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“IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT”  
THE SALVATION ARMY, SOCIAL REFORM AND THE LABOUR  
MOVEMENT, 1885-1910\*

*The British bourgeois [...] finally [...] accepted the dangerous aid of the Salvation Army, which revives the propaganda of early Christianity, appeals to the poor as the elect, fights capitalism in a religious way, and thus fosters an element of early Christian class antagonism, which one day may become troublesome to the well-to-do people who now find the ready money for it.*

F. Engels<sup>1</sup>

In the past decade a prominent theme in the historiography of nineteenth-century Britain has been the imposition of middle-class habits and attitudes upon the populace by means of new or re-invigorated mechanisms of “social control”. To the apparatus of law enforcement and to the disciplines of the factory and wage labour, historians have added the less overt instruments of social welfare, education, religion, leisure and moral reform. Philanthropists, educators, clergymen and moralizers have all become soldiers in a campaign to uproot the “anti-social” characteristics of the poor and to cement the hegemony of the elite.<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly, the concept of “social control”, and the depiction of the activities and institutions of the propertied as effective instruments of social discipline, have run into opposition. Most significant, for present purposes, is F. M. L. Thompson’s objection that the idea of social control

\* The research for this paper was greatly facilitated by the R. T. French Visiting Professorship, which links the University of Rochester, New York, and Worcester College, Oxford. A preliminary version of the paper was presented at a conference on Victorian Outcasts at the Victorian Studies Centre, University of Leicester. I would like to thank Simon Stevenson of Exeter College, Oxford, for research assistance; Lieut.-Col. Cyril Barnes for guidance with the archives in the International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, London; and Clive Fleay, Tina Isaacs, Ellen More, K. O. Morgan, Rosemary Tyler and Martin Wiener for their helpful comments. Finally, for her advice and encouragement, I am indebted to Jennifer Donnelly.

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (London, 1892), p. xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> See *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. by A. P. Donajgrodzki (London, 1977); *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by P. McCann (London, 1977); J. R. Hay, “Employers’ Attitudes to Social Policy and the Concept of ‘Social Control’, 1900-1920”, in: *The Origins of British Social Policy*, ed. by P. Thane (London, 1978), pp. 107-25.

ignores the possibility that “the working classes themselves generated their own values and attitudes suited to the requirements of life in an industrial society”. Thompson instructs us to “pay more attention to the workers’ own history as something with a life of its own”, and he suggests that the transformation in Victorian social habits and social relations owes as much to the “autonomous development of working-class culture” as to “embourgeoisement by social control”. A similar view was put forward by Martin Wiener when reviewing the first collection of essays on British history to refer explicitly to the concept of social control. Victorian moral reform, argued Wiener, not only represented efforts at social engineering from above, but also “efforts by vast numbers of ordinary individuals to reshape their lives – as individuals and together with their fellows – towards increased autonomy and effectiveness”.<sup>3</sup> In harmony with this critical response to the idea of social control, the present article examines the Salvation Army as an expression of independent working-class cultural development, and not as an agency of middle-class domination.

The trend of previous historical work on the Salvation Army has been to represent it as part of a middle-class onslaught on the “uncivilized” poor: a middle-class evangelism and philanthropy which sought to re-create the poor in its own image, to establish a new paternalism; in all, to restore class harmony and class control to the threatening urban areas. For Bentley Gilbert, the Salvation Army was one of several representatives of indiscriminate charity, used as “vehicles to transmit the ransom” which the propertied were eager to pay to subdue the menace of the poor in the wake of the Trafalgar Square riots. Gareth Stedman Jones has described the reforming effort of middle-class London in the same years, manifested in the proliferation of missions, shelters and settlement houses, dispensing an Evangelicalism that sought to mould working-class culture and conduct. There is, of course, evidence in favour of such an interpretation. The Salvation Army was party to an ambitious effort of cultural reconstruction, in the best tradition of the temperance movement. Its flaunted purchase of the Grecian Theatre and Eagle Tavern in City road, London, in 1882 prompted *The Times* to ask if the Salvationists intended “to wage war upon all amusements save those provided by the religious ‘free-and-easies’ of their meeting rooms?” Seemingly the London working class believed so,

<sup>3</sup> F. M. L. Thompson, “Social Control in Victorian Britain”, in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XXXIV (1981), pp. 189-208; M. Wiener, review of *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, in *Journal of Social History*, XII (1978-79), p. 318. See also *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914*, ed. by E. and S. Yeo (Brighton, 1981), ch. 5.

since they came out in force to resist physically the Army's colonization of their former haunt.<sup>4</sup>

The aim in what follows, however, is to argue for a modification of this conventional image of the Salvation Army, and thus to begin the construction of the more adequate work of historical analysis that the Army deserves. The focus is on the phase of the Salvation Army's history, from the mid 1880's to the early twentieth century, which E. P. Thompson rightly described as "a profoundly ambiguous moment when Salvationism ran in double harness with London Radicalism" and with the early labour movement.<sup>5</sup> Throughout these years, in particular, the Army developed a definite rapport with the labour movement in the sphere of social reform. The subsequent sections seek to document the origins and progress of this relationship between the Salvation Army and the various components of labour. More crucially, they strive to demonstrate the social and ideological affinities between the Army, on one hand, and the most emancipated and self-sustaining movement of the working class, on the other. First, however, it is useful to provide a brief outline of the Salvation Army's evolution.

The emergence of the Salvation Army in 1878 from the cocoon of the Christian Mission represented a significant development in the attitude of Nonconformity to the depressed strata of late-Victorian England. From below 5,000 in 1878, "Army" membership grew rapidly to an estimated 100,000 in 1900 and 115,000 by 1911. The number passing through Salvationist hands was considerably greater: between 1886 and 1906, probably no fewer than four million people knelt at the Army's penitentiary forms. Religion, it appeared, could break new ground among the urban poor. The number of full-time officers likewise increased from 127 in 1878 to 2,868 in 1906; the number of corps rose from 81 to 1,431 between the same years.<sup>6</sup> The Salvation Army was particularly strong in Bristol, in the working-class wards of Nottingham and Leicester, and in the Northern towns of Hull, Barnsley, Darlington and Scarborough. It was always much

<sup>4</sup> B. B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain* (London, 1966), p. 32; G. Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", in: *Journal of Social History*, VII (1973-74), pp. 466-69; also R. D. Storch, "Introduction", in: *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by id. (London, 1982); *Times*, 19 August 1882, p. 7; also 22 September, p. 8; 7 February 1883, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> E. P. Thompson, "Blood, Fire and Unction", in: *New Society*, No 128 (1965), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976), pp. 42-43; R. Robertson, "The Salvation Army: The Persistence of Sectarianism", in: *Patterns of Sectarianism*, ed. by B. R. Wilson (London, 1967), p. 102; R. Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army* (3 vols; London, 1947-55), II, p. 338.

tougher going in London, where, according to the social investigator Charles Booth, “the mental life of the average working man” was ever more occupied by sport, leisure and secular societies, to the exclusion of religious interests.<sup>7</sup>

The first phase of the Salvation Army’s history, *circa* 1865 to 1885, saw the development of one more variant of late Methodist revivalism: the charismatic preacher, in the shape of William Booth, frustrated by the discipline of the Methodist New Connexion, eager to return to the intuitive virtue of the pure in heart, determined to minister to the outcast poor excluded by the more respectable denominations.<sup>8</sup> From the mid 1880’s, however, the Army gradually supplemented its soul-saving mission with various forms of social relief work: night shelters, rescue homes for fallen women, a prison-gate brigade, and a detachment of slum sisters to nurse the sick and assist with child care. The Army’s social work expanded considerably following the publication in October 1890 of William Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. Extrapolating from the figures in Charles Booth’s *Life and Labour of the People* (1889), “General” Booth estimated that three million men, women and children in the United Kingdom, or one-tenth of the entire population, languished in a state of abject destitution and misery. The General intended to guide the “submerged tenth” out of the jungle of “Darkest England”, or, changing the metaphor, to launch Salvation lifeboats into the sea of drunkenness, want and crime, there to rescue the “shipwrecked” unemployed and sweated, as the lithograph in the frontispiece to *Darkest England* so garishly depicted. The instrument of deliverance was to be a threefold scheme of “self-helping and self-sustaining communities, each being a kind of co-operative society, or patriarchal family, governed and disciplined on the principles which have proved so effective in the Salvation Army”. The City Colony would gather up the outcast poor, give them food, shelter and work, and start the process of “regeneration”. This process would continue in the

<sup>7</sup> H. McLeod, “Class, Community and Region: The Religious Geography of Nineteenth-Century England”, in: *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, VI (1973), p. 57; id., *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974), pp. 27, 60; K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963), pp. 196-97; Ch. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London, 1902-03), Third Series, VII, p. 425; also I, p. 82; V, pp. 67-68. The Salvation Army was also well represented in Bradford, Sheffield, Barrow and Runcorn, Robertson, “The Salvation Army”, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army*, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 15-18; H. Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth* (2 vols; New York, 1920), I, ch. 18; S. J. Ervine, *God’s Soldier. General William Booth* (2 vols; London, 1934), I, Book II.

Farm Colony, situated in the countryside, where colonists would be trained to begin a new life of economic independence in the Over-Sea Colony.<sup>9</sup>

## I

Stephen Yeo has convincingly described a distinct stage in the social history of socialism, characteristic of the years 1883-96, which he terms “the mass conversion, ‘making socialists’, religion-of-socialism phase”.<sup>10</sup> Significantly, the main features of the socialism of this period – the outdoor “missionary” activity; the importance of *being* socialists and of having socialism inside you; the expectation of personal and social change in the wake of “conversion” – were strikingly replicated in early Salvationism. The present section examines these resemblances in detail. For a start the main methods of transmitting the respective “gospels” coincided. In the 1880’s, both movements took to the streets and parks to rally recruits. Both groups occupied the main urban pitches for street preaching, or stump oratory, leading on some occasions to physical conflict between them.<sup>11</sup> At this stage, socialists no less than Salvationists believed that socialism (or Salvationism) would come if the gospel were preached sufficiently: it was all a matter of proselytising. Both bodies also, it seems, suffered attack from sections of the London working class. The so-called “Skeleton Army”, which dogged the footsteps of the Salvationists in London and in many provincial towns, “tried a fall with the Radical workers of East London”, according to George Lansbury, a founding father of the Labour Party, who as a boy belonged to the Salvation Army.<sup>12</sup> Both movements also used the street procession to some effect. More crucially, real accord developed between Salvationists and socialists in the 1880’s around the struggle with the London authorities to maintain the freedom to hold open-air meetings and processions. In September 1890, Commissioner Frank Smith crossed swords with the Metropolitan Police when he led a procession of Salvationists to Exeter Hall in the Strand, and refused to disperse in Savoy Street, thereby falling foul of the Trafalgar

<sup>9</sup> Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army*, III, passim; W. Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London, 1890), pp. 91-93.

<sup>10</sup> S. Yeo, “A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-1896”, in: *History Workshop*, No 4 (1977), p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> For one instance of conflict, in Norwich between the “Army” and the Socialist League, see *Daylight*, 8 January 1887; also 15 January.

<sup>12</sup> G. Lansbury, *My Life* (London, 1928), p. 85; S. Mayor, *The Churches and the Labour Movement* (London, 1967), pp. 322-23. See also V. Bailey, “Salvation Army Riots, the ‘Skeleton Army’ and Legal Authority in the Provincial Town”, in: *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, op. cit., pp. 231-53.

Square regulation of November 1887, for which Smith served three weeks in prison.<sup>13</sup> Well might Friedrich Engels, by then a doyen of English socialism, counsel Paul Lafargue thus: “You should also stand up for the *Salvation Army*, for without it the right to hold processions and discussions in the street would be more decayed in England than it is.”<sup>14</sup>

There were compelling similarities, too, between religious and political conversion. The “faith” was commonly revealed by individual “evangelists”, the latter exhorting members of the audience to join the faithful. There were converts struggling to resist the appeal before finally succumbing; there were individual confessions of faith from the platform, with both types of proselyte proclaiming visions of a new world, a Kingdom of God on earth. It was not unknown for socialists to testify to having been “born again”, a crucial canon of Salvationism’s meagre theology. In South Wales, according to Tom Jones, “Socialism swept through the valleys like a new religion, and young men asked one another, Are you a Socialist? in the same tone as a Salvationist asks, Are you saved?” The literature of the two movements adopted an equally vivid vocabulary. If the *War Cry* spoke of converted drunkards and thieves, the *Clarion* cited instances of “converted Tories”; if the *War Cry* announced enthusiastic receptions and successful “invasions” of virgin territory, the *Workers’ Cry* described open-air meetings at which officers were appointed “and many new members enrolled amidst much enthusiasm”.<sup>15</sup>

Following conversion, there was the intense fervour of committed converts and a strong sense of calling to do good to others. Salvationists and socialists alike sought not only their own spiritual and social welfare, but also the deliverance of their neighbourhoods and workmates from personal vices and denigrating social conditions. Making a bold stand for Christ or for socialism, however, was just as likely to lead to alienation from family, friends and workmates, with converts sorely tested by those who felt chal-

<sup>13</sup> Metropolitan Police Records 2/254, Public Record Office, London.

<sup>14</sup> F. Engels, P. and L. Lafargue, *Correspondence*, II (Moscow, 1960), p. 85. Cf. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 March 1888, p. 4; *Clarion*, 6 February 1892, p. 4. Other methods coincided; Captain Irons of Portsmouth recorded in his diary for 1 March 1879: “took 1500 handbills to the Dock gates, to distribute to workmen as they went home”, G. S. Railton, *Captain Ted* (London, 1880), p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Jones is quoted in P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics* (Brighton, 1980), p. 229. See Yeo, “A New Life”, loc. cit., pp. 10-13, 17, 28; *Workers’ Cry*, 15 August 1891. The *Workers’ Cry* was the organ of the Labor (sic) Army, founded by Frank Smith, formerly of the *Salvation Army*, for whom see below, pp. 146f., 158f. The *War Cry* was the *Salvation Army*’s weekly paper; the *Clarion* was an openly Socialist weekly, edited by Robert Blatchford.

lenged by divergent beliefs and habits.<sup>16</sup> Converts to both faiths commonly abandoned strong drink. At this date of course many socialists were still closely identified with the moral cause of temperance: George Lansbury, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, Keir Hardie, all temperance reformers before joining the labour movement, saw in drink an explanation of the inertia of the poor.<sup>17</sup> At times, it was more than simply new habits that were adopted, but a new sense of personal worth leading to a complete change in lifestyle, including what the Salvation Army called an “improved temporal condition”. In the *War Cry* for February 1888, General Booth commended “the Socialism of Salvation”, whereby moralized people created improved material circumstances. A decade later, a Salvationist officer from Peckham informed Charles Booth: “Conversion has a wonderful effect on a man; he is very soon decently clothed; his home becomes better, and, although he still remains a working man, outwardly he might pass with the clerks”.<sup>18</sup> Early socialism also looked to these individual changes of personal character and circumstance. The central creed of the Fellowship of the New Life, from which the Fabian Society emerged, was the creation of social change through the perfection of individual character. “Man building” was seen as an integral part of constructing the co-operative commonwealth.<sup>19</sup> Other labour pioneers, particularly those from an Evangelical background, considered that new standards of personal conduct – self-discipline, self-respect, self-sacrifice – would equip working-class individuals to take control of their own lives, to throw off the shackles of patronage and manipulation. There was, in their view, a connection between character or moral reform and social reform.<sup>20</sup> It was this whole

<sup>16</sup> Yeo, “A New Life”, p. 13; W. Bramwell Booth’s contribution to *Christianity and the Working Classes*, ed. by G. Haw (London, 1906), p. 155; S. Pierson, *Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism* (Ithaca, 1973), pp. 228-29; J. Kent, “Feelings and Festivals. An interpretation of some working-class religious attitudes”, in: *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. by H. J. Dyos and M. Wolff (2 vols; London, 1973), II, pp. 862-64.

<sup>17</sup> B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London, 1971), pp. 395-97; W. Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-21* (London, 1969), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Yeo, “A New Life”, pp. 8, 13; Booth, *Life and Labour*, op cit., Third Series, VI, p. 78. Cf. C. Booth, *The Salvation Army in relation to the Church and State* (London, 1883), pp. 20-21. Catholicism similarly gave the Irish poor in New York an internal discipline and a “militant respectability”. I owe this international comparison to Sheridan Gilley.

<sup>19</sup> A. M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 2-3; D. Douglas-Wilson, “The Search for Fellowship and Sentiment in British Socialism, 1880-1914” (M. A. thesis, Warwick University, 1971), passim; Sh. Rowbotham and J. Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life* (London, 1977), pp. 15-16; M. J. Wiener, *Between Two Worlds. The Political Thought of Graham Wallas* (Oxford, 1971), ch. 2; J. Clifford, *Socialism and the Churches* [Fabian Tract No 139] (London, 1908), p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Storch, “Introduction”, loc. cit.

conversion and post-conversion syndrome that Bernard Shaw both elucidated and encapsulated in “The Illusions of Socialism” (1897), at a time when backsliding was increasing, with earnest converts burning themselves out through overwork.

we are told of the personal change, the transfigured, lighted-up face, the sudden accession of self-respect, the joyful self-sacrifice, the new eloquence and earnestness of the young working man who has been rescued from a purposeless, automatic loafing through life, by the call of the gospel of Socialism.

These transfigurations [...] are as common in Socialist propaganda campaigns as in the Salvation Army.<sup>21</sup>

Inevitably there were similarities in the social-class appeal and constitution of both movements. If William Booth penned *How to Reach the Masses with the Gospel*, the early socialist journals, *Justice* and *Commonweal*, spoke of the awakening of “the masses” – a relatively new term in social discourse, descriptive of an industrial-urban working class, including those who could find no work.<sup>22</sup> In one sense, the class appeal was stronger in the Salvation Army than in the labour movement. The tract *All About the Salvation Army* (1882) insisted that the masses must be evangelized by those of their own class. Unlike, say, the Wesleyans, the Army stressed that working-class people could find leaders from among themselves, that evangelists could be drawn from the same social strata as the non-worshippers. Not for Booth the bridges to the poor of the settlement movement; class divisions were too wide, he believed, for such social closures. Instead, the Salvation Army worked for a genuine participatory movement, a “priesthood of believers”, albeit a highly undemocratic one in terms of decision-making. As an organization of the poor, it thus bore some resemblance to the labour movement, including the Labour Churches.<sup>23</sup>

As for the social composition of the leadership and membership, there were undoubted parallels. If the Fabian Society was an exclusive body of middle-class teachers, journalists and clerks, the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League drew most of their recruits from the

<sup>21</sup> B. Shaw, “The Illusions of Socialism”, in: *Forecasts of the Coming Century* (Manchester, 1897), p. 158.

<sup>22</sup> A. Briggs, “The Language of ‘Mass’ and ‘Masses’ in Nineteenth-Century England”, in: *Ideology and the Labour Movement*, ed. by D. E. Martin and D. Rubinstein (London, 1979), *passim*.

<sup>23</sup> Inglis, *Churches*, *op. cit.*, p. 95; S. Meacham, “The Church in the Victorian City”, in: *Victorian Studies*, XI (1968), p. 361. The Labour Churches were usually organized by branches of the Independent Labour Party, Inglis, *ch. 6*; Pierson, *Marxism*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

lower middle class (clerks and shopmen) and from amongst skilled artisans.<sup>24</sup> The most detailed estimate of the social background of approximately one-third (or 500 officers) of the Salvationist leadership in 1884 also discovered regular wage-earners in skilled manual or lower clerical employment. A sufficient number had been colliers, navvies and labourers, however, to suggest that the Army was to some degree plumbing the lower reaches of the urban poor. Almost half of all Salvationist officers were women, drawn mainly from domestic service and the clothing industry (dressmaking, weaving): the smaller range of skills reflecting the kind of jobs which were available to female labour.<sup>25</sup> The stable centres of Salvationism were thus to be found in the solid working-class communities of London, not in the poorer quarters of Bethnal Green or Whitechapel, where the Army was not conspicuously successful. Charles Booth's massive survey of religious influences at the turn of the century found the Salvation Army recruiting from among gas-workers in Camberwell, railwaymen in Kentish Town and "the decent working class, earning from thirty shillings to fifty shillings a week" in Peckham. In Camberwell, moreover, where the Army split into two rival camps, both corps grew into regular congregations, having "more the character of working-men's churches than militant missions".<sup>26</sup> By 1906, Bramwell Booth could declare that ninety-five percent of male officers were "formerly mechanics, operatives, and labourers. [. . .] It is a working-man's Church, with a working-man's ritual, and a working-man's clergymen — and clergywomen!"<sup>27</sup>

It is surely not over-extending the analysis, therefore, to suggest that the Salvation Army corps, no less than temperance bands or trade-union and co-operative-society branches, was the beneficiary of an emerging working-class consciousness. Working-class individuals, becoming aware of their potential status as citizens, expressed and formalized this new status by joining the Salvation Army as much as by attaching themselves to the labour movement.<sup>28</sup> The fact that working-class political and industrial organizations were still in an early stage of development made it more

<sup>24</sup> McBriar, *Fabian Socialism*, op. cit., p. 6; Pierson, *Marxism*, p. 88; W. Wolfe, *From Radicalism to Socialism. Men and Ideas in the Formation of Fabian Socialist Doctrines, 1881-1889* (London, 1975), p. 303.

<sup>25</sup> Ch. Ward, "The Social Sources of the Salvation Army, 1865-1890" (M.Ph. thesis, London University, 1970), ch. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, I, pp. 176-77; VI, pp. 25, 32, 77; VII, p. 327; *Times*, 19 August 1882, p. 7; Ward, "The Social Sources", p. 118; P. Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour* (London, 1967), pp. 18-19.

<sup>27</sup> W. B. Booth in *Christianity and the Working Classes*, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ward, "The Social Sources", pp. 154-55, 167, 270-72.

likely that proletarian aspiration would also be expressed through religious structures. This seems especially to have been the case with women: at this date they were hardly represented at all within the labour movement, yet the Salvation Army recruited them and gave them a measure of equality and accomplishment few other women of their generation obtained. To a certain extent, we are talking of a new generation of “joiners”, since most Salvation Army officers enlisted in their late teens and early twenties.<sup>29</sup> It would of course be helpful to know the extent to which Salvationists were concurrently involved in Friendly Societies or in the trade-union movement, and the extent to which Salvationists moved off entirely into other social and political channels. The evidence is hardly overwhelming, but one Salvationist in Northampton was the treasurer of the Boot and Shoe Operatives Union, and at a public meeting protesting the unfair competition of the Salvation Army’s workshops, he urged in defence that the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress had found the workshops in good order.<sup>30</sup> Frank Smith is an example of the passage from Salvation Army to socialist movement, as are the working-class women, former Salvationists, who served with Sylvia Pankhurst in the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (later, Workers’ Socialist Federation).<sup>31</sup> The contention, in short, is that the background to the origin and early progress of the Salvation Army, no less than that of the early socialist movement, was an emerging working-class consciousness.

A new self-awareness and status was fortified by membership of bodies with a strong group consciousness and *esprit de corps*. Just as the socialist groups generated a sense of unity, fellowship and fraternity, the rescue mission induced a tenacious corporate identity, based on immense self-denial and a desire to save others. Many factors served to reinforce commitment to the Salvation Army: a distinctive uniform and the military paraphernalia; the reality and memory of persecution; and an authoritarian organization which insisted that cadres rely on the locality for subsistence, requiring young Salvationists to “live very hardly and work

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-50.

<sup>30</sup> Northampton Daily Echo, 10 and 12 September 1910, cutting in the Gertrude Tuckwell Collection, Trades Union Congress Library.

<sup>31</sup> For Frank Smith, see below, pp. 146f., 158f. For the suffragettes (Mrs Jessie Payne, Mrs Baines, Mrs Schlette and Harriet Bennett) see E. S. Pankhurst, *The Home Front* (London, 1932), p. 97; *id.*, *The Suffragette Movement* (London, 1931), pp. 475-79; *id.*, *The Suffragette* (London, 1911), p. 324; *The Workers’ Dreadnought*, IV (1917-18), p. 938. I am indebted to Carolyn Stevens of the University of Rochester, New York, and to Rosemary Tyler for this information.

hard".<sup>32</sup> Not that corporate identity survived all pressures. If the socialists had their differences (with the Socialist League breaking away from the SDF), schisms and secessions likewise afflicted the Salvation Army, due mainly to the disciplined, not to say despotic, character of Army government. In 1886, *The Times* reported that "the whole of the southern division staff have resigned or been dismissed and serious defections have followed among the rank and file."<sup>33</sup> Even so, Charles Booth's informed judgment was that the Army "is before everything a religious community", binding people together "whose faith it has strengthened, and whom it has set diligently to work for the social and religious welfare of the world".<sup>34</sup>

Associated with the Salvation Army, especially in the earliest years of the establishment of foreign missions, was finally an internationalism that commands some respect. Later on, perhaps, the Army became more associated with imperial service, with the development of native power along non-insurrectionary paths. Protests against the Boer War were certainly forbidden to its officers in 1900.<sup>35</sup> But then the labour movement hardly stood four-square against either imperialism or the Boer War.<sup>36</sup> And of one thing there is little ambiguity, the Salvation Army maintained a resolutely pacifist stance throughout these years.

## II

The argument on behalf of a correspondence in certain social and organizational details between the Salvation Army and the labour move-

<sup>32</sup> Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, III, p. 209; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 45; S. Yeo, "Religion in Society: a view from a provincial town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Ph.D. thesis, Sussex University, 1971), p. 137, note 49; *Saturday Review*, LIII (1882), p. 763; *My Adventures with General William Booth*, Henry Edmonds 1877-1889 (Private circulation, 1930); Robertson, "The Salvation Army", pp. 55-56.

<sup>33</sup> *Times*, 10 May 1886, p. 6; Robertson, "The Salvation Army", p. 76; *Saturday Review*, LIV (1882), p. 243; J. J. R. Redstone, *An Ex-Captain's Experience of the Salvation Army* (London, 1888).

<sup>34</sup> Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, VII, pp. 337, 345; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 184.

<sup>35</sup> G. S. Railton, *The History of Our South African War* (London, 1902), p. 129; S. H. Swinny, "John Wesley and General Booth", in: *Positivist Review*, XX (1912), pp. 217-22. Arthur Clibborn and Kate Booth, the General's daughter, pleaded for permission to condemn the Boer War, without success, C. Scott, *The Heavenly Witch: The Story of the Marechale* (London, 1982).

<sup>36</sup> B. Baker, *The Social Democratic Federation and the Boer War* [Our History Pamphlet No 59] (London, 1974), passim; N. Etherington, "Hyndman, the Social-Democratic Federation, and Imperialism", in: *Historical Studies* (Melbourne), XVI (1974), pp. 89-103. For a different interpretation of popular attitudes, however, see R. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (London, 1972), passim.

ment would seem to break down, however, when it comes to the approach taken towards poverty, unemployment and the outcast poor. For the best part of the 1880's, the Salvation Army expressed a traditional evangelical attitude to poverty – one inimical to radical social reform. In 1883, during the controversy over the revelatory pamphlet *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, General Booth wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* to warn against “the attempt to deal with the great social difficulty as though it had no deeper cause than a want of bricks and mortar”. A belief that sin was the authentic source of poverty bred an indifference to material conditions, which was again revealed when Bramwell Booth, Chief of the Staff, proclaimed the Salvation Army's belief in “the Divine power of the Gospel as the quickest and completest means of raising up the poor from the dunghill”.<sup>37</sup> Yet here, too, the concerns of the Salvation Army and the labour movement began to converge. Raising the living standards of the poor assumed a new urgency for the Salvation Army in the late 1880's. The present section traces this increasing intersection in the realm of social welfare.

Let us first dispose of the charge, still made by some historians, that in the late 1880's the Salvation Army exacerbated the problem of sweating in the match-box making industry of the East End of London.<sup>38</sup> The accusation first surfaced in 1888 when the Reverend William Adamson, Vicar of Old Ford (Bow), told the House of Lords Select Committee on the Sweating System that the Salvation Army was known to have offered to make match-boxes at 2¼d per gross, undercutting the going rate of 2¾d. He even stated, in subsequent correspondence, that the opposition of the East End poor, including that of the “Skeleton Army”, had been actuated by “the supposed complicity of the Salvation Army with the reduction”. Yet Adamson clearly knew little about the Salvation Army's reputed operations, even suggesting that Salvationists supported themselves by making match-boxes in their barracks.<sup>39</sup> Not surprisingly, Bramwell Booth leapt to the defence of the Salvation Army, informing the editor of *The Times* that the Army had “never either made or offered to make match-

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Inglis, Churches, pp. 175-76. See also War Cry, 29 February 1886; Times, 26 July 1882, p. 6 (Mrs Booth speaking at Blackheath). Cf. K. S. Inglis, “English Nonconformity and Social Reform, 1880-1900”, in: Past & Present, No 13 (1958), pp. 83-86; H. Pelling, “Religion and the Nineteenth-Century British Working Class”, *ibid.*, No 27 (1964), pp. 128-33.

<sup>38</sup> E.g., R. Beer, Matchgirls Strike 1888. The Struggle Against Sweated Labour in London's East End [National Museum of Labour History Pamphlet No 2] (London, n.d.), pp. 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, with Minutes of Evidence [C. 361] (1888), pp. 248, 254, 353; Times, 10 May 1888, p. 6.

boxes at 2½d per gross, nor at any other price". The Army, he said, so disapproved of the "sweating system" – which he described as "an abominable and scandalous iniquity" – that "we will not employ firms who profit by it to supply us with uniforms, however advantageous to our funds the contract might be". Later, Bramwell Booth appeared before the Select Committee to denounce Adamson's evidence as a complete fabrication.<sup>40</sup> Of course the Army entered the match-box-making trade in the 1890's; they also crashed into the organized trade-union movement over the sweating of "unemployables" in the carpenters' shop of the Hanbury Street Elevator between 1907 and 1910.<sup>41</sup> But these later facts ought not to influence judgments, as they seem to have done, on the Army's work in the 1880's.

By this date the Salvation Army had begun, however, to expand its social-relief work. In January 1888 a food depot was opened near the West India docks. By April 1889, the Army also had three night shelters, two of which were for men.<sup>42</sup> One was at St John's Square, Clerkenwell, where the first two floors each contained 100 coffin-like boxes, 6 feet long by one foot 9½ inches wide, containing a bed: what William Booth himself described as "a shake-down on the floor in the packing-boxes".<sup>43</sup> Temporary assistance was given without discrimination between "deserving" and "undeserving" – the central division in Victorian philanthropy. Any such categorization, Booth believed, ought to wait until the submerged had first been offered a way out. This displayed a much less censorious attitude to the urban "residuum" than that shown either by the Charity Organization Society or, indeed, by the labour movement.<sup>44</sup>

The first practical convergence of social salvationism with the labour movement came with the London Dock Strike of 1889, when the food depots supplied cheap provisions to the dockers' families. Ben Tillet, leader of the dockers' union, later recalled that "Booth's organisation was

<sup>40</sup> First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, pp. 1005-06; *Times*, 7 May 1888, p. 16; 12 May, p. 17; also *War Cry*, 13 April 1889; Ervine, *God's Soldier*, op. cit., II, pp. 694-96.

<sup>41</sup> See below, pp. 160f., 168ff.

<sup>42</sup> Home Office Papers 45/9802/B5587/1, Public Record Office (hereafter HO). In December 1888, General Booth asked the Home Office for £15,000 to provide cheap shelters for the outcast poor, *Hansard*, Third Series, CCCXXXII (1888), c. 648; *Times*, 11 December 1888, p. 5; 25 December, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Metropolitan Police Records 2/203; Booth, *In Darkest England*, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

<sup>44</sup> Inglis, *Churches*, p. 201; G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 289, 345-46; V. Bailey, "The Metropolitan Police, the Home Office and the Threat of Outcast London", in: *Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. by id. (London, 1981), p. 97.

destined to serve a very useful purpose of a commissariat character in the great upheaval in 1889." From Australia, the Salvation Army sent the proceeds of the sale of *War Cry* to the London dockers' strike fund, supplementing the donations from the Australian labour movement.<sup>45</sup> It all secured an enduring commitment to the Salvation Army's social work on the part of the New Unionist leaders.

A more important mode of bringing Salvationism and socialism together was the personal influence of Frank Smith. Born of lower-middle-class parents in Chelsea, apprenticed as an upholsterer (in which trade he ultimately set up in business), Smith was a part-time evangelist at the Chelsea Mission from 1879, before deciding to devote all his time to the Salvation Army. In true Salvationist style, he developed into an energetic and unorthodox evangelist, whether in "capturing" the Eagle tavern in London or when "invading" Liverpool, riding through the streets on horseback, facing the animal's tail, in order to attract a crowd.<sup>46</sup> As Keir Hardie revealed, in a portrait of Smith a few years later, "The old campaigners in the S.A. still speak with delight of those days. Wherever hard fighting in the most literal sense of the word had to be done, Frank Smith was sure to be in the midst of it."<sup>47</sup> In 1884 Booth sent Frank Smith to take charge of the Salvation Army in the United States, during which time he read and was deeply influenced by *Progress and Poverty*, written by Henry George, the American radical and land reformer, a book which proved to be a crucial stepping-stone to socialism for not a few English radicals.<sup>48</sup>

Back in England by 1887, Smith, now in his early thirties, began to link up with the early socialist movement, addressing meetings of the unemployed, where he would stress that Christ had always fed the hungry, and assisting the Law and Liberty League, formed in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday to fight the ensuing court cases. At the public funeral of Alfred Linnell (a victim of police aggression), which the League organized,

<sup>45</sup> *War Cry*, 29 November 1890; B. Tillett, *Memories and Reflections* (London, 1931), p. 92; A. Stafford, *A Match to Fire the Thames* (London, 1961), pp. 24, 139-40, 185.

<sup>46</sup> Inglis, *Churches*, p. 202; E. I. Champness, *Frank Smith, M.P. Pioneer and Modern Mystic* (London, 1943), pp. 6-11.

<sup>47</sup> J. K. Hardie, "Frank Smith, L.C.C.," in: *Labour Prophet*, III (1894), p. 113. The *Labour Prophet* was the organ of the Labour Church.

<sup>48</sup> Champness, *Frank Smith*, loc. cit.; W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below. Utopian Experiments in England 1560-1960* (London, 1961), p. 317. *Progress and Poverty* was published in America in 1879, in England in 1881. George lectured energetically in Britain to publicize his single-land-tax plan, H. Ausubel, *In Hard Times. Reformers Among the Late Victorians* (New York, 1960), pp. 106-08.

Frank Smith was one of the pall-bearers, touching shoulders with other key figures in the radical and socialist movement: Annie Besant, Herbert Burrows, Cunninghame Graham, W. T. Stead and William Morris. Until 1890, moreover, Smith was at the forefront of the Salvation Army's contribution to the defence of the freedom to meet and process.<sup>49</sup> Smith's direct political involvement irritated General Booth, and for a brief period Smith left the Salvation Army. As the Army's involvement in social work filled out, however, Booth recalled Smith and in May 1890 gave him direction of the Social Reform Wing. Smith set about the implementation of "Social Christianity" with characteristic zeal, increasing the number of food depots and shelters, organizing a labour exchange, establishing a factory or "elevator" in Whitechapel, and planning a match factory with the aim of undermining the large match firms. If the trade-union movement harboured any fears that the factory, opened in June 1890, would be a source of cheap labour and unfair competition, it was reassured by Smith himself, who, in correspondence with the London Trades Council, guaranteed that no such situation would arise.<sup>50</sup>

In August 1890, Smith attracted Henry George to come and inspect the various components of the Social Reform Wing. Addressing a noon prayer meeting in the Whitechapel shelter and workshop, George explained that he had come to see for himself

the beginning of The Salvation Army's noble attempt to grapple with this great social problem. He was rejoiced to see that the Army at any rate recognised that it was not by virtue of God's law that any man willing to work should be unable to find work. He was sure The Almighty never intended destitution, starvation or poverty to be the lot of mankind [. . .].<sup>51</sup>

George's visit coincided with the first of five articles which Smith contributed to *War Cry* (out of a planned eight "volleys" on the Lord's Prayer), under the general title of "Sociology". In these articles Smith wrote of the Kingdom of Justice that had to be founded, and of "the right to live

<sup>49</sup> *Methodist Times*, VI (1890), p. 1077; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 202; E. P. Thompson, *William Morris* (London, 1977), pp. 493-94. See also note 13.

<sup>50</sup> Champness, *Frank Smith*, p. 12; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 202; *Star*, 24 September 1890, p. 1; *Justice*, 30 August, p. 2; R. A. Woods, *English Social Movements* (London, 1892), pp. 171-72; N. H. Murdoch, "Salvationist-Socialist Frank Smith, M.P.: Father of Salvation Army Social Work", unpublished paper delivered at the Fourth Annual Salvation Army Historical Conference, New York, September 1978.

<sup>51</sup> *War Cry*, 30 August 1890. In January 1887, Catherine Booth had told Henry George that "privately she would further his ideas as much as she could but that her position made it impossible for her to advocate his views publicly", Ausubel, *In Hard Times*, op. cit., p. 115.

without the pangs of hunger, the right of an opportunity to honest toil, and the right to maintain themselves and theirs in a position worthy of the creation of God” – and not on the verge of starvation, where so many people were to be found. It was not God’s will, he maintained, “that the fruits and flowers of life should be in the sole possession of one class, while to another should be given the thorns and thistles only”. The medium was religious, but the message had important social, not to say political, implications. Poverty was gradually represented not simply as a bulwark against individual salvation (which would better describe William Booth’s position), but as a social injustice in itself.<sup>52</sup>

Through Frank Smith’s agency, a limited rapport had developed between the Salvation Army and the labour movement. This rapport was doubtless strengthened by the fact that the early labour movement had not yet turned its face against charitable social work. As Stephen Yeo wrote, “ILP branches and even the SDF in places like Battersea, Clerkenwell, and South Salford, were not afraid of direct charity work as part of their presence in a locality”.<sup>53</sup> In Manchester in the early 1890’s, Robert Blatchford started his “Cinderella” work for poor children, whilst the Pankhurst family persuaded their local ILP branch to organize the cooking and distribution of food to the unemployed. A little later, through the efforts of Fred Brocklehurst, the ILP attempted to establish an annual “Self-Denial Week”, during which socialists would fast to help the needy: a straight “lift” from the Salvationist practice of the same name.<sup>54</sup> At least until the First World War, the ultimate goals of socialism did not exclude attempts to work for reforms that would create a juster society in the present.

It has been argued, then, that an informal understanding between the Salvation Army and the labour movement materialized in the 1880’s. Here were two groups using similar open-air methods to bring their respective gospels to the labouring masses. Both movements bound new converts

<sup>52</sup> War Cry, 30 August, 13 and 27 September, 1 and 29 November 1890. Smith left the Salvation Army before the final three articles were written, see below, pp. 158f. See also Inglis, Churches, p. 209; Ch. Parkin, “The Salvation Army and Social Questions of the Day”, in: *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, VI, p. 111. It would be interesting to know if any accord between the Salvation Army and the labour movement developed in the United States. My impression, for what it is worth, is that there were similar linkages: Labour Leader, IX (1897), p. 355; P. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 140-41.

<sup>53</sup> Yeo, “A New Life”, p. 39.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 51, note 34; R. Blatchford, *My Eighty Years* (London, 1931), pp. 189-90; Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, op. cit., pp. 128-29; Pierson, *Marxism*, p. 228. Brocklehurst was a key figure in the Labour Church movement.

together into a committed and zealous fellowship; inspired them to energetic missionary activity on behalf of the unsaved; and commonly impelled changes in personal character and environment. Both movements, furthermore, drew from and in turn invigorated an emerging working-class consciousness. It is a comparison which confirms that the Salvation Army was a movement both of the working class and in intimate relationship with the submerged, and which suggests that it warps historical reality to bracket the Army with organizations bent simply on imposing middle-class values on the uncultured poor. A closer evaluation of this uniformly proletarian evangelism lends credence to the view that the change in the social habits of the urban masses in late-Victorian England owes much to self-discipline, self-respect and self-help: in short, to the independent transformation of working-class customs and culture.<sup>55</sup>

The relationship between the two movements was built around the provision of charitable relief, both during and after the celebrated London Dock Strike. At the centre of this dialogue was Frank Smith, a Salvationist on his way to becoming a socialist. Under Smith's influence, the Army departed from the plain evangelical tradition and turned to ways of improving the material environment of the depressed poor. Admittedly the connections between the Salvation Army and the labour movement rested heavily upon Frank Smith. The cross-talk also relied, however, upon a labour and socialist movement which refused to erect impassable barriers between itself and other groups that were doing comparable work under different banners with contrasting credos. The arteries between the different political and religious organizations had not yet fully hardened. In these ways the stage was set for the Salvation Army's dramatic entrance on to the stage of social reform, heralded by the publication in October 1890 of *In Darkest England and the Way Out*.

### III

Frank Smith's articles in the *War Cry*, coinciding as they did with William Booth's announcement in *Darkest England* of new proposals to help the outcast poor, plus public knowledge of Smith's activity as head of the Social Reform Wing, meant that he was initially credited with the employment of the Salvation Army as "an instrument of social reform". According to W. T. Stead, Smith was "one of the leading spirits of the new departure", and had been pressing the social scheme on Booth for the past three years. The labour press endorsed this view: Keir Hardie was in no

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Thompson, "Social Control in Victorian Britain", loc. cit.

doubt that “the social side of the Army’s work is largely due to Mr. Smith’s initiative and activity”.<sup>56</sup>

As far as the content of *Darkest England* is concerned, however, Frank Smith’s was not the only imprint. W. T. Stead – Congregationalist editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, publicist of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, “partner in crime” in the covert investigations that resulted in the “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”, whom Bramwell Booth described as “a Salvationist in mufti” – was a vital influence on the design and detail of the Darkest England scheme as it appeared in General Booth’s book. Stead’s biographer has described how the radical editor offered to act as amanuensis, converting Booth’s disordered material into a manageable manuscript, to which Booth then added his own evocative vernacular and some of the singular proposals. There is a Boothian touch to the scheme to transfer salvage from London to the farm colony. “I see, as in a vision”, declared Booth, “barge loads upon barge loads of bones floating down the Thames to the great Bone Factory.”<sup>57</sup> Stead was influential in other ways, too. He probably called Booth’s attention to W. L. Rees’s *From Poverty to Plenty: or, the Labour Question Solved* (1888), which informed the General’s views on emigration; and he most certainly introduced Booth to Arnold White, who had experience of colonization in South Africa, and with whom Booth compared notes.<sup>58</sup> Stead himself was clearly satisfied with the results of his intercession; he wrote to Lord Milner, then at the Ministry of Finance in Cairo, predicting a new era of social reform:

You remember, of course, the first great *coup* which we made in the *Pall Mall Gazette* – The Bitter Cry of Outcast London. General Booth’s Book may be regarded as a bigger and a better “Bitter Cry”, and in order to make the apostolic succession quite clear I took care to incorporate in the first page the greater part of that famous Leader which began everything.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Inglis, Churches, p. 209; Hardie, “Frank Smith”, loc. cit.; also Star, 24 September 1890, p. 1. A Times correspondent believed that “the ideas of the substantial parts of the scheme – that is to say, of the city colony and the farm colony – had their origin in the mind of Mr. Frank Smith”, Times, 26 December 1890, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> W. B. Booth, *Echoes and Memories* (London, 1926), pp. 141–43; F. Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (2 vols; London, 1925), II, p. 12; Begbie, *General William Booth*, op. cit., II, pp. 92–93; Murdoch, “Salvationist-Socialist Frank Smith”, op. cit., p. 5; Booth, *In Darkest England*, p. 136. In the Preface to *In Darkest England*, Booth acknowledged “valuable literary help” from a friend of the poor. Professor J. O. Baylen of Georgia State University, Atlanta, is about to publish what promises to be the definitive biography of W. T. Stead.

<sup>58</sup> Inglis, Churches, p. 203; W. Booth to A. White, 24 October 1890, to be found in the copy of A. White, *The Great Idea* (London, 1910), in the archives of the Salvation Army.

<sup>59</sup> Whyte, W. T. Stead, op. cit., II, p. 13. Milner had previously been on the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, A. M. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics. A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power* (London, 1964), pp. 10–11, 19.

Stead sent Milner a copy of *Darkest England*, assured that he would recognize Stead's "fine Roman hand in most of the chapters", and closed the letter thus:

You will be delighted to see that we have got the Salvation Army solid not only for Social Reform but also for Imperial Unity. I have written to Rhodes about it and we stand on the eve of great things.<sup>60</sup>

To Stead's undoubted influence should be added the Reverend Herbert Mills's *Poverty and the State or Work for the Unemployed* (1886), whose proposal to transform the workhouses into Home Colonies for co-operative production (which, in turn, may have been taken from the Dutch and German labour colonies for the incorrigibly idle), underlay Booth's Farm Colony. Mills was a somewhat disillusioned Unitarian minister, a Socialist, and founder of the Home Colonization Society in 1887, with the aim of substituting co-operative estates for the existing poor law. When Booth appeared on the scene, however, Mills agreed to transfer the £ 5,000 which he had so far raised, to the *Darkest England* fund.<sup>61</sup>

In view of the different tributaries feeding into *Darkest England*, it is perhaps unwise to be too categorical about its true source. Nonetheless, the book seems to emerge from the fusion of the ideas of the social-imperialist movement, anxious to use the Empire to combat urban degeneration, and the "social gospel" wing of Nonconformity, notably its emphasis on rural panaceas.<sup>62</sup> Without question, a strong anti-urbanism runs through *Darkest England*, not least in the prefatory chart, where the city is obviously the source of evil, the countryside "the way out". Now, it would be strange if the anti-urbanism of Booth's study had failed to find an appreciative audience within at least sections of the labour movement, given the pro-

<sup>60</sup> Whyte, W. T. Stead, II, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> P. d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914* (Princeton, 1968), p. 398; Inglis, *Churches*, pp. 203-04; J. Harris, *Unemployment and Politics* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 119-21. It is unknown whether Booth ever consulted the pamphlet *Our Tramps*, issued by the Church Army (the Church of England's imitation Salvation Army) in March 1890, in which a threefold scheme of City, Farming and Over-Sea colonies was first propounded, K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action* (London, 1962), pp. 59-60. It seems unlikely, finally, that Charles Booth's scheme of labour colonies influenced *In Darkest England*. J. Brown, "Charles Booth and Labour Colonies, 1889-1905", in: *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XXI (1968), p. 357; Harris, loc. cit., p. 119.

<sup>62</sup> D. W. Bebbington, "The City, the Countryside and the Social Gospel in Late Victorian Nonconformity", in: *The Church in Town and Countryside* [Studies in Church History, XVII] (Oxford, 1979), pp. 418-23; J. Kent, "The Role of Religion in the Cultural Structure of the Later Victorian City", in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, XXIII (1973), pp. 153-73; Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, op. cit., pp. 308-12, 311, note 20. I agree with Jones when he says that General Booth and Frank Smith "were probably not motivated by any particular ambition to advance the cause of social imperialism".

country sentiments which found expression in William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) or, later, in Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* (1894). More specifically, Annie Besant had already put the Fabian *imprimatur* on a scheme for "County Farms" as one way of assisting unemployed labour; and Keir Hardie and the Scottish Labour Party were attracted at this date to Home Colonies as a remedy for unemployment.<sup>63</sup>

However, historians invariably interpret *Darkest England* as a highly conservative and backward-looking document, and hence by implication anti-socialist. Christine Parkin underscored Booth's "conservative, patriarchal approach to human misery".

Here was no blue-print for a social revolution, no encouragement for the breakdown of the social order. The prevailing class structure is made the focal point of fruitful co-operation, rather than an element of friction.<sup>64</sup>

Roland Robertson detected in the *Darkest England* scheme "a feudal conception of the social structure, in which each person's position in society was clearly defined and ascribed on the basis of a system of authority gradations". One could add K. S. Inglis's opinion that Booth introduced the social scheme as merely a new strategy of salvation once it became evident that "poverty itself was a grave impediment to salvation". Booth did indeed affirm: "it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving the soul that I seek the salvation of the body." For the democrat, finally, there was much to deter in the undemocratic administration envisaged for the various colonies. Without discipline and unquestioning obedience, declared Booth, "your Utopians get to loggerheads, and Utopia goes to smash".<sup>65</sup> Yet William Booth did, after all, set out to fight poverty on a massive scale; he dramatized the war against want like no one before him, provoking a new awareness of social conditions and a new desire for social reform. For these reasons alone, *Darkest England* deserves closer textual analysis than it is usually accorded.

<sup>63</sup> McBriar, *Fabian Socialism*, p. 27; A. Besant, "Industry Under Socialism", in: *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, ed. by G. B. Shaw (London, 1889), p. 154-55. Annie Besant was also clearly influenced by the Rev. H. V. Mills's *Poverty and the State*. Keir Hardie proposed Home Colonies at the inaugural conference of the ILP in Bradford, in January 1893, which was held in the Labour Institute, formerly a Salvation Army "citadel". H. Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900* (Oxford, 1965), p. 119.

<sup>64</sup> Parkin, "The Salvation Army", loc. cit., p. 116.

<sup>65</sup> Robertson, "The Salvation Army", pp. 65, 83; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 195; Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp. 45, 232. The *Darkest England* scheme was certainly the beginning of Booth's widespread popularity, following a decade of opposition, and it revived a flagging Salvation Army, A. M. Nicol, *General Booth and the Salvation Army* (London, 1911), pp. 192-93.

The title of the book was an acknowledged paraphrase of the explorer Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*, the intended analogy being that between the equatorial forest and Darkest England, "alike in its vast extent [. . .], its monotonous darkness, its malaria and its gloom, its dwarfish dehumanized inhabitants, the slavery to which they are subjected, their privations and their misery".<sup>66</sup> The General first presented, in a racier manner, many of the facts and figures in Charles Booth's more systematic and sombre survey, enriching them with case records and personal statements that bear comparison with those to be found in *Life and Labour of the People*. In the early sections, indeed, *Darkest England* is a serious work of sociological testimony. Here is the statement of a 54 year old homeless man who was found sleeping on the Embankment.

I've slept here two nights; I'm a confectioner by trade; I come from Dartford, I got turned off because I'm getting elderly. They can get young men cheaper, and I have the rheumatism so bad. I've earned nothing these two days; I thought I could get a job at Woolwich, so I walked there, but could get nothing. I found a bit of bread in the road wrapped up in a bit of newspaper. That did me for yesterday. [. . .] When it's wet we stand about all night under the arches.<sup>67</sup>

No high moral tone is adopted towards the outcast, not even towards prostitutes.

there is no doubt it is a fact that there is no industrial career in which for a short time a beautiful girl can make as much money with as little trouble as the profession of a courtesan. [. . .] the number of young women who have received £ 500 in one year for the sale of their person is larger than the number of women of all ages who make a similar sum by honest industry.<sup>68</sup>

It was rare for prostitution to be described with such matter-of-factness in the late-Victorian period, but then the Salvation Army had more experience than most religious organizations in the etiology of prostitution.

More significantly, Booth traced the source of individual distress, as of the entire "social problem", to the want of employment. Existing schemes to improve the condition of the workforce were founded, Booth contended, not upon "rock", nor even upon "sand", but upon the "bottomless bog of the stratum of the Workless". Reversing the equation so beloved of the Charity Organisation Society, unemployment was said to cause drunken-

<sup>66</sup> Booth, *In Darkest England*, p. 12; Armytage, *Heavens Below*, op. cit., p. 318; W. S. Smith, *The London Heretics 1870-1914* (New York, 1968), p. 14.

<sup>67</sup> Booth, *In Darkest England*, p. 27.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50. For the Army's rescue work with prostitutes, see F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 190, 202-03.

ness, sickness and depravity (although as to what caused the want of employment, if not the personal failings of workmen, the book provided no adequate answer). The corollary of this analysis was a denunciation of individualist attitudes towards, and individualist solutions of, poverty. Booth was no defender of a *laissez-faire* political economy which simply let men sink; he gave short shrift to “those anti-Christian economists who hold that it is an offence against the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to try to save the weakest from going to the wall, and who believe that when once a man is down the supreme duty of a self-regarding Society is to jump upon him”.<sup>69</sup> He strongly chastised the ineffective alliance of a deterrent Poor Law and organized charity, the latter ministering exclusively to the thrifty and industrious – what Booth termed “the aristocracy of the miserable”.

We have had this doctrine of an inhuman cast-iron pseudo-political economy too long enthroned among us. It is now time to fling down the false idol, and proclaim a Temporal Salvation as full, free, and universal, and with no other limitations than the “Whosoever will” of the Gospel.<sup>70</sup>

Following these opening shots, Booth carried the war into the enemy’s camp by proposing elementary remedial welfare for the submerged, however undeserving. The standard of life to be gained was modest (although more generous than that of the COS), to wit, that of the London Cab Horse.

These are the two points of the Cab Horse’s Charter. When he is down he is helped up, and while he lives he has food, shelter and work. That, although a humble standard, is at present absolutely unattainable by millions [. . .] of our fellow-men and women in this country.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, Booth sought to convince the labour movement that his scheme of social salvation need not conflict with its own panaceas for poverty and unemployment. He declined to endorse such plans as Henry George’s single tax on land values, preferring a more practical scheme of immediate

<sup>69</sup> Booth, In Darkest England, pp. 18, 34; Harris, Unemployment and Politics, op. cit., pp. 124-25. For a critical response to Booth’s view that unemployment caused distress, by the economic historian W. J. Ashley, who preferred the sentiments of the COS, see “General Booth’s Panacea”, in: Political Science Quarterly, VI (1891), p. 546. I accept of course that the assault upon *laissez-faire* attitudes towards poverty was, at this date, a characteristic also of the writings of the social imperialists, Stedman Jones, Outcast London, p. 311.

<sup>70</sup> Booth, In Darkest England, pp. 36, 67-72. Cf. S. and B. Webb, The Prevention of Destitution (London, 1916), pp. 234-35.

<sup>71</sup> Booth, In Darkest England, p. 20. Booth regretted that a prison standard would be to set things too high: “Some time, perhaps, we may venture to hope that every honest worker on English soil will always be as warmly clad, as healthily housed, and as regularly fed as our criminal convicts – but that is not yet.” *Ibid.*, p. 19.

help for the hungry and workless, but, as he also emphasized, "There is nothing in my scheme which will bring it into collision either with Socialists of the State, or Socialists of the Municipality". Booth also believed that the most knowledgeable trade unionists would recognize that "any scheme which could deal adequately with the out-of-works and others who hang on to their skirts and form the recruiting ground of blacklegs [. . .] would be [. . .] most beneficial to Trades Unionism." As for the workshops of the City Colony, no unjust competition would emanate from them (as was the case with pauper and criminal labour), since the Army was "pledged to a war to the death against sweating in every shape and form", and since anti-sweating experiments were an essential part of the social scheme.<sup>72</sup>

But how, in fact, did the different sections of the labour movement respond to this chariot of philanthropic fire? Herman Ausubel and K. S. Inglis have documented the response to *Darkest England* from the so-called experts on London pauperism and from the main political and religious journals. Clearly, *Darkest England* aroused more public interest than any other book since Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. By December 1890, some 115,000 copies had been sold; within four months, the £100,000 which Booth requested as a token of public commitment to the social scheme had been contributed.<sup>73</sup> But we still know very little of the response of the labour movement and the labour press to *Darkest England*.

According to the American social investigator, Robert A. Woods, New Unionism "formally expressed confidence in the Salvation Army's scheme, and offered all possible assistance." Both Tillett and Mann thought the social scheme deserved a fair trial; and Tillett was in the audience when Booth sought financial support for the scheme at an Exeter Hall meeting in

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 77-80, 108, 110, Appendix 2. Anti-sweating experiments were an integral part of the scheme, whether it was the proposal to enter the matchbox-making industry or the labour exchange for the employment of sandwich men, bill-distributors and messengers.

<sup>73</sup> H. Ausubel, "General Booth's Scheme of Social Salvation", in: *American Historical Review*, LVI (1950-51), pp. 519-25; Inglis, *Churches*, pp. 204-09; Mayor, *The Churches and the Labour Movement*, op. cit., p. 52. For a sample of responses to *In Darkest England*, see *Review of Reviews*, II (1890), pp. 382ff., 492ff.; *Economist*, XLVIII (1890), p. 1468; F. Peek, "General Booth's Social Work", in: *Contemporary Review*, LXII (1892), pp. 59-84. Most "experts" on London pauperism, with the exception of Peek, denounced the scheme as impractical, financially prohibitive, over-ambitious and a duplication of existing schemes to aid the submerged. C. S. Loch, *An Examination of "General" Booth's Social Scheme* (London, 1890), passim, but esp. p. 94, for the COS, predictably criticized the absence of all discrimination and the neglect of inquiry in the demoralizing provision of free food and shelter. The reaction of the main London newspapers to *In Darkest England* was generally very favourable. See the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* for 20 October 1890.

November 1890.<sup>74</sup> Evidently, the Army's work during the Dock Strike was paying dividends. What of the labour press, in its widest sense? Among the Radical weeklies, none was more supportive of Booth's plan than the widely read working-class journal, *Reynolds's Newspaper*. "As a scheme", it declared, "it is in one sense the most socialistic that has ever been brought out", a commendable ground-plan for the improvement of the condition of the masses. Two months later, *Reynolds's Newspaper* looked forward to the residue which would be left once the "fantastic side of Salvationism" had evaporated, viz.,

A large number of men and women who have been organised, disciplined, and taught to look for something better than their present condition, and who have become public speakers and are not afraid of ridicule. There you have the raw materials for a Socialist Army.<sup>75</sup>

The radical London daily, the *Star*, described the social scheme as "an ingenious, a large, a resourceful method for transplanting the slum population".<sup>76</sup> Turning to ultra-radical opinion, the *Labour World* (Henry Georgian in outlook) heralded the plan as "the most important step that has yet been taken in England in the direction of thorough social reform. It is the most marvellous scheme for the reformation of society that this generation has been called upon to study." As crucially, it would illustrate that "State or municipal organisation of labour [...] are not Utopian dreams."<sup>77</sup> In short, a substantial section of the labour press gave a warm welcome to *Darkest England*, if for the moment judgment was reserved on the actual efficacy of the social scheme.

In the socialist press, in contrast, divergence was soon apparent between the Salvation Army, basically suspicious of centralist collectivism, and the main socialist groups. The *Christian Socialist*, representing a melange of Christian social conscience and ethical socialism, considered *Darkest*

<sup>74</sup> Woods, *English Social Movements*, op. cit., p. 19; Review of Reviews, II, p. 652; *Commonweal*, VII (1891), p. 5; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 23 November 1890, p. 4. The Executive Council of Tillet's Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers Union congratulated Booth "for the efforts he is now making on behalf of the downtrodden and helpless", *Docker's Record*, December, p. 12. There was a favourable reaction also from the *Workman's Times*, 31 October, and the *English Labourers Chronicle*, 22 November.

<sup>75</sup> *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 26 October, p. 4; 23 November, p. 2; also Armytage, *Heavens Below*, p. 321. Cf. *Weekly Dispatch*, 23 November.

<sup>76</sup> *Star*, 20 October, pp. 1-2; 21 October, p. 1. In the 1890's, the *Star* was the organ of the "Progressives" on the London County Council.

<sup>77</sup> *Labour World*, 25 October, p. 8; 15 November, p. 3 (letter). Cf. the response to *In Darkest England* of Durant, an English single-taxer, in a letter to Henry George, 27 October: "You will be pleased with it. It seems to me the most important thing that has occurred for some time", cited in Ausubel, *In Hard Times*, p. 108.

*England* to be the most notable book of the year, the Army to be well-fitted for its task, and the plans to be well-drawn. If the journal entered the caution that Booth's palliatives inevitably fell short of "the drastic cure of collective action", it nonetheless welcomed the Salvationists to the ranks.

To the Socialist the chief cause for rejoicing is that General Booth's corps has changed front and is now an attacking brigade of the Great Army which fights under the banner of "Social Salvation".<sup>78</sup>

The socialist pamphleteer "Elihu" (Samuel Washington) similarly invited Booth "to unfurl the standard of *practical* Christianity", a reformed Christianity which would fashion a juster set of social arrangements. This plea, however, came at the end of a lengthy indictment of the Darkest England scheme, in which it was claimed that Booth had misunderstood the true reasons for the existence of the submerged tenth. Finding employment for the submerged, "Elihu" argued, would merely increase the size of the labour market and decrease the level of wages, such was the law of supply and demand, and Booth would quickly become "general-in-chief of a huge nest of organised blacklegs".<sup>79</sup> Henry Hyndman, leader of the SDF, likewise accused Booth of ignoring the real causes of poverty. In the opening sections of *Darkest England*, Hyndman found little to which to object: "a well-ordered indictment of our present social system, and a careful statistical tabulation of its results". Nor could he do anything but admire Booth's denunciation of the prevailing relief schemes and of the "narrow limitations and inefficiency of trade unions". This was preface, however, to a critique of the social scheme as "but a supplement to philanthropy", and as a strategy destined to intensify competition and sweating. In short, an anti-socialist dodge that the capitalist class would readily support.<sup>80</sup> *Justice*, the SDF's paper, lent weight to Hyndman's indictment, as did *Commonweal*, the organ of the Socialist League, where William Morris condemned the new scheme as "Workhouse Socialism, [. . .] which casts about for devices at once to get [the workers] better rations and to lower the cost of keeping them to the capitalists".<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Christian Socialist, December 1890, January and March 1891. For more critical expressions of Christian Socialist opinion, see Th. Hancock, *Salvation by Mammon. Two Sermons on Mr. Booth's Scheme* (London, 1891), p. 16; Church Reformer, IX (1890), p. 286; Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival*, op. cit., pp. 108-11, 121.

<sup>79</sup> "Elihu", *Is General Booth's Darkest England Scheme a Failure? A Word of Protest and Advice* (Manchester, London, 1893), passim, but esp. pp. 11-12.

<sup>80</sup> H. M. Hyndman, *General Booth's Book Refuted* (London, 1890), passim, but esp. pp. 4, 6, 8, 11.

<sup>81</sup> *Justice*, 17 January 1891, p. 3; 24 January, p. 2 (H. Quelch spoke of Booth's "policy of pigwash and piety"); 9 April 1892, p. 2; *Commonweal*, VI (1890), pp. 345-46, 365. Cf.

But if the socialist press almost unanimously joined the anti-Boothite camp, the critical stance was due, to some extent at least, to the fact that Booth was being described as a new socialist (“here is General Booth turning Socialist”, exclaimed the *Methodist Times*), and to the fact that he was employing the language and commandeering some of the proposals of a programme that both movements referred to as “social salvationism”.<sup>82</sup> The socialist bodies doubtless recognized that a sturdy competitor was setting up shop in the same street to sell some of the same wares. Little wonder that they wished to point the differences between “Salvation Socialism” (as William Morris termed it) and “Scientific Socialism”. Other sections of the labour movement, more practical and proletarian in orientation, to whom socialism essentially meant economic justice, greeted *Darkest England* as an important addition to the library of social reform. One additional proof of this fact appeared when W. T. Stead asked the Labour MPs elected in 1906 to list the books which had helped to define their political creed. Thomas Summerbell, MP for Sunderland, a former printer, and member of the Church of England, listed Charles Dickens, the books and leaflets issued by the ILP and the Fabians — “not forgetting Mr. Booth’s *Darkest England*”.<sup>83</sup>

#### IV

The first few years of the Darkest England scheme were not dramatically successful. After only eight months as head of the Social Reform Wing, Frank Smith resigned, on the grounds that the promised separation of his section from the Army’s other departments was being trenched upon, thus making the social movement a “mere sectarian agency” for the benefit of the Salvation Army. In fact, Smith was wrong to suggest that the finances of the social and religious operations had been amalgamated. But the

John Burns’s critical response to the social scheme in an address to a Battersea Music Hall, *Labour World*, 1 November 1890, p. 2. Burns maintained a critical view of the Farm Colony, as he gradually abandoned the socialists for the Liberal Party, K. D. Brown, *Labour and Unemployment 1900-1914* (Newton Abbot, 1971), p. 81; J. Marsh, “The Unemployed and the Land”, in: *History Today*, April 1982, p. 20; *Times*, 7 February 1908, p. 12. For a less hostile Socialist response, see the opening quotation to this article from Friedrich Engels.

<sup>82</sup> *Methodist Times*, VI, p. 956, cited in Inglis, Churches, p. 194.

<sup>83</sup> W. T. Stead, “The Labour Party and the Books that helped to make it”, in: *Review of Reviews*, XXXIII (1906), pp. 568-82, quote at p. 580. For Summerbell, see D. Martin, “‘The Instruments of the People?’: The Parliamentary Labour Party in 1906”, in: *Ideology and the Labour Movement*, op. cit., pp. 128-29; Brown, *Labour and Unemployment*, op. cit., passim. The Webbs recommended *In Darkest England* for information on the most destitute, in *The Prevention of Destitution*, op. cit., p. 13.

whole incident was a sign of General Booth's unwillingness to allow Smith to administer the Social Reform Wing as a semi-independent outfit.<sup>84</sup> Shortly afterwards, the work of the section, renamed the "Social Wing", was put in the hands of Elijah Cadman, who, if less eager than Smith to grapple with the root causes of poverty, nonetheless worked energetically, making a direct appeal to the Home Secretary in 1892, for example, for state assistance to help both the submerged and "the respectable unemployed".<sup>85</sup>

The response to Smith's resignation was disappointment all round. "It may well be", said the *Times* Correspondent, who was greatly impressed by Smith, "that his resignation is destined to be the death-blow to Mr. Booth's more ambitious schemes." For the socialist press, the resignation confirmed its fears that Booth would exert too large a control over the social scheme. There was one man, claimed *Justice*, who,

though he could not possibly save the blatant Booth's scheme from failure in the long run, might have managed to keep it afloat for a season. That man Social Democrats have always spoken well and thought well of [. . .]. If our Government had any sense they would give Frank Smith carte blanche to reorganise the Poor Law on a Socialistic basis.<sup>86</sup>

In fact, Smith's first undertaking, after leaving the Salvation Army, was to form the "Labor [sic] Army" and edit its paper, the *Workers' Cry*, the latter sporting a Salvationist-like crest with the words "Truth and Right" instead of "Blood and Fire". The Labor Army was to fight the causes rather than the results of the social system, and to this end planned a countrywide democratic organization to get workers' representatives into Parliament. The venture was shortlived, but it was Smith's stepping-stone to election to the London County Council and to energetic service on behalf of the ILP and ultimately the Labour Party, which reinforced his close friendship with Keir Hardie. In 1901, Smith rejoined the Salvation Army, saying he was disillusioned at the lack of unity and purpose among the secular political groups, but not for long. He was soon back in harness, a veritable work-horse of the labour movement. At last, in 1929, at 75 years of age, Frank Smith won his first Parliamentary election in Nuneaton, as Labour took office for the second time in its history.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> War Cry, 3 January 1891; Daily Chronicle, 2 January; 5 January (letter); Times, 6 January, p. 5; Champness, Frank Smith, pp. 14-16.

<sup>85</sup> Inglis, Churches, pp. 209-10; Harris, Unemployment and Politics, p. 128; HO 45/9861/13077D/1-2.

<sup>86</sup> Times, 26 December 1890, p. 5; 29 December, p. 4; 30 December, p. 5; 2 January 1891, pp. 5, 7; Justice, 3 January, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Workers' Cry, 2 May 1891; Labour Prophet, I (1892), p. 24; III, p. 114; War Cry, 30

The practical implementation of the Darkest England scheme also had its share of difficulties. An Essex estate of over 1,000 acres was purchased in 1891, the heart of the Hadleigh Farm Colony. Within a year, 200 colonists were employed in mixed farming (particularly market gardening and fruit growing) and in brick manufacture. Unfortunately, a combination of late frosts, dry seasons, depressed farm prices and inefficient labour led to substantial losses on the colony in each year between 1892 and 1895. Harold Moore, brought in to advise on farming matters, had resigned at the end of 1891 over the Army's determination to make an industrial concern as well as a farming colony of Hadleigh. Thereafter, poor leadership and supervision added to the colony's burdens. At the close of 1895, Bramwell Booth considered that "mismanagements and mistakes" rather than "misfortunes" best described the tribulations of the past year.<sup>88</sup>

Meanwhile, in the so-called City Colony, the Army had declared war on sweating by opening a match factory in May 1891. The intention was to make matches without using yellow phosphorus (the toxic substance which created the ravages of "phossy jaw"), and to pay the match-box makers 4d per gross instead of 2½d or 2¼d. The Army's "safety matches" were more expensive than the strike-anywhere type, however, and sales began to plummet; even Salvationists were said to be buying the cheaper brands. The best consumers of the Army's matches, according to the *Officer*, "are members of other denominations, Co-Operatives, and Trade Unions." Eventually, in December 1894, the match factory had to be temporarily closed.<sup>89</sup> Nor were the city shelters [proving too acceptable. In addition to

November 1901; All the World, December 1901; Armytage, *Heavens Below*, p. 320; Murdoch, "Salvationist-Socialist Frank Smith", p. 10; Champness, *Frank Smith*, pp. 19-49. See also K. O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie* (London, 1975), pp. 45-46, for Smith's unique brand of ethical socialism.

<sup>88</sup> W. B. Booth to General Booth, 9, 11 and 14 April 1891, 7 December 1894, 18 October 1895; id. to Commissioner Pollard, 13 December 1895; letters to General Booth, 29 September 1894, 8 November 1895, Salvation Army archives. See General Booth to W. B. Booth, 29 November 1905: "Your letter made me very sad last night, but Hadleigh has ever been a trial to us." See also *Hadleigh Official Journal*, 1908-09; A. S. Swan, *The Outsiders* (London, 1905-06), p. 61; *Selected Papers on the Social Work of the Salvation Army* (London, 1907-08); *Third Report from the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment* [C. 365] (1895), qq. 9607-09 (H. E. Moore); C. Fleay, "Hadleigh: A labour colony and its problems, 1891-1914", in: *Middlesex Polytechnic History Journal*, II (1981), *passim*. I am extremely grateful to Mr Fleay for sending me an offprint of this article. For descriptions of the Farm Colony, see Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, VI, pp. 178-81; *Report on Agencies and Methods for Dealing with the Unemployed* (Board of Trade, Labour Department) [C. 7182] (1893-94), pp. 549-52. However, a favourable account of Hadleigh Colony appeared in the *Clarion*, 16 June 1892, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> D. C. Mitchell, *The Darkest England Match Industry* (Camberley, 1976), *passim*;

being criticized for attracting destitute persons to East London, the level of hygiene of the shelters led the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police and a number of metropolitan boards of guardians to press the Home Office to have them registered as common lodging houses and regularly inspected. The Medical Officer of Health for Southwark described the shelter in Blackfriars Road as “a dangerous hot-bed of infection, not only from small-pox, but from other infectious diseases”. The *Clarion* newspaper joined the campaign, with the editor, Blatchford, complaining that the end product of subscriptions to the tune of £120,000 was “a series of shelters where the submerged tenth are herded together under the most indescribably noisome and filthy conditions, and the shelters are simply disseminators of vermin”. At this date, however, the Home Office took the view that the shelters did not come within the definition of Common Lodging Houses.<sup>90</sup>

If this were not enough, there were accusations of underselling in the woodchopping and printing trades. “The Salvation Army is a misnomer”, declared the *Clarion* in September 1892, “it should be called the Sweating Army.” The censure appeared in response to the complaint of the secretary of the Woodchoppers Union that the competition of the Salvation and Church Armies had reduced the number of union members from 2,000 to 800. The union’s case was also taken up by the Reverend Stewart Headlam, Christian Socialist, Fabian and member of the London School Board. Headlam became convinced that the Salvation Army was securing tenders for firewood for use in Board schools by declining to pay “union wages” to the men employed in its shelters and “elevators”. The Army had, however, signed the contract clause, agreeing to pay the trade-union rate of wages, by which the Army presumably meant the wage *equivalent* in the form of food and shelter. This only led to the additional charge of violating the Truck Act. Headlam thus tried to get Sidney Webb, recently elected to the London County Council, to pursue the issue, but Webb said he was too busy. The *London Star* agreed to help, only to back-track by stating that

Mayor, *The Churches and the Labour Movement*, p. 51; W. B. Booth, *Work in Darkest England in 1894* (London, 1894), p. 30.

<sup>90</sup> Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, op. cit., pp. 60-61; Booth, *Life and Labour*, First Series, I, p. 127; Third Series, VI, pp. 174-85; VII, p. 342; HO 45/9729/A52912; *Clarion*, 27 August 1892, p. 6; 3 September, p. 6; 17 September, p. 4; 24 September, p. 5; W. B. Booth, *Light in Darkest England in 1895* (London, 1895), p. 25. There were shelters in Bristol, Leeds, Bradford and Manchester, and one for women in both Edinburgh and Cardiff, in addition to the London shelters. For more favourable comments on the Salvation Army shelters, see Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration [Cd 2175] (1904), qq. 3669 (D. Eyre), 7876 (W. H. Libby).

the accusations of unfair competition had been disproved.<sup>91</sup> Nor did anything come of the charge of sweating made against the Army in 1895 by the Printers' Federation, and investigated by the printing trades group of the London Trades Council. Beatrice Webb, who was party to the discussion at an LTC meeting, later commented thus:

Quite obvious that the delegates of the Printing Federation had made numberless exaggerated statements: equally clear that the printing trades group had given a clean bill of health to the Salvation Army in spite of manifold signs of sweating in the past, if not in the present.<sup>92</sup>

Even so, it was a worrying sign for the Army's "accord" with the labour movement that, at ground level, conflict was developing with some trade unions over the employment of "unemployables" at wages below the trade-union minimum.

Beyond these isolated criticisms, the Darkest England scheme *qua* scheme was far from operative. The city-colony workshops and shelters were of little value as feeders to the rural colony; an Over-Sea Colony, the ultimate aim of the whole venture, was proving extremely difficult to establish.<sup>93</sup> Yet the individual segments of the social scheme continued to function, and between 1892 and 1910 to expand. This expansion was due, in part, to the Salvation Army's increasing acceptance of social work as an end in itself, once it became evident that the spiritual profits to be gleaned from the social scheme were relatively meagre. From the 1890's, therefore,

<sup>91</sup> "Elihu", General Booth's Darkest England Scheme, *op. cit.*, p. 11; R. B. Roxby, General Booth Limited. A Lime-Light on the "Darkest England" Scheme (London, 1893), p. 5; Clarion, 30 April 1892, p. 2; 21 May, p. 8; 27 August, p. 6; 3 September, p. 6; 15 October, p. 5; 26 November, p. 5. See *ibid.*, 1 October, p. 8, letter from a firewood cutter: "Now, when Commissioner Smith was head of the Salvation Army he received our deputation, and promised us that he would discontinue the practice of Firewood Cutting in the Salvation Army." See also Church Reformer (edited by Headlam), XI (1892), pp. 210, 227-29, 249, 277; S. Headlam, Christian Socialism [Fabian Tract No 42] (London, 1892), p. 10. For Bramwell Booth's reply to these charges, and to the related charges of underselling on the Farm Colony, see Third Report from the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, *op. cit.*, qq. 9911, 9913. There were workshops in Bradford, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds and Hull, as well as in London. By 1903, there were 64 "elevators" in operation, Living Epistles: Sketches of the Social Work of the Salvation Army (London, 1903), p. 36.

<sup>92</sup> B. Webb, Our Partnership (London, 1948), pp. 125-26; Ervine, God's Soldier, II, p. 729. In consequence, the London Trades Council refused to join a demonstration against the Salvation Army organized by the Printers Federation.

<sup>93</sup> Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy [Cd 2891] (1906) (hereafter Vagrancy Committee), p. 96 (para 332), qq. 7414-16 (D. C. Lamb). In 1895, the Argentine looked like a possible site for an oversea colony, W. B. Booth to General Booth, 18 October 1895, Salvation Army archives.

as José Harris has shown, the social wing acted “as both a ‘laboratory’ for social administration and as a pressure group for intervention by the State”.<sup>94</sup> It is necessary to re-tread some of this terrain in order to establish the main point of this section, that the rapport between Labour and the Salvation Army, if strained by the events of the early 1890’s, re-affirmed itself around the pole of welfare politics. More strictly, the Fabian and increasingly predominant wing of the labour movement, with its ideology of social engineering by administrative fiat, viewed favourably a Salvation Army that began to look to state action on behalf of the unemployed and the “unemployable” as a framework in which its own work could be set.

The main representatives of Salvationism often highlighted the experimental value of the Army’s work. When questioned by a Select Committee in 1895 as to whether Hadleigh Farm Colony could contribute to a solution of the unemployed question, Bramwell Booth responded thus: “the effort we are making is really in the nature of an experiment in certain principles which, if it can be carried out successfully, we think could be extended to an unlimited degree. What we are trying to show is that they are sound.”<sup>95</sup> His overall view of the experiment, moreover, was that it had shown that male colonists, “even the most unfortunate class”, would submit to the life of discipline and labour.<sup>96</sup> From 1894, the Mansion House Relief Fund Committee and a number of poor-law authorities sent groups of able-bodied paupers to the Hadleigh colony. The most important supplier was the Poplar Union, under the influence of George Lansbury, elected on a socialist platform, and Will Crooks, a right-wing Fabian and active trade unionist; both were advocates of setting the unemployed on the land.<sup>97</sup> The human material that the parochial bodies sent to Hadleigh was very poor, and the experiment was an unmitigated failure, with many paupers refusing to stay in the colony. Even so, Colonel David Lamb, governor of the colony, still defended the arrangement: “when you consider the larger questions bearing on the unemployed”, he told the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, “we could not well object. We had the facilities for an effective demonstration of what could be done”.<sup>98</sup> The colony was indeed inspected by social reformers and politicians for evidence of ways to rehabilitate the unemployed. Henry Chaplin,

<sup>94</sup> Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, pp. 124-35, quote at p. 128.

<sup>95</sup> Third Report from the Select Committee on Want of Employment, q. 9963.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 9911.

<sup>97</sup> Fleay, “Hadleigh”, *loc. cit.*, p. 6; Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, I, p. 108; VII, p. 341; Vagrancy Committee, q. 5371 (Crooks); McBriar, *Fabian Socialism*, pp. 120, 198, 202.

<sup>98</sup> Vagrancy Committee, q. 7322 (Lamb).

President of the Board of Agriculture, visited Hadleigh in 1895; Cecil Rhodes spent an energetic day there in 1898.<sup>99</sup> Occasionally the Salvation Army's experimental role was facilitated by outside sympathizers. The Countess of Warwick (converted to socialism by Blatchford's *Clarion* and a patron of schools for the training of rural occupations) contracted with the Army to improve her garden at Easton. She and her head gardener were said to be impressed with the job of work done by sixty "unemployables" under Salvationist foremen.<sup>100</sup>

As for pressure-group diplomacy in the cause of state subsidy, the Salvation Army was active on two main fronts: the foundation of an overseas colony for surplus unemployed, and penal-labour colonies for vagrants and "unemployables". On the first front, a real advance seemed imminent when the agricultural reformer, Henry Rider Haggard, who had inspected the Salvation Army colonies in England and North America on behalf of the Colonial Secretary, recommended that the government should fund Booth's scheme of overseas colonization, as a way of avoiding the "race-ruin" that urban conditions fostered. Unfortunately, a Colonial Office committee immediately rejected Rider Haggard's scheme of state-aided colonization, on the grounds that religious bodies were ill-suited to levying regular re-payments from the settlers.<sup>101</sup> The financial disorder of the Darkest England scheme (not to mention the paucity of evidence for the success of Hadleigh colony) probably added to the Committee's fears.<sup>102</sup> If dispirited by what it felt to be a one-sided report, the Army responded positively by redoubling its efforts in sponsored emigration, becoming a sort of Cook's agency for the respectable working class.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Armytage, *Heavens Below*, p. 321; Booth, *Echoes and Memories*, op. cit., pp. 148-50. In 1895, W. T. Stead also visited Hadleigh and was "captured by what he saw" according to Bramwell Booth, Begbie, *General William Booth, II*, p. 204.

<sup>100</sup> Blatchford, *My Eighty Years*, op. cit., pp. 209-13; Hansard, *Fourth Series, CXVIII* (1903), c. 324 (Sir John Gorst); Gilbert, *National Insurance in Britain*, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>101</sup> Report on the Salvation Army Colonies in the United States and at Hadleigh, England [...] by Commissioner H. Rider Haggard [Cd 2562] (1905), pp. 370, 377-79, 430-35; Report by the Departmental Committee appointed to consider Mr. Rider Haggard's Report on Agricultural Settlements in British Colonies [Cd 2978] (1906), p. 545. One of the members of Lord Tennyson's Committee was Sidney Webb. See also M. N. Cohen, *Rider Haggard. His Life and Works* (New York, 1961), pp. 239-43. Rider Haggard's report appeared in popular form as *The Poor and the Land* (1905), which was recommended reading in *More Books to Read on Social and Economic Subjects* [Fabian Tract No 129] (London, 1906).

<sup>102</sup> Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, pp. 131-32; Vagrancy Committee, p. 77 (para 264), qq. 7103-24 (Lamb), 10585-86 (H. Lockwood), Appendix XXIV.

<sup>103</sup> *Emigration-Colonisation: Proposals by General Booth* (London, 1905), Beveridge Collection, Coll. B, III, item 28, British Library of Political and Economic Science; C. Fleay, "The Salvation Army and Emigration 1890-1914", in: *Middlesex Polytechnic*

The second sphere of policy in which the Salvation Army wanted state assistance is, for present purposes, much more significant. In the provision of compulsory-labour colonies for the detention, discipline and reclamation of vagrants and “unemployables”, the Salvation Army and the labour movement found themselves once more in substantial agreement. In February 1904, Colonel Lamb, governor of Hadleigh, informed Booth that the work of the land colony was being hampered by “the residuum of ‘won’t works’ and ‘unemployables’”, for whom he proposed powers of detention along the lines of the legislation for habitual drunkards. By the establishment of labour colonies for “unemployables”, Lamb argued, it would be possible “to regard vagrancy and begging not as a crime, but as a social danger requiring treatment”. Moreover, only by confronting the problem of this residuum, Lamb contended, would it be possible “to bring the unemployed question within measurable distance of solution”.<sup>104</sup> The proposals set out in *The Vagrant and the Unemployable* were embodied in a draft bill to be introduced in the Commons by Sir John Gorst, who for nigh-on twenty years had championed the Salvation Army and its social enterprises. Magistrates were to be empowered to order the detention of vagrants in state-subsidized colonies for a period of from one to three years. Gorst was an appropriate sponsor for the bill, having tried unsuccessfully for many years to interest the Conservative Party in a social-welfare programme, and having recently assumed leadership of the campaign to promote the recommendations of the Physical Deterioration report. The Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, itself part of the “quest for national efficiency”, which dominated the politics of welfare in the aftermath of the Boer War, had visited Hadleigh colony. As a result, it recommended labour colonies along the same lines as Hadleigh (although with powers of compulsory detention), “for the reclamation of some of the waste elements of society”.<sup>105</sup> The Salvation Army’s bill made no progress,

History Journal, I (1980), pp. 63-64; cf. G. Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London, 1982). Between 1906 and 1908, however, William Booth was pressing the Liberal Cabinet, particularly Earl Rosebery, for a loan of £100,000 for a Rhodesian colonization scheme, but without success: Begbie, General William Booth, II, pp. 362-68; R. Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office 1905-1908* (London, 1968), p. 287.

<sup>104</sup> HO 45/10499/117669/4; W. Booth to W. B. Booth, 29 November 1905, Salvation Army archives; Vagrancy Committee, qq. 6189, 7504; *The Vagrant and the “Unemployable”*. A Proposal by General Booth (London, 1904), pp. 9-18. For William Beveridge’s annotations to this pamphlet, see Beveridge Collection, Coll. B, IV, item 38.

<sup>105</sup> Vagrancy Committee, Appendix XXVII. Gorst’s bill was supported by Herbert Gladstone and R. B. Haldane, Liberal MPs, and by D. J. Shackleton and Will Crooks, Labour MPs. See HO 45/10499/117669/10 and 10578/179621/1-2. For Gorst, see McBriar, *Fabian Socialism*, p. 215; Begbie, General William Booth, II, p. 361; Gilbert, *National Insurance in Britain*, pp. 94-95, 98-99, 130; J. E. Gorst, “Governments and

however. Its principles were endorsed by the Local Government Board's Committee on Vagrancy in 1906, but the new Liberal government was no more disposed than its predecessor to legislate on the recommended lines.

Meanwhile, the idea of state coercion of the residuum had struck a chord in parts of the labour movement. Between 1905 and 1909, the labour press, from *Reynolds's Newspaper* to the *Labour Leader*, gave open support to the incarceration of habitual tramps and paupers in labour settlements.<sup>106</sup> Labour saw land colonies to be of little value as a way of dealing with the genuine unemployed – *pace* the Poplar guardians, headed by Lansbury and Crooks – and their role was now restricted to reclaiming the down-and-out. In 1907, the “New Unemployed Bill” of the Labour Party included a clause whereby “deliberate and habitual disinclination to work” would be penalized by compulsory work.<sup>107</sup> Organized labour was clearly not prepared to allow the “loafer” to spoil the claims of the “deserving” unemployed.

For the Fabian section of the labour movement, moreover, the “elimination” of the “industrial residuum” through disciplinary or reformatory detention was an integral part of a state socialism which, to use George Orwell's later denunciation, “we’, the clever ones, are going to impose upon ‘them’, the Lower Orders”. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the main spokesmen of this creed of efficiency above equality, tried hard around 1901 to incorporate “national efficiency” into a party of social reform and imperial strength around the prominent Liberal, Lord Rosebery, but to little practical effect.<sup>108</sup> The Webbs were not easily cowed, however, and with Beatrice Webb's appointment to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in 1905, another round of Fabian high-pressure salesmanship began. At the end of 1907, Mrs Webb was bending ears on “our able-bodied

Social Reform”, in: *Fortnightly Review*, LXXVII (1905), p. 848; id., “Physical Deterioration in Great Britain”, in: *North American Review*, CLXXXI (1905), pp. 1-10; Hansard, Fourth Series, CXXXV (1904), c. 648. See also Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, p. 24 (para 91).

<sup>106</sup> See R. Vorspan, “Vagrancy and the New Poor Law in late-Victorian and Edwardian England”, in: *English Historical Review*, XCII (1977), pp. 78-79. See also Lloyd's Weekly News, 11 March 1906, p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> J. K. Hardie, “Dealing With the Unemployed”, in: *Nineteenth Century*, LVII (1905), p. 52; Vorspan, “Vagrancy and the New Poor Law”, p. 79. For Lansbury and Crooks, see Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, pp. 139-41, 143, 237; Marsh, “The Unemployed and the Land”, loc. cit., pp. 16-20. The *Weekly Dispatch*, 2 February 1908, p. 6, however, was critical of this part of the Labour Party's scheme.

<sup>108</sup> G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London, 1937), p. 212; Gilbert, *National Insurance in Britain*, pp. 72-77. See also S. Ball, *The Moral Aspect of Socialism* [Fabian Tract No 72] (London, 1896), p. 5; *The Abolition of Poor Law Guardians* [Fabian Tract No 126] (London, 1906), p. 22.

proposals: [. . .] I am submitting them to General Booth of the Salvation Army to get that organisation on my side.”<sup>109</sup> More interestingly, she visited Hadleigh colony for a weekend in February 1908 and came away full of admiration for the Salvation Army staff and for their ability to arouse the faculty for regular work in the unemployable (which was more than she could say about Hollesley Bay Colony, run by the London Central Committee for the Unemployed). The Salvationist officers represented “a *Samurai* caste”, selfless and self-disciplined.

The men, and some of the women, are far more cultivated than is usual with persons of the same social status — one can talk to them quite freely — far more freely than you could talk to an elementary school teacher, or trade union official [. . .].<sup>110</sup>

The exertions made on the Sunday evening to convert the colonists, Mrs Webb confessed, “somewhat frightened me off recommending that the Salvation Army should be state- or rate-aided”. She concluded, nonetheless, that as a voluntary agency, linked to a national campaign against destitution, the Salvation Army “will be a quite invaluable agency to which to entrust the actual treatment of difficult sections of the residuum of Unemployed and Unemployable labour”. Not surprisingly, the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (two of the four signatories of which were Beatrice Webb and George Lansbury) recommended that labour colonies, run by voluntary religious bodies, should be used to train the recalcitrant unemployed.<sup>111</sup>

That was as close as the Salvation Army came to getting the coveted powers of compulsory detention and exchequer support. It was always unlikely perhaps that the Liberal social programme would authorize a religious sect to detain and train contingents of “unemployables”. Nevertheless, the idea of using the Salvationists as agents of social administration was placed on the Liberal agenda, and in this way the Salvation Army helped to force the pace of state interference with the social conditions of the poor. In putting its work into a framework of state action, the Salvation Army was helped by the Fabian wing of the labour movement, who were particularly supportive of the proposal for the compulsory detention of the “industrial residuum”. Exponents of a socialism of welfare

<sup>109</sup> Webb, *Our Partnership*, op. cit., p. 396.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401; id. to Mary Playne, 2 February 1908, Passfield Papers, II, 4 d, item 2. Cf. S. and B. Webb, *The Prevention of Destitution*, p. 243. See also Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress [Cd 4499] (1909), pp. 633 (Majority), 1206-08 (Minority). The Majority Report also proposed labour colonies for the residuum.

legislation, the Fabians were the midwives of a welfare ideology which increasingly joined punitiveness to compassion.<sup>112</sup>

## V

By 1910, however, other sections of the labour movement were rather more disenchanted with the Salvation Army. Around 1903, *Justice* had seriously questioned the efficacy of emigration; in 1905, the London Trades Council had denounced Booth's proposals "to transport for life thousands of the flower of the working classes as a pretended relief for the unemployment difficulty".<sup>113</sup> But the attitude of the labour movement was most greatly affected by the renewed and protracted battle between the Salvation Army and the trade unions over the related issues of sweating, truck-payment and under-selling. From 1901, the London branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners had been observing the Army's Hanbury Street workshop, which was fitted up as a modern carpenters' and joiners' shop, with working space for eighty men. Finally, in 1907, it brought the problem before the Trades Union Congress, although at this stage adopting a fairly conciliatory attitude. James O'Grady, a socialist member of the Alliance Cabinet Makers, whilst paying tribute to the "socially regenerative work" of the Salvationists, charged the Army with undermining the rate of wages agreed between the London Master Builders' Association and the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union, and successfully moved that the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC should open negotiations with Booth in order to stop the unfair competition.<sup>114</sup>

Shortly afterwards, a United Workers' Anti-Sweating Committee was formed from London trade-union branches and socialist societies, which for the next three years held protest demonstrations in London and several provincial towns in an attempt to get a public inquiry into the Army's social work.<sup>115</sup> The campaign was backed by the *Daily News*, increasingly eager

<sup>112</sup> See Nicol, *General Booth and the Salvation Army*, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>113</sup> Etherington, "Hyndman, the Social-Democratic Federation, and Imperialism", loc. cit., p. 98; Armytage, *Heavens Below*, p. 326. Cf. R. V. Clements, "Trade Unions and Emigration 1840-80", in: *Population Studies*, IX (1955), pp. 167-80.

<sup>114</sup> H. A. Clegg, A. Fox and A. F. Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889*, I (Oxford, 1964), p. 403, note 7; *Times*, 6 September 1907, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> This section is based on work done by Sheila Blackburn of Manchester University on the newspaper cuttings in Folder 207 of the Gertrude Tuckwell Collection. Tuckwell was, amongst other things, the honorary secretary of the Women's Trade Union League. The following items were the most helpful: *Morning Post and Daily Chronicle* for 7 September 1908; *Nottingham Guardian*, 10 September; *Morning Leader*, 20 January 1909; *Bromley Chronicle*, 18 February; *Eastern Daily Press*, 28 June; *Dulwich Post*, 14 August;

to publicize the plight of the low paid, and, in a more limited manner, by the *Labour Leader*, organ of the ILP. For the *Daily News*, the moral of the dispute was “the ease with which the most disinterested philanthropy may unconsciously degenerate into sweating”. The *Labour Leader* emphasized the fact that skilled work had been done in the Salvation Army workshops by what was a semi-permanent workforce and paid for “at piece rates that would represent ‘starvation level’ for any outside worker”, adding that the sweating was “viewed with great disfavour by the rank and file of the Army itself”.<sup>116</sup>

The typical Salvationist response to these charges served only to indicate the distance between the provision of “labour hospitals” for “the wounded soldier of labour” on one hand and the canons of organized trade unionism on the other. Trade-union principles, said Commissioner Alex Nicol, could not apply when the men concerned were more in need of “remaking” than of wages. Colonel Moss put it more provocatively when describing the derelict class of labour which the Army employed:

They are brought in from the streets and from the Embankment – dirty, ragged, and hopeless – without ambition or inspiration. [. . .] They are fed and clothed by the army, and they are at liberty, when they choose, to find other employment. Are we to pay a fellow who is picked up out of the gutter the trade union rate of wages, or are we to give him what he is worth?<sup>117</sup>

Accordingly, the argument that the Army’s measures of relief work served to undercut the market, and to create as much as to relieve destitution, cut little ice with William Booth, who proved, as on other occasions, an intractable and slippery negotiator.<sup>118</sup>

Glasgow Herald, 27 September; Derby Telegraph, 15 August 1910; Northampton Echo, 10 September. See also Times, 2 September 1908, p. 10; 13 February 1909, p. 8; 8 March, p. 10; 30 August, p. 2; Salvation Army Sweating: Manifesto by the United Workers’ Anti-Sweating Committee, Beveridge Collection, Coll. B, IV, item 15.

<sup>116</sup> Daily News, 26 August 1907; Labour Leader, New Series, IV (1907), pp. 152, 178.

<sup>117</sup> Daily Express, 26 August; Tribune, 7 September; Star, 16 September; Times, 7 September, p. 7; 22 September 1908, p. 9; A Calumny Exposed. A Reply to the unfounded charges of Sweating brought against the Hanbury Street Labour Home (London, 1909), passim. Alex Nicol subsequently left the Salvation Army and wrote favourably of state or Fabian socialism. Of the sweating issue, he later said: “It was alleged that sweating was practised here – I know it was. The Army officials argued to the contrary, and I am rather ashamed that I was among the number.” General Booth and the Salvation Army, p. 202.

<sup>118</sup> A. G. Gardiner, Prophets, Priests, and Kings (London, 1914), p. 193. Booth’s intransigence hardly dovetailed with the anti-sweating movement of the early twentieth century, for which see Mayor, The Churches and the Labour Movement, pp. 124, 136, 219; N. C. Solden, Women in British Trade Unions 1874-1976 (Dublin, 1978), p. 65; Sh. Lewenhak, Women and Trade Unions (London, 1977), pp. 119-20.

The whole issue came before the TUC conference in 1908 and again in 1909, when the Parliamentary Committee reported on the outcome of its negotiations with William Booth. To the distress of the representatives of the CJU, the Parliamentary Committee seemed afraid of offending public opinion by demanding an inquiry into the Army's social work. While accepting that the charges of sweating were substantiated, C. W. Bowerman, David Shackleton and James O'Grady wished only to persuade Booth either to close the factory or to put goods on to the market at the price at which they would be sold if produced by trade-union labour.<sup>119</sup> So, too, the leaders of the Anti-Sweating Committee were dispirited by the lukewarm attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Ramsay MacDonald sent a letter of support to a public meeting in London in May 1908, in which he stated that "while he for one would not like to stop what good work the Salvation Army was doing, at the same time it must not be allowed to undercut employers working under ordinary conditions". By February 1909, S. Stennett, the district secretary of the London branch of the CJU, was moved to complain that Ramsay MacDonald, Will Crooks and Keir Hardie had all expressed admiration of the Army's work.<sup>120</sup> The way the issue was finally resolved was also unsatisfactory to the union delegates. Booth agreed to confine Hanbury Street to the production of articles required for the exclusive use of the Army (resembling the compromise that was accepted by the trade-union movement for prison-made goods). No public inquiry was granted, and the union had simply to rely upon the promises of General Booth and his officers. Yet if the trade unionists felt that Booth had been left the master of the situation, there seems little doubt that the compromise arrangement further restricted the Salvationist workshops and colonies in providing for the unemployed.<sup>121</sup>

The conflict between the Army and the trade unions was not the only factor behind the growing rupture between Salvationism and labourism. By 1910 the influence of temperance principles within the labour move-

<sup>119</sup> *Times*, 9 September 1908, p. 12; *Labour Leader*, New Series, V (1908), p. 586; *Our Society's History*, ed. by S. Higenbottam (Manchester, 1939), pp. 176-79; Report of Proceedings at the Forty-Second Annual Trades Union Congress (London, 1909), pp. 75-84, 119-22.

<sup>120</sup> *Times*, 28 May 1908, p. 12; 5 February 1909, p. 7. Nor did the Anti-Sweating Committee gain any assistance from the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Truck Acts [Cd 4442] (1908), pp. 17-18. See, however, the Minority Report by Stephen Walsh and Mrs H. J. Tennant at p. 93. Keir Hardie still often visited Salvation Army shelters in order to help the destitute, Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 179; Morgan, Keir Hardie, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>121</sup> Report of the Forty-Second Annual TUC, pp. 119-22; *Yorkshire Evening News*, 1910, undated cutting in the Tuckwell Collection; *Times*, 14 September 1910, p. 8.

ment was waning, a symptom of Labour's drift away from radical Non-conformity, which, too often for Labour's liking, still traced the ills of man to drink, and too rarely seemed capable of acting as a source of social change. This loss of confidence in religious institutions eventually contaminated Labour's relations with the Salvation Army.<sup>122</sup> Equally influential, particularly in London, was the development of a working-class culture whose focal points, to judge from Charles Booth's end-of-century survey, were increasingly those of entertainment, trade unionism and, to some degree, political action.<sup>123</sup>

For a couple of decades, however, the labour and Salvationist movements had ploughed parallel furrows towards the same end of the field. Both organizations were "moralizing" agencies in the sense of appealing to working-class self-respect and self-discipline; both drew their strength from an emerging sense of self- and class-awareness. Both movements made important and at times complementary contributions to the discussion of social reform and to the search for solutions to poverty and unemployment; both movements were essentially concerned in these years with the welfare of the poor. Gradually, attitudes and directions diverged, and the partial accord between the Salvation Army and the labour movement began to disintegrate. The parting of the ways was foreshadowed, perhaps, by George Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara*. It was performed at the Court Theatre, London, in November 1905, before an audience which included Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the Conservative leader Arthur Balfour, and a box of uniformed Salvation Army Commissioners, attending a theatre performance for the first time in their lives. In the play, Shaw, the Fabian socialist, set out to dramatize the capitalist system as so corrupting that Christian virtue and charity became inimical to working-class interests. "I don't think you quite know what the Army does for the poor", says Major Barbara's *fiancé* and fellow-Salvationist. "Oh yes I do", replies Undershaft, the armaments manufacturer. "It draws their teeth: that is enough for me as a man of business."<sup>124</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, op. cit., pp. 397-405. For the continued strength of the Nonconformist connection, however, see Mayor, *The Churches and the Labour Movement*, p. 339; K. D. Brown, "Non-Conformity and the British Labour Movement: A Case Study", in: *Journal of Social History*, VIII (1974-75), No 2, pp. 113-20.

<sup>123</sup> Booth, *Life and Labour*, Third Series, VII, pp. 422ff.; Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics", loc. cit., pp. 460-508.

<sup>124</sup> G. B. Shaw, *Major Barbara* (London, 1980), p. 98.