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THE BORDERLAND BETWEEN PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY ACTION IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES

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I

MY subject is the borderland between public and voluntary action in the domain of the Social Services. The 'borderland' you observe: not the border-line. Only rarely can a hard and fast line of demarcation be drawn, and the harder the line the more unsatisfactory is often the situation which it reveals. It is a much more fruitful conception to regard the two realms of public and private service as being united rather than separated by a borderland zone within which both may act freely in co-operation. There are of course two kinds of neutral zones; the sterile and awful 'no-man's land' between the trenches of the combatants, swept by the fire of both, and empty of life and of aught that can nourish life, and the peaceful and fruitful strips of country on each side of an international frontier, where the citizens of both countries can meet in friendly co-operation free from restrictions and prohibitions.

It is the second type of frontier zone which is the subject of our study, and my object is to inquire what changes are taking place in the borderland relations between public and private effort in the various branches of the Social Services.

The subject is such a vast one that it is quite impossible in a single lecture to do more than illustrate it by a few examples, and try to draw from those examples some very tentative conclusions which may have a practical bearing on modern social problems.

I do not wish to encumber this lecture with elaborate definitions, but the terms 'public' and 'voluntary' are habitually used in so many different senses that it is

essential to be clear as to their meaning for our present purpose.

For example, the word 'voluntary' is often used as equivalent to amateur or unpaid, and 'public' is sometimes understood to embrace all kinds of collective action which concern the common weal, whether based on statutory authority or on private association. For our purpose I mean by public action all forms of action, whether central or local, which involve the exercise or at least the possession of compulsory power. That power may be no more than the right to use funds raised by compulsory taxation, or it may extend to the right to compel persons to comply with orders, as for example, the power of an Education Authority to require children to attend school. On the other hand, I include as voluntary all forms of action, individual or collective, which have not behind them any compulsory power. That an institution receives a grant from public funds does not in this view make it cease to be voluntary, provided that such grants do not carry with them such conditions as practically to vest the control in the public body. You will gather from this that the definitions of public and private action may sometimes be blurred and indistinct, especially in the case of heavily subsidized institutions. But though there are extreme cases in which different observers may draw the line somewhat differently, there is little or no ambiguity in regard to the great mass of social activities.

It is of course a matter of common knowledge that, throughout a period covering the whole of the lives of most of us, there has been a continual expansion of the field of public action in respect of the Social Services. In some cases this development has been accompanied by a shrinkage in the area of the field of voluntary service, but in many, perhaps in most, cases this is far from being an adequate description of what has been taking place. For each development of public activity has opened up new avenues for voluntary service, while at the same time the normal relationship between voluntary and public action

has been undergoing a very important change. What this change has been will best be seen from an examination of a few examples of recent developments in the Social Services.

II

My first illustration is drawn from the sphere of Elementary Education. The controversy between voluntary and state control of popular education dates back at least for a century and a half. It was discussed sagely among the political philosophers long before it became a question of practical politics. Some advanced thinkers like Joseph Priestley were aghast at the idea of surrendering education (as he put it) 'into the hands of the civil magistrate'. Other thinkers like Adam Smith were strong advocates of public education, while Thomas Paine suggested a division of function, the schools to be provided by voluntary effort, and the State to pay every poor family a capitation grant for each child sent to school.

When the irresistible pressure of very ugly facts forced the State to take a hand in popular education the line of demarcation was not drawn on any philosophical principle, but purely on the practical basis that where in fact private effort proved inadequate the State should fill the gap. In other words the demarcation was not primarily functional but regional, and was mainly determined by financial needs. Had not the burning question of religious teaching supplied a powerful motive for supporting voluntary schools, the competition between public and voluntary management would soon have settled itself, in view of the vastly greater financial strength of public authorities. Even as it was the encroachment of the one form of management on the other was rapid and continuous. Within ten years from the enactment of compulsory education in 1870 the new Board Schools already supplied a third of the total accommodation. At the present date 'provided' schools cover more than two-thirds of the ground. The change over from private to public management would appear even

more striking if we took into account the steady growth of public control within the voluntary schools themselves.

At first sight facts like these seem to point irresistibly to the conclusion that, in the field of elementary education at all events, public enterprise has been rapidly driving out voluntary effort. But is this the whole picture? Let us turn our eyes from the long-drawn-out contest between provided and non-provided schools and see what has been going on in the meantime within the limits of the elementary school itself.

As the colossal task of overtaking arrears and of supplying the ever-growing need of elementary education came within sight of accomplishment, new problems inevitably arose and clamoured for solution. The aggregation in school of children of all grades of poverty and well-being was bound to draw attention to their many physical needs and defects—malnutrition, uncleanliness, want of fresh air, defective teeth, eyesight, mental capacity—some or all of which prevented a large section of children from profiting from the education provided.

The first pioneer work in dealing with these problems was done by individuals and voluntary bodies, such as those who undertook in the early years of the present century to provide meals for poor children in schools of the poorest type, or to deal with special classes of mentally and physically defective children. Then bit by bit the problems were taken up by public authorities under a series of Acts beginning with the Act of 1906 dealing with school meals, followed next year by an Act dealing with medical inspection and treatment, in 1908 by the so-called Children Act, and in later years by a number of other enactments. These laws have been administered very differently in different parts of the country, but perhaps we have most to learn for our present purpose from examining the methods pursued by the London County Council in the effort to fulfil their statutory obligations and at the same time to make full use of voluntary experience and initiative.

In the words of the official account of Children's Care Committee work in London[1] 'the Council decided to give an opportunity for the co-operation of the private citizen in work for the community by delegating to Children's Care Committees certain of its duties'.

At the present time there are no less than 900 Care Committees covering the whole of the County of London, with an aggregate of between 5,000 and 6,000 voluntary members. Each Committee deals with a school or group of schools and they are themselves grouped in 12 areas. The voluntary workers are shepherded and guided by a small number of trained officials, who are however enjoined to abstain from unnecessary interference. The duties of the Care Committees are very far from being perfunctory: it is for them to ensure that no child in need of food or of medical aid fails to obtain it, and that every child on leaving school is made aware of the local possibilities of employment, continued education, and social organizations for boys and girls.

This work involves taking important decisions and making delicate inquiries and discriminations. It makes quite considerable demands on the time as well as the capacity of the voluntary worker. It is therefore noteworthy that, according to the information which I have obtained, the task of recruiting a sufficient number of suitable volunteers to replace the considerable annual wastage in so large an army of workers is gradually become not more difficult but, if anything, progressively easier. The voluntary workers themselves have in fact proved the best recruiting agents, while with the progress of time and experience the attitude of the professional teachers towards the voluntary workers has been gradually transformed. The poison of political intrigue does not seem to have yet infected this class of voluntary service.

It is not of course to be imagined that every Care Committee rises to the height of its responsibilities, but it would seem that in this vitally important Social Service

[1] Contributed to the International Conference of Social Work.

a real working partnership has been established, at least in London, between public and voluntary effort. And note that this partnership is based on an intelligent allocation of function, rather than on demarcation of area or subject-matter.

It may be a matter of some surprise that so important and successful a step in social co-operation has not spread from London to the provinces. For this failure to spread I imagine that inquiry would disclose a multitude of differing local reasons, some economic, some personal, some possibly political.

No doubt much of the skilled work done in London through Care Committees can be and is done in other places by head teachers, school medical officers, or nurses. But nothing can quite take the place of a co-ordinating agency which can look at the child's welfare as a whole.

To sum up: a conspicuous feature of recent educational history has been the emergence of problems of child welfare, which require and permit new forms of co-operation on a functional basis between voluntary and statutory service. The growth of these new forms of ancillary voluntary service has taken place concurrently with the shrinkage of the opportunities open to voluntary workers in connexion with the management and control of a particular class of schools.

III

My second example is drawn from the Social Services concerned with health. These present an even more chequered picture of the relations between public and private effort than those concerned with Education.

In Public Health administration in the narrow sense of the term public action is necessarily supreme, though in sanitary science and practice most of the pioneer work was in fact done by voluntary agencies. The institutional treatment of the sick is divided between voluntary and municipal hospitals on lines determined rather by historical accident than by any logical principle. The question of the relations present and future between these two types

of hospital organization is much too vast and complicated, and too much interwoven with questions of medical training, to be dealt with in a single lecture covering so wide a field. I think it is best therefore to confine my illustrations to certain subsidiary though highly important health services, namely health visiting, district nursing, and maternity and infant welfare.

A characteristically British contribution to child welfare has been the institution of Health Visitors to visit the homes of children under school age and advise as to their health. As Dr. McLeary points out: 'Neither in origin nor development does it owe anything to foreign influence or example.' Health visiting seems to date back as far as 1862, the pioneer agency being as usual a purely voluntary association. The Manchester ladies, who started the work, soon found it necessary to employ paid visitors, but it was nearly thirty years before the local authority gave either supervision or financial aid. It was Florence Nightingale who in 1891 urged the importance of health visiting, as distinct from sick nursing, on the Buckinghamshire County Council, and thenceforward the movement spread steadily though slowly, until it received a tremendous impetus from the experience of the Great War, during which the number of salaried health visitors employed by local authorities was more than quadrupled. Since then the number has again doubled, and the total number of salaried health visitors now employed by local authorities and voluntary agencies is equivalent to about 2,600 whole time workers, the vast majority of whom are employed by public authorities. Thus it is true to say broadly that the Health Visiting Service devised and initiated by voluntary agencies has now practically passed under the control of public authorities, though it is not uncommon for a district nurse (who is the agent of a purely voluntary organization) to be concurrently employed as a health visitor by the local authority.

At the other end of the scale is District Nursing, which from the beginning has been almost entirely a voluntary

service, not only in this but in several other countries where generally the sphere of voluntary action is much narrower than with us. The country is divided into a very large number of areas, each equipped with one or more trained nurses employed and paid by voluntary local nursing associations. These are for the most part federated in County Nursing Associations, many of which are themselves affiliated to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses. The origins of home and district nursing were religious, and a trace of the former connexion with the religious orders still survives in the appellation of Sister. The first secular nursing organization in England was founded by Elizabeth Fry in 1840. The State has never played any important part in the organization of district nursing, except in regard to the practice of midwifery, which has a definite bearing on Maternity and Infant Welfare, or where the person nursed is in receipt of poor law relief, or in certain other cases of exceptional need, such as that of parts of the 'special areas' whose economic plight has caused a break-down of the voluntary services. With these exceptions district nursing is normally almost entirely a voluntary sphere of work, not of course in the sense that nurses are unpaid amateurs, but that the entire system of organization rests on a voluntary basis.

Intermediate between these two extreme examples of State and voluntary service respectively, and with an origin independent of either, though with close affinities with both, comes the very remarkable and vitally important growth of what are known as Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, to which mothers bring their infants, and where expectant mothers are given advice and treatment in ante-natal clinics. This movement, unlike health visiting, was international in origin, and arose from general alarm at the high rate of infant mortality, especially in France, where the decrease of the birth-rate and the fall of population has long caused great anxiety.

Practically all the pioneer work was due to voluntary effort both in this and other countries. In particular the

institution of ante-natal clinics was attributable first to the long-continued efforts of a private doctor, Dr. Ballantyne, and secondly to a private gift of money in 1915 which enabled the National League for Maternity and Child Welfare to establish half a dozen experimental clinics.

During the War the number of organized Infant Welfare Centres in this country doubled in number, and by the end there were nearly 1,300 centres, of which rather more than half were run by local authorities and the remainder by voluntary agencies. At the present time there are 2,000 centres controlled by local authorities, and about 750 by voluntary associations, aided however by considerable subsidies out of public funds.

While there are no very outstanding differences as regards scope and method between the current work of a well-run municipal infant welfare centre and a good voluntary centre, the latter has undoubtedly a greater elasticity and freedom, and often a greater will, to undertake experimental new departures. Among the most characteristic functions of the voluntary agencies have been pioneering, education, and experiment, but as regards their day-to-day work the voluntary and municipal centres are frequently working at similar problems by similar methods in adjoining areas, their mutual relations being largely dependent on the personality of the voluntary leaders and of the local officials, especially the Medical Officer of Health.

We are here in presence of a relationship between public and voluntary enterprise in some way analogous to that which used to exist between board schools and voluntary schools, viz. a regional demarcation determined by financial necessity or local accident. Such a relationship tends to be unstable, because it is not adapted to reap the maximum advantage from an alliance between two partners, one weak in initiative but financially strong, and the other strong in initiative but financially weak. We may perhaps hope to look forward to an eventual readjustment of relationships on a functional basis, which will relieve the voluntary centres from the crushing and harassing burden

of raising funds, which at present distracts much of their energies from their proper work, while safeguarding their invaluable freedom of experiment and elasticity of method.

IV

My third example is drawn from the Social Services for the relief of poverty and distress. Here the relations between voluntary and public action are still profoundly affected by causes deeply rooted in historical and political conditions. Historically the national attitude towards poverty has a double root: repressive legislation designed to protect the community from sturdy beggars and similar nuisances, and the voluntary alms dispensed by the faithful or by the religious houses. After the break up of the religious houses the Elizabethan poor law cast the responsibility for poor relief on the parishes, and thereafter (to quote the Webbs) 'for more than 200 years . . . parish relief and the alms of the charitable travelled on side by side without an attempt at co-ordination'.[1]

The Poor Law of 1834 lacked nothing in its precision in defining the scope and methods of public poor relief. But it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that a serious effort was made to distinguish and co-ordinate the relative spheres of public assistance and private charity. Then the London Charity Organization Society, under the inspiration of a great constructive idealist, Sir Charles Loch, boldly claimed the whole sphere of rehabilitation for private effort, leaving only to the State the maintenance of those destitute persons whose restoration to self-supporting independence seemed hopeless. A corollary of this proposition was that the conditions under which State maintenance should be granted should be sternly deterrent, and in particular that home assistance should be restricted so far as possible in accordance with the so-called principles of 1834. Though, as we shall see presently, the idea underlying this conception of the functions of voluntary service contains an important element

[1] *Hist. Local Government*, part ii, vol. ii, p. 790.

of truth, the suggested restriction of the scope of State assistance was never accepted by public opinion, while private effort was at that time very far from being adequately organized and financed to take full responsibility for curative treatment. Nor did any better fortune attend the subsequent proposal of the Majority Report of the Poor Law Commission of 1909 to establish 'Voluntary Aid Committees' on a statutory basis, side by side with the 'Public Assistance' Committees, the latter of whom were (in the words of the Report) 'to deal with no application that can be dealt with equally well or better by the Voluntary Aid Committees'.[1] It was difficult to see how consistently with their statutory duty to relieve destitution a local authority could allow itself to be over-ruled by a voluntary body in settling what cases each should deal with. In fact before any mutual allocation of function between public and private action in the relief of poverty could be usefully attempted it was necessary to pursue to its end quite a different procedure, viz. the systematic separation of a number of classes of cases, each of which could be better dealt with by some specialized authority other than the poor law.

Of the immediate causes of poverty, four stand out as of major importance; unemployment, sickness and infirmity, old age, and loss of the principal bread-winner. When we made the New Survey of London Life and Labour these four causes were found to account for more than four-fifths of the cases falling below the 'poverty line' in London.

The adoption during the early years of the present century of compulsory insurance against unemployment and sickness, with pensions for the aged and for widows, together with specialized provision for various forms of physical and mental infirmity, gave rise to a quite new alignment between voluntary and public action; for the statutory authorities dealing with each of these specialized branches found themselves in need of voluntary workers who, as has been well said, could act 'as their

[1] Majority Report (1909), part vii, para. 218.

eyes and fingers'; to serve for example on care committees, local employment committees, juvenile employment committees or courts of referees, to help the local pension authority, or to visit the mentally defective.

Incidentally it may be observed that every one of these specialized public services was the sequel to much pioneering exploration and experiment by voluntary agencies. Unemployment Insurance had long been practised for their own members by a few skilled Trade Unions; sickness insurance by Friendly Societies; care for the aged and the physically and mentally infirm by various voluntary societies and private benefactors.

It is a matter of interest to inquire how far the introduction of the new public services has tended to dry up the sources of voluntary service; in other words how far the public authorities concerned have found difficulty in obtaining a sufficient flow of suitable voluntary recruits.

It is difficult to put the result of my inquiries into a single sentence, but so far as concerns all the agencies dealing with unemployment I cannot do better than quote the verdict of a distinguished Civil Servant that 'Government action has not destroyed voluntary effort but has stimulated it and given it an ordered basis on which to work'.

The separation and treatment by specialized organs of all these prolific sources of poverty still left a heterogeneous mass of cases, ineligible to benefit from any of these organs, for the Public Assistance Authority to deal with. The transfer in recent years of powers of the Poor Law Guardians to the County Councils once more brought into prominence the need for systematic co-operation with voluntary agencies. An early act of the London County Council, after taking over the powers of guardians, was to launch a tentative scheme of co-operation to be tried out in three experimental areas, on the basis of the mutual registration of relief, and the reference by the Council to appropriate voluntary agencies of cases 'of persons who would be likely to secure complete rehabilitation or derive

lasting benefit' from the assistance of such agencies. The first results were extremely meagre, and the scheme has now been dropped. It is difficult to say how far the failure arose from any inherent defects, or from lack of power or will to co-operate on the part of those concerned or some of them, or whether insufficient time was allowed for the new procedure to produce results.

A more promising and significant illustration of fruitful co-operation between voluntary and statutory agencies in dealing with certain aspects of distress is afforded by two schemes, both now in operation, though in neither case have we a long enough experience to afford a very secure basis for forecasting permanent possibilities.

The first example is the policy of the Unemployment Assistance Board to work in co-operation with local advisory councils representing all types of social experience and competence. Already there have been brought into existence some 130 such councils covering the whole country, and I understand that it is the Board's intention to utilize them not only as advisory committees but as panels of expert individuals to whom can be referred delicate and difficult cases and questions which can better be handled in this way than by an official body. This scheme of co-operation is manifestly in the direct line of succession to the various experiments which have preceded it, but it differs from all of them in certain basic characteristics, which may be summed up by saying that it aims at functional co-operation rather than a demarcation of cases or areas.

The other scheme I refer to is of quite a different character. The Ministry of Labour and its offshoot the Unemployment Assistance Board have found it desirable to utilize the voluntary organization of the National Council of Social Service to deal on their behalf with certain aspects of the problem of long period unemployment, and the Commissioner for the Special Areas has also used the same organization for considerably wider purposes in the Special Areas.

As I understand it the Council's role has been not to duplicate the work of public authorities in providing employment or easing the material hardships of unemployment, but to try to counteract the tendency to degeneration arising from long involuntary idleness, by ensuring (to quote its own words) that the unemployed should have 'food for their minds and some purpose to fill empty days'. One main instrument for carrying out this aim has been the occupational club for unemployed persons, of which about 1,500 with membership of 200,000 have been brought into being. In this uphill and sometimes disheartening task the Council does not merely act as the 'eyes and fingers' of the State, but retains in large measure its character as a voluntary body with the freedom of initiative and experiment which this implies—subject of course to the limitations of its financial resources.

At this point it is convenient to pause to consider somewhat more generally the necessary relations between public and private enterprise arising out of the inequality of financial strength. I have already given examples of the unstable equilibrium arising from the unequal competition between rivals who ought to be partners.

It is true of course that in any alliance in which one partner makes to the other a finanical grant which can be augmented, decreased or discontinued at its pleasure, the financially strong partner must have in reserve the power of ultimate control. There is, however, a world of difference between the *possession* of this reserve power and the day-to-day exercise of detailed control; and for practical purposes we may regard the voluntary partner as possessing a kind of limited sovereignty, when within reasonably wide limits he is free to act according to his own unfettered judgement. In this sense the National Council of Social Service may be said to have retained a limited but effective sovereignty within its allotted sphere. This sovereignty indeed is essential to its successful action, because success in such a task as I have indicated must depend essentially on human leader-

ship, and leadership depends on personal and individual influence. Leadership of this type is a spiritual function and in the realm of the spirit the voluntary principle is and must remain supreme. We shall find an analogous state of things when we come to consider the Youth Movement to which I now turn for my fourth and last illustration.

V

The 'Youth Movement' has from the beginning been a spontaneous growth of an essentially voluntary character, though in recent years it has received great help in many ways from public organizations whose primary objects are of a different nature.

Briefly the aim of the movement (which includes boys' and girls' Clubs, Scouts, Guides, and Brigades) is to make better provision for the leisure of adolescent boys and girls, especially working boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 18, i.e. roughly during the first four years of their working life.

I choose for my illustration clubs, and especially the boys' club movement, not that it is numerically the strongest, but because I know it most intimately, and because on the whole it is the most typical of social organizations predominantly concerned with the problems of adolescent working youth. Historically both boys' and girls' clubs had their origin in the efforts of the various religious bodies to strengthen their hold on young people. In the case of girls there was a specifically preventive or rescue object, aimed at combating the moral dangers to which young girls in cities are exposed. But both movements have now largely outgrown the conditions of their origin, though they still show traces of it.

Recent investigations into juvenile delinquency and moral deterioration have made clear that the most powerful prophylactic against degradation, vice, and crime is the fostering of healthy and varied interests during the impressionable period of adolescence. Of course the prevention of delinquency is not the only or even the main object of

the youth movement, which has the more positive and comprehensive aim of fitting boys and girls, both physically, mentally, and spiritually, to play their part in life and in the life of the community. All the specific activities of a club (sports, games, drama, handicrafts, classes, reading circles, music, and so forth) are to be looked on as means to this end. In this vital respect a club, in the sense in which I use the term, differs widely in aim and method from a collection of evening classes, or from an organization confined to one single activity such as cricket, music, or the drama. What I have already said of the occupational club for men is certainly not less true of clubs for adolescents. The essence of club organization is leadership: and the essence of leadership is personal influence. Not that the club is a self-centred organism isolated from all other forms of social service. It has its educational side, its physical welfare side, its moral and spiritual side, and on each of these sides it is necessarily in close touch with other organizations, public and voluntary, which are specially concerned with one or other of these aspects. There is, for example, the Education Authority with its provision of evening institutes, playgrounds, and continuation classes, its organization for after care and choice of employment, and the wide powers with which it is now equipped to promote boy and girl welfare. There are also the local authorities with their open spaces and playing-fields, their libraries and swimming baths, all providing amenities of which clubs may and do take advantage.

It cannot be said that the problem of the right relationship between the voluntary club and all the specialized activities of statutory authorities by which it is encircled has as yet found its final and definite solution. The evening classes of some education authorities still demand an attendance so frequent that a boy cannot comply with that demand and continue an effective member of his Club. Housing authorities when planning new housing estates and sweeping away slum areas still show a most inadequate recognition of the necessity of providing buildings or sites

where clubs can be established. On the other hand, club leaders absorbed in their own day-to-day problems are not always sufficiently alive to the importance of co-operative action. But this problem of co-operation, if not yet completely solved, seems on the way to be solved, inasmuch as both the voluntary organizations and the public authorities are making increasing efforts at mutual understanding and collaboration. Out of these efforts a solution of the problem will, I hope and believe, emerge, which will recognize how in a hundred ways public authorities can smooth the path of the club movement and help it to realize its ideals, not only by direct financial support but by adapting their various specialized facilities to the peculiar needs and conditions of life of members of boys' clubs; while on the other hand those responsible for club leadership can and should more fully co-operate with the public authorities by adapting their rules and practices so as to reap the maximum advantage from the facilities provided by these authorities. It requires insight, patience, and goodwill to arrive at an *entente* on all these practical aspects of mutual relations which will be to the advantage of both parties. But it is a *sine qua non* that any practical arrangements of this kind should recognize that autonomy and free development are the very life blood of the club movement, and that club leadership is a spiritual rather than a temporal function.

When the relations between the club movement and public authorities have reached a stable equilibrium based on functional co-operation it may quite probably be found that the most important role of the voluntary club is not to overlap or duplicate the specific facilities and amenities organized by public authorities, but rather to vitalize them and make them more fruitful by creating and fostering the will to use them and to use them aright. If this be the goal kept in view it should be possible to obtain the best results from a partnership in which each partner remains sovereign within its own domain. In saying this I do not wish to exclude the possibility of the club

movement receiving financial support from public sources, provided that the conditions are not such as to impair its freedom of development. It would of course be an immense help if club leaders could be relieved of the present necessity to squander so much of their time and energy on the task of raising money. But even this relief can be too dearly bought.

This must be the last of my examples though there are other branches of social service which, if time permitted, would afford equally apt illustrations of recent trends. Notable among these is the whole problem of re-housing and slum clearance. But I must leave you to work out this and similar exercises for yourselves.

VI

I have left myself but little time to summarize my conclusions. If the illustrations which I have given are in any degree typical they suggest that the vast increase in the range of public action in the domain of the Social Services which has characterized the past half century, has been accompanied by a realignment of the relations between public and voluntary activities, on the basis of functional co-operation rather than of demarcation of area or of subject-matter. This transformation of relations is still partial and incomplete, and it has made much greater progress in some departments of social service than in others.

When we carry the matter further and inquire what is the particular character or pattern of co-operation between public and voluntary social service, we find that the answer is not single, but twofold if not multiform, the differences corresponding to certain very deep-lying distinctions in the nature of the functions which voluntary effort seeks to perform.

Conforming to the first type or pattern are a whole group of ancillary services for which a public authority may enlist the help of voluntary workers. Here the voluntary workers fulfil an invaluable though subordinate function, and they do it avowedly in leading strings. The character and method of their work, the limitations and conditions by which it is governed, are determined for them and not by them. On all sides we see examples of this kind of voluntary service within the ambit of a statutory authority. How far in any particular case this kind of co-operation is successful and to what point of development it can be carried depends largely on personal relations and on local and even accidental circumstances.

Some believe that this kind of voluntary service only fulfils a transitional purpose, that it is becoming and will become more and more difficult to find suitable recruits, and that the functions now performed for and under the aegis of Statutory Bodies by volunteers will eventually, for good or ill, be taken over by public authorities. The evidence of present facts and trends however does not in my judgement support the view that the sources of voluntary social service are drying up. Indeed, the experience of such bodies as the Ministry of Labour and the London Education Committee points on the whole to the contrary conclusion.

There are without doubt some serious difficulties to be faced in recruiting voluntary workers to co-operate in this way with public authorities. One factor is the increasing degree to which women (who have always formed the largest element among voluntary social workers) are now pursuing professional or industrial careers of their own which leave them less leisure for voluntary service. Another factor is the almost total disappearance of a leisured class in some of the industrial areas where social work is most urgently required. Another factor is the vast development and multiformity of the social services themselves which in the aggregate make continually increasing drafts on a relatively inelastic volume of potential volunteers.

Lastly, there may still linger something of the non-receptive and non-co-operative attitude of officials, usually subordinate officials, who are sometimes more alert to

the defects than to the advantages of voluntary service, while on the other hand voluntary workers are sometimes irresponsible, irregular, and erratic, and chafe under the necessary conditions imposed by co-operation.

But all these mutual suspicions and antipathies, though they die hard, are I think weakening, and they may be expected to become weaker with the rise of a new generation both of volunteers and officials accustomed to work together, and the increasing emphasis rightly laid on the systematic training of volunteer recruits. There is no need to suppose that the younger generation are more self-centred and pleasure loving than their parents, or less willing to sacrifice their leisure to benefit their less fortunate fellows. The view which is undoubtedly held by many of those engaged in social service, that voluntary recruits are now harder to come by, is adequately explained, if, as is probable, the multiplication and extension of the social services have caused the demand for such recruits to increase faster than the supply.

But the ancillary functions performed by voluntary workers in connexion with public enterprise are not the only functions, perhaps not the most important functions, which under modern conditions fall within the scope of voluntary service. In the first place there is always pioneer work to be done, experiments to be made, theories to be put to the test of practice. Such research and experiments are vital to social progress, and without them it is only a question of time before first stagnation and then decay set in. All experience shows that the freedom and adventurous initiative which are essential to fruitful experiment can most abundantly be found in voluntary enterprise, if only because the financial risks to be run are usually greater than any public authority would assume. The illustrations I have given amply confirm this conclusion.

Thoughtful collectivists accept the position that pioneer work is the function of the voluntary worker, but look forward to the State taking over the results of such work as soon as the pioneer stage is over. To a large extent

this expectation is sound, but it is quite consistent with the view that there is a permanent place, and a leading place for voluntary researchers, who continually pass on to new fields of experiment, as and when the results of each experiment are ripe to be taken over and exploited by the public authority, or at least by some organization with adequate financial strength.

To supply public enterprise with a constant stream of voluntary helpers, and to feed it with a constant stream of new and fertile ideas—these are vitally important functions, but in my view even these do not by any means exhaust the contribution which voluntary workers can make to social welfare. You will note that in both these types of service the pattern of the relationship is the same; the central position is occupied by the public service; to which the voluntary services are harnessed as auxiliaries.

But there remains another pattern of relationship in which this position is reversed; in which voluntary service occupies the centre, and the public services are ancillary. This pattern is characteristic of those forms of social service which depend on individual leadership and discipleship, free from any element of compulsion.

The essence of such leadership is the power of influencing individual lives through contact of mind with mind, and of spirit with spirit. The exercise of such influence can no more be subordinated to the rules which govern the acts of public authorities, than can religious faith and practice. Social service designed to form character or to rehabilitate human wreckage is in the last analysis a spiritual service, however much those who perform it may pray in aid various forms of temporal means.

To take the last example which I have given, the club movement has at bottom a spiritual and redeeming aim, and in relation to that aim all the various club activities—sports and hobbies, camps and classes are but so many contributory means. Here public action, however important in relation to some special service, can only be ancillary, and voluntary leadership must always remain

central, unless the club movement is to lose its highest aims and its power of leadership and to be replaced by something quite different in quality and aim, though doubtless serving a beneficial social purpose.

Some when they contemplate the magnitude of the field to be covered and the small corner of that field which is as yet effectively cultivated may think that the introduction of some form of public control may be worth the sacrifice, in order to speed up the extension of youth organizations. Others will think that the gain of the whole world would be dearly bought in exchange for the soul of the movement.

Here we are confronted by the age-long, perhaps insoluble, problem of the relations between the spiritual and the temporal power, which runs like a thread through so much of the tangled history of the world.

But I would not willingly end upon this note, or countenance the idea, so persistently thrust upon us nowadays that we are always standing at some cross-roads, with only a choice between two extreme and divergent paths either of which must lead to disaster. On the contrary, the idea which I have tried to present to you is one of partnership rather than of divergence. True I have more than once spoken of sovereignty, but in the social as in the political sphere sovereignty no longer connotes something absolute and exclusive but something capable of gradations and limitations.

Partnership between sovereigns necessarily implies some degree of derogation from the absolute autonomy of each, so as to attain a wider benefit for both. The crucial question is whether the terms of the partnership are such that it remains sterile, or that it gives rise to a fertile growth 'whose seed is in itself'.

I have tried to make some slight contribution towards a clearer understanding of the right functional basis of such a partnership in the domain of the social services.

I do not wish to underrate the difficulties, or the many chances of failure, but it seems to me nevertheless that I

have a glimpse of a vision that is not merely a mocking mirage—a vision of a union at once stable and fruitful between public organization and voluntary initiative; a union from which in the fullness of time may grow a living tree putting forth leaves. And the leaves of that tree shall be for the healing of the nations.

I like to believe that my main conclusion, or perhaps I should say aspiration, is not out of harmony with the thought and ideals of my old friend Sidney Ball, in whose memory this lectureship has been founded, or of some at least of that eager band of social inquirers whom he gathered around him in his rooms at St. John's. That was half a century ago, but to some of us it seems but as yesterday