizing slum owners, it rewarded them substantially. Instead of yielding a profit, or even paying for itself, it resulted in a huge financial loss. The failure of the Act was to a considerable extent responsible for the crisis of overcrowding in London in the 1880's. (Stedman Jones, 1971:200)

The failure of the liberal response to the housing crisis increased opposition from other political groups. The worsening conditions of the economy and the housing crisis led many to question, and then to challenge, the dominant traditional liberal ideology. This challenge, in the form of the Social Democratic Federation, growing trades unions, and other forms of 'collectivism', tended to polarise political opinion as the depression deepened after 1873.

In February 1886 these factors crystallised in the

public mind as matter of social importance. The catalyst was the public disorder of February 8, 9, and 10; and the 'poverty question' came to rival the 'Irish question' (for a time at least) as the issue which most preoccupied the politicians and the public. On the afternoon of 8 February a meeting of the unemployed was called by the Fair Trade League. Some 20,000 met in Trafalgar Square, where fighting broke out between supporters of the League and the supporters of the Social Democratic Federation. A part of the crowd then followed the S.D.F. leaders out of the Square in the direction of Hyde Park, but in Pall Mall the marchers were provoked by members of the Carlton Club and stones were thrown, breaking windows. At this point, Stedman Jones explains:

> '...the march turned into a riot. All forms of property were assailed, all signs of wealth and privilege attacked. In St. James's Street all the club windows down one side of the street were broken, and in Picadilly looting began.'
> (1971:291)

Robbery and looting spread through Hyde Park and along Audley Street and Oxford Street. The reaction of the middle classes, the shop owners, and the government was just short of panic. On the morning of 9 February a crowd began to gather once more in Trafalgar Square. Shops were boarded up and the police circulated warnings of new attacks. In the afternoon the Square was cleared, but the rumours continued to spread of groups marching out of the East End bent on loot. On 10 February the situation was

similar but the sense of panic was greatly increased. A heavy fog added to the foreboding and it was reported that 10,000 men were marching from Deptford in South London to Central London. Troops were restricted to barracks, bridges guarded, government offices, banks and businesses were barricaded against attack. At the Elephant and Castle, on the New Kent Road, in Deptford, and in other places crowds gathered to join the mob which was always thought to be marching from somewhere else on its way to the West End. By night the unorganised crowds had been broken up, but the sense of threat to the public order was not calmed (The Times, 9,10,11.2.1886; Stedman Jones, 1971:292). Throughout 1886 and 1887 lingered a fear of revolt by the unemployed, and the police and courts dealt harshly with anyone organising demonstrations. Another result of the riots was a tremendous increase in the donations to the Mansion House (or Lord Mayor's) Fund for the unemployed. As the fund was dispersed the Charity Organisation Society attacked the 'unscientific' nature of the relief, and noted that this was little better than a ransom paid to the feckless and would only encourage them. That the C.O.S. would do so is indicative of the basic assumptions underlying mechanisms of relief and welfare of the period.

Social Welfare in the 1880's

It would be incorrect to give the impression there was any sort of integrated social welfare system for London in the 1880's. The cost of relief of poverty and distress was

met, as far as it was met, from a variety of sources, and not all of these were official. Three broad categories describe the mechanisms of relief available to the poor. Firstly, were the agencies such as the Poor Law authorities, the Jewish Board of Guardians, and the Mansion House Fund mentioned above. Secondly, as Treble has pointed out (1979:121), was the 'more ambiguous role played by debt and debt agencies in alleviating, in the short-term, some of the more pressing needs of working class society'. Finally there were the few options of self-help which could aid the unemployed in times of distress.

The Poor Law authorities were the official and national agency for relief of distress. As noted above, the 'New Poor Law', enacted in 1834, consolidated the Church parishes which had previously been responsible for relief into Poor Law Unions. The New Poor Law had also withdrawn much outdoor relief; established workhouses (indoor relief) for the able bodied; and instituted greater scrutiny of applicants. These changes in the organisation of relief, though subsequently resisted in the North of England, were more readily accepted in the South where the workhouse was, by the 1880's, a regular fixture. The organisation of the workhouse reflected the liberal economic and individualistic philosophies so clearly voiced in the quotations from the Poor Law Guardians given above. Under the policy of 'less eligibility' the workhouse was designed to be so much worse than simple poverty that only the truly destitute would be driven in and the malingerer or slacker

would not fall on public expense. Two flaws in the legislation hampered the implementation of Poor Law policy. Firstly the Poor Law Commission was given virtually no powers to enforce the changes set out in the new law; and secondly, while the parishes were organised into unions in 1834, the financing of relief was left to individual parishes. Great disparities resulted from the requirement that each parish raise its own funds; the poorest parishes usually had the greatest number requiring aid and were the least able to meet these requirements from public funds. The difficulties of meeting the costs of relief continued after the reorganisations of the 1860's, and the 'economy question continued to dominate the proceedings of many boards of guardians' (Rose, 1985:10). Because of these flaws, and because of popular feeling and the inefficiency of the workhouse, the payment of outdoor relief (cash or kind payments) never actually stopped and was especially used in times of economic depression. In London from the late 1860's controversy centred on the payment of outdoor relief. As Rose explains, 'in the big cities...many boards of guardians were doling out small amounts of cash relief to able-bodied paupers, and leaving them to bring these inadequate allowances up to subsistence level by begging, stealing, or working at ill-paid jobs' (1971:222). The situation was further confused by the proliferation of charities in the Mid-Victorian period. In 1865 the Charity Organisation Society was formed in London to co-ordinate

the voluntary and Poor Law relieving agencies. The C.O.S. became the major force in London for the organisation and direction of poor relief. Led by C.S.Loch, its attitude was that a distinction must be made between the deserving and the undeserving poor. The deserving would be identified by careful investigation and given the most appropriate relief which would help them back to self-sufficiency. The undeserving, the feckless or the drunkard, would be denied any private aid and would be driven to the workhouse and the test of 'less eligibility'.

By 1870 the London Poor Law Board had been replaced by a Local Government Board which, in the face of the increasing economic depression of the early 1870's, responded with ever more stringent conditions for relief. In particular, there was a policy of discouraging out-relief of any sort. In the cases of widows with children, for example, it was recommended that one or more of the children be taken into the workhouse rather than providing any public contribution to the inadequate family income through out-relief. The informed and co-ordinated response to distress that was supposed to have grown up between the Local Government Board and the C.O.S. never occurred. Through lack of funds, harshness of treatment, and the overwhelming numbers unemployed in the Great Depression, poor-law administrators failed 'even to alleviate urban poverty, let alone find any solution to it' (Rose, 1971:234).

Because of the disorganisation of relief agencies, and

the variability of funding, it is difficult to describe exactly what the availability of relief would have been in the East End in 1886-87. At times the agencies worked actively to restrict relief. As Treble records, 'amidst the considerable amount of distress which was generated in 1879 by mass unemployment, the Charity Organisation Society successfully stifled the charitable impulses of London's wealthy citizens by preventing the launching of an appeal on behalf of the impoverished population of the East End' (1979:146). At this time special appeals and relief funds would usually be organised at the Mansion House, the centre of government for the City of London and the office of the Lord Mayor. In the Winter of 1884-85 the C.O.S. resisted another call for the establishment of a Mansion House Fund for the unemployed, arguing that the accounts of distress in the East End were greatly exaggerated. The following Winter (1885-86) brought even greater distress and an appeal was launched in January, 1886. As mentioned above, the riots of early February increased the funds flowing in to the Mansion House considerably. The riots also led to a breakdown of C.O.S. control over poor relief as the Mansion House Fund managers began to disburse funds against the recommendation of the C.O.S. Some 40,950 families representing around 160,000 individuals were given small amounts of money, averaging 13s. 1d. per capita. The distinction between the deserving and the feckless, and the control of the C.O.S. over who was entitled to make that

decision, faded in the rush to mollify the poor in the aftermath of the riots.

All of this was to effect a tightening of relief in the 'Inquiry' Winter of 1886-87, as the C.O.S. reasserted its control over the mechanisms of relief. Stedman Jones notes that, 'by the Summer of 1886, the immediate scare provoked by the riots had somewhat subsided and the C.O.S. assaults upon the evils of the fund began to meet with general acceptance in the press' (1971:300). In the 'Inquiry' Winter of 1886-87 there was no large scale fund-raising or disbursement, though Booth noted an increase in those sleeping rough: 'the question who are the homeless and what can be done for them, has been pressed upon our consideration by a recent rapid increase in numbers' (Booth, Vol. 1, 1889:230). He then listed these figures giving the numbers admitted to the casual wards in London year by year. The casual wards provided a temporary bed for those sleeping out.

Table 3-3

Year	Total Admissions	Ave. No. of admissions per night	Ave. No. of inmates per night
1886	108,293	297	578
1887	141,733	388	738
1888	241,958	663	1,136
1889	182,299	500	960

Adapted from Booth, Life and Labour, Vol. 1, page 230.

The increased numbers in 1888 were thought by Booth to be

due to the continuation of the bad economic conditions of 1886-87 coupled with a diminution of relief through charity.

Another 'official' agency of relief in the East End was the Jewish Board of Guardians. Its records give a indication of the dimensions of distress in the Winter of 1886-87. At the time of Booth's research there were between 60,000 and 70,000 Jews living in London; the majority of these and the poorest lived in the East End. In the five years immediately before the 'Inquiry' there had been a sharp increase in the number of Jewish immigrants to London from Russia due to the pogroms following the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881. The Conjoint Committee of the Board carried an average of 1,500 cases (around 3,000 individuals) from 1882 to 1886. The number of new cases, measured in individuals, was not above 200 per year for that period. From 1887 there were 600 to 900 new cases per year until 1891. When the Mansion House Fund was established in 1886 the Jewish Board of Guardians was placed in charge of the funds for relief to Jews. In that year the Board received its largest ever number of applicants, over 4,000; the number fell somewhat in calendar year 1887 (Lipman, 1973:82).

The Jewish Guardians took special care to record and analyse the cases of relief made in the East End. This care was considered necessary because of the anti-semitic, anti-immigrant attitudes which blamed the Jewish 'greeners' (recent immigrants) for the depression of the labour

market. Herbert Llewellyn Smith in the first volume of Life and Labour, would demonstrate that this was not the case, but in 1887 the Whitechapel Union instituted an inquiry 'aimed at showing that the immigrants put a burden on the rates, though it failed to do so' (Lipman, 1973:90). Another indication of the conditions of 1886-87 is the increase in emigration to America sponsored by the Jewish Guardians after 1886. As Lipman records, 'the Conjoint Committee was responsible for the emigration of about 30 cases a year between 1882 and 1886, and over 100 cases a year between 1887 and 1891' (1973:97).

In addition to the agencies of relief were informal options of 'self-help' offered by debt and debt agencies such as pawn shops, and stratagems for increasing family incomes other than the employment of the head of household. Among the last mentioned was the movement into the labour market of as many family members as could be found work. For those in distress this meant that children would be put to work from the earliest age. In London this also meant cheating the School Board, and the location and identification of these working children was one of the main tasks of the School Board Visitor. Women's employment was more possible in the East End than in most parts of the country given the wide variety of jobs available in the clothing trades, service, and sweated workshops. Wide availability did not mean adequate remuneration, but in times of 'exceptional distress' it was the income of the

woman that often supported a family for long periods. For virtually all families the income brought in by children, or by women's employment, was inadequate, but as Treble has pointed out:

> ...compared to any other step which the poor could take on their own behalf to raise their living standards, supplementation was the only really effective answer to the socio-economic problems posed by indigence (1979:130).

As a temporary measure the East Ender could raise some funds by going into debt to the pawnbroker. Or as Beatrice Potter described: 'the most they can do in their forlorn helplessness is to make the pawnbroker their banker, and the publican their friend' (in Booth, First series, Vol. 4, p. 27). Many families pawned goods on a seasonal basis, furniture and household goods being a form of savings that were pawned off in the Winter and redeemed in the warm months with increased employment. In times of distress, and for those whose incomes were very irregular, household goods and clothing might be pawned on a weekly basis. By this method the weekly expenditure on food would be consolidated to a single debt and allow for cash purchases, rather than tie the family to the credit of any particular shop. Alternately, the pawnshop served as a resource in the event of illness, though it would hardly meet the needs of the invalid and the family for very long.

For the average poor and working class resident of the East End the Winter of 1886-87 would be remembered as cold and hard time. The riots of the previous Winter had led to a temporary increase in the amount of relief and

make-work projects sponsored by the Boroughs, but no real changes had been made in the social welfare system in response to what was an ongoing economic crisis. The C.O.S., which might have co-ordinated the increased amount of relief funds in 1886-87 had, in the aftermath of the Mansion House Fund, taken up a conservative position which denied that exceptional distress was being suffered in the East End. Given the decline of London industry over the previous twenty years, the volatility of employment due to seasonal swings in demand, the influx of large numbers of immigrants, and the general economic malaise, it is doubtful whether relief agencies could have met the general need even had they been so inclined.

The Historical Moment

I have tried to describe the London that Charles Booth confronted when he began his research. Because the Inquiry was a cross-sectional study, it is only right to ask: how did the London of that historical moment differ from the London of before or after? Other methodological questions aside, is it reasonable to assume that research done at this point in the history of London conveys to us a portrait which is a good likeness? Another, related, question is: given the economic conditions of the time, is Booth's work likely to overestimate or underestimate the extent of poverty? In answer to these questions we see that in 1886-87 London was not widely or significantly different from the years immediately before or after, but

probably somewhat harder on the poor. The long slow economic slide of the Great Depression was exacerbated by unfortunate weather and a trade-cycle trough, but the slide would continue until 1914 with other buffetings of weather and commerce. It was a Winter of more than average hardship. As a time and place to study the causes of poverty, and its impact on human life, Booth could hardly have chosen better. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes reported that in 1885 East End labourers and dock labourers 'follow such an uncertain employment that their average wage is said by some witnesses to be not more than 8s. or 9s. a week, and at the highest is put down as from 12s. to 18s. a week' (RCHWC, xxx:16-17, 1885). By 1886 Lynd estimates that one-third of the dock workers were out of work, and another third were only working a few days each week, and reports constant demonstrations of the unemployed in 1887 and the collapse of Trades Unions unable to continue unemployment pay (1945:56-7). All of these difficulties were symptoms of the underlying movements in the world economy and reflected Britain's place in an increasingly competitive market.

The historical moment was also important in the conceptualisation and treatment of poverty. The centralisation of Poor Law relief by legislation had not been paralleled by the many charities and church groups which also worked with the poor. Some of these groups, like the Jewish Board of Guardians, remained segregated by

policy. The Charity Organisation Society was achieving only partial success in enforcing its model of scientific relief. And altogether these agencies were merely palliative. Solutions or answers to the poverty question were not forthcoming. Debate continued to rage in 1886-87, even increase, over the right approach to the problems of London poverty. Charles Booth developed one strategy to address this debate: studying the problem from the opposite direction of the COS. Rather than meet the need of individuals with information collected through the 'scientific' visitation of each family, Booth sought an answer in the aggregate. The result, the study of the metropolis from several angles, answered part of the poverty question, and set in motion new forms of research practice. In the next chapter this study is examined in detail with an eye to comprehending the scope of this work as well as illuminating the process by which large scale social research organisation came into being.

Chapter Four - Life and Labour

This thesis is concerned with a number of questions about how Charles Booth's work fitted within London and Britain in the 1880's, and how this work influenced the emerging social sciences by placing the study of poverty on a scientific basis and demonstrating the methods by which large scale social research could be accomplished. But in order to address these questions, it is also important to review _The Life and Labour of the People of London_. What was the coverage of this study in terms of content and geography? These seventeen volumes are so comprehensive and detailed, and the research which supported them so varied, that they require exegesis. The scope of the work was remarkable, and this was set out by a multi-dimensional research plan which organised the inquiry by social class in some instances, by location in other instances, and by time in still other situations - and by using combinations of these organising principles to suit the subject at hand. While these methodological concepts lead the work, the substantive result is developed along three themes: 'poverty', 'industry', and 'religion'.

The seventeen volumes of _The Life and Labour of the People of London_ are divided into these three topics. They, in turn, were studied using the organising principles noted above. The population of London was first divided into classes in the Poverty Series. Each of these groups, and many sub-groups, was also described carefully in

qualitative accounts which infused life into the reported statistics. Most of these groups and sub-groups were also plotted on maps; the Poverty Series and the Religious Influences Series are, for the most part, organised by geographic area. And in what became an important, but less explicit, part of the research, the impact of social change over the 1880's and through the seventeen year period of the research itself was examined.

Something in the order of eighty per cent of London's population came directly or indirectly under Booth's view, providing a virtually complete portrait of a city of four millions. If there was a section of the population which was systematically excluded it was that portion about which we already know the most - the wealthy and the aristocratic. There was to be no careful examination of their living conditions, incomes, or 'situation'; they had the power to avoid the gaze of the researcher, and they were not considered, by Booth anyway, as a social problem. That exception aside, its coverage makes it unique; in Pfautz' words it is 'the only detailed empirical study of the social structure of a large city' available to social science (1967:48). To explore the full study it is best to take its own divisions and to examine the three series in order of their publication.

The starting point in this particular order, the study of East End poverty, was chosen because of the immediate crisis of the mid-1880's. The subsequent topics grew from the results of the poverty research. As will be seen, the

cause of most poverty in London was found to be structural unemployment and under-employment. To further understand poverty it became clear that it was also necessary to understand the character of London's industrial base. And if Booth had been primarily interested in the economic underpinnings of poverty he might have stopped there, but Booth was more sociologist than economist. Within each aspect of the research he found human variation not attributable to solely economic explanations. To understand this variation he attempted to analyse all of those social, voluntary, and religious influences which might, in part, determine the behaviour of the residents of London. This last exercise was somewhat unfortunately named the Religious Influences series, this is unfortunate in that it does not do justice to a study which includes a wide variety of non-religious influences as well, from music halls and cabarets to trades unions. The ultimate product of three series in seventeen volumes was not planned from the beginning. The beginning centred on a discrete research project addressing an immediate social problem: the poverty question.

The Poverty Series

The most notable findings of the Poverty Series, which examined the links between poverty and employment in East London, were first presented to the public in papers given to the Statistical Society. The revelation that something in the order of one-third of the metropolis fell below

Booth's Poverty Line had whetted the public's appetite for more information and Booth pressed hard to complete the first volume of his work for publication in 1889. It concentrated on the East End. The first volume had three parts: The Classes; The Trades; and Special Subjects.

In the first of these, The Classes, Booth recounted the work on poverty and livelihood that had been the centre of his reports to the Statistical Society. The unit of analysis was the family, using data recorded from the regularly updated notebooks and memories of the School Board Visitors, transfered into the standardised data notebooks which Booth had had printed for the study.

Especially important was his 'Introductory' which in twenty-five pages explained the underlying assumptions and some of the methods on which the research was based. Here were presented specimens of the notebooks in which data were recorded household by household, about sixty households on a street for each of the social class groups. Booth and his team had filled forty-six notebooks covering around 3400 streets or places, in total something in excess of 180,000 households. Here also are spelled out the basic assumptions on which the research is based. Booth explains the nature of his sample of the East End - that it is primarily made up of families with children known to the School Board Visitors, and other people without children who had come to the notice of the visitors. From the Visitors Booth expected to get information on most families

with children, excluding only those families, rare in the East End, of high income whose children attended private institutions.

Geographically Booth described his sample as covering a quadrant, whose centre point rested at the boundary of the City of London near the Tower and whose radius was approximately three miles. See Map 1. This took in all of the administrative districts of Whitechapel, St. George's in the East, Stepney, Mile End Old Town, and Shoreditch, as well as the southern portion of Hackney, and the north-western portion of Poplar.

This selection of information was readily accepted as a true picture of things by Booth's contemporaries, especially so since it was supported by ten more qualitative essays from a number of contributors dealing with the 'Trades' and 'Special Subjects' of East London. The key findings were that something over one-third of the population of the East End were in the four social classes which Booth classified as being, more or less, in poverty, and that the cause of poverty was primarily economic rather than moral. These were the bare-boned figures gleaned from the thousands of households on which the School Board Visitors held information. To back up these statistics Booth included long excerpts from the data collection notebooks, descriptions of the different classes _in situ_, as well as the essays on 'special subjects'. The effect was one of a well rounded and virtually comprehensive picture of life in the district.

MAP 1

Hackney

3 Miles from City Boundary

Shoreditch

Bethnal Green

1.5 Miles from City Boundary

Poplar

Mile End
Old Town

Whitechapel

St. George
In The East

Stepney

City

River Thames

Area included in House-by-House
Poverty Survey of
Tower Hamlets, 1886 - 7.

Adapted from Booth 1889.

The additional essays were, for the most part, written by people other than Booth. In Part II, 'The Trades', after an introductory chapter by Booth on the industrial position of East London, there are chapters on The Docks and Tailoring (by Beatrice Potter); Boot Making (David Schloss); the Furniture Trade (Ernest Aves); Tobacco Workers (Stephen N. Fox); Silk Manufacture (Jesse Argyle); and Women's Work (Clara Collet). In the third part, 'Special Subjects' Booth wrote on Sweating; Herbert Llewellyn Smith on the Influx of Population; and Beatrice Potter on the Jewish Community. The last two were politically sensitive issues, as the recent rush of Jewish immigrants to the East End following pogroms in Russia had generated friction and a conservative reaction to what some perceived as a threat to the livelihood of 'native' East London labour.

Geographically the district surveyed in the opening volume of Life and Labour was described by the quadrant shown in Map 1. The area first surveyed in relation to the rest of metropolitan London is shown in Map 2. The names of the districts included in the research are familiar today as areas within the modern borough of Tower Hamlets: Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, Mile End (in the 1880's usually called Mile End Old Town), Shoreditch, and Stepney. The district of St George in the East lay just to the East of Whitechapel along the river, and stretching around the outside of these smaller districts were the much larger areas of Poplar to the East and South into the Isle of

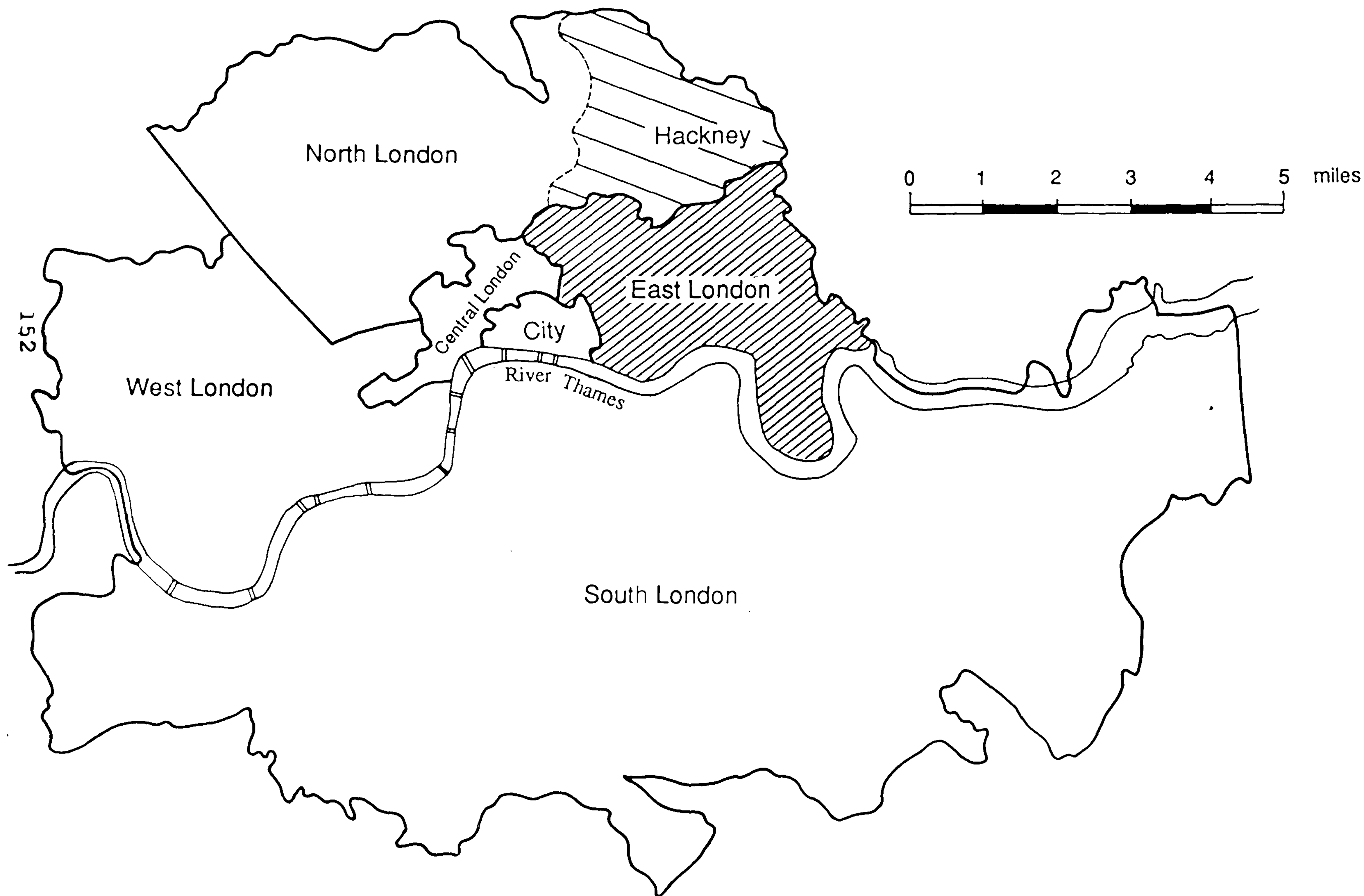
Dogs, and Hackney to the North. Most of the inner districts fell within the curve of the Regent's Canal, which approximated a quadrant based on the same centre point as before, but with a radius of one and a half miles. The canal still exists and can be seen on modern maps, though it is often labeled with its other name, the Grand Union.

The districts studied included within them several other well-known neighbourhoods: Wapping and Shadwell along the river, Limehouse in Stepney, and Spitalfields in the North of Whitechapel. That some were named and others not was the result of the ongoing reorganisation of districts from the old parish boundaries. Throughout the research Booth lamented the constant alteration of boundaries and administrative areas, and indeed no functional areas were coincident - School Board areas, Poor Law districts, Health districts, none of these were aligned along the same boundaries. For that reason markers such as the Regents Canal are especially important, and in any case Booth was to find that, in terms of the social classes, no clear boundaries did exist.

Chronologically, the Poverty Series was researched and published over the years 1886 to 1892. The research actually began in early September, 1886, with the first interviews of School Board Visitors. The publishing history is, however, slightly confusing because of the revised editions which added extra volumes to the Poverty Series in 1892. The first volume, as published in 1889 (and

the only volume published by Williams and Norgate) was described above - divided into three sections, the Classes, the Trades, and Special Subjects. The aim of the second volume was to continue the research on poverty to all parts of north and west London, and it had a separate appendix which included some statistical tables and the 'Poverty Map', now reduced in size from its original sixteen feet by thirteen feet and cut into sections. This second volume marked an important shift in research method, as poverty statistics for it were compiled block by block, rather than house by house. When it was published in 1891, it was less the organised whole the first volume had been - being more the extension and enlargement of the Classes section of that volume. (See Map 2) Late the next year, the whole Poverty Series was reorganised and published in a new edition by Macmillan. The two volumes of the Poverty Series had sold out immediately after they were published, and Booth took the opportunity to set out a new edition which would bring all of his findings up to date. Now the first two volumes were reordered to present the poverty research for all of London district by district. The first volume included East, Central, and South London in a mixture of descriptive accounts and statistics; the second volume was a description of London street by street. The third and fourth volumes of this new edition contained all of the essays which had originally been included in the first

East London and Hackney as included in House-by-House Poverty Survey, 1886 - 1889.



MAP 2

volume on the Trades and Special Subjects, with a number of additional ones such as four pieces on London Children in volume three, and an expanded section on 'Tailoring and Bootmaking - East End and West End' now in volume four. With the publication of the four volume edition a stop was put on further publication until the material could be collected and written up for the study of London's industrial character.

The Industry Series

Booth explained that the Poverty Series was 'an attempt to describe the inhabitants of London, especially the poorer part of them, and their social conditions, as they lived, street by street, house by house, in their homes'. The aim of the Industry Series, following on from this, was to 'review the people as they work, trade by trade ... to consider their relations to those whom they serve ... and to examine the bearing which the money earned has on the life they lead' (1897:ix:159). The method by which this would be accomplished was very simple and very ambitious. Booth, using data collected in the 1891 Census (on which he had been asked to advise), divided all the occupations of Londoners into 100 groups; these groups were further sorted into broad industrial categories such as the Building Trades or the Textile Trades. In a letter to Ernest Aves, one of his collaborators, he explained that he intended to give for each of these 100 groups:

'(1) Numbers employed - by sexes and ages.

(2) Numbers of Heads of families and those apparently dependent

(3) Birth place (in or out of London) for Heads of families

(4) Social position of Heads of families as shown by number of rooms occupied or of servants kept.

To this we shall add (and to a great extent have got already):

(5) The facts as to trade organization; and concurrently shall study,

(6) System of work

(7) Remuneration - hours and seasons.

(8) Character of work i.e.
Male or female
Young or old
Skilled or unskilled, etc.

All of which is to be got from three sources:

(a) Trades Unions (part done)
(b) Masters
(c) Individual workmen'

(Booth Collection, BLPES, February, 1892)

From the individual workmen Booth proposed to get 'vivid pictures of their working life' which he hoped would make the work more readable. The research, following this plan, generated a large quantity of notes, letters, questionnaires, and printed ephemera. Questionnaires were sent to firms, the owners being asked to fill them in with red or black ink to correspond to busy or slack periods. Wage books were collected, as were the minutes of trade associations. For the most part employers were very co-operative, though occasionally they demurred as did the manager of Simmons' Export Perambulator Manufactory, who wrote: 'I would certainly have the time expended to work up

the figures you require if I thought that any useful purpose for the advantage of the poor or to increase of the peace and happiness of the country generally, could accrue from publishing of the figures you desire to issue. Do not those statistics tend to foster discontent among the poor, and instead of directing them to exercise the discipline, industry, and thrift by which their condition might be bettered, rather suggest that while such multitudes are poor, and so few are rich, the many might plunder the rich...' (Booth Collection).

Notwithstanding this reply, an examination of the returned schedules in the Booth archive show that most employers returned meticulously completed questionnaires, whose information was added to other evidence to produce studies according to the format given above. The content of the Industry Series is primarily these studies of trades or groups of trades. The first group studied was the Building Trades, the section prepared by Ernest Aves. The first volume of the Industry Series (Volume Five of Life and Labour) also contained a lengthy introduction by Booth explaining his methodology, and sections on Wood Workers and Metal Workers.

The section on the Building Trades provides a good example of the organisation of the Industry Series. The workers engaged in the Building Trades are first considered in the aggregate. Using the 1891 Census they are broken down by age, sex and occupation. Using an index of

crowding, which Booth developed as a surrogate poverty measure, they are then divided by family into general social classes, and the distribution of Heads of families is made to each of the allied trades. Using earlier Census returns the conditions of 1891 are compared to 1861. Then the individual professions (plasterers, masons, plumbers, etc.) are examined in detail, with their conditions of employment, wage rates, busy and slack periods, and level of trade union organisation. Recent industrial actions are listed and their result given. The final section deals with 'abuses' both of the workers by the employers, and of the public by the shoddy and deceptive work allowed generally within the industry. This basic scheme is repeated, albeit with tremendous variation in the detail, for the following four volumes and for the other trades in London.

Work on the Industry Series began in 1892, with four of its five volumes published in 1895 and 1896. These contained the trades of London classified and analysed; the aim of the fifth volume was to pull this great sweep of information together into an intelligible conclusion. As they were published, the industrial volumes, with their repetitive examination of occupation after occupation, did not excite nearly the same interest in the public as the Poverty Series. Critics continued to respect Booth's work, but were beginning to ask where, after eight volumes, it was going.

Unfortunately, Booth's answer to this question was ambivalent. The estimates of poverty among the trades based

on the index of crowding supported his previous investigation of poverty in households derived from the information collected from the School Board Visitors. But the ability of the detailed, and essentially economic, investigations of each occupational grouping to answer social questions was limited. A further ambivalence was introduced by Booth's own viewpoint. On one hand Booth had enjoyed a rich and productive life based upon the individualist and competitive approach which most Victorians in his social class held to be the highest form of social organisation. On the other hand, Booth found in his own data a forceful argument against that system in the human suffering and inefficiencies brought about by the unbridled competition in London's economy. 'The helplessness of the worker, whether unionist or non-unionist, shows itself not so much in rates of wages as in irregularity, or actual lack of employment' he explained in the concluding volume of the Industry Series, (Industry Series, Volume 5:72). Caught between the two positions, his response was reformist. He argued that health and safety regulations should be made and enforced, education should be expanded, and more provision should be made to allow workers to prepare for slack periods. But as far as locating more exactly the causes and cure of poverty, the Industry Series moved the exercise forward by only the tiniest margin. A final section considered 'Expenditure and the Quality of Life', and provided a clear and useful

picture of the economic life-cycle of families, but did not address the overarching questions of poverty in society.

In part, this was due to the fact that Booth had come to believe that other areas of life must be studied before final answers could be offered. The tremendously detailed study of work and workers provided the largest and most detailed description of an industrial population yet made, but now Booth felt it was necessary to look to 'other remedies' than the industrial. To the critic who asked 'what is the use of it all?' he answered that he would not yet make an answer, instead he would 'trust in the efficacy and utility of the scientific method in throwing light upon social questions, and the work on which I am engaged is not yet finished' (Industry Series, Volume 5:338).

The Religious Influences Series

Within a month of the appearance of the last volume of the Industry Series Booth was contacting religious leaders and planning his study of the religious and social influences on the lives of Londoners. With the beginning of this research in the late Spring of 1897, Booth also moved his base of operations and streamlined his research team, who will be discussed later in this chapter. Offices in Adelphi Terrace (in the Strand in Central London) had served as the nerve centre for the Inquiry for several years. Now Booth and his reduced team of five became roving researchers; he explained that 'Our plan of action may be likened to a voyage of discovery. We have removed our camp

from centre to centre all over London, remaining for weeks or even months in each spot in order to see as well as hear all we could' (Religious Series, Vol. 1, 1902:7).

The plan, as this caravan moved about London, was to interview all those responsible for, or in charge of, every religious and social institution in London - every church, mission, temperance hall, and meeting house. The plan was to explore the character of each neighbourhood and its response to religious influences, but other influences had to be taken into account: the police, housing and rents, and municipal administration. At least another eighty notebooks were filled with information. (Appendix A describes these surviving notebooks in more detail.) Thirty of these were concerned with housing and rents; for every district of London Booth recorded the most prevalent types of housing, the average rents, drawings of typical floorplans, and a discussion of the levels of poverty and relief of the residents.

Notes were made on visits to nearly every parish in London. In addition to interviewing the vicar, Booth or one of his research staff would attend services and file a memorandum, a sort of subjective review of the character of the church's congregation, as in the review of: 'Stamford Hill - No poor members, too well to do - "too damned comfortable". Prosperity needs nipping by a frost to rouse as love scriptural exposition. Good choir with hard leaders. Sermon hearing community - always crammed, many young men - Tendency to extravagance since the Jubilee'

(Notebook A37, Booth Collection). Nor was it only church choirs that the researchers heard singing. Booth defined 'social institutions' broadly, and George Duckworth was assigned to attend the various Music Halls, spend the night in different hotels, and write up his experiences.

In what was also a clear recognition of the contemporary urban context, local government and its influence was carefully examined by Booth. In many ways he could not have picked a better time to do so. The local government reforms which occurred around the turn of the century included a number of extensions of municipal power. Equally, the nascent Labour Party was enjoying its first successes at the local level and significantly altering the form and delivery of municipal service. Booth's notebooks include interviews with some of the first Labour councillors in the East End, contrasting their political style and perspective with that of the older parties. The Simeys commented on Booth's reversal of opinion; while he had previously expressed suspicion of socialism as a philosophy, he was honestly impressed by the achievements of socialists in the East End boroughs (1960:150).

Booth's research team was omnivorous - consuming all forms of discoverable or offered information. Nearly 1,800 interviews were accomplished and, since Booth was now seen popularly as a touchstone of reform, proposals, plans, and information continued to pour in, some of it cogent and clear, some of it confused. In the collected materials are

floorplans proposed for public houses which would serve no alcohol, and for Salvation Army workshops. As the evidence was amassed another great map was prepared, which would accompany the Religious Influences Series. Now in addition to the coloured blocks showing the 'welfare of the people' was shown 'an impression of the ubiquitous and manifold character of the three most important social influences' (Booth, 1903:119): red symbols for churches and welfare agencies, black symbols for establishments selling alcoholic drinks, and blue symbols for schools. The map was later shown at the Paris Exhibition of 1905 as an example of the advancement of British social science. It may have been an advancement in the collection of social science data, but the map, like the rest of the Religious Influences Series, presented much more than was analysed or interpreted. The Simeys have quoted one reviewer of the Series as saying the whole thing might be 'summarized in a single phrase: it has revealed "a decadence in ecclesiastical Christianity, unaccompanied by a corresponding decay of Christian belief itself" ' (1960:237).

The Importance of the Religious Influences Series

In spite of the voluminous amount of information brought to bear in the study of religious influences, the outcome was far from clear. The resulting volumes, virtually all from Booth's own hand and in the first person, seemed muddled and meandering. In large part this was due to the inexactitude of Booth's research question.

In the three series - poverty, industry, and religious influences - Booth pursued research questions of increasingly greater complexity and with increasingly elusive answers.

The basic questions posed in the Poverty Series were clear: how many are poor? and why are they poor? The Industry Series had a central question of equal simplicity: what is the distribution and nature of employment in London? The answer was more difficult, being what amounted to a complete census of employments, but it was a difficulty of scale rather than complexity. In the Religious Influences Series the research question itself became a multilayered problem. In the previous studies Booth had declared that he would present and analyse 'things as they are', but now the task had an added dimension of things as they were perceived. For it may be simply stated (in a way which Booth did not) that the central research question of the Religious Influences Series was this: what is the effect of religious institutions on society _and_ what is the effect of religion on the individual in society. The duality of this question was never made clear by Booth, nor is it easily separable in practice.

Equally difficult was the concept of 'influence'. Where 'poverty' and 'employment' could be defined in such a way as to be measured and analysed, the nature of 'influence' at the posited macro and micro levels was much

less clear. And while this influence could be seen, it was virtually impossible to measure. For example, Booth knew that church attendance was measurable, but that it was not the measure, or even a significant measure, of the influence of religion on the lives of individuals. Religion had a profound impact on the lives of many people who never attended church, and the lives of many church goers were remarkably free of the effects of religion. Knowing this, Booth recorded attendance figures but did not use them in the analysis of 'influence'. Likewise Booth understood that the influence of religion did not operate in a vacuum, and this motivated the collection of information on the many other forms of 'influence' which are taken up in this Series: housing, rents, the police, clubs, public bars, local government, and other social groups. With all of this information Booth sought to separate and understand the nebulous but potent nature of faith. The result was two sets of partial answers.

The Influence of Religion on Society

In the context of the beginning of the twentieth century, the visible influence of religion on society was great. In the absence of the institutions for public welfare which would grow in the fifty years which followed, the major providers of education, relief, and welfare were religious institutions. Small and large, almost every denomination fulfilled some role in addressing social problems. In the assessment of these works for the social good Booth used his own moral measure. While he was in no

way a member of the Comtian Positivists, and settled into what he described as a 'reverent unbelief', he judged the work of the churches on their rationality and reason or lack of it. As the Simeys put it: 'the distinctive attitudes displayed by the churches were deemed by him to be "good" or "bad" in proportion to the extent to which they inclined to one end or the other of a scale running from the purely rational at one extreme to the crudely emotional at the other, with a blend of the two in the centre' (1960:224). (But while this scale may be surmised it was never clearly stated by Booth.) At the end of the scale representing reason were the denominations receiving his highest praise: congregationalists, unitarians, and Quakers. The great contribution of the Quakers, for example, was their development of democratically organised adult schools, and Booth approved of their lack of proselytizing and commented on their returned questionnaire: 'the simplest, truest, and least embellished account we have had of the work of any denomination' (1903:146).

At the other end of the continuum were the denominations whose energies were expended in the winning of souls with little attention paid to the bodies housing those souls in this world. The missions which had been set up in nearly every street of the poorer sections of London seemed not to have any good or lasting effect in Booth's view. The emotional appeals, the clear use of food and

warmth as fulcrums with which to lever the destitute into religion, the haranguing of 'sinners', were, as Booth described the behaviour of one Salvation Army officer, the 'most awful exhibition of theological savagery' (1902:184). As his research progressed Booth was moved to strong denunciations of the dishonesty, self-delusion, and pointless sectarian rivalry of many of the churches he studied. Even those denominations which were not actively deceiving the poor were described by Booth as lacking in any real spiritual centre if their appeal and practice were more emotional than rational. About the Wesleyans, for example, he stated that there was in their approach 'something hollow, unsatisfactory, and unreal ... as a religious influence'; he explained that 'in self-deception they have no equals' (1902:122-4).

This sort of subjective assessment of the qualities of religious denominations left Booth open to serious criticism, and led to the rejection of his findings by the leaders of several denominations. This was all the more unfortunate because it included the rejection of those parts of his research which were not based upon his own opinion of religious worth. In particular the charitable activities of churches came in for close scrutiny. For the most part Booth could find little to prevent the conclusion that these charitable activities were more than a waste of time, that they were in fact a drag upon the elevation or independence of the working classes. After closely examining the various forms of charity and relief offered

by the churches Booth concluded that they operated in contradiction to Christian morals. The life and teachings of Jesus seemed to have very little to do with the actions of the missionaries plying the poor areas of London.

Booth also found and demonstrated the very close relationship between the social ranking of the denominations and the organisation of the class structure. 'When we sum the matter up, we shall find that each religious method finds its place in London according to ... social status' (1903,iv:85). This hierarchy of denomination was found to mirror a continuum of religiosity. Attendance and other demonstrations of religious involvement were frequent among the upper classes and especially the bourgeoisie. Among the working classes the church held much less appeal, but a certain loyalty. In the working classes religion was a thing of childhood, and most children were sent along to church. Adults, however, had little or no actual participation. Booth found among the working class a strong support for the concept of religion, but a concomitant suspicion of the overtly religious, particularly those pious employers who exploited their workers. Booth encapsulated the working class attitude to religion in the seventh volume of the series:

The churches have come to be regarded as the resorts of the well-to-do, and of those who are willing to accept the charity and patronage of people better off than themselves. It is felt that the tone of the services, especially in the Church of England, is opposed to the idea of advancement; inculcating rather contentment with, and the necessity for the doing of duty in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call a man. The spirit of sacrifice,

inculcated in theory, is not observed among, or believed to be practised by, the members of these churches in any particular degree, and this inconsistency is very critically and seriously judged. (1903:426-7)

While the gist of Booth's assessment was negative, he did provide an important picture of religion in London which would, in turn, be used by the denominations. By collecting interviews and completed questionnaires from members or representatives of every denomination he accomplished a survey of the state of religious affairs which has never been repeated. Unfortunately, because of the difficulty in operationally defining 'religious influence' his scientific approach generated volumes of information which were not interpretable except in the most rudimentary way.

One of the most marked findings was just how small the influence of the churches was on the people of London. The working classes had little or no contact, and the middle classes were drifting away. He also showed that this decline was linked to other influences, social and economic. His measure of their decline was upsetting to many churchmen, and many wrote after publication to denounce it and to point to growth in some areas, but Booth's diagnosis was prophetic. As the Simeys explain: 'a calamitous decline set in soon after ... fifty years later, the position of the churches at the time when Booth described them appeared to be one of "terrific prosperity", setting a standard against which the potential strength of Christianity in England has since been measured' (1960:238). As social institutions Booth found the churches

wanting, serving little purpose other than as gathering places for the like-minded. But in the assessment of the impact of faith on the individual his judgement was much more positive.

The Influence of Religion on the Individual

Doubtful of religious institutions, Booth was accepting, even admiring, of the religious individual. He believed that the real centre of religion was in the individual, often unique to the individual. 'Religion is not simply a moral code', he wrote, 'rather is it a devotional expression; religion is also an impulse and a persistent attitude, an intimate possession of the soul, perhaps not even understood by the individual, and very difficult of interpretation by others' (1903, vii:279). But with the exception of the Quakers and Congregationalists Booth felt there was little of this 'intimate possession' in the institutional varieties of faith.

In some lights it is necessary to posit the influence of religion, or personal and moral philosophy, on Charles Booth himself, if we are to understand the motivation to accomplish this analysis of 'Religious Influences'. To do so requires a certain amount of speculation. The introductions to the series made by Booth offer only what is described above. The discussion of this research in Mary Booth's Memoir gives only the reproduction of four letters to Ernest Aves from Booth, and these deal with administrative rather than substantive questions.

Looking into Booth's past does not reveal a great deal. His father 'remained to the end of his life a convinced Unitarian, and was in active communion with the Unitarian body' (Mary Booth, 1918:2). His mother (who died when Booth was thirteen) was also a strong Unitarian, and from a well-known Unitarian family. But if there are formative events which shape Charles Booth's personal philosophy, it is important to look at the events which struck him in 1860-61, his twentieth and twenty-first years. As noted in Chapter 2, at the beginning of 1860 his father died suddenly 'of scarlatina'. In late 1861, his intended wife, Antonia Prange, developed tuberculosis, dying in August 1862. A month later one of his two business partners suffered a serious illness and was thereafter confined to an asylum. The Simeys describe his response to this buffeting as 'deliberately cultivating that philosophy of acceptance which was thenceforward to characterise his reaction to the inescapable griefs and frustrations of living' (1960:20). This 'philosophy of acceptance' does not, however, account for the passion of expression which marked Booth's writings of the time, the ridiculing of 'Lady Christian Consolation and the Reverend Ebenezer Fanatic', and the proselyte fervour he gave the Positivist 'church'. In these we see more of the very young man he was, insecure in both his emotions and his work, railing against the personal losses he had suffered. It was assumed by the growing Positivist wing of his family that Booth would become a formal member of the 'church'. But as Mary

Booth explained: 'his nature, though enthusiastic, had many needs, many aspirations difficult to satisfy, and not easily confined within the limits of any formal body of doctrine' (Mary Booth, 1918:9).

Nor is it easy to see a 'philosophy of acceptance' preceding the overwork and tension which culminated in his mental and physical breakdown in 1873. This inner conflict shows, in his writings, a distinct sense of guilt. It is the guilt of the well-off in the midst of the crushing poverty of the day, whose moral justifications begin to ring hollow. He wrote that the poor often practised Christianity much closer to 'the religion that is read each Sunday in our Churches'. And while he very much desired to continue his belief in God and a Divine Purpose, he saw about him very little evidence of either. In the common and widely accepted assumption that the poverty he saw around him was the 'the will of God', he placed no faith. And the ineluctable conclusions which followed from that judgement, made culpable the greed and selfishness of individuals. This realisation was a difficult one for a young man of some wealth. He did not feel it would be responsible to merely give away his resources and retire, 'adding the scourge of the anchorite to the seclusion of the hermit' as he put it, nor could he accept the existing channels of philanthrophy which, in his opinion, degraded its recipients. His response was that whirl of political and business activity which led to his breakdown.

As seen above, one of his responses to this dilemma was to submerge himself in the teachings of Auguste Comte. But unlike several of his relatives Booth never became a regular member of the Comtian 'church'. This should not, however, lead to the assumption that he also rejected its leadings. From the time they returned to London from his recuperation in Switzerland, Charles and Mary Booth began a long and mutually challenging discussion of their religious and moral beliefs. While Mary was moving back toward a firm and conservative Anglicanism, Booth never resolved for himself a clear place within the existing religious bodies. But that is not to say that he did work out in detail his own belief system. In 1883 he wrote out his own creed:

> I am a Positivist - by which as to religion, I mean that I worship Humanity.
>
> By humanity I mean the human race conceived as a great Being - and by worship I mean that I feel for this Being love, gratitude and reverence.
>
> By religion I mean the double bond to the object of my worship and to others similarly bound. And to this bond and this worship I look for hopefulness, strength, and constancy in seeking and holding fast to the higher life.
>
> By higher life I mean that individual life which is in harmony with the collective life.
>
> I abandon inquiry into the origin of Humanity which I believe to be impenetrable, and also into the origin of the laws of its life and development; as I abandon also all inquiry into the origin of the rest of creation and of its laws. I hold as certain the fixed character of these laws. They seem to me as that 'necessity' which the Greeks placed above their Gods.
>
> Of the author of these laws, if they have an author, I

know nothing beyond the laws themselves which I accept as the atmosphere in which I have to live. They seem to be consistent as well as constant but I find in them no trace of any active will.

The Great Being, which I worship and of which I am myself a part, has led, and now leads, its life amongst these laws, taking shape from them and from its own forces and forming between the two new laws.

It is these secondary laws which, if discovered and rightly understood, would enable us to explain the past and even foresee the future. And their study is for me 'Theology'.

I resolve to do that which I believe to be right, guided by the Great Being of which I am part, and trusting in that Greater Order in which Humanity lives and grows and will doubtless one day perish.

Standing between past and future and looking back, I thankfully recognise my great debt to Humanity, to my ancestors, to the crowd of the living and the dead whose influence presses upon me, and to those dear ones in whose lives I have made my home.

I also recognise the responsibility that is mine to live a pure, honest, and open life so as to transmit undimmed to others the best that I have received.

May my knowledge and love of that Great Being whose child and servant I am, help and strengthen me throughout my life.

Amen.

(Booth Collection, Senate House, Mss. II/26/15/vii-x)

The Victorian Positivist has something in common with those who are today called secular humanists, but within his own social milieu Booth's philosophical position engendered a certain tension. Years later, as he embarked upon the study of religion in London, this tension informed his work. An underlying belief in human perfectibility pressed against what Booth saw as the hopeless delusions of most of the religious leaders. The pacific and egalitarian

teachings of Jesus contrasted sharply with the Church as an instrument of wealth and political power which was clearly exposed by Booth.

And yet this is the same man who, at the time he was producing the Religious Influences Series, purchased Holman Hunt's replica of his own 'The Light of the World', a famous painting by one of the period's most famous artists. This painting shows Jesus, lamp in hand, calling on a modest home. The dark shadows which surround the central figure of Jesus as he 'stands at the door and knocks' are only just dispelled by the light of the lamp he carries. It is a painting of hope, but in small measure. It is not a painting which fits easily into the expected categories of religious art. It is not a painting of triumph or exaltation, nor of suffering and pity as are depictions of Christ on the cross. It does not elicit adoration as might portraits of Mary. In it Jesus, though divine, is humbled. His act is one of sacrifice and care, and holds implicit the possibility of failure. As can be seen from the rusted bolts and crossing vines, the door at which He knocks has never been opened. He is surrounded by a darkness which oppresses his lamp. His attitude is that of one who _would_ serve, if only given the opportunity. And while very Victorian in its pictorial style, one message of this painting is not that of the Victorian church - for this is Jesus the servant, not Jesus the judge. As Booth had seen, the average Londoner had little power to determine the role of Jesus in their lives, Jesus was presented as salvation

on the church's terms. But this painting is about choice and mercy, not about power and judgement.

What is remarkable is that Booth did not purchase this painting to hang in his home, or even to donate to a place of worship. Holman Hunt had imposed a requirement on its sale - that it would ultimately be given to the nation, preferably to the Tate Gallery (Maas, 1984:117). Instead he paid something around £2,000 (the exact price was kept secret) for the painting and then expended about another £5,000 for it to go on a lengthy tour of the Empire, where it was placed on display in galleries and halls and viewed by crowds of people. After a slow start in Canada, the picture began to draw vast crowds in Australia and New Zealand, where counts by the various galleries suggest that some four million people viewed the painting. After New Zealand the painting was sent to South Africa, where it was also seen by large crowds (Maas, 1984:198).

When the picture ultimately returned to England, and after it seems to have been quietly refused by the Tate Gallery (Maas, 1984:196), Booth donated it to St. Paul's Cathedral. It was a characteristically Victorian gesture, but one which betrayed Booth's never resolved feelings about religion - an agnostic in 'reverent unbelief' devoting significant resources to the display, for the benefit of the masses, of a notable religious painting, and one which was often described as 'a sermon in oils'.

In many ways, Booth's analysis of religious influences

repeated the criticisms he had levelled against the religious establishment in his youth. It was an indictment of religious institutions, but a celebration of individual religious belief. A reviewer of Booth's analysis in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society explained that Booth had revealed 'a decadence in ecclesiastical Christianity, unaccompanied by a corresponding decay of Christian belief' (1903:398). It is possible that Booth's own ambivalence clouded the analysis of religion in London. But it may also be said that it opened religion to view in a way that the doctrinaire or atheistic might not. It was of real importance that Booth pressed for the expansion of the sociological study of religion. As he explained:

> Of the creation of man by God we know nothing. Of the creation of God by man we know almost everything. Not only are the records on the subject by far the best of human records, but the process in all its forms goes on today; intelligibly under our eyes. There is comparatively little mystery about it. We can watch men of all races struggling to find their God, as plants turn toward light, and achieving faith in the reality of their own conceptions. (Booth Collection, Unpublished MSS, quoted in Simey, 1960:238)

Contributors and Researchers Working with Booth

Booth's research team was important both in the individuals that composed it and the research organisation they became. Several commentators on the development of social research, such as Nehnevajsa and Holzner, argue that organised social research did not really come about until the 1930's: 'in spite of the distinguished contributions made by European and American social scientists at the turn of the century ... the invention of organisations adequate to this purpose did not occur in a significant way until much later' (1982:4). This assertion, however, is hard to reconcile with the evidence of extensive research activity, particularly in the United States, before 1930. In a bibliography of survey research in the United States A. Eaton and Shelby Harrison (1930) listed 2,775 surveys carried out before 1928. Harrison was the director of the Department of Survey and Exhibits at the Russell Sage Foundation, which had paid for a large number of surveys between 1912 and 1931 (Bulmer, Bales & Sklar, 1991:30). Perhaps Nehnevajsa and Holzner are referring to 'modern' social research organisations which they wish to date from Lazarfeld's Bureau of Applied Social Research in the late 1930's. To do so, however, is likely to create false lines of demarcation based on chronology rather than the evolution of the research process. As they explain it:

The bottom line, so to speak, of the performance of research organizations is formed by adherence to scientific methods in terms of which problems are conceptualized into research questions, evidence is acquired to shed light on

such questions, evidence is converted to data, data are reduced into analyzable formats, analyses are carried out in the light of the research questions posed, and interpretations are formulated on the bases of the analytic outcomes. (Nehnevajsa and Holzner, 1982:9).

Yet these are the same steps which Booth and his team took to produce their research product.

A research organisation is a bureaucratic mechanism for the production of knowledge. Its principal components are human, with a concomitant fluidity in their function. One can describe Booth's team in the same way as Barton (1979) describes the loose and changing organisation of Lazarsfeld's research team. Over the period of the research twenty researchers (fifteen men and five women), in addition to Charles and Mary Booth, are named as contributors. There were also some clerks who helped to process information whose names are lost. The organisation had a clear structure: Charles Booth directed the enterprise, Mary Booth served as an informal leader often managing in his absence. Jessie Argyll primarily managed the operations and logistics of the research, and Ernest Aves may be thought of as a deputy director. Below this tier are arranged the researchers who contributed large or small amounts on specific sub-areas.

The organisation seemed, in part, modelled on the organisation of Booth's business - a clear directorship, sub-managers, and information collectors and clerks below that. But the research team had none of the rigidity of a business office, the ultimate product being information and finite, in the sense that a chapter on, for example,

homeless men, might complete the inquiry into that subject. To best produce specialised information Booth called in specialists for short term projects, so that the large team of researchers actually revolved around a core team of only five or six who stayed with the project for most of its history (See Table 4-1).

Of some of these contributors a great deal is known: Beatrice Potter (Webb), who wrote on several subjects, is discussed in this work and elsewhere. Esme Howard, who collected information on woodworkers, would become the British Ambassador to Washington. But there are others of whom only their name and, by implication from the areas which they studied, their interests are known: James Macdonald for example provided a short section on 'West End Tailoring - Men's Work'. It is a piece written with some humour and style, though not especially deep in its analysis. But who was James Macdonald? He might have been a journalist or a jobbing writer, but no record remains.

Why did Booth choose to use so many researchers? And how was it that he was able to hire or gain assistance from such a high calibre of researcher? The answers to these two questions have to do with Booth's ability to manage large scale projects, and with the relative youthfulness of most of his assistants, as well as the fact that Booth actively recruited women researchers.

TABLE 4-1

Life and Labour of the People of London

Data Sources, Personnel, Geographical and Temporal Coverage

STUDY	Geographical Coverage	Time Period	Data Sources	Researchers Involved
First Poverty Research	East End only, Tower Hamlets and Hackney *	9.1886 - 3.1887	School Board Visitors	CB BP JA MP EP MB
Second Poverty Research	Central and South London **	1888 - 1892	School Board Visitors, & Research by Team	CB BP JA GB EG MT RV GA HH CS HS CC MT EA DS SF OH JM
Industry Series	All London	1891 - 1896	'Returns' by employers & workers, interviews & observations	CB EA JA GA GD EH AB
Religious Influence Series	All London	1897 - 1903	'Returns' by denominations participant observation & official stats	CB EA JA GA GD AB

* See Map 1, pg. 148
** See Map 2, pg. 152

KEY to Personnel:

CB - Charles Booth
MB - Mary Booth
JA - Jessie Argyll
GA - George Arkell
EA - Ernest Aves
AB - Arthur Baxter
GB - Graham Balfour
CC - Clara Collet
GD - George Duckworth
SF - Stephen Fox
EG - E.C. Grey
HH - Harold Hardy
OH - Octavia Hill
EH - Esme Howard
JM - James MacDonald
MP - Maurice Paul
BP - Beatrice Potter
DS - David Schloss
CS - Charles Skinner
HS - Hubert Ll. Smith
MT - Mary Tabor
RV - R.A. Valpy

Because social research work, especially in its embryonic form, was closely linked to reform, but not yet attached to the universities which excluded women, it engaged a number of women social reformers. As Sklar has explained 'The role of social investigator was one which upper middle-class women could play without social ostracism, though they could not, Mrs. Webb excluded, aspire to the same political prominence ... and they could not frequently occupy the vanguard of social inquiry' (Bulmer, Bales and Sklar, 1991:37). The women who contributed to Life and Labour will be considered later. It is a tribute to Booth's skill in choosing talent that they were asked to participate. All of the contributors are discussed below, first the men and then the women contributors.

By the time he came to the research Booth had amassed a wealth of experience in management. The development and extension of the business which he ran with his brother, first in the import and manufacture of leather goods, and then in the establishment of the Booth Steamship Company, had required that Booth control and manage large numbers of people on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout the period of the research Booth's company owned and ran two factories in New York State, the import-export firms in Liverpool, and the steamship line with all its far-flung agents and offices from Portugal to South America. In 1889 Charles Booth moved to the position of Chairman of the company, a

position which was to free him from day-to-day management, but still involved him extensively in the business. Had there not been reliable assistants and secretaries, the research work would have halted each time Booth made one of his many business trips to Liverpool, the United States or South America. The key person who provided the necessary continuity was Jesse Argyle.

Jesse Argyle

Most of Booth's assistants were young people of his own social class, well-educated, upper middle class, and very assured. They were young people who stopped off to work for Booth between their time of education and the assumption of their career. But Jesse Argyle was not of this group. The only Cockney on the staff, Argyle had originally been hired as a clerk in the steamship company. In 1885 Booth reassigned him to plough through the information which was flowing into the Mansion House Inquiry and to gather and calculate from the Census returns information for his first papers to the Royal Statistical Society. From that task he became secretary of the 'Inquiry' as it got underway, a job he would hold until it was completed seventeen years later.

Argyle's background both separated him from and endeared him to Booth and his family. Mary Booth said he was her favourite among the many workers on the Inquiry, and her children and grandchildren long remembered his curious accent: 'Oy'll troy a little poy if you please Mrs. Bewth' records Booth's grand-daughter (Norman - Butler,

1972:117). But while Argyle was clearly an _employee_ as opposed to a volunteer, his contribution was ultimately as important as that made by any of the Oxford-educated young researchers. He was the only person, out of the many assistants and helpers, who would work with Booth full-time for the length of the project. In many ways Argyle was the organising secretary of the enterprise, and his relationship with Booth's family was to become a strong and warm one.

In the first volume of _Life and Labour_ Argyle supplied the chapter on Silk Manufacturing in East London. He had also worked as one of the primary data collectors for the section on poverty. In later volumes he would provide chapters on woodworkers, metalworkers, and two chapters on textiles workers. In all he made a larger contribution than any other assistant; his work is cited in every one of the seventeen volumes of _Life and Labour_. Booth once described Argyle as 'the best literary hack in London'. This writing was done in addition to his role as organiser and sub-editor. With so many contributors, with Booth so often travelling, with Mary Booth normally at Gracedieu, it fell to Argyle to co-ordinate the passing of manuscripts, ordering of materials, processing of information, and management of the office in the Strand. He turns up in the letters between Charles and Mary Booth taking on many and various tasks, like helping Mary to select the illustrations for the paper cover of Booth's book on old

age pensions. When it came to the preparation of the 'Star' or final volume of Life and Labour, most of the work was done by Argyle, Mary Booth, and the other assistants while Charles Booth was in South America. Describing the progress of the work in a letter to Charles, Mary Booth wrote:

> I have enjoyed down to the ground all my little work at the book... I hope you will approve of what we have done: I think you will. The Secretaries are all delightful people to do anything with ... I have been surprised to find how very ready Mr. Argyle is; and how conciliatory; he has got something quite big about him and never makes a fuss about little things and he has no vanity. He doesn't care a bit whether a thing is settled in his way or no as long as he thinks it will do; and do justice to what you want to say. I fear you will be horrified at our delays but at any rate we shall be out before you return, which is the great thing. Mr. Argyle writes that he has a little girl, his wife and baby are doing well. (Quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:136)

Argyle stayed with Booth after the research office was shut down, and executed Booth's orders to pack up the collected materials of seventeen years' research and dispatch them to the London School of Economics. Afterwards he continued to organise and answer correspondence, deal with inquiries, and co-ordinate other publications. It was not until the beginning of the war in 1914 that their working relationship ended, when Argyle left to take up a post in the Ministry of Munitions. In all, he had worked over thirty years for Booth.

Ernest Aves

If Jesse Argyle was the logistical co-ordinator of the Inquiry, Ernest Aves was key to its intellectual organisation. Aves was of the upper middle class, and in the rigid social demarcations of the 1880's was readily

accepted by Booth as a co-investigator. His personal history and preparation are indicative of that of most of Booth's secretaries: well born, well educated, and seemingly filled with the earnest social concern of youth.

The Dictionary of National Biography notes that Ernest Aves was born in Cambridge in 1857; he attended private schools and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took a First in the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1883. From 1886, the year in which Booth began the research in the East End, Aves was a resident at Toynbee Hall. He was to remain at Toynbee Hall for eleven years, serving as sub-warden from 1890 until his marriage to Eva Maitland in 1897.

Aves joined Booth in the Inquiry in 1888, though he must have been aware of the work as it progressed through 1886 and 1887 as Toynbee Hall was often frequented by Booth and other investigators. The Booths socialised with the Barnetts who ran Toynbee Hall and, as one Toynbee supporter wrote of the time: 'all the most eminent in literature, art and politics came to pour their wisdom to the poor of Whitechapel: Leslie Stephen, Arthur Sidgwick ... Charles Booth, etc. and often had the pleasure of meeting them at Toynbee Hall' (Margaret Nevison, quoted in H.O. Barnett, 1918:421) In any event Toynbee Hall stood near the centre of the area which was first studied by Booth. Up until 1888 Booth and Jesse Argyle worked on the Inquiry from the offices of Alfred Booth and Company in the City, then the Inquiry was moved to its own office in Gracechurch Street not far north of London Bridge above the Monument, where

they were joined by Aves and Hubert Llewellyn-Smith. In the first volume of Life and Labour Aves contributed the chapter on the The Furniture Trade. In latter volumes he wrote five chapters on the Building Trades, and worked extensively on the seven volumes of the Religious Influences Series.

In some ways Aves took the place, after 1889, of Beatrice Potter as one of Booth's two intellectual sounding boards, the other being Mary Booth. Whenever planning conferences were held, Aves was part of the central 'cabinet'. Plans made by Booth for the research are often seen first in letters to Aves, and the process of discussion and refinement between the two men shaped the work as it developed. Mary Booth describes their relationship in a way which seems to reverse their difference in ages - Booth being the more enthusiastic, Aves the more judicious. In her Memoir she wrote:

> Aves had a natural gift of fairmindedness beyond any that I have ever met ... a thing all the more remarkable as his mind was by no means indifferent. He held definite views, he was suggestive, even audacious in suggestion, and could argue convincingly in support of his opinion. (1918:131)

Of several sections, particularly the final volume of the Industry Series, Aves might be considered a co-author. His views shaped Booth's work, and he and Booth submitted their work to each other for review and editing. But their like-mindedness was, in some respects, not a benefit. When he began the Industry Series Booth had posited that a complete portrait of those in work, or sometimes in work, of their

crafts and occupations and industries, was the key to unlocking the vexing problem of poverty and its causes. In this he failed, and admitted his failure at the end of the Industry Series (Industry Series, Vol. 5, p. 231). Part of this failure was due to the fact that he did not follow up the link between irregularity of employment and poverty so clearly suggested in his research on East End poverty. But the structural causes of unemployment and poverty did not fit with either Booth's or Aves' philosophical orientation. Booth tended to disregard the classes of labour and industry he had so carefully outlined and to speak of 'individuals or families, each and all fighting for themselves ... the good battle of life' (Industry Series, Vol. 5, p. 336). Aves agreed, placing central emphasis on the individual: 'John Smith is a "free" man, and so also is his employer, and it is perhaps the highest social aim to realize, maintain, and develop the freedom of both, in their mutual as well as all other relationships' (Industry Series, Vol. 5, p. 199). In a special section at the end of the Industry Series Aves took up the question of irregularity of employment and, like Booth, ignored much of the vast compendium of statistics in the previous volumes and linked it with 'irregularity of habit' (Industry Series, Vol. 5, p. 231). Their ideas were simply too close to challenge one another sufficiently; they shared a blind spot.

This shared blind spot was especially unfortunate as Aves did bring real skills to the task of researching

London. His chapters are clear and thoughtful, and they have a movement in their writing not always found in Booth's more laboured prose. In Mary Booth's estimation, of all the researchers, Aves was 'in many respects the ablest of all' (1918:130).

The creed of individualism expressed by Aves does not give a clear indication of his character or work. His was a life devoted to service. It is important to remember that he was never a regular employee of Booth's and that, at the same time that he was working for Booth as a researcher, he was taking an active part in the life of Toynbee Hall. In addition to teaching there and serving as sub-warden, he was involved in the East End in several ways. Surprisingly, Aves was branch organiser and branch president of the Dockers' Union, and closely involved in the struggle for the dockers' 'tanner'. For years he worked with R.H. Tawney in the National Anti-Sweating League, which agitated for the regulation of sweated labour. He served also as the secretary to the Council of the Universities' Settlement Association from 1889 to 1901. When the Mansion House Committee on Distress was revived in 1903, it included Aves along with William Beveridge and R.H. Tawney.

When Booth wound up his research he helped to place his best researchers into government posts. Aves, now aged fifty, spent 1907-1908 as a Home Officer Commissioner detailed to investigate and report on the wage boards, arbitration acts, and industrial relations in Australia and

New Zealand, and then chaired Special Enquiries (of the Board of Trade) from 1909 to 1911. In 1912 he was appointed Chairman of the Trade Boards, and presided over eight Trade Boards in England and five in Ireland before his death in April, 1917.

Hubert Llewellyn Smith

When Ernest Aves joined Booth in 1888, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, also a Toynbee resident, began to work for Booth as well. His working relationship with Booth was not as close as that of Ernest Aves, and his activities outside the Inquiry were more diverse. Llewellyn Smith was born in 1864 in Bristol where he attended Bristol Grammar School. He went up to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, taking a First in Mathematics in 1886 and winning the Cobden Prize. He received a B.Sc. from London University in 1887, and for 1887 and 1888 was Lecturer on Political Economy at Toynbee Hall. From 1888, in addition to working for Booth, he was secretary of the National Association for Promotion of Technical Education. But his pursuits in East London were not just restricted to research and teaching.

Like several of the other young Toynbee residents, Llewellyn Smith was caught up in the struggles of the trades unions in the late 1880's. When the famous matchgirls' strike began in 1888, he began, with two other residents, an independent inquiry into their working conditions and wages. Their results were published in three letters to the Times, and helped to swing opinion behind Annie Besant and the strikers. Like Aves, he was also

extensively involved in the dockers' strike of 1889, and years later would write a history of that strike.

In the first volume of Life and Labour Llewellyn Smith contributed the chapter on the 'Influx of Population'. It was work which particularly suited his mathematical skills. Until Booth put him on this problem, there was little sound information on, but a great deal of political rhetoric and bombast about, the 'immigration question'. From the 1870's, and escalating with the waves of Jewish refugees, was a constant drum-beat of anti-immigrant agitation in the East End. 'True-born' Englishmen were often warned by conservative politicians of the threat to their livelihood which the 'Greener' represented. It was a delicate issue and one which Booth had to address. In giving it to Llewelyn Smith he saw it addressed in a clear and workmanlike way. In his chapter were combined a careful analysis of the available census information with data from organisations which worked with 'greeners'. Llewellyn Smith added to this observations and interviews. He showed that there was a tremendous influx of population to London's East End - but that the greatest part of it came from other parts of England. This chapter and an additional continuation chapter on the same subject for the 1892 edition of Life and Labour were his main contributions to the inquiry, but his work in the East End continued and expanded.

In 1891 Llewellyn Smith and A.P. Laurie of Toynbee

Hall helped organise the busmen's strike, setting up pickets and raising funds, and were described by the Chairman of the London Omnibus Company as 'unscrupulous ruffians' (Pimlott, 1935:87). After 1893, however, Llewellyn Smith began a long and distinguished public career. The _Dictionary of National Biography_ explains that in that year he was appointed Commissioner for Labour in the Board of Trade, serving the next year as a member of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education. He was attached to a number of delegations setting up trade relations with other countries, and was knighted in 1908. With the coming of war in 1914, he was made General Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions. Afterwards, from 1919, he was again sent out as the British delegate to a number of treaty, League of Nations, and other conferences. He reached the top positions as a civil servant, serving as Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade from 1907 to 1919, and then as Chief Economic Advisor to the government from 1919 until his retirement in 1927. From that time he took up the direction of the _New Survey of London Life and Labour_, a study of London which closely paralleled Booth's plan, published and funded through Beveridge's intervention by the Rockefeller Foundation between 1930 and 1936. Very productive into old age, he published a _History of the East End_ in 1939, and was the Chairman of the National Association of Boys' Clubs from 1935 to 1943. He died in September, 1945.

George Duckworth

George Duckworth also joined Booth's enterprise in 1888 with Ernest Aves. Unlike the other assistants mentioned thus far, George Duckworth had long been known to Booth through the friendship of Mary Booth with his mother. The Dictionary of National Biography notes that Duckworth was born in 1868, and that his father died when he was still young. After Eton, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating in 1886. Duckworth had the advantage of being a man of private means, and because of that was able to work regularly as one of Booth's secretaries until 1902, in addition to his other pursuits.

His work in Life and Labour is extensive. It was Duckworth who walked every police beat, recording the running commentary of the constables, and drawing the maps of their perambulations. It was Duckworth as well who attended most of the religious services of the many churches visited for the Religious Influences Series. His work is cited in every volume of that series as well as the Star Volume. In the Industry Series he served as a jobbing writer turning from one occupational category to the next. In the lead volume of that series he provided the chapters on Coopers, and 'Workers in Other Metals', as well as co-writing the chapter on Cabinet Makers with George Arkell. In all, his contribution would fill two or three volumes itself, as he turned his hand to a study of all sorts of workers, from jewellers to soap and glue makers. In this

latter chapter one gets a sense of the less agreeable side of serving as a 'secretary' to the Inquiry; Duckworth writes of visiting workplaces that 'lie for the most part along the banks of the Thames, but may be smelt from afar' in which 'fats of the most disagreeable nature' are being boiled and distilled. (1893:5:115).

Duckworth's work was solid and reliable, his prose clear but not sparkling, many of his chapters on occupations being written to a formula. It was work which filled in Life and Labour, expanding its coverage to its remarkable breadth. He collected much of the information for, and contributed to, all seven volumes of the Religious Influences Series. Duckworth also worked on Booth's other projects, accomplishing research for the study of old age and pensions, and constructing the elaborate maps of London transport. When Booth began to run down the Inquiry in 1902, he helped Duckworth secure an especially auspicious position. It was Booth that contacted Austin Chamberlain and suggested that Duckworth might make an excellent secretary. Appointed to this post, he remained with Chamberlain for three years, during which time he married Margaret Herbert, daughter of the Earl of Carnarvon. From 1905 his career was one of civil service ascendancy, though not as striking as that of Llewellyn Smith. From Secretary to a Treasury Committee on War Risks, he became Secretary of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in 1908. Throughout the war he served as Deputy Director of Munitions Finance, and as Controller of Labour Finance in

1918. After the war he directed several schemes for the re-housing of veterans. In his later years he returned to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, was knighted in 1927, and served as a member of the advisory committee on the New Survey of London from 1928. He died in early 1934.

Esme Howard

If George Duckworth's career was notable, Esme Howard's was stellar. He represents that singularly English model of the well-born man, without specific qualifications, who rises in an almost effortless way to high position. He was born at Greystoke Castle, Cumberland, in 1863, the fourth son of Henry Howard of Greystoke. After attending Farnborough School and Harrow he embarked on a tour of the continent, returning to take and pass the diplomatic service examination in 1885. He was first appointed to be secretary to the Earl of Carnarvon in Ireland (who would become George Duckworth's father-in-law), and was then attached to the Embassy in Rome in 1886. There he had a minor success in negotiations with the Vatican, but was more occupied with falling in love with an Italian-English woman whom he would marry, after many peregrinations, in 1898. Her father was both an Italian prince and the Earl of Newburgh, (McKercher, 1989). In 1892 he stood for parliament as a Liberal in Worcester, though he failed to gain the seat. He explained in his autobiography that he made only one personal addition to the Liberal campaign platform: 'one serious addition on my own initiative, which

was the Charles Booth proposal for non-contributory old-age pensions' (1935:143).

Dissatisfied with his work, he resigned from the diplomatic service and returned to London in 1895, thirty-two years old and still very unsettled in his plans. Howard knew of and admired Booth's work and seized the opportunity, through George Duckworth, to become one of the 'secretaries'. For the Inquiry Howard investigated several disparate industries: china, glass, brush-making, musical instruments, leather, matches, paints, varnishes, and rubber. The conditions of working people in the factories and shops Howard visited moved him deeply, and set him to thinking carefully about his own political and economic philosophy. While working for Booth he set down an eight-point 'economic credo' of interventionist and co-operativist ideas; this credo he still adhered to in the 1930's, writing that: 'I left the office of Life and Labour still less of a Free Trader than I was when I went in. People seemed to me from then on to count for much more than riches derived without control from foreign trade, no matter what the cost to flesh and blood' (1935:173).

His work on the rubber trade helped to inform a scheme he would later develop to establish rubber growing in the Caribbean, in which Charles Booth was one of the investors. At the time rubber was very little used, but Howard was convinced by the research that its uses would grow and grow. After discussing his ideas Booth offered him two free passages to the Amazon during the rubber tapping season so

that he could learn first-hand about rubber cultivation, and he left Booth's office to sail to Brazil in late 1895. He left _Life and Labour_ with 'the highest respect and a real affection' for Booth. He wrote later that 'I rarely met a man so utterly unself-seeking. He not only had an extraordinary natural gift for clothing with flesh and blood the statistical skeletons that his office turned out, but the corporate beings thus produced were real beings and not the fictions of economists working frantically to prove some preconceived theory of social structure' (1935:178).

When he returned to Britain he was offered the post of third secretary to the Earl of Kimberley, who was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In that capacity he met and became friends with Edward Grey. When Grey achieved power in the Foreign Office he carried Howard up with him. As seen in the _Dictionary of National Biography_, from 1903 his rise is steady through the ranks of the diplomatic service: 1903 to 1906 Consul-General in Crete, 1906 to 1908 Counsellor at the embassy in Washington, 1908 to 1913 Counsellor in Vienna and Budapest. Throughout the war Howard served on the legation in Stockholm, then took part in the peace conference at Versailles. From 1919 to 1924 he was Ambassador to Spain, and from 1924 to 1930, he achieved the pinnacle of his career as the Ambassador to the United States. Returning to England in 1930 he was made Baron Howard of Penrith. In retirement he published his memoirs in two volumes, and died late in 1939.

Maurice Paul

Maurice Eden Paul, son of the publisher Charles Kegan Paul and the novelist Margaret Colville, wrote nothing for *Life and Labour*, but he was a young doctor who attended its birth. Working with Beatrice Potter, and carrying on a doomed love affair with Ella Pycroft, he attended the first meetings of the 'statistical board' contributing ideas and some leg-work. He soon, however, went his own way, to become a well known writer and publisher on the political left. He died in 1944.

George E. Arkell and Arthur L. Baxter

If the careers of Esme Howard and Maurice Paul are well documented, the careers of George Arkell and Arthur Baxter are mysteries. Arkell provided both statistical analysis and written sections in fifteen of the seventeen volumes of *Life and Labour*. He analysed the statistics relating to Model Dwellings in the Poverty Series, and co-wrote the chapter on Cabinet Makers with George Duckworth. In the Industry Series his was a significant contribution as he provided chapters on: printers, bookbinders, paper manufacturers, stationers, booksellers and newsagents, tailors and bootmakers, hatters, milliners and shirt makers, trimmings and artificial flower makers, drapers and hosiers, soldiers and police, and professionals in the areas of art and religion. He is credited as a contributor to all seven volumes of the Religious Influences Series, and of the final 'Star' volume. Yet of the life of George

Arkell nothing is known. He is not mentioned in Mary Booth's memoir, or Norman-Butler's Booth family history, or in the Simeys' biography of Booth. While he worked with George Duckworth and Esme Howard (as well as Jesse Argyle and Ernest Aves) only Howard gives him a brief mention: 'There were further two or three others who did the same sort of work which Goerge Duckworth and I did and two clerks, Mr. Argyll and Mr. Arkell, who looked after the purely statistical and clerical work respectively' (1935:169) - which seems to under-rate his contribution. He is not recorded at Toynbee Hall or in the diaries of Beatrice Potter. His work is significant in its breadth, but his memory, while it may be known to his family, does not survive in the general historical record.

In the Booth archive there is only one note surviving from Arkell to Booth. It concerns the libel suit which Booth faced which grew out of a pair of misunderstood identities. A row of particularly low tenements in the East End in Miller's Avenue were attributed by Booth to a local property developer named Miller. This was not the case and the developer threatened legal proceedings and sought an injunction to prevent publication of the Inquiry. For his part Miller confused Booth with 'General' Booth, founder of the Salvation Army and, assuming him to be poor, proceeded against the publishers. Booth defended the suit, the injunction was denied, and the matter was ultimately settled out of court, an outcome Booth found 'humiliating' (Simey, 1961:146). In the note dated 15 April, 1903 Arkell

mentions some reviews recently published of the new edition of Life and Labour, and then continues:

I am sorry that we could not have fought the libel action on a more typical slum. If only the owner of Wilmer's Gardens had come on instead! Millers Avenue is not a very bad slum although I recognised it as the original of Vernal Avenue in Mr. Stewart's story "The Hebrew" ... (Booth Archive, BLPES)

The same situation holds for Arthur L. Baxter. Baxter wrote chapters in the Industry Series on milksellers, millers and sugar refiners, warehousemen and messengers, professionals in the civil and municipal services, and the 'extra' servants engaged in domestic work. Like Arkell he is credited as a contributor to all of the Religious Influences Series. And like Arkell, Baxter's subsequent career and personal life has left no record behind, with a small exception: in the Booth archive there is a letter from Baxter to Mary Booth marking the completion of the 'Star' volume. It is addressed 'Dear Mary', and it is written on the letterhead Manaos Harbour Ltd., one of Booth's companies in the Amazon. Did Baxter work for Booth in a business capacity as well? Was he part of their social set? The latter might be assumed if he was on a first name basis with Mary Booth. Unfortunately there are clues, but no solutions.

Other Male Researchers and Contributors

After Argyle, Aves, Duckworth, Arkell, Baxter and Llewellyn Smith, the other contributors (including Esme Howard) provided much smaller parts of Life and Labour. These other writers were often specialists in their areas, such as

Octavia Hill, who provided a brief chapter on Model Dwellings. And like the 'secretaries' discussed above, there is a great deal known of the lives of some of these contributors and virtually nothing of others.

One of the better known was Thomas Graham Balfour, who is listed in the contents of Life and Labour as Graham Balfour. It is possible he used only the second name to avoid confusion with his father, also Thomas Graham Balfour, who, according to the Dictionary of National Biography, was the Surgeon General. Balfour attended Marlborough and Worcester College, Oxford, and was called to the bar at the Inner Temple in 1885. Shortly afterward he became involved in Booth's work, doing research in South London and contributing the chapter on 'Battersea' in the second volume of the Poverty Series.

After its publication in 1891 he went to live with Robert Louis Stevenson, who was a relative, staying there until Stevenson's death in 1894. His subsequent career was as an educationalist, as Director of Education in Staffordshire, and member of several central government bodies on further education. He published two books of note: The Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland (1898) which became a standard reference, and the Life of Robert Louis Stevenson (1901).

Harold Hardy was hired by Booth to contribute two chapters to the Industry Series, one on mineral water makers, and the other on costers and street sellers. It

might be that Hardy was a law student or articled clerk, for in the Booth archive is a letter from Hardy to Booth giving South Square at Grays Inn as the return address and dated 13 June, 1893:

My Dear Mr. Booth,

I am very much obliged to you for your letter and cheque. I am glad to think that you consider my efforts have been satisfactory for I am aware how incomplete such an inquiry must almost necessarily be. The men were certainly hard to get hold of sometimes and I often felt after a long evening's tramp that I had hardly gleaned any information at all. I am quite satisfied with the "marking of the brief" and am very grateful to you for so kind an appreciation of my work.

When you are writing the chapter I shall be glad to give any assistance I may.

Yours sincerely, Harold Hardy

Attached to the letter are a handwritten report 'London Costermongers and their Markets' and a clipping from the Standard newspaper reporting a swindle by bulk tomato dealers in Covent Garden.

David Schloss penned the chapter on boot-making in the first volume of Life and Labour in 1889. Boot-making was a key sweated industry of the East End, and one which used large numbers of immigrants as labour. Little is known of Schloss's subsequent career, but the work with Booth seemed to have set off or augmented an existing interest in industrial policy, for in 1892 Schloss published a book entitled Methods of Industrial Remuneration which, in part, draws upon Booth's analysis of sweated labour.

Four other men wrote chapters for the Industry Series without leaving behind a record of their other work. Stephen N. Fox contributed a chapter on tobacco workers,

and co-wrote two others, hemp, jute and fibre workers with Jesse Argyle, and bakers and confectioners with Booth. His hand-written chapter on confectioners remains in the archive, as does a note fixing an appointment from him to interview a confectioner, otherwise there is no record. There is likewise no record for the remaining three, E.C. Gray who wrote the chapter on Covent Garden, R.A. Valpy who wrote the chapter on common lodging houses, and James McDonald, mentioned earlier, who prepared the chapter on West End tailoring.

Women Researchers and Contributors

The men discussed above made up three-quarters of Booth's workforce; five women made up the other quarter. The role of women in the Inquiry is significant both in that it was unusual and in that, for several of these women, their work with Booth provided an important stepping stone to further careers in social research and policy making. In all, five, or possibly six, different women took part. The uncertainty is due to the fact that in the section on Model Dwellings a short chapter entitled 'Sketch of Life in the Buildings' is credited to 'A Lady Resident'. It is likely that this is the work of Beatrice Potter; the style is much like hers, and there are two other pieces of evidence - the first being that she had in March 1886 written to the Pall Mall Gazette a letter, which was then published as an article, entitled 'A Lady's View of the Unemployed' based on her experience as a rent-collector in

the Katherine Buildings in the East End. This provoked a harsh response from some of the tenants who felt Potter had made them out to be idle and feckless. This however did not prevent Potter from staying on as their rent-collector, and in her diaries for May 1887 there are a number of 'pen portraits' of tenants made at the time she was actively engaged in work for Booth (MacKenzie, 1986).

On the other hand the 'Lady Resident' might have been Potter's friend Ella Pycroft. Pycroft, the daughter of a medical doctor in Exeter, also worked as a rent-collector cum social worker in the Katherine Buildings. There are no parts of Life and Labour credited to Pycroft, but she did help with the research, particularly by supplying the data collected for the Poverty Series on the Katherine Buildings, and by completing an extensive questionnaire on the buildings. Pycroft went on to serve as an organiser of community education programmes for the London County Council, teaching in colleges and workingmen's institutes around London.

Certainly the best known of the women who worked on the Inquiry is Beatrice Potter, who is best remembered by her married name: Beatrice Webb. Her life and work is very well documented, both by her own hand and by that of later writers such as Margaret Cole (1945) and the MacKenzies (1977, 1982, 1983), so it is primarily as a contributor to Life and Labour that she will be considered here.

Beatrice Potter was, as mentioned earlier, the cousin of Mary Booth and her relationship with the Booths at the

time of the Inquiry was very close. In 1886 and 1887, at the age of twenty-eight, she was suffering the dual burdens of caring for her seriously ill father and failing, in spite of herself, to forge a romantic but respectful relationship with Joseph Chamberlain. For her the Booths represented both solace and stimulation. In her diary in December 1886 she wrote of the Booths: 'They become every year more near to me. Perhaps they are the only persons who really love me.' (MacKenzie, 1983:189). For Potter work on the Inquiry was both an important escape and an education in research methods.

Her work may be divided into two parts. The first of these is not attributed in Life and Labour, but was the special role she played as sounding board to Booth in the conceptualisation of the Inquiry. Throughout 1885 and 1886 in visits, letters, and the exchange of draft plans and manuscripts, Potter, Mary, and Charles Booth shaped the scope of the Inquiry. As the research got underway she also worked hard at collecting information for Booth and her diary abounds in brief notes of 'hard days tramp in the docks' (1887) and 'hard at work on the Jewish community, seeing Jews of all classes all day long' (1888). At one point she placed herself in a sweated workshop to experience the working conditions first hand:

(19 October, 1887) First morning learning how to sweat; Mrs. Moses, 78 Oxford Street, Stepney. Four rooms and a kitchen, one room let for 3s. Deserted street during the daytime. Public house at each corner. Small back yard. Three rooms on ground floor, two used as workshop. Large room with two machinists - Polish Jews - and master who

acts as presser.

In back room, mistress, first hand who was a Scotch woman and two girls learning the trade. Coats turned out at 1s 2d each, trimmings and thread supplied by the sweater. Buttonholes 4 1/2d a dozen by woman outside. Mistress said the women by working very hard could earn 10s a week, with 2s deducted for silk. Evidently these people worked tremendously hard, a woman from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. without looking round, and master working up to 2 o'clock and often beginning at five in the morning. The mistress was too busy to give me much information and I did nothing but sew on buttons and fell sleeves in... (MacKenzie, 1982:219)

Some of the research Potter accomplished fed into the overall Inquiry, other parts of it were used in separate articles or letters which she wrote for newspapers.

By the time of the publication of the first volume of Life and Labour in 1889 Potter had written three of its chapters. Two of these, on 'The Docks' and 'Tailoring' had been previously published The Nineteenth Century, a magazine, in late 1887 and late 1888. The third was a chapter entitled 'The Jewish Community'. These three chapters provide some of the best and most insightful writing in Life and Labour. These articles do what other chapters often do not: place their subjects within an overall social and historical context, and mix fact-finding and analysis with rich qualitative description. And at a time of rising right-wing agitation against Jewish immigration, her analysis was judged to be balanced and clear by both the Christian and Jewish communities. It is unfortunate that her work on the Inquiry was restricted to its first volume, nor is it clear why Booth, after late 1888, suggested no further work for her, though this may have more to do with her own preoccupations with her

younger sister's ill health and the formidable task of setting in order the affairs of her dying father. In any event by the time of Life and Labour's publication in 1889 she had turned to other projects and would, in a few months time, meet Sidney Webb.

Another important contributor in the opening volumes of Life and Labour was Clara Collet. Collet was born in 1860 in London and attended the North London Collegiate School. After graduation she became, from 1878 to 1885, assistant mistress of a girls' school in Leicester. She returned to London in 1885 to take a place at University College London, taking her degree in 1888. From 1888 to 1892 she worked to large or small degree for Booth. For Life and Labour's first volume she wrote the chapter on 'Women's Work' (in the East End). Given that most women in the East End were engaged in some form of work this was a long and yet cursory chapter touching briefly on each of those areas of work which were traditionally considered women's work such as sewing and pasting matchboxes. In the next volume she provided a similar chapter on 'West End Tailoring - Women's Work', as well as a chapter which was more indicative of her own future work: 'Secondary Education - Girls'. These areas of research for the Inquiry fitted neatly with her ongoing career. In 1891, while still working on the Inquiry, she became President of the Association of Assistant Mistresses in Public Secondary Schools. The next year she was appointed assistant commissioner to the Royal Labour Commission, and from 1893

to 1903 worked for the Board of Trade on Labour issues, one of very few women in these civil service positions. In 1903 she was promoted to Senior Investigator at the Board of Trade and held that post until 1917. She was part of the Ministry of Labour from 1917 till 1920, and was then appointed a Member of the Trades Board, where she stayed until 1932. She was also a long-serving member (1919-1935) on the council of the Royal Statistical Society. It was a long and distinguished career in public service and in social research carried out from within government. She died in 1948.

How Clara Collet fitted into the social milieu of Booth's work is unclear. Though she was working on the Inquiry at the same time as Beatrice Potter, there is no mention of Collet in Potter's diaries, or in the letters she exchanged with Booth. Yet in 1927 Collet published in the Social Science Review a short memoir of Booth in which she tries to recall 'for the benefit of future investigators those qualities in Charles Booth which especially fitted him for his task' (1927:384). It is a warm and insightful appreciation of a man she describes as 'profoundly reverent of goodness' but 'quite unmoved by traditional authority' (1927:389).

One woman contributor who tended to represent traditional authority was Octavia Hill, one of the leaders of the Charity Organisation Society, and campaigner for better housing. As with Beatrice Webb, Hill's life has been

well researched (Bell, 1942; Hill, 1956) and large parts of her correspondence preserved (see for example Maurice, 1913). That she contributed to Life and Labour at all seems curious, given that she and Booth regularly disagreed on most social issues. In fact, when the volume including her own section, was first published, and in spite of the fact that the research dealt with exactly those issues of her own immediate concern, she confided to a friend that she had no intention of reading it, saying that 'I know in my heart of hearts what I think, and that is that it all depends on the spiritual and personal power; and *that* we must measure, if at all, in the courts [of the tenements], rather than in the book' (Maurice, 1913:515). Her contribution is perhaps best understood in the light of her long acquaintance with Mary Booth. Before her marriage to Charles Booth, Mary had worked as a volunteer in a playground organised by Hill, and Hill seems to have been one of the people with whom Booth discussed his plans for the Inquiry before setting out. Throughout their careers Booth and Hill remained respectful acquaintances rather than friends, occupying as they did opposite poles of a continuum which ran from Hill's individualist and spiritual amelioration to Booth's empirical and aggregative investigation and policy formulation.

Two other women wrote chapters for Life and Labour, but they, unfortunately, fall into the same category as R.A. Valpy or E.C. Grey listed above as being unknown, and no record survives of their personal lives or other

careers. These women are Margaret A. Tillard and Mary C. Tabor. In the second volume of the Poverty Series Tillard co-wrote with Booth a chapter on 'Homeless Men'. In the section on education in which Clara Collet wrote on secondary education, Tabor provided the chapter on 'Elementary Education'. Did Tillard normally work with homeless men? Was Tabor a teacher, or perhaps an acquaintance of Clara Collet's? From the records of the Inquiry there is no indication.

The Organisation of Social Research

In 1927 Clara Collet commented on the talent that Booth had assembled in his research team in discussing why she felt that this organisation was different in important ways to that of a government inquiry:

> To begin with, a proposal to grant money for a statistical record of impressions of degrees of poverty, however accurately obtained, would never have survived departmental criticism. Nor could such an inquiry have been successfully carried out by civil service methods, which involve, in any work covering the whole of a wide area, the delegation of routine work to routine workers. Now Charles Booth employed hardly any routine workers, and there was no section of work in which he did not take part. (1927:384)

That he was able to recruit such a talented group was due in large part to their youth and the social networks to which the Booths belonged. For most of the contributors the work they did on the Inquiry was an important and shaping stage in their early careers, set between university and their first major appointment. For many of them, Llewellyn Smith and Clara Collet for example, the work with Booth would be very important in determining the direction of

their future work. For others, such as Esme Howard, this was less so, but even Howard's memories of his work on the Inquiry were strong, and he cites this short period of research as forming and fixing some of his most basic beliefs on social and economic issues.

And while Booth's workers were not 'routine' in the words of Clara Collet, they were a varied group. It is notable that, in a time of fairly rigid social demarcations between the classes and sexes, Booth's workers included members of the elite and the working class, as well as men and women. Some, like Argyll were employees, others, like Esme Howard, had private means, yet there is little sense that social position determined rank within the research team. Booth's criteria for recruitment seemed to centre on talent and diligence - though there is a serendipity in many appointments, friends of friends or acquaintances happening into Booth's notice. Overall, however, it is clearly a team of the upper and upper-middle classes, highly educated, well-connected and, for the most part, bearing a strong sense of responsibility for service to others as the duty of their class.

How Booth both directed and taught his workers may be glimpsed in Beatrice Webb's description of the effect which the Inquiry had on her own life:

> My participation in Charles Booth's grand inquest into the life and labour of the people of London served as a training in the art of a social investigator and confirmed my faith in the application of the scientific method to social organisation.
>
> In the course of this enquiry I had learnt the

relation between personal observation and statistics. However accurate and comprehensive might be the description of technical detail, however vivid the picture of what was happening at the dock gates or in the sweated workshops, I was always confronted by Charles Booth's skeptical glance and critical questions: "How many individuals are affected by the conditions you describe; are they increasing or decreasing in number?" "What proportion do they bear to those working and living under worse or better conditions?" "Does this so-called sweating system play any considerable part in the industrial organisation of the four million inhabitants of London?" (Webb, 1926:339-340).

This passage is indicative of Booth's role as the director of the research, the master planner who delegated to some, guided others, but mapped out the path of the research project himself. In addition, Booth paid for the research from his own pocket, wrote the majority of the published work, and exercised editorial control over it all. With the exception of Ernest Aves and Jessie Argyll, most of the contributors may be thought of as apprentices in the art of social investigation, some of whom, like Beatrice Webb and Hubert Llewellyn Smith, would become masters in their own right.

Webb and Llewellyn Smith in their own research would, in part, follow on with both research skills and organisational skills learned from Booth. In her Methods of Social Study (1932, 206-211) Webb refers to her work with Booth and offers his method of 'wholesale interviewing' as a positive example of statistical methods linked to social investigation. Many others would follow the format of surveying a city, and some, like the workers at Hull House in Chicago, would also copy the research organisation. If Booth's work served as a conceptual template, it also

served as an organisational template. His was the first known example of an organised team assembled for the purpose of social research. As such it had much more in common with the later organisations formed by Lazarsfeld and others than anything which went before. Nehnevajsa, Marx and Holzner (1982) set out a number of attributes of social research organisations, all of which apply to Booth and his team:

- they are primarily organizations for cognitive work - even though much of the cognitive work going into social research may be quite capable of a high degree of routinization.

- such organizations are, in addition to being administrative entities of some kind, also collections of professionals.

- the prime organizational entity develop(s) a research network for a particular task that is built around a configuration of social research contractors. (1982:6-7)

In only one area does Booth's research team fail to match those attributes assigned to modern research organisations: 'we see among research organizations a very great deal of structural overlap, partial inclusiveness, and a very high degree of interdependence' (Nehnevajsa, Marx and Holzner, 1982:7). Booth's research organisation, while drawing readily on government and other sources, was hardly interdependent with other research bodies. This was, in large part, due to the fact that it was the first such social research organisation, though subsequent organisations were to be reliant on the model Booth established.

That subsequent research organisations would copy

Booth's model is not surprising, because it was a successful model. Drawing primarily on his experience in business, Booth assembled the first large-scale social research organisation, which then produced the seventeen volumes of _Life and Labour_, as well as the other works on pensions, transport, and trades unions. Successful production of research, however, is not the only prerequisite for being taken up as a model of research organisation. To achieve that Booth, his research team, and their results needed to become known to those who would emulate them. As we have seen, this occurred when the first results of the poverty study were trumpeted in the world's press. In the next chapter I will examine the results and the importance of the poverty study.

Chapter Five - The Results of the Poverty Study

The Poverty Study grew together from several separate projects: Booth's contribution to the Mansion House Inquiry, his reanalysis of the Census, and the data collection exercise with the School Board Visitors, as well as being augmented by the qualitative research which he had been carrying out informally for some time. In this chapter I will trace this development to the published Poverty Series itself and then consider its findings. The Poverty Series is the research for which Booth is best known: his status as an originator of modern research practice, and his achievement in placing the study of poverty on a scientific basis, both rest on this work. It is the part of his work which is most debated by modern writers, and this thesis also intends to resolve some the methodological questions raised by some modern critics. To do so we must first look carefully at the evolution of the Poverty Series and its results.

Booth began his research into poverty before the Winter of 1886-87. His increasing interest in the Poverty Question, and social affairs generally, was matched by an increase in the public's preoccupation with these social issues. Broad fact-finding visits occupied Booth's spare time in the early 1880's - to model dwellings, to Toynbee Hall and Oxford House, to meetings of the S.D.F., and to the East End generally. The publication of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (Mearns, 1883) further increased public concern and in its wake, several 'commissions of inquiry'

were launched to examine slums. Booth 'regarded all of this with increasing doubt and distaste' (Simey, 1960:65), for the 'commissions' simply added more shocking, but ultimately impressionistic, accounts to an existing glut. When in 1884 the Lord Mayor's Fund asked the Statistical Society for help in determining what forms of assistance had proved most useful in the past, Booth volunteered his services. (The Mansion House Report is discussed in detail in Chapter 8). Also published in 1883, but with a much smaller readership, were the Government statistical reports based on the Census of 1881. These reports suggested to Booth a possible source of hard information which might be brought to the Poverty Question, and his subsequent work on the Census was to be his introduction to the field of social statistics.

Working with Census Data

Working back from the 1881 Census Booth endeavoured to compile comparative occupational and demographic trend information from the first Census in 1801 to the latest in 1881. Through such information he hoped to chart the impact of economic and social change on the 'Condition of the People'. Booth was unable to accomplish this aim, but the analysis of the Census laid the foundation for the Poverty Series in three important ways. The first of these was the conversion of Booth from an 'ethnographer' and commentator into a statistical researcher. His exploration of the East End and discussions with politicians and social reformers

had been useful but not directed to any end-product. Now a distinct body of information was analysed in order to address specific questions; it was his first research project. To accomplish it he reassigned Jesse Argyle to serve the Census project as a combination secretary, researcher, and statistician. Argyle's salary represents the beginning of Booth's large financial investment in social research. By the Summer of 1885 Booth was also immersed in supplying information and recommendations to the Mansion House Report as well as the analysis of the Census. Beatrice Potter records in her diary a 'delightful' weekend spent with the Booths in the country:

> Charles and I [took a] long walk among pines and Spanish chestnuts. Discussed the possibility of social diagnosis. He, working away with clerk on the Mansion House Inquiry into unemployed, and other work of statistical sort. [presumably the paper on the Census] Plenty of workers engaged in examination of facts collected by others - personal investigation required. Pall Mall [Gazette] have started this but in worst possible way, shallow and sensational ...(Webb diaries, 22.8.1885)

In the Pall Mall Gazette that Summer the editor, W.T. Stead, had published a sensational 'investigation' into London's white slave trade and the traffic in women entitled 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' (Simey, 1960:68).

The second way in which Booth's research into the Census shaped his career as a researcher was to bring him into professional contact with other researchers, and especially the members of the Royal Statistical Society. Booth joined the Society in 1885 and presented his paper

based on the Census in May 1886. His paper was not well received, as will be seen below, but the criticisms offered Booth the opportunity to polish and tighten his work.

Finally, the work on the Census, as well as that on the Mansion House Enquiry, demonstrated to Booth that he would have to rely on his own resources and skills if he was to address the Poverty Question successfully. For, after much work, the Census proved as useless as a data source as the Mansion House Enquiry would for the formulation of responsive social policy.

In his paper on the Census, 'Occupations of the People of the United Kingdom, 1801-81', Booth had hoped to establish demographic baselines for the understanding of social and economic change over the 19th century. In the end its major findings were potential improvements which might be made to the Census itself. The first detailed returns of occupations were made in the 1831 Census. In the previous three (1801, 1811, and 1821) the employment categories were simply: those employed in agriculture, those in industry, and everyone not employed in the preceding two. The 1801 Census recorded the occupational grouping of individuals, and the problems of comparability began with the second Census which recorded the same information by family rather than individual. Booth had hoped to make a longitudinal 'comparison of our industries which would show the relative circumstances of those connected with them (whether as regards health or social position)... but while the census enumerations are made on

the present basis, no such comparison can with any accuracy be undertaken' (1886:315). In addition to the different ways in which information was collected from one Census to the next, Booth pointed out that the returns were not sensitive to unemployment and thus to poverty. Speaking of lunatics, paupers, and criminals, he explained that 'The great majority of these classes having returned themselves as following, or having at some period of their lives followed, an occupation, have been returned with the regularly employed. The tables thus become vitiated by the presence of a large number of individuals whose claims to be considered workers are very remote' (1886:317). This was the central failure of the Census in meeting the aims of Booth's research: the failure 'to distinguish nominal from actual employment' (1886:350) excluded the possibility of even estimating social conditions and poverty.

Strong criticisms were also levelled against the Census for altering its classifications and forms of presentation from edition to edition without explanation. Over time, Booth explained, 'though the broad plan of classification remains much the same as in 1851, huge transpositions of numbers have been made from one class to another; the domestic class in one Census includes the larger part of the population, and in the next is reduced by more than half; ... the partially occupied wives are in no two successive Censuses classed alike'. The result was that 'even competent authorities have been seriously misled

regarding the apparent results'; and worse still was the fact that no attention was drawn to these changes, 'instead there is not even so much as a footnote. The seeker after information is left to grope his way in the dark...' (1886:318). In spite of these reservations Booth continued his project, with the now reduced aim of restating the information 'given in the censuses in a more uniform and accessible shape' (1886:318). To give them this uniform shape Booth set down rules for the treatment of the information: for example, that females not returned as in work would be treated as dependents, and was quick to explain that his 'results are certainly not correct in detail, but in a more general sense they cannot be very wide of the truth' (1886:350). The eighty-three pages of tables which make up the bulk of the paper showed clearly the shifts in estimated occupational populations for the forty year period from 1841 to 1881. Separate tables were given for Scotland and Ireland, and all were provided with both frequency counts and percentages. While it is an excellent portrait of economic and social change over time, Booth made the point of his paper the recommendations he proposed for the improvement of the Census.

His three proposals were at once very broad and very simple. The first was that whatever happened to individual occupations, since new ones appeared and some old ones disappeared each decade, it would be useful to divide the working population into four main categories: 'those who produce raw material in various ways, and those who prepare

it for use; those who distribute what is produced, and finally those who in other ways serve the community' (1886:347). In modern terms these are the derivative trades, manufacturing workers, distributive workers, and service workers. Booth argued that if these broad divisions were used then 'all nations could be compared or contrasted, and a scientific basis might be found for the greatest questions of the relation of numbers to subsistence, and of policy as to home and international trade, which at present can only be treated theoretically' (1886:347). (Booth was, of course, referring in part to tariff policies, one of the main political issues of the late-Victorian period, and especially important to him in his role as joint-owner of a shipping company.) His second recommendation also touched on international comparisons; he argued that 'the tables in every Census should be divided into international, national, and special schedules, answering to the three distinct purposes for which they are required' (1886:347). His third recommendation concerned those 'special schedules' (one-off studies of particular topics) - 'there is room for special inquiries without thought of recurrence, and therefore without need of uniformity ... [these] can claim, and receive, a special amount of attention; and once made, would give light and life to the figures of every succeeding Census' (1886:347).

Booth's paper was given a rough ride in the discussion

following his presentation. His criticisms rankled especially with those who had been involved in the census. Dr. Ogle denied that any tables lacked sufficient explanation, and stated that there was nothing wrong with its occupational categories. But he was most condemning of the idea that 'special subjects' might be taken up in the Census:

Even the one inquiry that Mr. Booth had suggested would involve the addition of seven or eight different questions to the schedule. He [Dr. Ogle] strongly deprecated using the machinery of the census for purposes entirely outside of it. It was already a most complicated task, and one excessively difficult to bring to a successful issue, and every additional complexity added to that would, though it gave the appearance of covering more ground, diminish the accuracy of the figures. It was one thing to ask questions, another to get satisfactory answers; and he was strongly of the opinion that if they asked questions such as had often been suggested - questions for instance, as to a person's religious opinions, or as to his wages, or the like - they would get a mass of answers, the tabulation of which would not merely be a waste of public money, but, what was much worse, would serve for the propagation of that most pernicious of pernicious things, false statistical statements...(1886:438).

(Though the discussants made their comments in person, and therefore in the first person, the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, following the accepted journalistic practise of the time, would report their statements in the third person.) Booth did have some supporters, a Mr. J.S. Jeans pointing out that in other European countries employers were differentiated from employees in the Census and that he could not see why this and other improvements might not be made in the British Census. Dr. Ogle put forward an answer to this. Such improvements would not be possible in Britain, he explained, because:

> The great mass of people who filled up their own schedules in England were uneducated and suspicious of every question put to them, and as a matter of fact they did not state whether they were journeymen or not. In foreign countries where they were filled up by various officials, all these answers could be got with much greater precision than they could in a country governed like England. (1886:442)

The chair of the meeting, Sir Rawson W. Rawson, then president of the Society, was dismissive of the paper. He closed the discussion by stating that he 'certainly did not undervalue the importance of the objections raised', and went on to 'thank Mr. Booth for the immense industry he had displayed in collecting this information' and he 'expressed the hope that the paper would not be a fruitless one' (1886:443-444).

Though it was not well received in the beginning, Booth had expected little else; in a letter from Mary Booth to Beatrice Potter in May 1886 she writes that Booth -

> this morning received the reports of the referees who have had in hand his paper on the 'Occupations of the People'. One man likes the paper; the other doesn't like it at all; and is very cutting in his criticisms, especially of the hypothetical apportionment of 'dependents' to the different occupations ... I think Charlie is satisfied on the whole; he had expected objections; and knew that his criticism on the way in which the Census Department does its work must create a certain amount of soreness. He feels confident that the paper has value in it; and it is plain that the Statisticians think the same, though there may be some opposition to a youthful pretender who presumes to find fault with the experts... (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:73)

The paper would ultimately bear fruit when, after the success of Life and Labour, Booth would be made a member of the committee overseeing the 1891 Census. In any event, the census was a fading interest even as Booth presented his paper to the Statistical Society. The month before he had

convened the first meeting of what Beatrice Potter called in her diary the 'Board of Statistical Research'; this was an *ad hoc* and temporary group including Booth, Potter, Maurice Paul (son of the publisher Kegan Paul who, though remaining a friend and correspondent of Potter and Booth, was to play no further part in the research), and Jesse Argyll which was intended to accomplish the Poverty Study, though Potter noted at the time as well that 'At present C. Booth is the sole worker in this gigantic undertaking' (Webb, Diary, 17.4.1886). The month after, June 1886, Mary was writing to Beatrice that Charles had said:

> ... the thing is alive and that he thinks the men he has got hold of by no means lose their interest in the idea; so I hope when your free time comes, you will not find probably a perfected instrument, but a usable one ... (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:76)

The Poverty Study

The collection of information began in September 1886, and the research project which would become the seventeen volumes of *The Life and Labour of the People in London* was under way. (The methodology employed by Booth and its development is described at length in Chapter 8). Speedily accomplished by Booth and his staff, the first report on their research into poverty was presented to the Statistical Society exactly one year after the paper on the Census.

The first report on the 'Inquiry' was tentative and very much an interim report. Booth stated that he had doubts that he 'could go on with the work by himself

without going wrong, and [that he] wanted to bring it in touch with public discussion' (1887:401). Geographically the paper covered only the Tower Hamlets School Board District and the interviews made with thirty-four of the Visitors. The paper explained the role of the School Board Visitors, attempted to define 'poor' and 'very poor', and set out a preliminary description of Booth's eight social classes. The distribution of classes was given for each occupational group and geographical sub-section, and two or three page treatments were given to each of five 'special subjects': employment at the docks (which included material collected by Beatrice Potter during her Spring 'holiday' from the care for her ailing father); the Jewish settlement and immigration; the 'sweating' system and middle men; working women; and the unemployed. It was a rudimentary research report and Booth was aware of its unfinished nature, but more than most of his writing it is a lively and provocative paper and one which conveys a sense of excitement in the ongoing Inquiry -

> I do not know whether the facts disclosed will be considered surprising, or which of them may be so considered. Many of them have been a surprise to me ...
>
> In attempting to do this work I had one leading idea: that every social problem, as ordinarily put, must be broken up to be solved or even to be adequately stated.
>
> The divisions into which I have thrown the population have been arbitrary, but they may serve to show how complicated the interests are which I have attempted to disentangle. The proportion of the population shown to be above the line of poverty, I make to be 65 per cent., that on the line 22 per cent., while those falling chronically below it into the region of distress are 13 per cent... This is a serious state of things ... (1887:375).

The discussion of the paper by the members of the

Statistical Society was much more positive than that which had greeted his paper on the Census. It also, as the Simeys point out, gives a good indication of the lack of usable information available on poverty at the time. The discussants were the recognised social statisticians of the day, yet their thoughts on poverty range through the gamut of moral and political theories then on offer. They do not necessarily disagree with Booth, nor agree with him, as the Simeys explain: 'it soon became apparent that their guess was as good - or as bad - as that of the man in the street' (1960:91). Mr. S. Bourne stated that 'there was needed most decidedly an investigation into the moral position of the various classes of society, for his belief was, like that of Professor Leone Levi, that a large amount of distress in the country arose very much from the immoral conduct of the poorer classes ...' (1887:397). This was a swipe at Booth, who had carefully tried to avoid any moral diagnosis in his definition of poverty: 'I do not here introduce any moral question: whatever the cause, those whose means prove to be barely sufficient, or quite insufficient, for decent independent life, are counted as "poor" or "very poor" respectively ...' (1887:328).

Those who had read the paper carefully made useful contributions. The first of these was the economist Alfred Marshall, whose comments were not so much exacting as encouraging. This sort of research, he said, would be welcomed by economists, who needed such a basis in reality if they were to improve their economic theories. In

particular, statistics on the irregularity of employment were especially welcome - 'The want of this knowledge hampered economists very much, and Mr. Booth might be able to arrange his figures so as to supply it if Government persisted in refusing to do so...' (1887:392). Professor Levi made an important point concerning the definition of poverty, asking 'whether the paper gave an accurate idea of the word 'poor'. . . It would be of great value if Mr. Booth would add as an appendix budgets of the earnings and expenditure of as large a proportion as possible of the classes with whom he dealt' (1887:394). In his reply to the discussion Booth set out in four sentences the seed of the entire Inquiry, stating that

> ... it would not only be important, but a necessity, in order to make the paper of greater value to insert something like a budget of the expenditure of the people referred to. The question of their earnings he had dealt with in the paper by saying that the information could only be got by a trade inquiry. The expenditure of the different classes might be ascertained by persons who were living and working amongst them ... the moral questions would form a third set of inquiries.' (1887:401)

The Simeys see this as the 'whole Inquiry in embryo' (1960:91), providing the ontology of the Poverty Series, the Industry Series (a trade inquiry) and, in the moral questions of the third set, the Religious Influences Series. Whether or not Booth had set out a structure for the remaining Inquiry, his immediate plans were clear - to continue and refine the Poverty Study. Exactly a year passed before he again reported its progress to the Statistical Society.

In the paper he presented to the Statistical Society in 1888 Booth expanded his coverage, from the approximately half-million inhabitants in the Tower Hamlets District to the nearly one million in the whole East End. The thirty-four School Board Visitors he had interviewed for the 1887 paper was expanded to sixty-six, and the streets first surveyed in September 1886 were surveyed again. The findings of this paper mirrored that of the previous one: that approximately thirty per cent. of the population was 'poor' or 'very poor'. Booth commented that 'In submitting the whole thing again, I run the risk of being considered tedious in the hope of being thorough' (1888:277). But this paper raised new issues, particularly in dealing with criticisms of the paper of the year before:

> My arbitrary division of the people into the 'poor' and 'very poor' has been criticised; but I am glad to know that the criticism comes from both sides...Dr. Leone Levi ... thought that with 20s. a week a family could not be considered poor; while an evening journal [Booth is referring to the Pall Mall Gazette] 'doubts if Mr. Booth has adequately realised the struggles and privations of even the best paid of those who figure in his tables - whether he has taken account of the scantiness of their food, their clothing, their bedding,' and adds that my entire pamphlet on the Tower Hamlets 'reads too much like a complacent and comforting bourgeois statement of the situation'. In reply to both criticisms I can only say that I have tried and am trying to learn how the poor live, and have studied and am studying the manner of life of those I place above the line of poverty ... (1888:278)

The most important addition to the research was Booth's attempt to illuminate the causes of poverty. 'In order to try to throw some light on the terms of this struggle [for existence in poverty], and on the causes of destitution, I have attempted to analyse 4,000 cases, being the 'poor' and

'very poor' known to selected School Board Visitors in each district' (1888:294). Booth had asked his most reliable Visitors to note what they considered to be the primary cause of the poverty in the 4,000 families he had selected. He admitted that he had 'attempted no verification', since to do so would have been impracticable and intrusive, and for that reason he stated that the 'analysis must be taken for what it is worth' (1888:294). He hoped that the bias any one Visitor brought to the analysis would be balanced by the opposite bias of another Visitor. The results of this analysis are discussed in detail below, but the key finding was this: over half of the 'very poor' and 'poor' (55 and 68 per cent respectively) were poor due to 'questions of employment', meaning irregular employment, underemployment, and unemployment. The next greatest cause of poverty was found to be 'questions of circumstance' (27 and 19 per cent. respectively of the 'poor' and 'very poor'), 'circumstance' including illness, injury, a large family, or the combination of these with irregular employment. Drink and other 'questions of habit' accounted for only 14 and 13 per cent. respectively of poverty in the two groups. These figures he compared to a government survey made in the same period - 'at the very time when the government house-to-house inquiry was made into the numbers of those out of work in St. George's-in-the-East, I was scheduling in the same district, and I made special inquiries from the School Board Visitors, who had themselves only just completed their schedules for the

year, and I was astonished at the very small number of heads of families returned by them [the government survey] as out of work' (1888:296). The government had found little unemployment, but as Booth now demonstrated it was underemployment and irregular employment rather than unemployment that contributed the most to East End poverty.

In a break with his past reports Booth put forward in this paper a number of policy suggestions. Significant discussion was devoted to organising the time men spent out of work so that 'value for themselves or each other can be obtained from the combined efforts of the partially employed in their leisure hours' (1888:297). The problems caused by those allocated by Booth to Class B (the very poor) in taking a large fraction of the work that might be done by Classes C and D (the more stable 'poor') indicated, for Booth, that 'the poverty of the poor is mainly the result of the competition of the very poor' (1888:299). Sooner or later, he argued, society 'will find itself obliged for its own sake to take charge of the lives of those who, from whatever cause, are incapable of independent existence up to the required standard, and will be fully able to do so. Has this time come yet?' (1888:299). His vague suggestions had a harsh ring, and would be refined into a proposal for the relocation of part of the population to labour colonies when the first volume of Life and Labour was published. Whatever the remedy, Booth was now ready to counsel action: 'I only say that it

seems time that we should find some means to carry voluntarily on our shoulders the burthen which otherwise we have to carry involuntarily round our necks' (1888:300).

The discussion of this paper, on the 'Condition and Occupations of the People of East London and Hackney, 1887', was very different from that which had greeted the first two papers. The publication of Booth's first paper on the East End had generated much discussion in the press and journals. The resulting interest brought to Booth's presentation to the society a number of commentators who were not normally in attendance (including Mary Booth and their daughter Antonia). C.S. Loch of the Charity Organisation Society was one of the first discussants, as was Sir Ransom W. Ransom. As newsworthy research the Inquiry was becoming public property, and F.S. Powell M.P. took the opportunity to state that 'Mr. Booth's paper taught ... that in our present social system there was a firm and solid foundation of that which is good...' (1888:338). Indeed, much of the discussion centred on disagreements between the discussants and had little to do with Booth's paper - a Mr. Kerrigan explained that 'for downright outrageous laziness, that of the 'loafer' portion of the East End of London exceeded every other part of the globe'. A Mrs. Amie Hicks replied that 'if Mr. Kerrigan had visited the houses of the poor instead of applying to groups of men in the street, he would have found plenty who were ready for work...' (1888:338). It is little wonder that Booth, in his reply, said that 'he hardly knew how to

express his sense of the kind reception he had had'. More importantly, he explained that the 'paper he had read was a mere skeleton; the flesh and blood had yet to be added ... in the book he hoped would be published at the end of the year ... the other points which had been raised would be dealt with' (1888:339).

The first volume of Life and Labour of the People of London was published in April 1889. The book was divided into three parts. The first, for which Booth was solely responsible, was a reworking of the two papers previously presented to the Royal Statistical Society reporting the interim results of the research on poverty in the East End. These papers were published with additions and alterations, and now included many more of Booth's own research notes, as well as sample sections taken from the data collection notebooks. Included in this section was a chapter on 'Institutions' which reviewed the influence which different organisations such as schools, clubs, missions, and hospitals had on the poor. The second section was a review of the trades which were dominant in the East End. This section, as noted earlier, was written by Booth`s collaborators: Beatrice Potter on the Docks and on Tailoring; David Schloss on Bootmaking; Ernest Aves on the Furniture Trade; Stephen Fox on Tobacco Workers, Jesse Argyle on Silk Manufacture; and Clara Collet on Women's Work. The section was introduced with an essay by Booth on the position of the East End in London's economy. The third

section consisted of the three articles or 'special subjects': on sweated labour (piece-rate workers of the East End 'sweat shops') by Booth; on the increasing population of the area by H. Llewelyn Smith; and on the Jewish community by Beatrice Potter. The article on sweated labour was said by Hamilton (1932:95) to be the impetus to the establishment of the House of Lords Select Committee on Sweating.

In his preliminary papers to the Royal Statistical Society Booth had offered up the remarkable finding that in the East End of London 35.2 per cent. of the population were among the poor or the very poor. This research report had received wide publicity when first presented, but the extensive supporting evidence and detail given in the first volume gave the result even greater exposure. There were two major parts to the results reported in the first volume; the first was the total number estimated to be in poverty, the second was an indication as to the cause of their impoverishment. Booth explained that in East London there were approximately 909,000 inhabitants. On the basis of his research he divided these into eight classes:

Class

A. The lowest class of occasional labourers, loafers, and semi-criminals.

B. Casual earnings 'very poor'

C. Intermittent earnings
} together the 'poor'
D. Small regular earnings

E. Regular standard earnings - above the poverty line

F. Higher class labour

G. Lower middle class

H. Upper middle class

He went on to explain of this classification that:

The divisions indicated here by "poor" and "very poor" are necessarily arbitrary. By the word "poor" I mean to describe those who have a sufficiently regular though bare income such as 18s to 21s per week for a moderate family, and by "very poor" those who from any cause fall much below this standard. The "poor" are those whose means may be sufficient, but are barely sufficient, for decent independent life; the "very poor" those whose means are insufficient for this according to the usual standard of life in this country. My "poor" may be described as living under a struggle to obtain the necessaries of life and make both ends meet; while the "very poor" live in a state of chronic want. (Life and Labour, Vol 1, 1889)

These eight classes were then used in a number of tables and the population was divided into classes by their census occupation categories, number of children, and by the eight districts of East London. The single table which carried the basic finding and which received the most publicity was the table giving the percentage of each class in the districts and in the whole of East London. Here it was shown that the population was divided as:

Class A	1.2%	} the very poor
Class B	11.2	
Class C	8.3	} the poor
Class D	14.5	
	(35.2%)	
Class E	42.3	
Class F	13.6	
Class G	3.9	
Class H	5.0	
	(64.8%)	

In answer to a criticism to his earlier research paper Booth collected and included in this volume the family budgets of thirty families, ten from the "poor" and six from the "very poor". These budgets help us to place Booth's poverty line into economic perspective. The average income per adult per week among the "very poor" was 5s 1d; rent would take 1s 3d of this and food a further 3s 7d. For the "poor" the average income per week per adult was 7s 7d; their expenditure on rent averaged 1s 8d, and on food 4s 5d. Translated into food and accommodation this would mean that an average family of four among the "very poor" (at times of relative economic stability) would live in one or possibly two rooms (children commonly sleeping in the kitchen if there were two rooms), and would subsist on a diet consisting primarily of bread, margarine, and tea, with the occasional additions of soup, or meat once a week or so. Any loss of income, illness, or injury would lead to

a rapid deterioration in this meagre life-style. For an average family among the "poor" the situation was simply improved, but not radically different: the family of four would live in two rooms, and the diet would enjoy a slightly greater variety and volume. What was not provided for in any family budgets were the costs of medicines, or any other irregular items - the level of income hovered around the cost of subsistence at all times. For all families among the "very poor" and most families among the "poor" subsistence income levels required that all able family members work full-time, including children in many cases and certainly teenagers. Of the latter, a boy or girl of fourteen might be expected to contribute 3s to 6s to the family weekly income. If any of the regular earners were out of work the result was that, normally, the rent would not be paid, followed by cuts in the amount of food consumed.

From the outset Booth explained that the broad divisions of 'poor' and 'very poor' were 'necessarily arbitrary' (Life and Labour, 1889:33). To clarify the distribution of the poor in the East London population he also divided 'the population by classes according to means and position and by sections according to employment' (1893:33). The 'sections of employment' were thirty-two categories of male employment from 'lowest class, and casual labour' to 'professional, and independent'. To these were added another six categories for women's employments.

Every individual for whom an occupation was known was assigned one of these employment codes. Classes A to H were also shown to be variously distributed among the eight districts Booth studied; percentage tables showed those below the poverty line ranging from 23.7% of the population of Hackney to 48.8% of the people of St George's-in-the-East.

To further clarify his Class assignments and the groups he thereby hoped to exemplify, Booth filled nearly thirty pages with descriptions of each group. It is well worth reproducing some of this to gain the flavour of the Classes as Booth perceived them. Class A was the:

lowest class, which consists of some occasional labourers, street sellers, loafers, criminals and semi-criminals, I put (it) at 11,000, or 1 1/4% of the population, but this is no more than a very rough estimate, as these people are beyond enumeration... With these ought to be counted the homeless outcasts who on any given night take shelter where they can, and so may be supposed to be in part outside any census. Those I have attempted to count consist mostly of casual labourers of low character, and their families, together with those in a similar way of life who pick up a living without labour of any kind...

There are, at any rate, many very piteous cases. Whatever doubt there may be as to the exact numbers of this class, it is certain that they bear a very small proportion to the rest of the population, or even to class B with which they are mixed up, and from which it is at times difficult to separate them. The hordes of barbarians of whom we have heard, who, issuing from their slums, will one day overwhelm modern civilisation, do not exist. There are barbarians, but they are a handful, a small and decreasing percentage: a disgrace but not a danger.

About 11,000 people were thought to be members of Class A; in the employment tables they are concentrated in the 'lowest class of occasional labour'. In the transcriptions from Booth's data collection notebooks published in Life

and Labour to explain his research methods are several examples of Class A. These three are more informative as their notebook entries included the comments in brackets (the street names were changed for publication as they were whenever Booth thought that individuals had a chance of being identified):

Living in one room at 25 St Hubert Street, Casual Labourer and wife, four school children and one baby and one just left school. (An awfully poor, low, and wretched lot - children almost naked - man is also in the militia)

Living in one room at 28 St Hubert Street, Hawker and wife, two school children and one baby. (All cripples - wife's mother, also a cripple, lives here - an awful lot - younger children like withered-up old men.)

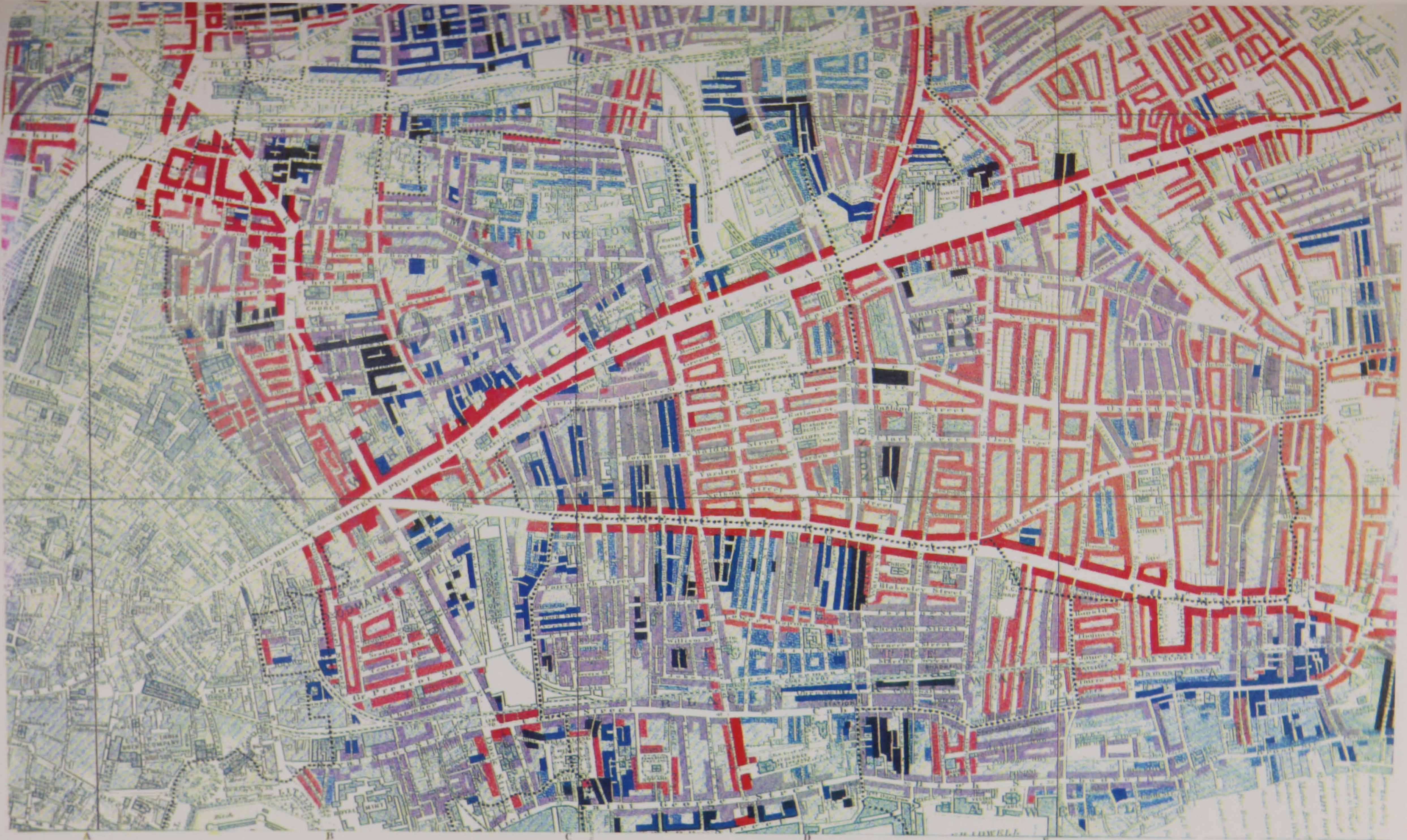
Living in two rooms at 3 Marble Street, Labourer (?) and wife, two school children and two babies. (Now in gaol for cruelty to wife, who is judicially separated from him, wife has charge of children and gets parish relief).

Class B had casual earnings, was very poor, and was a much larger group, almost 100,000 people - just over 11% of the population. Booth divided this class in terms of marital status and age as:

Married Men	17,000
Their wives	17,000
Unmarried Men	7,000
Widows	6,500
Unmarried Women	5,000
Young Persons, 15-20	9,500
Children	38,000
	100,000

He went on to describe Class B, the irregular nature of its employment, and the concentration of casual dock labourers in this class:

Widows or deserted women and their families bring a large contingent to this class, but its men are mostly to be


WHITECHAPEL ROAD
WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.
ALDGATE HIGH ST.
COMMERCIAL ROAD
MILE END NEW TOWN
MILE END
THE STREETS ARE COLOURED ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS, AS UNDER:—
Lowest class. Vicious, semi-criminal.
Very poor, casual. Chronic want.
Poor. 18s. to 21s. a week for a moderate family.
Mixed. Some comfortable, others poor.
Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings.
Well-to-do. Middle class.
Upper-middle and Upper classes. Wealthy.
A combination of colours—as dark blue and black, or pink and red—indicates that the street contains a fair proportion of each of the classes represented by the respective colours.

found in Section 2 [casual] of 'Labour'... the boundaries of Section 2 are constantly fluctuating; for the casual labourer, besides being pressed on from below, when times are hard is also flooded from above; every class, even artisans and clerks...failing to find work in their own trade, compete at the dock gates for work...In East London the largest field for casual labour is at the Docks; ...The number of those who are casually employed at the Docks does not seem large compared to the very great public concern which has been aroused, but as a test of the condition of other classes, the ebb and flow of this little sea is really important; it provides a test of the condition of trade generally, as well as of certain trades in particular - a sort of 'distress meter' - and connects itself very naturally with the question of the unemployed. ... The labourers of Class B do not, on the average, get as much as three day's work a week, but it is doubtful if many of them could or would work full time for long together if they had the opportunity... The wives in this class mostly do some work, and those who are sober, perhaps, work more steadily than the men; but their work is mostly of a rough kind, or is done for others almost as poor as themselves. It is in all cases wretchedly paid, so that if they earn the rent they do very well.

Class B, and especially the 'labour' part of it, is not one in which men are born and live and die, so much as a deposit of those who from mental, moral, and physical reasons are incapable of better work.

From the data collected from the School Board Visitors the notebook transcriptions for Class B families included:

Living in one room at 28 St Hubert Street, a widow match-box maker with four school school-age children, two of whom stay at home and help their mother.

Living at 22 Marble Street [number of rooms not given], a Labourer and wife with two school-age children and two babies. (Husband away from home looking for work in the country - wife and family are starving, and live on parish relief).

Living at 30 Marble Street, a bricklayer, his wife working as a charwoman, with four school-age children, and one boy over thirteen. (Used to be in regular work, but some stone work fell on him, and he has been affected ever since).

Class C Booth enumerated as 75,000 people or eight percent of the population. Moving from Class B to Class C crossed the admittedly arbitrary line with which Booth separated the 'very poor' from the 'poor'. As a group Class

C was thought to suffer more from the cyclical nature of London employment discussed in Chapter Two, or as Booth wrote:

... on them falls with particular severity the weight of recurrent depressions of trade. In this class are counted most of the labourers in Section 3 [intermittent earnings], together with a large contingent from the poorer artisans, street sellers, and the smaller shops... men who usually work by the job, or who are in or out of work according to the season or the nature of their employment... They are thus a somewhat helpless class, not belonging usually to any trade society, and for the most part without natural leaders or organization.

Examples of Class C from the data notebooks show rather more regularity of employment when compared to Class B, or indicate that a dual income was more likely:

Living at 12 Hepworth Street in two rooms, a boot jobber and wife with three school age children and a baby. (Dirty, man has ill health).

Living at 7 Hepworth Street in two rooms, an irregularly employed bricklayer, whose wife operates a mangle, with four school-age children and a baby (poor).

Living at 52 Everett Street in two rooms, a casual dock labourer whose wife works at home as a trouser seamstress, with one school-age child, one boy who works in a stationer's, and one girl who sews at home with her mother.

Class D was the upper end of the 'poor'. It consisted of some 129,000 people (14 1/2% of the population of East London) who received small but regular earnings. Regular in this sense did not mean salaried, only that 'the earnings are constant enough to be treated as regular income ... labour may be paid daily and at the casual rates, but whose position is pretty secure'. These were men:

at the better end of the casual dock and water-side labour... It includes also a number of labourers in the gas

works whose employment falls short in the summer but never entirely ceases... others are heads of families, and instances are to be met with (particularly among carmen) in which men have remained fifteen or twenty years at a stationary wage of 21s or even less, being in a fairly comfortable position at the start, but getting poorer and poorer as their family increased, and improving again as their children became able to add their quota to the family income.

Of the whole section none can be said to rise above poverty, unless by the earnings of the children, nor are many to be classed as very poor. What they have comes in regularly, and except in times of sickness in the family, actual want rarely presses, unless the wife drinks. As a rule these men have a hard struggle to make ends meet...

In the household records the families of Class D were widely varied, much more so than the description 'small but regular earnings' implied. While the majority of Class D had very brief listings such as the regularly employed horsekeeper and his wife and two school-aged children who lived in a single room in a tenement behind St Hubert Street, other entries shed a bit more illumination on their lives:

Living at 15 St. Hubert Street in two rooms, a chairmaker and his wife, with one child at school and three over school age. (Also have a loft, where the wife, the wife's mother (who also lives with them), and the elder children all work together at making fish baskets out of old may sugar bags. Dirty and low, but not so poor.)

In Thorn Street the 'Houses consist of four rooms and kitchen and let at 8s per week'. In number 15 lived two families of Class D, a boot finisher with his wife and one school-aged child; and a waiter with his wife and three school-aged children. [These houses would have, almost certainly, had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. In a 'two up-two down' house the families would live on separate floors.]

At number 3 Everett Street probably living in one room, a regular dock labourer whose wife was dead, with one school-aged child (another child in reformatory). This man is recorded as being 'poor in consequence of drink'.

Class E was the largest of the groups Booth identified

in East London; it totalled 377,000 people, over 42 per cent. of the population. While some of Class E might from time to time fall below the line of poverty, the bulk could 'lead independent lives, and possess fairly comfortable homes':

As a rule the wives do not work, but the children all do: the boys commonly following the father (as is everywhere the case above the lowest classes), the girls taking to local trades, or going out to service.

The men in this section are connected with almost every form of industry, and include in particular carmen, porters and messengers, warehousemen, permanent dock labourers, stevedores, and many others...

This class is the recognised field of all forms of co-operation and combination...it holds its future in its own hands.

Class F amounted to 121,000 or 13 1/2 per cent. of the population of East London. These were higher class labourers and artisans, small shop keepers, and market traders. Among labourers members of Class F were likely to be foremen, 'non-commissioned officers in the industrial army'. They were more likely to see the workplace from the employer's point of view. Still very much part of the employed were the skilled artisans in Class F: tailors; cabinet-makers; wet coopers; slaughtermen; and the other wage earners such as railway servants, policemen, and seamen. Of those who might be said to be self-employed:

...the street sellers and general dealers are pretty well to do, certainly above the line of poverty ... The section, taken altogether, is a large one in the East End of London. Certain parts of Whitechapel, including the neighbourhood of Petticoat Lane, serve as a market for outlying districts. To deal 'in the lane' is a sufficient description of many we have met with.

Classes G and H made up together 79,000 people, or just under nine per cent. of the population. Their

FOUNDLING HOSPITAL
PORTLAND PL.
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS
EMBANKMENT
A
B
C
D
E
F
THE STREETS ARE COLOURED ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS, AS UNDER:—
Lowest class. Vicious, semi-
Very poor, casual. Chronic want.
Poor. 18s. to 21s. a week for a moderate family.
Mixed. Some comfortable, others poor.
Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings.
Well-to-do. Middle class.
Upper-middle and Upper classes. Wealthy.
A combination of colours—as dark blue and black, or pink and red—indicates that the street contains a fair proportion of each of the classes represented by the respective colours.

situation is of less immediate interest as they played no part, except at times as employers, in the 'poverty question'. Booth did not describe them at length, in part because they were unlikely to come onto the schedules of the School Board Visitors. In brief, the lower middle class were allotted to Class G - 'shopkeepers and small employers, clerks, etc., and subordinate professional men'. The fact that 45,000 members of what Booth termed the 'upper middle class' of Class H are included in his analysis is due to the extension of the Inquiry into Hackney. Two-thirds of this group lived in Hackney and were 'shortly defined as the servant-keeping class'.

The Classes which Booth constructed from his collected information were 'indistinct; each has, so to speak, a fringe of those who might be placed with the next division above or below; nor are the classes as given homogeneous by any means'. They were useful conceptual categories which made intuitive sense to Booth and others. The classes were tied to possible 'guide' incomes and spending patterns and these levels of income and expenditure in the first four classes were generally accepted as falling below or at 'the usual standard of life in this country' mentioned by Booth. That the people Booth described were "poor" and "very poor" was not contradicted by commentators after the first volume was published. In many ways this finding was accepted with a certain amount of relief by all those involved in debating the 'poverty question'. The question of how many

were actually poor had exercised many and been resolved by none. Having this question settled meant that the debate could safely proceed to the related questions of why these families were poor and what should be done about them. These questions had also been central to the debate around the 'poverty question', and Booth's second major finding addressed the question of why these families were poor.

As the Simeys have pointed out Booth 'assumed a degree of ignorance that was unique; most of those who busied themselves about the problem of poverty felt so overburdened with information and enlightenment that the very idea of asking such questions was an absurdity to them' (Simey, 1960:179). The majority of those who 'busied themselves' about poverty fell into two similar camps. The first felt that people were poor because of the natural tendency to prefer indolence to industry. This Benthamite approach offered little remedy except preventing well-meaning philanthropists from exacerbating the problem through assistance. The second camp was that of the religious institutions which provided a significant portion of charitable relief. This camp knew that the poor would always be with society due to the sinful tendencies of mankind - poverty was the inevitable outcome of vice. The importance of Booth's work is that it sharply broke away from these two camps and aimed for what might now be called a 'value free' assessment. This is not to imply that Booth achieved 'value freedom', or that he even attempted anything which might reject his own particular values of

service and sober assessment. He brought into the research his own ideas derived from his own social and economic background. As Himmelfarb puts it, for Booth the 'attitudes and habits, as much as income and occupation, were facts of life; they described the poor "as they actually exist" ' (1991:116). What is important is that he attempted to recognise, state clearly, and hold apart his own opinions. In his first report on the research he explained: 'I have no foregone conclusions, and it is rather to the method here employed, than to the results yet shown, that I pin my faith' (1887:327). In the first volume of Life and Labour he expanded these methods in an attempt to explain the causes of poverty. The resulting explanation was the second crucial finding of the Poverty Survey.

The Causes of Poverty

Poverty, as it actually existed, arose from a number of causes. Booth had set out clearly that in the initial measurement of poverty he was not concerned with cause: 'I do not here introduce any moral question: whatever the cause, those whose means prove to be barely sufficient, or quite insufficient, for decent independent life, are counted as "poor" or "very poor" respectively' (1887:328). Now three broad causes of poverty were identified (1889:146):

Questions of employment - Lack of work or low pay

Questions of habit, idleness, drunkenness or thriftlessness

Questions of circumstance, sickness or large families.

The allocation of the poor into these groups was the result of the special study made by Booth of 4,000 families in Classes A, B, C, and D. His key finding, as mentioned above, was that for the great majority of poor families the cause of poverty was centred in problems of employment. Table 5-1 shows Booth's breakdown of causes of poverty by Class:

Table 5-1 Analysis of Causes of Poverty

	Classes A & B	Classes C & D
Questions of Employment	55%	68%
Questions of Habit	18%	13%
Questions of Circumstance	27%	19%

(adapted from Booth, 1889:147)

Three types of employment problems were identified: those who had regular earnings which were too low to support them; those whose earnings might be sufficient but were too irregular; and those who kept small shops or barrows and whose profits were too low. Among the "very poor" 55 per cent. fell into this category of 'questions of employment', among the "poor" 68 per cent. were so impoverished. Those impoverished through under-employment, or through the ebb and flow of work, Booth felt were the 'saddest form of poverty, the gradual impoverishment of respectability, silently sinking into want' (1889:151).

The next greatest cause of poverty had to do with 'questions of circumstance' - illness, infirmity, old age, or having too many young children. This accounted for 27

per cent. of the poverty of the "very poor" and 19 per cent. of the poverty of the "poor". Those causes normally assumed to be the major causes by the two more moralistic camps mentioned above - vice, drink, fecklessness, and indolence -between them accounted for only 18 percent. of the poverty of the "very poor" and 13 per cent. of the "poor". In particular the relegation of drink to such a minor position in the causes of poverty was a marked shift in understanding in a society in which the "Drink Problem" was the scapegoat for most social evils. Booth's treatment of drink deserves notice, as Himmelfarb explains:

> Booth neither exaggerated the problem of drink nor trivialized it. In his case studies of individual families it commonly appeared together with dirt, disorderliness, thriftlessness, the neglect of children, and the incapacity for work. But like these other evils, he saw it as more often the consequence of poverty than its cause. For the most part the poor drank because they were poor. (1991:120)

An Answer to the Poverty Question?

Booth found that primary among the causes of poverty was the irregularity of work, and the yearly waxing and waning of employment that marked London's service and industrial economy. The predominance of marginal employment in poverty was a backdrop to the final well-publicised issue raised in the first volume of Life and Labour. This final issue was not a research finding, but was Booth's answer to the third 'poverty question' - what should be done about the poor?

For Booth unemployment and underemployment were more the result of an excess of workers than of a shortage of

jobs. 'The modern system of industry', he wrote, 'will not work without some unemployed margin - some reserve of labour - but the margin in London today seems to be exaggerated in every department, and enormously so in the lowest class of labour' (1889:152). For a number of connected reasons neither Class B nor Class C were seen to be in employment much more than one half of any year. Booth was very chary of putting forward any solution to the poverty question - 'In laying my ideas before my readers, I trust that if they are considered futile and visionary, the facts I have brought to light may not be discredited by being brought into company with theories from which I can honestly say they have taken no colour, but that out of the same material some other hand may be able to build a more stable structure' (1889:165). In Booth's opinion the answer was the removal of the poorest (Class B) from the labour market: 'for the State to nurse the helpless and incompetent as we in our own families nurse the old, the young, and the sick, and provide for those who are not competent to provide for themselves' (1889:165). It was his suggestion that those who regularly lived in a state of chronic want should be moved into industrial colonies, a not uncommon notion of the period and one for which Australia and the other British colonies were often seen as possible outlets. In these industrial colonies or labour colonies 'people should be allowed to live as families in industrial groups, planted wherever land and building materials were cheap; being well housed, well fed, and well

warmed; and taught, trained, and employed from morning to night,... [and] The good results to be hoped for from such an extension of "limited socialism" would be manifold' (1889:167-9).

This hastily proffered remedy is one that Booth was to regret having included in his first volume and it was modified in subsequent editions. Coming after his demonstration of the actual number in poverty and their distribution among the 'causes' of poverty this scheme was unfortunate, lacking the weight of the research findings which led up to it. In many ways the scheme ran contrary to the evidence he presented - Class B also had a large number of widows and others whose 'questions of circumstance' guaranteed their poverty and for whom the training and employment of the colony were not what was required for the amelioration of that poverty. Nor does the scheme show any of the signs of Booth's usual methodical planning. The Simeys explain that 'Had he not been subjected to considerable public pressure to produce remedies, he might have been able to wait until he had finished his survey ...and he would have preferred to do so ... As it was he allowed himself to propound proposals that involved the adopting of a moralistic standpoint which he had been only too ready to deplore in others.' (Simey, 1960:195). The remedy he proposed only occupied three pages of the first volume, but <u>because</u> it was a remedy it received attention well out of proportion to its place in the Poverty Survey

when the volume was first published. In the reviews and the public discussion of Life and Labour that followed its publication, each of the three points discussed above garnered special attention; after a period of more than one hundred years it is the statistical information rather than its interpretation which still holds value. At the time, however, the evaluation of Booth's work was much determined by the existing moral or political stance of the various parts of the reading public, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Booth's poverty research was an extremely large and methodical undertaking. Politically unencumbered, he was able to use his own resources just as he saw fit and to address the poverty question without immediate pressure to produce a particular answer. In seeking an answer the use of the School Board Visitors provided a special opportunity as well as a possible problem. Through the Visitors Booth could 'survey' the terra incognita of the East End, but, as he was aware, their views might colour his ultimate understanding. In Booth's estimation it was a gamble worth taking, as long as sufficient safeguards were put in place. Booth assembled the first large-scale social research organisation in an attempt to place the study of poverty on a more scientific basis, and the result was a great body of information that, when aggregated and categorised, offered answers to a few basic questions. The two key questions

were: How many are poor? and Why are they poor? Did Booth's information actually answer these questions? I believe so, as did Booth's contemporaries, and so did Booth. Because of the controversial nature of poverty research it was important to restate his findings above, since around these research results hang a number of further questions and controversies: how reliable were the School Board Visitors? Is the information they collected a sufficiently true picture of East End life? Booth's poverty line was a relative measure, was it applied equally? Did subjective, moralistic criteria colour the decision to classify particular families? Are the categories consistent? The results presented above give Booth's case in answering these questions, but his answers have been occasionally called into doubt. Some of the criticisms of Booth's work were and are based on political differences, as we shall see in the next chapter, but other criticism is based on a concern that the methodology used to produce the results given above was at fault. To examine that criticism requires a careful study of Booth's methods and, where possible, a reanalysis of his data. That study and reanalysis begins in Chapter 8. But first there is a further step in understanding Booth's work in its social and political context, and that is to ask: what was the contemporary impact of Booth's poverty research?

Chapter Six - The Contemporary Impact of Life and Labour

In earlier chapters we examined the state of research into poverty as it existed in the mid-1880's. The overemphasis on moral questions which characterised the work of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science had, by this time, led to an explanatory dead end. Yet as the ability of social research to address and answer such questions diminished, the need for social research was increasing. Through an unhappy convergence of climatic, economic, and political conditions the plight of the poor working class of London was grave and worsening, and public awareness and concern were steadily increasing. The immiseration of the East End pressed on its inhabitants and pushed them to unprecedented public actions - such as the Trafalgar Square riots of 1886. And while there was little or no chance that these bursts of frustration and demand would become an actual threat to the stability of London's social system, the working class of the East End was *perceived* as a threat by much of the rest of London, by opinion shapers and policy makers. It was generally believed that a serious threat to public order existed, and reputable journals discussed the possibility of social revolution.

As Booth's research continued into the Autumn of 1887, more demonstrations and confrontations occurred. In the worst of these, now known as Bloody Sunday (13.11.1887), a series of demonstrations and marches were broken up with much brutality by the police. The demonstration marking the

funeral of one Bloody Sunday victim was attended by an estimated 120,000 people and ended in the East End Bow Cemetery. Booth was one of the first to realise how atomised the East End working class truly was, and how little they were able to organise any form of action, much less threaten the social order. This finding alone was seen as a breakthrough by many commentators when Booth announced his results. The social and political climate shaped the nature of Booth's research questions, and in turn his results were to shape social and political responses to poverty. The first place this response would be seen was in the press reports on the findings of the Poverty Study.

Newspaper and Magazine Reports of Booth's Work

Outside the Royal Statistical Society and Booth's circle, the first public reports of the Inquiry followed Booth's presentation to the Society of his paper 'The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), their Condition and Occupations' in May, 1887. As reported above the statisticians were critical and wary in their reception of it, but the press was much more accepting. The newspaper reports on his research published in late May 1887 were an important turning point in Booth's career. Before the publication of these reviews Booth was little known outside his own circle of families and friends. It is true that while he had met and discussed social issues of the day with many of the key figures in London - Octavia Hill, the Barnetts, Joseph Chamberlain, H.M. Hyndman - he had

contributed nothing to the public discourse. Now his research seemed to answer the right question at the right moment.

Just over one year after the Trafalgar Square riots, and the public scrapping between the Charity Organisation Society and the Mansion House over the disbursement of relief funds, Booth offered partial resolution to an acrimonious public debate. The journalistic response was not to weave Booth's work into this debate, however, but to treat it as news. One very sensational article about Booth's work was titled 'London's Suffering Millions' and was reproduced in newspapers around the world. The illumination of what had become in the minds of the public 'darkest London' was exciting. That it was accomplished by a private individual made it doubly so. As Booth had explained in his paper to the Statistical Society:

> It is the sense of helplessness that tries everyone; the wage earners, as I have said, are helpless to regulate or obtain the value of their work; the manufacturer or dealer can only work within the limits of competition; the rich are helpless to relieve want without stimulating its sources; the legislature is helpless because the limits of successful interference by change of law are closely circumscribed... To relieve this sense of helplessness, the problems of human life must be better stated. The *a priori* reasoning of political economy, orthodox and unorthodox alike, fails from want of reality. At its base are a series of assumptions very imperfectly connected with the observed facts of life. We need to begin with a true picture of the modern industrial organism, the interchange of service, the exercise of faculty, the demands and satisfaction of desire. It is the possibility of such a picture as this that I wish to suggest, and it is as a contribution to it that I have written this paper. (1887:376)

Many of the newspapers reporting on his findings took Booth at his word; this inquiry would be an antidote to the

pervasive sense of helplessness in the face of the problem of poverty. Only the Pall Mall Gazette criticised Booth severely, asking whether Booth 'had adequately realised the struggles and privations of even the best paid of those who figure in his tables ... [the paper] reads too much like a complacent and comforting bourgeois statement of the situation' (13.10.1887). Booth took up these criticisms in his next paper to the Statistical Society and the Pall Mall Gazette would change its position on Booth's work the next year. But most newspapers reported in much the same way as the Morning Post did on a 'very curious and interesting inquiry ...just completed in East London':

> It is extraordinary that a private individual should not only have dared to take in hand, but should have been able to successfully carry out, an elaborate investigation as to the occupations, earnings, and social condition of half a million persons, or no less than one-eighth of the inhabitants of the Metropolis; and this in the very poorest districts, where the circumstances of the population present more difficulties. Yet this is what has been done by Mr. Charles Booth, and we venture to say that the facts and figures which he laid before the Royal Statistical Society last week, as the first results of the inquiry in question, are more valuable than a ton of the average blue-books on pauperism, or an ocean of sensational writing on progress and poverty ... Such hard facts as have been collected in this inquiry form the best basis for the efforts both of the legislator and the philanthropist. (26.5.1887)

The general reports on his paper on Tower Hamlets made it much easier for Booth to proceed quickly with the Inquiry. In the Spring of 1889 the first volume was published. Entitled Life and Labour of the People. Volume One: East London, it was published by Williams and Norgate. Beatrice Potter refers to it from the beginning as 'Life and Labour'; in her diary of 17 April, 1889 she writes

proudly of '<u>Life and Labour</u> on my table with my name standing out as a contributor' (Webb, in MacKenzie, 1986:282). Four days later she records '"The Book" a great success and Charles Booth delighted. Leaders in all the principal papers, and C.B. quite the head of the statistical tree'. The second volume would be published in 1891 with the title changed to <u>Labour and Life of the People, London, Continued</u>, also by Williams and Norgate. The alteration was thought necessary because Samuel Smiles had published a book in 1887 called <u>Life and Labour</u> and there was worry over copyright. But from 1892, and the second edition, this time published by Macmillan and Company, the work would take on the name it is commonly known by: <u>Life and Labour of the People in London</u>. The first edition rapidly sold out. As the Simeys explain, even though the book was 'repetitive and diffuse' -

> ...the general effect was overwhelming. The stark fact of the unexpectedly high proportion of the population living in poverty had already received wide publicity after the presentation of his Papers, but the mass and the evident veracity of the detailed evidence with which it was now supported gave it a fresh and startling power to shock ... (1960:107)

As would be expected, the first reviews of Booth's book appeared in the popular press. Booth or his publishers maintained an extensive clipping file from the release of the first volume in April 1889. The expanded findings published in Volume One were considered very newsworthy at the time. Nine countries are represented in the 251 reviews surviving in a scrapbook in the Booth archive. Several

newspapers published their review in instalments, as in the Leeds Mercury and the Jewish Chronicle, taking up 'Poverty' in one issue and the 'Special Subjects' in the next. Only rarely was the press report a brief notice of publication or condensed review. Twenty column inches would be about the average length, though some were much longer, such as the Bradford Observer's forty-nine inches of extremely fine type. Though the publication of Life and Labour was treated as 'news', exactly what sort of news it was varied from newspaper to newspaper. In general the reviews opened up Life and Labour, rather than concentrating on the Poverty Line or the wages levels and other information used to demarcate the classes. The reviews tended to look closely at those more qualitative sections which their readers might compare to their own knowledge. The statistical side was more appreciated, for its readability and clarity, than critiqued. But the political orientations of the various newspapers and journals also coloured the reports. Booth must have been one of the first social scientists to have the opportunity to observe his simply and factually stated research results twisted to the many editorial slants of various journals.

The Times welcomed the work - 'The book makes its appearance at an opportune time, when public interest has been excited about the condition of the London poor, and when the efforts of philanthropists are in more than common need of guidance by the light of facts'. This idea of misguided philanthropy is the theme of the Times review.

The proportion of the population found to be living in poverty is passed over very quickly - 'four lowest classed comprise together somewhat more than a third of the inhabitants of East London'. Much more space is devoted to a comparison of dock labourers, who have lapsed into degeneracy, with Jews 'well capable of making it in the world.' The *Times* concludes that *Life and Labour* demonstrates 'the twofold evil' of indiscriminate charity ('it weakens and degrades') and that Booth 'tells us..how large a part of the misery of East London has been due to this cause..' The *Athenaeum* found the book too pedestrian to be of serious interest, 'The book is entirely without literary merit but contains information useful for philanthropists. It has a curious map of East London ... There is no attempt to make the book readable, nor is it provided with an index, so that its perusal is a work of solid labour' (27.4.1887). Of the philanthropists interested in Booth's work the Charity Organisation Society might have been expected to show the greatest interest, but for the C.O.S. Booth's proposals for 'limited socialism' were totally objectionable. His plans they damned with the faintest of praise: 'It would be especially ungracious to quarrel with Mr. Booth for his single excursion into the pleasant dreamland of world-making. He has fairly earned the relaxation, and the modesty with which his scheme of sanctified pauperism disarms criticism' (*Charity Organisation Society Review*, May 1889).

Booth's 'scheme of sanctified pauperism', his suggestion that his 'Class B' should be removed by government intervention from the labour market, was taken up by most reviewers and given attention far out of proportion to its position within the mass of other findings. In that it represented an answer, albeit tentative, to the 'poverty question', it was readily seized upon and discussed. This discussion most clearly showed the various political interpretations of Booth's findings. The notion of 'Labour Colonies' was treated in three distinct ways in the press: condemnation by those on the political right, cautious acceptance by moderates and the centre-left, and with complete apathy from the socialists.

To those on the political right Booth's suggestion was seen as wasteful and destructive socialism. The St James Gazette wrote that it was 'remarkable that Mr Booth... though he is a strong enough advocate of laissez-faire..would make them (class B) men, women, and children, pensioners on the State'. The Leeds Mercury twisted Booth's suggestion of removal from the labour market coupled with aid, training, and employment into a rather more chilling solution - stating that after consideration 'in almost every essential aspect, Mr Booth is driven to the conclusion that the great object to be aimed at is the extirpation as a class of the casual labourers'. A common image used by editors on the political right is that of the poor as an infection or disease that does, indeed, deserve extirpation:

> The recurrence Winter after Winter, of agitations - having sometimes a savour of menace - in the alleged interests of the unemployed; the pathetic appeals made also at each returning Christmas for the multitudes who are represented as either famishing or on the borders of destitution; and the stories of such writers as Mr Walter Besant have combined to produce a wide-spread feeling that in East London the diseases of our body politic are present in peculiarly intense and virulent forms. And the series of ghastly crimes which horrified the whole country a few months ago, together with the repulsive revelations which they elicited as to the manner of life...of East London served to bring home anxiety and even apprehension (Leeds Mercury 19.4.89)

The 'ghastly crimes' referred to are the murders which in time would be attributed to 'Jack the Ripper'. The image of the poor as disease was carried further in the aptly named Graphic:

> It is a very depressing picture which Mr Booth presents to the public in his work on East London. Out of a population of nine hundred thousand, it is estimated that about one third are loafers, criminals, and casual toilers who turn their hands to evil on slight provocation... What should be done to remove this terrible gangrene? Mr Booth suggests the State should provide the miserable creatures with food and lodging ... but a far graver difficulty presents itself in the confirmed idleness to be thus assisted. They detest work, especially regular work; it is really extraordinary what sufferings many of them will accept sooner than try to earn an honest living... (Graphic 20.4.89)

The review continues in the same vein for several paragraphs. The same figures could be used in a completely different way to answer and confound the 'socialist agitators':

> ... very consoling facts may be accepted as proven by his figures. For instance, even in the poorest quarters of the capital those who are below the line of comfort do not number more than one third of the population...(Standard 19.4.89)

What should be done with these 'loafers and criminals' living below 'the line of comfort' was perfectly clear to

reviewers on the political right, and it was not to provide them with work, shelter, and sustenance at State expense. As the Saturday Review (20.4.89) expressed it-

'more good would be done in the long run, by a general hard-hearted determination to drive the weak into the workhouse and leave the idle to starve'.

Closer to the political centre Booth's work was seen as necessary reading for any social reformer, and his suggestion of Labour Colonies for Class B was reduced to an extension of the 'existing socialism of our Poor Law' (Guardian 17.4.89). The Daily News managed to describe the scheme without even mentioning labour colonies (Class B would be 'compelled to accept State Aid'), then notes 'It is Socialistic, but Mr Booth is not afraid of the word', (16.4.89). in a similar way the Liverpool Review termed it 'socialism for the residuum',(27.4.89). The notion of Labour Colonies was a large scale solution to an even larger problem. Reviewers in the political centre accepted it as worth discussion, for unlike their counterparts on the right they had no immediate answers themselves. For the Liverpool Daily Post it was 'a heroic suggestion' (19.4.89), and the fact that Booth's proposal was 'Socialistic should not be an insuperable objection', according to the Manchester Courier (20.4.89).

If the political right and centre were certain the Labour Colony scheme was socialistic, the Socialists were happy to accept it. Their reaction to Labour Colonies was welcoming; the journal Today regarded the plan as one which would 'send the old world spinning down the grooves of

collectivist change with considerable impetus'. It is worth noting that the Labour Colony scheme, which has been used in the 20th century to demonstrate Booth's 'conservatism', was not considered threatening in any way by most Socialist reviewers, nor did they react negatively to his work. For most of the Socialist newspapers Life and Labour was recommended as essential reading. Christian Socialist urged every reader to get it and 'digest it' (8.89). By the publication of the second volume in the Spring of 1890 the Pall Mall Gazette published a drawing of Booth and in the accompanying editorial lionised him as a fact finder leading public opinion. On the publication of the first volume the reviewers on the left went straight to Booth's poverty line and found the proportion 'proven' to be in poverty to be important news. 'No less than 35 percent of the 909,000...are in, or below, the "poor"' reported the Labour Elector (4.5.89). The Penny Illustrated Paper pointed out 'with unquestionable authority....300,000 people in London in a condition of chronic want.' This demonstrated, Booth's research 'ought to make an end of the current flippancies about drink, unthrift, and other easy and Pharisaic apologies for our social breakdown,'(8.6.89) The Pall Mall Gazette quoted extensively from Life and Labour, especially from Booth's own descriptions of poverty, and found one sentence to be 'crucially important' - 'The disease from which society suffers is the unrestricted competition in industry of the needy and the

helpless.' The Socialists of 1889 saw Booth as an ally, though one they wished were more radical in the interpretation of his findings.

Beneath these squabbles of political interpretation were newspapers with special interests. Christian World reported Booth's findings and remarked especially on the moral lessons it taught: 'the evidence yielded during this inquiry as to the frequency of the wife being a drunkard and a slattern is very painful,'(18.4.89). The East London Advertiser (27.4.89) found in Life and Labour an answer to those who painted the East End as a dark sinkhole of vice. The statistics of income distribution and occupation were used to show that the great majority of East Enders lived and worked like their contemporaries elsewhere.

The two Jewish newspapers, the Jewish Chronicle and Jewish World, were most interested in Beatrice Potter's long essay on 'The Jewish Community'. Of all the reviews, those in the Jewish press were the most academically critical. The Jewish Chronicle split its review into three parts; the first placed Booth within the context of Mayhew and Stallard, pointing out the crucial difference of Booth's quantitative approach. There is a brief report in this first review on Potter's essay. The judgement is that it is a fair treatment if occasionally inconsistent. The second part uses all of Life and Labour to draw comparisons between the Jewish population and other East End residents; in these comparisons, as in Life and Labour, the Jews are shown in a favourable light. The final part of the review

is a synopsis of Booth's findings with a number of the statistical tables reproduced. The _Jewish World_ felt Potter's essay 'must be the standard authority': 'Miss Beatrice Potter contributes an exceedingly able and scrupulously fair account of the Jewish community', (19.4.89). Their only criticism was that Potter's understanding of the Jews in Eastern Europe was 'rather faulty'. The _Jewish World_ also published a detailed, two part, synopsis of Booth's findings.

In sum, though he was attacked as too socialistic by the right and not radical enough by the left, the general consensus was that Booth had made an important contribution to knowledge. Most reviewers accepted that Booth's aim 'has in the main been confined to showing how things are', (_Life and Labour_, 1889:592). Whatever their interpretation of the findings, virtually all reviewers accepted the findings as fact, and disseminated these facts widely. The repercussions of this dissemination are lost in questions of historical cause and effect, but the proliferation of social surveys in Britain and America after _Life and Labour_ must owe something to this wide publicity. For some the newly emergent power of the social scientist was almost clairvoyant, as the _Evening Despatch_ reported:

> Mr Booth (not to be confused with the distinguished military commander of the same name)....made close investigation over a district comprising nearly a million souls, not only into every house and every family, but _into every room and every person_ (18.4.89)

Political Uses of Booth's Research

The publication of Life and Labour in 1889, and the papers to the statistical society which preceded it, were part of a greater movement toward social reform and an increased recognition of the working class in politics in the 1880's and 1890's. In this section I will look at the influence Life and Labour had on these ongoing debates, and specific questions of social policy will be considered in terms of how they demonstrate this influence. The next chapter examines in much greater detail Booth's work and its inter-relationship with social policy.

Booth's research 'was only part of a whole series of investigations conducted in the 1880's to discover the working and living conditions of the working classes. ... and must be placed within the context of a decade of unrest, agitation, and re-evaluation of the fundamental structure of society' (Wohl, 1977:220). In the 1870's and early 1880's Irish Home Rule was the premier political issue and one which brought about rapid shifts in government, including the fall of the Gladstone government in the mid-eighties. Old political and social norms were under assault, and the passing of the Franchise Bill exacerbated these changes. The election of 1886 has been described as 'unsurpassed in importance of the issues, the confusion of the parties, and the sincerity of the combatants' (Lynd, 1945:224). The Liberal Party as a destroyer of old evils was now disarmed, for a general

shift toward greater state intervention was unsettling what had been the party of government. 'Old liberals' defected to the Conservatives - where individualist laissez-faire was preserved. The Liberal Party found itself rudderless, a collection of worthy causes - franchise, free education, supported housing - but without the fixed ideological will to carry these through. Sidney Webb was very optimistic but presenting one side of the Liberal dilemma when he wrote:

> The Liberal Party ... with every approach towards democracy, becomes more markedly socialistic in character. The London Liberal and Radical Union, the official party organization in the metropolis ... has lately in 1889 expressly promoted a measure to enable the London County Council to build unlimited artisans' dwellings, to be let at moderate rents, and to be paid for by a special tax, unrestricted in amount, to be levied on London landlords only. No more extreme 'socialistic' proposal could possibly be made, short of complete communism itself (Webb, 1889:64).

Webb's view was much more radical than most, but it is an indication of the rapidity of change swirling around Booth and his research in the 1880's. The sense of confusion which occurred when economic liberalism failed in its marriage to political democracy was pervasive. 'A new fear came to England, a new self-questioning' writes Lynd, for in the 1880's:

> ... poverty, unemployment, and the demands of the enfranchised people for better things were becoming insistent threats to confidence in self-adjusting processes and to established English ways of life. Planless international trade and planless economy within England - relying on 'natural law' ... were becoming things of the past. (1945:414)

To resolve this confusion, to bring order to the 'planless economy', led to a number of answering strategies. Most of these were overtly political, from the

deliberate attempts to influence and initiate legislation by the Fabians, to the more spontaneous Trafalgar Square riots. But one of these strategies was exemplified by Booth's research - 'a systematic accumulation of social facts which could not be avoided' (Lynd, 1945:417). In the increasing attention paid to issues of social condition, social facts took on a new relevance. And in the increasing tide of pamphlets and facts, the empirical and apparently non-partisan reports made by Booth had special value.

The influence of Booth's research on political activity of the time is easy to assert, but very difficult to demonstrate. Actual political statements or acts which explicitly name the Poverty Survey as a starting point are not to be found. As noted above, Hamilton (1932:95) states that initiation of the House of Lords Select Committee on Sweating (1888) was due to the publication of Booth's work. Beatrice Potter gave extensive evidence to this committee, but a clear causal link between the Inquiry and the Committee is not apparent. Booth was also called to participate in the Registrar General's Committee which would guide the 1891 Census, and this was more likely due to the reputation he had gained after the publication of _Life and Labour_ than to the badly received criticisms he had made of the Census in 1886. In many ways the influence of _Life and Labour_ may be thought of as quietly powerful. Himmelfarb, in reviewing the legislation, local government debates, and proposals that called on Booth's work explains

that there were 'frequent references to his work in books and articles, parliamentary debates and hearings. These are all the more revealing because they are so casual; his classes and statistics were referred to as if they were obvious, well-established facts' (1991:164).

Some commentators, such as Webb and the Simeys, also trace Booth's political influence through those members of his staff, discussed in the last chapter, who went on to government positions. Llewellyn Smith, for example, went on to initiate and organise the State Labour Exchanges (1906-1910), and the provision of unemployment insurance (1911-1914). Ernest Aves worked in the establishment of minimum wage boards overseeing the 'sweated trades' from 1909, and later served in the government of New Zealand. Beatrice Webb is also a political figure whose early career was much influenced by Booth and her part in the Inquiry.

Beatrice Webb gives an account in My Apprenticeship which demonstrates the lack of specificity in the influence of the Inquiry on politics. Under the heading 'The Political Effect of the Grand Inquest' she sets out to discuss the effect on public opinion, politics and philanthropy of Life and Labour, and worries that she 'may easily overstate the political and administrative results' (1926:247). According to Webb the results of the Inquiry 'came as a shock to the governing class'; the 'philanthropist and politician were confronted with a million men, women and children in London alone, who were existing, at the best, on a family income of under 20s. a

week'. In Webb's estimation two further important issues were resolved by the Inquiry. Firstly, the belief that underpaid agricultural labourers swarmed into London and depressed wages, which was in Llewellyn Smith's contribution not to be true. Secondly, that a constant stream of aliens, especially Jews, into the East End was depressing wages and pressing upon the housing and livelihoods of the 'English' inhabitants. As it turned out there was actually only a 'relatively small annual increment' of Jews given that large numbers were merely passing through London on their way to America. More importantly, Webb sees in Booth's work the dismissal of 'the whole controversy between rival schools of poor relief and private charity' (1926:251). By demonstrating that neither the Poor Law Unions nor the C.O.S. was able, after years of effort, to get at the roots of poverty, Webb perceives an ineluctable pressure for the ultimate adoption of socialist policies. In fact, by Webb's accounting, Booth was foremost a proponent of moderate socialism. As evidence she offers his unqualified support of the London School Board, 'an organisation that was, in those very years, being hotly denounced as a form of socialism' (1926:253). Added to this was his proposal for labour colonies for Class B, of which Webb explains 'the magnitude and the daring of this piece of "Collectivism" was startling' (1926:254). When these proposals and findings are combined with Booth's work on behalf of old age pensions, Webb sees

a key to the extension of state provision at the turn of the century:

> Thus we have the outcome of Charles Booth's poverty statistics, not indeed State provision for Class B as such, but State provision for the children of school age, State provision for those over seventy (and State provision for the blind over fifty), State provision for all those without employment (under unemployment insurance). Meanwhile, in the sphere of collective regulation, we have seen the repeated extensions of the Factory and Workshops, Mines and Merchant Shipping, Railways and Shop Hours Acts; and the far-reaching ramifications of minimum wage and maximum hours legislation. Indeed - perhaps being 'wise after the event' - if I had to sum up, in a sentence, the net effect of Charles Booth's work, I should say that it was to give an entirely fresh impetus to the general adoption, by the British people, of what Fourier, three-quarters of a century before, had foreseen as the precursor of his organised communism, and had styled 'guaranteeism'; or, as we now call it, the policy of securing to every individual, as the very basis of his life and work, a prescribed national minimum of the requisites for efficient parenthood and citizenship. This policy may, or may not, be Socialism, but it is assuredly a decisive denial of the economic individualism of the 'eighties. (1926:256)

The idea that it was but a short step from Booth's work to the establishment of a welfare state is indubitably overstated. What is undeniable is that Booth's research findings altered the nature of political argument and, rather more than prompting specific actions, contributed to a trend of basing new social policy on scientific study. Trevelyan wrote that the 'scientific study of the London poor ... did much to enlighten the world and form opinion' (1931:400). Canon Barnett expressed a similar view, that the Inquiry prepared 'the public mind for reforms and for efforts' (1918:54). Hutchins and Harrison in their History of Factory Legislation (1911) point to the Inquiry as a stepping stone to legislation which 'weakened the superstition about individual liberty as no amount of

socialist theory could have done' (1911:201). Beveridge recounts that as an undergraduate his Master at Balliol, Edward Caird, under Booth's influence, told him that the 'one thing that needs doing by some of you is to go and discover why, with so much wealth in Britain, there continues to be so much poverty, and how poverty can be cured' (1953:9). Well into the twentieth century Booth was often seen as a reformer and ally of the socialists, Longmate's Socialist Anthology describes him in this way: 'Charles Booth was not a Socialist, but the vast survey of the condition of the people of London ... converted many to the cause. His work revealed that talk of poverty was not merely the propaganda of wild agitators, and also that only in state action could improvement be sought' (1953:95). If specific instances of the influence of the Inquiry in legislation are hard to pin-point, with the exception of Pensions (discussed in the next chapter), it is certain, that as Fraser put it, the Inquiry 'provided the compelling statistical justification for a more collectivist policy' (1973:137).

The transition to 'more collectivist' policies is a recognised watershed in British social and political history at the turn of the century. The establishment of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1905 is often described as a pivotal event in this transition. In showing poverty to be a definable and, perhaps, correctable problem, Booth pointed towards a 'scientific' resolution -

in much the same way as public-health reforms had reduced diseases like cholera. His criticism of the Poor Law was mild and oblique, but after ten years of research Booth had to admit that:

> Tested by the condition of the people, it is not possible to claim any great improvement. The people are no less poor, nor much, if at all, more independent. There are fewer paupers, but not any fewer who rely on charity in some form. Private charity defies control, and the work of the Charity Organisation Society has, in spite of itself, become largely that of providing, under careful management, one more source of assistance for those who would otherwise be obliged to apply to the Guardians (Religious Influences, Vol. II, p.53).

Once more we find Booth to be a hinge upon which issues are turning. For Beatrice Webb and Norman Longmate he stands out as the harbinger of state socialism, yet Fraser places him 'at the end of an essentially Victorian tradition' (1973:137). Booth's works of 'conservative moralism', decried by modern historians, were seen as required reading for radical socialists of the 1880's and 1890's. In some ways both of the earlier views of Booth are correct, and probably the least useful is the modern revisionist view that casts Booth as reactionary and conservative. Booth must be evaluated in his own historical context. Admittedly, Booth did not make an understanding of his position on political and social issues easy by aligning himself with particular groups or parties. His own orientation to social issues changed in some ways over his lifetime. Nor did the evolution of his ideas follow a uniform path. In some areas such as his views on property he became more conservative over time, while in areas of

social policy such as public transport or income support for the elderly he moved steadily to the left. He refused to accept a single over-arching explanatory paradigm from the political left or right. Whether this is viewed positively or negatively, as an admirable analytical approach or a failure to achieve a breadth of vision, the result is the same: an understanding of Booth's position on any issue requires looking to his work on that issue. That said, it should still be possible to extract commonalities in Booth's thought.

But the central themes in Booth's approach were to do more with the definition of his social reality, than with ideological structures designed to alter that reality. At one level, his definition of poverty and the proportion of the population which fell within poverty, separates him from the left. Booth's concern for amelioration or change was not for the 'working class', a group by his reckoning much larger than the 'poor'. As Himmelfarb notes, 'Booth, like most of his contemporaries, persisted in thinking and speaking of the working classes in the plural; this was, indeed, the main point of his work' (1991:167). That separation and definition called for specific solutions to specific problems of poverty among particular groups of the population. Large-scale political change was not seen by Booth as either necessity or preference. As Booth explained the separation in a paper read to the Political Economy Club in 1888:

The force of labour considered as a class consists in the

amount of its earnings, the regularity and value of its work. The force of the poor considered as a class consists in their poverty, in the irregularity of their work or the smallness of their earnings... There is no uniformity of interest and can be no uniformity of aim, any more than there is uniformity of social position, amongst the millions who fill up the ranks of poverty and labour. (Senate House, Mss. 797/II/29/2)

The young Booth who denounced property as theft and railed against the cruelty and waste of poverty did not forsake his beliefs in latter life, but he did temper them. While he stood to the right of most Fabian policies he shared with them an emphasis on the pragmatic, and in this pragmatic orientation as a social scientist is an ideology which is often discounted in the attempt to place Booth politically.

Like Emile Durkheim, Booth derived from Comte a conception of social science as transcending political groupings. As Durkheim wrote to the Sociological Society: sociology 'is not there for its own sake, but because it alone can furnish the principle necessary for a complete systemisation of experience' (1905:259). If we understand Booth politically as a social scientist first, and ideologue second, we come closest to explaining how his belief system would lead to the specific results it provided. For a person whose primary orientation was toward systemisation, a concentration on the illumination of social facts was more fruitful than pressing toward a pre-determined political explanation.

This elevation of the social fact to a role in politics is perhaps the most basic of the effects of the

Inquiry on Booth's contemporaries. But the extension of his work beyond the simple provision of facts proved to be much more difficult for Booth when the reputation he had made in research drew him more and more into the formulation of social policy. The next chapter explores the translation of Booth's complex political position into political expression through policy.

Chapter Seven - Booth and Social Policy

This chapter explores the circular impact of Charles Booth's work on the development of social policy, and of social policy on the development of his work. Booth's personal history included many attempts to turn his ideas and beliefs into reality. As a young man in Liverpool he had moved step by step through a series of political acts, each expressing in action the policies his personal philosophy supported. Campaigning for greater political self-determination in the Liverpool slums, welding disparate factions together in an attempt to foster universal schooling, building educational and meeting places for working people and trades unionists, all these attempts at small scale policy implementation shared two attributes. They were all radically before their time, and they all failed. In this early period of his life he brought to the immediate social problems immediate solutions - which were overwhelmed by the sheer size and history of the problems he attacked. The disillusionment he suffered in this series of failures drove Booth, in the short term, more and more deeply into Comtian positivism, a philosophical orientation which claimed the explanatory power to address problems as large as sectarian differences and class conflict. In the longer term, this inability to achieve immediate reform compelled him to look elsewhere for the part he might play in realising social change.

The part he decided he could play to best effect was

in social research, doing the sort of systematising of information that was so successful for him in setting policy within his businesses. His primary concern was to bring information to bear on nagging social problems, but to leave the resolution of social problems to those who concerned themselves with the formation of social policy. And while that was his intention, his aim to be analytical rather than active was often subverted by his own social conscience. Booth was a person of deeply felt social concerns who believed that strong beliefs must give rise to social action, and at times his own research presented him with social conditions which he met with immediate action. He represented, as mentioned above, 'a union of faith in the scientific method with the transference of the emotion of self-sacrificing service from God to man' (Webb, 1926:221). If his way of serving was through social investigation, it had to be investigation which in turn served human needs.

If Charles Booth was one of the first people to become popularly known as a social investigator, he was also one of the first to face the problem of the policy implications of his research. Originally conducted to answer a pressing social question, the Poverty Survey had a significant impact across the political spectrum. Its results were quickly taken up and used by those groups who felt they might turn its findings to their own advantage. Initially Booth remained aloof, preferring to continue with his research. But there was in his approach to research and

social investigation a pragmatic bent. In his youth he had been badly stung by his own failures at social and political action. Withdrawing from direct action and 'standing to the side to watch' had, in part, led to the research of the Poverty Study. In the same way in which its results had a profound impact on others, some of his own findings shook Charles Booth and spurred him to propose political or social action.

His own reformist feelings were joined by another factor which pushed him into the public arena. Curiously, this was the very aloofness which he cultivated to maintain objectivity in his research. Despite the fact that many tried to ascribe to Booth political motives (some seeing him as a radical socialist, others as a reactionary conservative) most commentators came to view Booth as an independent and unimpeachable expert on social affairs. His views, while moderate in basic tendency, were a mixture of the radical and the conservative in a way consistent with his personal view of the world. It was a carefully constructed world-view which blended a belief in the inherent goodness of human beings with strong support for personal liberty and individualism. This was the starting point to which ideas and policies were added or subtracted using human needs and administrative efficiency as guides. A great amount of unrecognised scholarship went into the construction of Booth's political views. For example, some writers have implied that Booth was practically ignorant of

socialist or Marxist writings (cf. Selvin), and the letter that Booth wrote to Mary Booth in the 1870's in which he mentions 'Marks (?)' is often cited as proof of his ignorance. This view, unfortunately, fails to recognise that Karl Marx was generally little known in Mid-Victorian England. Marx died in London in March, 1883, at a low point in his renown in the English speaking world. As Cole in her history of Fabian socialism points out, at that time 'no one ... read Marx, whose International Workingmens Association was dead in New York' (1964:10). That Booth had begun exploring Marx in the 1870's was rather well ahead of his contemporaries - Henry Hyndman did not discover Marx until 1880 and George Bernard Shaw first took up Capital in 1883, the only one of the early Fabians to do so (MacKenzie, 1977; Cole, 1964). Both of these famous Socialists had to read Capital in French as the bulk of Marx's work was not available in English until after 1890, the first available being Volume One of Capital edited by Engels and published in 1887. The Booths bought a copy of this first edition so that Charles and Mary might read it together. The year before Beatrice Potter had begun writing a long essay analysing Marx's economic theories, working from the French edition of Capital. Booth read and commented on this paper then passed it on to Professor Beesly at the University of London. In the Summer of 1888 Mary described in a letter how she 'enjoyed an hour and a half's rest over a good fire yesterday night with Karl Marx in our own bedroom ... His style is lively and he has got

ideas, but is steeped in the German craze for distinctions, as Comte is in the French chart system.' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:97). In the early 1890's Beatrice Webb's diary records evenings spent with the Booths discussing Marx, socialism, communism, and the various proponents, British and continental, of each. In any event, Booth's reading and discussion on political and ideological matters ranged much more widely than the work of Marx. He placed himself in debates with members of the Social Democratic Federation, espousing a non-interventionist policy for government. In a discussion in 1890 with Beatrice Potter, who had recently joined the Fabians, Booth pressed her with the following definition of socialism: 'The prevention by a paternal state of the consequences of a man's actions: the substitution of a new set of consequences for the natural set of consequences following upon a man's action.' (MacKenzie, 1986:325). Yet he called for greater powers to factory inspectors, and further legislation 'making landlords as well employers responsible for safety and sanitary conditions' (Himmelfarb, 1991:160).

Booth tended to assess each issue individually, he was protectionist in terms of the tariff; but not imperialist or militarist. In his later life he leaned toward the Unionists on the Irish question, though not long after coming to London, in 1884, he published a leaflet 'England and Ireland - A Counter Proposal', which called for dominion status for Ireland. He decried most state

intervention - except in the several ways which _he_ proposed, and then only when he felt there was no 'individualist' alternative. These proposals were in turn decried by others as dangerously socialist. The machinations and moral sinks of political intrigue appalled him. In short, he was a complex man who was nevertheless constant in his beliefs and approach to both political questions and life. In 1895 Beatrice Webb had known him well for twenty years, and wrote in her diary on the convening of the Poor Law Commission that: 'Charles Booth has not changed one whit - he is still the sincere, simple-natured man, with an aloof intellectual interest in human affairs that I knew so well and cared so deeply for years ago' (Diary, 28 May, 1895). This 'aloof intellectual interest' was the attribute which most characterised Booth. His place on the Royal Commission on the Poor Law was welcomed, in part, because of the knowledge that he served no political interest. This political philosophy reflected the watershed position he occupied - conservative insistence on non-intervention and personal freedom tempered by 'limited socialism' to maintain those who were in need. What follows is an examination and history of social policy issues as they affected and were affected by Charles Booth; as such the focus is not one which will consider the many policy changes of the period in the round. For the most part, Booth waited to be asked before speaking out on social policy, but if it can be said that Booth had one axe to grind, it was a deep conviction that

old age pensions should be universally provided in Britain.

Old Age Pensions

In 1889 Booth found in the records of the Stepney Union workhouse 'a mine of great wealth', and he wrote to Beatrice Potter that 'We are trying (as a by-issue) to find out "who and why" the paupers are ...' (Booth Coll., BLPES) Paupers in this instance meant those people who had become chargeable to the rates, in other words who had become dependent on the local authority for support. These records together with similar records from Poplar related the case histories of the inmates of the various institutions of the Stepney Union. These case histories were laboriously copied out by George Arkell and then held over until there was time for their analysis in 1891.

In this analysis Booth discovered that among the 'causes of pauperism' old age ranked first, accounting for 32.8% of the institutionalised population. It was a fact corroborated by statistics which Sidney Webb had given him showing that a significant proportion of the elderly died in the workhouse. A study of the case histories demonstrated that for many inmates of the workhouse there had been no past history of drink or fecklessness. Men and women who had worked all their lives, and saved when they could, would see their savings exhausted in one bout of illness in old age. The result was that the workhouse, designed to be a deterrent to the feckless, was the pathetic last refuge of the hard-working and 'deserving'

poor. Booth felt that a remedy was necessary for several reasons. Firstly, the blatant injustice of inflicting the workhouse on those who had earnestly tried to make provisions for their old age shocked and offended him. As the research proceeded Mary Booth records that he became more and more certain that for the elderly 'removal to the Workhouse was a very great and genuine trouble' (1918:142). Secondly, Booth believed that a remedy to this problem would mitigate other problems associated with poverty. In the first edition of the Poverty Series Booth had tentatively proposed the removal of Class B from the population. This 'removal' would free more work for those most able to perform it, and lessen the demands on the various schemes of poor relief. If this large group of the aged poor could be removed from the responsibility of the Poor Law, its efforts could be better focused, and the 'deserving' aged poor could be offered dignity at the end of their lives.

In Booth's estimation the best answer to this problem was a universal weekly pension of 5 shillings for everyone reaching age sixty-five. His scheme was bold in its simplicity yet had been very carefully worked out. Booth did not originate the idea, but it can be said that his participation was important to the scheme's ultimate enactment as law. The overture in what was to become a social movement for old age pensions was an article on 'National Insurance' by Canon Blackley in the November 1878

edition of the 19th Century Review. Early the next year R.P. Hookam published a pamphlet entitled "Outlines of a Scheme for dealing with Pauperism" which was widely read and which gave 'the first proposal for the endowment of old age out of national funds' (Booth, in Stead, 1910). Booth credits the ideas put forward by Hookam as being the basis for the scheme he developed, writing that 'though I did not even then come across it, I think it must have been from this pamphlet that the idea reached me; to be made by me the basis of a paper read to the Statistical Society in December 1892' (in Metcalfe, 1899:ii). Whatever the origin of his ideas there were two important differences between Booth and the other proponents of various schemes for old age pensions. The first was that Booth was well known as an independent and reliable social commentator. Hookam wrote of himself in 1879 that 'As an obscure individual attempting to thrust into notice a scheme of such magnitude and importance; I may incur the risk of ridicule' (quoted in Metcalfe, 1899:v). The author of Life and Labour was not an 'obscure individual' and had to be taken seriously. The second important difference was that Booth offered evidence in support of universal old age pensions as compelling as that put forward in the Poverty Series.

This evidence was a sizeable body of work that Booth produced while managing the work on the Industry Series. The work began with the analysis of the case histories which had been collected in 1889. There were a sufficient number of these and they contained enough detail for him to

be able to perform both statistical and qualitative research. (A detailed description of these data is found in Appendix A.) The key variable in this analysis was pauperism, meaning that the individual had become the responsibility of the Poor Law Union. A pauper was someone whose destitution was complete and for whom the Workhouse, which had been designed to be as unattractive as possible in its regimen, became the only viable alternative to starvation. In addition to the extreme discomfort and degradation of the Workhouse was the shame it carried in the minds of most of the poor. When Booth, using the information contained in the case histories, determined the reasons why individuals had been removed to the Workhouse he found that the various causes were distributed in this way:

Table 7-1

Cause	%
Old Age	32.8%
Sickness	26.7%
Drink	12.6%
Lack of Work	4.4%
All other causes	23.5%

(Adapted from: Booth, JRSS, 1892:609)

The large proportion of inmates institutionalised due to old age surprised Booth. And while he had been very chary of making policy recommendations on the basis of his past research, he felt no such compunction here. In addition to the research Booth arranged a series of meetings with those

whose opinions were well cultivated on the subject, for example, with the labour leader Tom Mann who was decidedly in favour of pensions, and with Octavia Hill who was very much opposed. In the later part of 1891 Booth organised this research and his recommendations into a paper on 'The Enumeration and Classification of Paupers, and State Pensions for the Aged'. On 15 December, 1891, in the Hall of the School of Mines he presented this paper to the Royal Statistical Society. The response was hostile. The paper consisted of four parts. The first presented the descriptive statistical and qualitative analysis of the information collected in the Stepney Union and the St. Pancras Union in the course of the research for Life and Labour. The second explained his system for determining the 'causes of pauperism'. Booth had constructed a method for assigning the primary, secondary, and tertiary causes of pauperism for each individual as discovered in the case histories. From this system he produced the table above. But the case histories lacked uniformity and reliability in their collection, and a third section described the need for improved methods of record keeping in the administration of the Poor Law. Finally, Booth extended his research presentation to include policy recommendations. In this fourth section he made the case for old age pensions paid universally to those over the age of sixty-five. Ever practical, Booth had calculated the annual cost of such pensions to the exchequer - £17,000,000, at the time a

colossal sum. Mary Booth described the result in her Memoir:

> The paper fell like a bombshell, and in the discussion which ensued not a voice was raised in favour of the proposal, and as time drew on, so many of the eager critics were unable to obtain a hearing that before the meeting broke up it was decided to give a second evening to the discussion (1918:23).

Among those who spoke on the first night were C.S. Loch, Leonard Courtney and Professor Marshall the economist. The Marshalls were at the time staying with the Booths and an interesting third view of the proceedings is found in a letter written by Lady Darwin to a friend two weeks later:

> I saw Mrs. (Prof.) Marshall the other day - she told me that they had been staying at the Charles Booths for a meeting of the Statistical Society at which Mr. Booth made his startling suggestion of pensioning everybody without distinction, over sixty-five. There was no time for the discussion that evening, but Mrs. M. said it was very well received and has since been discussed. Prof. Marshall's only objection, as far as I understood, was that its consideration might prevent the consideration of a more radical reform of the Poor Law. Mr. Loch of the C.O.S. was dead against it (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:119).

Apparently, on the strength of Mrs. Marshall's report of the first meeting, Lady Darwin assumed the paper had been well received, but it was also true that objections to the plan were much better organised when the paper was discussed at length a week later. The second meeting, in which the discussion was held, was held on 22 December, 1891, the ideas which Booth proposed received much the same reception as before. Again Mary Booth is the source on this evening which she remembered as 'very hostile':

> ...voice after voice emerged, and all unfavourable, many whilst courteous almost contemptuous in their repudiation of so wild a project...it was inadequate, it was impracticable, it was ruinously expensive, and the

cost of collection and payment of officials needed would be as great as that of the pensions themselves (1918:23).

Booth was undeterred. The arguments put forward against his scheme were not, for him, convincing. The suffering of the elderly who died in poverty had moved him to action. In the paper to the Royal Statistical Society he had written with uncharacteristic emotion of the rightness of his proposals:

It offers for those who, without being able to earn a living, are still able to clean and cook for themselves, a far more desired and desirable existence. They can still remain members of the society to which they are accustomed, can still confer as well as receive neighbourly favours, mind a baby, sit up with the sick, chop firewood, or weed the garden. They are not cut off from the sympathies of daily existence, and their presence is often a valuable ingredient in the surrounding life. When the end comes, the presence of well-known faces, the sounds of well-known voices, soothe and succour the last hours (1892:633).

If he did not lack certainty, Booth did believe he would need more evidence. His research staff was at an hiatus between the completion of the Poverty Series and the beginning of the Industry Series. Accordingly, he redeployed several of his staff and a large part of his own time to collecting the facts which would make his case for pensions indisputable. Mary Booth also devoted most of January, 1892 to researching pensions and interviewing those working in this area. This work was to have several products. The first was a slim volume which elaborated the findings and arguments he had presented to the Royal Statistical Society. Published in 1892 _Pauperism, A Picture and the Endowment of Old Age, A Proposal_ is a striking contrast to the works of Hookam, Blackley or others who were advocating pensions in this period.

As in the Poverty Series the arguments put forward by Booth in Pauperism a Picture are based only on the evidence of which he felt secure. The arguments which had been put forward by Hookam and Blackley were essentially moral. Their plans had called for compulsory contributory insurance based on the assumption that it was every man's duty to save for his old age. Those who did not do so were 'paupers in spirit' long before they became chargeable to the Poor Law. Booth's argument was first sociological and economic then moral, and was concerned with collective rather than individual morality. In making this sort of argument Booth was again demonstrating that the study of poverty could be placed on a scientific basis, and moreover that there could be a very close link between this type of social research and the policies which might be derived from it.

To broaden its base a rural Poor Law Union was added to the two London Unions in Pauperism A Picture. This was the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, chosen presumably because his country house in Leicestershire fell within its boundary. This slim volume followed much the same pattern as the Poverty Series; pages of statistical tables were combined with descriptive passages and further enlivened by the recounting of many case histories. It differed from his work on poverty in that the second half was devoted to the arguments in favour of universal pensions. In the first four volumes of Life and Labour, the Poverty Series, there

had been hardly five pages of policy recommendations. In contrast, the foundation for the recommendations put for pensions was very carefully laid. After presenting the data gathered in London and Leicestershire, Booth again explained the various problems with the Poor Law Records and how these difficulties might affect their statistical interpretation. The causes of pauperism were then examined in detail in an attempt to categorise those who should and those who should not be entitled to state assistance. Criminals and drunkards should not be granted pensions, according to Booth, and the elderly and infirm should. On 'questions of employment' he could not fix a clear answer and restricted his discussion to old age. From his critics Booth had taken up thirteen possible objections to universal pensions, and each of these was given a fair statement and then answered with a mixture of evidence and logic. If there is any uncertainty in Booth's arguments it is in his attempts to reconcile what he admits is a 'socialistic' scheme with his own individualist beliefs. Convinced that the aged poor and the 'inevitable troubles of sickness, old age and death' (1892:51) should be made a public responsibility, he then tried to recast the argument into more individualist terms:

> I advocate it [the scheme for universal pensions] as bringing with it something of that security necessary to a higher standard of life, a security of position which will stimulate rather than weaken the play of individuality on which progress and prosperity depend (1892:77).

Despite this personal ambivalence the exposition is a very strong argument combining macroeconomic analysis of the

national cost of relief and the estimated costs of administering pensions, with microeconomic analyses of individual households to demonstrate the suitability of the five shilling pension. And when Pauperism a Picture was published in 1892 its critics did not attack the research or its analysis, but concentrated on the scheme for universal pensions.

Publishing Pauperism a Picture altered Booth's life in a way which he found both exciting and uncomfortable. By publishing an extended argument for universal pensions Booth removed himself from his aloof position as social investigator and plunged into public debate. The book provoked immediate attacks, especially from those who felt that pensions were yet another method for the encouragement of sloth and fecklessness. Octavia Hill and C.S. Loch of the Charity Organisation Society roundly denounced the pension scheme. The C.O.S. Review remarked that this was the 'most outrageous and absurd scheme yet promulgated' (9.1892), and also included the comments of the President of the Economic Section of the British Association, Sir Charles Fremantle, who termed Booth's proposals as being 'utopian ...no food for serious discussion', and then spent another 1400 words on the attack.

Hill and Loch represent one of the four 'clear lines of argument' identified by Collins (1965) concerning old age pensions in the period. The arguments were either moral or economic or both, but to each were gathered supporters

who tended to be politically opposed. The C.O.S. stood at one end of the continuum declaring that any public support for the aged poor would lead to greater pauperism and demoralisation. In the centre stood two similar groups, both calling for contributory pension schemes, and differing on whether or not the contributions should be compulsory. These two groups agreed in the belief that the working classes were capable of saving for their own old age if not particularly willing, and both believed that a state-secured savings institution would offer a suitable inducement. Blackley, for example, argued that compulsory deduction should be made from the wages of all men before they reached the age of twenty. The aim would be to put away in a Post Office account £15 which would then be invested by independent trustees and which would return to the investor 8 shillings weekly in illness and 4 shillings weekly at the age of seventy until death. It was to be the responsibility of employers to deduct and deposit the funds. The various contributory schemes (Blackley's was one of many) represented the moderate centre of the pension argument. On what was thought of as the radical wing stood Booth and others who called for universal, free pensions. These four lines of argument were much discussed public positions in what became in the 1890's a key issue of public debate. Pauperism A Picture was printed both as a book and as a 6d. pamphlet to meet the demand for evidence in this debate. In Booth's estimation, however, this book, while being useful, was insufficient to the task.

What he felt was now necessary was a complete portrait of the aged poor in the national context - a national system of pensions required a national portrait. One of the lessons that had been driven home in his earlier research, and discussed in Pauperism A Picture, was that no guidelines or requirements existed for the treatment of the aged poor by Poor Law Unions. Because of this, great differences existed between the various unions, and especially between the rural and urban unions. To explore these questions Booth mounted a survey of all 648 Poor Law Unions in England and Wales. A research team was given a room in the premises of the Statistical Society in Adelphi Terrace, on the Strand. And an official sanction was given the research by the President of the Local Government Board who mooted a survey of all unions to reflect their situations on 1 January 1892. The questionnaires, or 'Forms of schedule' as they were called, were sent to the Chairmen of each of the 648 Unions, of whom 285 replied. A further 360 replies were received from a canvass of clergy in each Union. To explore the position of the aged poor in the rural areas 262 villages were additionally surveyed, ten of which were examined in great detail as case studies. Booth combined these data with that available in the Local Government Board's Report on Poor Law Expenditure and the fresh returns of the 1891 Census. It was a concentrated research effort, for the growing public debate gave the investigation a sense of urgency. Upon completion the work

was published as _The Aged Poor in England and Wales_, and Booth remarked that 'the results it shows bear out my estimates rather closely' (1894:1).

In the light of the growing public concern a Royal Commission was appointed on the subject of the aged poor in January 1893. Their brief was to 'consider whether any alterations in the system of Poor Law relief are desirable, in the case of persons whose destitution is occasioned by incapacity for work resulting from old age, or whether assistance could otherwise be afforded in those cases'. Booth was appointed to the Commission which also included the rather curious presence of the Prince of Wales, as well as Lord Aberdare in the Chair, Lords Brassey and Playfair from the Lords, Joseph Chamberlain and Joseph Arch from the Commons, Charles Loch of the C.O.S., and a number of other philanthropists. The Commission, which began with a reasonable frame of reference, quickly became a battleground for the various political and ideological camps the participants represented. As the controversy increased the Prince of Wales quickly withdrew, lest he become embroiled in the fighting, to the embarrassment of the Crown. Lord Aberdare's health degenerated, supposedly due to the strain, and he also withdrew to die a short time later. Booth himself fell ill in this period and went abroad for two months to recuperate. The vast amounts of paper the Aberdare Commission generated were only overtaken by its tendentious wrangling. At one point Booth crossed to the other side of the table to give evidence based on his

research. Some of his fellow commissioners were antagonistic in their questioning and attempted to restrict discussions to the failings of the poor, while Booth tried to explain the impact of social change on the elderly:

Commissioner - To what causes do you attribute that large proportion of women [receiving out relief] as compared to men?

Booth - I suppose mainly to the fact that they are less financially responsible.

Commissioner - That they do not belong to friendly societies; that they do not take any other methods of providing for their old age in the same proportion?

Booth - They have not the same control of the purse. Then when we consider also the large proportion of outdoor to indoor paupers, where we have seen more than double are women, it seems to me that it tends to show that a very large number of them are decent respectable people...These old women are necessarily dependent, and I do not see that we have any right to apply a special meaning to the word independent, and translate independence of poor relief into independence without that restriction. My impression is that most of the women would feel more independent if they lived in their son's house with a small allowance from the parish, and still more with a pension which had no stigma to it... There is one thing I wish to add, to finish; that I do claim that the whole position of the old is unsatisfactory now, and I would say that old age fares hardly in our times ...Life runs more intensely than it did, and the old tend to be thrown out. Not only does work on the whole go faster, and require more perfect nerve, but it changes its character more frequently, and new men, young men, are needed to take hold of the new machines or new methods employed. The community gains by this, but the old suffer. They suffer beyond any measure of actual incapacity, for the fact that a man is old is often in itself enough to debar him from obtaining work.

Commissioner - That may be true of particular classes of work; but do you mean to say that it is generally true?

Booth - It is generally true of town conditions; I do not feel equally certain that it is true of country conditions.

Commissioner - But why should it be of town conditions? The general effect of recent changes has been to shorten the hours and also to increase the wages; why should that have an injurious effect upon the nerves of character of the

workmen?

Booth - The shortening of hours and the raising of wage, I believe, is economically satisfactory, mainly because it is connected with the intenser work. The evidence, as I have seen it, is that production is very little reduced ... The question in my mind is, whether a man over 65 can work alongside of younger men successfully. [Booth then went on to describe his proposed pension scheme in detail...]

Commissioner - The most startling part of your proposition, and one, I think, we all find most difficult to explain to ourselves, is, why the very large numbers of those who do not want 5s. a week should have 5s. a week pressed upon them.

Booth - I believe it to be necessary to take from this proposal the harmful economical effects which do, in my judgement, come from relief when it depends upon considerations of desert or necessity... It would be a very unreasonable proposal if it were not true, as I believe it is true, that very much larger classes than those who come upon the Poor Law would be greatly and soundly benefited by it... There is no reason to suppose that those who have reached 65 without any recourse to the Poor Law, would cease to be independent after receiving their pension, and it is sufficient to provide that a fall into pauperism later would entail the passing of their pension to the guardians in exchange for maintenance in the workhouse.

These excerpts represent only a fraction of the testimony Booth provided to the Commission as he read out pages and pages of Pauperism A Picture and verbally fenced with his questioners on subjects as diverse as the moral responsibilities which children owe their parents and the 'bridge' of charity between pauperism and self-sufficiency. Throughout the Commission Booth was careful to claim nothing which could not be statistically supported, or to offer conjecture on evidence if the questioning were purely hypothetical. When it was suggested that only the poor would apply for pensions, thus returning the stigma to its provision Booth denied it - 'I'm sure I should [claim a pension]; I believe that all ordinary people ... would

take the trouble to claim it' (quoted in Simey, 1961:166).

Throughout the period of the Commission Booth's team continued to gather information for the broad picture of poverty and old age in England and Wales. Based on the returns described above, which had been collected from the Poor Law Unions, _The Aged Poor in England and Wales_ was published. Probably because Booth was overloaded with work from the Commission, the Industry Series, and his business, _The Aged Poor_ received little polish or imaginative editing, and Booth (and others) thought it was 'very dull'. The book was a mass of statistics, but one which would prove very useful to those campaigning for pensions. The work made it clear that old age was a serious problem for the working class, among whom between 40 and 45 per cent. of those over the age of sixty-five were found to be living in poverty. An important summary point was that people were poor because they were old, but it was difficult to go beyond this in the analysis. The acceptance and treatment, and therefore the number of the aged poor reported by the Poor Law Unions varied enormously from place to place. This was as suspected by the researchers, since the treatment of the aged poor had no national legal requirement and was left to local custom and practice, but the result was that variance in the information could not be statistically interpreted. Booth also stated at the time that his membership of the Royal Commission restrained his desire to be more outspoken in _The Aged Poor_. He had hoped that the

Commission would put forward specific schemes at its conclusion. This it singularly failed to do. When the Royal Commission was wound up in 1895 no schemes were put forward at all, and Booth along with Chamberlain signed the Minority Report which called for pensions and which was said to be written by Sidney Webb (Cole, 1945:95). The Commission resolved nothing on the question of pensions, and had only served to aggravate and polarise positions further.

The publication of The Aged Poor signalled another fight for Booth outside the Royal Commission. C.S. Loch and other members of the C.O.S., particularly the Bosanquets, had for some time been disturbed by the arguments put forward by Booth in Life and Labour. Their concern was transformed into confrontation after a disagreement broke out between Loch and the Bosanquets on one side and Samuel Barnett the Warden of Toynbee Hall on the other. At this time Samuel and Henrietta Barnett were active in the central organisation of the C.O.S.. After spending more and more time with Booth, Barnett began to reject the moralistic and ameliorative line of the C.O.S. and to fully support Booth's call for universal old age pensions. In 1893 he published his views, attacking the C.O.S., and Loch and the Bosanquets replied in kind. By 1895 the Barnetts had left the central organisation of the C.O.S., Barnett writing that he left behind minds that were 'thin and narrow, timid and hard ... under the law and not under the spirit' (in H. Barnett, 1918:267).

These internecine battles began to touch Booth when the Bosanquets realised that 'the theoretical forces behind Barnett were the arguments of Charles Booth' (McBriar, 1987:65). Booth's findings in the poverty survey were also being used as ammunition by the socialists who were denouncing the C.O.S.; for the Bosanquets it became clear that Booth must be treated as a socialist and his findings disproved. They moved against Booth on two fronts: against the method and conclusions of the poverty survey, and against his call for universal pensions.

The Bosanquets had in the first years after the publication of Life and Labour used it extensively in their writing to support their views. Bernard Bosanquet used the results of the poverty survey in a pamphlet criticising the projects of General Booth and the Salvation Army. But as the socialists and Radical Liberals took up Booth's work, the Bosanquets had little choice but to reject it.

They first tackled Booth's proposals for pensions. In articles in the C.O.S. Review and the Economic Journal, they denied the argument Booth made in his book The Aged Poor, questioned the evidence presented, and challenged his methods and calculations. The arguments against Booth's proposals were many: inordinate cost (and that in the form of a transfer from the richer to the poorer classes); a weakening of the independence of workers; a diminution of family ties as children no longer needed to care for their parents; and the establishment of a sense of dependency on

the state. Booth rebutted these arguments, but without such pensions in effect all discussions were academic. This argument continued throughout the period of the Aberdare Royal Commission.

For the next two years after the Aberdare Commission Booth spent little time or effort on the question of pensions, devoting his time instead to the research, writing, and editing of the Industry Series, and to the initial preparations for the Religious Influences Series. Then, in 1898, Booth began to revive his work on old age pensions as the Industry Series was published. Writing to his wife in that year he describes spending a day visiting churches in the East End and then 'I ended curiously with an Old Age Pensions meeting to hear [George] Lansbury on the Social Democratic Federation view...I did not say a word at the meeting, only claiming acquaintance when it was over... I have also Vaughn Nash [later Private Secretary to Asquith] coming for Pensions. It is quite too complicated at present' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:125). Over this intervening period public debate continued, and another Committee was set up by the Salisbury government.

This last, which became known as 'Lord Rothschild's Committee', was formed by Rothschild in 1896 to attempt to find a resolution to the pensions question. Over 100 pension schemes were presented to it, resulting in the same paralysis which had affected the previous Aberdare Commission. Not long after the Rothschild Committee had declared all pension schemes to be impracticable New

Zealand brought in a Pensions Act in 1898. This enactment gave another spur to the campaign for Pensions and Booth set out to make a new effort which would lead to unexpected personal, and public, activity.

Marshalling again his statistical evidence, and bringing to it a stronger written argument, Booth published early in 1899 Old Age Pensions and the Aged Poor: a Proposal. In the Preface he wrote:

> In a previous volume, published in 1894, I brought together all the facts I was able to collect as to the condition of the of the Aged Poor in England and Wales, and then I undertook to deal later with proposals for their relief. I at that time awaited the publication of the report of the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Aberdare; and since that document was issued in 1895 have again waited for the report of the Committee presided over by Lord Rothschild, and appointed with the special aim of carrying the question to a more definite conclusion.
>
> The net result of both these reports is negative, in that they neither approve of any of the schemes submitted, nor suggest any others; but positive in so far as they both recognise the existence of a state of things which cries for remedy. (1899:iii)

In this pamphlet Booth would stop waiting for official action and put forward his scheme very clearly and reiterate his arguments in its support. The pamphlet became important ammunition in an expanded campaign for Pensions in which Booth participated.

Just before the publication of Old Age Pensions and the Aged Poor, in December, 1898, Booth spoke at a conference in Browning Hall, Walworth, London (Stead, 1910). The meeting had been organised by F.H. Stead and Frederick Rogers and was attended by representatives of various trades unions. During the meeting Booth outlined

his findings and his scheme for pensions, and when he finished the conference discussed several resolutions. All were in support of Booth's scheme; one sought to lower the age at receipt to sixty, the minutes reading that 'Charles Booth did not agree'. Most importantly, another resolution called for the formation of a 'provisional central committee' of a 'National Old Age Pensions Committee'. At the conclusion of the meeting these committees were formed as a sub-group of the National Committee of Organised Labour, of which Stead was the General Secretary. These committees moved in earnest and Booth, then aged fifty-nine, became part of a campaign of direct social and political action for the first time since his twenties in Liverpool.

Booth legitimised the pensions campaign for the National Committee of Organised Labour. He served as a sort of scientific talisman whose mastery of the factual and statistical forestalled any argument about the desperate condition of the aged poor. It was a curious alliance, the mix of moderate trades unionists and socialists on the National Committee and the ambivalent champion of laissez-faire. But whatever mixture of motives Booth held, it was his reputation which went before the National Committee's campaign and prepared the way. After reading the reviews of The Aged Poor in England and Wales Mary Booth wrote to Charles, 'The reviews are delicious, especially the "Daily News". What a curious, Colossal, Impassive Sphinx they think you are' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:122). Since

he was known as a purveyor of fact without political bias Booth's pronouncements on the need for pensions brought many people to the National Committee's campaign who otherwise would have assumed it to be too radical. To capitalise on Booth's participation a further six conferences were organised by the Old Age Pensions Committee from Browning Hall. These mass meetings were organised according to the regional divisions in organised labour: Northumberland and Durham; Yorkshire; Lancashire; the West of England and South Wales; Scotland; and the Midlands. With Frederick Rogers as the organising secretary, the trades unions in each region provided the funding and publicity work to ensure large turn-outs and extensive press coverage. The meeting in Newcastle on 18 January 1899 was followed by another in Leeds on 24 February; Booth wrote home that it was 'a very good meeting ... but not quite such smooth sailing as before, there being a strongish contingent of Young Socialists who regarded pensions for old people as fiddling work. However, the sense of the meeting was pulled together by Stead very cleverly' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:127).

In the files of the Old Age Pensions Committee is a handbill which was printed by the thousands in 1899 to launch the national campaign. It announces the intention of the National Committee of Organised Labour to achieve 'free state pensions for everyone of five shillings a week on reaching 65 years of age'. This endeavour, it reports, has

been 'appointed at the Seven Conferences of Mr. Charles Booth' (Rogers, 1909). Coming on the heels of the publication of Old Age Pensions and the Aged Poor: a Proposal, the campaign served to increase public agitation for pensions. This last publication was condensed by Booth into a penny pamphlet which he gave to the Committee. Titled Pensions for All in Old Age, thousands of it were printed and distributed from Browning Hall. In answer to the enlarged public interest a Select Committee in the Commons under Mr. Chaplin was set up to examine Booth's proposals in particular. The Select Committee concluded with a recommendation that pensions for the deserving poor should be paid through the Post Office, but no legislation was put forward to bring the recommendations into effect. At the end of their first year of organising the Committee issued a Manifesto (Browning Hall, 24.1.1900, collected into Rogers, 1909). It declared that 'The National Committee of Organised Labour advocate a scheme of legislation which... shall embody the main principles of Mr. Charles Booth. They hold that he has pointed out the sound and scientific methods by which any legislation that is to be successful must work'. With Booth acting as advisor and supporter, but not as a member of the Committee, the campaign grew apace. In an interim report on the preparations for the 1901 general election the Committee recorded that it had printed and distributed 200,000 'Appeal to the Elector' pamphlets and 500,000 handbills titled 'The Worn Out Workmen' this last

describing 'This principle [of universal pensions] which has behind it the high scientific authority of Mr. Charles Booth'.

From this time in 1901 Booth's role in the campaign was less active, most of his efforts now being taken up with completing the Religious Influences Series and winding up Life and Labour with a final volume of conclusions (the 'Star' volume). For the Committee, however, Booth still made regular public speeches. In a handbill issued at the end of the Boer War ('Why Not Old Age Pensions in 1903?') we read that 'The watchword for this decisive winter was given by Mr. CHARLES BOOTH, when Mr. Seddon told at Browning Hall of the success of Old Age Pensions in New Zealand: PENSIONS FIRST: REMISSION OF TAXES LATER!'. In reality, Booth's delivery had not been quite so forceful, but he had argued that the increased taxation for the support of the war effort might, in part, be reallocated to pensions.

Throughout the campaign, the proposal for pensions continued to have powerful enemies. In particular, C.S. Loch and Octavia Hill organised and agitated against it. Mary Booth in her Memoir records that the whole concept of a universal pension was 'terrible' to Octavia Hill and that Hill thought it equally so -

> that one in whose judgement she confided, and of whose honesty she was certain, should come forward to destroy - as she feared would be the case - the basis of her life's work; to turn the thoughts of the poor ...back into the pestilential habit of holding out a beggar's hand for what she could only look upon as dole ... She opposed him

[Booth] with all her force and with all her own originality ... (1918:149).

From 1901 the C.O.S. under Loch organised opinion against Booth's proposal, but the political centre was moving toward the working class and the pension campaign continued to gain strength.

As the strength of the Pensions Movement grew the Bosanquets' attack on Booth also widened. In 1902 Helen Bosanquet published a criticism of Booth's work on poverty in Life and Labour. Though thirteen years had passed since its publication, she now argued that Booth's (and Seebohm Rowntree's) findings had been improperly generalised far beyond London (and York), while these cities were, in fact, special cases. Booth's poverty line, she said, was based on 'opinions only' - that of the School Board Visitors. Since Booth had no direct evidence of the incomes she doubted that any of his conclusions held water. Much of this attack was aimed not at Booth but at the younger, more radical 'New Liberals' such as J.A. Hobson and L.T. Hobhouse. Both of these men, and particularly Hobson, had used Booth's results to good effect, arguing that out-relief should be raised to 20 shillings per week, just above Booth's poverty line, and in support of universal pensions which they felt, as Booth did, should be controlled by the recipient (McBriar, 1987:77). The use of Booth's work by Hobson and Hobhouse is indicative of the importance of the poverty survey to the political left, and why it subsequently was attacked by the political right. McBriar explains that:

...the young Fabians were alert to a number of particular social causes [of poverty], though they lacked statistical and other evidence to assess their relative importance. The same was true of the SDF at that time.

As a result, the Socialists were dependent on the work of social investigators - of Charles Booth above all. Booth's conclusions about the causes of poverty were taken by Socialists to mean that scientific investigation had tipped the balance decisively in favour of social causes of poverty being more important than individual failings. (1987:90)

In 1902 the first bill for universal pensions was put up in the Commons. It fell, but from this time the annual reports of the Old Age Pensions Committee begin to be more and more taken up by accounts of parliamentary action and less and less concerned with mass meetings. Keir Hardie wrote the annual report on the legislative action in the Commons, which included petitions to and interviews with Asquith. It took five more years to achieve a pensions bill, which came after the election of a Liberal government in 1906. In the debates accompanying the second and third reading of the bill Booth's name appears again and again as a talisman of scientific respectability. In the report of the speech by F. Maddison, M.P. in Hansard for 27 June 1908 he states:

There was not a man in England who was entitled to more credit for making Old Age Pensions possible than Mr. Charles Booth. Mr. Booth was a Conservative in politics, and a cautious man belonging to the great trading class, who threw himself into this movement, and spent money and time and health in social research of the most disinterested kind, and, therefore, when they were on the eve of seeing a legislative effort successfully launched, they ought not to forget in this connection Mr. Charles Booth.

Booth stood for a number of principles...for non-contribution, that the pension should apply to men and women, and that it should be administered apart from the Poor Law, and those principles are in this Bill.

In the debate in the Lords it was the Archbishop of Canterbury who used his speech to pay tribute to Booth's work.

In Maddison's speech in the Commons there are remarks that Booth, in addition to other contributions, spent money in social research. This is well known, but a fact which has been omitted from previous biographies is that Booth also provided significant financial support to the Committee for Old Age Pensions and through it to the National Committee of Organised Labour. Throughout the ten year existence of the campaign for Old Age Pensions Booth contributed at least twenty per cent. and often up to fifty per cent. of the annual budget of the Committee for Old Age Pensions. In 1902, for example, he subscribed £150 of the £384 total budget. In many years Booth contributed just under half the budget and Edward and George Cadbury matched his contributions, smaller individual donations and the support of Trades Unions making up the remainder. This continuing and sizable financial support helped make it a viable campaigning organisation.

When the Old Age Pensions Bill became law in 1908 it carried some but not all of Booth's original proposals. The final legislation was arrived at through some compromise which watered down and clouded the simplicity of Booth's scheme. The Bill provided that pensions be paid to persons over the age of seventy who fulfilled certain residency requirements and whose incomes fell below a certain level.

Those who had £21 or less per year were entitled to 5s. a week; permitted incomes were then graded up to a weekly pension of 1s. per week for those with £31 10s. income per year. The elderly might be disqualified for a number of reasons: those who had been in receipt of poor relief in the preceding year; those who had been detained in an asylum; those who had been imprisoned; and other persons who were unable to show that they had tried to look after themselves in the past. The first payments were to begin on 1 January 1909 and a flurry of claims and appeals continued through the Autumn of 1908 and into the new year. The first three months of the scheme brought 10,000 appeals as the new pensions clerks attempted to reconcile and interpret the various problems relating to low and irregular incomes so common to the aged poor. By 1912 642,524 pensions were being paid at a cost of £7.9 million (far below Booth's original estimates for a universal scheme) and the official rate of pauperism among the over 70's had declined by 74.8 per cent.

As it was enacted the pension scheme was tentative and rather experimental. Lloyd George had said in the debates that the Liberals 'put it [the Pensions Bill] forward as an incomplete one; we say that it is a beginning, and only a beginning. We do not say that it deals with all the problem of unmerited destitution in this country. We do not even contend that it deals with the worst part of that problem' (Debates, Vol. 190, Col. 585). Booth had little sympathy for these protestations, and he gave the Liberals no credit

for bringing in the Bill. Restricting the pensions to those whose resources had fallen below a certain level diminished the provision in Booth's opinion. Curiously it was the nine year old Labour Party, at that time the smallest party in Parliament with only twenty-nine members, that took the opportunity to mark Booth's role in the provision of Pensions after the Bill was passed. In November 1909 they presented him with an illuminated address in the House of Commons. To be honoured in this way must have encouraged Booth at a time when he probably needed it, for throughout the parliamentary campaign for Pensions he was involved in a hard-fought and discouraging Commission to examine the Poor Law. In early 1909 the Commission issued its now famous Majority and Minority reports. By the time of its conclusion Booth was a spent force, his health was broken, and he signed neither report. The world was changing as Booth entered his own old age, and the social movements he helped to start now left him to the rear.

The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws

Balfour, the Conservative Prime Minister whose government ended in 1905, is remembered as a harried man trying to hold his party together as the political tide swept away from it. But on the very day on which his government resigned he hurried to appoint a Royal Commission on the Poor Law, to address a system of relief which he considered 'antiquated and utterly worn out' (quoted in Bruce, 1961:200). This Royal Commission and the

Majority and Minority Reports it generated in 1909 are often regarded by modern writers as an important turning point in British social policy, though this assessment was not true at the time. Charles Booth's membership of this Commission was his last major act of public service, and in many ways the least satisfactory.

Beatrice Webb credited herself with putting Booth's name to Balfour for appointment to the Commission, but John Sandars had also written to Balfour saying that he was sure Balfour would want Booth 'from the public point of view' (quoted in McBriar, 1987:189). Booth had already been made a Privy Councillor the year before, and had served on the Aberdare Commission as well as Chamberlain's tariff Commission in 1903-1904. Helen Bosanquet also served on the Commission and placed Booth squarely in the opposite camp to her own, the camp of 'convinced socialists' (Bosanquet, 1912:276).

The Commission was appointed in late November, 1905. In the Spring and Summer of 1905 Booth had been in retirement from most work after a serious breakdown in his health. In the Autumn his health improved and he began to throw himself back into his work with what was perhaps more self-neglect than was appropriate for a man of sixty-five. The Commission, however, began well and Booth was pivotal in altering its agenda to include the collection and presentation of statistical evidence. In preparatory meetings Booth discussed with Beveridge the plan for further work, but his most important collaborator was

Beatrice Webb. On the second of December she records in her diary: 'A pleasant visit to Gracedieu [Booth's home] colloguing in the old way with Charles Booth as to the proper course of the Poor Law Enquiry' (McKenzie, 1984:14). Beatrice had ascertained from J.S. Davy, the assistant secretary of the Local Government Board (L.G.B.), that the L.G.B. officials intended to control the 'purpose and procedure' of the Commission. She continued:

Having settled the conclusions to which we are to be led, the L.G.B. officials (on and off the Commission) have predetermined the procedure. We are to be 'spoon-fed' by evidence carefully selected and prepared; they were to draft the circular to the boards of guardians, they were to select the inspectors who were to give evidence, they were virtually to select the guardians to be called in support of this evidence. Assistant commissioners were to be appointed who were to collect evidence illustrative of these theories. And above all, we were to be given opinions and not facts. Charles Booth and I consulted what line we should take (MacKenzie, 1984:15).

At the first meeting of the Commission the chair, Lord Hamilton, proposed exactly the plan as outlined by the London Government Board, and asked that it be ratified as the course for the proceedings, no real agenda being offered from the chair. Four senior government officials had been appointed and they, having previously investigated the topic at departmental level, made it clear that they wanted little or no inquiry at all. From its first meeting the Commission was a 'conflict of wills'. Together Booth and Webb stopped the railroading of the Commission. Beatrice recorded that 'Charles Booth and I want a real investigation of English administration as well as an examination into pauperism, though Charles Booth is more

concerned with the question of right treatment than of prevention by a better regulated life'. In reality what Beatrice Webb and Booth wanted somewhat different things. Booth wanted a proper investigation of poverty, and argued from the beginning that it should not be made with the assumption that 'the present poor law arrangements required no important change - only a better enforcing and a little patching' (Booth to B. Webb, 12 July 1906, Local Government Collection, Passfield Papers, Vol. 286). He called for a very broadly based study which took in charity, regional differences, the causes of distress and pauperism, an examination of theories of state action, even a test of different methods in similar poor law unions. He believed that the preparation of statistical tables and sketch and coloured maps from these studies would greatly enhance the ability of the Commission to make clear-cut decisions.

Beatrice Webb supported Booth in this plan, but with some qualifications. Her immediate concern was to break up the Commission into sub-committees, for two reasons: to break the link between the C.O.S. representatives and the government officials on the Commission, and to provide an opportunity for Webb's own outside experts to load these sub-committees with evidence more to her choosing. In the end Webb and the C.O.S. members, particularly Helen Bosanquet, fought over the procedures which would guide the Commission. Webb lost, her plan to set up a statistical committee with a staff of outside statisticians being

defeated. Booth, however, won by compromise, a statistical committee was set up composed of Commission members, and Booth's claim on the chair to the committee was clear.

In one sense Booth then circumvented the wishes of the Commission by bringing to the statistical work, at his own expense, his own staff of researchers headed by Ernest Aves (B. Webb to Mary Playne, [?29 July, 1906], Passfield Papers, BLPES). This large and competent staff notwithstanding, the majority of the Commission actually had little use for Booth's statistics; their minds were made up. For the Bosanquets and the C.O.S. on one side and the Webbs on the other, the Commission was a battlefield where their opposing philosophies would be contested. Booth took a characteristic stand based on his own personal reading of the research, one he described as 'a middle position between what I believe to be the opposing schools of thought on poor law questions' (Booth, 'Notes for a New Poor Law', Local Government Collection, Passfield Papers, Vol. 286). Many of his own proposals rested on the assumption that the government would soon introduce old age pensions for those over seventy, but this, for many of the C.O.S. members, was not a foregone conclusion. His middle position served neither of the powerful camps, it was therefore politely recognised, and then ignored.

But what was the nature of Booth's stand on Poor Law reform? As McBriar (1973) has explained, his middle position has made possible his being claimed (and rejected) by both ends of the political continuum. In the same way

that Booth proposed that pensions should be paid universally to anyone over sixty-five, his theme for poor relief was even-handed support without stigma for those in certain categories of need, qualified by a desire to treat the criminal and irresponsible differently. Nor would he accept extensions to the system of relief beyond those he had always backed: pensions, education, and special provision for the sick or destitute. His views were in curious contrast to those of the Webbs'. His plans were a sort of 'limited socialism' based within a political and philosophical individualism. Theirs were more concerned with individual morality, but were based upon a broadly socialist ideal. Beatrice Webb believed that unconditional help was 'under the present condition of human will, sheer madness'. She believed detention colonies would serve for the idle, and compulsory retraining should be required of those not placed in jobs by the new Labour Exchanges. Beveridge recorded in a letter his colleague Masterman's horror at Beatrice Webb's 'zeal for disciplining people', remarking that he 'prayed that he might never fall into her hands as an unemployed' (quoted in Bruce, 1961:207). Moralist or not, the Webbs pursued a centralist vision and Booth an atomistic one.

In its detail Booth's proposal was basically a modification of the existing Poor Law with the addition of Old Age Pensions. The modifications took several forms; one of the first proposed was that the language of the Poor Law

be altered so that the meaning of relief might be altered. 'The name "workhouse" has long been an absurdity', he wrote, and 'for "relief" should be substituted "treatment", for "indoor relief" "institutional treatment" ... for "destitution" and "able-bodied" new definitions are needed and for others such as ... "eligibility" some entire change of expression seems needed to carry the new ideas.' (Passfield Papers, Vol. 286). These changes in terminology do seem to have been aimed at making changes in poor law policy. Booth supported most of the humanitarian changes to the law that had already occurred, and favoured others such as the total exclusion of children from workhouses. But he could not bring himself to support Webb's call for a public health system that would be free to the poor. His view was based squarely on the contemporary reality: the tripartite control of relief by Public Health, the Poor Law, and Charity already existed and in his view should simply be strengthened and improved.

Interpretation of Booth's position has been confounded by another statement of his that the reform of the Poor Law should return to the 'principles of 1834', a sentiment often read as being reactionary. But as McBriar has pointed out, Booth was actually calling for two out of the four basic 'principles of 1834' (1973:728). Booth did intend, according to the first principle, that there should be a national system of relief with central policy guidance to ensure uniformity. And by a second principle, he believed that relief administration should be placed in the hands of

persons especially elected to the task at the local level. The other two basic priciples of 1834 were ones which Booth had much more difficulty with: the application of 'less eligibility', and the requirement of the workhouse for the able-bodied poor.

Over the course of the Commission Booth changed his views on these principles. In the beginning he was in favour of abolishing out relief, believing that pensions, special care for children, and charity would take up the slack. Webb was diametrically opposed to Booth on this issue, calling for the expansion of government assistance. But Booth's position changed as his statistical committee brought in more and more evidence that about half of outdoor relief went to the elderly poor, and that it was preferred by many of the democratically elected administrators, particularly in Scotland and Wales. In time Booth was admitting that his idea of the abolition of out relief was unlikely ever to be taken up.

The second principle of the 1834 Poor Law concerned the use of the workhouse for the able-bodied poor. Booth supported institutional treatment, but without the harshness of the workhouse. He thought there should be a series of institutions, some with more internal discipline than others, and all providing 'the greatest possible variety of employment' which would be 'the means of training the individual and of fitting him for a return to self-supporting life' (Booth, Memorandum A, RCPL). But

beyond a description of this intention in a memorandum to the Commission Booth did not press the matter further.

In any event, Booth was not able to carry his views forward on the Commission. He took over the new sub-committee appointed to make a wide investigation and collection of statistical evidence, but found himself increasingly alienated by the intrigues that whispered through the Commission. Mary Booth read all of the Commission's papers, as Sidney Webb did as well, and she records in her diary that in the cast of characters she found: 'Mr. Wakefield futile; Mr. Loch obstructive; not enough of Octavia Hill; Beatrice wordy and pretentious; an unseemly row between Beveridge and Clarke' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:174). Sidney Webb used Beatrice's Commission papers to leak information to their own campaign for reform. This revived Booth's distrust of him, and also led to an embarrassing denunciation of this leak of information written by Lord Hamilton and published in the Times.

Still the investigation ploughed ahead, Beatrice analysing the documents of the L.G.B. and others, and Booth compiling and analysing statistical information. This was a natural activity for him but in pursuing it he lapsed into the habits of the Inquiry. On several occasions he was criticised for examining witnesses minutely for hours at a time, 'as if the Inquiry was Mr. Booth's and the date was somewhere in the nineties' (Norman-Butler, 1972:175). Age and infirmity were taking their toll as well; Beatrice Webb

recorded in her diary in early 1906 that 'Booth is as delightful as ever, but he is losing his intellectual grip and persistency of purpose' (MacKenzie, 1984:24).

In early 1907 the Commission set off on a fact-finding tour of the country, collecting evidence in all the major cities. The tour became 'a running battle' (Norman-Butler, 1972:170). Booth wrote to Mary from Scotland in June saying that, 'At Dundee there was a devil of a long day but the work went well. Loch was as usual in the blocking position. Stutchbury is an irrepressible person and will fight viciously. Mrs. Bosanquet always supports Loch. Beatrice is at the other end' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1972:173).

A few months later, while walking in the Alps on holiday, Booth suffered what was probably a mild heart attack; he recuperated rapidly but never to his previous vitality. Further illnesses required long periods away from the Commission's meetings. Another telling episode is recorded in Beatrice Webb's diary for January 1908:

> A few days before Christmas he [Booth] circulated another volume of his statistics and another edition of his scheme for a new ad hoc authority. Both statistics and scheme were wholly ignored by the chairman. When we all met to discuss the chairman's memorandum and Charlie presented himself for the first time for six months, no mention was made of his contributions. He sat melancholy by the fire and quietly remarked that he seemed 'in a minority of one'.

Early in January 1908 Booth's doctor insisted that he resign from the Commission. Octavia Hill wrote at the time in a letter that 'Dear Mr. Booth has resigned his place on the Commission. There was great sympathy and warmth of feeling shown, and we all signed a letter to him' (Maurice,

1913:570). It must have been a rare moment of agreement for, as Beatrice recorded 'The Commission's atmosphere is getting very hot, and it will be hotter before we are done' (Webb, 1948:322).

A year after his resignation the Commission ended with the issuing of the now well-known Majority and Minority Reports. He would have signed neither Reports, he was again the man in the middle; to his mind the Majority Report was 'poor stuff', and the Minority Report too radical. The Minority Report was the first rough blueprint for the establishment of the Welfare State, and this vision of the future Booth's individualist philosophy could not countenance.

After the publication of the Reports, the Webbs organised a campaign in support of the proposals in the Minority Report. It was hoped by the Webbs that the existence of the Minority Report, with its fresh break from the past and its radical proposals, was hoped by the Webbs to be an impetus to the uptake of these ideas. The campaign did a great deal to keep those proposals and their supporting arguments before the public, and the Minority Report ultimately sold 500 more copies than the Majority Report. The campaign failed, however, in its aim to have the policies of the Minority Report made into law. Mowat states that the campaign's primary achievement was 'to alienate the government, bore the country, and postpone reform' (1961:163). Provoked by this campaign, Booth

published three papers in 1910 and 1911. These set out in detail his belief that broad relief as called for in the Minority Report was injurious to individual effort and improvement, and that compulsion was necessary for 'those whose unrestrained lives cause injury to others as well as themselves' (1910:79). Apart from the elderly and the sick, financial support by central government was strictly ruled out. The answer, he believed, was still in industrial organisation, thrift and charity. These arguments were restatements of the same ideas that some had condemned as radically socialist in the 1880's, and it is an indication of the rapidity of social change in this period that by 1912 they were central to the Conservative Party's policies and considered by a significant part of the population to be reactionary. In this context Booth's contribution to the plans for the Poor Law was hardly significant. The small changes he proposed would have made the Poor Law more efficient and humane, but not changed its basic tenets.

An interesting aside on the Poor Law Commission is the light it throws on Booth's relations with the socialists. Booth had a reputation for socialist leanings due to his writing in _Life and Labour_ of his desire for 'Socialism in the arms of Individualism', and for his links with socialists in the campaign for old age pensions. But he was certainly no socialist. He dismissed socialist plans to reorganise the economy as utopian, but he did see the socialists as achieving two important functions (McBriar, 1973). The first function was to be the voice of the poor

against bad conditions. Booth had cordial ties with the S.D.F. and the Marxists, and tended to be more sympathetic when calls for reform came from these working class activists than when similar calls came from the middle and upper class Fabians. In the course of the Poor Law Commission the S.D.F. came out against the abolition of the Poor Law Guardians and Booth wrote to Mary Booth 'I send two cuttings indicating the attitude of the real Socialists towards Webbs' methods' (21.11.1909; Booth Papers). The second function Booth assigned to the socialists was to develop and offer proposals for policy change which increased state intervention. As someone who supported some intervention, Booth found the contributions of the socialists to be valuable. Though while the programmes proposed by the socialists might have been ahead of their time, Booth's ideas were more and more clearly seen to be lodged in the 1890's. In another area of his policy work, however, Booth's ideas may, even today, be thought of as current, those being his ideas to do with transport planning.

Booth and 'Locomotion'

Booth's research and writing on public transport would seem to have less to do with social policy and tell us more about his personal interests. But for Booth public transport was closely linked into potential policy responses to the question of urban poverty. For Booth, government-subsidised, inexpensive public tranport was one

way out of the slums of London. His interest in transport also highlights his originality of approach in studying an entire city from several angles. Transport had always been important in London but, as the metropolis grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, it became a critical area of change and growth.

In the research for the Industry Series Booth was one of the first to document the modern expansion of urban transport. Questionnaire responses demonstrated that large numbers of workers were travelling considerable distances from home to work. These large numbers, coupled with the increasing modes of transport available (underground and overground trains, buses, and trams), led Booth to propose that further improvements to the transport network might be the most efficient means of addressing the eternal London housing problem. At a meeting organised at Browning Hall to discuss the housing problem, he asked if 'this permanently useful and healthy force could not be successfully taken advantage of for the solution of the housing difficulties now experienced in London' (quoted in Simey, 1960:169). In Booth's view a governmental attempt to improve housing in central London was probably too costly and excessively complex, and in any event it was an affront to his individualist beliefs. He believed that 'Any direct attack on the insufficiency, badness or dearness of the accommodation available for the people is bound to fail' (1960:170). If direct control of housing was ideologically

unacceptable, the 'limited socialism' of a centralised and controlled transport system was not. To aid the spread of the population he proposed that a Joint Transport Board be set up. This Board would 'attempt to reconcile, and if necessary to override sectional interests of whatever kind for the benefit of the whole community'. The capital expenditure to build the transport network would have to be borne by local authorities. It is indicative of Booth's middle-ground position that he thought of building railways as the business of government while building houses was not.

After the conference at Browning Hall in 1901, a second meeting empowered a committee to explore Booth's proposals. With Booth in the chair, George Duckworth was assigned to make a survey of the current state of London transport. A very large map, eight-foot square, was erected to display the transport network graphically. 'Tram routes were shown by ribbons of various colours, railways by lengths of string, electric railways by silk cords, stations by black-headed pins, and the main centres of traffic by flag indicators' (Simey, 1960:170). Booth, however, made no attempt to show the routes of the horse-drawn omnibuses for he believed they would soon vanish from the scene. He noted that 'they certainly have their uses, but that they should up to now form the principal method of transit on so many of our main routes is evidence of how far London has fallen behind in the adoption of methods which other cities have long regarded as essential' (Booth,

1901:179). It is curious that Booth did not see a role for motor-driven buses, for he was fascinated with automobiles and owned several from the 1890's when they were still very rare.

These proposals and the research were pulled together and published as a pamphlet in 1901: 'Improved Means of Locomotion as a first step towards the Cure of Housing Difficulties of London'. This pamphlet was written with the help of Duckworth and the Booth's young cousin, Theodore Llewelyn-Davies. A letter from Mary Booth to her daughter in February 1901 depicts 'your Father reading us his Paper on the "Improvement to Locomotion" for our, and principally for Theodore's criticism, he and Theodore working away at it together afterwards with excellent results' (quoted in Norman-Butler, 1971:129). This work had a significant impact on policy, particularly that of the London County Council. Stead wrote in the 'Review of Reviews' that:

> Five weeks before the last County Council elections he [Booth] announced what he considered the first step in housing reform - a much more drastic step than either party had seriously proposed - won for it the support of both parties, and secured the written adhesion of exactly one half the new Council (4.1903, quoted in Simey, 1960:171).

This pamphlet was followed by a strong reiteration of the argument in the final 'Star' volume of Life and Labour. In this discussion he expanded the possibilities of the transport network calling for:

> bolder engineering expedients on the periphery of London, such as Tube railways, sub-surface tramways or special monorail passenger lines overhead capable of covering forty miles in twenty minutes. Without doubt the arrangement and use of the streets will tend to be further specialised.

Street traffic may be regulated or new avenues made for the sake of serving motor cars...in recent years the increase of the outside population has disguised the facts of growth but it will not be long before a "Greater London" will have to be reckoned with for administration purposes. (Booth, 1901)

Also in 1903 a Royal Commission on the Means of Locomotion and Transport in London was set up, in part due to the influence of Booth's work. Booth gave evidence calling for a permanent transport authority for London. The Royal Commission reported in 1905 with recommendations much the same as those originally argued by Booth. But Booth did not begin to organise a campaign to achieve these recommendations as he had done in the period after the first research into the condition of the aged poor. Illness and the pressure of other commitments prevented his participation, as the Simeys explained, 'the campaign gradually lost its impetus. The Royal Commission duly reported in 1905 on lines similar to those indicated by Booth, but their recommendations were not implemented in his lifetime, and immediate results were meagre' (1960:171).

After the publication of the last volume of Life and Labour Booth was called on to join in other commissions and groups. Two of these were especially time-consuming, the departmental committee to study Post Office Wages, and his appointment to the Tariff Commission by Joseph Chamberlain in 1904. This last was an especially controversial topic. The Tariff Reform League had been formed by Chamberlain in 1903, its aim was to increase colonial trade and protect

certain British industries. Booth supported Chamberlain in part due to a personal loyalty and in part because he believed a general rather than specific tariff to be more efficient - with this idea he felt he might convince Chamberlain. The lobbying was intense; Norman-Butler (1972:159) records a dinner-party given by the Hobhouses to enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, and Winston Churchill to win Booth over to the side of free trade. This they failed to do. The overall result of this infighting was a disaster for the Conservative Party when, in 1905, a showdown came between the two camps. The party split over the issue and in the January 1906 general election the Liberals gave the Tories a crushing defeat. When the Liberals took power they increased the speed of reform, measures to which Booth had contributed both as a social scientist and a social reformer.

Conclusion

In the process of reform at the turn of the century, both those actors concerned first with social action and those who concentrated on research were highly productive, those in the government alone generating an 'avalanche of blue books and official reports' between 1900 and 1914 (Abrams, 1968:137). This avalanche was due, in part, to the orginal example of Booth's Poverty Study, in which the study of poverty was placed on a scientific basis, and the nature of large-scale social research organisation was demonstrated.

The link between this type of research and its use in social policy was inescapable. The Poverty Study had been designed and carried out to address a vexing social and political problem and, while its answers to that problem were not complete, it did alter the form which a response to such social problems might take. Others, both inside and outside of government, took up these methods and began to produce work which would join this avalanche. On several fronts the combination of research and reform became a significant tool in constructing social and political change in the early twentieth century, in North America as well as in Europe. The several works that Booth published and then used as campaigning materials in the fight for universal old age pensions are examples of this. The same is true of his demonstration of the importance of studying a city from several angles - its social conditions, its economic and industrial system, its religious and voluntary organisation, even its forms of 'locomotion'. This approach was taken up by many reformers and one of the most important new tools in American progressive politics was the community study, conducted according to the template which Booth used to study London. It is interesting that when Booth attempted to step to the side of social policy and reform when he moved back to London in 1875 and to concentrate on the development and exploration of 'scientific' questions, he was rapidly dragged back into the political arena. What is important is that his role had changed - in comparison to the campaigner of his youth, he

was now more of a scientific social commentator. His new reputation and role rested upon those very attributes which form the themes of this thesis: the scientific approach to poverty, the originality of studying London in the round, and, particularly, the development of the organisational tools for the practice of social research. It is the nature of these new tools, in their evolution as social research methods developed and used by Booth, which are considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight - Booth's Research Methods

Booth's idea to confront the 'Poverty Question' systematically was not translated directly into the Poverty Study. To do so would have been out of character and precipitous. In Booth's estimation the Poverty Study was like a large scale business venture, and required the same amount of preparatory data collection, analysis, and planning to shape its ultimate form. In the same way that Booth had laboriously catalogued all shipping in the Portuguese ports before instituting a service there, he now turned to available statistics to get a broad picture of his proposed area of study. He was, according to Mary Booth, 'still more uncertain as to whether the facts on which all must depend had been accurately ascertained', (1918:16). Booth began to concentrate on the need to discover 'these all-important but elusive facts' (1918:16). He went first to the Census.

From the 1881 Census returns he hoped to determine the relative distribution of the population into various occupational categories. This was not an especially novel exercise, for the Census already collected and categorised employment figures. As discussed above, what was different was Booth's inferential aim of an exact baseline from which discussion of, and policy for, poverty could begin. It was an important pilot study, establishing procedures, bringing Jesse Argyll into full-time social research, and making contacts in government and the Royal Statistical Society.

The practical value of the Census study was, however, slight.

Neither the results nor the reception of his work on the Census pleased Booth. Unable to find what he considered trustworthy data in the public domain, he began to plan his own data collection. The form of the Poverty Study was now taking shape in conversations with Beatrice Potter, Alfred Cripps, Jesse Argyll, and Mary Booth among others. About this time it began to take on its own name, being referred to in correspondence as 'the Inquiry'. By March 1886 Booth had developed an outline plan and had constituted, as noted above, a steering committee, a 'Board of Statistical Research' as it was called in Beatrice Potter's diary. It is not clear who was to make up the 'Board'; Alfred Cripps, Beatrice Potter, Maurice Paul, Benjamin Jones (Secretary of the Working Men's Cooperative Society), a person named Radley who was secretary to a trade society (unspecified in B. Potter's diary) - are known to have attended an inaugural meeting. Canon Barnett may also have been invited, but it appears that while many were called few chose to attend. In any event the 'Board of Statistical Research' soon faded away, leaving those who were to be Inquiry researchers (Jesse Argyll, Beatrice Potter) to soldier on under Booth's direction, though at this point in time none of these were fully occupied with the Inquiry.

The inaugural meeting of the 'Board' was held on 17 April 1886. The next day Beatrice Potter lunched with Canon Barnett, who had not attended. In her diary she records

that Barnett 'threw cold water on CB's scheme ...said it was impossible to get the information required and was evidently sceptical of the value of the facts when there' (Passfield). Undeterred, Booth continued to plan the Inquiry. A sheet of foolscap survives on which Booth has written in pencil:

> General aim. To connect poverty and wellbeing with conditions of employment. Incidentally, to describe the industrial peculiarities of London (and of modern towns generally) both as to character of work, character of workers, and of the influences which act upon both.

An extensive research outline followed this opening statement. The Simeys believe that this is 'the actual note prepared for consideration by the 'Board', (Simey, 1960:79). What it makes clear is the logical sequence from the attempt to link poverty and employment in the Census to the collection of reliable data to achieve the same end. As a research question or working hypothesis it is remarkable for its clarity and ambition. The outline which follows this research statement is notable for the detail it includes and, also, for what it omits. For an inquiry that, in the first instance, concentrated on poverty and employment, the outline is surprisingly like that of a broad economic analysis. Major headings included government regulation, labour organisation, production cost, specialisation, firm size, market elasticity, and distribution. From this outline there is little indication that the subsequent study will look so closely into the lives of the people of the East End. On the other hand this

is not the plan of research, but the analytical framework which was to receive the data collected.

The method that would complete this plan was being formed through the Spring of 1886. According to the Simeys (1960:80) Booth had received a suggestion from Joseph Chamberlain, via Beatrice Potter, recommending the School Board Visitors and their records as a source of data for the Inquiry. This was a welcome suggestion for Booth had, by February 1886, examined and rejected the Census, the Poor Law Unions, charitable societies, and the clergy. Unfortunately any notes made by Booth at this time do not survive, but glimpses of the growing Inquiry appear in Beatrice Potter's letters and diary. In March 1886, she writes to Mary Booth, returning 'the papers sent to me by Charlie'. These papers presumably included outline plans for the 'Board' for she continues:

> I should almost divide instructions for the Board, describing in detail the methods and aims of the Inquiry, from a general description of the work which would serve as a credential for inquirers, to give employers and other authorities as an outline of the undertaking.

She, as others were, felt somewhat overwhelmed by what Booth proposed to do -

> Of course it is a huge business, but if one or two districts or trades could be thoroughly worked out, I think the results would be sufficiently valuable... In any case even if the end be not arrived at, the work will be interesting and educating, and give the workers some idea of the scope and direction of an inquiry which might be undertaken by a more powerful body or even by the government. (Mackenzie, 1983:55)

A few days later she wrote again to Mary Booth. Now it is clear that the School Board Visitors have been chosen:

I think I shall have some time in London and should be glad to undertake my own school board district and the London and St Kath. Docks with the Royal Albert further down [? to run under the same Cd.] That will be in Tower Hamlets? at least St. Kath Docks not the Royal Albert. It would certainly be an advantage to have a short resume of the objects of the work without specifying details of clarification?...

My love to Charlie. I suppose when the scheme is sanctioned by the Board we shall have it in typewriting. (Mackenzie, 1983:56)

The 'Board' was ineffectual and Booth pushed on with no scheme in 'typewriting'. And while Potter continued to discuss the nature and plan of the research, Booth was anxious to begin and was cultivating those who could be helpful. On 6 May Beatrice Potter records in her diary - 'Met at Charles Booth's Office Mr. Loch, secretary of the C.O.S. Enthusiast for accurate knowledge of the conditions of the poor. Evidently, from his account, there are many who would like to devote themselves to investigation.' (Mackenzie, 1982:166) Another impetus behind moving to his own data collection was Booth's involvement, through the Winter of 1885-86, in the Mansion House inquiry 'into the causes of permanent distress in London'.

The Mansion House Report on Distress

Following the riots by the poor and unemployed in Trafalgar Square and along Pall Mall in early February 1886 two immediate responses grew up, with the sponsorship of the City of London. The first was the Mansion House Fund for the relief of the distressed. The second was also based at Mansion House, the seat of government for the City of London, and came in the form of a request from the Lord

Mayor to the Statistical Society to help determine the causes of, and solutions for, poverty and 'distress'. Booth probably saw the Mansion House Survey as an opportunity lost. With the resources of the Lord Mayor, and the notables selected for the committee, a great deal of 'evidence' was brought to hand. Unfortunately, the committee conducted itself as might a Royal Commission. Interested parties were called to testify at various 'sittings' throughout 1886. Booth tried to interest the committee in a more statistically sound approach, and detailed Jesse Argyll to prepare statistics. The recommendations made by Booth were heard but not acted upon. In the Mansion House Report on Distress we find:

> With reference to it (the class of casual labour) the Committee have been much struck with the suggestion of an experienced witness, that great advantage might arise from a careful and exhaustive inquiry into the nature of employments of those who belong to it, the number of persons engaged in each, the probable vitality or cessation of such employments, their trade customs and the like. If such an investigation were carefully made , and a well-drawn report published, it might, it seems to the Committee, be practicable for benevolent persons to assist this class more intelligently and more for their ultimate benefit than is at present possible. (Mansion House Report, 1886:13)

This may have been the most sage advice offered up by the Committee; the 'remedies' proposed just before and after this call for further research were to remove children from poor homes in order 'to take them away from evil example and influence, and so to save them'; and to stop charitable donations to poor relief altogether since it only encouraged pauperism. Compared to this reactionary diagnosis and the even more draconian 'remedies', Booth's

moderate empiricism seems almost radical. As a basis for policy, or in providing any real facts, the Report was useless. Given that this was one of the political bodies most likely to support an 'Inquiry', and that it failed to do so, Booth was thrown back on his own resources.

After the meeting of his own Board of Statistical Research, Booth was anxious to be started. He formed an office, brought in staff, and then, in June, 1886, was called away to New York by the death of the head of one of his businesses there. When he returned to London at the end of July he found 'my secretary and his assistant sore distraught for lack of work from which trouble I pray Heaven they may soon be relieved' (Booth to B. Potter, 27.7.86). A further delay occurred, however, for Booth 'lost no time in calling on Mr Mather of the School Board, but found that worthy just about to start on a holiday... till the end of August' (op.cit.). It was agreed with the School Board to begin interviewing the School Board Visitors on 1 September.

During the enforced holiday from late July through August Booth and Potter continued to correspond regularly, discussing especially the essay she was writing on Economics. She passed to Booth new works in Political Economy, the works of Marshall, and Jevons in particular. Her essay was grappling with questions of induction - deduction, and the nature of theory and fact, Booth offered the empirical alternative -

Both single facts and strings of Statistics may be true, and clearly demonstrably true, and yet entirely misleading in the way they are used. A framework can be built out of a big theory and facts and statistics run in to fit it - but what I want to see instead is a large statistical framework which is built to receive accumulations of facts out of which at last is evolved the theory and the law and the basis of more intelligent action...By the way I do not think I should make the possibility of reduction to numerical expression the point as to quantity and quality, though it is true. I fancy that the idea can be taken further in the conception of simple as compared to complex relations.

He went on to warn Potter away from the circular question of induction-deduction. Rather than becoming mired in such abstractions, Booth stated, 'I think Political economy needs badly to step back just now. We have had too many hasty deductions and too much cutting out of complicating considerations which never are cut out in nature', (Booth Coll, Senate House, I/1308(iii))

Booth's assertion that it was necessary to get back to basic facts harmonised with his now developed plan of research. The long gestation of the Poverty Study and Booth's virtually self-taught studentship in social science were coming to an end. At half past seven on the evenings of 1 and 2 September, 1886 Booth and Jesse Argyll interviewed Mr. Mather of the School Board and made a first attempt at categorising data from the East End household by household. The Inquiry had begun.

Collecting the Poverty Data

Why Booth chose to use the information collected by the School Board Visitors requires illumination - why did he proceed as he did? One of the best answers to this

question was put by Herbert Llewellyn-Smith several years after working with Booth on the Poverty Study. By 1895 Llewellyn was a civil servant working in the Board of Trade; in January of that year he wrote a memorandum on the unemployed (P.R.O.; CAB 37/38) in response to a request put to the President of the Board of Trade by W.T. Stead for government funds, to the sum of £3000, to conduct a house-to-house survey of the unemployed. In this memorandum Llewellyn-Smith discussed the various ways in which information about the unemployed was then being collected. Most of the information available on the unemployed Llewellyn-Smith rejected as incomplete, and to this he contrasted the information collected by Booth:

While, however, no successful attempt has been (or can, from the nature of the case, be) made to count the unemployed by tabulating their statements, a very elaborate and remarkable investigation has been made, unofficially, by Mr. Charles Booth and his staff, as to the condition of the poor in London which throws far more light on their status as regards employment than any other inquiry that has been made. (CAB 37/38:5)

But to be perfectly clear that Booth had not conducted a house-to-house survey Llewellyn-Smith enumerated three points about Booth's study:

(1) It was not a house-to-house inquiry...

(2) It was not a compilation of statements of the people themselves...

(3) The Visitors were not asked to obtain information specially for the inquiry.

It is thus clear that the resulting classification of the people according to poverty is determined by the nett impression left on the mind of Mr. Booth and his secretaries by cross-examination of the School Board visitors.(CAB 37/38:6)

Llewellyn-Smith then went on to assess the viability of

such research for the government and to explain that:

> It may perhaps be doubted whether a work like this, however possible to a private individual, could be justifiably carried out by a government department. The responsibility for maintaining a uniform standard throughout must lie entirely with those tabulating the information ... It was the great triumph of Mr. Booth's inquiry that he succeeded in this difficult and delicate task ... I believe this to be the only possible plan for dealing with the subject [of unemployment] and in spite of the objections indicated, the Government, if it determines on making some kind of fresh inquiry, covering a certain district, would probably do as well to proceed as nearly as possible on the same lines. (CAB37/38:6-7)

There were three reasons why Llewellyn-Smith believed a house-to-house survey to be ill advised, reasons that had applied to Booth's study as well. The first was the fact that the only time the unemployed and the poor were likely to encounter an interviewer was when they were being assessed for relief. The nature of the communication between interviewer and respondent was, for that reason, less concerned with simply setting out the state of things. As Llewellyn-Smith put it, Booth's inquiry 'was thus not vitiated by raising expectations of pecuniary relief among the population of the districts dealt with' (CAB 37/38:6). The second reason was that Llewellyn-Smith believed that collected information would require verification, but that accuracy and verification would not be possible unless the survey was 'kept perfectly quiet, but it is extremely doubtful if this is possible'; and it was especially doubtful if the prospect of relief accompanied enumeration. Finally, Llewellyn-Smith could not see any way to overcome what he saw as the 'insuperable difficulty of framing questions which would elicit definite information on this

point [unemployment] on a uniform basis' (CAB 37/38:8). Llewellyn-Smith urged rejection of Stead's proposed census of the unemployed since:

There is no evidence that any of the difficulties of a house-to-house inquiry have been surmounted by this scheme, or that any stock of useful information would be obtained which has not already been obtained by Mr. Booth for the same district. The only points of difference from Mr. Booth's inquiry are that the information is to be collected from house to house - a plan which he deliberately rejected for reasons which are still valid. (CAB 37/38:8).

In a passage that has been often quoted Booth explained why he believed the School Board Visitors had the information he needed:

The School Board visitors perform amongst themselves a house-to-house visitation; every house in every street is in their books, and details are given of every family with children of school age. They begin their scheduling two or three years before the children attain school age, and a record remains in their books of children who have left school. The occupation of the head of the family is noted down. Most of the visitors have been working in the same district for several years, and thus have an extensive knowledge of the people. It is their business to re-schedule for the Board once a year, but intermediate revisions are made in addition, and it is their duty to make themselves acquainted, so far as possible, with new comers into their districts. They are in daily contact with the people, and have a very considerable knowledge of the parents of the school children, especially of the poorest amongst them, and of the conditions under which they live. ... Of the wealth of my material I have no doubt. I am indeed embarrassed by its mass, and by my resolution to make use of no fact to which I cannot give a quantitative value.

Beatrice Webb offered a similar, but more succinct, explanation some years later in an essay on methods of investigation. She described Booth's plan in this way:

He wanted to discover the circumstances of each individual living in a street, so he first got permission to call up the School Board visitors, each of whom had charge of two or three streets. With his secretaries he went over each individual in each street, and got from the visitors their

idea of each person's circumstances. The School Board visitors were going in and out of these houses every day. That was information obtained from personal knowledge, and roughly speaking it would not be far wrong - Jones lives in one room with a certain sized family, earns 20s. and pays 5s. rent. He got such facts as these and verified them by means of district visitors. (1903:348)

The manner in which Booth secured his data and its subsequent reliability have been much debated. Booth's own description of those first interviews survives:

We had two successive evenings with Mr Mather on the School Board figures. At the first we got a rough idea of what sort of information was to be had: at the second we made a definite effort at the statement of the facts concerning certain streets. The first evening dealt with very much more picturesque facts than the second, but the second served well enough, and the sorts of streets dealt with are probably more frequently to be met with than the hell-holes and sinks of vice and iniquity first described to us by old Mr Orme, the first visitor we met (Passfield Collection, letter to B. Potter, 5.9.1886).

From the Visitors' notebooks and explanations Booth began to construct tables to organise the information. He saw the error in attempting to enforce a categorical scheme at the beginning of data collection: 'our idea is that having made our classification we should note down every occupation we hear of, and so make this list in the end a dictionary of Employments' (Passfield op cit). From a complete inventory of 'Employments' it was hoped forty to fifty 'heads' or categories could be evolved. The classification by employment was becoming central to the Inquiry, for it became rapidly apparent that data on actual incomes would be insufficient. After this first interview he wrote in a letter to Beatrice Potter:

'You will see that I have abandoned to some extent the division by earnings and have fallen back on that by trades. We can get from the Visitors an opinion upon the

earnings of each man and I should like to find some way of noting this down for averages; but I feel that at the end it is only an opinion and I hesitate to make it the basis of a classification.' (Passfield op cit.)

The loss of earnings as a reliable measure did not trouble Booth, for he felt that, in the aggregate, variation of earnings within jobs was not so large as to preclude imputing mean wages. In any event he determined that other data sources should be used to support wages estimates - 'What is needed is that the Employments should be so arranged as to be capable of research by other means into the facts of income of each class' (Passfield, op cit.) Booth then stated in this letter to Beatrice Potter that he had called a meeting of the 'Board' but expected no one but Maurice Paul to attend.

At this point in this rather long letter a topic is raised that may be misunderstood. On the seventh page Booth appears to raise the question of sampling - 'The plan [of the research] suggested is applicable either to a complete statement of the whole information touching every street and every house in London <u>or to the sampling plan</u>' (emphasis mine); he continues, 'The "unknown" element will be very considerable in better districts where it will cover families with children as well as those without' (Passfield op.cit.). By a 'sampling plan' Booth almost certainly did not have in mind the representative or random sample that would be introduced by Kiaer in 1895 and pioneered by Bowley as a social science technique in 1915. Karl Pearson was at work on questions of probability

sampling during the period of Booth's Inquiry, but as Kruskal and Mosteller have pointed out: 'Karl Pearson might have formed the bridge between the two statistical worlds [natural sciences and social sciences], but he did not' (1980:170). Bowley's 1912-1914 sample survey of five towns is usually referred to as the 'pioneer' sample survey, and so it was - but this is often contrasted in the literature with the work of Booth who is presented as either not understanding or not knowing about sampling. As Goyder put it 'Bowley .... used samples in preference to attempts (on the model of Booth) to survey entire populations' (1985:722). It can not be said that Booth knew about statistical sampling, since the introduction of the technique by Kiaer was still nine years away, but it is a compliment to him as a statistician that he is concerned lest his research fail to be representative. In the last sentence quoted the 'sampling plan' is implicitly rejected because the '"unknown" element will be very considerable'. Instead Booth used the more prevalent method of the period, that of 'purposive selection' (Desrosieres, 1991:218).

The letter continues and makes two further methodological points. The first is the recognition that it will be necessary to use the collected data cautiously, in the knowledge that the information is biased towards families with children (due to data being collected from School Board Visitors). The second is that the nature of this sample bias will necessitate, as far as possible, its

correction - 'to separate ... the young persons and unmarried men and women is an important step; and we can get from the Visitors (and in many other ways) information as to the employments of these classes'. He concluded by saying that each Visitor will need a personal interview in order to 'thrash out his district filling up so many sheets of figures and so many pages of remarks.... If we can get the information we shall manage to classify it.'

This letter is an important piece of evidence in the history of the methodology of the Inquiry. Much more than the 'foolscap sheet' this letter represents a proposed plan of research. For that reason it is important to briefly recapitulate the five methodological points Booth makes in this letter:

1. After pilot data collection the information held by the School Board Visitors is determined to be lacking in some ways but acceptable overall. The Visitors are recognised to place personal interpretation on the data, requiring the Inquiry to restrict its collection, as much as possible, to the quantifiable 'facts'.

2. Booth determines that classificatory schemes should grow out of the data rather that be enforced by preconception.

3. Measures of income proven unreliable in the pilot collection are replaced by an occupational classification.

4. The need for secondary sources to support the occupational scheme of wage estimates is recognised.

5. The use of some sort of 'sampling plan' is, apparently, considered and rejected due to Booth's recognition of the bias in the Visitors' data. Booth states that the analysis will have to be done on the assumption of uniformity, with extra effort put to collecting data to correct the overemphasis on families with children.

In setting out the problems and plans of the research in this way Booth anticipated a number of his later critics. Problems, such as the sampling bias, were apparent to him, and were accepted cautiously when unavoidable. In the first volume of Life and Labour Both spelled out the assumptions that he was forced to make in using the Visitors' information:

> (1) That the numbers of married men with school children in each section of employment imply a similar proportion in the same sections of married men without school children, and of other male adults...
>
> (2) That likewise the number of children of school age in each section implies the existence of brothers and sisters, older and younger, to be found living under the same home conditions...
>
> (3) That the condition as to poverty of those with children at school in each section will safely represent the condition of the whole section; the younger men in some employments, and the older men in others, earn less money than those of middle age who are fathers of the children at school, but both are a less expense. (1889:5).

These assumptions give rise to several questions: What proportion of the total population of the area did the sample represent? Booth was unsure, estimating it at 'half

to two-thirds of the whole' (1889:5). And do these assumptions lead to serious error in representation? By my own calculation, which is explained in more detail in the next chapter, Booth's sample represents about 58% of the population of the area. And by Cullen's analysis, reported briefly in Chapter 1 (page 38), consideration of other data collected by Booth and separated into families with and without children, the error in representing families and individuals without children was less than 1%, and that in the direction of over-estimating poverty.

Booth understood from the beginning that the data which came to him through the Visitors was far from perfect; he also understood that if he was going to answer the research questions he had set himself then these were the most reliable data immediately available. The information was not, however, accepted without several checks being made of its veracity. Relieving Officers and C.O.S. agents were interviewed as well, and when the Poverty Maps were completed they were exhibited at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House (these settlement houses being situated in the East End) in order to 'subject the map to the test of criticism' (1889:24). The maps were inspected by some who knew the whole area to a small degree and by those who knew small parts of the East End intimately. The errors this exercise uncovered were 'in almost every case found to be due to mistake in the transfer of verbal into graphic description' (1889:24). Some years later Beatrice Webb wrote of other checks on the information collected

from the School Board Visitors: 'He got such facts as these and then verified them by means of district visitors. I remember he also utilised the agents for Singer's sewing machines in the same way. He was getting not at men's opinions, but at their personal knowledge' (1907:348). Another check were visual inspections by Booth and his staff of the neighbourhoods described by each visitor. At the beginning of the data collection they would not visit a neighbourhood while interviewing a Visitor 'fearing lest any prejudice of our own should colour the information we received'. But Booth wrote that 'later we gained confidence, and made it a rule to see each street ourselves at the time we received our visitors' account of it', adding that they made no attempt to 'meddle' with the inhabitants of the houses. Booth believed that to do so would have been 'an unwarrantable impertinence' (1889:25).

The interviewing of Visitors continued through the Winter and into the Spring of 1887. A total of 66 were interviewed, some by Beatrice Potter. The Visitor who provided the most complete and extensive information was not a Visitor at all. This was Ella Pyecroft, who worked with Potter in the Katherine Buildings as a rent collector cum social worker. The quality of data collected varied from Visitor to Visitor, but the preprinted notebooks used by Booth and his staff helped to regularise and order what was collected. After the meetings with Mr. Mather and Mr. Orme which served as a pilot test, three notebooks were

prepared by hand with the column headings: street number; rent per week; no. of rooms; occupation; no. of children 3-13: social status or position; and 'employment of wives or young persons and general remarks'. These first three notebooks were for the use of Booth, Maurice Paul and Jesse Argyll. These notebooks begin with Mr. Bowsher's district in Whitechapel, and were used through October and November 1886. After thirty to sixty pages in each of these three notebooks a change occurs in the way the collected information is categorised. The previous system of column headings was altered to read: street number; rent per room; no. of rooms; occupation; wife (meaning wife present and sometimes her occupation); children 3-13; children less than 13; children over 13; wages; and position. The amount of information available on wives and children, and the notes often necessary to describe the family's 'condition,' were too numerous to fit the small column allotted to it in the earlier category scheme; to ease collection of these types of information the new order of headings was introduced. Soon Booth would have these headings and columns printed into notebooks. These interviews with Visitors were the mechanisms of the data collection - the Visitors were the primary source. Exactly how they came by their information, their veracity, their role in the community, all these must also be understood if the Poverty Inquiry is to be understood.

The School Board Visitors

While Booth's work is often called the first social survey, in one crucial sense it is not a survey at all. It is actually a detailed and personalised collection of data from middle class (or lower middle class) informants, the School Board Visitors (the SBVs). Booth, or one of his assistants, would interview each Visitor for twenty to thirty hours. The SBV would bring his or her notes and record books (the SBV performed an annual 'survey' in their assigned district), and the researchers would enter the information gained from the Visitor's records or memory into their own prepared notebooks. In this way the recorded data follow the street plan of the Visitor's district, proceeding household by household up and down the streets. Aware of the possible omissions, checks were made on the information. Booth would inspect a neighbourhood after interviewing a Visitor; compiled data were checked against other aggregate statistics such as the Census; and trusted persons 'in the know' were asked to give their opinion as to validity.

For the first interviews of the 'pilot' test Booth, Argyll, and Paul would interview each Visitor together. This was done to standardise the questions asked and the interpretation of the information gained. The checks mentioned above were sufficient to convince Booth that the data held by the visitors were capable of bearing the

research questions he wished to ask. Booth saw the visitors as a unique source of detailed information, and for his needs they were exceptionally well suited. But the School Board Visitors, whose work was commonplace and well understood in Booth's time, are relatively unknown today. What follows should shed some light on the Visitor's role in the East End of London in the 1880's.

A School Board Visitor's position was much sought after. In 1901, several years after Booth's study, over one hundred applications were made for three SBV vacancies, (School Board for London). To fill the three posts the District Board selected from these applicants around fifteen who would then be examined on Arithmetic, Composition, Dictation, and Tabulation. From the test results and interviews the vacancies would be filled. Once hired, the SBV was paid about £100 per annum. The wage records that remain show a relatively low turnover in these posts; several of those known to Booth may be traced for years in the records. (The records of the School Board for London are, unfortunately, incomplete. Most have been destroyed; only 'representative' records were retained, leaving several temporal gaps. It is clear, however, from the remaining records that the SBVs held their jobs for long periods.)

When the actual work of the SBV is considered, it is surprising that the job turnover was not higher, for two reasons in particular. Firstly, the SBVs were sometimes unwelcome among the people they visited and, secondly, they

had a tremendous workload. The lack of popularity may be traced back to the consequences of the arrival of compulsory education. In 1871 the London School Board, under powers bestowed by the 1870 Education Act, passed bye-laws which would enforce compulsory attendance in school and a fee-paying system (Lewis, 1982; Rubenstein, 1969). The bye-law applied only to those schools charging less than 9d. per week; in other words, it was aimed at working class children who were expected to pay 1d to 2d per week. But, as Lewis notes, 'poverty was not accepted as a legitimate excuse for absence' (1982:291). It was within the power of the School Board to waive the fees of poor pupils, but it never took the next step (though it could legally have done so) of opening free schools. Paupers were provided for under an earlier law which required school attendance as a condition of outdoor relief to parents, and the retention of a fee paying system for the remainder had much to do with the policy of separating the deserving from the undeserving poor (Lewis, 1982:292).

School fees were to be paid to the teacher at the beginning of each week. In London the fees averaged 2d. per week and, if two children attended from the same family, the second would pay one-half the fee unless the school only charged 1d. (Rubenstein, 1969). Many Visitors and commentators of the time pointed out that fees paid for three or four children amounted to 6d or 8d, a large sum when total family income would often be less than a pound,

or 6/- or 10/- for a widow. It was this combination of compulsory attendance with the requirement of fees that made the School Board Visitor more than just an attendance officer.

If the fee was not paid, the Board could exclude the child and then prosecute the parents for the child's absence. This procedure actually added to the number of absences, yet the establishment of free schools was resisted for two main reasons. Firstly, free schools, in the opinion of some officials, would include an undesirable element of 'gutter children'. Secondly, free schooling was seen by the Board as a radical step which would, in time, lead to a call for "free breakfasts and dinners; free houses and free clothes" (E.J. Tabrum quoted in Lewis, 1982).

This chary approach extended to the remission of fees as well. A number of Board members could not believe that the poor were unable to pay the 'school pence'. If they could not, then they were paupers, and should appeal to the Guardians for relief under the poor law. The Board saw its work as the problem of ignorance, and felt that poverty should be left to the charities and the Poor Law Guardians. On the other side, the parents were not necessarily convinced that compulsory education was a good thing, for it prevented their children from working and bringing home much-needed income; it required a regular weekly outlay (whether the breadwinner was working or not); and many of the subjects taught seemed far from useful (School Board

Chronicle, December 1872).

Between the Board and the parents worked the School Board Visitor, charged with gathering exactly that information concerning family poverty which the Board had said was not its concern. Beginning in 1873, whenever a family was being 'visited' for whatever reason:

> a common application form was used for the first time to ascertain the family's means, sources of income and rent, whether the breadwinner was unemployed, his prospects of getting work and whether the family had previously requested remission or payment of fees. Visitors were urged to pursue their inquiries with neighbours and employers in order to verify their evidence. (Lewis, 1982:297).

Once visited because of an infraction, the parent would be required to attend a 'B' meeting of the Divisional Committee. The same procedure was followed if the parents were in violation of the bye-laws, in arrears with school fees, or simply applying for a remission of fees. These meetings could be harsh on the parents, who were often required to attend during working hours and were then cross-examined by a board of officers as to the family budget and the personal details of family relationships.

To reduce their liability, parents would sometimes refuse the legal obligation to supply information. Children found in the streets during school hours could not be legally detained, and might also refuse to inform or misinform the SBV (Morgan, 1956). In most areas, and especially in the Southwark and Tower Hamlets districts,

parents and children were often so migratory as to escape detection altogether.

At their annual conferences the SBVs would discuss the difficult aspects of their work. One speech, reported from the 1885 conference, described West Lambeth:

> In one row of houses which he visited with a colleague, out of 108 children, only seven were on the rolls of any school, and the police told him it was unsafe on a Saturday or a Sunday for any constable to go single-handed into that quarter. The attendance officers had to go into places like that; and it was much the same in other large towns. (Hear, hear.)
> (J Pritchard, School Board Chronicle (SBC), Oct 1885, pp. 434)

In addition to physical threat was omnipresent disease and the risk of carrying infection home. In an address to the 1886 conference entitled 'Compulsory Education and its Difficulties', a SBV from South Hackney described some of the homes he visited:

> I had to stoop to enter the doorways, and go down two or three steps to enter the room, the number of steps depending very much on the accumulation of filth outside ... When the doors of these shanties were opened, one always noticed that both parent and children were all more or less bleareyed, and pale as death, indeed death is rarely absent from these hovels. In other parts of this district I had many families living in the basement under the pavement, or packed together in small rooms like herrings in a barrel. One was almost stifled in attempting to enter such places ... Think of the reeking stench that fills these staircases, and then you will but faintly realise what it is to enter such places as these.
> (R Massey, SBC, May 1886, pp. 471)

While difficult for the Visitor, it is obvious from these accounts that Booth had selected excellent informants

to learn about the poorest families. It is the Visitors' information which illuminates the conditions experienced by the poor. The School Board Visitors were ordered to register all children who were coming up to school age; to locate these children they performed the 'house-to-house' visitation Booth described. In doing so they were much more cognizant of all types of household in their areas than were, for example, the C.O.S. visitors who only looked in on those who applied for relief.

Parents would sometimes keep children from school for shorter or longer periods depending on the financial needs of the family. A popular reason given by parents for keeping children from school was the brain-taxing effect of education:

> When you go to a parent to make enquiries why the child is absent from school, you are told the child is suffering from over-pressure. "And what do you mean by that, Mrs Smith?" you ask. "Well, do you see, sir, there's Bill - he keeps a-waking up at nights, a-talking about his sums, and he gets up in bed and looks so wild-eyed, and don't seem to know what he's a-doing of; and as for little Bessie, why she is alus a-dreaming and a-saying her bits of poe'ry she learns at the Board school, and she don't seem right at all, sir. So I says to my old man as the schooling was too much for them". (Massey, SBC, May 1886, pp. 471)

Clearly the position of the SBV, caught between a strict and, at times, paradoxical Board and suspicious families, was difficult. They were also very pressed for time. The weekly workload for this job, albeit it was a "white collar" one, was heavy (Lewis, 1982; Morgan, 1956; School Board for London Records 1886-1901). Examining

their work eight major duties emerge:

1. Each SBV was responsible for 3,000 to 6,000 school children in their district.

2. The names of these children were kept in school registers which needed to be inspected each week to isolate the names of 300 or so 'irregular' children.

3. The names of these 'irregular' children would be indexed and a visit scheduled, at the same time an absence report being completed for each child.

4. Up to 80 to 100 visits would be made each week to inquire into the backgrounds of parents seeking remission of fees.

5. 'A' notices to parents, the first order to report to the District Board concerning their children's absence, would need to be delivered at a rate of about ten per week.

6. Once a week the SBV might accompany a constable to serve a summons on parents to report to the magistrate's court. Also about once per week the SBV would be needed to testify in the court.

7. While they were about the streets making their 'visits', the SBVs were expected to apprehend any child they found out of school, and fill in form 11A on the spot, after which the child was to be released.

8. Finally, the SBV was to keep 'under surveillance' all children about to reach age five; to keep a list of these children and their birthdays, and to transfer them to the school rolls when appropriate.

These were the tasks Visitors were supposed to accomplish each week. What they were actually able to accomplish is another matter, and certainly informal and more flexible ways of accomplishing these ends were found.

Despite a dedication to the task, the Visitors admitted the strain of their workload. In a paper, calling

for a superannuation programme, delivered to their 1885 conference, a Visitor from South Hornsey stated:

> The School Board Visitor's work is never done, for apart from his seven or eight hours of peregrination he has an amount of clerical work imposed on him that would frighten many clerks, for this duty not only employs him during the long hours of the night, but occasionally to the small hours of the morning.
> (C Battson, SBC, Oct 1885, pp. 430)

For this amount of work they earned salaries which did not provide an especially comfortable life-style. Beatrice Potter described her visits, in May 1887, to one of the SBVs named Kerrigan, a "most amusing Irishman", who lived in:

> the back room of a small working class dwelling - serving for dining, sitting, sleeping, working room of this humble individual, with the most ingenious arrangements for all his functions,
> (Mackenzie, 1982:205)

Despite their workload, it is important to note that the SBVs were not paid for the twenty or so hours of interviews, rather, as Booth put it, they 'lent themselves to my purpose', (1889:26). Booth described the process of working with the Visitors and the notebooks they filled in this way:

Our books are mines of information. They have been referred to again and again at each stage of our work. So valuable have they proved in unforeseen ways, that I only regret they were not more slowly and deliberately prepared; more stuffed with facts than even they are. As it was, we continually improved as we went on, and may be said to have learnt our trade by the time the work was done. At first, nothing seemed so essential as speed. The task was so tremendous; the prospect of its completion so remote; and every detail cost time. In the Tower Hamlets division, which was completed first, we gave on the average 19 3/4 hours work to each School Board visitor; in the Hackney

division this was increased to 23 1/2 hours. St. Georges-in-the-East when first done in 1886 cost 60 hours' work with the visitors; when revised it occupied 83 hours. (1892, Vol. 1:25)

A salary of £100 per annum placed the School Board Visitor on the lowest rung of the middle class ladder, but the SBVs may not have considered it sufficient for the required workload. Some Visitors were known to 'moonlight', doubling as relieving officers or rent collectors (Royal Commission on Education, 1888:362-3). And while most Visitors were conscientious, others were undoubtedly unfit for the job, as in the cases of two SBVs, charged and disciplined by the Board, for sexually harassing housewives (SBL Records, 1903).

In spite of the house-to-house visitation it is possible that large numbers of children were escaping the notice of the Visitors. In 1887-88, the year after Booth had used the SBVs to survey the East End, the Board appointed one new Visitor to each district with special orders - to search out and list those children not on school records, or unknown to the regular SBVs. These 'Street Visitors', as they were called, discovered over 8,000 'vagrant' children in three districts: a number equal to approximately half the listed schoolchildren (SBL Records, 1888). When their names were traced through the records, it was found that the majority of them were actually on school rolls in other districts, but all were playing in the streets, 'loitering, running errands, selling something or scavenging' (Morgan, 1956:97) The work

of the 'Street Visitors' would have turned up some of the families that had missed being included in Booth's collection of information, but not a great number of them. The School Board Visitors organised their information by location not by presence of children, for this was the only practicable way of dealing with the high rate of movement in the East End. In order to meet the requirement that they keep track of all children approaching school age, it was easiest simply to visit all households in all buildings at least once a year. The children found in this sort of 'census' might have moved to another district and school, or onto the streets as vagrants, the next week, but their details were still recorded in the notebooks until correction or revision with the next visit.

Taken together this description of the work of the School Board Visitors portrays them as a group who should have known the facts on most households with children, but who were often overwhelmed by their workload. A further statistical test of the reliability of the information collected from the School Board Visitors is reported in Chapter 9.

Booth was very much aware of the possibility that the School Board Visitors might not be completely reliable in providing the facts necessary to construct this 'true picture'. Compared to a modern data collection strategy it was in many ways inferior, but what valuation can be placed on Booth's data collection?

The School Board Visitors, as shown above, should have

had most of the information which Booth required of them - on families with children, and a fair number of families without children. Booth's technique of collecting descriptions household by household was certainly not new. From the surveys of slum households by the London Statistical Society in the 1840's and 1850's, to the inquiries of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, to the visiting of the poor in their homes by visitors of the C.O.S., the interiors and conditions of poor households had been recounted over and over. The mixture of moralistic measures and environmental counts of rooms, windows, and pieces of furniture tell a great deal about the Victorian diagnosis of poverty, which wavered regularly between the moral and the environmental. It is also important to break down the term 'moral' as used by the Victorians. It often served as a catch-all which included education and even housing, thus blending and confounding the environmental measures. Booth is himself often guilty of blending these two perspectives together, though in his own defence it should be remembered that in the letter to Beatrice Potter, mentioned above, he chastised the political economists for separating those 'complicating considerations which never are cut out in nature' (31.7.1886).

With the School Board Visitors Booth hoped to come to grips with some of the complicating considerations. In addition to Chamberlain's recommendation, the Visitors had

demonstrated their ability to 'answer specific questions about particular streets and houses' (Cullen, 1979:161) when they were called upon to testify to the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1884-5. It is possible that Booth could have hired agents to collect this information instead, in the same way that the Manchester Statistical Society had used agents in its surveys, but there were several reasons why this was rejected. The first was the sheer size of the task; Booth knew that approximately one million people lived in the area he wished to survey. The cost of hiring and training and deploying necessary numbers of agents might not have been beyond Booth's means, but it was a daunting expense. A second reason also negated the hiring of agents to collect 'fresh' information. Booth believed that with so many agents, C.O.S. workers, School Board Visitors, Census enumerators, clergy, and settlement workers operating in the East End, the requisite information had to exist in some form. It is important, however, to remember that, as Marsh (1985:206) has pointed out, no such role as 'interviewer' then existed.

As described above, he looked over several other sources before settling on the Visitors. And as Herbert Llewellyn-Smith explained some years later, it was also thought that the use of agents might unduly influence the responses gathered by raising the expectation of relief. Inspecting agents were often used when special relief was to be given out, and it was possible that the potential

recipients of relief would emphasise some household characteristics over others. The School Board Visitors also had the advantage of having been working in the area for some time; they could not be confused by anything which might be more apparent than real. But that is not to imply that Booth accepted their information without care as to its accuracy. As Cullen puts it: 'Booth's real innovations were twofold: his system of classification and his concern for checking his data and verifying its accuracy' (1979:161).

Cullen, in his consideration of Booth's methods, went on to examine the differences between families with children and families without children in a sample of Booth's data, since the families without children were those least likely to be known by the School Board Visitors. His conclusion is that 'even the small error of 0.8 per cent which Booth's method [of using School Board Visitors] appears to have introduced is probably an overestimate of the actual error' (1979:163). Booth was careful to perform tests of his own as checks on the reliability of his data. The first of these was to compare classifications of poverty made by teachers and the School Board to those Booth constructed (1891, Vol. 3:196). This test showed that the teachers' data, while roughly comparable, showed greater amounts of poverty than that collected from the Visitors. Because the teachers' survey was based on their descriptions of whole school classes,

Booth assumed that theirs was more likely to generate broad statements leading to exaggeration.

A second test, which had been suggested after the first results were presented to the Statistical Society, was to minutely analyse the family budgets of thirty representative families. This test proved most of all that the classification system was flexible, and needed to be, to deal with the various arrangements of income, family size, regularity of work, and consumption patterns which marked different families. There was no indication that Booth had over or under estimated poverty from this test, but little more than that could be said for it.

The third test Booth applied was more definite. Using the 1891 Census returns he constructed a measure of crowding which he compared to birth and death rates, an early marriage index, a fertility index, and his own measure of poverty for each district. Booth's crowding index produced a percentage of those in crowded households (31.5%) which was very close to his estimate of those in poverty (30.7%). On the other indices he felt the measures were generally in support of the poverty estimate. Cullen supported this assessment with a correlation study using Booth's district indices. The measures of crowding, early marriage, fertility, and death rate were all highly correlated with Booth's poverty estimate and he argues that Booth was able to maintain a 'reasonably consistent standard of poverty [while] extracting information from the school-board visitors' (1979:172). In the next chapter the

two areas in which Cullen states that Booth was most innovative, data reliability and classification, are put to further tests, which support Cullen's findings and point to other indicators of the reliability of the poverty data.

The data Booth collected with which to assemble this true picture were readily accepted in his day. Only rarely did one of Booth's contemporaries call into question the quality or reliability of his data. That this was to happen later is an indication of both the increased sophistication of statistical techniques and the enhanced sensitivity to the subjectivity of researchers and their respondents. In any event, Booth's data, which have been preserved for modern analysis (See Appendix A), are remarkable for the sheer numbers of households 'surveyed' and the types of information available for each household.

Throughout the research which would become the Life and Labour of the People of London, there were several other ways in which information was collected. Interviews and participant observation were especially used in the Industry Series. Booth had a special advantage in his study of the industrial character of London, since because of the success of the Poverty Study he was called upon to advise the Registrar General on the formulation of the 1891 Census. With more variables added to the Census which might indicate economic well-being (such as the number of rooms occupied per family), Booth was then able to expand comparisons within and between the eighty-nine occupational

classifications he derived from the Census. In particular, he wished to collect: facts as to trade organisation, systems of work, rates of remuneration, hours and seasons of employment, and the age, sex, and skill mix of the labour force. To collect this information he went to individual workers, trades unions, and firms. Questionnaires were sent to firms and, if they agreed, a member of his research staff was sent along for an in-depth interview covering: hours and overtime, regularity and irregularity, seasonal work patterns, training methods, skill requirements, illnesses and the sick list, occupational injuries, and habitation. Trades unions provided copies of by-laws, sample contracts, and their own statistics, and union officials were interviewed about the role of their union and its history. Individual workers were also interviewed at length. Work histories and anecdotes are included, as well as drawings of products, production processes, and the lay-out of shops and factories.

An example of these interviews is the five page record of a meeting with the seventy-four year old chimney sweep J. Kingsley (LSE, Booth Coll./Notebook B160). The interview follows his career from his apprenticeship in 1830 to 1893 and is a mixture of Kingsley's stories of times past and his answers to specific questions on wages, hours, skills, age limits, and the effect of chimney sweeping on his health. Booth felt that without the personal stories of individuals the research would miss its aim. When the

results were published he was, however, unsatisfied with the number of individual workers that had been interviewed; he had hoped for a more comprehensive survey of workers.

A further data collection exercise was accomplished by George Duckworth for Booth in 1890 and 1891. Duckworth toured London by walking every police 'beat' in the Metropolitan area. Twenty notebooks are filled with notes on police practice, crime, home industries, and street markets. Duckworth also interviewed a large number of publicans in this period.

For the study of the inmates of institutions a careful analysis of their recorded case histories informed work on pauperism in Stepney. Altogether 1457 case histories were collected, using standardised categories of information, making comparison possible. A further explanation of these techniques, the Stepney data, and the police and publican notebooks, is given when these now micro-filmed data sets are discussed in detail in Appendix A.

These other techniques of data collection came after the first big push to obtain information about families in poverty. It was the poverty data which made Booth well known as a social researcher, and it was his use of the poverty data which opened up, for many people, the field of community and social surveys. An examination of his research methods points more to an intelligent synthesis than to significant breakthroughs.

Why then is Booth remembered before others whose methods were similar and who worked in the same period? It cannot be said that Booth was completely different from the researchers that went before him, nor can it be said he was the same. The key is that his work was pivotal, a transitional blending of Victorian techniques with the methods of the community surveys which were to follow. The explanation for his lasting influence is in the combination of attributes he brought to his research. None of these were, individually, unique to Charles Booth, but the combination was. Some of these attributes are mundane but crucial - such as the fact that Booth had the financial resources to support an attempt to arrive at broadly based, definitive studies. Other attributes tell us more about Booth as a social scientist. In many ways it had to do with his own interpretation, the way in which Booth interpreted the research situation. There are some general points about his interpretation of research which bear mention. The first is that Booth attempted a clear and non-judgmental analysis of work and poverty. That is not to say that he succeeded in preserving non-judgmental objectivity, but it is important that his aim was the illumination of social facts as they existed in society. A second point is that Booth treated the School Board Visitors not as informants but as data collectors, and attempted to separate their opinions from the other information they collected. Much more difficult to quantify is Booth's sense of commitment or urgency which reflected the general sense

of urgency about poverty. Gunnar Myrdal observed that 'the social sciences have all received their impetus much more from the urge to improve society than from simple curiosity about its working' (1953:210). Booth is a prime example of this, and however methodologically naive his work might be by modern standards, it showed a way toward the questions of urban social organisation upon which the social sciences would sharpen their methods.

In a similar vein, Pfautz has argued that Booth's relevance for the development of the social sciences stems from his emphatic empirical concern. Booth's work and methods lead significantly to modern research, Pfautz explains:

> Because he focused on the problems of an urban community in an industrial society; because of his use of statistical data and methods to describe, to compare, and to chart the course of change of the social structure and functioning of the (then) world's largest city; because he rationally organized and pursued a collective research effort; and, finally, because despite his abiding concern to bring about reforms he developed a very sophisticated sociological eye and scientific attitude toward 'social facts' (1967:170).

Taken together, the commitment, the tests for reliability, the scale of the research organisation, the concentration on social facts, we see a modern social research strategy in embryo. Booth's main contribution to survey research and the social sciences generally is this: he demonstrated the possibility of large-scale, 'scientific', and socially conscious social research. He did not invent survey research or an applied approach to social problems, but he did convince a very wide audience of the power of this

approach. That audience would grow into the Social Survey Movement and would inform the development of mainstream social science well into the twentieth century. His other contributions to social science or survey research are all derivatives of this. The classification systems, the blending of research techniques and data sources, the construction of census-derived variables and surrogate indices, the emphasis on co-variation in the spatial distribution of social measures, the development of the 'poverty line', his techniques for the adjustment of data from abnormal areas (such as the City of London), his attempt to complete a true portrait of London by taking on religious practice as well as the economy, his use of social mapping, his serious attention to women's work and minority ethnic groups, his employment of women researchers -all of these were innovative but are subsumed within the major initiation of a large-scale social research project which is his major contribution to the social sciences.

When Booth and his staff had assembled the many notebooks of quantitative and qualitative information for the Poverty Study, they processed it 'by hand'. This processing took the form of classifying each household into one of the eight categories, and then tallying that variable or any other variable of interest, such as number of children, for each page in the data collection notebooks. The page totals would then be added together for sections of the notebook, and then these section totals would be added together to make notebook totals, which

would be added together to make absolute totals. The published results, then, were primarily aggregations of the measurable and distillations of the unquantifiable. And while the organisation of the research effort was cogent and efficient, the significance of the research findings must be seen as a function of two interlocking elements: the credibility of the School Board Visitors, and the explanatory power of Booth's analytic categories. In the next chapter these two elements will be put to the test.

Chapter Nine - Further Analysis of the Poverty Data

Testing the Reliability of Booth's Data

Perhaps the most serious criticism made of Charles Booth's study of poverty is the possibility that the information collected from the School Board Visitors is unreliable. In the absence of other tests, one must either accept or deny Booth's assertion that 'No-one can go ... over the description of the inhabitants ... full as it is of picturesque details noted down from the lips of the visitor to whose mind they have been recalled ... and doubt the genuine character of its information and truth,' (1886:5). For some writers, particularly Hennock the historian, and Marsh the sociologist, this claim that the poverty data represents the population is not sufficient. 'There was', Hennock notes, 'no house-to-house visiting nor were the School Board Visitors asked to obtain any information especially for the survey. Booth relied solely on what information had come to them in the normal course of their work ... The reliability of this information, even when it was available, was open to grave doubt,' (1982:4). The placement of the SBV's between the subject of research and the researcher is seen to greatly increase the possibility of error - 'in the end it was impressions he counted and his conclusions are only as reliable as were the impressions in the first place,' (Hennock, 1976:74). As mentioned above, since the impressions could not be verified the resultant analysis is, in Marsh's view,

'hopelessly subjective', (1982:17). Marsh sees Booth and his predecessors as a 'primitive' stage in the evolution of social research, marked by the method of investigation which avoided contact with the subjects of their research and used intermediary informants instead (such as the School Board Visitors). But the notion that social researchers in this period were actively avoiding contact is probably misguided. The problem of data collection was exercising researchers across Europe, and Booth's response was one of several. It was, in fact, one of the methods closest to achieving the participation of the research subjects. Two examples will illustrate this: the work of Le Play in France, and that of the Verein fur Sozialpolitik in Germany.

Faced with the task of describing the lives and living conditions of poorer parts of society, researchers responded in different ways. In France, from the 1850's, Le Play 'advanced the application of scientific method to the study of society without doing surveys as such' (Bulmer, Bales, & Sklar, 1991:14). His focus was on the individual and the household, rejecting the assumptions of Quetelet that the collection of 'moral statistics' would lead to the illumination of natural laws of human behaviour. To achieve understanding of the individual lives of families he used the 'monographic method' (Desrosieres, 1991), the selection and minute inspection of the lives and household budgets of 'typical' families in different social strata. The result

was progress of a sort, quantitative and qualitative information mixed together with Le Play's own philosophical beliefs - but providing a reasonably clear picture of the circumstances of these 'typical' families. What was lacking was representativeness given Le Play's purposive selection of subjects, but as Desrosieres points out: 'these selection methods were rightly stigmatised as likely to lead to 'bias' in the subsequent period, but, in the context where they were used, they were consistent with the aims of these inquires, which on the whole were to describe the functioning (and malfunctioning) of working class communities subject to the vicissitudes of industrialisation' (1991:220).

In Germany, from the end of the nineteenth century, government inquiries also sought to explore the impact of industrialisation on the working classes. The Verein fur Sozialpolitik conducted extensive studies, but did so, for the most part, after the publication of Booth's work, and in some ways drew upon his model. In other ways, particularly in allowing the participation of the research subjects, they failed to reach even the in-depth case studies of Le Play's monographic methods. Instead, 'they relied heavily upon third-party informants ... thought to be knowledgeable about the conditions of peasants in their area' (Bulmer, Bales, & Sklar, 1991:17). Their information was collected, and often published verbatim, in the form of essays, and very little data were collected on the subjects of the research. These published results informed debates

over social policy, but without the power of resolution that more precise and representative information might have carried.

Of these three, Booth, Le Play, and the Verein, Booth's methods of data collection carried the greatest potential for generalisation; the collection of information from School Board Visitors was imperfect, but through the sheer number of families on whom data were collected a basis was made, to Booth's satisfaction, for generalisation. But the fact remains that School Board Visitors stood between Booth and most subjects, and Marsh is correct when she has asserted that Booth's methods have a high 'potential for error' (1982:10), though no attempt has been made to test the Booth data against other sources.

In my own attempt to determine the reliability of these data two lines of inquiry have been pursued. The first, reported above, was to look more closely at the role of the SBVs, to consider their workload, their job-histories, and their own statements assessing their work. The results give us a picture of overworked Visitors who could have known the facts on most households with children, but who were often overwhelmed by their work even if they did their best to perform it properly. The verdict on the data's reliability, following this line of questioning, is moot. More is known about the Visitors, and they are found to be capable and responsible on the whole. This positive point, however, is balanced by a

greater understanding of the constraints under which the Visitors worked. To resolve the question of data reliability we must look elsewhere, to a more exacting and empirical test of Booth's information. The second line of inquiry, which such a test represents, is necessary if the assertions made by Hennock, Marsh, and others are to be confirmed or denied.

It was not possible to pursue the second line of inquiry until 1982, for it was not until this date that the Census Enumerator notebooks for 1881 were released under the 'One Hundred Year Rule'. These notebooks, which contain the household entries collected by Census Enumerators, make possible a more rigorous test of reliability for Booth's data. The Census notebooks recorded, in addition to county, town, and parish, street address; the name of each inhabitant by household; their relationship to the head of household; their marital status; age and sex; occupation; where each individual was born; and whether the subject was 'deaf and dumb, blind, imbecile, or lunatic' (see Table 9-1A below). In his notebooks, Booth recorded street address, number of rooms, rent, occupations of household members, ages of children, wages (if available), and a general comment as to the family's condition. In addition to these standard items, qualitative notes often supplement with descriptions of job histories, ethnicity, medical conditions, or legal problems. The two sets share sufficient items to allow comparison between them.

The best test of reliability is to ask the same question of the same respondents (or a statistically comparable sample) within a reasonably short time after data is first collected. Obviously this is impossible when the question of reliability is raised one hundred years later. The collectors are gone, the informants (the School Board Visitors) are gone, the subjects are not only gone, but nameless - for the household's family name was not recorded by Booth. An alternative test of reliability is to match these data against comparable contemporary information. Only one such comparable data set exists - the 1881 Census. Booth did not record family names, but by tracing street addresses houses (and households) may be individually identified in both data sets. The major difference between the two is that Booth's data is only a portion of the total population, since it is based on the SBV's knowledge of families with children. Though he hoped to achieve complete coverage, Booth was forced to extrapolate from the data available from the SBV's and to assume that families with children were sufficiently representative of the population as a whole. Booth's data set, as noted above, is biased toward families with children; under-represented are the single, the transient, and the elderly (though the latter might be said of the census as well).

The nature of this bias may be shown by a comparison of the aggregated results of the Census with Booth's aggregated sample. The total number of individuals Booth

recorded in his notebooks equalled approximately 58 per cent of the 909,000 estimated population of the East End in 1885. Counting through the households in the sixty-six notebooks filled with information by Booth and his team indicates that the notebooks contain entries on approximately 180,000 households. The School Board Visitors, however, did not have information on 28.8 per cent of these households. This may have been due to the members of these households falling into those categories least likely to be known to the Visitors, or to the building being empty. Whatever the cause, these households are recorded in the notebooks with a 'U' standing for 'Unscheduled'. Leaving the unscheduled households aside, usable information remains on 71.2 per cent of the Booth sample, or about 128,000 households. In order to compare this sum with Booth's estimations and to the overall Census results, it is necessary to convert the number of households into an estimated number of individuals. The computerised sample from the Booth notebooks analysed below yields a mean number of children per family of 2.25. Multiplying the number of households by 4.25 (parents plus children) the result is an estimate of approximately 540,680 individuals for whom information is recorded. This is likely to be a slight over-estimate as it does not allow for single-parent families. As female-headed families equal seven per cent of the computerised sample the estimate may be adjusted by that figure. This adjustment lowers the estimate to 531,218 individuals, or 58.2 per

cent of the 1885 population for the area as estimated by the Census. This estimate is at the lower end of Booth's own supposition of the extent of his sample; 'the population brought directly under schedule,' he wrote, 'amounts to from one-half to two-thirds of the whole population' (1889:26). By the computerised estimates, then, just under three out of every five people in the East End in late 1886 and early 1887 came into Booth's notebooks. This number is sufficient for comparisons with the previously collected Census information, but the comparison itself is sensitive to other factors - especially the high residential mobility of that time and place.

Given that Booth's sample represents 58.2 per cent of the total population, and that these households may be traced through their street addresses, two factors remain which may make comparison difficult. The first difficulty is the time lag between the Census and the Inquiry. Booth's staff interviewed the School Board Visitors in 1886 and 1887, about five years, at least, after the 1881 Census. Obviously in this period a number of births and deaths would occur, buildings would be torn down and others built up, and families would rearrange themselves in the flux of marriage, divorce, or desertion. The second difficulty is the very high rate of residential movement by families in the East End. As Booth noted, 'In many districts the people are always on the move; they shift from one part of it to another like "fish in a river"'

(1889:26). The high rate of movement was often commented on by housing workers and School Board workers. Samuel Burgess, Housing Manager for the London County Council, testified to the Royal Commission on Locomotion in 1905 that one third of all LCC tenants moved every year (Royal Commission on London Traffic, 1905). One of the School Board Visitors interviewed by Booth reported that within 'a fairly representative district in Bethnal Green ... of 1204 families (with 2720 children) on his books, 530 (with 1450 children) removed in a single year' (Booth, 1889:27). This equals a removal rate of 44 per cent per annum. If this rate were generally applicable, in any neighbourhood of one hundred households existing at the end of 1881, 56 would remain at the end of 1882, 31 at the end of 1883, 18 at the end of 1884, and 10 (or 10%) of the original 100 would remain at the end of 1885. This simple 44 per cent rate, however, would be likely to overstate the number of households removing from a neighbourhood since it assumes all households are equally likely to move. In reality some households - the poorest, and the youngest - were much more likely to move and move more often than older, financially secure households. Taking the difficulties of time-lag between the collection of the Census information and the Booth 'survey', and the high rate of residential movement together, as an index of its reliability we might expect a direct correspondence between the Booth data and the Census notebooks of <u>at least</u> 10 per cent of households scheduled, the ten percent which should remain in any neighbourhood

after five years at a 44 percent removal rate. Further, at least 10 percent of the households traceable to both data sets should match exactly, with the only exception of added children under five years of age in the Booth sample. If these minimum criteria are not met, the reliability of Booth's data, and his results, must be doubted.

In order to determine the reliability of Booth's data the following test was carried out: A sample of 1576 households in forty-three streets was drawn from Booth's notebooks and computerised; the Discriminant Analysis, which begins on page 390, also uses these data. These sample data were selected from Booth's notebooks in random blocks of twenty-five to fifty households, this form of cluster sampling being used to retain neighbourhood characteristics. Any individual street, however, may have from less than twenty to over fifty households recorded. In order to make random the selection of streets for comparison with the 1881 Census Enumerators' notebooks, each of these streets was weighted according to the total number of households recorded for it and a table of random numbers was used to select street names. Thirty-four street names were selected in all. While the clustering of the Booth data simplified the task, locating and copying the correct sections of the Census notebooks proved to be very time consuming and expensive, since the Census Enumerator notebooks hold on each page, on average, only three or four households. As each Census notebook page

would be a sample point, the intention was to amass a sample for comparison with Booth's notebooks of 100 to 130 households. This sample size was chosen for the comparison as small enough to be manageable and large enough to give a clear, if basic, comparative picture. Street names were then located in the Census notebooks, a copy being made of the first page for each street which included street addresses matching those in the Booth data. The Census notebooks contain, with rare exceptions, all addresses on all streets. The computerised Booth data having been sampled in clusters might have, for example, street address numbers 50 to 76 in a street whose total house address numbers run from 1 to 100. The photocopied pages from the original Census notebooks were then taken to the archive of the British Library for the Political and Economic Sciences for direct comparison with Booth's original data collection notebooks. A sample page from the Census notebook is given in Table 9-1a; the information on the same street addresses from the Booth notebooks is given in Table 9-1b.

There are five variables which may be compared for households in these two data sets: street addresses; marital status; occupation of head of household; number of children; and age of children. It is occasionally possible to compare as well the sex of children, and the work or occupation of children. Within street addresses, that is, within individual buildings, it is the households which are being compared. While addresses must be matched first, some street addresses might hold two, three or more family

households. The four households shown in Tables 1a and 1b may be compared as an example. In 1881 the family of Levi Olstermann lived at Number 19 Zion Square, and he and his wife Hannah had three sons, all under the age of four. Levi Olstermann worked as a cigar maker, and Hannah Olstermann did not, apparently, work outside the home. In December 1886, the Booth notebooks recorded a married cigar-maker living at 19 Zion Square. The cigar maker's family in 1886 also included a wife and four children whose ages were within the category 'three to thirteen'. In the descriptive notes the School Board Visitor has explained that the families living in this group of houses are 'Jews and Germans'. Assuming the Olstermanns had had another child between 1881 and 1886 (not unlikely given their ages), their particulars would be very likely to match those recorded in Booth's notebook. The match for 18 Zion Square is not as exact. There are two households shown at this address in 1881, and it is possible that one of them, the Cohen family, was still there in 1886. Booth records a married tailor, but fewer children. It is possible that the two older boys, Morris and Abram, aged about 15 and 13 in 1886, have left the household. If they had done, the remaining children would match those recorded in the Booth notebook - a daughter over thirteen and two children between three and thirteen. The other tenant of 18 Zion Square in 1881, the commercial traveller Jacobs and his family has, in 1886, been replaced by a married tailor with

no children at home. As a final example, at 17 Zion Square in 1881 lived John Harris, tailor, and his family. In 1886 a married tailor was living at 17 Zion Square but only two girls, over the age of thirteen, are recorded. As before, there is no way to be certain, but it is conceivable that if Harris' three sons (in 1886 aged 30, 28, and 20) have left home, then the 'two girls help' listed in the Booth notebook may be his daughters Elizabeth and Julia. Obviously, absolute certainty in these comparisons is impossible, but it must be considered highly probable that the 'German and Jewish' cigar maker, who is married with four children living at 19 Zion Square in 1886 is the same Levi Olstermann who was living there in 1881. For the Cohens and the Harrises the probability decreases, but these two families were at the life-cycle stage of being middle-aged with children just beginning to leave home, which would increase the likelihood that they would be residentially stable over the period 1881-1886. The point by point comparison just made for these four households on Zion Square was repeated for each of the 113 households which had matching addresses in 1881 and 1886.

Table 9-2 shows the results of this comparison. Of the 113 households twenty-one (18.6 per cent) had the same occupations, marital status, and the numbers and ages of children (with ages adjusted and added children being less than five years old), in the two sample points of 1881 and 1886. These twenty-one households matched closely enough that they were taken as likely to be the same families. A

further six households matched on some, but not all, points of comparison. Three of these had the same marital status, and the correct number and ages of children, but listed different head of household occupations - mast and block maker in 1881 becomes lighterman in 1886; plumber and painter changes to mason; and carman to tailor. The first of these is a possibility, but the second and third are more improbable given the disparate nature of the occupations. One household (type number three in Table 9-2) matched on marital status and occupation (Smith's hammerman)

Table 9-2

Distribution of Comparable Households

Type of Match Between Households	Number	%
1. Household has same occupations, marital status, and no. of children (with ages adjusted and new children less than five years) 1881 - 1886	21	18.6
2. Household has same marital status, & number of children (with adjustments); but different head's occupation	3	2.8
3. Household has same head's occupation and marital status, but does not match on number of children	1	0.9
4. Household now headed by widow with the correct number and ages of children	2	1.9
5. Household empty, demolished since 1881 or not recorded in one of the notebooks	43	38.0
6. Household does not match, but is similar on occupation, etc.	43	38.0
TOTAL	113	100.0

but has only one child recorded for 1886, compared to three (aged five, three, and one) in 1881. It is possible that this was due to the death of two of these young children, a not uncommon occurrence, or it may just be another hammerman and his family. For a further two households (type number four in Table 9-2) the head of household is, in 1886, a widow with correct number and ages of children. There can be no certainty that these are the survivors of, in 1881, a 42 year old boiler maker and a 37 year old maltster, but it is not impossible.

An exact comparison was not possible for forty-three households, there being a lack of any information recorded for them in the Booth notebooks. As noted above, the School Board Visitor's knowledge would tend to exclude those families without children, the transient, and the elderly. When a School Board Visitor had no knowledge of a household, but knew it to be existent, it was marked with 'U' (unscheduled) in the notebooks. The computerised sample has 28.8 per cent of its households recorded as 'unscheduled'. In addition, occasional street addresses are listed as 'empty' or 'torn down'. In one case a street address found in the Census Enumerator's notebook is not found at all in the Booth notebook.

Looking closely at the information held on these forty-three households in the Census Enumerator's notebooks suggests why they might have been excluded from the records of the School Board Visitors if the same families were

living at these addresses in 1885-6. A higher proportion of these households are inhabited by people who do not have children. In the overall sample 87.1% of households are headed by a husband and wife living together, in these forty-three households only 62.7% are husbands and wives living together. Of the forty-three households, twenty-eight either had no children (21) or would have had children older than school age in 1886 (7). Altogether 149 people lived in these households, of whom nine were widows, seven were lodgers, and seven married couples were over age 50 and shown without children. Only seventeen of the forty-three households were of the composition which School Board Visitors would be required to keep on their books. In terms of their listed occupations, however, they were much the same as those recorded by Booth; labourers, carmen, and porters predominate, and the widows and other women worked as charwomen or at mangles. With the exception that these households had fewer children, they were virtually identical to their neighbours.

The remaining forty-three households' addresses (38 per cent) had information recorded for both 1881 and 1886, but did not match on occupation or number of or ages of children. Of these forty-three households in the Census records, four were young couples with a single infant at home, four were elderly couples, two more were middle aged couples with no children. The other thirty-three were families with children, including one of a widow with children and one of a widower with children. Several of

these households included a lodger. It was assumed that these were families different to those listed for the same addresses in the Booth notebooks. In short, the test sample of 113 households may be divided into: 21 (18.6 per cent) reasonable matches; 6 (5.3 per cent) possible matches; 43 (38 percent) no data or missing data; and 43 (38 per cent) not matching.

Two points should be drawn from this test; the first is its comment on the reliability of Booth's data. The minimum criterion set for this reliability test was that at least ten per cent of the households should match (with age adjustments) between the two data sets. The 18.6 per cent of the sample which did match meets this criterion, and in exceeding it helps to make up for the uncertainty due to the lack of family names in Booth's notebooks. Further tests of reliability may be made when and if other forms of contemporary information are discovered. Until that time an interim verdict may be pronounced - the School Board Visitors did have sufficient and correct information on the families they knew. Given an understanding of the data set's omissions (the elderly, childless, and transient) it may be accepted and used.

The second point which may be drawn from this test concerns the forty-three households (38 per cent) which did not match. While they would clearly appear to be not the same families, none of these households were radically different in character from 1881 to 1886. A French Polisher

(the occupation, not the nationality) and his family in 1881 might be replaced by a Dyer and his family in 1886, a Stevedore's family gives way to a Dock Labourer's, but the demographic nature of the neighbourhood alters little over the five years. The changes which do occur are slight, occupational status shifting only a notch up or down. For example, on Heath Street, in two contiguous households, a widowed laundress and children and the Rigger and Dock Labourer of 1881 are replaced by a Bookbinder with a large family and a Gunmaker. All in all this is a small but perceptible improvement on the old neighbourhood which may have been caused by rising rents - Heath Street being a wider, more salubrious thoroughfare than, for example, a smallish side lane like Blondin Street which seems to decline a bit over the five years. There the Plumber at Number 14, and the Railway Porter at Number 15, gave way to casual labourers. Of all the households the only inroad of what might be considered a lower middle class person is the unmarried, thirty year old school teacher who was lodging with a family in Desart Street. This close similarity between neighbourhoods over time is another check on Booth's data. While it can say nothing about reliability, it makes a strong case that these data are representative of the population from which they are drawn. In sum, the closeness with which these data represent the area and, particularly, the 18.6 per cent of households which match exactly, confirm that Booth's efforts to assemble information were successful, and it supports his view that

his 'books of notes are mines of information' (1889:24).

Given that these data are reliable and representative, there is one further caveat which must be attached to their use. The assumptions upon which Booth formed his results are often forgotten and it is best to restate them here. 'I have relied upon information obtained from the School Board Visitors', Booth wrote, 'and my tables are based on three assumptions' (1889:4). These three assumptions are Booth's recognition of the skew in his data. The first of these was 'that the numbers of married men with school children in each section by employment imply a similar proportion in the same sections of married men without school children, and of other male adults', (1889:4). Booth reckoned that the choice of employment was usually made before marriage and children and that a man usually continued in an occupation after children had left home. The number of men without children to be added to his summary tables of employment was derived from the proportions of unmarried and childless men returned in the Census. The Census was also used to make the adjustments necessary to the second assumption 'likewise the number of children of school age in each section implies the existence of brothers and sisters, older and younger, to be found living under the same home conditions', (1889:4). The final assumption relied, in part, on the two before, and made possible Booth's discussing the whole of the population - 'That the condition as to poverty of those with children at school in

each section will safely represent the condition of the whole section.' He based this assumption on the effects of the life-cycle, 'younger men in some employments, and the older man in others, earn less money than those of middle age who are fathers of the children at school, but both are at less expense', (1889:5). Booth felt that these adjustments were necessary so that he might discuss the whole population of the East End, and in spite of them he believed that 'the condition of the bulk will be better than that of the part we are able to test'. (1889:5). Without the necessary information to empirically test these assumptions Booth was forced to arrive at them through his own logic and experience, and to use them with the understanding that they were open to question. One such question, that of reliability and representativeness, has been pressed here. The answer provided by this test tends to confirm Booth's own assertion 'that the true, and not more than the true, significance and value may be given to the facts and figures produced' (1889:7). On the other hand, his assertion of truthfulness does not rest on reliability alone. Accurate data can easily be incorrectly analysed and misinterpreted. If these data are reliable, a further question remains: how successful was Booth in analysing and interpreting the information he had collected. An attempt to answer that question requires more than comparison with contemporary sources. One possible way in which to answer that question is to submit Booth's data and analysis for reanalysis using more recent and more

sophisticated statistical techniques.

Computer Analysis of Booth's Data

As reported above there have been a number of criticisms of Booth's 'subjective' analysis of poverty in the East End. Yet there remains an historical artefact against which to test Booth's analysis - the information recorded in the notebooks. The notebooks contain some variables which must be considered as 'subjective' or 'opinion', and they also contain variables which are, if the previously reported test against the 1881 Census is correct, clear or adequate representations of social facts. Both types of variables are useful and usable in modern analysis. The gap of more than one hundred years makes any form of replication impossible, nor do data of sufficient equivalence exist. The possible alternative of making an internal analysis of Booth's categories, however, is methodologically acceptable. The test of the validity of Booth's data reported earlier indicates that the information collected by Booth and subsequently coded for computer use may be statistically analysed, albeit with caution. It is an alternative justified by the development of much more powerful statistical techniques since Booth analysed these same data.

Some debate has centred on Booth's assignment of households to his Social Class Code. A second area of disagreement has concerned the placement of households

below or above the Poverty Line. For the most part this disagreement and debate have centred on the belief that Booth's assessment of households for categorisation was, as Marsh put it, 'hopelessly subjective'. This supposed subjectivity has two principal parts: it could arise if the information received from the School Board Visitors was unreliable; and/or it could arise if the various criteria drawn from this information were evaluated and applied arbitrarily by Booth or his staff when households were assigned to social classes or to one side or the other of the poverty line. The test of the Booth sample against the 1881 Census reported above suggests that the information received from the School Board Visitors was reliable. If that is so, what remains is to test the decisions made by Booth and his staff in the assignment of households to categories of class or poverty. Both of these areas may be tested using multivariate techniques.

A question which cannot be answered is the absolute level of poverty which existed in the East End in 1886. No independent measure of poverty exists which might be applied to this group of households. For that reason it is impossible to participate in the same controversy that Booth was addressing in the original research. Booth sought an exact measure of the number of households in poverty, and to determine the relationship of measured poverty to economic and social factors. Unless comprehensive new data from the 1880's are discovered it is impossible to make an assessment of the number in, and causes of, poverty in the

East End which is <u>independent</u> of the information in Booth's notebooks. What is possible is the statistical separation of the factors which Booth used to measure and describe poverty, and to determine how well his measurement and description of poverty was accomplished when it is assessed by his own criteria.

Booth diagnosed the poverty of the East End using the information collected into the research notebooks. The variables describing rents, incomes, occupations, number of dependents, and other measures were the indicators which Booth used to place each family into his Social Classes from A to H. An individual decision was made for each family placed into a Social Class group. Given that something more than 100,000 such decisions had to be made, it is unlikely that much time was taken on any one decision, or that the assignments to Social Classes were all made by the same person, though there is evidence to suggest that it was Booth himself who made the majority of them. In addition, the notebooks contain much more information about some households than others; this being the case the apparent uniformity of Booth's social classes is open to question. Modern statistical techniques allow the analysis of the classification decisions made by Booth and his staff to determine which items of the notebook information were most important in the placement of any particular family in a social class category. Other techniques allow us to reclassify the sample into the

social classes outlined by Booth, but to do so with uniformity in the use of internal criteria. A further analysis may be used to divide the sample according to Booth's poverty line, and, again, to determine the importance given to the various criteria used by Booth and his staff in the assignment of households to each side of the poverty line.

The following analysis can not tell us whether Booth was right or correct when he classified a household to a particular social class or to one or the other side of the poverty line. Nor could there have been empirically correct placements into what were essentially arbitrary categories. The arbitrary nature of the concept of social class is not restricted to Booth's work. In modern social science, categories of social class are a widely used, but imprecise, measure which usually contain income, employment, education levels, and occupation prestige. Several writers, in particular Gibbs (1989), have demonstrated the imprecision of social class as a tool for social analysis. Examine carefully the components of social class, writes Gibbs, and 'it appears arbitrary; and to the extent that it avoids arbitrariness, the definition promises negligible empirical applicability' (1989:13-14). Examine the relevant research on social class and 'there is no prospect of even appreciable agreement among independent investigators in identifying the number of classes in a given social unit, much less the numbers of each' (1989:13-16). Since the concept of social class eludes empirical

testing 'no particular population category as a class can be invalidated' (1989:13-22).

Booth avoided building a theoretical framework around the concept of social class. Concentrating on the problem of poverty, social class served for Booth 'a pragmatic rather than a theoretic function and was employed primarily to make operative distinctions among different degrees of poverty and well-being' (Pfautz, 1967:128). As a diagnostic tool Booth's concept of social class was fluid. In Life and Labour Booth uses the eight social classes (A to H) categorised in the first volume in seven different arrangements which group the original eight classes into three, four, or five bands depending on the topic under discussion. Using his social classes as a diagnostic tool rather than theoretic predictor is indicative of Booth's cautious, understated approach. Then, as now, social class is virtually untestable as a theory since there exist no discrete social classes in society. The measures used by Booth to estimate social class position, as well as the measures used today to the same end, are distributed continuously (though not evenly) across the population. As Booth put it, it is a 'doubtful line of demarcation between class and class among the poor' (1891, Vol. 2:19).

The analysis that follows will illuminate how Booth used the criteria derived from the interview notebooks, and will indicate if he and his staff were using those criteria uniformly. It is also possible to determine the emphasis

Booth placed on each criterion in making the decision to assign a household to a social class group. When the 'subjective' criteria (such as comments about drunkenness) are separated from those which are more 'objective' (such as the number of rooms inhabited) it becomes possible to determine if 'subjective' measures were more or less important than 'objective' measures, and if households are being elevated or relegated in social class groupings on the basis of subjective measures. In short, in one regard it is a test of whether Booth's assignments were too often subjective, the product of moral judgements and prejudices. But in another regard, the information available to Booth may have been subjective: in that the description of any household may have been only the opinion of the School Board Visitor; or that some attributes may have been estimates only, such as the way in which wages were often inferred from occupations. How any social scientist deals with information which is difficult to measure and integrate, is, in turn, a measure of their ability. The test which follows of Booth's ability as a social scientist is, I believe, more important than any question of his 'moral judgements'.

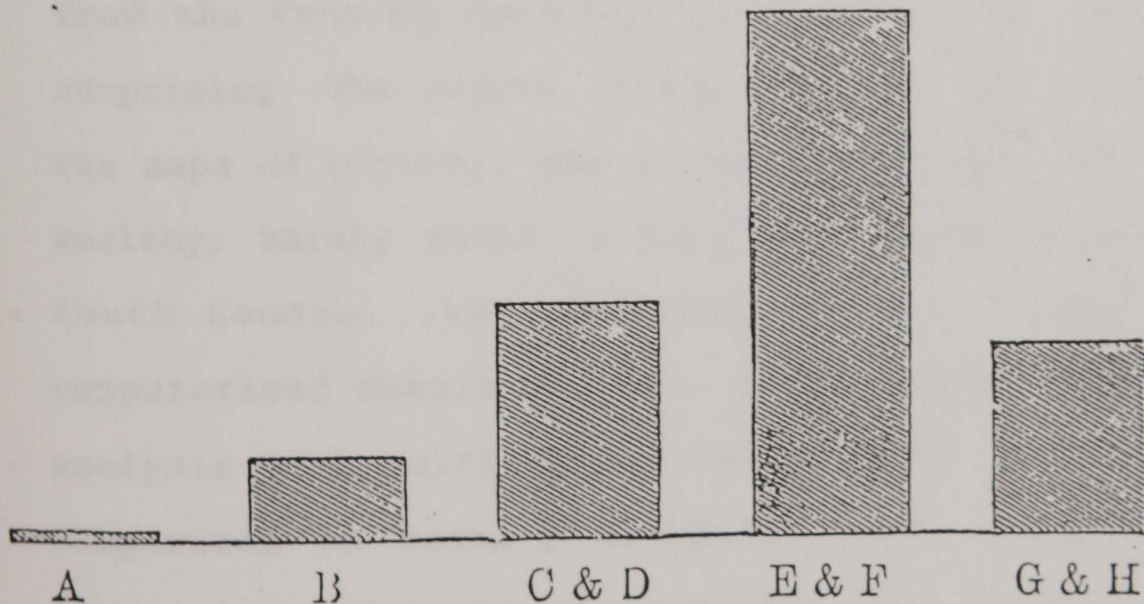
Sampling and weighting

The sample analysed here was drawn directly from Booth's notebooks. A careful examination of the notebooks uncovered the potential variables and values to be found for households. A total of 160 possible variables were identified, though any one household might contain information on only 25 to 30 variables. The large number of possible variables, given the relatively small number of columns within which information on a household might be entered, is a result of an attempt to allow for all information to be collected no matter how small or trivial. The data as collected and coded into the rectangular file are sufficiently robust to bear the following analysis, but only just so. Imperfect knowledge of the full range of notebook data when this sample was taken resulted in over- and under- sampling on certain geographic variables. It was later determined that the Central East End had been oversampled and areas such as Hackney were undersampled. As described above, sampling was by clusters of households taken from the first thirty notebooks at points randomly selected in each notebook. This clustering proved important in testing these data against the 1881 Census, but it has no use in the analysis which follows. After excluding from the analysis those cases which were entered as 'U' or 'unscheduled' in the notebooks, 1034 cases remained. Of those 1034 the distribution into Booth Classes was similar to, but insufficiently close to, Booth's distribution to use the sample without compensatory weighting. Booth's full

The proportions of the different classes shown for all London are as follows :—

Class	Number		Per cent.	
A (lowest)	37,610	or	·9 per cent.	In poverty, 30·7 per cent.
B (very poor)	316,834	,,	7·5 per cent.	
C and D (poor)	938,293	,,	22·3 per cent.	
E and F (working class, comfortable)	2,166,503	,,	51·5 per cent.	In comfort, 69·3 per cent.
G and H (middle class and above)	749,930	,,	17·8 per cent.	
	4,209,170		100 per cent.	
Inmates of Institutions............	99,830			
	4,309,000			

Graphically, the proportions may be shown thus :—



(Reproduced with enlargement from page 21, Chapter 2, 'Statistics of Poverty', Volume 2, Life and Labour of the People of London, 1892 Edition.)

data did not describe a normal distribution across his Classes as might be expected. In particular in Booth's classification Class C and Class A were especially small in relation to the other classes. In the published volumes this fact is not always apparent, for Booth would combine Classes A and B, and Classes C and D, resulting in a more normal distribution (one of the more frequent regroupings mentioned above); Classes G and H were also regularly combined in the published work. On the previous page a facsimile of a table from Volume 2 of _Life and Labour_ shows one recombination of the class groupings used by Booth to describe all of London.

The computerised sample did not yield any cases coded by Booth as being in the highest Class H. Given the small relative size of the sample, and the fact that it was drawn from the Central East End notebooks only, this is not surprising. The colour Yellow was used for this class on the maps of poverty, and as Booth described it: 'Yellow - Wealthy; hardly found in East London and little found in South London...keep servants' (Vol. 2, pg. 40). The computerised sample of 1034, while large enough to bear analysis with multivariate techniques, is very small in comparison to Booth's notebook data. After a careful inspection and count through the data notebooks a safe estimate is that Booth held data on about 128,000 households. The sample of 1034, therefore, amounts to only .80% of the 'population' of notebook households. Because of

the inadequacies of the sample just described, it has been weighted to better approximate the population it sought to represent; this procedure multiplies cases in the sample by different fractions (determined by the percentages allocated to each class by Booth) until it resembles the distribution in the full sample. Put another way, the procedure applies additional fractional counters to the cases requiring extra 'weight' in the analysis. In the computerised sample there are still no cases in Class H even after weighting since no estimates of Class H parameters may be made. The percentage distribution of the original notebook information across Booth's Classes, of the unweighted computer sample, and the weighted sample are given in Table 9-4:

Table 9-4

Booth Class	Booth data	Orig. sample	Weighted Sample
A	1.2%	.6%	1.2%
B	11.2	12.1	11.0
C	8.3	.3	8.6
D	14.5	28.1	16.5
E	42.3	56.1	46.5
F	13.6	.2	12.4
G	3.9	2.6	4.4
H	5.0	---	---

The sample as weighted provides a much better estimate of the population parameters of the East End of 1886 as

measured by Booth. All of the analyses reported below were performed on both the unweighted and the weighted samples, none of the findings gained from the weighted sample were significantly different from those obtained on the 'raw' sample. Because I believe the weighted sample to be a more reliable source of information the tables below are taken only from it. As a pilot sample to test basic assumptions about Booth's findings the computerised sample is sufficient. More detailed study of the East End itself based on the notebook information must wait until the 35,000 case sample comes into use. This sample did away with rectangular data structure using a relational data base to receive the information as recorded in the notebooks on every fifth household.

With the 1034 cases (weighted to 1110) refinement and construction of new variables allows the placement of households into the Class Code to be tested. There are two basic dependent variables to be analysed. The first is Booth's Class Code itself, an ordinal and discrete classification which should contain within its statistical make-up the 'logic' of its construction and content no matter how subjective that construction might be. The second is the 'Poverty Line' which Booth drew across his population. The line is available as a variable when each case in the sample is assigned one of two values in a dichotomy according to its placement by Booth above or below the line of poverty. The subjective information recorded on any household may also be converted to a

variable for analysis. Not all households had entries of a subjective nature in the notebooks. Of those that did, the comments were both positive ('poor but honest and hardworking') and negative ('low and dirty, drinks'). The possibility of no comment, a positive comment, or a negative comment allowed construction of a trichotomous variable which represents the placement of each case into one of these three categories.

The remaining variables needed for the analysis are much more straightforward. From the columns of the notebooks described above may be gleaned information on the occupations of the head of the household; that of the woman in the house (if she was not 'head of household'); the number of rooms the household occupies; their rent per week; the total number of people in the household; the summed (possibly estimated) incomes of the members of the household minus the rent; and whether or not children of the household are working. These, and the subjective information, are the criteria with which Booth classified his 'population' into Social Classes. In discussing his own research Booth asserted that, in the absence of reliable income data, the strongest indicators of economic status were the occupation of the head of household, and the number of rooms the household occupied. At the beginning of his 'pilot test' Booth had decided against using income estimates, as noted earlier. He wrote to Beatrice Potter 'We can get from the Visitors an opinion on the earnings of

each man and I should like to find some way of noting it down for averages; but I feel at the end it is only an opinion and I hesitate to make it the basis of our classification. The character of employment is at any rate a fact...' (Letter to B. Potter, Passfield Collection, BLPES).

Multivariate analysis allows an examination of how Booth used each of the variables just listed to discriminate between the sections of the population he perceived as being separate social classes. Perfect separation could not, of course, occur in the population across attributes such as rent or income, in the way it might if something like voting preference were being measured, but the separation of groups can still be tested even when there is a degree of overlap. The specific technique used in this research situation is known as Discriminant Analysis, first introduced by Sir Ronald Fisher. Its underlying assumption of Discriminant Analysis is that linear combinations of predictor variables may be formed which will serve to classify cases into groups. These predictor variables are sometimes called the **discriminating variables**; in this case these are the independent variables (such as: occupation, rent, or subjective assessment) discussed above.

There are two steps to Discriminant Analysis: **analysis** and **classification**. The analysis step allows measurement of the success with which the independent variables actually discriminate between categories when combined into

discriminant functions. In addition, the function coefficients identify the variables which contribute most to the classification. The second step of **classification** acts as a check on the original division of cases into groups. A separate linear combination of discriminating variables is used for each group and the cases are reclassified according to their probability of membership according to these linear combinations. If cases are misclassified, perhaps because the criteria for classification have been applied arbitrarily, the **classification** step will indicate this.

Testing Booth's Social Class Code

The Discriminant Analysis first identifies those variables which contribute the most to the differentiation of groups. The variables entered into the discriminant analysis of the Booth Class Code are: Number of rooms; Head of Household's occupation; Wife's occupation; Rent per week; Total number in household; Children's work status; Income after rent; and the trichotomous subjective assessment 'Mentioned' in the notebook. The procedure first seeks to minimise Wilks' lambda statistic; this statistic is the ratio of the within-groups sum of squares to the total sum of squares. A lambda of 1 occurs when group means are equal (that is, when there is no difference between groups), a lambda close to 0 occurs when group differences are strong. Variables are entered into the equation in the order of their ability to differentiate between the groups

in question (and so reduce the lambda score). The order of variable entry and the associated Wilks' lambda score are shown in Table 9-5:

Table 9-5

Variable Entered (step)	Wilks' lambda* (for entire classification)	
1.Number of rooms	0.413	(0.578)**
2.Subjective 'Mention'	0.295	(0.431)
3.Head of Household Occupation	0.251	(0.411)
4.Rent per week	0.230	(0.401)
5.Total number in household	0.202	(0.378)
6.Income after rent	0.188	(0.361)
7.Children's work status	0.179	(0.346)

[The variable 'Wife's occupation' was excluded by the analysis as it did not contribute sufficiently to the classification of groups.]

*all statistics are significant beyond the .0001 level

**the scores in brackets are the Wilks' lambdas for the same analysis of the unweighted sample

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The Wilks' lambda score can vary from 0 to 1.0. As noted above a score of 1.0 would mean that group means are equal, in other words that there was no difference between the Social Classes as Booth defined them. This statistical procedure also ranks the variables according to their ability to separate the groups and enters them in that order. At the beginning of the analysis the procedure assumes that there is no difference between the classes and

assigns the score of 1.0. Then the variables are entered in the order of their ability to reduce the score toward 0 (which would occur if the classes were absolutely distinct). In Table 9-5 the introduction of the variable 'Number of rooms' reduces the Wilks' lambda from 1.0 to 0.413, entering the variable 'Subjective "mention"' reduces the score further to 0.295. The final Wilks' lambda of 0.179 shown in Table 9-5 indicates that the Booth Class categories are statistically distinct and may be thought of as well defined.

In addition to Wilks' lambda, a Discriminant Analysis derives canonical discriminant functions which measure the degree of association between the discriminant scores and the groups. The functions identified are similar to the factors identified in a factor analysis, in that the linear combination of the variables results in the emergence of underlying explanatory factors. These underlying functions may be used to represent the inter-relationships of several variables. In this case the functions identified will represent the 'weight' or importance that Booth attached to different variables (or groups of variables) when he placed a household in a particular Social Class. This analysis identified six possible factors within the eight independent variables; only three of these factors were significant to an acceptable degree and they accounted for 97.4% of the variance in the decision to place a household in a particular Social Class. The relevant scores for those functions are given in Table 9-6:

Table 9-6*

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Canonical Corr.
1	1.798	68.6	0.802
2	0.558	21.3	0.598
3	0.196	7.5	0.405

*(The unweighted sample produced lower Eigenvalues - Function 1 (.699), Function 2 (.397), and Function 3 (.116). The allocation of variables to the functions remained the same.)

When the standardised canonical discriminant function coefficients are examined for each variable in relation to these three functions, the key variables in each function are identified. The Number of Rooms the household occupies is the strongest component of the first function (coefficient = 1.02); the subjective 'Mention' (coeff. = 0.76) and to a lesser degree the Rent per Week (coeff. = 0.57) are the main components of the second function; and the Head of Household occupation (coeff. = 0.71) is the major component of the third function. These three functions can be seen to parallel and support the evidence in Table 9-5 which measured the effect on the Wilks' lambda for the entire classification of each of these variables. The four variables identified by the Wilks' lambda score as having the greatest power to differentiate the Classes are also identified as the components of the three functions shown in Table 9-6. Put simply, both of these statistical measures point to the same four variables as having the

most influence on the decision classifying a family as belonging to a particular Social Class.

The second step in the Discriminant Analysis is the **classification** of cases on the basis of their predicted group membership. The predicted group membership is based on the ability of the Discriminant Analysis to evaluate all variables of all cases simultaneously. Taking advantage of this additional information the probability of any one case belonging to each group is calculated. The result is given in Table 9-7 which presents the actual (as assigned by Booth) and the predicted (as assigned by the Discriminant Analysis) group membership for the Booth Class Codes. When all household attributes are simultaneously considered, the total percentage of cases correctly classified by Booth to his Class Codes is 55.3%. (In the unweighted sample the total percentage of cases correctly classified was 44.97%). In other words, according to the discriminant analysis, just over half of the cases in this sample were placed in their correct Classes by Booth. The percent of Booth's Class which is correctly or incorrectly classified is shown by reading left to right from the 'Actual' Booth Class. For example, for the thirteen cases in the sample originally assigned to Class A, the analysis indicates that nine of them (or 66.7%) were correctly assigned, but that two (16.7%) of the thirteen should have been assigned to Class B and a further two cases (the remaining 16.7%) should have been assigned to Class E. See Table 9-7:

Table 9-7

in %'s

Actual Class	(N)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
		Predicted Class Membership						
A	(13)	*66.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0
B	(121)	21.6	*65.6	0.0	4.8	5.6	0.0	2.4
C	(96)	0.0	0.0	*100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
D	(183)	11.7	37.8	3.4	*21.0	16.5	2.1	7.6
E	(510)	3.1	4.1	2.6	14.1	*48.6	9.7	17.8
F	(138)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	*100.0	0.0
G	(49)	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.5	25.9	*11.1

* indicates % correctly classified

Interpretation

The Discriminant Analysis provides three items of information: firstly, an indication of the success with which the independent classifying variables actually discriminate between groups; secondly, it identifies those variables which contribute the most to the classification; and thirdly, it identifies those cases which have been misclassified. For Booth's Social Class Code each of these points have clear and statistically significant results. Firstly, the variables recorded in the notebooks and used in the analysis are very successful in discriminating between the Booth Classes. If the assignment to classes had been very arbitrary or subjective, the analysis, particularly the Wilks' lambda, would have indicated a much weaker relationship between the criteria and the groups.

That the variable 'Wife's occupation' was excluded by the analysis is probably more due to the small number of cases with data in this variable than its discriminating power when present. Secondly, of the variables which successfully separate households into Social Classes, the 'Number of rooms' contributes the most to the classification, the 'Subjective "Mention"' the next most, and 'Rent per week' and 'Head of Household Occupation' are also, but not as importantly, contributors. The discriminant functions indicate that the classification virtually takes place on the power of these variables alone, with the 'Number of rooms' accounting for over half of the classifying 'decision'. Thirdly, it can be said that, in this sample, 44.7% of the cases were misclassified by Booth. How this misclassification occurred may be, in part, explained through a careful examination of the distribution of the cases in their predicted Classes. In Table 9-7 it is Class D which has the lowest number of correctly classified cases. The majority of the cases Booth considered to be in Class D were placed by the analysis in Classes A, B, and C - predominately Class B, these three classes accounting for 53% of those reclassified from Booth's Class D. This misclassification by Booth suggests that the criteria and the subjective assessments elevated a number of low income families into Class D, the 'Poor', when they might have otherwise been seen as the 'Very Poor'. Another dimension to be considered is the spread of

cases across the Predicted Classes. Given that no exact formulae were used by Booth to place households into Social Classes, it might be expected that the slippage would be from the 'correct' class to an adjacent class. In fact, about one fifth of the sample falls into classes adjacent to those which might be expected for them, put another way, over a third of the misclassified cases are 'near misses'. If the 'near misses' are included, the percentage of cases correctly classified increases to 73.2%. Finally, there must be a recognition of the small, but noticeable, number of cases which may be reported as misclassified but are more likely so placed due to missing data. In particular, the twenty-two cases classified by Booth as Class G and by the analysis as Class A are probably due to flaws in the data rather than a complete misjudgement on Booth's part. This occurs because the School Board Visitors had the most information on the poorest households and the least information on the more well to do. This paucity of information on the middle class is reflected in the sample and, with examination, is shown to be reflected in these cases as well. Booth's placement of families into Social Classes will be discussed again later. What follows is a similar Discriminant Analysis that examines the Poverty Line.

Testing the Poverty Line

Charles Booth drew not one but two Poverty Lines across the population. The one most remembered is the line

between his Classes D and E. All below that line, which amounted to the much remarked upon 30.7% of the population, counted as the Poor. Figure 9-1 shows the grouped classes as they were presented by Booth in 1887:

Figure 9-1

Booth's Poverty Lines

Classes A and B	8.4%	The Very Poor
Classes C and D	22.3%	The Poor
(The Poverty Line)		
Classes E and F	51.5%	Working Class
Classes G and H	17.8%	Middle Class

[The exact distribution was changed by Booth as the research added more cases, by the 1893 edition those below the Poverty Line (Classes A to D) amounted to 35.2% of the total.]

His definition of who was to fall below this line was not exact, but neither was it necessarily arbitrary. In the first paper he presented to the Royal Statistical Society he wrote:

By the word 'poor', I mean to describe those who have a fairly regular though bare income, such as 18 shillings or 21 shillings per week for a moderate family, and by 'very poor' those who fall below this standard, whether from chronic irregularity of work, sickness, or a large number of young children. I do not here introduce any moral question: whatever the cause, those whose means prove to be barely sufficient, or quite insufficient for decent independent life, are counted as 'poor' and 'very poor' respectively. (JRSS, 1887:328)

Generally these categories corresponded to Classes A and B

for the 'very poor' and Classes C and D for the 'poor'. The Simeys have expressed the view that this division has been taken too seriously to the exclusion of more important descriptive information. They believe the estimate is 'imprecise and was originally intended to be only illustrative' (1960:187). When Booth presented the results of his first analysis to the Statistical Society his division was also criticised by Professor Leone Levi because it did not examine the actual cost of 'vice, extravagance and waste' in the family budget. Booth, as may be seen from the quote above, sought to measure poverty without reference to its immediate cause on the assumption that poverty was poverty no matter how it came about. He justified his method of research by stating that: 'On the other hand we may as logically, or perhaps more logically, disregard the follies past or present which bring poverty in their train...In this temper we prefer to view and consider these unfortunates only as they actually exist' (JRSS, 1887:327). Another criticism was that the information returned by the Visitors might overestimate the amount of poverty as the respondents deliberately under-reported their income. In an attempt to answer both of these criticisms Booth collected and analysed household budgets from thirty families. This test was not especially successful. He sought to demonstrate what he meant by 'poverty, want and distress' but, as the Simeys report 'the results were not convincing. The incomes of twenty-five of the thirty families were 21s. or over: most of them were

well above the 18s. to 21s. per week for a family of moderate size that he had originally chosen as the line of demarcation. Three of the five families with low income were in Class B and one (with no children) in Class E.' (1960:187).

The way Booth dealt with the inability of income by itself to demonstrate legitimate differences has been discussed above. For the division of the population into Social Classes several other measures in addition to income were brought to bear. And the Discriminant Analysis above has shown that Booth assigned the greatest weight not to income but to the number of rooms the household occupied. An index of crowding would become a more explicit definition of poverty in Booth's work several years after the publication of the poverty survey analysed here. Because the poverty line was ultimately drawn using the divisions of the population into social classes, the concern held by the Simeys that Booth overemphasised income is unnecessary. The poverty line is an artefact <u>derived</u> from the social class codings; as such it has much more to say about crowding and occupation than income. Booth was well aware that the poverty line was a reduction of his social class categories. For that reason he replaced it in the Industry Series (Vol. 1, 1-4) with an index of crowding drawn from the 1891 Census (to which he had been allowed to add questions for that purpose). He was pessimistic as to the ultimate usefulness of the poverty line and explained

when he replaced it that 'The original classification [the poverty line] has the advantage of being directly aimed at poverty, with which domestic crowding is not entirely coincident, but was based on opinion ...whereas the new classification is based on a direct enumeration of the facts' (Industry Series, Vol. 1:4).

Booth's pessimistic appraisal of the efficacy of the Poverty Line as a classification is borne out by statistical analysis. Using the same technique of Discriminant Analysis described previously, the Poverty Line was tested twice: once as a demarcation between the Poor and the rest of the population; and once as a dual line that separated the 'very poor', the 'poor' and the non-poor. The same variables which were analysed in the examination of the Booth Class Codes were used in the analysis of the Poverty Line.

The simple division of the population according to placement above or below the line of poverty was tested first, then the separation to 'poor, 'very poor' and non-poor. The first step in the Discriminant Analysis identifies those variables which contribute the most to the separation of the population to each side of the poverty line. Only five of the original eight variables are retained as statistically significant. Again the 'Number of rooms' contributes the most, and the subjective 'Mention' contributes the next most. The entry step and Wilks' lambda for each of these five variables is given in Table 9-8.

Table 9-8

Variable Entered (step)	Wilks' lambda* (for entire classification)	
1. Number of rooms	0.765	(0.885)**
2. Subjective 'Mention'	0.618	(0.834)
3. Children's work status	0.605	(0.819)
4. Income after rent	0.600	(0.810)
5. Total number in household	0.598	(0.806)

*all statistics significant beyond the .001 level

**the scores in brackets are the Wilks' lambdas for the same analysis of the unweighted sample

The final Wilks' lambda of 0.598 indicates that the division of the population into the poor and the non-poor is not a very distinct classification. Compare this score with the lambda of 0.179 which denotes the very distinct separation of the Booth Classes. The group means on each side of the poverty line are different, but not so distinctly different as those of the Social Classes. The analysis identified only one discriminant function of which 'Number of rooms' (coeff. = 0.70) and the 'Subjective mention' (coeff. = 0.67) were the principal components. These two variables may be thought of as the indicators Booth predominantly used to distinguish between the poor and the non-poor. In spite of the indistinct nature of the underlying discriminant function, the analysis still tests the classification according to the criteria found significant. Given those criteria, the analysis finds that

Booth was more successful in allocating families to each side of the Poverty Line than he was in assigning them to Social Classes. It may at first seem contradictory that Booth was somehow better at dividing the population into what has been shown to be not very distinct groups when he split the population with the poverty line. It is important to remember that Discriminant Analysis performs in two steps - analysis and classification. The analysis of the Poverty Line has demonstrated it to be a rather blurred but still statistically significant demarcation. The classification finds that Booth was successful at the distribution of households into these two, admittedly, less distinct categories. The actual and predicted allocations are given in Table 9-9:

Table 9-9

in %'s

	Predicted Allocation	
Actual Allocation	The Poor	The Non-poor
The Poor	*84.2	15.8
The Non-poor	25.5	*74.5

*indicates % correctly classified

This statistical classification finds that Booth correctly assigned 78.1% of the households in the sample to the correct side of the poverty line (48.83% in the unweighted sample). But it must be remembered that the analysis showed that, on the other hand, the poverty line was not a very efficient or descriptive method with which to divide the population.

The division of the population into the trichotomous groups of 'very poor', 'poor' and non-poor fares slightly better in the light of statistical analysis. (This part of the analysis was not carried out on the unweighted sample). Six of the original eight variables are found significant in discriminating between these three groups and the Wilks' lambda is reduced to 0.533 by the separation of the 'poor' and the 'very poor'. This separation of the 'very poor' into their own category points up the possibility that subjective assessments figured largely in the assignment to the relative classes. In particular, it suggests that the subjective judgements played a greater part in the separation of the 'very poor' from the 'poor', than they did in the demarcation of the Poverty Line. This reliance on subjective 'mentions' is indicated by the reversal of the positions of 'Number of rooms' and 'Subjective mention' in their contribution to the allocation of families to these three groups. For the first time 'Subjective mention' is of greater statistical importance than 'Number of rooms'. The order of variable entry and the associated Wilks' lambda are shown in Table 9-10:

Table 9-10

Variable entered (step)	Wilks' lambda* (for entire classification)
1. Subjective 'mention'	0.741
2. Number of rooms	0.585
3. Children's work status	0.571
4. Income after rent	0.555
5. Rent per week	0.540
6. Total number in household	0.533

*all are significant beyond the .001 level

A second piece of evidence which suggests that the subjective concerns were more likely to be applied when families were assigned to the 'very poor' or the 'poor' is the configuration of the discriminant functions when the the trichotomous division is analysed. Two underlying functions are identified by the canonical correlations, both are statistically significant and together they account for 100% of the variance. The relevant scores for these two functions are shown in Table 9-11.

Table 9-11

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Canonical corr.
1	0.689	86.2	0.638
2	0.110	13.8	0.315

An examination of the standardised discriminant function

coefficients points to a clear demarcation in their content. The subjective 'Mention' is the strongest component of the first function (coefficient = 0.71) and the number of rooms is also an important component (coeff. = 0.65). In the second function the main component is the number of rooms (coeff. = -0.88). It is the sign of these coefficients which gives an indication of the way in which the subjective 'Mention' would affect the classification decision. The variable 'Subjective mention' is coded 1, 0, and -1, for a positive subjective assessment, no assessment, and a negative subjective assessment respectively. The positive sign of the coefficient for the 'Subjective mention' variable in the primary discriminant function indicates that statements offered by the Visitors to the effect that a family was 'poor but honest' or 'hardworking' for example, were more likely to have an impact on the classifying decision than a negative subjective assessment. The sign of the 'Number of rooms' variable's coefficients in the first and second functions is different and the scores for this variable are significant in each function. Put simply, the first function may be conceptualised as representing economic well-being (uncrowded) and a positive subjective assessment; while the second function represents crowding and poverty. With these as the criteria the assignment by Booth of families to each of the three groups was somewhat successful. The actual and predicted assignments are given in Table 9-12.

Table 9-12

in %'s

Actual Allocation	Predicted Allocation of Households: The Very Poor	The Poor	The Non-poor
The Very Poor	*78.0	12.5	9.6
The Poor	31.8	*49.3	18.9
The Non-poor	7.5	19.1	*73.4

*indicates % correctly classified

Interpretation

It is clear from Table 9-12 that Booth was much better at identifying those families which were 'very poor' than those which were 'poor' or not poor at all. Over all 67.9% of the sample was correctly allocated according to the Discriminant Analysis. The Simeys believed that, though Booth's estimates were imprecise, 'It must not be assumed... that the definition itself, or the way in which he applied it to individual families, was unreliable'. They felt that the 'number of dependent children' or the presence of other wage earners was of 'equally great importance' (1960:187). In fact, the analysis shows that it is generally the number of rooms and the subjective assessment of the family that is of the greatest importance in Booth's decision to classify a family to a particular group or class. The same sort of imprecision which led in the household budget analysis to the placement of five low income families into three different classes varying from B to E, has led to the sort of generally correct but

imprecise allocation of families in the sample. When the sample is divided into the three groups of 'very poor', 'poor', and the non-poor, the area of imprecision can be located. In the same way in which allocations were most incorrect in the assignment to Booth's Social Class D, the assignment of households to the 'Poor' was especially problematic for Booth. Here, at the grey area nearest the line of poverty, is where Booth most needed to but could not maintain precision in his classifications. The variables which he used precluded mathematical exactitude since they combined qualitative assessments with quantitative measurements. Nor does it seem possible, given the added influence of positive subjective assessments on the allocation of families, that the variables were given equal weight by Booth each time the decision was made. All of these criticisms may be reduced to two points - that the classification system was imprecise, and that Booth was occasionally arbitrary in the choice of variables to which he gave the greatest weight in the classifying decision; but it would be unfair to end the consideration of Booth's work there.

The analysis has demonstrated that Booth was in some ways imprecise and in other ways arbitrary. These criticisms have been made before, and indeed Booth made them himself. What is more important is that the analysis demonstrates that these faults detract very little from Booth's basic findings. When viewed in the light of the

discriminant analysis Booth's classifications fail to produce results which might be expected of modern survey research, but by the tests and expectations of his own day the results were a breakthrough in empirical exactitude. The true appraisal is somewhere between these two judgements. If we accept that Booth's data is reliable, then Booth's classification was correct in the majority of cases, ranging from 55.3% to 78.1% from the sample analysed. Well over half of the families were placed in the correct Social Class category, or on the correct side of the poverty line. Those modern critics who have condemned Booth's results as completely inaccurate have not had their case proven by this analysis. By the same token Llewelyn-Smith overstated when he said that Booth's research produced 'conclusions not appreciably different from those which would have resulted from the use of more objective methods of measurement' (JRSS, 1929:536). The analysis shown above also refutes a more recent group of commentators who have asserted that Booth's classifications were unduly influenced by the negative subjective judgements passed on the poor by Booth or the Visitors (Hennock, 1976; Brown, 1968). Subjective judgements were not the most important criteria used to classify households, and when they were part of the classification 'equation' they were more likely to act as positive assessments. The classification may have been imprecise but it was not 'hopelessly subjective', nor could its value judgements be thought to carry any bias against the poor.

The apparent power of 'Number of rooms' rented by a family to serve as a classifying variable has also been corroborated by the re-analyses performed by Davies (1978) and Cullen (1979). There are a number of reasons why it should be an excellent indicator. It was a variable with little question as to its accuracy, it was verifiable and reliable. More importantly, due in large part to the serious housing crisis in London in the 1880's, rooms were scarce, and were one of the first 'purchases' a family might make if their financial position improved, or lose if their situation declined. Even in Classes C and D densities often exceeded two persons per room, sometimes far exceeding this level. Rents were fairly stable in neighbourhoods and areas of the East End, and reflected the quality of the housing rented. For all these reasons 'Number of rooms' provided a useful index to overall financial situation.

Despite its enormous size the Poverty Survey was, after all, the first exploratory work in a long series of researches. Booth made it clear that he was not satisfied with the precision with which the population was divided into Social Classes and by the poverty line, but in spite of his reservations the divisions were widely accepted and popularly believed to be fact. The analysis above cannot demonstrate that the classifications were true pictures of social facts, only that within the context of the poverty data they were reasonable and consistent, if somewhat

imprecise, classifications. It is perhaps best to view Booth's conception of his poverty line and Social Class classifications as a well-grounded step in the evolution of ideas about poverty and its measurement. The idea of a poverty line was not invented by Booth, and it has remained a well-used idea to the present day. What has changed over time is the nature of its use and meaning. Before Booth's reinterpretation of the idea of the poverty line, it was often used to denote and separate those deserving and respectable from the undeserving residuum. This entirely subjective and moral judgement was replaced by Booth with a framework for classification which incorporated both objective judgements, in its attempt to measure numbers, rents, and occupations, and value (as opposed to moral) judgements. Indubitably Booth did not achieve complete accuracy, and the value judgements he made may smack of middle-class moralism today, but the important point is that the measurement and understanding of poverty had improved and that setting it upon a firm methodological base provided an opportunity for further refinement. This improvement was not long in coming. Rowntree took one logical step and attempted to refine away the value judgements inherent in Booth's classifications. In doing so he transformed the poverty line to a much more exacting and empiric classification, but it is also possible that in doing so he took it one step away from the reality of poverty he sought to describe. Since Rowntree many attempts have been made to reconstruct the constituent parts of a

poverty line. Some have reduced the line to simple measures of absolute physical needs, others have returned to the value judgements inherent in 'relative' concepts of poverty and deprivation. The latter have probably the greatest correspondence with the lives of those whom a poverty line hopes to classify, and for that reason have the shortest periods of analytical use as life is affected by a changing culture, economy, and politics. The former, the measures of absolute poverty, change little over time as the understanding of the basic requirements of biological life has not been seriously altered as time has passed. Booth's measure combined absolute and relative measures in an attempt to best describe the reality of the poverty aggregated in the East End. It was a reasonable and demonstrably successful attempt to do so; if it did not do so in any definitive manner it has to be said that neither have subsequent attempts to comprehend and diagnose the maladies of poverty and deprivation which have plagued East London.

Chapter 10 - Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to resolve two debates, but that was not its most important task. In addition to the two debates which surround Booth's work, I expanded three themes which help us to understand better Booth's role in the history of the social sciences. I intended to demonstrate and believe that I have shown:

a) That Booth placed the study of poverty on a scientific basis.

b) That Booth was an originator of modern social research practice.

c) That Booth demonstrated a special originality in studying an entire city from several angles.

In these accomplishments Booth had a significant effect on the social sciences, in two ways in particular: he demonstrated and popularised the survey method (and the form of research organisation necessary to do it); and he demonstrated an immediate link between that form of large-scale social research and the formation of social policy. That is not to say that Booth had an immediate impact on social policy as it affected the poor, he did not. But the Poverty Study was aimed to answer discrete policy questions; and was for the most part successful in doing so, and it was successful in altering the agenda on which the policy decisions were debated. The subsequent use of Booth's research by policy makers is a different question, which has been touched on in this thesis, but which could form an extensive study in itself. The more direct linkages in the research concerning old age pensions, the following

national campaign, and their ultimate enactment into law, have also been explored here and also deserve enlargement into a larger study.

In the 1880's and 1890's the ripples of influence spread out from the Poverty Study in ways which surprised Booth. Other studies picked up the pattern of the work and made improvements, seeking to answer in other cities the questions Booth addressed for London. The Poverty Study was seen as being powerful, powerful because its results were regarded as true. The meaning and interpretation of the results were debated, but not the reality they portrayed. Many people, particularly political activists, began to adopt the research techniques which would make this power their own. The demonstration of a modern research process put power into the hands of those outside government to influence the agenda of policy. This motivation, more than academic advancement, spread Booth's influence very widely and very quickly, and helped to give birth to the Social Survey Movement. It was an influence which would then shape the academic social sciences, methodologically and substantively. It would only be after significant time had passed that debates would grow up around Booth's influence and the nature of his work within academic social science.

In this thesis, I have also tried to resolve the two central debates about Booth's work, one methodological, and the other centring on political and philosophical questions. The methodological debate has these key

questions:

> How representative were Booth's subjects?
>
> Are the results of the Poverty Study valid and reliable?
>
> For those parts of the research which were qualitative, what value do they have?

In the debate, which is primarily political and philosophical, there are also three key questions:

> What were Booth's motives for doing his research?
>
> What did he hope would be gained from his research, what were his objectives?
>
> What can we learn about Booth's personal politics and philosophy from the policy recommendations which he made?

The answers to these questions feed into one another. The methodological questions may be answered with empirical tests, but to draw conclusions about Charles Booth's work and career is a more difficult task. His was a life lived very fully, and one which had influence in more than one area. While at times quintessentially Victorian, he was, as well, singular. He was very much a 'self-made' person, not in the financial sense, but in the sense that his personal philosophy was pieced together in a way that was uniquely his. It was a philosophy which did not fit neatly into one of the existing paradigms of his day, or of today. But for Booth it was a coherent and organising set of ideas which guided his work for most of his life, and which informed and directed his development as a social investigator. The personal creed which he wrote out in 1883 (quoted in Chapter 4 above) has two central themes: devotion to the

service of humanity, described at one point as 'worship'; and the discovery and right understanding of the laws of human interaction. Booth explained that their study 'is for me "theology"'.

The close similarity to the reification of the 'social fact' by Durkheim is not accidental. Both lived out their formative years under Comte's influence. The coherence of Booth's philosophy is one reason why I believe that much of the debate raised by historians concerning the dichotomy 'moralist or social scientist' is misguided and simplistic. He was a moralist and a social scientist, and the moral component of his personal philosophy must be understood by looking to Booth's own explanations of his thought, not through the imposition of ahistorical stereotypes. As Himmelfarb put it, 'he would have rejected the antithesis between morality and science implied in this debate. He would not have understood why it was scientific to regard low wages as a cause of poverty but not intemperance or improvidence' (1991:149). There is a complexity to Charles Booth which is lost in reduction to modern dichotomies.

This complexity makes Booth a difficult person to interpret or categorise. There is an irony that a great categoriser defies placement in one or another of the conceptual categories selected for him by his contemporaries and by modern interpreters. His political philosophy did not fit any of the ideological moulds of his day. His belief in the individual, in individual rights, was at the core of his beliefs, and was the engine which

drove the other parts of his personal philosophy. But this individualism was coupled with a rational interventionist approach on many issues, an approach only slightly diminished and, at times, curiously shaped by his individualism.

Of course, in most people there are differences between what is thought of as their public and private personas. Charles Booth, the dry and methodical author of _Life and Labour_, stands in marked contrast to the emotionally sentient and altruistic reformer who campaigned for old age pensions. In the often dull mass of statistics and descriptive accounts that make up his written work it is easy to overlook the occasional burst of human feeling and his own recognition of the power of that emotion:

> It is difficult for those whose daily experience or whose imagination brings vividly before them the trials and sorrows of individual lives, to think in terms of percentages rather than numbers... In the arithmetic of woe they can only add or multiply, they cannot subtract or divide. In intensity of feeling such as this, and not in statistics, lies the power to move the world. (_Life and Labour_, Final, pg. 178)

The young Charles Booth, who wrote powerfully and passionately in the pages of _The Colony_, never stopped being moved by the plight of those around him. Madge sees this characteristic as one which signals the 'memorable social scientists of the past century'. There is, Madge asserts, 'a strangely neglected uniformity in the aspirations of these great men. Comte's altruism, Le Play's paternalism, Booth's genuine concern for the relief of poverty ... for each of them the stimulus of social

curiosity would by itself have been patently inadequate' (1953:17). Booth's was a strength of feeling which excluded the possibility of distilling the living society he studied into the abstracted dogma of an all-encompassing theory. But by giving social facts precedence it was unavoidable that his philosophy and political thought were sometimes ambivalent, even conflicting. The reality of human interaction often dismays the requirements of grand theory, and it is in Booth's favour that he was willing to be led by social facts to positions which others saw as paradoxical.

The paradoxical nature of Booth's personal philosophy is more apparent than real. A believer in laissez-faire and the primacy of the individual, his work widened 'political responsibilities for the promotion of the welfare of society at large, involving the displacement of laissez-faire doctrines' (Simey, 1960:260). In the field of social policy he alienated those most closely identified with his own class position. Octavia Hill and C.S. Loch are prime examples; while moving in the same circles and socially cordial, they regularly denounced Booth's proposals in the strongest terms. In the political movements of the time Booth's position was constant and pivotal. In the 1880's and 1890's his call for a 'limited socialism', one that would 'leave untouched the forces of individualism and the sources of wealth', was rejected by those in power in politics and social welfare.

In this time and for these men and women 'socialism' was a frightening and dangerous threat to the proven underpinnings of society. With the twentieth century the current of political thought moved past Booth. His 'limited socialism' was too limiting for the Webbs. It did, after all, take individualism as its starting point, and the movement toward 'guaranteeism', while supported by his own research, was not one that Booth supported. If he sought some 'guarantees' in social policy, such as guaranteed pensions, it was on the assumption that only through provision to the most needful could the individual freedoms of the majority of the population be maintained. His call in the 1880's for labour colonies for his Class B, in order to free employment and resources for the majority of the under-employed poor, was this principle in microcosm. The divergent reactions to the labour colony scheme are indicative of his position between the collectivist and individualist camps. Originally condemned by the conservative press as socialistic, the scheme has, for some, more recently come to represent all that was bad in the class-bound inhumanity of Victorian social welfare (Brown, 1968).

But questions about Booth's personal philosophy, and its effects, if any, on his research, are answered in part by examining his success or failure as a social scientist. The question of 'moralist or social scientist' should lead directly to the examination of Booth's research and the clarity and rigour of his methods. A social scientist

holding moral beliefs, as all social scientists do, is expected to exercise control of these beliefs and to be aware of their potential to colour the interpretation of data.

If we are able to look to Booth's data and interpretations with confidence, if he overcame any personal reading of his findings in their presentation, then the question of his own ideological orientation, at one level, becomes unimportant. This thesis has demonstrated that his data and his interpretation of those data deserve our confidence. In the Poverty Series careful examination of his methodology inspires trust. The planning and setting of research questions, the contextual research using the census, the selection of the School Board Visitors in part to surmount the question of sample and in part for the quality of their knowledge, the checks made on that knowledge against diverse sources, and the sheer doggedness of the computations all suggest care and precision. Imagine the hand tabulation and aggregation of data on some 130,000 households! While the provenance and interpretation of the poverty data has been debated, no one has found errors in the statistics themselves, though the lack of multivariate techniques plagued Booth.

Although Booth was able to conceptualise research questions in multivariate terms, he lacked the tools to answer these questions. The standardising of variables and plotting of moving averages which he used in his

presidential address to the Statistical Society presage modern techniques but were, at best, still descriptive. It was this lack of tools which made the construction of the social class categories necessarily rough and imperfect, reflecting in some ways contemporary ideas as well as the actuality of social life. But they were categories which had internal consistency and authority. The statistical analysis shows that the variables collected, crowding being the key variable, are successful in classifying households. And most of the households are seen to be correctly classified. Moreover, the amount of imprecision and arbitrariness which is shown to exist does not significantly detract from Booth's basic findings.

But the fact that Booth was successful in collecting valid data and classifying it correctly is not the most important indication of his skill as a social scientist. Social researchers are allowed to follow the duty of data collection with the privilege of interpretation. Booth, of course, did not invent the poverty line, but he radically reinterpreted its meaning. What had been used in the past to demarcate the deserving poor from the undeserving residuum, was replaced with a classificatory structure. This structure blended the more objective measures of rent and crowding with qualitative assessments or value judgements. The importance of this reinterpretation of the poverty line is that the measurement and thus the understanding of poverty was much improved and set upon a course for further refinement. For Rowntree this refinement

meant a more strictly empirical measure of absolute poverty based on biological minima. For others, like Townsend, the relative poverty of one household when compared to another, an exercise requiring the careful measurement of shared standards of adequacy, became the best way to express their understanding of poverty. It is generally agreed that the best of the measures and methods for defining poverty have used both absolute and relative criteria, as did Booth. If Booth's analysis of poverty in East London was superseded in time, that is only to be expected: 'modern' measures of poverty cease to be useful within twenty years if not sooner. Booth made no claim of comprehensive explanation. His was an exploratory project and he was acutely aware that he worked without a model or template for his research.

In his various works there is, in fact, a laudable empirical timidity. Booth went only as far as his data would safely take him. There is little or no extrapolation, no framework 'built out of a big theory and facts and statistics run in to fit it', of the sort Booth once decried. In the few instances when he stepped beyond what he could verify and demonstrate, such as the proposal for labour colonies, Booth would surround the suggestion with caveats and disclaimers. This tendency is both a strength and a weakness in his work. Of those areas, such as the description and diagnosis of poverty, in which he felt some confidence, we may also trust in his reliance on the facts

he collected. In those areas, such as the attempt to understand the influence of religion on human life, in which Booth felt no solidity in his findings, we are left with great masses of shapeless information, lacking even a theoretical interpretation. It is a demonstration of his own lack of confidence, and a reluctance to interpret as opposed to present results. The areas of his work which do, however, express a sureness in reporting and interpretation demonstrate that he was a social scientist first and foremost.

As a social scientist he had an important impact in both the areas of both social policy and the social sciences. To chart Booth's participation in the Commissions and campaigns that shaped social policy is relatively easy. To draw out of that participation an understanding of his ultimate contribution to both social policy and social science is much more difficult. The foremost reason for which Booth is remembered was his demonstration of the power of social statistics. The pragmatic character of his approach to social science shows clearly in the resolution of the 'poverty question' and the indications which were drawn from the research for political and social change. Indeed, it is for the study of poverty alone that Booth is usually recognised; classified, as the Simeys put it, as 'a superlatively successful statistician with an interest in social welfare' (1960:247). This reading of Booth's work is partially due to his lack of involvement with academic social science, which at the beginning of the 20th century

was rarely empirical. And to that must be added Booth's preference for practical work and his reluctance to explore the theoretical implications of his work. On one side was the very general and synthetic theorising of late-Victorian academic social science and on the other the dry statistical reports and bluebooks of Mr. Gradgrind and the Census. Booth stood between. The Simeys felt that 'he deliberately occupied a half-way position between concrete fact and abstract theory' (1960:253). He had left the grand theories of Auguste Comte far behind, not only in the sense of abandoning Positivism, but equally in the rejection of any grand scheme which would explain the world and posit what was, for Booth, an unobtainable alternative. Grand theories lacked immediate usefulness and Booth had no overarching paradigm of his own design. It was his emotional involvement with his work and its uses that, in part, prevented armchair theorising and propelled Booth into the movements which pressed for social reform.

These movements were many and varied. When listed, as was done in Chapter 7, it becomes clear that Booth's contribution to social policy was greater than is popularly imagined, though perhaps less than his efforts deserved. In his early years in Liverpool were the political campaigns in the Toxteths, the campaigning for free education, and the establishment of the centre for trades unions. That none of these were immediately successful was due in part both to Booth's inexperience and impatience, and to the

lack of popular support at that time for those reforms.

In his business Booth instituted profit sharing schemes, paid high wages, and cared for the sick and injured in his employ. His employment policies were at the forefront of industrial practice. At home he worked through the ways in which he might share the 'surplus income' of the £2,000 per year that he earned from his company. In the same manuscript which included his personal 'creed', Booth calculated that his expenditures came to £1,000 per year, but that this should be higher since the sum represented the low wages paid by suppliers across the economy. The difference, which Booth figured to be £500 per year, was 'a debt owed and to be paid if any way can be found to do it'.

One way in which Booth paid that debt was in the financial support for the old age pensions campaign. It helps to place his support into perspective when one remembers that in modern (1994) pounds sterling Booth was paying the equivalent of between £50,000 and £100,000 per annum into the campaign for many years. In addition, Booth served the campaign for pensions in several ways. The research he accomplished provided the main ammunition for attacks on government denials of the need for pensions. From that research came two books, several smaller works and pamphlets, and even more articles, the cost of printing being underwritten by Booth, with prices for this literature set artificially low with the aim of only achieving a break-even on large publishing runs. The size of these print runs shows the scale of the campaign - for

the 1901 general election alone 200,000 pamphlets and 500,000 handbills were printed. As discussed above Booth also toured widely, speaking at public meetings for the campaign. All of this adds up to a significant contribution to the cause of old age pensions.

Exactly what this contribution meant is much more difficult, if not impossible, to calculate. The same is true of Booth's participation in the royal commission and three government committees which dealt with the questions of poverty and pensions. The 1893 Aberdare Committee on the Poor Law served Booth as a platform for pressing the case of pensions, but the Committee concluded that no immediate action was necessary. Rothchild's Committee of 1898 followed much the same path. The 1899 Select Committee on pensions also failed to recommend action, in spite of the urging of Booth and others. No policies were effected by these committees, but each one represented some movement toward the policies Booth espoused. Each of these committees was an ideological battleground, but because Booth concentrated on the presentation of the physical reality of the human condition, some of the force of his social statistics could not be resisted.

The same can be said of the 1905 Royal Commission on the Poor Law. Four years of wrangling produced three reports: a majority report recommending little action, the Webbs' now famous minority report, and the all but forgotten report in which Booth set out a position

occupying the middle ground. His contribution was often indirect. As McBriar explained, the Fabians 'were dependent on the work of social investigators - Charles Booth above all' (1987:90), and it is the nature of most social policy that it is made by many hands. This fact and Booth's own modesty have, I believe, obscured the significance of his contribution.

By the same token how are we to measure the importance of the various research projects supported by Booth? The poverty research, the rest of Life and Labour, the studies of old age, pauperism, transport, trades unions, housing, and police - all make up a significant corpus for any social scientist, and represent a remarkable achievement given a research career begun only in middle age. As noted above, many of these works had direct policy implications and served to influence the slow course of legislation. For questions such as London's evolving transport policies, the proposals made by Booth on the basis of his research can be compared to the ultimate policies enacted and seen to be very similar. On the other hand, Booth's recommendations on trades unions were rarely taken on board by any of those concerned with the issues surrounding organised labour. His ideas on these questions were listened to politely and then ignored by both the trades unionists and the employers. But in his primary area of work, the application of social statistical research to social questions, he was more successful.

Booth was pivotal in the history of the social survey,

carrying this technique along in its evolution, and was the spark which ignited the spread of the social survey movement. After Life and Labour there was an explosion of social research and these new research projects were more like each other than what went before. They synthesised descriptive and statistical techniques, they explored spatial relationships and social measures, and they explicitly or implicitly addressed social problems and social policies. They established a norm of large-scale quantitative social research which formed the basis for the social sciences in the second half of the twentieth century. Booth did not invent the social survey any more than Henry Ford invented the motor car, but Booth's work was important in that it popularised the idea of social research and served as a template for others. He offered up by example social research techniques at a time when the liberal and progressive movements of Britain and the United States were in great need of such tools. After Life and Labour progressives on both sides of the Atlantic embraced the social survey as their own special tool for social change. (Bales, 1991:98-99)

In general, I believe that we can ascribe to Booth this impact on the world of social policy and social science: he placed the study of poverty on a scientific basis, he demonstrated how an entire city might be studied from several substantive directions, and he originated much of modern social research practice. And by doing these

things he altered, through the application of social research, some of the fundamental contemporary debates on questions such as poverty. In short, he re-wrote the agenda around which a number of policy issues revolved. And in doing so he demonstrated the importance and usefulness of social science, enabling it to grow in new ways, and placing his mark upon that growth.

Appendix A -

Quantitative and Qualitative Data used in Life and Labour: A Guide to the Booth Archive

Booth's feat of producing seventeen volumes in as many years has been much remarked. He did not work alone, but personally and closely supervised a research staff of three to eight people. Seventeen volumes on a single city, even one as multifaceted as London, is a daunting task for the reader. And it is the sheer size of Booth's output which has led most researchers to treat the published volumes of Life and Labour as the primary source rather than looking behind it to the source material collected for its production. It would be easy to imagine that to fill seventeen volumes Booth needed to use all of the information he collected. In fact, Booth was so diligent and successful at collecting data of all descriptions that he amassed much more than he actually used in the published work. This fact adds a certain weight to his work - when short descriptions or generalisations found in Life and Labour are traced back to Booth's notebooks they are seen to be distillations of many pages of notes and figures. Booth was a categoriser, and enormous amounts of raw data filtered through his hands in order to be systematised and refined. The realisation that these large amounts of information existed led to the decision to reclaim as much as possible for further research. What follows is a very brief description of the collection of information used by Booth to write Life and Labour and now held in the

Archives/Special Collections Department of the British Library of Political and Economic Science

General Description of the Research Materials

The portion of the Booth archive used for Life and Labour consists of three basic forms of information: 1) notebooks in which are recorded interviews and notes; 2) the collected miscellanea of any project - collected articles, press clippings, letters, sketches, maps, and synopses; and 3) preprinted notebooks which received distinctly categorised or quantitative information. The notebooks are small, ruled, and bound, and served as the central repository for all information. (See facsimile at page 336) Booth listed contents or geographical area or both on the inside cover, often with short notes and the date, which made his (and the modern researcher's) task the easier. Taking them by type:

1) Interview Notebooks There are approximately (some few fall into more than one category) 314 notebooks recording interviews and notes (those used in the Industry Series are discussed in greater detail from page 458). Not all, or even most, of these are filled. Booth tended to use one notebook for each topic or area, if ten or twenty or one hundred pages of notes were made on that topic, that would be the number of pages used in the notebook reserved to that topic. The number of notebooks by topic are: religion, 146 notebooks; notes on housing and rents, 29 notebooks; notes on the Police system (collected by George

Duckworth), 30 notebooks; on local government, 15 notebooks. In addition are the 81 notebooks on industry or job category collected for the 'Industry Series'. These 81 notebooks concern 68 industries or types of work. As mentioned not all notebooks are filled, but it may be noted as an example that these 81 notebooks contain 5195 pages of notes; an average of 64 pages of notes per notebook. These interviews conducted for the 'Industry Series' record contracts, hours, rates of pay, production figures, examples of job hazards and health, union by-laws, work processes, and personal work histories among other things. They cover the full spectrum of occupations from civil servants to charwomen. The interview notebooks also have a system of interior notation, Booth would usually write on the right side of each two-page opening; the left would be used for annotations, a running topic index, and occasionally sketches.

2) Miscellanea The miscellanea of Booth's work are sprinkled, to some extent, throughout the other notebooks; in any notebook an occasional page might note an informant's name, an appointment, or a quick figuring of expenses. In 28 notebooks, Booth has written out a synopsis of the 'Industry Series'. In an album the press notices (such as those discussed earlier) on his various publications have been saved. One notebook is but a list of community organisations, another, a list of what appears to be every pub in London. These were the pieced together guides to the voluminous amounts of data assembled by Booth

and his staff.

3) <u>Data Notebooks</u> There are two types of data notebooks. The first, though not preprinted, follow a strict order in the information recorded and concern the cases of 1457 inmates of institutions. These case histories are divided by institution - Bromley Work House, for example - but the 7 notebooks are, curiously, paginated as one. Each case records: name; home address; condition ('widow since April 4, 1883' or 'imbecile' for example); total number of children; surviving children; children under age 13; occupation; changes of address; relief given; causes of pauperism; relatives (sometimes with short descriptions); general notes - these are the bulk of the case history, and take one-half page to three pages; a statement by the person concerned (not in every case); and visitor's reports. A more detailed description of the collection and use of these cases, all of which have now been microfilmed, follows under the heading 'Qualitative Information on Pauperism and Poor Relief'.

The second group of preprinted data notebooks is in many ways the heart of the Booth archive. In these notebooks are recorded all of the information which would be combined to form the Poverty Study. There are forty-six of these notebooks and they contain data collected for an area reaching from Cambridge Circus, the Strand, and Oxford Circus on the West to Bow Creek and the River Lea on the East, but excluding the City of London. The exact area

sampled by these data is often misunderstood. In Volume 1 of Life and Labour Booth maps the area 'surveyed' as a quadrant whose radius point is the boundary of the City and Whitechapel at the Thames. By this reckoning Hackney, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Mile End Old Town, St. George's in the East, Stepney, and Poplar are all included (See Map page 152). The districts allotted to all the School Board Visitors who were ultimately interviewed, however, exceeded these boundaries and stretched to the Western points mentioned earlier. At the time the various official administrative boundaries were not rationalised in any way; Booth explained about the London School Board districts that 'These areas unfortunately bear no relation to either the registration sub-districts or to the ecclesiastical parishes, which again differ from each other' (Life and Labour Vol. 2, pg. 16). In the second volume of Life and Labour Booth explains that the individual family is the unit of analysis used for the study of East London, Central London, and Battersea (that is, the basis for the analysis in Volume 1 in the Second Edition, and a portion of Volume 2). In the first 1889 edition only Towers Hamlets and Hackney were 'surveyed', subsequent editions enlarged the geographical scope. After that the School Board Visitors were asked to provide information street by street rather than house by house. Booth regretted the loss of employment measures due to this change in the unit of analysis, but noted that 'in order to cover the whole ground in a reasonable time it was

necessary to lighten the work' (Vol. 2, pg. 2, 1891). The forty-six notebooks discussed here are those which record information household by household.

The way information was recorded in the notebooks by Booth and his staff changed slightly as the research got underway. In the Autumn of 1886 Booth, Jesse Argyll, and Maurice Paul developed and polished their research technique and the necessary format for data collection. When they first met with the School Board Visitors in the early September 1886, Booth had them begin by 'doing one visitor together, and then dividing our forces so as to each take one' (letter to B. Potter 10.9.1886). His intent was to standardise their interview technique as much as possible. Booth was very conscious of the necessity of clear research methods unsullied by preconceptions. He wrote to Beatrice Potter - 'I can and do believe that for some time the method of the Inquiry must be formulated and worked before the truths sought are considered, and that meanwhile the truths imagined must be laid aside.' (21.9.1886).

To collect and categorise the information gained from the School Board Visitors, and to ensure its standardisation, the notebooks were initially given seven categories (as columns) to be completed for each household on a single ruled line. In this way the information for each household could be placed on one line across the page. In the first three notebooks, the ones which Booth, Maurice

Paul, and Jesse Argyll used to standardise the interviewing, the categories are handwritten across the top of each page and the columns are pencilled down the page. The column headings in these three notebooks read: ' street number / Rent per week / no. of rooms / Occupation / no. children 3-13 / status or position / employment of wives or young persons and general remarks'. This scheme of categories was used as a pilot test of the research method. For the pilot study 143 pages of notes were collected (33, 50, and 62 respectively in the three notebooks) from nine different Visitors, a pilot sample of just over 2000 households. Collection of these cases took from mid-September to the end of November 1886. The data collected for this pilot study were not included in the ultimate calculations; a careful check of subsequent notebooks shows the relevant streets of Whitechapel and Mile End Old Town surveyed again with the improved category scheme. In early December the pilot was wound up, and the system of categories was changed. Exactly how this came about - through a meeting of the staff, or by Booth's own reformulation - is unknown, no record survives. The result was the category-column headings used for most of the research. There were ten categories in the new scheme and notebooks were ordered with these headings printed above the columns (see facesimile). The new categories were:

- House number
- Rooms
- Rent
- Occupation
- Wife
- Children 3-13
- Children - 3
- Over 13
- Wages
- Position

Into these columns was entered the data which would be analysed for the Poverty Survey. Appendix B is an explanation of what form this information took, and the logic employed in its conversion to machine readable form.

Qualitative Information on Pauperism and Poor Relief

In 1889, while still engaged in the 'Poverty Survey', Booth came upon the records which had been kept on the relief of the poor in Stepney. He wrote at this time to Beatrice Potter saying that he had 'found a mine of great wealth in the books of Stepney' (Passfield Collection, BLPES). These records when compiled and transcribed filled seven notebooks with the 1457 case histories which we now refer to as the Asylum Data. In the Booth Archive these notebooks are catalogued as B162 to B168, the fly-leaf of B162 lists the allocation of 988 'cases' and 469 'subsidiary cases' to each of the seven notebooks. The

cases included 'every pauper in receipt of relief at Stepney on April 30, 1889' (Booth, Vol. 8:379). Though the cases were collected in 1889 they were not analysed until 1892, when Booth used these records in Volume 8 of Life and Labour (in the Industry Series) to explore and illustrate 'pauperism'.

As organised by the Poor Law, parochial relief was amalgamated into a Union of several parishes; often the boundaries of these Unions would be contiguous with other administrative areas. The Stepney Union consisted of the parishes of Limehouse, Shadwell, and Wapping, and the hamlet of Ratcliff. These parishes stretched along the Thames to the east of the Tower of London, and by the time of Booth's research were densely populated and busy with the commerce of the London Docks and the Limehouse Basin of the Grand Union Canal, both of which fell within the Union's borders. In all, it was an area of 462 acres. Booth described the inhabitants as being 'of a waterside character'. He went on to explain 'the wharves and neighbouring docks are the chief sources of employment for the people, and beyond the shopkeepers and some professional men, few are above the labouring class' (1892, Vol. 8:311). There was a large concentration of Irish at Ratcliff. This area, not shown on modern maps, survives only in the names of two short streets which lie on each side of Cable Street. In Ratcliff there were two major employers in addition to the docks, the Rope Works and the Lead Works. The latter figures often in the employment

histories of the inmates of asylums, and it would seem that lead poisoning must have brought tremendous suffering to the area. People did not seek employment in the Lead Works as the place of first choice. It was generally understood that working there could make a person ill. But the pernicious and cumulative affect of lead on the body, and especially upon foetuses, infants, and children was not comprehended - the Lead Works primarily employed women.

Stepney Union was divided into two parts for the purposes of relief: Wapping, Shadwell and Ratcliff to the east; and Limehouse to the west. Though the case histories recorded are those of Stepney residents, none of the institutions in which they are housed were actually in Stepney. There were three main institutions - Poplar Workhouse (in the Poplar Union area and shared by Stepney Union); Bromley Workhouse (run by Stepney for the infirm including the aged and children); and the Sick Asylum at Bromley (shared by the Poplar Union). Bromley lies about two miles to the northeast of Limehouse. By the time of Booth's inquiry the inmates of these institutions made up virtually all public 'relief' cases in the Stepney Union and represented the result of an important shift in relief policy stretching back twenty years.

In 1870 a policy of restricting out-relief was inaugurated. Out-relief consisted of monies, food, food tokens, clothing, or lodging coupons which were handed out from the Relief Office to those making application and

satisfying the relieving officers of their need. For many Victorians outdoor-relief symbolised all that was wrong with the Poor Laws and the 'indiscriminate' aid given to the poor. As with many modern forms of social welfare it was thought to be rife with abuses and cheats. Booth noted that in Stepney since 1870 'out-relief has been refused to new applicants, while death and a process of weeding out have made great reductions in the numbers' (1892, Vol. 8:312). Great reductions were indeed the case. In the last full year of out-relief (1869) 7,602 persons received out-relief at a cost of £6153 over a six month period. Two years later this had been reduced to 4,415 at a cost of £5401 for the same six months. By 1875 only 541 people received out-relief in the six months, and by the time of the publication of Volume 8 in 1890 figures for the six month period showed 177 people relieved at a cost of £148. Over the same period, from 1869 to 1890, the number given 'indoor relief', that is being taken into an institution, was relatively constant. Stepney Union had an average of 1656 inmates institutionalised, at an average cost of £5282 per annum over these twenty years.

Throughout this period there was an attempt to standardise the records kept by the relieving officers. Booth explained: 'The system employed is so admirable that it might with advantage be adopted elsewhere. The name and request of every applicant for relief are entered into the relieving officer's journal, and if relief is granted, and sometimes when it is not granted, the particulars of the

case are entered in the "record books"'. These 'particulars' included the results of inquiries and the disposition and type of any relief given. They were indexed and grouped so that 'allied' cases were placed together. 'Allied' cases were the relief records of extended families and relatives.

Booth stated that to these books he had 'kindly been allowed access', but the exact nature of their use by Booth is not known. It would appear that Booth and an assistant spent a good deal of time going over the record books and establishing a format for their transcription. The case histories, as has been noted earlier, were recorded in seven of Booth's standard notebooks which for this work had been paginated as one. One of Booth's assistants, George Arkell, copied and ordered the cases into the notebooks. The information recorded in the notebooks follows a fairly uniform format. At the top of the page a case number is assigned, then the name, age, institution, address, and condition are recorded. The 'condition' recorded was usually an indication of marital or other relations and might read 'widowed', 'orphaned', or 'married'. An occupation was entered on some cases, and was followed by a code assigned by Booth which gave the primary, secondary, and sometimes the tertiary 'cause of pauperization'. (See below for Booth's codes). Booth's comments on the assignment of these 'causes' throw some light on his aims in collecting these case histories:

In considering the causes of pauperism, it is very easy to exaggerate any one of them at the expense of the rest. Incapacity and mental disease might be stretched to cover almost all - vice, drink, laziness, themselves closely bound together, fill also a great place in connection with sickness and lack of work - or we may reverse this, and show how sickness and lack of work, and consequent want of proper food, end in demoralization of all kinds, and especially in drink. It is said also that the chief cause of pauperism is to be found in our attempts to relieve it. With subtleties of this kind I shall not attempt to deal. All I have done is to mark each story with letters to indicate the apparent causes or roots of the trouble suffered; large letters being used for what appeared to be the principal cause in each case, and small letters for those which seemed less important, which I classify as 'contributory', as is explained in the Appendix. It is a very rough-and-ready method, and has the disadvantage, as well as advantage, of resting on no special inquiry. A special inquiry would be more open to suspicion of bias and errors due to methods of selection. It would, moreover, be almost impossible to give to a special inquiry so broad a numerical basis. (Life and Labour, Vol. 8:379:380).

After the cause of pauperization are listed the relatives. These can be of almost any sort of relation - children, spouses, in-laws, siblings, grandparents or grandchildren, and will include illegitimate children and 'paramours'. Information on these relatives is recorded, special attention being given to any relative who has also been institutionalised. In Booth's notebooks the information on relatives is referred to in the page number for their own 'case'. For example, the record of case number 555, William Davis, has written under Relatives:

'Brothers Charles (p.753)

Herman (p.752)

Uncle George (page 753)

Mother Rhoda Davis (see page 752)

Father Joshua Tim Clare (page 752)

Wife relatives - see pages 746-747

Sisters Caroline (p. 757) Jane (p. 752)

Following the section on relatives are the 'General Notes' which make up the bulk of the record. The cases make up a wonderful diversity, but as an example these are the General Notes for the 81 year old Jane Avrell institutionalised in the Bromley Workhouse:

General Notes - Woman applied for admittance 24 May 1882. Her husband was an able bodied seaman, but died 50 years ago. She then had to work to keep herself and daughter. She belonged to no club or benefit society and had no relatives to assist her.

The daughter took her 4 years ago and has since kept her; but she (the daughter) had been very slack of work, her earnings only amounted to about 5/- a week. So she could not help mother any longer. They lived at 6 Thomas St. for 17 years.

6 July 1882 medical order and admission to Stepney Asylum

10 March 1883 Admission order for Bromley Workhouse

27 August 1884 admission order to Bromley from Stepney Asylum

Booth was not anxious to use the case histories to generalise about pauperism. He did not quantify his work on them beyond the preparation of three summary tables on occupation, place of birth, and cause of pauperism. He also stressed that the information was not collected for his research. 'It is to be remembered', he wrote, 'that it was none of it taken _ad hoc_, but was collected as a matter of business by those who had to report on each case for the guidance of the Guardians in the administration of the law' (_Life and Labour_ Vol. 8:316). Because of these limitations Booth made only a cursory analysis, yet it was one which challenged the common assumptions that alcohol and idleness

must underlie any recourse to public relief. Noting that this is, in fact, the third inquiry 'I have myself made into apparent causes of poverty' Booth explains that the findings of all three studies agree - no more than 14 per cent. of paupers have drink as the principal cause of their pauperism. By way of comparison, sickness and old age account for 59.5 per cent. of those institutionalised. This analysis is followed by caveats; 'I, however, do not wish to lay too much stress on the results shown, as the basis is insufficiently wide for safe generalisation...'. In the end Booth decided to let his readers use the case histories to come to their own conclusions by publishing his data. The remainder of Volume Eight is then given over to the collected information on pauperism in Stepney presented in three forms: 'twelve stories illustrative of pauper surroundings'; 'fifty short stories illustrating the principal causes of pauperism'; and the 'summary of Stepney stories'. The last are one or two line synopses of each of 1192 cases Booth took from the data notebooks (the notebooks actually record 988 regular and 469 'subsidiary' cases), the information being arranged in columns. The three blocks of 'stories' fill over one hundred pages, and are conveyed, Booth admits, 'in the "tabloid" form'. The names of the paupers given in the printed stories in Volume 8 have been changed, but with a little work the cases in the published work may be traced to their originals in the data notebooks.

The human stories and the explanation of civic

response to human need in these case histories represent a remarkable historical source. Several of the elderly inmates of the Bromley Workhouse were born in the 18th century and had lost their spouses in the Napoleonic wars. Their lives stretch across nearly a century of dramatic social and economic change, yet their last days are spent institutionalised. Booth's decision not to analyse these cases in more detail must have been due, in part, to the ongoing scheme of his inquiry. His original plan was a 'double classification' of London, first by poverty, then by occupation. From the fourth volume of Life and Labour the occupations were considered, first for the East End in Volume 4, then by trade and occupation group for the whole of London. By the time Booth turned to the consideration of these case records he had completed the research he had planned for the Poverty Series. The case histories were presented, instead, as part of the 'Industry Series', their role being to illustrate the 'occupation' of inmates of institutions rather than to explore the causes of poverty. Booth did note that these case histories substantiated and corroborated several of the findings of the 'Poverty Series', in particular those concerning the causes of poverty. In the final volume he refered to these cases as supporting his advocacy of old age pensions. But though these are case histories of relief to the very poor, they were analysed within a larger effort to classify the population into industrial and occupational groups. As

such they fit in the Archive materials as a section of the overarching series of interviews collected for the Industry Series which fill a further eighty-one notebooks.

<u>The Industry Series Notebooks</u>

These notebooks contain a phenomenal amount of information about people's work and the organisation of firms in Victorian London. They are simply too extensive for a full description and discussion here - comprising thousands of pages of notes. As might be expected these are not the work of Booth alone. His research team completed a great deal of this work with less supervision than had been the case in the Poverty Study. Unfortunately, because of Booth's reduced role in this part of the inquiry, less evidence survives to tell the story of the research methods. Booth's biographers have written that they 'would give a great deal to know more about this side of the Inquiry' (Simey, 1960:126).

In studying labour and industry Booth was keen not to suffer the same limitations which had hampered his research on poverty. His system of classification for social classes had arisen directly from the data held by the School Board Visitors, and had been criticised as being no more than their opinions. For the research on industry and labour Booth established a baseline of information which was collected for the 1891 Census, largely at his own instigation. As a member of the committee set up to advise the Registrar-General, he had devised a new form for the collection of Census information which recorded the number

of rooms occupied by each household that lived in four rooms or less, and the number of servants employed by households occupying five rooms or more. Concerned that the information be collected in a uniform and reliable manner, Booth met with every Registrar in London at least twice to explain the format, the object of the research, and the possible uses of the information obtained. From this Census information the baseline for each section of the industry series was taken. In addition, from these variables Booth constructed an 'overcrowding index' which he felt was an important key to understanding social conditions. Using Census classifications the trades and occupations of London were divided into eighty-nine sections (see Appendix C), some of which had further internal categories. In a letter written to Ernest Aves Booth explained the proposed research methods:

> We have divided the whole population into groups...according to occupations, and for each group in each district we expect to be able to give from the Census or through the kindness of the Registrar-General:
>
> (1) Numbers employed - by sexes and ages.
> (2) Numbers of Heads of families and those apparently dependent.
> (3) Birth place (in or out of London) for Heads of families.
> (4) Social position of Heads of families as shown by number of rooms occupied or of servants kept.
>
> To this we shall add (and to a great extent have got already):
>
> (5) The facts as to trade organization; and concurrently shall study,
> (6) System of work
> (7) Remuneration - hours and seasons
> (8) Character of labour
> i.e. Male or Female, Young or Old, Skilled or Unskilled, etc. (Booth Archive BLPES)

The information under these eight headings was to be collected from firms, trades unions, and individual workers. For firms Booth administered a questionnaire (which he called a 'circular') asking the 'exact amount of those employed, whether men, women, or boys, and the wages paid to each in an average, or, better still, in a maximum and minimum week' (Life and Labour, Vol. 5, pg. 27). The questionnaires were to be filled in with black or red ink for slack or busy periods, respectively. The names of firms and trades unions to which the questionnaires were sent were taken from Factory Inspectors' notebooks, business directories, and other sources. If a firm would agree to provide further information a researcher was sent for an interview which would explore topics such as hours and overtime, regularity and irregularity, seasonal work patterns, training methods, skill requirements, illnesses and the sick list, occupational injuries, and habitation. For certain industries or employments special forms were prepared. Hospitals, for example, did not fit neatly into industrial categories and so had their own questionnaire. As with other services, rota schedules, rules of dress and deportment for nurses, and financial statements were collected for all of London's hospitals.

The Branch Secretaries of Unions were interviewed about the role of their union and its history. From a number of Unions copies of by-laws, sample contracts, pamphlets, and other ephemera were collected and pasted

into the notebooks. The Branch officials were also able to provide information on firms which had refused to cooperate. Union officers were apparently reimbursed for the time they spent in being interviewed and collecting information at a rate of 1s to 4s per hour.

Individual workers provided information for every occupation as well. These interviews include work histories, anecdotes, and even drawings made of products, production processes, or the layout of shops and factories. An example of these interviews is the five page record of a meeting with the seventy-four year old chimney sweep J. Kingsley (found in notebook B160). The interview follows his career from apprenticeship in 1830 to 1893 and is a mixture of Kingsley's stories of times past and his answers to specific questions on wages, hours, skills, age limits, and the effect of chimney sweeping on his health. Booth felt that without the personal stories of individuals the whole research would miss its aim. When the results were published he was, however, unsatisfied with the number of individual workers that had been interviewed. Booth had hoped for, but had not had time to obtain, a wide and comprehensive survey of workers.

A final, official, source of information was the wage returns collected by the Board of Trade, which were for the most part unpublished. Booth used these returns to check his own findings.

As in virtually all of Booth's research more information was collected than was used. For this reason

the notebooks are, as the Poverty Study notebooks have been, a source of remarkable detail. For example, Booth himself collected a series of interviews from individual dockers as to the conditions of their lives and work which were not used in the published work. The central theme of the work done by Aves and his colleagues was economic rather than social and as such fell somewhat short of Booth's desire to pursue in greater detail the questions of unemployment and poverty.

In the context of Booth's published work the Industry Series presents a full and comprehensive picture of employment and production in Victorian London. In the notebooks filled to support this work there exists an even greater amount of information than can be learned from the published volumes. It is a unique assessment of the economic activity of a metropolis, and one that has never been matched in the combination of case studies and hard statistics. Curiously, as noted above, it finished without answering Booth's original questions about poverty. In some ways Booth accepted this as preferable to building results from opinion rather than clear cut research results. In the final volume of the Industry Series he writes:

> What I endeavoured to present to my readers is a picture of a way of looking at things, rather than a doctrine or argument. I have been glad to see that my book furnished weapons and ammunition for absolutely opposed schools, and can even make shift to stifle my annoyance when it is occasionally quoted in support of doctrines which I abhor. (Life and Labour, Vol. 9, pg. 337)

The Industry Series had opened more questions than it had

answered. It is possible that modern researchers will make more conclusive use of Booth's collected data than he was able to do.

The Police (and Publican) Notebooks

Scattered throughout the mass of information collected by Booth and his team of researchers are several virtually self-contained studies. The notebooks which describe Stepney pauperism are an example of one such study restricted by a geographical boundary. The twenty notebooks termed here the Police Notebooks are another example, in this instance limited by subject rather than geography. In 1890 and 1891 George Duckworth performed a tour of London by walking every police 'beat' in the Metropolitan area. The notebooks which record his observations on these rounds average 250 pages each, and as is often the case in the notebooks in the Booth collection only the right side of each page opening is used for the notes. On the left of each two page opening are sketches, hand-drawn maps, and a running index and commentary on the notes. In the front of each notebook is an index giving the page numbers associated with each Police Constable, Police District, and Parish.

At the beginning of each 'beat' walk is a sketch map of the route taken, along with the date and the name of the Police Constable whom Duckworth accompanied. The notes are linked to the original Booth Poverty maps as well, at times noting that a particular block had been coloured a certain way on the maps. Duckworth had a keen eye for detail and

many facts both small and large are carefully noted. The rents of the houses and the prices in the shops are regularly recorded. Visiting in residents' houses he describes various home industries and often finds hunger and illness as well. Because Duckworth tours with the police, the notebooks are full of accounts of deviance and crime. Protection rackets and prostitution occur again and again, and it is to Duckworth's merit that his discussions of these topics are dispassionate and aim for the facts. On Ossulton Street Duckworth gives this short case history:

Went in to No. 45 - taken by a man who put up the legend 'Last and Stretcher Maker' to conceal his real occupation as a brothel keeper. He was there for seven weeks and then turned out and convicted by the police. He proved to be well known and is supposed to have a gang of women who use whatever house he opens. Showed me the deserted establishment, including the spy hole in the shop window commanding the passage entrance partitioned off with match boarding, and the hand hole, by which the latch could be reached and withdrawn and the money of those entering be taken without anyone appearing. The rent had been £45; the man's references had been quite good, but had not been verified. (Booth Collection, BLPES)

Nor was Duckworth simply reflecting the views of the P.C.'s he with whom he toured. In his notes of a 'beat' near Euston Station he relates: 'The more I see of Inspector Wait the more convinced I am that he is exceedingly unlikely to tell the whole truth ... on the question of publicans and others who would stand drinks for policemen, he said <u>he</u> kept all publicans at a distance - but said later that the police were "75 per cent. more sober than they used to be"' (Booth Collection, BLPES).

Duckworth's accounts are especially interesting in

what might be termed the micro-economics of neighbourhoods. Because of the neighbourhood concentration of many handicrafts or home industries, small areas of no more than a few blocks might be undergoing economic boom or severe depression completely unrelated to the general economy. This economic information is often presented in comparison to data collected six years earlier for the mapping of poverty. In many inner London areas change had been dramatic over this period as many blocks of tenements were pulled down. Several of the wide and straight thoroughfares which now criss-cross London were built in this period - Shaftesbury Avenue, the Kingsway, and New Oxford Street, for example. Thousands of people were displaced by these schemes, the destruction of tenements causing even greater crowding in the slums nearest the demolition area. Near the area being demolished in order to build the Kingsway (where the London School of Economics now stands) Duckworth records:

> A hot, thundery day. Sleepy, weedy men in the courts and streets, and stout, burly Irish women, a few drawn-faced children. Many small public houses, full today of women and children. Messy streets, no opium dens.
>
> Good temper and curiosity of the inhabitants of the courts, 'Government inspector I suppose, anyone can see what the other is' - 'Don't pull down our houses guv'nor, before building us up other to go into.'

Another group providing information to Duckworth were Publicans. Long interviews reveal the differences in clientele, the economics of running a public house, and add a bright thread of anecdote to the fabric of Duckworth's notes. The result is a vivid portrait of a very busy street

life.

There are something in the order of 2000 pages of notes in Duckworth's hand, and they cover virtually all of London. Unlike the information collected on Stepney Pauperism, the Police notes were never used in a discrete section of Life and Labour. In the Industry Series each occupational grouping was considered in turn, and the Police were no exception. But the short chapter giving an overview of 'Police and Prisons' as a census category (Booth, Vol. 8, pg. 44) owes little to the 'beat' notes collected by Duckworth. Among the aggregate descriptions we learn - 'The ordinary policeman must constantly perambulate his beat, visiting every street and entry. At night he examines the fastenings of windows and doors, marks entrances so that he can tell whether they have been visited in the intervals of his round, and walking silently in the shadows of the houses comes upon the belated pedestrian with startling suddenness' (op. cit. pg. 48). A second larger use of the Police notes appears in the Final (or Star) Volume of the Religious Influences Series of Life and Labour, yet still fills less than ten pages. Here Booth writes that:

> Selected members of the force were our "guides, philosophers and friends," over thousands of miles of walks through the streets of London. During these walks almost every social influence was discussed, and especially those bearing upon vice and crime, drunkenness and disorder. The street, the house, or perhaps some man seen were reminiscent of an incident, or brought to mind a tale, tragic, pathetic or comic, as might happen.

The short essay which follows this introduction is the

barest overview of the relations of the Police with the people, the clergy, the publicans, and the courts. This section, written by Booth, shows little of the wealth of information available from Duckworth's notes. At times Booth seems surprisingly naive about Police work as when he states, '"Tea-leaf" is for some inexplicable reason the name used by the police for pickpockets' (op. cit pg. 139). Perhaps Booth had in his wide researches simply failed to discover informants who spoke rhyming slang. In any event, he explains as well that 'in previous volumes we have noted the presence of the criminal classes in different parts of London, and have there included some remarks on their habits' (Final Vol. pg.138).

These sections scattered throughout the Religious Influences Series are the depositories of the Duckworth notes. In Volume 1 of this series the religious and social influences on the lives of the people of the North and East of London are considered. One section is devoted to 'The Police, Drink, and Disorder', and is clearly derived from the Police Notes. Here is described the small amount of professional crime and the prostitution which is rife among the sailors in Poplar and Limehouse. In this area drink is as serious a problem for women as for men - the women 'have their day and their special public-houses, known as "cow-sheds"'. This is followed by a discussion of the role of the police in such a rough area, especially their multi-faceted relations with the publicans who need them to control the disorderly, but don't wish their businesses to

be too closely patrolled.

It is necessary to trawl through several volumes of _Life and Labour_ to discover the uses of the Police Notes. They were an evenly viewed assessment of London's darker side, an assessment that Booth felt he needed to balance the interviews with clergy and local administrators which provided the bulk of the Religious Influences Series. In some ways this dismemberment of the information is unfortunate, but it also offers an opportunity. The _corpus_ of the Police Notes taken whole is a social history document with its own importance. In time it will no doubt fuel a unique work on the Police of Victorian London.

The Police Notes with the Industry Series notes and the Pauper case histories still do not account for all of the information collected by Booth. The Religious Influences Series contributed another five volumes to _Life and Labour_, and there are hundreds of notebooks filled with interviews which were used in this survey of the socio-religious life of London. The Religious Influences Series was less well received, in Booth's time, than the Poverty or Industry Series, both of which were to be evaluated and analysed again and again.

Appendix B

Converting the Notebook Data to Computer Records

The reclamation of Booth's data for wider scholarly use has two tasks, computer coding and microfilming. The first of these, computer coding, is by far the most daunting, for if errors are made in the translation to computer code the data's meanings could be lost in the attempt to save it. There arise innumerable questions that concern the definition and translation of raw information, and the resolution of these questions will, in part, determine the data's subsequent usefulness. The resolution of these questions in the reclamation of Booth's data has driven home three central tenets: firstly, one must cast the net as widely as possible to retrieve every item of information that is available; secondly, the data (and its original collectors) must be allowed to speak for themselves; and thirdly, contemporary sources must be brought in whenever confusion or doubt arises over meaning. These tenets represent the problems faced in the reclamation of any 'antique' data. The response to these problems will be outlined as each tenet is explored below.

To try to capture every single item of information in a potential data set is a task many researchers would like to avoid. It is much more tempting to glean from the raw material only that information which informs immediate research interests. When the raw data are readily available to most of those interested, as is the case with Census records, this is a reasonable strategy. If, on the other

hand, the data are unique and not immediately or easily accessible, or still in their original form and fragile, the responsible choice is complete reclamation. Not to do this has several drawbacks: while less expensive in the short run it is more costly in the long run, in time and money as initial preparations are duplicated, and in wear and tear on deteriorating documents. In addition, selective reclamation may be ultimately self-defeating; the interrelation of information collected as a unit often proves synergistic in analysis. The uses of antique data are limited only by the imagination; it would be short-sighted to limit these uses through the omission of information.

The second tenet for reclamation of the Booth materials is that the data must be preserved and presented in a way true to its original form and content. The original collectors had questions, preconceptions, and impressions enough. Reinterpretations will only muddy the waters further. Value judgements must be retained intact, for this is information with double usefulness. It describes both the object of study and the mind of the investigator. After the coding is completed is the proper time to consider the meaning of suspect value judgements. To alter the original interpretation of information, either to accentuate its flaws or to conceal them, is a disservice to the original collectors as well as later investigators. It is better to let the original meanings remain and the academic chips fall where they may. In the same way,

translation to computer codes should be literal. The euphemisms of each age have their own peculiar meanings, 'low and dirty sort' does not equal 'culturally disadvantaged family unit'. Variables, once encoded, may be used to construct further variables which better fit modern paradigms but, as mentioned before, the time for manipulation comes after careful and true reclamation.

A final tenet is to consult, when possible, contemporary sources whenever the meaning of an item of information, and so its correct coding, is in doubt. How, for example, did a ginger beer airer or an umbrella translator spend their working days? The answers to these questions were, no doubt, obvious to Booth, but are much less so today. Yet the answers are still available, in Mayhew, novels, newspapers, Parliamentary inquiries, which are not always easy to discover but preferable to hindsight.

What follows is a description of the information to be found in the Booth notebooks with an explanation of their conversion to non-rectangular data base records using the Dbase III software. This project was funded by a grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation to Michael D. Hughes at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Kevin Bales directed the actual data collection in the archive at the BLPES. Absolutely crucial to the conversion to machine readable form was the aim to capture the information as closely as possible to its original form. In the Dbase records nineteen fields were required to do so.

Occasional additions were required for clarity; when additions were made they were marked by the use of square brackets. By placing two small computers in the Archive of the British Library for Political and Economic Science which holds the Booth Collection, and employing data entry personnel, just over 35,000 cases were encoded to the Dbase file in five months in 1983 and 1984. A Dbase file requires further manipulation to prepare it for the statistical analysis after it is input. The explanations below describe the Dbase fields and the types of information likely to be found in them, and provide a good description of the information held in the notebooks.

As has been noted there were ten columns for entry of information on each household in the Booth data notebooks, but other information specific to the notebook is available which applies to each household. The first five Dbase fields record such information:

Data Base Structure

1. Notebook the BLPES Archive number for each notebook. Within the collection these are in Series B, so the entries are b1 to b76 for the notebooks used.

2. Page The sampling plan for Dbase entry required that every fifth page be entered. Page is a numeric field recording on each case the number of the page from which it was taken.

3. SBV School Board Visitor From one to five Visitors might be interviewed for any one notebook. Their names were recorded on the inside front cover of the notebook, and in addition a Visitor's name is entered at the beginning of any data gained from them. Many notebooks also have a list in the front or back cover giving area, streets, and the relevant Visitor with page numbers. This field records on each case the name of the School Board Visitor who provided its information. The names were input exactly as found in the notebook - Mr., Miss or Mrs. followed by a surname. Occasionally a first initial was given, and this was also recorded as found.

4. Area When a borough boundary was crossed this was recorded in the notebooks. And as mentioned for SBV, an index in the front or back cover gave the boroughs surveyed and the relevant page numbers. These were input as the borough name (Shoreditch, Bethnal Green). The only alteration was (as normally done in the 1880's) to input 'St. George's' for 'St. George's in the East'.

5. Street Street names were written in the notebooks at the beginning of household records from that street. Households would be recorded down one side of the street and then down the other for whatever length was being considered. Extra comments after the street name might be in the order of: '(East side)' or 'formerly Exton St' these were input as found. Street names were entered in with the abbreviations

as: St., Rd., Ln. (Lane), Sq. (Square), Pl. (Place), Tr.(Terrace), and Bldgs (buildings). Alley, Row, and Way were written in full.

For some of the following fields the data were taken from headed columns in the Booth notebooks. These are noted by '(Col.)' after the field name.

6. House number (Col.) this normally held the street address number, but might be the flat number in a block. Descriptive addresses were recorded as found: 'behind the stable' or 'Ark Cottage'. Because there were often more than one household at any one street address the house numbers are entered with a decimal point; the number to the right of the decimal point is the number of the household (that is the Dbase record) at that street address. So, on White St., 26.2 is the second household recorded for the street address 26 White St.

7. Colour - after the interviewing was completed Booth or his assistant went through the notebooks labelling streets with the colours which would represent their level of poverty on the 'Descriptive Maps of Poverty' which were published with the Poverty Series. The entry in the notebook is usually at the beginning of each street written in an ink of the named colour. These were input as written using Booth's abbreviations.

8. Rooms (Col.) In this column were recorded the number of rooms per household, house, or the normal division of rooms in a house. As one side of a street, for at least a block or so, would tend to be similar in housing given the London custom of building identical terraced houses along urban streets, the entry in the column was usually entered at the top of the notebook page and assumed to apply to the remainder on the page. Exceptional cases, or a change in the type of housing were then noted in the column. The entries would be something like '4&K' meaning 'four rooms and a kitchen', most likely a two up-two down terraced house with back extension. The exact number of rooms per household is sometimes unclear, but may be surmised. For example, a row of houses will be listed as having six rooms each, but the number of households may vary from one to four. In the common situation in which three households are listed for a six room house, contemporary accounts, and Booth's notes, would indicate three families, each living on one two-roomed floor. When these data were input only the household at which the Rooms were first recorded would have the number of rooms entered verbatim. For the subsequent households which should be presumed to have the same number of rooms the information is entered with a preceding @ sign. This @ sign denotes that the address unit is assumed to have the listed number of rooms, but it cannot be proven. If square brackets were also used to extend and explain the information, the Dbase field might appear as: '@4 & K[itchen]'.

9. Rent As with rooms, rents were usually entered at the top of each page and assumed to remain the same until a change was noted. In the same way a @ sign is used before each rent entered which must be assumed. Rents are sometimes given as a range such as '14/6 to 16/-'. In the great majority of cases rent is given as weekly rental for a certain number of rooms, less often the weekly rent for entire building may be given, even less often (as in the case of the middle class homes Booth rarely recorded) the rent is recorded as an annual rent.

10. Job Code This number (or a number and a letter) were assigned by Booth or one of his assistants. These were used by Booth for summation of the large numbers of possible listed occupations. This coding accomplished the plan he explained to Beatrice Potter in a letter written just as the pilot research began - 'our idea is that having made our classification we should note down every occupation we hear of, and so make this list in the end a dictionary of Employments' (Passfield, 5.9.1886). The numeric code, once assigned, was squeezed in the rent or occupation columns; sometimes it is circled to clearly differentiate it from rent. It is input as written with the letter in lower case.

11. Unscheduled - the Dbase records contain a logical field (meaning it must have one of two specific values) to identify those cases which were recorded as 'unscheduled' in the notebooks. This 'U' assigned to the household meant

that no information was available on that household. The Dbase field was automatically set to 'f' (meaning the case was 'scheduled') unless a 'U' was found in the notebook, or the line was completely blank except for the house number. If the case was 'unscheduled' the field was set to 't'.

12. Booth's Class Code (Dbase field BClass) - Booth's class code separated the households into one of eight classes:

Class A - Lowest class, occasional labourers, loafers, and semi-criminals

Class B - Casual earnings - "very poor"

Class C - Intermittent earnings } the "poor"

Class D - Small regular earnings } the "poor"

Class E - Regular standard earnings, above the line of poverty

Class F - Higher class labourer

Class G - Lower middle class

Class H - Upper middle class

These class codes were assigned by Booth or his assistants after considering the information complete on every household. Booth admits they are in some ways arbitrarily assigned, but in Volume 1 of Life and Labour he goes on to explain in great detail the assignment of codes and to give detailed examples of each class. They were entered in Dbase fields as upper case letters as found.

13. Occupation (Col.) - The entry made in this column was central to Booth's plans for analysing the population by occupational groups. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs were

listed here; almost always this was the work done by the head of the household. Abbreviations were often used, common examples being: T. (tailor); c.l. (casual labourer); BLast (boot laster); D.L. (dock labourer); and so on. The large extent of these job titles may be demonstrated by examining the classifying lists Booth made of the collected 'occupations'. In a listing not intended as definitive he has divided 1165 specific 'occupations' into forty categories. There were two slightly different versions of this listing, but its basic form was not altered - an ordinal grouping from '1. Lowest Class, casual labour verging on crime' to '30b. Professional or Official (upper class).' The remaining ten categories were used for a short ordinal listing of 'Females Occupations' and the categories for 'ill or invalid'; 'no work or trade'; and 'unknown'. This column in the notebooks would also hold information on non-household entries. When the building at a street address was not inhabited its use would be entered here. For example, 'Stable' or 'Boot factory' might be entered, or the name of the proprietor as: 'J. Walker (Zinc works) employs several'. Entered adjacent to the occupation was the number corresponding to the forty general job categories described above as the Job Code. This would be done after the interviewing of the School Board Visitor. This numerical coding was sometimes squeezed in next to the occupation listed, or at other times placed in the Rent column. Many times it is only the subsequent assignment of a numeric code which makes the deciphering of the

occupation possible. A common example is the entry 'C.' in the occupation column. The single letter C was used to denote both Carmen and Carpenters, but they may be differentiated by an occupation code assigned by Booth or his team of 5 ('Labour, regular employ, 22/- to 30/-. Wharves, warehouses, Carmen etc.) or of 7 ('Artizans, building trades).

When these data were entered into Dbase fields it was often necessary to use Booth's lists of occupations to decipher the abbreviations used. Square brackets are often used in these fields and question marks were inserted before any entry for which certainty was not possible - this might be due to illegibility or the use of abbreviations which are not, now, understood. For example, an illegible entry which appears to read 'gas bl.' would be recorded as: [?] gas bl. If the abbreviation is unclear it might be recorded as: gas bl[?ower]. If a house was <u>unscheduled</u> a 'U' was entered in the occupation field as a double check against the logical field <u>Unscheduled</u>.

14. <u>Wife</u> (Col.) - this column is very often blank as it was assumed by the investigators that a wife was present. Sometimes a '1' will be entered to indicate 'wife present', but for the most part it was the exceptions that were noted. An upper case 'W' was entered when the household was headed by a widow. When this was the case the job listed under <u>occupation</u> was for the female head of household, this fact reflected by a 'female' job code. Otherwise this

column often contains the occupation of the wife as distinct from the husband. Sample entries would be: 'Char' (works as a charwoman); 'Gen. Sh.' (keeps general shop in home); or 'helps' (helps the husband with his trade or craft). Occasionally other situations will be noted here, as 'deserted', 'drunkard', or 'cripple'. All entries were input as found.

15-17. Children - The column for information on the household's children was subdivided into three age bands. Each of these bands is given a separate Dbase field. In the notebook reading from left to right the sub-columns were headed 'Child 3-13', 'Child -3', and 'Over 13'. In some of the notebooks the first of these is headed 'School' instead, this is simply because children aged 3 to 13 were considered to be of school age. Those aged three to five were 'under surveillance' by the School Board Visitor prior to their entering school. In a similar way the 'Over 13' column was in some notebooks headed 'Others in family'. The first of these columns, for school age children, usually recorded simply the number of children aged 3 to 13 in the family. It might record a comment such as 'one an idiot'. The second column, in effect, recorded the infants in a household, and usually contained only the relevant number. The third column variously headed 'over 13', "children 13-', or 'others in family' was much more likely to include wage and job information. Sample entries are: '1 b. carp. 1 g. ser.' (one boy a carpenter; one girl in service); '1

b.van' (one boy works on a van); or '1 P-city' (one boy a Porter in the City). Their wages were occasionally recorded, as were data on institutionalisation (1 b. asylum) or physical condition (1 g. cripple; 1 b. idiot). As before, square brackets were used when entries were illegible or indecipherable.

18. Wages - The early printed notebooks did not have a column headed for wages. For these, income data were recorded near the occupation column. The majority of notebooks do have a Wages column, however, usually giving weekly incomes. At times hourly rates (Bricklayer - 6d per hr) are noted, and, rarely, an annual income. Predictable annual incomes were held by, in most cases, the clergy or pensioners. The former enjoyed a sufficient salary (£60 to £100 per annum). For the latter pension income was supplementary at best (£5 to £20 per annum). To Booth's regret wages information was not usually available, the School Board Visitors assuming, as Booth was forced to, average incomes from occupations. When it is available the wages information was entered as found, usually in shillings/pence. Any comment under Wages was also input as found.

19. Position (Col.) - the last headed column on a notebook page was a catch-all for recording subjective impressions; additional information on jobs; bits of family history; ethnicity; physical or mental pathologies; or any

information the investigators or School Board Visitors considered germane to the household's 'position' or 'situation' (as it was sometimes headed) in life. A number of abbreviations were used regularly in this column. 'Poor' and 'Very poor' were given as 'P' and 'VP', 'R' or 'Reg' meant 'regular work', 'Comf' stood for 'comfortable'. Entries were often much longer than these abbreviations, for example: 'reg. work at brewery, good income' for a carpenter; for a bricklayer, 'irregular work, out of work now due to frost', these two concerning work status. Indicators of poverty also figured in this column. Concerning the household of a widowed charwoman the position is recorded as: 'v.p. children in workhouse-assisted by neighbours'; for a journeyman carpenter 'v.p. ill health-parish relief'; and for a widowed office charwoman 'husb. was a window cleaner and fell from window and killed'. Pathologies are also listed here: 'often ill - do pretty well when at work'; and institutionalisation: 'husband in asylum' or 'used to be auxiliary postman but now in convalescent house'. Explanations of the family's condition include 'man deserted and married again - allows her 10/-' and 'summoned 5 times for neglect in sending children to school'. This last entry would be part of the SBV's records. Subjective assessments are recorded here of character, as in - 'could get work if he wanted to' and 'would buy anything from a tin tack to a piano and rob you at the same time'. Ethnicity was also noted in this column - 'German' or 'Jew'.

20. Remarks - Other information was entered in the notebooks which might apply to more than one household. At the end of a street or neighbourhood there is often a comment on that area as a whole. This comment might be very brief as in 'a low and dirty place', or 'mostly Jews and Germans', or it might be quite long as in 'wretchedly poor and improvident - old houses in very dilapidated condition - people work hard when they can get it, but are frequently out of work, and have no idea of thrift'. Similar comments may apply to a single household, giving job history or explanations of injuries, but are clearly differentiated in the notebooks from street and neighbourhood descriptions. In the Dbase field Remarks any end of street comments were identified as such with the bracketed '[end of street]' inserted before the comment. All remarks falling between cases, or at the ends of streets, were entered in to the Dbase fields as they were found.

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