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**WORKING CLASS LIFE IN BRADFORD 1900-1914. THE
PHILANTHROPIC, POLITICAL AND PERSONAL RESPONSES
TO POVERTY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO WOMEN
AND CHILDREN**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
HUDDERSFIELD IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE IN DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

April 2001

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ABSTRACT

The challenge that faced Edwardian Britain was how to respond to poverty and related social problems. The Victorian ideas on poverty and philanthropy were under attack by the beginning of the twentieth century and had not been replaced by those of the mid to late twentieth century, large-scale state welfare. This meant that the first twenty years of the twentieth century were a time when there was no consensus on how to respond to poverty. The concern about poverty with the lives of the working-class highlighted by Booth, Rowntree and the Boer War led to the development of new responses to poverty. Two groups who attracted attention at this time were working-class women and children whose poverty and related problems were highlighted during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In Bradford there were developments in both the political and philanthropic spheres in response to poverty. This thesis seeks to add to the knowledge of the early twentieth century through focusing on responses to poverty within one English town, Bradford, concentrating on both the philanthropic and political community. No study has investigated the work of both the Guild of Help and the ILP together and examined how their work and their policies impacted on poverty in Bradford. The Guild of Help looked to alleviate the poverty of those best placed to help themselves whereas the ILP aimed to alleviate, if not eliminate problems for all of those in poverty.

The working class in Bradford responded to poverty largely through the development of practical strategies that enabled them and their families to survive. They were not able to alleviate their own poverty on a long-term basis and in some cases needed outside assistance in order to survive.

The main response of the philanthropic community was the establishment of the Bradford City Guild of Help. It aimed to provide a community wide response to poverty in Bradford and to act as a clearing-house for charity in order to eliminate fraud. This response of the Bradford charitable elite aimed to investigate personal circumstances and provide help in the form of advice rather than money. The Guild of Help looked to alleviate rather than eliminate poverty and helped those in the best position to practice self-help. Although its acceptance of a role of the state in areas that had had been the traditional preserve of charity showed that the Guild of Help had moved on from Victorian charity, it still aimed to preserve the status quo and would not advocate any measures that would change this. The knowledge built up by the Guild of Help in relation to the problems of working-class women and children ensured that it was well placed to deal with these problems. However it preferred to deal with each case on an individual basis by individual Helpers which meant that there was no consistency in dealing with the poverty of working class women and children.

The major response from the political community came from the Independent Labour Party. The ILP looked to eliminate poverty and the social ills associated with it and if poverty could not be eliminated without a change in society, then the ILP advocated that society should be fundamentally changed. The ILP lacked a coherent plan to tackle poverty and related problems in Bradford and had little success in responding to problems such as unemployment. However, the ILP did make the issue of education their own and built on the work of Margaret McMillan in Bradford. The ILP did challenge traditional views on responsibility for children and their policies made a difference to the lives of working-class children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff at Bradford Archive and Library for their help and patience in finding material, some of it rather obscure, and in particular for finding the Case books of the Guild of Help, which were not catalogued.

Professor Keith Laybourn and Professor David Taylor have provided so much good advice, valuable time, and patience in putting up with my efforts and excuses in submitting this thesis. They gave me the opportunity to pursue this study and the confidence to push through to completion. It is not possible to quantify the support and help they have given me over the years.

After three years full-time study a large proportion of this thesis has been completed on a part-time basis, which has been at times, a challenge, to say the least. This thesis has survived three full-time jobs in three different cities.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their belief that this thesis would be completed and for constantly enquiring about progress and when it would be completed (you know who your are!).

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Allan for being there and for making me see that there is life beyond this thesis.

I look forward to reacquainting myself with friends who think I've left the country.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges that faced Edwardian Britain was how to respond to poverty and related social problems. The reality of Victorian life had meant that poverty was either thought of as a personal failing or an unforeseen tragedy. By the beginning of the twentieth century these ideas were under attack but had not yet been replaced by the ideas and policies of the mid to late twentieth century that focused on large-scale state welfare measures as a remedy for poverty and related issues. The first twenty years of the twentieth century were a time when there was no or little consensus on how to respond to poverty. It is against this background that this thesis is presented. This dissertation examines responses to poverty within one English town, Bradford, focusing on both the philanthropic and political community. This study seeks to demonstrate that there was no common approach in response to poverty, mainly due to political differences. The main response from the philanthropic community, dominated by Liberals and Conservatives, came with the creation of the Bradford City Guild of Help. The major response from the political community came from the Independent Labour Party. The Bradford City Guild of Help aimed to preserve the *status quo* and alleviate the poverty of those in a good position to help themselves. The ILP looked to eliminate poverty and the social ills associated with it and believed that if poverty could not be eliminated without a change in society, then the ILP would change society.

This thesis seeks to add to the knowledge of poverty during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Many studies of poverty and social policy in the Edwardian period focus on the work of the Liberal government and the reforms that were introduced or the poverty investigations of Booth and Rowntree. Studies of philanthropy tend to be associated with the Victorian period. This dissertation seeks to investigate how, in one town, both a philanthropic and a political agency responded to poverty. Previous studies have concentrated either on the work of the Guild of Help or of the ILP.¹ No study has investigated the work of both the Guild of Help and the ILP together and examined how their work and their policies impacted on poverty in Bradford.

During the nineteenth century Bradford had grown from a small town to a city, its population increasing from just over 6,000 in 1801 to almost 300,000 in 1901.² The town grew throughout the nineteenth century due to inward migration and absorption of neighbouring areas into the towns boundaries. The main industry of Bradford was worsted textiles, which had grown throughout the nineteenth century and had been largely controlled by paternalistic families such as the Ripleys, the Waudes and Illingworths. This paternalism had declined somewhat by the last decade of the nineteenth century. Largely un-unionised, Bradford's textile trade had a workforce with a high female population who were paid less than the male workers and were restricted from most of the higher paying occupations in the industry.

By the turn of the twentieth century Bradford had a reputation for being a city of progressive and radical thought. The politicisation of Bradford's textile industry, epitomised by the strike at Manningham Mills in 1890/91, showed that the dominant political party in Bradford, the Liberals, would not act for working-class interests. The result was the formation of the Bradford Independent Labour Party (ILP) which throughout the 1890s made strides into Bradford political life. Given the formation of the ILP in Bradford and its growing willingness to look for new solutions to old problems, it is perhaps not surprising that the liberal community responded to the challenges laid down.

The main response of the Bradford middle-class to poverty (and perhaps to the creation of the ILP) was the widening of philanthropy. A new charity, more progressive than those of the nineteenth century, was founded in Bradford in 1904. The Bradford City Guild of Help, (the name chosen in an attempt to break with the charities of the past) recognised that poverty was not always caused by personal failings. This 'new philanthropy' was different to the charities of the nineteenth century and in particular the Charity Organisation Society, as it made little distinction between assistance from the state or assistance from private charity; the Guild of Help was as likely to recommend help from the state as it was to recommend assistance from private charity. The Guild of Help was an attempt to place charity on a more

¹ David James, Tony Jowitt and Keith Laybourn (eds), *The Centennial History of the Independent Labour Party*, (Fyburn 1992). Keith Laybourn and David James (eds), *The Rising Sun of Socialism: The Independent Labour Party in the Textile District of the West Riding of Yorkshire between 1890 and 1914*, (West Yorkshire Archive Service, 1991). Keith Laybourn, *The Guild of Help and the Changing Face of Edwardian Philanthropy, The Guild of Help, Voluntary Work and the State 1904-1914*. (Edwin Mellen Press, 1994). Michael Cahill & Tony Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy: The Emergence of the Bradford City Guild of Help*. *Journal of Social Policy*, 9,3, 359-82.

² See Appendix, 5 Table app5.4.

scientific footing through investigation into the personal circumstances of those in need of help and to stop the poor from applying for assistance to many charities. It was a local response to poverty; the founders had no desire to create a national organisation and because of this were limited as to a civic response to poverty. This thesis, in aiming to examine the work of the Guild of Help, seeks to argue that the organisation did not help those most in need but instead looked to help those best able to help themselves. The capacity of people to be self-supporting was the most important factor in the cases of the Guild of Help, for the destitute were the responsibility of the Poor Law. The Guild of Help was also an agency for moral control that tried to bring about reformation of those it helped and bring about a response of gratitude from those it helped. It never looked to eliminate poverty. It has been claimed that the Guild of Help involved all sections of society in its campaign against poverty.³ This view is not supported by this study. The Guild of Help failed to deal with poverty because it endorsed existing class distinctions.⁴ However, what is important is that it existed in Bradford as a middle-class response to poverty at the same time as the ILP challenged existing thoughts on how poverty could be dealt with.

The main response of the political community to Bradford's poverty came from the ILP that was formed in Bradford in January 1893. In the main the ILP proposed municipal solutions in response to poverty and related social problems. The ILP kept poverty on the political agenda although the party did not have a coherent strategy for dealing with poverty.⁵ A grouping of middle-class socialist and working-class trade unionists, the ILP had grown in influence throughout the 1890s. The other political parties in Bradford were not able to contain the ILP and respond to the challenges laid down by it.⁶ The greatest success of the ILP came with its programme of education and educational welfare, an issue the ILP made its own. The ILP built on the work of Margaret McMillan during the 1890s to develop policies to alleviate the poverty of working-class children and improve their lives. The policies, the limitations on the party and the ILP's challenge to the other political parties to think outside of

³ Margaret Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: A History of the National Council of Social Service*. (London, 1969), p.6.

⁴ Cahill & Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy*, Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*.

⁵ Keith Laybourn, 'The Defence of the Bottom Dog', in D.G.Wright & J.A. Jowitt (eds) *Victorian Bradford*, (Bradford Metropolitan Council, 1981).

⁶ Keith Laybourn, 'One of the Little Breezes Blowing Across Bradford': The Bradford ILP and Trade Unionism 1890-1914, in Keith Laybourn and David James (eds), *The Rising Sun of Socialism*. (West Yorkshire Archive Service, 1991), p.22

the usual solutions is most important to this study. The ILP challenged the structure of the existing society, whereas the other political parties and the Guild of Help sought solutions that endorsed it.

As well as focusing on the responses of the philanthropic and political agencies to the poverty of the working class in Bradford, this thesis will examine the responses to the problems of two specific groups, working-class women and children. There had been a reconceptualisation of childhood during the later Victorian and Edwardian Years.⁷ This enabled children, in particular working-class children, to begin to be seen as separate from their parents and policies could be developed that were specifically aimed at children. The provision of municipal school meals is a good example of this.

Although there was no similar reconceptualisation of the position of working-class women, there was debate on how working-class women should be viewed in society, either as citizens in their own right or as extensions of their home and family. The Poor Law system viewed women as extensions of her husband and home, and as such, was not able to deal appropriately with problems specific to women.⁸ The debate on women's place in society is reflected in the ILP as the debate on women's suffrage versus universal suffrage dominated the women's agenda at ILP conferences. The tensions between the advocates of universal suffrage and female suffrage limited the capacity of the ILP to develop policies to deal with the poverty-related problems of women as these arguments tended to dominate the political agenda relating to women.

There were poverty-related social issues that concerned both working-class women and children. For example the prevalent view in Edwardian society was that infant mortality could be tackled through policies aimed at working-class women rather than attacking the environmental causes such as disease or poor cleanliness.⁹ Both the ILP and the Guild of Help focused on the role of working-class women in cutting infant mortality levels rather than reporting the environmental causes of infant mortality. The two groups experienced some of the worst effects of poverty and were also limited in what they could do to escape poverty.

⁷ Carolyn Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan 1860-1931*, (Virago Press, London, 1990).

⁸ Pat Thane, 'Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 6, Autumn 1978.

Both the Guild of Help and the ILP responded to the poverty of women and children, again with varying degrees of success. Elizabeth Roberts noted that abilities of working-class women as mothers and wives were judged in the light of local infant mortality statistics, although not by the women themselves.¹⁰

Day to Day responses to poverty by the working class in Bradford

Before investigating the responses to poverty of the Guild of Help and the ILP some understanding of the day-to-day lives of the working class and in particular of working-class women, needs to be established. This will show what the poor themselves were doing in response to their own poverty and help to understand why the Guild of Help and the ILP responded to the poverty in Bradford. The working class, those most affected by poverty, had to respond to it and dealt with it on a day-to-day basis. Working-class women utilised a number of strategies in response to poverty. In particular working-class women were responsible for the welfare of their families and most of the attempts to increase income, borrow and limit out-goings.

Many of the middle class regarded the working class as wasteful and not capable of practising thrift. However, this was not the case as working-class women used different tactics to ensure their families survived. However the options open to working-class women were limited by a number of factors. Elizabeth Roberts noted that the efforts of working-class women were constrained by both social and financial restrictions such as by the family income, their social standing and the general morals of the neighbourhood.¹¹ For instance, in an upper working-class neighbourhood it may have been frowned upon if a woman asked for shop credit or went out to work, but in another neighbourhood these may have been perfectly acceptable, whereas using the pawnshop was not.

There is patchy evidence about what working-class women were doing in response to poverty. Unlike London, Lancashire or Birmingham, there is no body of work, contemporary or historical, focusing on the lives of the poor. For Lancashire Elizabeth Roberts has

⁹ Jane Lewis, 'The Social History of Social Policy: Infant Welfare in Edwardian England.' *Journal of Social Policy*, 9,4,463-86. Carol Dyhouse, 'Working-Class Mothers and Infant Mortality 1895-1914.' *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 12,2, 1978.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940.* (Blackwell, Oxford 1984), p.164.

¹¹ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place*, p.125.

established how most married women did not work or aspired not to work. If it became necessary to increase the family income, then part-time work, preferably done at home, was preferred to factory work. Elizabeth Roberts alluded to one possible reason for this. If working-class women worked outside the home, then this reflected on the social standing of their husbands since it was assumed that they were no longer able to provide for their family and fulfil the traditional role of breadwinner.¹² Joanna Bourke also described how many working-class women looked to stay within the domestic sphere rather than work outside the home.

Many working-class women thought that housewifery was something worth striving towards. There was a price to pay for being a housewife: but the benefits were perceived as being cheap at the price.¹³

The types of home-working described by Elizabeth Roberts included taking in washing, cleaning, acting as an unqualified midwife and providing childcare for women who were also working. Other strategies for increasing family income and coping in poverty included borrowing either the kind of borrowing that attracted a social stigma and the kind that did not. For instance, the paying of a small sum of money for goods such as clothes on a weekly basis was regarded as an acceptable way to borrow, whereas shop credit and the use of pawnbrokers was not seen as acceptable. Other methods of coping in poverty included women putting pressure on their family not to waste anything at all and making endless economies.¹⁴

The body of evidence that exists for Bradford is contained within some recordings and transcripts of reminiscences of the lives of people who lived in the town during the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁵ Many of the recordings are focused on the working lives of the interviewees but there is some information that provides an insight into the lives of the working class in Bradford and what was done by working-class women. As this evidence is based on individual memories, it needs to be treated with caution and some of it is focused a little later than that provided by Elizabeth Roberts, but still provides an insight into the lives of the working-class in Bradford.

¹² *Ibid*, p.137.

¹³ Joanna Bourke, *Working –Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960. Gender, Class and Ethnicity.* (Routledge London 1994), p.64.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place*, p 151.

Insights into the condition of the poor at this time were also evident in the poverty surveys that were undertaken during the period. Works such as that by Rowntree in York also acted to raise awareness of the problems of poverty. The publication of Rowntree's study into poverty in York and the growing realisation of the deprivation suffered by a large proportion of the population of England, focused national attention on working-class families and on working-class women. With state assistance either unavailable or unwanted, it is evident that those with insufficient income were finding methods of surviving or coping with their day-to-day problems. It is necessary to focus on poverty on a more personal level and examine the diverse strategies used by the working class themselves in order to survive. The working class of Bradford were aware of many tactics which allowed an already overburdened income to stretch a little further. However, many of the strategies used by the working class had the effect of draining their resources. For instance the payment of insurance which could instead have been used every week to feed and clothe families, Pember Reeves was especially critical of this.¹⁶

Poverty is an emotive term and one that conjures up images of deprivation and helplessness, an inability to cope without state benefits or dependency on charity in order to survive. This image is a stereotype of the poor and ignores the true experience of many working-class families before 1920. Many families survived due to day-to-day measures taken, often by women, that helped them to get by. Elizabeth Roberts chronicled the day to day lives of women, the endless round of childbearing throughout their lives, the daily life of cooking, cleaning and washing and all to ensure their families survived and their standing within the community remained the same.¹⁷ Yet it is important not to use this period to create a false idea that these experiences were somehow symptomatic of the 'good old days' where families pulled together and state support was minimal. It was acknowledged, to a certain degree, by those of all political colours, from those spreading the socialist gospel to eugenicists seeking to improve the quality of the race, that reconstruction of the state and welfare system was needed in order to improve the health and welfare of the nation.

¹⁵ Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, Bradford City Library.

¹⁶ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p. 66.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place*, p.125-168.

Working class is a descriptive term which evades as much as it defines. It ties loosely together a bundle of discrete phenomena. There were tailors here and weavers there and together they make up the working classes.¹⁸

The working class was not one homogenous body. There was not one uniform working-class experience of life. Different attitudes towards poverty existed throughout the working class and thus their coping mechanisms differed. The strategies for dealing with poverty were of a diverse nature and depended largely on income and status within working-class society. The poorest of families were concerned with a basic day-to-day existence. Many casual workers, paid daily for their work, existed in a precarious state, having no guarantee of work tomorrow. Their families lived from day to day.¹⁹ Better-off members of the working class had different ambitions and expectations of their families than those of poorer families. The aims of a very poor family would be immediate: to get through the day without starving. Those at the very bottom of the scale would be families such as those dealt with by the Poor Law Guardians, the unemployed or the widowed or elderly or the sick, those without any income at all. A better-off family had different priorities; at its head would be a skilled man who earned enough money to feed and clothe his family and purchase, what would have been regarded by some as luxuries.²⁰ The experience of the majority of working-class families lies somewhere between the two extremes. For the majority, life before 1914 defined dullness and monotony, a day-to-day existence where the food and routine never changed from week to week.²¹ The strategies of survival for these families allowed this existence to be maintained not bettered.

In London in 1889 at the time of the gasworkers' strike Engels wrote: 'The most repulsive thing here is the bourgeois "respectability" which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. The division of society into innumerable strata, each recognised without question, each with its own pride, but also inborn respect for its

¹⁸ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Camelot Press Ltd, 1963, this edition, 1965.

¹⁹ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p. 195-210.

²⁰ Recording A0084, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

²¹ Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty; A study of Town Life*, 1901. (Original edition Macmillan 1901 London, this edition, Garland, London 1980)

“betters” and “superiors”, is sold and firmly established that the bourgeoisie find it easy to get their bait accepted.²²

The working class was not a coherent group that responded to poverty in the same way. Much of the day-to-day lives of the working class was governed by the notion of ‘respectability’. Whether or not someone was considered ‘respectable’ could, in some ways be gauged by the ways in which they responded to poverty. For instance, those who were considered ‘respectable’ would not have used pawnbrokers, but they almost certainly would have made insurance payments. Trying to understand how respectability affected the lives of the poor is important to understanding the different responses to poverty of the working class.

Respectability is something in the constitution. You can’t acquire it and mercifully, if you haven’t got it, you don’t feel the need of it.²³

The concept of respectability is difficult to define. Ellen Ross, in her article on London before the Second World War, examined notions of respectability.²⁴ She argued against Eric Hobsbawm’s idea that respectability was governed by a man’s position within society, his job, his wages and whether or not he was a member of a union. Ross, instead, discussed other aspects of respectability pointing out that it was more often defined by the behaviour of women in their homes and neighbourhoods. It is the aspect of respectability rooted in the home that is of most importance to this study,

There is much evidence to suggest that working-class neighbourhoods had a strict and rigid hierarchy of social relations. This was exhibited by Robert Roberts in *The Classic Slum* which examined the complex state that existed in his own working-class neighbourhood in Salford.

In our community as in every other of its kind, each street had the usual social rating; one side or end of that street might be classified as higher than another.....Every family had a tacit ranking, even individual members within it; neighbours would consider a daughter in one household as ‘dead common’, while registering her sister as refined. Class divisions were of the greatest consequence, though their

²² V. I. Lenin, *On Britain*, (Translated by Kvitko, Lawrence, 1934).

²³ *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 1906.

²⁴ Ellen Ross, “Not the Sort That Would Sit on the Doorstep”. Respectability in Pre-World War London Neighbourhoods’, *Journal of Working-class History*, Vol. 27, Spring 1985.

implications remained unrealised: the many looked upon social and economic inequality as the law of nature.²⁵

Respectability often had an adverse affect on working-class families as it could cut off a family from vital support. If a family was unwilling to let their neighbours know that they were in poverty, then help was limited and strategies closed off to the family.

Respectability was lost through the behaviour of the children of the family. Children would not be encouraged to associate with other children playing in the street. In some families the children would not be allowed to even play outside as they would be thought of as 'rough'. These children would be encouraged to only socialise at events their parents sanctioned, for instance through the Band of Hope movement or the Church Lads Brigade. For instance in the Bradford Oral History collection, several of the recordings show evidence of enforcing of 'respectable' behaviour. One woman remembered her childhood in Bradford and how her mother would not let her associate with certain children in the street. She stated that her mother did not want her to play with the children whose families used the pawnbroker nor was she allowed to join in with the children playing in gangs in the street. These children were considered to be 'rough' by her mother and therefore she should not associate with them.²⁶ As with many children, the girl ignored her mother's advice and played with whomever she liked.

Many of those affected by poverty would not qualify for poor relief and nor would they want to claim due to the stigma attached to the Poor Law. Strategies had to be devised in order that a family might survive. The responsibility for ensuring that the family was fed and clothed fell to working-class women, who were generally responsible for day-to-day budgeting.

One of the most obvious ways of responding to poverty was to try and increase the income of the family. It has been acknowledged that married women usually worked only when their families needed it. Joanna Bourke described how it could be advantageous for a married woman to devote herself to her domestic duties and still contribute to the family economy. Bourke notes that married women at home often did this by spending time

²⁵ Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum*. p. 4-5.

²⁶ Recording A0067 Bradford heritage Recording Unit.

shopping around for the cheapest goods possible.²⁷ If this strategy was not working then an obvious, but largely not welcome response was for the woman to go out to work if a family were in poverty if circumstances were appropriate. In Bradford the textile industry provided more work opportunities for women than other cities. An average of 18.1 per cent of married women worked.²⁸ However, this report does not give a full picture of the numbers of married women working perhaps for short periods of time or within the home or in occupations outside the textile industry.

Table Int.1 – Numbers Working in the Textile Industry in Bradford

Occupation	Male	Female
Wool Sorting Processes	1702	45
Wool Combing Processes	3186	2189
Spinning Processes	4079	10604
Weaving Processes	3082	12986
Other Processes	6865	1665

There was a clear gender division of labour, with more women involved in the processes of spinning and weaving and more men involved with sorting and other processes. Men tended to be involved in the more skilled areas that paid higher wages and were usually closed to the majority of women. The highest paid jobs in the worsted textile industry were those of the wool sorters who earned an average of 37s per week.²⁹ These were mostly men: 1,702 in 1901 compared to 45 female in 1905.

The majority of female workers in the textile industry were single women; 71.5 percent of single women in Bradford worked.³⁰ These were mostly young women who were viewed by employers as a source of cheap labour. Women textile workers were paid less than men for the work they did. For instance, women woolcombers were paid an average of 11-14 shillings if they had a full week's work whereas men in the same occupation were paid 20-23 shillings for a full week's work. Neither wages for male or female woolcombers was particularly good in comparison to those of other trades in Bradford, but men were paid substantially more for the same job.³¹ Many women textile workers were former half-timers,

²⁷ Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p. 65.

²⁸ Board of Trade Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908-1913.

²⁹ Table 5.1 Appendix 5.

³⁰ Board of Trade Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908-1913.

³¹ Table app5.1 Appendix 5.

who worked to provide extra money for their family. The mill was seen as suitable employment for young working women to earn reasonable money without the stigma of going into service. One woman, born in 1896, came to live in Bradford from Sheffield at the age of seven. Her father took the family to Bradford in order that his four daughters find employment. He did not want any of his daughters to go into service. She joined her sisters at the mill as a half-timer in 1908 and went full time two years earlier.³²

The textile trade was poorly paid compared to other occupations such as engineering. Table 2 gives the wage levels for certain Bradford trades. According to this table, platers were paid 38s (£1.90) on average per week. This compared with a textile worker's wages of between 18 (80p) and 30s (£1.50) per week. However, wages fluctuated and it is safe to assume that there were many textile workers who were paid far less than average. *Forward*, the ILP newspaper, published an open letter to Councillor James Hill illustrating the poor conditions experienced by many woolcombers. The letter's principal complaint was against the practice of night work in the textile trade and the effects that it had on the condition of the workers. The letter pointed out that an average full weekly wage for a woolcomber was about £1 per week, but because at least one third of the time was spent not working due to 'slack trade' the average weekly wage was about 13 or 14s.³³ Further examples were given of individual cases. For instance, case one tells of a night woolcomber who had been out of work for three weeks. His average weekly wage for the previous year was 12s per week. He had five children and no other source of income. One of his children was ill and in the care of the infirmary, his rent was 4s per week.³⁴ Case two was that of a night woolcomber who got an average of two nights work per week, earning a total of 7s per week. He had four children and no other source of income.³⁵ A family who had come to the attention of the Guild of Help in 1909 were also victims of the poor wages and short hours worked by the woolcombers. The man, a woolcomber, had had no work for three weeks and had been on short time for a long time before being laid off.³⁶ It is clear from these examples that wages and working conditions were far from ideal, casual work and low wages being one of the main causes of

³² Recording A0003, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Case 3326, Bradford City Guild of Help case books.

poverty in the Bradford textile trade. This is backed up by the study of the Guild of Help that also identifies casual work and low wages as major causes of poverty.

Although many women worked in the textile trade, others increased their family's income through taking in work at home such as washing or cleaned houses when textile work was unavailable or as the preferred alternative to factory work, as described by Elizabeth Roberts.³⁷ Many of the women who were assisted by the Guild of Help were found work as cleaners or took in washing. The transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit highlighted other kinds of work done by women. One transcript mentioned a 'feather woman' who lived in the same street as the applicant. This interviewee described how the 'feather woman' would clean and curl feathers that were then used to add to hats.³⁸ She also described another woman who made money through selling soup and dumplings at 3d bowl.³⁹

There were other options open to families to poverty if women were unable to go out to work. The textile industry provided work for children as well as for women. The half-time system was common in Bradford. According to a Board of Trade Report in 1905, 26.6 per cent of boys and 23.1 per cent of girls worked, most of these child workers being half-timers or doing other part-time work.⁴⁰ Those children who worked in the textile industry worked part-time whilst attending school for the other half of the day. The majority of these children went to work full-time at the age of 14 and their wages would be usually handed over to their mother.⁴¹

Children were no longer seen as extensions of the parents who were expected to work to contribute to the family income. The evidence from the transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit neither prove nor disprove this. Some of the children who worked half time did so in order to add to the family income. One woman described her experience as a half timer.

And when I was twelve years old, we were very, and when I say poor, I don't mean poor poor, I mean we hadn't a lot of money. We'd only what we'd coming in each week. And when I was twelve I decided to go to work in the mill. Don't talk to me

³⁷ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Womans' Place*, p.136.

³⁸ Transcript A0161 Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

³⁹ Transcript A0161 Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁴⁰ Board of Trade Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908-1913.

about the good old days because there weren't such things as good old days. They were terrible and I worked half-time. I went to school in the morning and to the mill in the afternoon and I got two and nine one week and three and nine the following week. And I did that until I was thirteen and then I went full time and I got nine and six a week then. But the mill when you're a little girl at twelve to get up at half past five every morning is a poor life for a girl, for a little girl.⁴²

The interviewee who described her early life as a half-timers made the decision to work in the mill of her own accord, although she was clearly aware that her family needed the money. She did not report any parental pressure, although that is not to say that there was no expectation that she would go to work at twelve. Other former half timers explained that they started work for other reasons. In one transcript the interviewee explained that she went to work half time mainly because her peers were also going half time.⁴³ This interviewee was one whose family was better off than others who told their story to the Heritage Recording Unit. This interviewees father was a manager of a copper smiths and she described how her family was one of the first to have a proper bathroom. The interviewee in this recording stayed in the textile industry for six years and left to get married at the age of eighteen. Another interviewee explained her decision to work in the mill was because her father would not allow her to work in an industry that was unprotected by government legislation. She pointed out that industries like shop work were unregulated and her father did not want to see her exploited.⁴⁴

Whatever the reasons behind children working, whether half time or full time, it was clear that the income of the family was increased by working children. If we return to the poverty cycle identified by Rowntree, that a family began to escape poverty when children began to work.⁴⁵ It is therefore not surprising that one widespread response to poverty was to get children out to work.

⁴¹ There is much evidence on the half time system in the transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit. Many of those interviewed for the recordings were former half timers who described their experiences.

⁴² Transcript A0161 Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁴³ Transcript A0084 Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁴⁴ Transcript A0132 Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁴⁵ Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty; A study of Town Life*, 1901. (Original edition Macmillan 1901 London, this edition, Garland, London 1980).

Borrowing Money or Goods

Family and Neighbourhood Support

If the possibilities for increasing the family income were limited, then a family could, in times of distress, have resorted to borrowing either money or goods. Elizabeth Roberts described how the women of Lancashire borrowed to help their families and discussed how some forms of borrowing were generally socially acceptable, as for instance, paying for goods such as clothes every week from a door to door salesman. In contrast, borrowing from a pawnbroker or a money lender would not be acceptable.⁴⁶ Most borrowing was on a small scale and the first line of support would often come from family. Family ties, particularly those on the female side of the family such as mother and daughter, were of paramount importance in the fight against poverty. Family help ranged from childcare for working women, help with food, actual monetary help and even taking in a child and bringing that child up as well as and many small and everyday measures. The importance of female family ties cannot be exaggerated. Carl Chinn identified a pattern in the settled communities of the urban poor in Birmingham that showed the great reluctance of females to move very far away from their mothers. Chinn identified several members of an extended family living in the same street or in nearby streets. The reluctance to move away from family was not only due to emotional ties but also to economic necessity.

Family was the front-line defence used by women in the war against poverty and Chinn identified a hidden matriarchy in the society of the urban poor.⁴⁷ He has argued that women controlled the economics of the family and also pointed out that the first person they would turn to in times of distress would be a member of her own family.

Pawnbrokers

Borrowing was not limited to families and neighbours; for those who could not borrow from families or who needed more than family or neighbours could provide, the alternative was the pawnshop. Pawnbrokers provided ready access to money for those who had passed the

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Womans' Place*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ Carl Chinn, *They worked all their Lives. Women of the urban poor in England, 1880-1939*, (Manchester University Press), 1988, p. 12-44.

stage of being concerned about respectability. Melanie Tebutt referred to pawnbroking as 'the mirror image of saving'⁴⁸. She also commented that:

For the poor household, expensive credit was just one aspect of a generally high cost of living based on low income, casual labour and lack of security.⁴⁹

Those who used the pawnshop then entered into a weekly cycle of debt. Items were pawned, usually at the beginning of the week, and then retrieved at the end of the week when money from the wages-earners came in. This meant that every week, those who used the pawnshop had to pay out money, making it likely that the pawnshop would have to be used again. The available literature suggests that those most likely to use pawnshops were women as they were responsible for the day-to-day management of the family budget and that men were often unaware of the use of pawnbrokers by women.⁵⁰

It is not possible to tell just how extensive the use of pawnbrokers was in Bradford or indeed anywhere. This is largely down to a reluctance amongst the working class to admit to using pawnbrokers.⁵¹ In Bradford, the number of pawnbrokers listed in the Post Office Directory, remained fairly constant throughout the period at about 35.⁵² The transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit do make reference to the use of pawnbrokers in the town. One woman remembered her family using the pawnshop on a regular basis and described how she had to take items to be pawned on a Monday morning.

I used to take parcels on a Monday morning before I went to school. That's another thing I hated. They used to call me 'Pawnshop Lizzie'. Now they wouldn't give me anything because I were under 14, but I used to have to take the parcels and my grandma used to go and collect the money.....and you'd get 2 and 6 on a parcel.⁵³

The parcel that was referred in the transcript would often be clothes worn on a Sunday that was taken into the shop on a Monday. The money would then be used to buy whatever the family needed to survive the week. The use of the pawnshop by women was quite often done without the knowledge of men, so long as the items were retrieved before the owner knew they had been pawned.

⁴⁸ Melanie Tebutt, *Making Ends Meet. Pawnbroking and Working Class Credit*. (Leicester University Press, 1983, Leicester), p. 11.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 38.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.37.

⁵² See Table app5.3 Appendix 5.

The use of the pawnshop was not for the 'respectable' and tended to bring about insults and name-calling; for instance the woman that referred to the interviewee being called 'Pawnshop Lizzie' by other children.⁵⁴ The interviewee described how their family was very poor and also had poor relief and bought their clothes from a rag-man. So the use of pawnbrokers was clearly a necessity to that family. Other transcripts also made mention of pawnshops. One interviewee told of how her mother would not let her play with the children of those who used pawnbrokers. She also said that she ignored her mother and continued to play with these children.⁵⁵

Pawnshops were used not just to enable a family to survive but for what would have been described at the time as 'improvident reasons'. The transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit highlighted an interviewee who described how and why she used the pawnshop. The interviewee worked as a barmaid from the age of sixteen in the Princess Alice, on Grafton Street.⁵⁶ This described how she would pawn her ring when she wanted to buy a round of drinks. She also described how she kept this from her mother.

Q. Can you remember any of the pawnshops down Manchester Road?

A. Yes, one at the bottom of Grafton Street, Ellis's. And when it were my turn to pay a round in the Princess Alice, when they'd all paid but for me, I used to pawn my ring for a pound.....yes and get it out at weekend.⁵⁷

Out-Goings

A further response to poverty was to examine and reduce the out-goings of the family income on a weekly or even day-to-day basis or to pay out small sums in order to avoid the payment of larger sums later. This section will examine the shopping habits of the Bradford working class in order to see how income was stretched and also examines payments of insurance and in particular burial insurance.

⁵³ Recording A0098, textile memories, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁵⁴ Recording A0098, textile memories, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁵⁵ Recording A0067, textile memories, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁵⁶ Recording A0047, textile memories, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁵⁷ Recording A0047, textile memories, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

Food Prices and Family Budgets

The casebooks of the Guild of Help, in which so much useful information was recorded, do not record income spent on food. It is very difficult to establish the level of wages for most trade on a week-by-week basis due to working practices such as short time or overtime. Therefore it is not easy to establish accurately how much income was spent on food. However, we may speculate using the available data, albeit with qualifications.

Table Int.2 –Food Prices in Bradford as Compared to London

Commodity	Prices or range of predominant prices in Bradford. Oct. 1905	London
Tea (per lb.)	1s. 6d - 1s. 10d	1s. 4d
Sugar (White, per lb.)	2d - 2 1/4d	2d
Bacon (collar, per lb.)	5d - 6 1/2d	7.75d
Bacon (back per lb.)	6d - 9d	10.35d
Eggs	12 - 14 per 1s	15 per s
Butter (Danish per lb.)	1s. 2d	1s. 2d.
Potatoes (per 7 lbs.)	2 3/4d - 3d	3.29d
Flour (per 7 lbs.)	7 1/2d - 8d	9.7d
Bread (Per 4 lbs)	5d	4.9d
Milk (per qt)	3d	1d
Coal (per cwt)	11d	1s. 2d
Paraffin Oil (per gallon)	7d - 8d	6.5d

The table shows the average prices of staple foods in Bradford in October of 1905.⁵⁸

These give only an indication of the prices paid for food. A small example of the amount of money available for food can be gained from examining the average wages and rents to see what disposable income was left for food. As shown in the wages and occupations table, the weekly rate of pay for a man in the woolcombing trade was between 20 and 23s per week. However, it must be remembered that many of these woolcombers would be paid far less than that every week due to 'slack time'. So we may assume that the average woolcomber with a family of three children and a non-working wife lived on approximately 15s per week and paid between four and five shillings in rent. This allowed between ten and eleven shillings for food clothing and all other necessities for the family. It must also be remembered that those who earned money by the day or on irregular wages were unlikely to buy food in such quantities as described in the table. Practices such as buying in very small amounts

⁵⁸ Board of Trade Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908-1913.

were well documented by Pember Reeves and Robert Roberts. Although there is very little evidence on the shopping habits of the working class in Bradford.

Insurance

Insurance and respectability were very strongly interlinked. Payment of insurance was the most widespread response to poverty by the working class, whether it was insurance to protect income against sickness or an accident at work or burial insurance. Insurance payments were thought of a necessity by all but those considered to be 'rough'. Payment of insurance was a response to poverty that would, in theory, enable the person's circumstances to change without that person losing their status of respectability. For instance, someone who had paid health insurance would have a small amount of money to tide them over until they were able to work again. The death of a child would not cause the parents or family any loss of status if the child was insured as they would have the money from the insurance in order to pay for a funeral and avoid the stigma of a pauper funeral.

At the higher end of the employment scale, well-paid men paid insurance payments through their wages at work. Some of the best paid workers were the members of the Bradford Typographical Society. In 1912 those members who worked on the morning papers had agreed a wage rate of £2. 3s per week, which was more than twice the average wage rate for Bradford workers. Membership of the Typographical Society received benefits for sickness, unemployment, striking and death, all for a contribution of around 1s to 1s 6d per week. For instance, if a member died, the family would receive £10 to pay for the funeral. Sick money was also paid to members for medical help and provided the family with money whilst the wage earner was out of work.⁵⁹ Those members of the Typographical Society were well off and received a reasonable return for their money, but they were among the better-off workers in Bradford. However, the average Bradford worker would not be able to afford contributions at this level week after week.

Insurance payments were a fact of life for much of the working-class population in Bradford. In 1900 there were 116 insurance societies listed in the *Bradford Post Office Directory*.⁶⁰ By 1903 there were only 45 listed, the fall in number was due mainly to mergers

⁵⁹ Table app5.2 Appendix 5.

⁶⁰ *Bradford Post Office Directory 1900*, see Table app5.3, Appendix 5.

of insurance companies to form large and powerful vested interests in the insurance business. The number of insurance companies in Bradford remained fairly constant during the rest of the period. Most working-class families would have paid insurance to a collector who would come to the house. Insurance was a part of life for the working class. It was normal practice to insure the lives of each member of the family.

Burial insurance was the most widespread method of thrift used by the working class. It comes in for strong criticism from Maud Pember Reeves in her study of pre-war London. Pember Reeves states that funerals and respectability were strongly linked because to have a funeral provided by the state meant a loss of status

The pauper funeral carries with it the pauperisation of the father of the child - a humiliation which adds disgrace to the natural grief of the parents.....Funerals are not run on credit; but the neighbours, who may be absolute strangers, will contribute rather than suffer the degradation to pauperism of one of themselves.⁶¹

The payment of funeral insurance and respectability were strongly connected. Illness and infant death were a common experience of working-class life. For instance the infant mortality rate in Bradford for the year 1904 was 166 per thousand live births.⁶² The infant mortality rate varied across the city, with overcrowded working class districts having the highest rate; for instance in 1901 Thornton had an infant mortality rate of 195 per thousand compared to 168 per thousand for the city of Bradford.⁶³ Payment of burial insurance added further expense to already over-stretched working-class budget, which many middle-class observers regarded as being an illustration of improvidence or as an unnecessary burden. The evidence does seem to suggest that after rent, insurance was one of the first calls on the family budget and was often paid before food was bought.

The work of the women sanitary inspectors in Bradford highlighted how important the practice of insuring children was. From 30 September 1907 until 1911 the sanitary inspectors recorded the numbers of new-born children they visited.⁶⁴ On three occasions they noted the numbers of children they visited who were already insured shortly after they were born.⁶⁵ In September 1907, the sanitary inspectors visited 64 children for the first time, 38 of whom

⁶¹ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p. 67-68.

⁶² *Report of the Bradford Medical Officer of Health 1904*.

⁶³ See appendix 2 table app2.1.

⁶⁴ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors in Bradford, 1902 –1911*.

were insured. This represented almost 60 per cent of those visited. In the December of 1907 they had visited 262 babies for the first time, of whom 124 were insured, representing 47 percent of the total visited. In March of 1908, the sanitary inspectors had visited 617 babies for the first time of which 417 were insured, representing almost 68 per cent of those visited. Unfortunately, the sanitary inspectors stopped recording the numbers of children insured at this point. It is not possible to identify and trends in insurance take up. However, from the three figures presented it is clear that a substantial proportion of children were insured shortly after they were born. The women sanitary inspectors clearly thought that insurance for children was not only the norm but was something to be positively encouraged.

With regard to the number of children insured. It is customary to insure every infant and those not insured at our first visit will usually be so by the first month has elapsed. Invariably the more thrifty and careful mothers never omit this, but the shiftless and thoughtless parents are most often those, who have forgotten to insure the infant.⁶⁶

The evidence from the Women Sanitary Inspectors clearly shows how much insurance was associated with respectability.

The reminiscences contained in the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit also point to the prevalence of insurance payments. A number of transcripts mention the payment of insurance. One transcript contained the life story of a very poor family who were regular visitors to their local pawnshop. Even though the family were obviously so poor that they resorted to the use of pawnbrokers, they still regarded payment of funeral insurance as normal and the only time that their premiums were not paid was when the family were on poor relief. The transcript went on to describe how, in early married life, the eldest child died from diphtheria, although they were extremely poor, their only income was from very casual work the child's funeral was paid for by insurance. Therefore, despite the poverty of the family, insurance premiums were still paid.⁶⁷ It should be noted that this transcript was quite confused and it is possible that the death of her child, whose funeral was paid for by insurance, happened during the 1920's.

⁶⁵ Table app4.1 Appendix 4.

⁶⁶ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors in Bradford, 1902 –1911.*

⁶⁷ Transcript A0098, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

Another transcript of the Heritage Recording Unit also described the payment of insurance premiums. The subject of the transcript described her early working life during the first two decades of the twentieth century. She described how before she went out to work on a Friday evening, she would leave money to pay for various things.

What did people pay out on Friday?

Oh yes, clothing clubs and your rents, and clothing clubs and your insurance⁶⁸

This particular subject would not necessarily have been described as 'respectable' as she also gave details of how when she worked in a pub she used to pawn her wedding ring in order to buy a round of drinks.⁶⁹

What the two transcripts highlighted is that those who would have not been considered 'respectable' by some of the standards of the day still responded to poverty in the same way that those more likely to be considered 'respectable' did. Perhaps what this also highlights is that those who were somehow less 'respectable', had more strategies for coping with poverty open to them. They used both the pawnshop and insurance.

Although one transcript does not mention insurance payments directly, it is clear that insurance payments were important. Burial insurance would have been of most importance to one particular person's story. One of the transcripts described how the interviewee remembered her mother's funeral in 1912. Her mother had died after giving birth to her thirteenth child. Her memory of the event seemed quite vivid. She described the funeral as being horse drawn and that, in order to attend, she was loaned boots and a coat. She mentioned in the transcript that she had no idea how the funeral was paid for although we may speculate that a family with twelve children who had to borrow clothes to attend a funeral would not have had the ready money to pay for a horse-drawn funeral. Although the family were very poor it seems obvious that they would still be insured for funeral expenses.

The *Bradford Daily Telegraph* illustrated the perception of the working class and funerals.⁷⁰ The *Telegraph* discussed the case of a widow who had received £19 from her husband's insurance company on his death and had subsequently spent all the money on his funeral. The widow, having no money left, then applied for poor relief. The *Telegraph*

⁶⁸ Transcript A0047, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁶⁹ Transcript A0047, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁷⁰ *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1906.

condemned the woman for her extravagance in spending all the money on the funeral but the Poor Relief committee recognised the need for a “respectable’ funeral’. The Poor Relief committee did condemn the undertakers and argued that they took advantage of the working-class need for ‘respectable’ funerals.

Whilst everyone of the Guardians wished the dead to be buried in a ‘respectable’ fashion.....thought that these funerals were overdone and a good deal of blame rested on the undertakers.⁷¹

Insurance and, in particular, burial insurance remained one of the constant out-goings of the working class and is an excellent example of an anticipated response to a situation that may have put a family into poverty. The money was spent every week in the anticipation that a member of the family would die; the funeral without insurance would be unaffordable which would have either put the family in poverty or would have cause a loss of status through having a pauper funeral.

Shop Credit and The Co-op.

One response to poverty was to either cut down on the amount of money spent or to ask for credit and pay at the end of the week when more money was available. Food was one of the most elastic items on the working-class budget: rent had to be paid, but food could be stretched. So it was food shops that provided the most scope for buying small amounts or for asking for credit. Another option included shopping in cheaper shops or shops where customers were given something back for shopping there.

Although getting into debt of any sort would place the respectability of a family under scrutiny, some forms of debt were considered acceptable in certain circumstances. For example credit from a shop was regarded in some areas as essential. In some areas, the ability to get credit from a shop was sometimes looked upon as a measure of the respectability of the family. In some cases the ability of get shop credit meant the difference between hunger and starvation. Robert Roberts described this in Salford. Although the shop, which his family owned, had a notice that said ‘No Tick’, he did describe the payment of

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

money at the end of the week at a time of poverty. 'If a woman can still pay at a weekend for what she's getting, let her choose the family food.'⁷²

There is little evidence about shop credit in Bradford, although there is little reason to doubt that the situation would have been different to that described by Roberts. There is some information on the use of corner shops and the shop credit within the transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit. One interviewee described her mother using shop credit when the family hit hard times.

My mother went,.....when we was very poor when we use to have tick shops, we used to go to a shop and pay at the weekend.⁷³

This family used shop credit as a temporary means of alleviating poverty. When the family were in better circumstances, they used another kind of shop that gave money back to its customers – the Co-op. Credit was not available at the Co-op but a dividend scheme operated which benefited those who spent money at Co-op stores. A member of a co-operative would get a certain amount of money back every quarter depending on how much was spent. The co-operative societies were very much working-class institutions and were valued and perceived as different to other stores. It has been noted that the Co-ops tended to favour the better-off working class such as the families of skilled workers. It was perceived to be a 'respectable' working-class movement.⁷⁴

I believe in the Co-op..... It belongs to the people, well it doesn't really but I do think they treat people right.⁷⁵

There were 12 co-operative societies in Bradford in 1900 including the City of Bradford Co-operative Society opened in 1903.⁷⁶ The Bradford Co-operative was a very large store that provided a wide range of food and household goods. The Co-operative movement took hold amongst the working class, although as mentioned earlier it is likely that it was mainly the better off working class who shopped there on a regular basis owing to the lack of credit and the appeal of saving alongside shopping. The transcripts of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit have some references to the Co-op. One interviewee described how and why

⁷² Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p.85.

⁷³ Recording A0003, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁷⁴ Eric Hopkins, *Working-Class Self-Help in Nineteenth Century England*, University College London Press, London 1995, p.221.

⁷⁵ Recording A0003, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁷⁶ Bradford Post Office Directory, 1900.

she joined the Co-op. This interviewee was quite politically aware and was involved with the ILP in Bradford.

I joined the Co-op as well.....You could join the Co-op for a shilling then. You weren't a full member till you'd a pound in, but you could vote when you'd paid a shilling. So we joined the Co-op so we could get somebody better on the Committee.⁷⁷

Other interviewees also described using the Co-op. The interviewee whose mother had used tick shops when the family was in poverty used the Co-op when the family circumstances had improved.

I think when we got a bit better off, mother said we'd start and go to the Co-op, then course we used to get bonus then.⁷⁸

The combination of the esteem in which the Co-op was held and the money that was given back to customers meant that the Co-op was something that the working class aspired to join.

Aside from the Co-op and small corner shops, there were other shops that were used by the working class in order to save money. One interviewee described how her mother shopped at a large store that helped her to save money.

Because Hansen's was the, I will say, a kind of supermarket of yesterday because it was the cheap shop. Everything was cheap at Hansen's. You got good stuff but it was cheap, cheaper than everyone else. Cheaper than the corner shops.⁷⁹

Clothing Clubs

Clothing and shoes or boots were likely to be amongst the greatest expense that a family would have. This would have been particularly so of large families. Clothing clubs were widely used by the working class. A small amount would be paid every week until the garment or the material was paid for. It did not seem to matter too much that they were being charged more than the item originally cost because what mattered was the ability to pay in small amounts week by week which could be incorporated into the family budget and were easily understood. This was perceived as an acceptable way to pay for shoes and clothing.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Recording A0132, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁷⁸ Recording A0003, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁷⁹ Recording A0161, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Roberts, *A Womans' Place*, p.148.

In recording the budgets of working-class families Maud Pember Reeves showed that clothing clubs were included in the weekly expenses of families in London.⁸¹ There is some evidence within the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit to show that clothing clubs were in evidence in the town. One transcript of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit described how the interviewee and her mother paid for her clothes through a clothing club, 'We would put three pence on that until it was paid for'.⁸² Other families were able to get their clothes from other sources. One interviewee described how her clothes were made by her aunt and then handed down through the family. 'One of my dad's sisters was a tailoress. And we were all hand-downs. I'd get the new and the two girls got what I'd left.'⁸³ Those on the poorest incomes had to look elsewhere for their clothes. Another interviewee of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit tells of how her family got their clothes from the ragman. The ragman would take clothes from better-off areas and sell them in the poor neighbourhoods.⁸⁴

Working-class women were far from thriftless and employed many strategies in response to poverty. The tactics practised, constrained by respectability, ensured that their families survived. Their responses to poverty ensured day-to-day survival rather than any long-term alleviation of poverty. Differing notions of respectability and a stratified working class ensured that the working class in Bradford had different methods to deal with poverty depending on their place in working-class society. Working-class women were largely responsible for the welfare of their families and practised various strategies in response to poverty to ensure that their families survived.

Increasing the income of a family was a necessary response to poverty. Women and children who worked to ensure that sufficient money came into the home were constrained by the lower wages that were available to them. Despite the lower wages, the textile industry did offer women work that was better paid than other kinds of work such as cleaning or washing.

Definitions of respectability governed the types of borrowing that were permissible. For example, some women would have considered borrowing from family to be fine but not to borrow from the pawnbroker. There is a lack of evidence in Bradford of women relying on other members of their families for support including borrowing money or goods. Evidence of

⁸¹ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p.83.

⁸² Recording A0003, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁸³ Recording A0161, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

⁸⁴ Recording A0098, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit.

women's networks for sharing can be seen in London, Birmingham and Manchester. The relative lack of evidence in Bradford does not necessarily mean that the networks were not in place. However, women's sharing networks may not have been as pronounced because Bradford was a town which attracted female migration owing to the job opportunities in the textile industry.

The attempts to limit family out-goings often meant that more was paid for goods in the long term. The purchase of small quantities of food, often from small corner shop was an example of this, a further example being clothing clubs, that enabled payments to be spread over a long period. This made the purchase of clothes affordable but a premium was added for payment by this method.

An emergency that would have faced a working-class family at some time was a death. Working-class women planned for this through the payment of burial insurance. This practice was both criticised and praised by contemporaries. The practice of paying small sums on each member of the family could have limited the income of working-class families and in particular large families. However, the cost of a funeral would have been unaffordable without insurance and most of the working class was hostile to the idea of a pauper funeral as it implied loss of respectability of the family. Respectability governed even the burial of bodies.

The working classes, particularly working-class women, adopted many strategies to deal with poverty. Most obviously they had to enlist the support of family and outside agencies. The agencies examined in this thesis responded to poverty in different ways and had different motivations. The Guild of Help aimed to alleviate the poverty of those best placed to be able to help themselves, perhaps in an attempt to make sure that those that were helped did not become socialists. The ILP, although limited by the influence of the trade unions, did look more towards the elimination of poverty rather than alleviation. Although the ILP membership was small, it kept poverty and related issues on the political agenda.

CHAPTER 1
THE PHILANTHROPIC RESPONSES TO POVERTY - THE BRADFORD CITY GUILD OF HELP

The ideas of philanthropy and poverty of Victorian society had been undermined by the realities revealed by social investigators such as Booth and Rowntree. Many studies of this period have concentrated on topics such as the changing nature of the role of the state and the reforms of the Liberal government rather than on voluntary aid and philanthropy, that being mainly associated with the Victorian period. The changing nature of voluntary effort during the Edwardian period has largely been ignored and yet, finding an effective response to poverty at this time was an important challenge for the philanthropic and wider community. To ignore the developments in Edwardian philanthropy is to dismiss the work of the Guild of Help and miss an important insight into early twentieth century middle-class attitudes towards the poor and social welfare. This chapter seeks to illustrate the workings of the Guild of Help, its aims, objectives, organisation and philosophy. It seeks to show that action taken locally in Bradford was not effective in dealing with poverty and that poverty could not be alleviated without state action. The chapter also endorses the work of Keith Laybourn in that it explores the practice of the Guild in assisting those who had the potential to become self-supporting rather than those who were suffering the worst poverty.¹ A survey of the surviving casebooks of the Guild will be analysed in this chapter to elicit in-depth information of the workings of the Guild of Help.

Before exploring the origins and the work of the Bradford City Guild of Help the historical interpretations of the period need to be considered. At least five different approaches to the development of Edwardian social welfare have been identified.² The first interpretation suggests that the developments in Edwardian social policy and the failure of charity are almost inevitable stages on the road to the welfare state.³ This study doubts this view, as nothing is inevitable until it has happened. The second interpretation doubts the sociological and socialist theory that charity is a form of social control. It has been observed that charity was not always good done by one class to another. Frank Prochaska, the leading exponent of this view cites the growth of working-class charity including official subscriptions to charities and also unofficial charity such as helping out neighbours in times of need as evidence for this view. He stresses that charity strengthened the family unit and could bring

¹ Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, p. 165-170.

² *Ibid*, p.9.

³ Pat Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, (Longman, 1982) p.209.

about social harmony and disputes the social control agenda.⁴ This study of the Guild of Help disputes this view and maintains that the Guild of Help was very much in the business of social control, i.e. that the Guild was attempting to enforce certain modes of behaviour in those who received relief. The Guild of Help worked at the margins of poverty to change the behaviour or those who with a bit of help, would be best able to practice self-help. The third approach examines the tensions between collectivism and individualism in particular the tension surrounding the self-help debate.⁵ The fourth approach examines the tensions between New Liberalism and the Labour Party.⁶ There is some confusion on this theme as it is not clear whether the New Liberals were reacting to, the socialist societies such as the Independent Labour Party or to the Labour Party who were radical but not socialist.⁷ This study acknowledges that there is some validity in this view, however, the existence of the Guild of Help cannot wholly be put down to the presence of the ILP in Bradford. The fifth approach focuses on the development of the professionalisation of welfare and the emergence of the professional social worker.⁸ This close study of the casebooks of the Bradford City Guild of Help will help to provide an insight into the lives of those who were helped by the Guild, the members of the Guild themselves and to place the work of the Guild within the historical framework described above.

The Bradford City Guild of Help was a philanthropic movement established in 1904, that pioneered social work techniques that were ahead of its time. The Guild was unlike the majority of voluntary bodies from the Victorian era because it recognised that economic, political and social circumstances were as much responsible for poverty as personal failings. It was also willing to advocate limited state support for those cases where it was felt appropriate. However, the Guild was not in favour of large-scale state interference to deal with the problem of poverty. It sought to tackle poverty through a localised initiative rather than following a national lead. It was an organisation providing a localised response to a problem caused by national and international influences at a time when the boundaries between the roles of the state, philanthropy and the individual were becoming blurred.

⁴ F. K. Prochaska, 'Philanthropy' in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume 3; Social Agencies and Institutions*, (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 357-93.

⁵ Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*. (London, McMillan 1975).

⁶ P. F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, (Cambridge University Press, 1971).

⁷ Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p. 9.

⁸ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, p. 1-18.

The Bradford City Guild of Help is an example of how the voluntary sector had moved on from the philanthropy of the Victorian era. The Guild represents one response to poverty in an age of limited state intervention and when organisations were largely feeling their way. The chapter will also try to illustrate that the Bradford City Guild of Help was to some extent in the business of social control, although this was not perhaps a conscious policy and because of this they did not totally break with the Victorian voluntary tradition. The study uses the hand-written casebooks to give an insight into the lives of the Bradford poor and the workings of the Guild of Help.

The historical context

The Guild of Help emerged at a time of social crisis within the British middle class. The Edwardian era saw the beginning of a growing realisation that Britain no longer had the means, in particular militarily and economically, to sustain a large empire indefinitely.⁹ The Boer War highlighted the problems of Empire. The war cost far more and took much longer than those in power had expected. The Boer War also highlighted problems at home. A sizeable proportion of those men from the cities and towns who applied to join the army were turned down on the grounds of poor health which highlighted problems of poverty and deprivation in Britain's cities. The fact that the Boers were mainly from rural, farming colonies highlighted further the deficiencies of the urban working class. Society's concerns about poverty and the problems of the poor were also brought to the fore by Rowntree in his study of York conducted in 1899 and published in 1901. This emphasised the poor condition of the working class in York and also painted a picture of the drabness of life on the breadline. He found that 28 per cent of the population of York lived in some form of poverty.¹⁰ If this was the case for York, then it was clear that a town largely reliant on one main industry which was at the whim of international competition and trade problems such as Bradford was, would also have similar, if not greater problems.

There was fear amongst many of the middle and upper class was that the British race was degenerating and that measures had to be taken in order to prevent this. The Eugenics movement had its roots in Britain twenty years earlier with different members of the

⁹ G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency. A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1900-1914*, (The Ashfield Press Ltd. Paperback edition 1990), p.2.

movement raising issues of racial degeneration in different ways, for instance Marie Stopes and her birth control campaign. Other factors helped to raise the awareness of issues highlighted by the Eugenicists such as the report on Physical Deterioration that was published in 1904, the same year that the Bradford City Guild of Help emerged which highlighted the poor condition of Army recruits during the Boer war. A prominent member of Bradford Society, a sometime member of both the Bradford Liberals and ILP, the Reverend Roberts was involved both with the Bradford Eugenics movement and the Bradford City Guild of Help.¹¹ The condition of the poor was certainly an issue at this time and yet there was confusion as to how this could be alleviated. The existence of widespread poverty raised difficult and profound questions concerning the economic and political emphasis at the time, in particular the role of the state and its relationship to the individual came under close scrutiny.

There is also a local political dimension to the action of the Guild. That is that the middle classes feared that if they were intransigent regarding poverty that the working class would turn towards socialism.¹² It is perhaps no surprise that the Bradford City Guild of Help emerged at a time when the ILP was gaining ground in Bradford. So the Guild could perhaps also be seen as a local reaction to prevent more radical action through socialism.

Large-scale social welfare reforms were largely unpalatable to many of the Edwardian middle class as they were seen as unnecessary interference that would undermine the traditional class structure and moral values. Those involved with the Charity Organisation Society (C.O.S.) still appeared to believe that poverty was a temporary condition caused by moral failure rather than economic circumstances and that the existing system was basically sound.¹³ However, by the turn of the century it was more widely acknowledged that poverty was more likely to be caused by economic circumstances than personal failing. Yet the Poor Law, based on the principle of less eligibility was geared up to deal with absolute destitution rather than poverty. The system was virtually incapable of dealing with the poverty caused by a capitalist, imperialist, laissez-faire economy that had produced a class of low paid, insecure or unemployed workers. This stems from a failure to understand the nature

¹⁰B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty a study of Town Life*, p.117.

¹¹ Bradford Trades Council Year Book (1899).

¹² Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p. 51.

and causes of poverty. The Poor Law would provide indoor relief in the form of the workhouse and occasionally test work in times of extreme distress, but this barely scratched the surface of the problem. Many officials, including F. H. Benthem in Bradford, were opposed to outdoor relief as a matter of principle and obstructed moves to allow this when trade in Bradford's main industry, worsted textiles, was slack.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw widespread questioning of the Poor Law, as it had become evident to many politicians that change was needed. Conflict arose between the socialists, Liberal progressives, the old Liberals and Conservatives, each holding their own varying opinions on the subject as to what change was needed.

The Poor Law Commission of 1905 – 1909 highlighted some of the thoughts and opinions on solutions to poverty. Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Fabians and writers of the Poor Law Minority Report wished to destroy the Poor Law and replace it with a fairer system that did not penalise the unemployed or stigmatised those who claimed. Though, significantly the Webbs still identified a certain section of the population who were to blame for their poverty. Helen Bosanquet, C.S. Loch and Octavia Hill were all part of the royal commission as well as members of the C.O.S., which largely influenced the Majority Report, which was signed by the Chairman and fourteen members of the committee. The signatories wanted much of the Poor Law to remain intact and charity was to remain as the main source of assistance for the poor. The Majority Report emphasised moral failing as a cause of poverty. The Local Government Board, in whose remit the Poor Law fell and in particular J.S. Davy, head of the Poor Law division believed that the Poor law should return to the principle of 1834. Pauperisation of those in need still held sway with Davy, even if poverty was due to a trade depression. The man:

Must stand by his accidents ; he must suffer for the general good of the body politiche must accept assistance on the terms whatever they may be, which the common welfare requires.¹⁴

This illustrates a view that harked back to the original principles of the new Poor Law on how to tackle poverty and was opposed by Beatrice Webb. The Minority Report opposed

¹³ Michael J. Moore, 'Social Work and Social Welfare: The Organisation of Philanthropic Resources in Britain, 1900-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, (Spring 1977), p. 87.

¹⁴ Report of the Royal Commission of the Poor Law & Relief of Distress (XXXVII 91909) Appendix V Vol. 1: Minutes of Evidence Q2230.

this and advocated that the Poor Law be destroyed and the work taken up by Local Authorities and that separate problems be dealt with by specialist departments such as education and health. For the able bodied in times of cyclical trade depression, the Minority Report recommended labour exchanges, retraining programmes and public works programmes.¹⁵

There was a real sense of fumbling towards a solution to poverty. It may have made sense to the Edwardian middle class to look for a solution to poverty in what was already in place, as in the Majority Report, rather than accepting a radical or untried solution that may have altered the balance of society, such as the solutions put forward by the ILP. The Majority and the Minority Reports illustrate just some of the opinions that existed on how to tackle poverty during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Neither report was implemented in full and neither one was implemented immediately. This is further evidence that there was no real coherent strategy to deal with poverty.

Emergence of the Bradford City Guild of Help

One solution to the problems of poverty in Bradford presented itself in 1904 in the form of the Bradford City Guild of Help. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Guild of Help emerged in Bradford. Bradford was the home of the ILP and much evidence suggests that the local Liberals were reacting in part to the demands of the Bradford ILP. Poverty was a major issue for the ILP and they campaigned long and hard to raise awareness. Many socialists regarded charity as an anachronism and opposed charitable support for initiatives that they considered so important to the public that they should come under municipal control. There was inter-party conflict on many issues including relief of poverty. Those Bradford Liberals, H. B. Priestman, F. H. Bentham and their followers had obstructed and opposed the ILP on measures such as relaxing the conditions on outdoor relief and proposed very few alternative measures. Yet it was clear that the Liberals could not continue to respond in a wholly negative way to ILP demands because the voters, in particular the working class trade union voters would perhaps opt for the ILP solutions.¹⁶ The Liberals may also have been concerned about losing the votes of the working class to the ILP. The Liberal party had long

¹⁵ Derek Fraser, *Evolution of the British Welfare State*, (Macmillan Press 1973, This edition 1984).

¹⁶ Cahill and Jowett, *The New Philanthropy*, p.371.

been tied to the trade union movement in Bradford, but if the Liberals no longer provided a voice for the working class, as claimed by the ILP, then the working class would take their vote elsewhere. In Bradford, it would appear that to some extent the Liberals were reacting to the socialist agenda.¹⁷

The Guild of Help was loosely based on a system set up in the German town of Elberfeld. Relief in Elberfeld was run by the municipal government, which organised Helpers to visit and assist those in need.¹⁸ The Elberfeld system was brought to the attention of the Bradford community from two main sources. The first was a report carried out by C.S. Loch for the Local Government Board in 1887 which rejected the introduction of the Elberfeld system in England as it could not be incorporated within the existing structure as it was a locally based municipal system and not voluntary in nature.¹⁹ The second and possibly more important, source was a book written by Julie Sutter entitled *Britain's Next Campaign*.²⁰ It put the case for a system of district visiting and local initiatives to cope with the problems of poverty. 'The loving sacrifices of men and women in united organised action alone can solve the problem of the poor.'²¹ This study will attempt to illustrate why this was not necessarily the case. *Britain's Next Campaign* was a major influence on the founders of the Guild of Help in Bradford. However Julie Sutter later criticised the Guild of Help, as she had wanted the initiative to be municipal as it was in Elberfeld. She regarded the Guild of Help as nothing more than another C.O.S., which would be bound to fail. She stated that

What is this newly started Bradford Guild other than a Charity Organisation Society under a different name. Yet another name cannot produce new results.²²

She was to some extent correct in her assessment of the Guild of Help, although the Guild of Help was a more sympathetic organisation and did accept that personal failing was not always the cause of poverty in an individual. The Guild of Help was also more willing to accept state assistance whereas to the COS this was an anathema.

However, a municipal system was probably not an acceptable initiative for the Bradford Liberal elite in 1904 as they showed little inclination to extend municipal control when charity

¹⁷ Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Cahill and Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy*, p. 372.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 373.

²⁰ Julie Sutter, *Britain's Next Campaign*, R. Brimley Johnson, London 1903.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *The Yorkshire Daily Observer*, 2 September 1904.

could be utilised. For instance, the Bradford schemes to feed school children, before 1906 were charitable rather than municipal with the Cinderella club providing the meals. The Liberal-dominated municipal council did not provide school meals for children until after the 1906 Education (provision of meals) Act. This will be examined in detail in chapter 4, which focuses on the Independent Labour Party and their responses to the poverty of women and children.

Members of the Guild of Help included Henry Brady Priestman leader of the Bradford Liberals on the City Council, who was regarded as an advanced Liberal, verging on the fringes of New Liberalism later in his career, following the death of Alfred Illingworth. This was distinct from the laissez faire, old style Liberalism, still championed by Alfred Illingworth. HB Priestman was from a Quaker family and was the brother of Arthur Priestman, who led the ILP/Labour Party group on Bradford Council. Members of the German community in Bradford were involved in the setting up of the Guild of Help, including the Mosers and the Steinthals. It is possible that some members of the German community may have been aware of the Elberfeld system.²³ Other prominent members included F. H. Bentham, the Chairman of the Bradford Board of Guardians. The very fact that both H.B. Priestman and F.H. Bentham were involved in the creation of the Guild of Help suggested that its philosophy was going to include a strong belief in self-help and thrift. Although, some new Liberals had doubts that self-help was sufficient to deal with poverty. It is also clear that the presence of these Liberals would deter members of the Independent Labour Party from playing a major role in the Guild of Help. Following a period of co-operation at the end on the nineteenth century, the ILP adopted a policy of conflict with the Liberals. The ILP perceived the Liberal Party to be at fault for not providing better solutions to the problems of poverty in Bradford. The Liberal leaders were regarded by the ILP as being intransigent in the case of poverty and were guilty of blocking solutions that would have made conditions for the poor easier. For instance F.H. Bentham was a whole-hearted opponent of changing the system of poor relief in times of unemployment to one where outdoor relief was more flexible. The Bradford Liberals, under H.B. Priestman failed to provide much help for unemployed able-bodied other than test work. This was clearly not practical during a major trade depression, and the Liberals were much

²³ Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p.4.

criticised by the ILP for their failure to tackle unemployment, although the ILP also failed to offer alternative policies to deal with unemployment.. This will be examined further in chapter 3 of this study.

Objectives, Aims and Philosophy of the Bradford City Guild of Help

The Guild wished to:

Unite citizens of all classes, both men and women, irrespective of political or religious opinion, for the following objects. To deepen the sense of civic or collective responsibility for the care of the poor. To provide a friend for those in need of help. To secure timely aid for the suffering and needy and to bring about lasting improvement in the condition of each case by patient study and wise methods of help To keep a general register of relief and to provide a centre of information for social workers, so that overlapping may be prevented and personal beneficence wisely directed. These objects are to attain by the promotion of co-operation between voluntary workers and public officials, clergy and charitable agencies of the city.²⁴

The Bradford City Guild of Help was publicly launched on 20th September 1904. Within a year of its foundation 500 Helpers were enlisted and it was dealing with approximately 2000 cases.²⁵ At the public meeting held to launch the Bradford City Guild of Help, speeches were given by Seebohm Rowntree, and the Bishop of Ripon.²⁶ During the early stages of setting up the Guild of Help those involved were careful to exclude religious leaders in an attempt to avoid sectarian conflicts which had been a feature of Bradford charity prior to the creation of the Guild of Help.²⁷ Although excluded from the initial planning of the Bradford City Guild of Help, the clergy of various religious denominations were actively involved with the Guild either in providing funds for cases with a connection to their particular religious denomination, or in recommending cases to the Guild.

²⁴Walter Milledge, *Bradford City Guild of Help Handbook*, 1911.

²⁵*Help*, Journal of the Bradford City Guild of Help Vol. 1, No. 2, 1905.

²⁶*The Yorkshire Daily Observer*, 21 September 1904.

²⁷ Cahill and Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy*, p. 373.

The Guild of Help is an example of 'The New Philanthropy', a term used to describe some charitable movements of the early twentieth century, particularly the Guild of Help.²⁸ This represented a more sympathetic approach to charity, accepting that poverty was not always due to the failings of the individual and combined voluntary service and some acceptance of state welfare measures such as old age pensions. The term New Philanthropy is used to distinguish the movement from the old philanthropy of the Victorian era, specifically the Charity Organisation Society, (C.O.S.) as it accepted the need for state welfare to deal with major problems such as unemployment. Although the Guild did moralise about the behaviour of those in need, it also recognised that poverty was not always the fault of the poor. Unlike the C.O.S., it understood that poverty was often caused by outside factors and not merely moral failure. There was much friction between the two organisations. For the Guild of Help to exist, the principles of the Charity Organisation had to have failed. There were, however, many similarities between the two organisations. For instance both were visiting societies which undertook casework to enquire into the lives of those in need of help. Both the C.O.S. and the Guild of Help placed a great deal of value on the principle of self-help and they each wanted to act as a clearing house to co-ordinate charitable effort. The C.O.S. had never had much influence outside of London and yet its members complained when the Guild of Help was set up in Bradford. The Bradford C.O.S. complained that the Guild of Help had 'fossilised' the C.O.S. and labelled its rival a 'defective imitation of a second-rate C.O.S. office'.²⁹ Tensions between the organisations were only to be expected. However, the influence of the Guild within the philanthropic movement in Bradford was so strong that by early 1906 the C.O.S. were directing all enquiries and requests for relief to the Guild of Help. 'In future, not only enquiries, but all requests for relief from the C.O.S. must be made through the General Secretary of the Guild'³⁰

One of the central aims of the Bradford City Guild of Help was its commitment to working with public bodies.³¹ The City Guild of Help made little distinction between assistance from the state and from charity. A Helper was as likely to recommend a case to the municipal council as it was to recommend a private charity if charitable action was

²⁸ E. Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*, (George Allen & Unwin, 1934 London), p. 18.

²⁹ M. J. Moore, *Social Work and Social Welfare*, p. 95.

³⁰ *Help*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 1906.

³¹ Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, p. 20.

inappropriate for that case, as the diagram of social forces taken from the casebooks of the Bradford City Guild of Help illustrates.³²

Wherever vigorous work has been undertaken it has been realised that relief from destitution can only be adequately obtained from public funds.³³

On a national scale the Guild of Help accepted state intervention such as old age pensions where as the C.O.S. would not.³⁴ The aged poor were a group who were unable to practice self-help and were unable to work due to their old age. The aged poor were more likely to end up in the workhouse rather than with private charity and therefore the Guild of Help was happy that a group, to whom there was little point in preaching the benefits of self-help, were removed from its care. The Guild of Help accepted state intervention only if it meant that philanthropy still had a role to play. The Guild did not wish the state to take over the running of social welfare completely but only those areas where philanthropy was not appropriate or could not cope. Thus the state would look after the destitute; charity would take care of the poor.

One major achievement of the Bradford City Guild of Help was to put welfare on a more systematic footing. Before the creation of the Guild, charity was indiscriminate and sporadic.³⁵ The system of organised Helpers visiting the poor backed up by a co-ordinated board of charities showed a professional and thorough approach to social work and charity, which was part of a wider process of professionalisation of welfare.

The name, Guild of Help was chosen to avoid any connotations of religious or class bias and was to reflect the personal service nature of the Guild. As the Guild of Help was an organisation founded on local action and inclusiveness perhaps this is reflected in the uses of the name "Guild". A Guild being an organisation where all members had a common interest in this case in the relief of poverty and all worked for that common interest. The Bradford City Guild of Help set out to provide a community response to the problems of poverty and to bring together citizens of all classes to help the poor. It would 'unite all citizens in a collective effort to deal with the problem of poverty.'³⁶ Cahill and Jowitt point out that the Guild of Help in Bradford owes much to the civic conscious movement of the time and cite the name of the

³² See Appendix 1 Chart 1.1.

³³ *Help*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Nov. 1905 Annual Report Edition, First Annual Report.

³⁴ Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, p. 22.

³⁵ Moore, *Social Work and Social Welfare*, *Journal of British Studies*, 1977, p. 91.

Bradford Guild as proof of this. The Guild of Help in Bradford is often referred to in contemporary sources as the City Guild of Help.³⁷ Cahill and Jowitt feel that this cannot be due solely to Bradford's new status as a city but that the Guild of Help regarded itself as a civic conscious movement and explained its feelings in the *Help* Journal.

The Guild of Help is the practical expression of the civic consciousness and the end and the embodiment of the new philanthropy.....the Guild worker does not go in as a visitant from another world but as a fellow creature to be helpful.³⁸

Perhaps this is where there is some common ground between the Guild of Help and the ILP. The ILP also saw civic pride, the betterment of the community through local action and municipal socialism, creating public services such as transport systems and street lighting, as a way forward to enhance the quality of life of the poor, although for different reasons than that of the Guild.

The Bradford City Guild of Help was launched with its motto 'Not Alms but a Friend' which reflected the nature of the Guild in that it was to be a movement dedicated to personal service. 'Personal responsibility for the poor is a key note of the Guild and it is by the effort of single workers that really useful work has been and will be done.'³⁹ Whilst this shows that the Guild of Help were serious in tackling poverty and professional in approach, it also indicates that because of its personal and local touch, it was not focusing on the national and international causes of poverty. As the organisation was not tackling poverty at source, it is difficult to see how they could hope to make anything more than a temporary alleviation rather than a permanent solution to the condition of the poor in Bradford.

The Bradford City Guild of Help placed a great deal of emphasis on local effort. The Guild saw itself as operating within the local community and encouraging responsible citizenship. Although Guilds of Help developed all over the country, they were still autonomous bodies, they were not a centralised organisation, more of a federation, holding an annual conference but retaining a strong individual identity. Local effort was part of the central philosophy of the Guild of Help as it encouraged a strong sense of responsibility for the poor amongst the local community. Localism gave the Guilds of Help a distinct identity.

³⁶ *Help*, Vol. 1, October 1905.

³⁷ Cahill and Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy*, p. 372.

³⁸ *Help*, Volume 4, 2, November 1908.

³⁹ *Help*, Vol. 1, October 1905.

In a sense, the strengths that the Guild had in keeping the movement on a local basis also added to its downfall. By staying as a local movement the Guild of Help ensured that it would never be an effective solution to the problems of poverty and became progressively subservient to the state following the welfare legislation of the Liberal government. Although the leadership of the Bradford City Guild of Help welcomed many measures stating that they could now deal with the categories best suited to the charitable sphere, their territory had been encroached upon and the extension of state provision was underway.

The first action of the Bradford City Guild of Help was to appoint Walter Milledge as General Secretary. The executive committee had decided that what was needed was 'an educated gentleman'.⁴⁰ He gave the Guild a professional outlook through co-ordinating the day-to-day management of the Guild of Help and was responsible for the creation of the Guild's *Help* magazine which provided help and advice for those enrolled as Helpers. The magazine included topics such as outdoor relief, self-help, the workings of the Guild and adverts for work for cases. The journal even included competitions based on the work of the Guild. Readers were asked people to send in a family budget for one week to meet the needs of 'A Labourer and his wife and their three children. (two girls aged five and seven and one boy aged nine).'⁴¹ Their rent was 4s and 6d; wages are 24s per week. The competition was to see how the money should be spent and what should be provided for every meal for one week in order to get the maximum amount of nourishment. Competitions such as these were an attempt to give the Helper an idea of some of the problems they would face in the field.

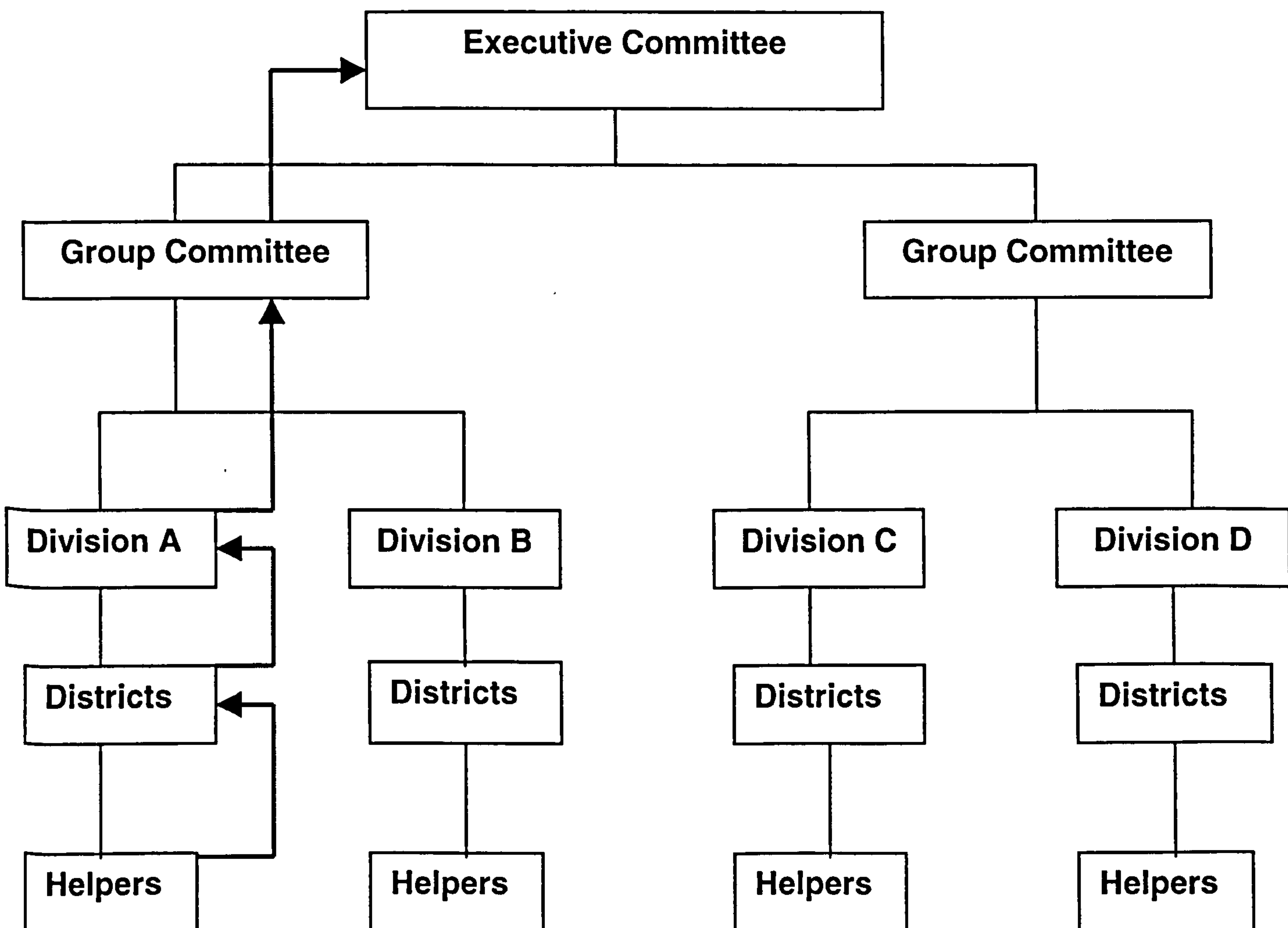
The Guild introduced Helpers who visited the poor and recorded the details of each situation in their casebooks. They were at the forefront of the Guild's campaign to tackle poverty. The Guild of Help set up a Board to co-ordinate charitable effort within Bradford, to prevent duplication and also to identify those who were obtaining money from many charities. The objectives of the Guild of Help were to be fulfilled through co-operation between voluntary agencies and the state. This marks the Guild of Help out from the C.O.S. and make it part of the New Philanthropy rather than the old.

⁴⁰ Bradford City Guild of Help Executive Committee, Minute Book, 13 November 1903.

Structure and Organisation of the Guild

This diagram illustrates the structure of the Bradford City Guild of Help. This is a rather hierarchical structure but one which allowed the Helpers to feed directly to the Executive Committee. The arrows illustrate the channels of communication and representation.

Diagram 1.1 - Organisation Structure of the Bradford City Guild of Help (Bolam 1999)



In order to ensure that organisation fulfilled its aims, the Bradford Guild of Help was organised on a district basis, which allowed good local knowledge of the community to be fully utilised. The executive committee met monthly and co-ordinated the organisation and developed policy.⁴² It was made up of the Group chairman and deputies together with one specially elected member from each Group Committee. Bradford was sub-divided into four

⁴¹ *Help*, Vol. 1, No. 1 October 1905.

divisions based on those used to administer the Poor Law. A prominent member of the Guild would head the division. For instance, in 1906 the Chairman of Division B was Alderman H.B. Priestman and the Chairman of Division C was Jacob Moser.⁴³ Each division was further divided into districts. Each district had a committee, made up of the District Head, Secretary and at least ten Helpers. These committees met every fortnight to receive reports on the cases visited and to decide on the best course of action. Between the Division and Executive committees came the Group committee. Each group had a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Treasurer. These, with the District Head and their deputies and secretaries formed the Group Committee. This committee met monthly to receive reports of the conditions and to consider needs of the group and also to discuss proposals to be submitted to the Executive Committee. This was a hierarchical and bureaucratic system, but one which ensured that the views from the front line of the Guild of Help were able to permeate to the top.

The backbone of the Guild of Help organisation were the Helpers, overwhelmingly women who did the visiting and case work. The Guild described them thus:

Helpers shall be elected by the District Committees. They shall endeavour to become the personal friends of those whom they visit.....They shall ascertain the circumstances, difficulties and the needs of each case, fill in the particulars in the case-book and consult the District head as to be the means to be used to secure permanent benefit. Helpers shall not have more than four cases at one time but they should visit these at least once a week.⁴⁴

How were people helped by the Guild?

The name of an applicant usually came to the attention of the Guild of Help from three different sources. A small number applied to the Guild in person. This would be done either through a local Helper or to the Guild office directly. Individuals in contact with the poor could recommend cases, for example doctors or priests. Organisations could also recommend cases to the Guild, including the Poor Law or the Education Department.⁴⁵ The

⁴²Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁴³*Help*, Vol. 1, No. 3 January 1906.

⁴⁴Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁴⁵Cahill and Jowitt, '*The New Philanthropy*', p. 379.

organisations that recommended cases to the Guild of Help included both private and public bodies.

The kind of help on offer from the Guild of Help was not perhaps what the applicant would have expected at first. The Guild of Help had a policy of not providing direct monetary help, as it had no general relief fund. This was a major point of contention with the ILP who felt that the Guild of Help would be unable to make inroads into poverty without a relief fund. One of the major causes of poverty was unemployment (See Survey results) and without a considerable relief fund the Guild of Help could not do more than scratch the surface of poverty caused by unemployment. To the Bradford Guild the idea of a general relief fund was an anathema. They did not want to become a general relief society which handed out money to all cases as it would detract attention away from their purpose which was to provide a friend and guidance to those in need and to recommend sources of help but not to give money themselves. In 1904 Jacob Moser, one of the founders of the City Guild stated that a general relief fund was not needed and following a major debate within the City Guild of Help a system known as 'Stand-Byes' was created. This system meant that those involved in philanthropy would underwrite the cost of individual cases. Moser insisted that this system would meet all the needs of the City Guild of Help.⁴⁶ The issue of a relief fund continued to be a problem for the city Guild. A meeting was called to discuss the issue on 12 December 1904. H.B. Priestman and Jacob Moser took the line that the Guild had always been against a general relief fund and opposed any compromise, such as that put forward by F.F. Steinthal who wanted funds to be organised on a district basis.⁴⁷ One of the strongest voices of opposition to Moser and Priestman came from Harry Smith, district head of Thornton. Smith, one of the very few members of the Independent Labour Party to play a role within the Guild of Help, stated that in his district, economic difficulties were the major problem especially among the night Woolcombers and that almost every home needed a Helper. Smith it would seem thought that a general relief fund was necessary and did not think that it would cause problems he felt that 'we distrusted each other unnecessarily'.⁴⁸ Smith had left the Bradford City Guild of Help by 1909. The creation of a relief fund was discussed in the annual report of

⁴⁶Bradford City Guild of Help, Minutes, 15 November 1904.

⁴⁷Bradford City Guild of Help, Minutes, 12 December 1904.

⁴⁸ibid.

the Guild of Help 1912-14 when the position on a relief fund was reaffirmed by Walter Milledge, who believed that the aims of the Guild could be achieved without a relief fund. 'The first article of our faith has never been wholly obscured - a belief in the power of personal help and human friendship.'⁴⁹ It is clear that without a general relief fund, the kind of help that the Guild could provide was limited. However, even with considerable funding the work of the Guild would have been limited because national and international factors caused poverty and the Guild tackled poverty on a local basis.

The Helpers were the point of contact between the Guild and the applicant. Instructions were given as to how the work was to be carried out and what agencies could be applied to, in order to get help. But before assistance could be given, the Guild needed to know the circumstances of the case

In learning to give help which shall be of permanent value, the next great principle of the Guild has been rediscovered, i.e. the necessity of knowing the circumstances, or as we call it investigation.⁵⁰

The front pages of each casebook detain the information needed by the Guild of Help. A wide range of personal information was recorded including income, age, childrens' schools, debt and rent. There was often a problem between the Helpers and those whom the Guild wished to assist. In order to ascertain the facts of the case, the circumstances had to be fully investigated, including checking up on whether the applicant was telling the truth or not. In one case, the Helper, an unmarried woman, recorded enquiring into the neighbourhood regarding one of her cases. The neighbours of her case claimed that the woman, whom the Helper was visiting, 'drinks and leaves her children in the house on their own'.⁵¹ This naturally caused mistrust between the Helper and the applicant and did not breed a friendly atmosphere or promote the image of the Helper as one who was there as a genuine friend. The Helper often found out that an applicant had not told the truth. Those in need of help felt that their lives were invaded, their word distrusted and their circumstances investigated. And yet the Guild of Help had set out to avoid this problem. Guidelines had been circulated in order to advise the Helpers as to the best way to approach the applicant and diminish conflict.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁵¹ Bradford Guild of Help Casebook 4976.

It was suggested that the Helper acts confident and does not act with a superior or patronising attitude towards the applicant.

The practised Helper, confident in his purpose will simply say "I have heard so and so, may I come in and speak to you?" The assumption is that this is the most natural thing in the world begets a similar confidence and it will be generally found that by taking for granted the belief in the good will of the visit, even delicate questions may be discussed without a sense of trespassing.⁵²

The guide goes on to suggest that the Helpers should try to put themselves in the position of the applicant in order to ascertain how they would have reacted in the same circumstances. This however would have been quite a difficult task, for someone to be able to empathise with another whose life would have been so different from his or her own. The Guide also suggests that the Helper should try to put the applicant at ease. Methods suggested by the Guild are different for male and female Helpers. If the Helper is male, Milledge suggested that he should make jokes with the applicant and, if he smokes the Helper should ask permission before doing so. If the Helper was a woman, Milledge suggests that she should compare her children with those involved in the case.⁵³ It seems unlikely that the advice would have worked as in my opinion it does not appear to be too tactful to tell jokes and then go on to ask probing investigative questions about their personal circumstances, nor does it portray the professional image the Guild of Help were keen to present.

Milledge's advice to women also appears to be inappropriate. Many women Helpers were unmarried young women who were therefore very unlikely to have children at this time. Milledge points out the 'it is the assumption of equality and friendliness that is so essential to success,⁵⁴ and yet the casebooks provide many examples of exactly the opposite attitude. A superior or distrustful position was often assumed. In one instance, the first comment of the Helper was that the case is 'undeserving'⁵⁵, while in another, the Helper was unwilling to give advice at first because the woman was rude but she then relented when the women expressed gratitude.⁵⁶ Many other cases show similar attitudes. The first comment of many of the Helpers was that the house and or the applicants were dirty. The general assumption

⁵² Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁵³ Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁵⁴ Milledge, *Handbook*.

⁵⁵ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 2636.

was that the applicant was under suspicion if their house was dirty: This attitude could not have fostered an atmosphere of good will but rather one of suspicion. It seems clear that while the Guild had clear guidelines on what should happen, this was not always followed. We must be aware of human nature and the prejudices of the Helpers themselves. It would be unrealistic to assume that Helpers could block out their own views when assessing a case. In one case that started in 1914, the Helper commented that 'the woman would be better off at home than working'.⁵⁷ This appears to go against Guild of Help advice on ensuring that cases become self-supporting.

Once a case had been assessed the next stage would be to investigate what assistance would be most appropriate. It was the Helpers who carried this out and implemented the policies of the executive committee and in the advice given, we can see the aims and philosophy of the Guild of Help. The handbook of the Guild of Help set out three points on how to provide assistance. The first stated that help should be given in such a way that would not stop the applicant from being self-dependent and that help should not injure the self-respect of the applicant.⁵⁸ The Guild did not want applicants only to expect handouts. It was not a relief society. Many cases were given up by the Guild when it was found that they were unable to be self-dependent or they would be referred to another organisation or they may not have even been taken on in the first place.

The second point stated that the kind of help that was to be given should remove the temptation to beg or to seek help from any other agency.⁵⁹ Help offered by the Guild was to be comprehensive to avoid the need for the applicant to go elsewhere. This suggests that the Helpers were allowed a certain amount of discretion in order to deal with each applicant. The third point stated that 'material help shall be given in such forms as will be least likely to sap the self-dependence of the recipients'.⁶⁰ This would include help such as free school meals for children or material for clothes. The handbook does not say that the Helpers were forbidden to give money but it did encourage other forms of assistance. The casebooks are littered with references of the Helper providing either a small amount of money or food for the applicant. These guidelines provide us with an insight into the philosophy of the City Guild of

⁵⁶ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 4456.

⁵⁷ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no 5956.

⁵⁸ Milledge, *Handbook*, 1911.

⁵⁹ Milledge, *Handbook*, 1911.

Help. It is clear that the Guild wanted its beneficiaries to practice self-help. They wished to change the behaviour of those who sought its assistance. Those who were unable or unwilling to change their behaviour were dropped. The overall policy of the Guild of Help was acceptance of the economic causes of poverty, but the solutions put forward by the Helpers were better suited to poverty caused through personal failings.

The Helpers attempted to enforce their own values on the working-class applicants, although this was not a stated objective of the Guild. It is difficult to see how they could have done anything else. Their knowledge of poverty was more than likely to have been gained through visiting the poor or reading about poverty rather than through first hand experience. The Helpers were not immune from the prejudices of the day. The Guild of Help was a great advocate of the self-help doctrine. The advice given to the Helpers by Milledge clearly shows that the Guild of Help wanted to bring about habits of thrift and self-help.

Material assistance from private or voluntary sources must be directed to those cases which can quickly be restored to self dependence – in a word, the Guild can not and does not wish to be a mere relief society.⁶¹

The kind of help that was offered was designed to produce habits of self-help, which was one of the main goals of the Guild. However, it must be remembered that belief in self-help was not only the preserve of the middle class, many of the most enthusiastic practitioners of the doctrine were the working class. Self-help was a central pillar of the Guild of Help and those who did not show willingness or were unable to practice it often had their cases ended by the Guild of Help. The daughter of the applicant had an illegitimate daughter and although there was no outright condemnation by the Helper, Helen Lister, (daughter of Samuel Cuncliffe Lister, prominent Bradford Mill owner) the case is dropped because it became clear that the case was not only unable to practice self-help but was also unwilling to try.⁶² This case also illustrates another interesting point. That is when the Guild starts to investigate applicants it often uncovers situations unrelated to the initial problems. The reason the case started up was a problem of old age, but it ends as an infant welfare case.⁶³

⁶⁰ Milledge, *Handbook*, 1911.

⁶¹ *Help*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Nov. 1905.

⁶² Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 2436.

⁶³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 2436.

The Guild of Help placed great emphasis on moral as well as physical help. The *Bradford City Guild of Help Handbook* published in 1911 gave guidelines on how to provide moral help. The Guild emphasised that moral failing should be treated in the same way as physical or economic failing.

The man loses his work because trade is bad, but also because he is a slack workman and is therefore the first to be discharged. The woman's home is in a deplorable state because there is not enough money coming in but also because she is thriftless.

It is clear from the casebooks that Helpers made moral judgements almost every time an applicant was assessed. Applicants were not always openly condemned for their mistakes or problems but they were noted all the same and the case was viewed with suspicion. In cases such as these the Helper could be said to have a patronising or superior attitude. However this is not the case with all Helpers. Some Helpers appeared to be very genuine in their desire to alleviate the problems caused by poverty and were sympathetic individuals who did try to put themselves in the position of the applicant although others clearly did not. However, there were limitations as to what could be achieved by the Helpers. For instance a large family came to the attention of the Guild. Strong evidence of domestic violence was uncovered. The woman in the case who was the main applicant was addressed in the records with a great deal of sympathy. However when the Helpers addressed her husband they pleaded with him to change. They did not encourage the woman to take any action against her husband. There was no suggestion that domestic violence was in any way acceptable but they stressed the moral reformation of the husband rather than in giving what we would see today as practical help or advice to the woman.⁶⁴ The action taken by the Helper to plead for a reformation of character was perhaps all that could be reasonably expected. Although in a case in 1912 a woman with a violent husband has an arrest warrant taken out on the husband.⁶⁵ So it sometimes difficult to gauge what was acceptable behaviour and what was not.

The recipients of the attentions of the Guild, aware of investigation and moral scrutiny, were often disinclined to be grateful. Many families perceived the proposed help as unwarranted interference, an attitude that puzzled many of the Helpers who expected the

⁶⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 3536.

applicants to respond with gratitude and were surprised when this was not the case. Viewing the system of visiting from the point of view of those who were under the scrutiny of the Guild, it is clear that many would have resented the intrusion into their homes. There is little or no evidence uncovered in the survey of the casebooks of the Helper being asked to leave by the applicant. There is evidence that suggests that the applicant would protest with a campaign of non co-operation. Tactics used included being out when the Helper was due to call or choosing not to open the door. Other methods included not offering either any, or truthful information about themselves in order to obstruct the work of the Helper. This may appear strange that those who were in poverty were unwilling to co-operate with the organisation trying to help them but it must be remembered that many of those whom the Guild dealt with had been referred from other agencies. An applicant for free school meals or free milk may have found a Helper knocking on the door every week which may not have been a welcome intrusion.

⁶⁵ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 5576.

Analysis of Casebooks of the Bradford City Guild of Help

Response Profile

In order to fully investigate the workings of the Guild of Help, a survey has been carried out on the hand-written records of the Bradford City Guild of Help. There are approximately 5600 casebooks surviving. This study examines 250 of these books. Although this is slightly less than a five percent sample, the results do provide a snap shot of the cases dealt with by the Guild of Help, although it is not possible to generalise from the data about the population of Bradford as whole. However, despite the limitations, the casebooks are a detailed and invaluable historical source. These case books are the hand-written accounts of the Helpers, written following their visits to those in need. They start as soon as the Guild was formed. The majority of books are finished by around 1920, however, there are entries in some casebooks up until the early 1940's, although these are the exception. This survey examines mainly quantitative data. The qualitative aspects will be examined in the next chapter where the focus is on women and children.

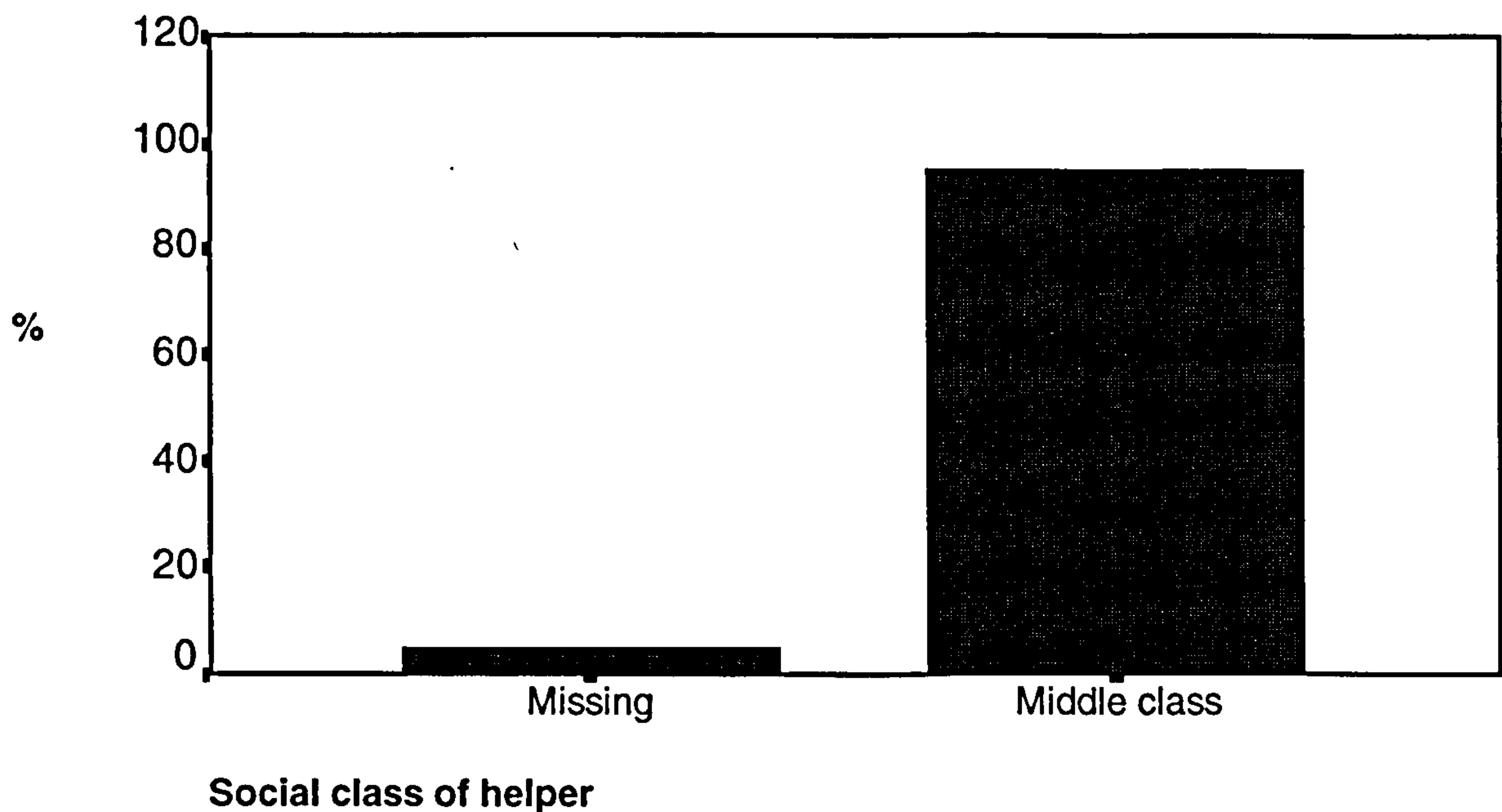
The casebooks left by the Helpers enable us to explore the work of the Guild on a daily basis. They provide evidence as to how the methods, aims and philosophy of the Guild worked in practice. A sample of one in every 20 case books was examined. The results of this survey have been collated and investigated using the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The casebooks are a record of the visits of the Helper. The majority of casebooks contain detailed information on the applicants to the Guild, including names, address, ages, occupations, wages earned, names, ages and schools attended by children. The casebooks are also a record of visits made by the Helper to the applicant. The thoughts, impressions and actions of the Helper are all recorded in the casebooks. They are a valuable historical source for a student of social history and philanthropy in Bradford.

Survey Results

The first question arises from investigating who the Helpers were? The first chart attempts to paint a picture of the social class of the Helpers, albeit rather a rough estimate based on a mixture of factors such as education and availability for visiting.

Chart 1.1 - Social Class of the Helpers of the Guild of Help



It must be remembered that the Helpers were volunteers, and were able to visit applicants in their homes at various times of the day. In order for the Helpers to do this, they would have been unable to work. They therefore had to have independent means or to be dependent upon another member of the family who could afford for them not to work. Taking this into account, it means that they were very unlikely to be members of the working class. A further indicator, if again, rather arbitrary, is the use of language and the ability to write. The casebooks show a full and complex use of language and tended to show Helpers who were well educated. Many Bradford working-class children left school early to go into the local textile trade, it does not seem likely that they would have the level of education shown by those who filled in the casebooks. That is not to say that they illiterate, however, the sophistication and range of language used suggested a good level of formal schooling. This does not mean that working-class children were always poorly educated but rather that the balance of probabilities is such that many were.

In her book on the National Council of Social Services, Margaret Brasnett stated that,

Indeed, this meeting (forming the Bradford Guild) must be regarded as a turning point in the history of social service, for it marked the end of the old order that rested on the implicit assumption that social service was good done by a favoured class to those less fortunate. Here was the first successful attempt on a large scale to enlist the support of every section and class of the community in a common endeavour to tackle the problem of poverty.⁶⁶

She argued that the Guild of Help fulfilled its aim of enlisting members from all walks of life. She regarded the Guild as a movement that attracted people from all classes. She has been backed up to some extent by Michael J Moore who, although he exhibits more caution than Brasnett and commented that

Guilds advocated the involvement of those more fortunate to relieve the distress of the poor. Solidly based in the middle class, their appeals, however, reached well into the ranks of the working class.⁶⁷

Moore does acknowledge that many members of the working class viewed the Guild with suspicion. Most members of the Independent Labour Party viewed it with at best of apathy, and at worst outright hatred. E. R. Hartley regarded it as "Guilded Help". The evidence found in this study does not support the findings of Margaret Brasnett, that the Guild was the first attempt to enlist support from every section of the community. This study certainly does not support the view that the Guild was successful in ensuring working-class participation within the Guild of Help.

In Bradford there were three prominent members of the ILP who were also members of the Guild of Help. These were Alfred Tuke Priestman, a middle-class socialist and cousin of H.B. Priestman, the Liberal leader in Bradford, Harry Smith who was district head of the Guild's C2 division and G.T. Meggison who was head of Bowling Backlane for a time. These held higher positions within the Guild of Help rather than being ordinary Helpers. All three had left the Guild of Help by 1909, Smith leaving in 1908 probably due to the conflict on the creation of a general relief fund. Brasnett also cites Fred Jowett's appearance on the Guild platform as evidence of the support of the working class for the Guild of Help. Jowett was

⁶⁶ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action*, p. 6.

criticised in the diaries of Beatrice Webb for his actions. Yet it may have been that Jowett was doing nothing more than fulfilling his role as MP for Bradford West and engaging in some electioneering. Socialists were dismissive of the Guild of Help and the ILP dissuaded their members from joining the Guild of Help. There does not seem to be any significant or long-term working class presence in the Bradford City Guild of Help. However the lack of ILP presence in the Guild does not mean that working-class people were not members of the Guild, although they are rather difficult to pinpoint within, class being somewhat difficult to ascertain in this study. The perceived lack of a working-class presence in the Bradford City Guild of Help does not mean that the working class were not engaged in charitable giving but it was likely that this was through philanthropy in general rather than organised membership of a charity. However, one charity which did have a working class following was the Cinderella Club, organised by Robert Blatchford.

A Helper was expected to spend a great deal of time working for the Guild, this tended to preclude certain groups from taking an active part. The work of a Helper demanded a large time commitment. It was expected that up to four cases would be taken on and each would be visited once a week. A record was to be kept for each case and was to be written up after every visit. The Helper was expected to attend district meetings every week and discuss their cases in order to decide on the best course of action to take. This included writing letters for the case to employers or enquiring to other organisations that may offer help to the applicant. What this illustrates is that the life of a Helper was a very full and busy one, and as explained earlier, it is likely that working-class men or women would not have had the time to take on the life of a Helper. Those members of the working class who would, perhaps have been able to spare the time would have been the wives and daughters of the highest paid working-class men. Married women, in general at this time went out to work only when their families needed it. Whether or not these women would have become involved with the Guild of Help is questionable. There is very little evidence within the casebooks to suggest that they did. Many members of the highest paid working class would also have been members of a trade union and as such could possibly have belonged to the ILP who were not

⁶⁷ Moore, *Social Work and Social Welfare*, p. 92

enamoured of the Guild of Help preferring more radical responses to poverty. This will be dealt with later in this study.

It was the Liberal elite of Bradford society who made up the members of the Guild of Help, or more precisely their wives and daughters. Women dominated the lower echelons of the Guild of Help whereas the men tended to be given positions of responsibility, reflective of society as a whole at this time. The composition of the Bradford City Guild of Help was set out in the *Help* Journal in March 1906. The four division heads in Bradford were men. Of the other forty districts, seven were unorganised and two had not decided on a district head. Of the other thirty one, thirty had men as their head and one had a woman as its head, Miss M. Wade, the daughter of David Wade the former Lord Mayor of Bradford. Of the Helpers, there were 152 men and 222 women, of whom half were single women.⁶⁸ They included many of the daughters of the Liberal elite such as Miss Helen Lister who was the Helper of case 2436 and a member of the mill owning Lister family.⁶⁹

The Guild of Help appears to have given many middle-class women their first experience of political work. Whether or not it was the actual visiting of the poor or the general experience of being involved with the Guild which produced a consciousness raising in middle-class women and an interest in the suffrage movement is debatable. It would be safe to say that the experience of being in close contact with the poor of Bradford would have opened the eyes of some middle-class women. In Bradford, Florence Moser, one of the founders of the Guild was also the driving force behind the Bradford women suffrage movement. The Guild of Help represented a gateway for middle-class women to become involved in social work. Jane Lewis points out that social work was a natural extension of the middle class domestic world and was accessible through their local community.⁷⁰ It is ironic that the increase in state welfare following the First World War may have undermined the position of women Helpers who had gained some experience of social work when it removed emphasis from voluntary action and placed it on the state.

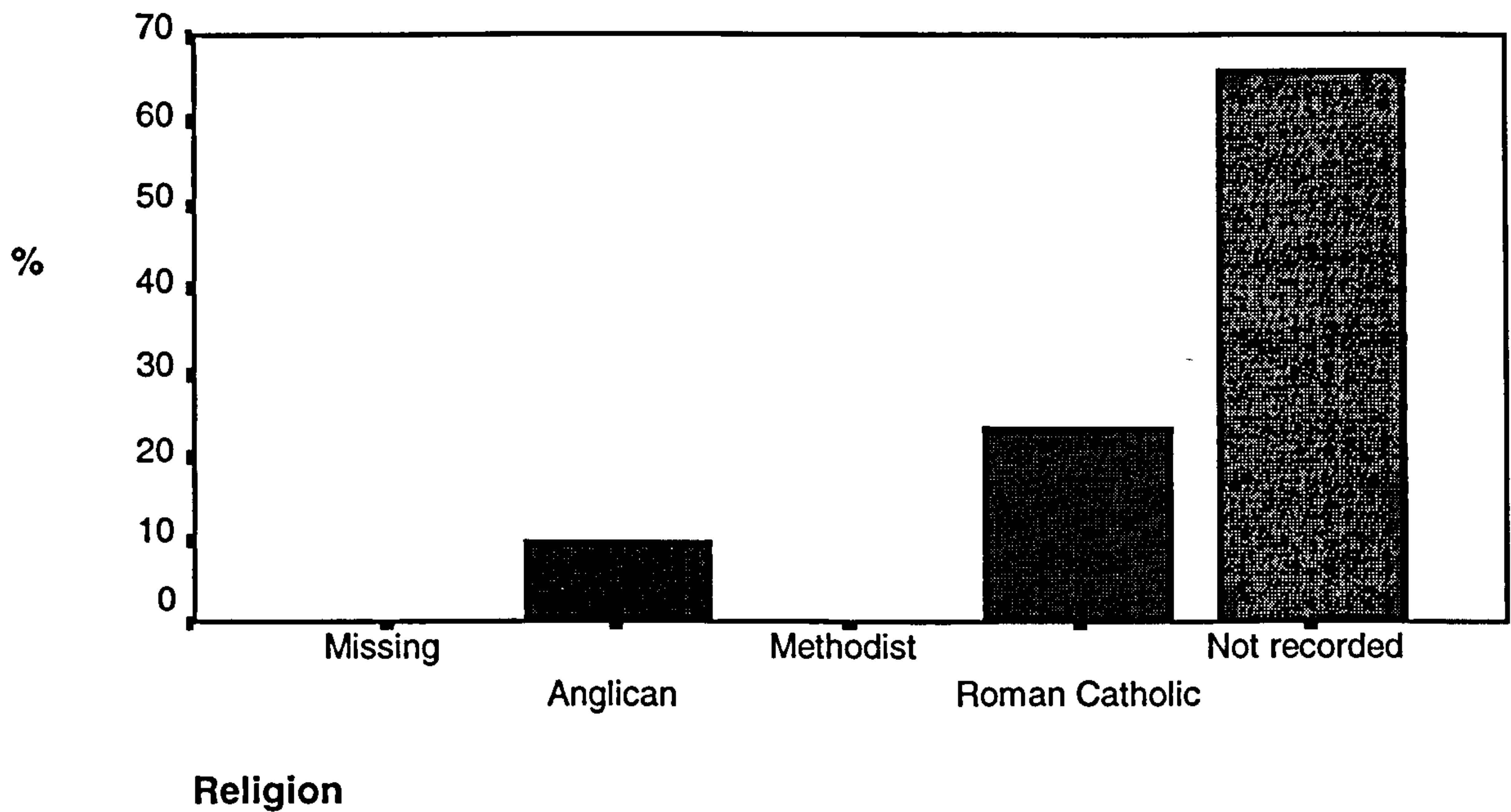
⁶⁸*Help*, Vol. 1, 6, March 1906.

⁶⁹Bradford City Guild of Help Case Book, no. 2436.

⁷⁰Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England*, (Stanford University Press, 1991).

Applicants to the Guild of Help

Chart 1.2 - Religion of Applicant to the Guild of Help

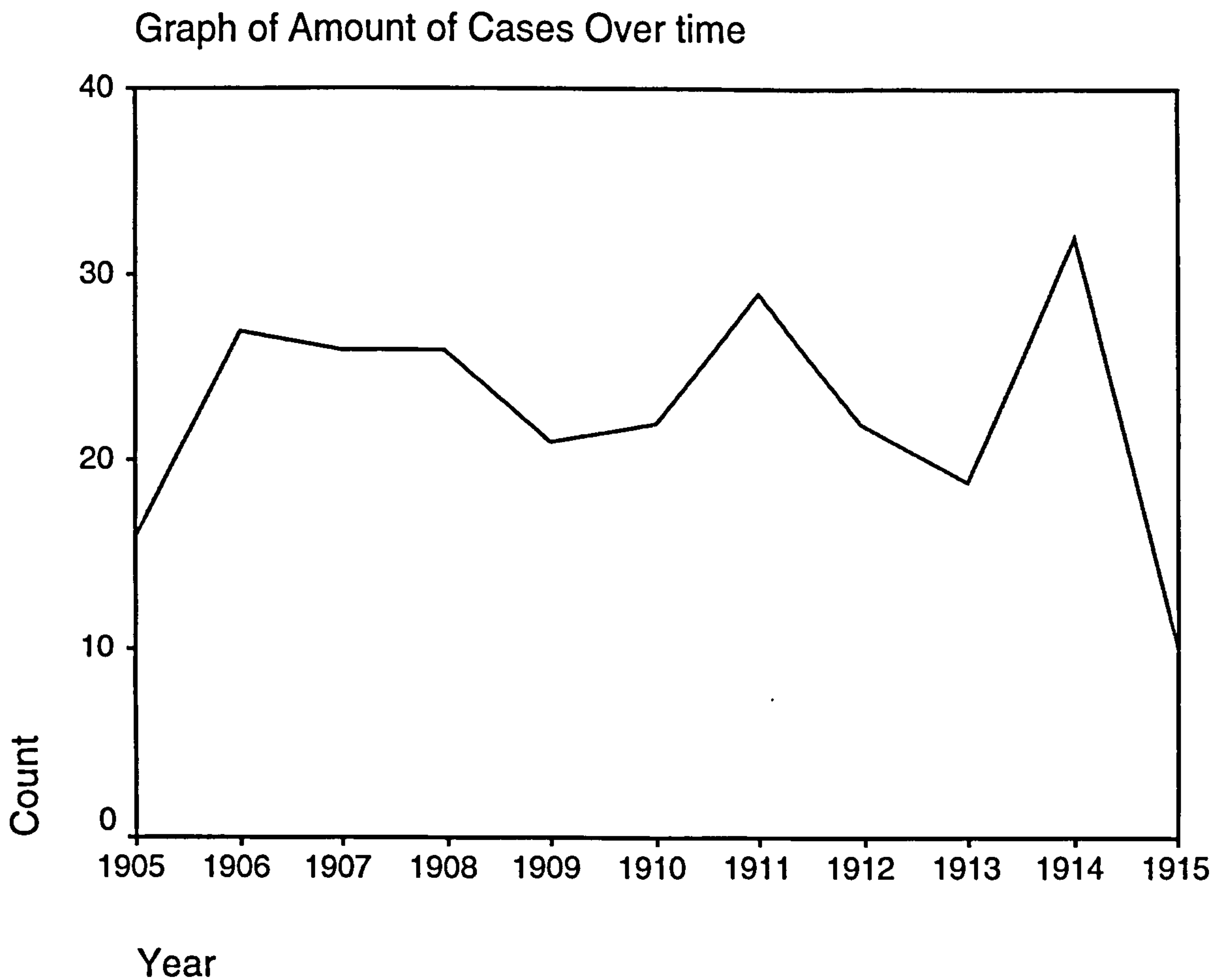


The evidence relating to religion is incomplete and therefore not easy to interpret. Quite often it is not mentioned directly in the casebooks. In order to get an idea of the religion of the applicants, the references to the children's school have been gleaned from the casebooks, which have also been scoured in order to find references to priests, vicars and churches attended which give us an idea of religion. Despite this, in most cases it is not possible to record religious affiliation. In cases where religion has been added it has been through very obvious reference. In one instance, an Irish family came under the care of the Guild and the Helper attempted to talk to the woman on the subject of Christianity and then got upset when the woman did not respond to her.⁷¹ The Helper commented that the woman would obviously not be interested in Christianity, as she was a Catholic! Despite some references, it is difficult to get much of an idea of the religion of many of the cases. But comments made by the Helper clearly show their own religious bias. The Guild tried to distance itself to some extent from the various churches but in certain cases, it was unable to prevent its Helpers from bringing their own religious faith to those in need of help. What should also be taken into account is that the Guild of Help was clearly not biased against those who were not religious.

⁷¹Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 2476.

To the Guild of help attendance at church was not proof of a deserving case. It is difficult to draw any further conclusions from this evidence other than that the Guild of Help does not seem to discriminate against applicants according to their religion. For most Helpers it has not been relevant enough to even record.

Chart 1.3 - Spread of Cases Over Time



This graph shows the number of cases in the sample and the year in which these cases first had contact with the Guild of Help. The sample of the cases of the Guild of Help were not spread evenly though the period. The peaks and troughs correspond mainly to those of the main industry in Bradford. The Guild of Help was established in 1904, the first cases being visited in 1905. The peaks were in 1906, 1911 and 1914. The peak of 1914 is perhaps explained by the large number of women left on their own at the start of world war one. The rapid fall in the number of cases after 1914 suggested that the demands of the war on the textile industry meant that more work was available and therefore less need for philanthropic help.

Causes of Poverty

Although lack of employment was the chief cause of distress in 33% of cases, illness, accident or old age complicated the matter. Vice only accounts for 15%.⁷²

In order to understand whom the Guild was helping we need to understand first, why these people were in poverty. There is no reference to vice in the tables because the term was not used at the start of any of the casebooks to describe why the cases began.

Table 1.1 – First or main cause of poverty in the survey

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	75	30
Illness / injury	86	34.5
Casual work	50	20.1
Low wages	8	3.2
Desertion	2	.8
Death	6	2.4
Old age	6	2.4
Other	15	6.0
Not recorded	1	.4

Table 1.2 – Second or additional causes of poverty in the survey

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
Illness / Injury	32	13
Casual Work	31	12.6
Low Wages	51	20.6
Desertion	3	1.2
Death	4	1.6
Old Age	16	6.5
Other	42	17.0
Not Recorded	68	27.5
Missing Variable	3	1.2

In table 1.2, the not recorded variable means that there was only one factor that caused poverty in these cases.

⁷² Journal of the Bradford City Guild of Help, Volume 1 no. 2 November 1905, first annual report edition, First Annual Report.

Chart 1.4 - Primary causes of poverty in the survey

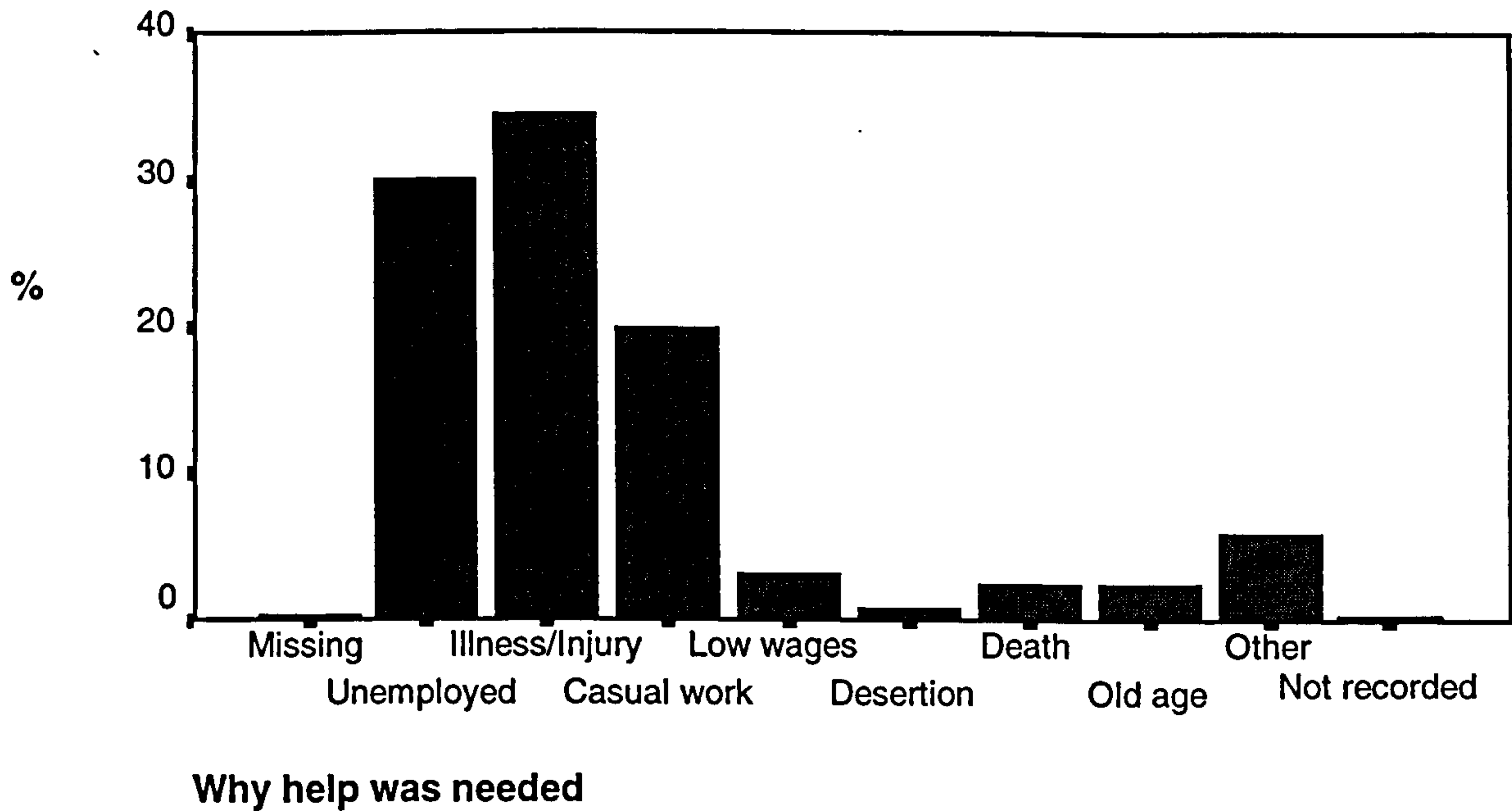
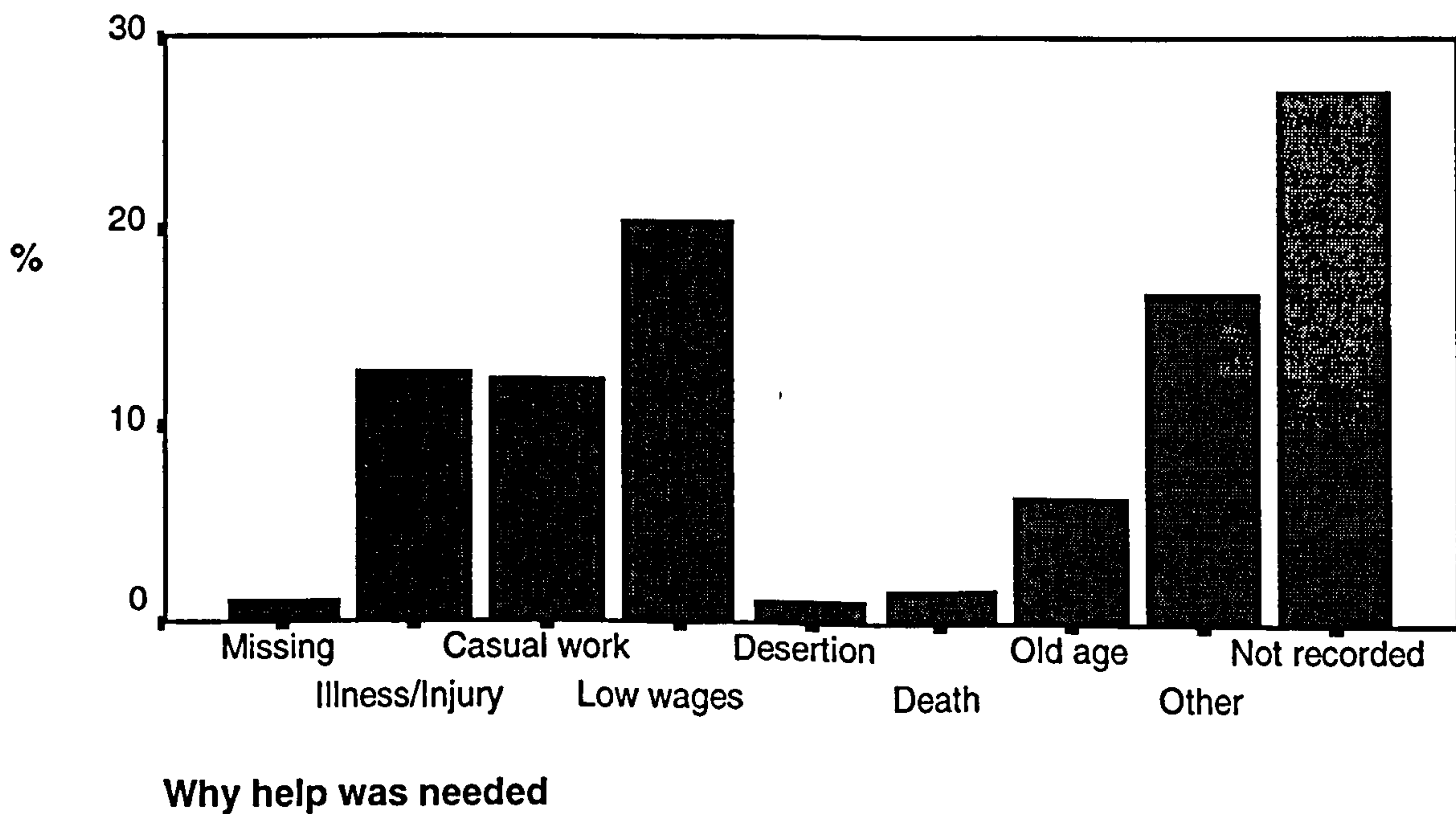


Chart 1.5 - Secondary causes of poverty in the survey



The causes of poverty shown in this chart are those recorded by the Helper when the case is opened and were recorded in their own case book. Examining two responses has allowed a

more rounded picture to be painted of what was actually causing poverty. The causes of poverty recorded by the Helpers have been used in this study to give an indication of the reasons why people were in distress. Although it is not possible to generalise to the population of Bradford, the figures still provide an insight into the causes of poverty over time.

This casebook evidence demonstrates that illness or injury was the primary cause of poverty in thirty four per cent of cases and unemployment caused poverty in thirty per cent of cases. A further important primary cause of poverty was casual work, which accounted for twenty per cent of cases. These factors are important because they give an indication of problems faced by the applicants to the Guild of Help, but they do not give a completely accurate picture of the causes of poverty. This survey was carried out on casebooks that were opened during the period 1904 - 1918. It is likely that the most important cause of poverty changes with the years. For instance when there is a poor year in the worsted and woollen textile trade, it seems more likely that the major cause of poverty during that year would be unemployment. A further limitation comes from the cases that begin during the war years; this can also distort the picture of the causes of poverty. Thirty of the 250 cases surveyed begin in 1914; this is the highest single amount of cases for any one year examined in this study. The following year sees a rapid fall to less than 10 cases that start in 1915.⁷³

In just over 27 per cent of cases, there was only one cause of poverty. That is there is no recorded second cause of poverty. In 23 of these cases the cause of distress was illness or injury and 20 were caused by unemployment.⁷⁴

In 73 per cent there is more than one cause of poverty. This has been record as primary and secondary causes of poverty. The two causes have been cross-tabulated in order to show which combinations of factors caused poverty in the greatest number of cases.⁷⁵

The combination of factors that caused the most poverty was unemployment combined with illness and injury, with thirty-one cases caused by these two factors. Other important combinations are those of illness or injury with casual work with twenty-three cases, and illness or injury and low wages with eighteen cases. Casual work combined with low

⁷³ Chart 1.3, Spread of cases over time, p. 58.

⁷⁴ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.5.

⁷⁵ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.5.

wages accounted for twenty-five cases of poverty.⁷⁶ In the survey, the term 'others' is used for any factor that did not fall into any other category. This was meant to include areas such as drink and debt. In reality, it became clear that many cases where the secondary cause of poverty was 'other' referred to pregnant women or women who had just had children. This is clearly because having a child was an expensive business. If a woman worked then her wages would obviously be stopped, as she would be unable to work for a time before and after the birth, thus reducing the income of the family. However, even if the woman was not working, the actual cost of giving birth was quite high as a midwife and sometimes even a doctor had to be paid, as did someone to help around the house if there was no family living nearby. Issues such as these will be dealt with in more detail in the later chapters that focus on responses to poverty of women and children.

Families with a new baby would sometimes come under the care of the Guild. In the north ward of Bradford, the Women Sanitary Inspectors enlisted the assistance of the Helpers to visit women who had just given birth in order to help combat infant mortality. The Guild provided the Helpers to carry out the visiting and, although this started in one ward, the scheme was spread to others. This re-emphasises the point that many of the families involved with the Guild were families with young children.

What becomes clear from examining the combinations is that the majority of problems were caused either by economic or health reasons, in effect circumstances largely beyond the control of the individual. Large-scale economic problems are not within the control of any one person and affect different trades or occupations. The Guild was not able to provide any long-term solutions to problems caused by structural or cyclical changes in the labour market. But it must be remembered that the Guild of Help did recognise this and knew that this was beyond their remit. The Guild of Help was not an organisation that tried to tackle poverty within the context of the bigger economic picture. They looked more to individuals first to help themselves but still recognising that poverty was caused by outside forces.

As shown in the survey, unemployment was one of the major causes of poverty. Now, if the unemployment of a case was due to a disagreement between the worker and the employer, a local problem, then a Helper could possibly have helped the applicant to solve

⁷⁶ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.5.

the dispute and get back on terms with their employer and maybe get their job back. However, if as described in the previous paragraph, the problem were of a cyclical or structural economic nature, the Guild would have very little influence. The problem was not local but national or international and as such was beyond the scope of the Guild. Casual work and low wages also presented the City Guild of Help with similar problems. To cope with the problems associated with unemployment and the structure of the labour market, the Guild would, perhaps have had two choices. Firstly to have agreed with the ILP and the trade unions and aimed to change the existing industrial structure in favour of the worker thus accepting that society needed to change in order to cope with these economic causes of poverty. Or a second choice would have been to fall into line with the progressive Liberal view point of increasing state intervention at the margins of society in order to move forward slowly and remove categories of need from the poor law, such as the aged poor. Many members of the Guild fell into the category of progressive Liberals but some did not. For instance Jacob Moser, one of the founders of the Guild of Help was in favour of paying for meals for hungry children out of the rates whereas H. B. Priestman another influential member of the Guild was against the proposal. This would have perhaps, held the problems of poverty at bay to a certain extent but would not have addressed the fundamental causes of unemployment. These problems were national or international, when connected to trade and as such were beyond the powers of the Bradford City Guild of Help. This is not to say that the City Guild was unconcerned about unemployment. The Guild was concerned with the effects the local community but was unable to cope with the fundamental economic causes of unemployment and their social consequences. The Guild was trying to provide a local response to a major international and national problem.

A further major cause of poverty in Guild cases was illness or injury. The Guild of Help concentrated many of its resources dealing with health problems. The health problems suffered by the applicants to the Guild ranged from industrial injury to tuberculosis. The problems of illness or injury could be to any member of the family. Quite frequently it was the children of the case who were suffering from illness or injury. For instance in one case the family wanted an artificial limb for one of their daughters⁷⁷. In another, the attention of the

⁷⁷Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 3536.

Guild was drawn by an illness of a child who is later sent to Thackley Open Air school for children.⁷⁸ Health was a priority for the Bradford City Guild of Help. Health weeks were organised to encourage the promotion of good health. The two major issues with which the Guild was concerned were tuberculosis and infant mortality. Many of the later cases of the Guild were referred with a doctor's note giving instructions on how to deal with the after affects of TB. On infant mortality, the Guild organised clinics in order to monitor the health of the infants and to give medical advice to their mothers. One such clinic was 'Babies Welcome'. Advice was given on baby care once a week. All babies were examined and weighed by the doctor and health inspectors. This clinic was a charitable affair until 1913 when it came under municipal control and changed its name to 'Infant Consultations'.⁷⁹ Health was one of the main concerns of the Guild and one which they had some limited success. The Guild was not equipped to deal with the fundamental causes of poverty related problems such as TB, poor housing, ventilation and overcrowding, but attempted to alleviate the symptoms and help with convalescence. Success with health problems came mainly with children. The problems of children, infant and maternal welfare will be examined in more detail in a later chapter. The economic causes of poverty were beyond the Guild of Help and the serious causes of ill health, environmental conditions, were also beyond the means of the Guild.

One other causal factor in poverty was described by the Guild as vice. This referred to a wide range of behaviours including drink, gambling or debt. There is little hard evidence to ascertain the amount of poverty dealt with by the Guild than was caused by drink. The Guild's own Journal asserted that vice only accounted for 15 per cent of cases.⁸⁰ One area where it is easier to gain details concerning vice is on the question of debt. Most cases had no debt at all and yet some cases had massive debts, up to twenty or thirty pounds. In cases of large debt the City Guild were unable to help the case. Those whose debt added to their poverty were regarded by the Guild as being in poverty due to vice and as such were classed as undeserving. However there was no evidence as to cases came to be in debt.

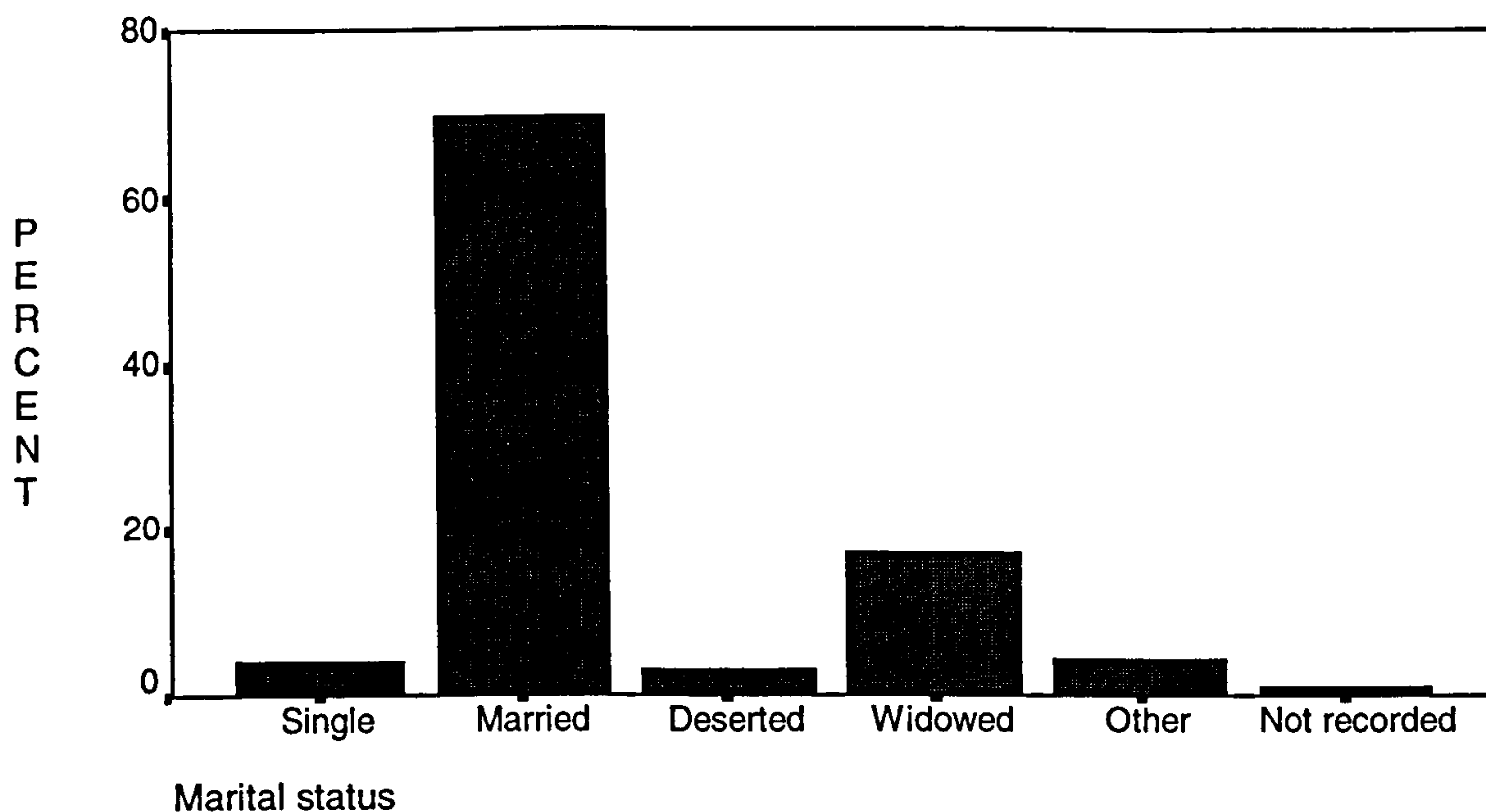
⁷⁸ Bradford City Guild of Help Case Book, no. 3516.

⁷⁹ *Bradford Pioneer*, February 7th 1913.

⁸⁰ *Help*, Vol. 1 No. 2, November 1905.

Who did the Bradford City Guild of Help Try to Assist?

Chart 1.6 - Marital Status of cases of the Guild of Help



The heads of the household consisted as to 52% of married persons, 8% single, 7% separated or divorced and 33% widows.⁸¹

Over seventy per cent of cases in the survey were married couples. The results suggest a number of possibilities. One possibility is that more people were married than single therefore the figure is bound to be higher as it reflects the number of married couples within the population. Another is taking account of Rowntrees' poverty cycle that married couples with children are likely to hit a period of poverty and therefore come to the attention of those attempting to relieve poverty. A further observation could be that married couples, in particular young married couples, were better able to practice self-help than those who were in poverty caused by old age.

The life of a labourer is marked by five alternating periods of want and comparative plenty. During early childhood, unless his father is a skilled worker, he probably will be in poverty; this will last until he, or some of his brothers and sisters, begins to earn money and augment their father's wage sufficiently to raise the family above the poverty line. Then

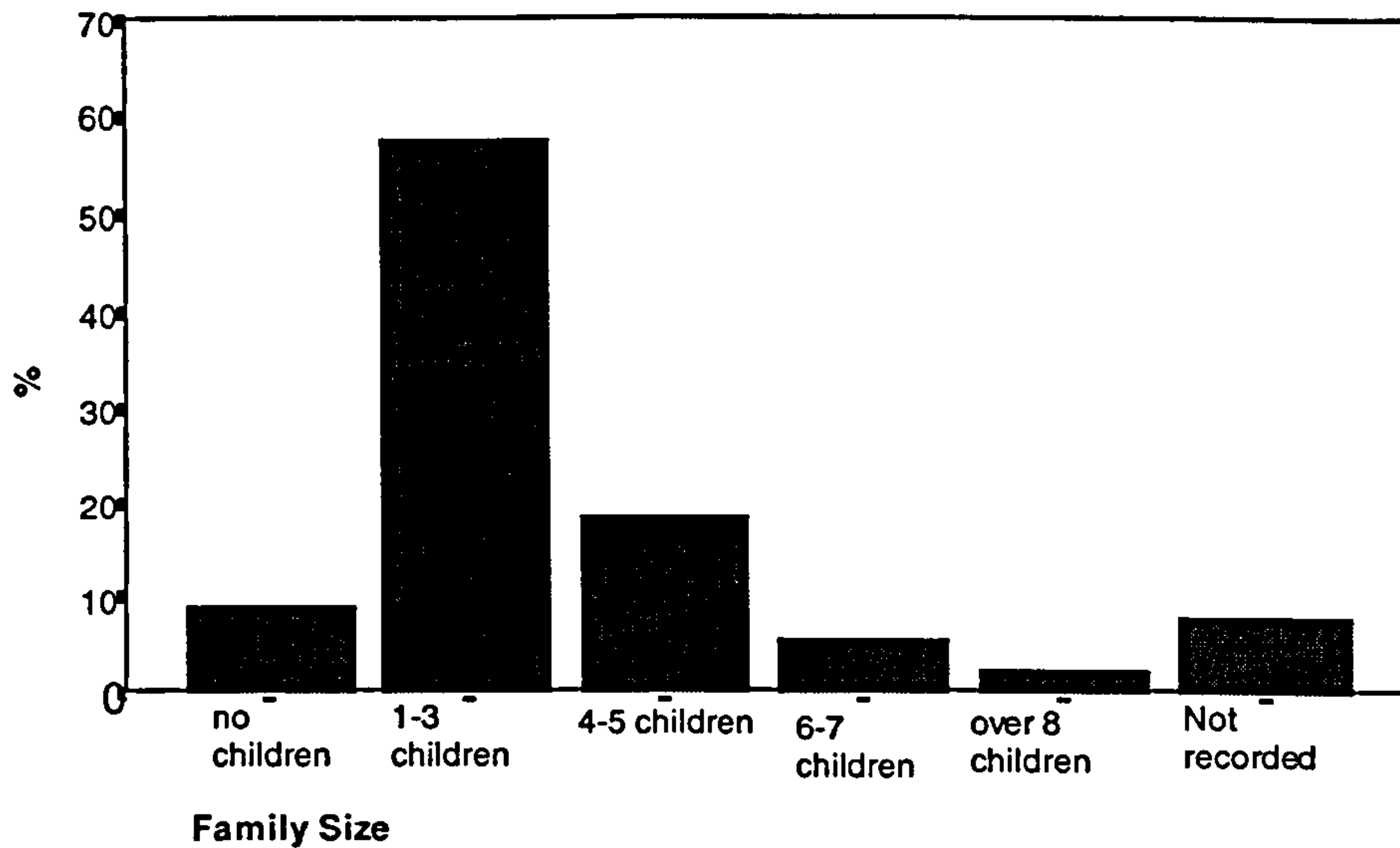
⁸¹ Ibid.

follows the period during which he is earning money and living under his parents' roof; for some proportion of the period he will be earning more money than is required for lodging, food and clothes. This is his chance to save. If he has saved enough to pay for furnishing a cottage, this period of comparative prosperity may continue after marriage until he has two or three children, when poverty will again overtake him. This period of poverty will last perhaps ten years, i.e. until the first child is fourteen years old and begins to earn wages; but if there are more than three children it may last longer. While the children are earning, and before they leave the home to marry, the man enjoys another period of prosperity, however, only to sink back into poverty when his children have married and left him and he himself is too old to work, for his income has never permitted his saving enough for him and his wife to live upon for more than a very short time.⁸²

The quote from Rowntree illustrates the life of a working-class labourer. This cycle can perhaps be seen in the cases of the Guild of Help. Those most likely to be under the care of the Guild being married couples, with children and those who had some misfortune such as to be widowed.

⁸² Rowntree, *Poverty*.

Chart 1.7 - Average family size of cases assisted by the Guild of Help



The great majority of cases in the survey had between one and three children. It is highly likely that the majority of those married couples were those with young children. As most children earned nothing it suggests that most of the children involved with the Guild of Help were not old enough to work. The ages of children have not been collated in this survey, as their recording in the casebooks is not consistent as some Helpers did not record the ages of children.

There are relatively few applicants with very large families. Most cases have either one to three children and or four to five children. There are very few cases with very large families, that could suggest that family size was not a major factor as a cause of poverty, however, this is unlikely to be the case given that the more children in a family, the more thinly the earning would be spread. About fifteen cases had between six and seven children and only five cases had eight or more children. A 'typical' Guild family appears to be a married couple with between one and three children.

Chart 1.8 - Average Earnings of Applicants

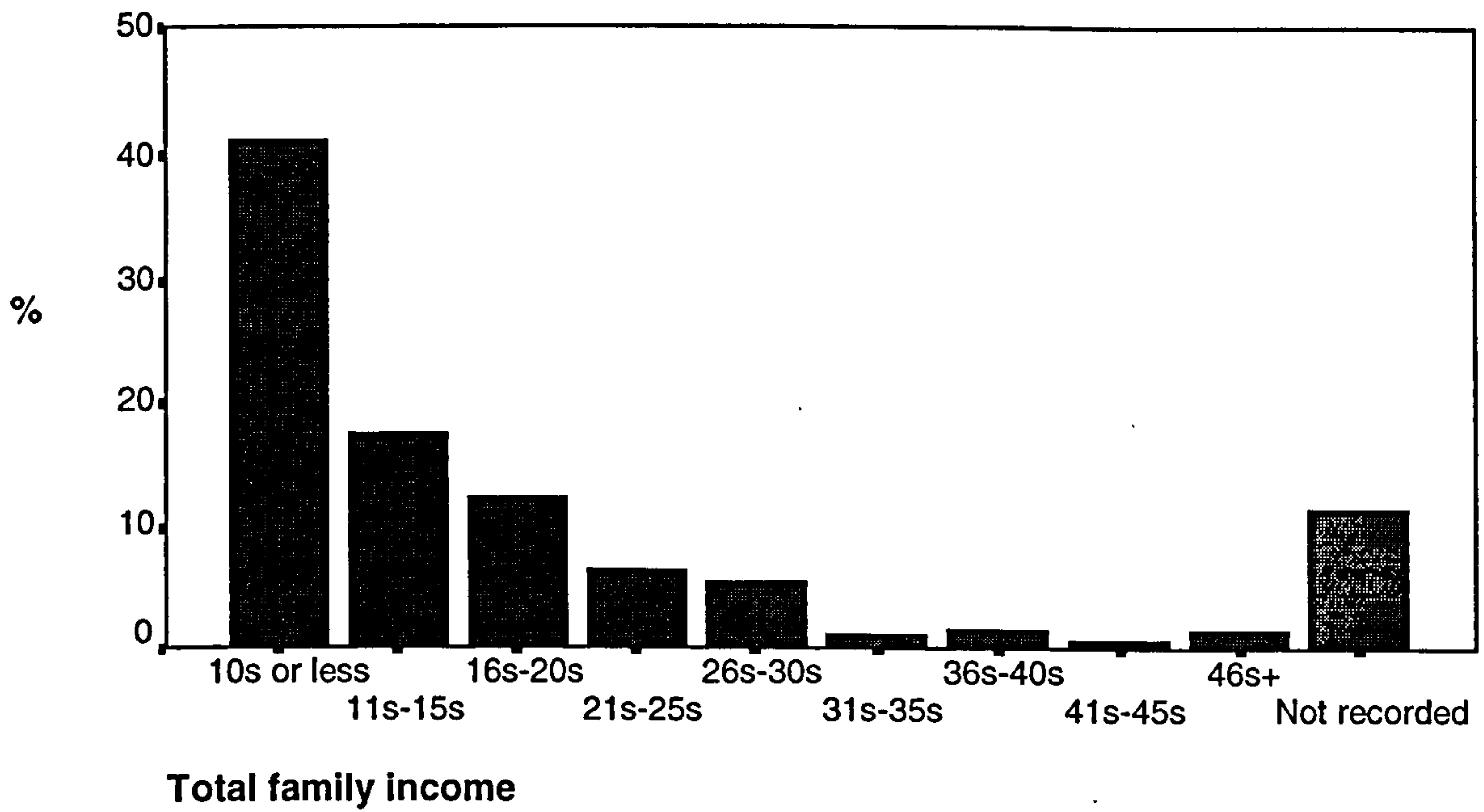


Table 1.3 - Family Income

Amount Earned	Frequency	Percentage
10s or less	103	41.2
11s-15s	44	17.6
16s-20s	31	12.4
21s-25s	16	6.4
26s-30s	14	5.6
31s-35s	3	1.2
36s-40s	4	1.6
41s-45s	2	.8
46s+	4	1.6
Not recorded	29	11.6

Laybourn has suggested that the Guild was not interested in the destitute, especially where there is no capacity to be self supporting and this has been borne out by this study.⁸³ The income of a family is an important measure of family circumstances but can be a somewhat unreliable one. The income level refers to the amount recorded the week the case commenced. This survey clearly shows that forty one per cent of cases had an income of less than ten shillings when first referred. At first glance this possibly suggests that the Guild were helping those with very low incomes. Yet this was not necessarily the case. The Guild wished to help those who had the potential to be able to help themselves as they wanted to engender a culture of self-help. The approximate income at the start of a case was to some extent not a matter of great importance to the Guild of Help. What was paramount was the potential of the case to be self-supporting. In each casebook there is much evidence of income fluctuations throughout the duration of the case. An applicant may have only had ten shillings during the first week of investigation, but the following week it was quite possible that an income of twenty shillings or greater may have been attained. This was particularly true of those who were in poverty caused by casual work or illness. With casual work, wages were unpredictable and with illness or injury, recovery could be just around the corner. Because of this, the measure of income at the start of the case is not an accurate reflection of the status of the case. Those who were genuinely destitute were usually not the married couples who made up the majority of the cases of the City Guild of Help but the widows and the elderly whose inability to practice self-help left them in a precarious position. Laybourn's assertion that the City Guild was not helping those on very low incomes is largely true. It is clear that many of the cases were referred to the Guild when their circumstances were at the worst for the applicant and improvement in the situation of the case often happened week by week.

For the City Guild of Help, the ability for an applicant to become self-supporting was more important than the income of a case. The hypothesis that the Guild were not dealing with the worst cases of poverty is further emphasised by the fact that some of the poorest districts for instance Bowling Back Lane, remained largely unorganised during the period and consistently found it difficult to attract Helpers. The Bradford City Guild of Help had a somewhat selective approach to its casework, which will be seen later in this chapter.

⁸³ Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, p. 38.

Widows and the elderly were more likely to have a lower income than other groups and were also less able to practice self-help.⁸⁴ Forty-three of the cases were widows and of these cases seventeen had an income of below ten shillings per week and ten had an income of between eleven and fifteen shillings per week. Widows, largely women, needed to work in order to support themselves and their families. Of those cases in the survey who were widowed 20 out of a possible 24 were women.⁸⁵ The work available to women in this situation was usually low-paid, low-skilled, such as washing or cleaning. Those who found work in the textile mills were usually better off financially as they were paid more than those occupied with washing but they were paid less than men in the same jobs and the work was full-time, usually casual and therefore childcare had to be paid for long hours and there was little job security. They were perhaps the most vulnerable of the cases of the Guild. A married couple would have more option. If a man was out of work it could be possible for his wife to work in order to ensure the family income. A widow with children would also have to pay for childcare, a further disadvantage, unless home work could be found. This was usually the worst paid work. Of those who were married, sixty-nine had an income of ten shillings or less whereas seventy-four had an income of between eleven shillings and thirty shillings.⁸⁶ Yet it must be re-emphasised that although a great many of married couples had a low income at the start of the case, their income did fluctuate throughout the case and too much emphasis should not be attached to income at the start of the case.

⁸⁴ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.1.

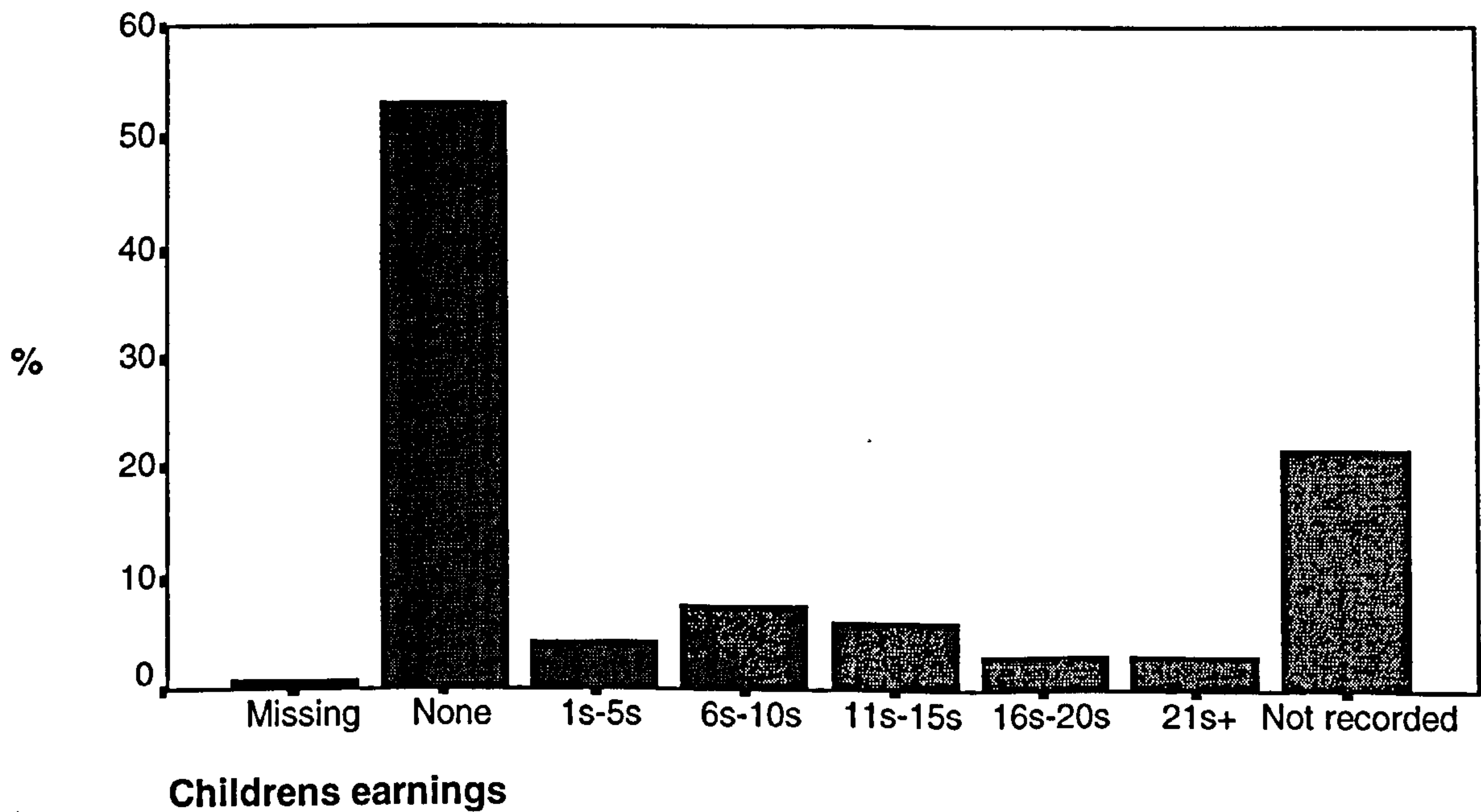
⁸⁵ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.4.

⁸⁶ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.1.

Table 1.4 - Children's Earnings

Amount Earned	Frequency	Percentage
None	133	53.2
1s-5s	11	4.4
6s-10s	19	7.6
11s-15s	15	6.0
16s-20s	8	3.2
21s+	8	3.2
Not Recorded	54	21.6
Missing	2	.8

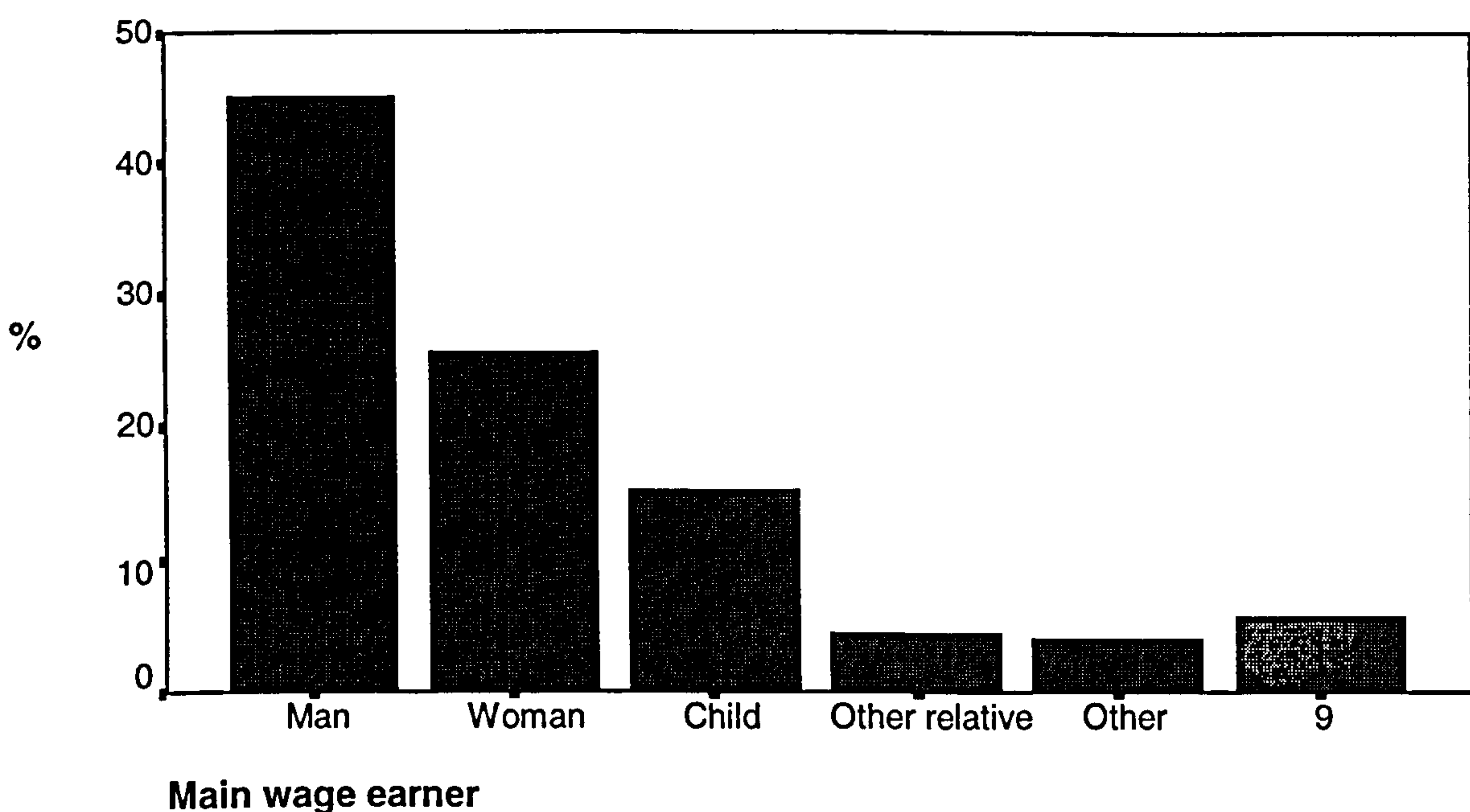
Chart 1.9 - Children's earnings



Of those children who were earning, most earned between six shillings and fifteen shillings. Some of the wage earners were approaching the round about a pound a week mark for wages, which were not the poorest in Bradford but on the poverty line nonetheless. There

were cases where the main wage earner in the family was the child or the children.⁸⁷ This situation occurred in families where a couple of working teenagers were in the house and were supporting the family. In cases where the child or children were the main family wage earners, most earned less than 15 shillings. However there were two cases where the child or children were earning over 41s per week and one case where earnings were above 46 shillings.

Chart 1.10 - Main Wage Earner in Families dealt with by the Guild



In order to examine the income of the case in more detail, the main wage earner has been assessed. The majority of wage earners, around forty-five per cent, were men. However, a significant minority of all cases, almost twenty-five per cent, had a female main wage earner. Of those who were married, over one third had a woman as the main wage earner. (See Appendix 1, Cross Tab 4.) This in itself is not significant, as industrial Bradford had always had a high proportion of women workers in the textile industry. Married women did not work all the time, only when their families were in need. The level of wages earned by women were less than those earned by men. (See Appendix 1, Cross Tab 3.) Of those 103 cases that had an income of less than ten shillings, thirty-four of those cases had a female

⁸⁷ Appendix 1, cross tab 1.4.

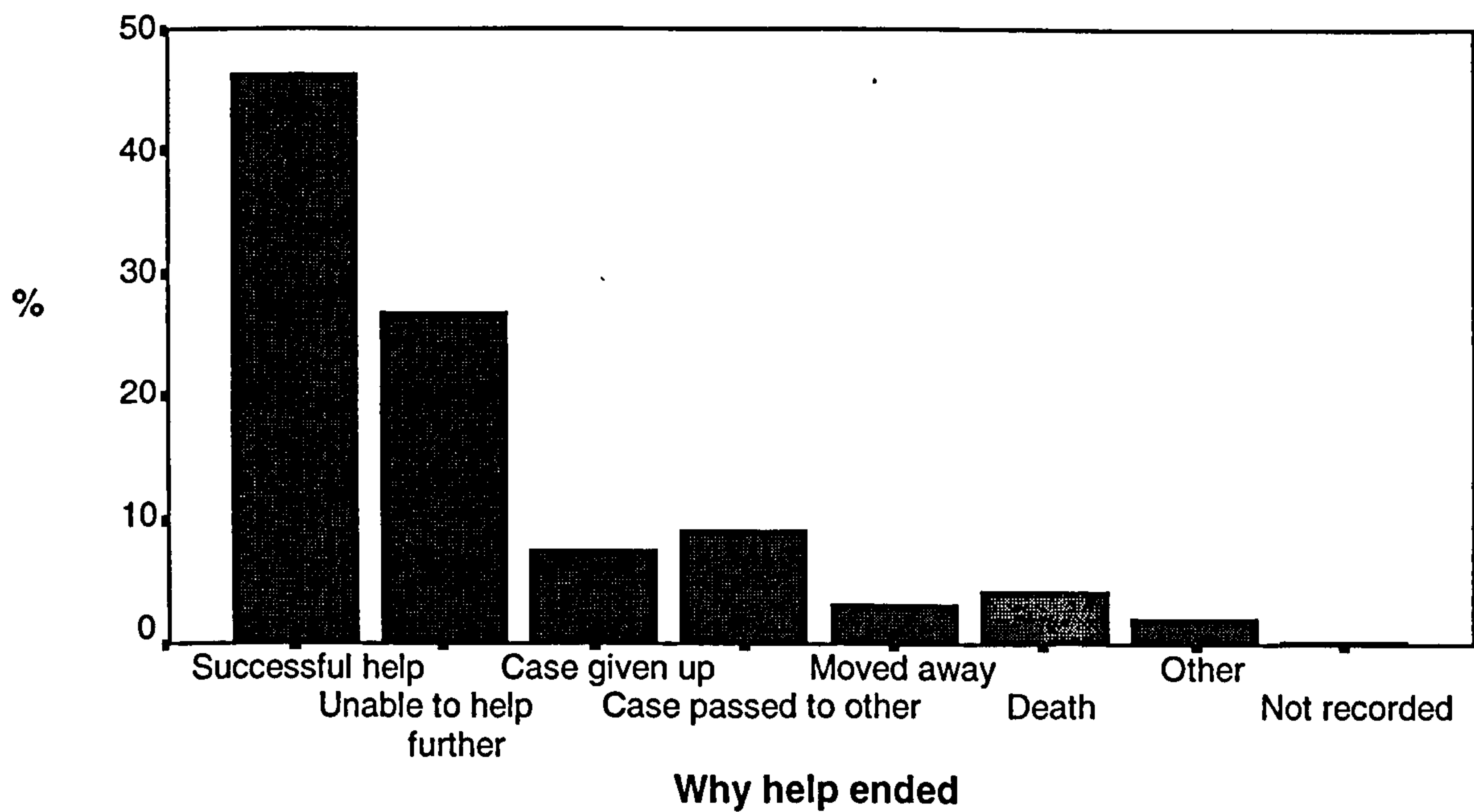
wage earner and thirty-nine had male wage earners. In the income bracket sixteen shillings to twenty shillings per week, eighteen of the wage earners were men whereas five of the wage earners were women, and between twenty-six shillings to thirty shillings, eleven of the main wage earners were men and only one was a woman. It was clear that women earned less than men.

The other categories in this section are children; other relatives and other people. When the other relative is the main wage earner it usually refers to a parent whom the applicant would be living with at the time. The category 'other' refers to a member of the household who was not a relative. This would generally be a lodger who paid rent and board to the applicant. A lodger would only usually be the main wage earner when the applicant was elderly and unable to work. The final category dealt with was children. Where a child is recorded as being the main wage earner this was usually due to either a child being over fifteen, still living at home and without any children of their own, or where two or more children are working and their combined income makes them the main wage earner.

Why Was Help Stopped?

In order to gain a further insight, the reasons given by the Guild as to why the case was closed have been collated in order to ascertain how many cases ended in successful help.

Chart 1.11 - Reasons Given By the Guild of Help for Ending a Case



The term “successful help” has been used here in the same way as it was used by the Guild. In short, it represents the Guild’s own measure of success. Almost fifty per cent of cases were classed by the Guild as being helped successfully. Of those applicants whose poverty was as a result of unemployment, thirty-one were helped successfully, according to the standards set by the Guild. In 26 cases where poverty was caused by unemployment the Guild was unable to help the case any further, three unemployment cases were given up and nine were passed to another organisation. These results seem to indicate that a lot of unemployment was solved by the Guild, but that was not necessarily the case. The Bradford Guild of Help had different criteria for classifying a case as being helped successfully. The impression given by using the phrase successful help was that those who were unemployed were found a job. Assistance was given to the unemployed in many different

forms. For instance free school meals were often given to children, or the wives of unemployed men would be encouraged to go out to work. Sometimes cases were classed as successful help without giving any real indication of why they were successful. For instance, one applicant was unemployed and was placed on test work. The Guild seems to regard this case as successful because they taught the woman to cook. There was no suggestion that the man got proper work.⁸⁸ Of course there were some cases where the Helper made a conscious effort to find work for their case. For instance, a Helper clearly stated that the case would not be given up until the man was found a job. Within three months the man was found work.⁸⁹ It is not possible to identify how many other cases were found jobs in this way.

The terms used by the Bradford City Guild of Help in order to close their cases include stating that they were unable to help a case any further or stating that the case was to be given up. This was used to distinguish those whom the Guild felt were guilty of some vice and those whom they could not help. A case would be 'given up' when it became clear that the applicant was not responding to help or was actively refusing to co-operate with the Guild of Help. For instance in one case the woman is regarded by the Helper as being "worthless drunken and blasphemous" and because of this the case is given up.⁹⁰ In effect those who have their cases given up were usually those regarded by the Guild of Help as being 'undeserving poor'.

Those cases that were described by the Guild as being "unable to help" were often those, which although in need of help, were unable to practice self-help or become self-supporting. In one case, a mixture of unemployment of the main wage earner and illness of his wife caused poverty. The children were given free school meals but it was clear that the man was not able to find work and that the woman was unable, because of illness to work and so the case is closed and the Guild regards itself as being unable to help any further.⁹¹ Another case was also closed as being unable to help. The main applicant was a widow whose sixteen-year-old daughter had a one-month-old baby. Although the Helper in this case does not make any active moral judgements on the girl, it was clear that they were unlikely to

⁸⁸Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 3596.

⁸⁹Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 4136.

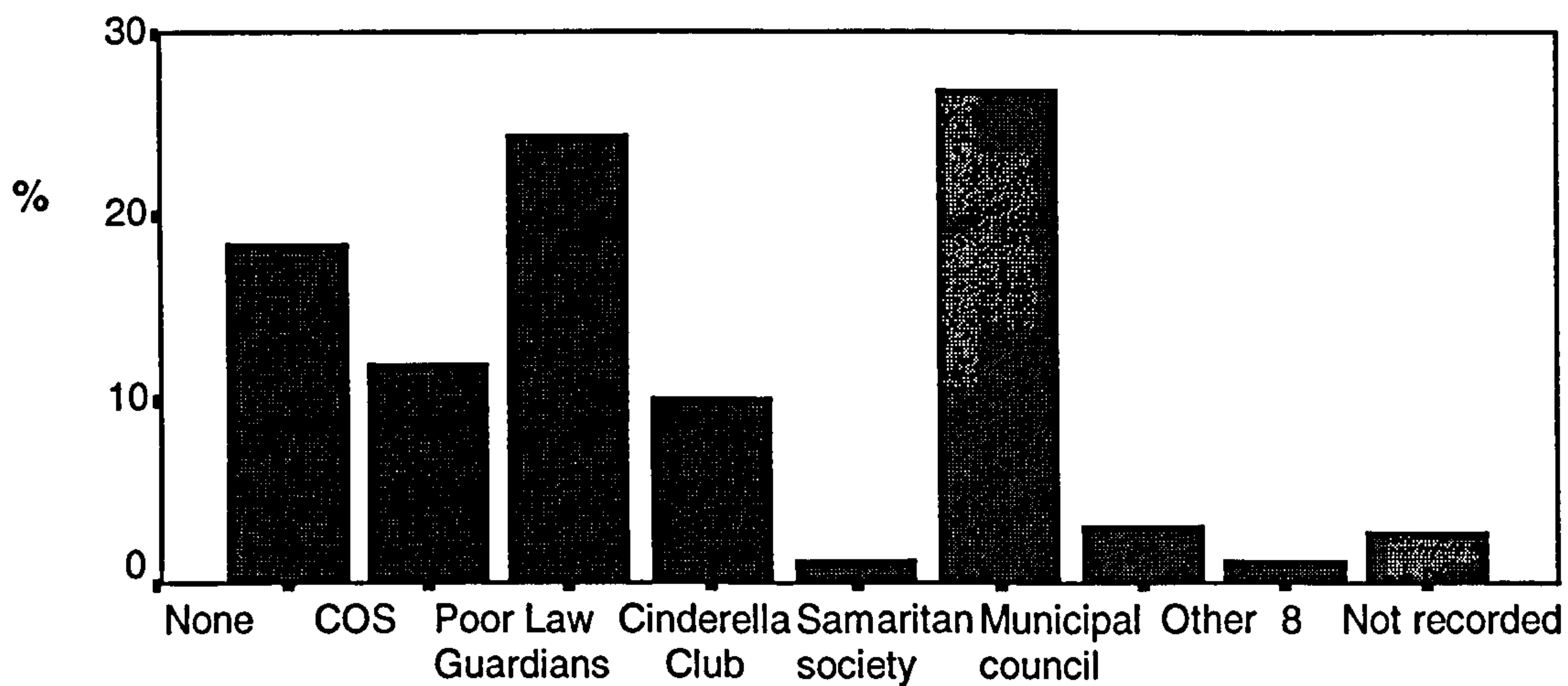
⁹⁰Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 4576.

⁹¹Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 4196.

become self supporting and the case was ended as the Guild were unable to help any further.⁹²

Further investigation into the cases show that thirty-nine of those primarily caused by illness or injury ended in successful help, as defined by the Guild, whereas twenty-four cases were described being unable to help. This gives strength to the argument that the Guild was better at dealing with cases relating to health than economy. But, it must be recognised that the Guilds' ability to deal with issues of illness and injury also depended on the types of illness that caused poverty.

Chart 1.12 - Organisation where cases were referred to by the Guild of Help



Association with other organisations

In order to further scrutinise the practice of the Guild of Help; the other organisations associated with its cases have been examined. This is to investigate further, the policy of the Guild in providing help to a select group of cases, those who had the potential to practice self help. A wide variety of cases were referred to other organisations, as the Guild acted in effect, as an agency, putting clients in touch with the most appropriate organisation to relieve their particular distress. As chart 1.12 shows clearly, cases were referred to a wide variety of sources, the most popular being the Municipal Council and the Poor Law Guardians. Less

⁹²Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook, no. 4256.

than 20 percent of cases were not referred to any other organisation. This could mean that the Helpers dealt with these cases themselves or that they were cases of unsuccessful help. The Helpers were given a list of organisations that provided relief for those in need. The organisations detailed in the chart were those most often used by the Guild. What the chart does not illustrate is the progression away from reliance on private charity as the first source of help to acceptance of municipal welfare. The diagram, present on every casebook that illustrated the philosophy of the Guild, showed that municipal or state forces should only be used when all other sources of relief had been tapped.⁹³ In practice, the municipal council was often the first port of call for the Helper. With the progression of time the Guild of Help became more likely to refer cases to public bodies than it had been previously. At the start the Guild advocated charity as the best remedy to poverty. This is not surprising when it is remembered that amongst its members it counted H.B. Priestman and F.H. Bentham, the leader of the Liberals in Bradford and unsympathetic Chairman of the Board of Guardians.

In order to further investigate the success of the Guild we need to assess which organisations dealt with which particular cause of distress. To clarify this point, for instance where did the Guild most often refer cases of unemployment? The primary causes of poverty have been examined in relation to the main organisation associated with the case. (See Appendix 1, cross tab 7.) Of those cases whose poverty was caused primarily by unemployment, twenty cases were not associated with any other organisation, nineteen were associated with the Poor Law, thirteen were associated with the municipal council and thirteen were associated with the Bradford Charity Organisation Society. Those cases referred to the Bradford C.O.S. were before 1910, suggesting that the little influence that the C.O.S. exercised in Bradford had waned and was ineffective by 1910. It is clear that most of the cases of unemployment were either referred to no other organisations or to public bodies. This implies that unemployment could not easily be dealt with by private charity and the applicant was more likely to be referred to a public body. Most of those cases that were primarily caused by illness or injury were also mainly referred to public bodies. Eighteen health cases were not referred to any organisation; twenty-three were referred to the Poor Law and twenty-two to the municipal council. Many of the cases caused by illness or injury

⁹³ Appendix 1 Chart 1.1.

ended in successful help. As many cases of illness and injury were referred to the Poor Law, it would seem sensible to assume that it was the hospitals and sanatoriums run by the Poor Law that these cases went to. The applicant would either recover or die, either way the Guild considered that it had helped successfully!

Average length of time for a case

The mean length of time a case would run was 56.04 months, between four to five years. The length of time a case was open ranged from one to 432 months. What these figures illustrate is that in many cases, the Guild was not providing a short-term response to poverty. One of the peculiar features of the Guild of Help was that it continued to visit many cases long after they became able to support themselves financially. The founders' vision of the Guild was of a society of friends, providing advice and assistance for those in need. The Helpers continued to visit many cases, even just once or twice a year to let them know that if they needed any assistance then the guild was there for them. Many cases dragged on for years. In certain circumstances a case might be closed only to open years later, even up to twenty or thirty years later. It would be inaccurate to record these cases as being helped by the Guild for many years as in most cases there are no visits in the intervening years. The latest recorded case ends in 1942.

The average period of help was almost five years, giving support to the view that the Guild of Help continued to visit after the original reasons for the case opening was no longer there. The minimum period of help was one month and this was in a case where the applicant would not accept any help at all and the case was immediately closed.

Where did the applicants live?

It has been of great importance to examine the spread of cases throughout Bradford in order to understand whether the Guild was working within the poorest communities.⁹⁴ Bradford was divided into four districts based on those used by the Poor Law, these are referred to by the letters A, B, C and D. The divisions were then subdivided into districts, which are referred to by numbers. From the table it is easy to see that the cases were spread throughout Bradford. The largest number of cases recorded in this survey was in the White

⁹⁴Appendix 1, Table app1.1.

Abbey district. This area was divided into three separate districts, B1, 2, 3. In total twenty-one of the two hundred and fifty cases came from White Abbey. Girlington (B7) had eighteen cases and Manningham (B4) had eleven cases. What is perhaps surprising is that there were not more cases recorded for these areas, particularly White Abbey, which was a very poor district. Also significant is that Bowling Backlane, another very poor district had very few cases. The Guild found it very difficult to recruit and keep Helpers for these districts. *Help*, the journal of the City Guild is littered with appeals for Helpers in these poor districts. When volunteers were found for these areas it was discovered that the problems of poverty and unemployment were so vast that there was little that could be done.

CONCLUSIONS

The creation of the Guild of Help in Bradford was an attempt to make philanthropy more effective and sympathetic than it had been during the nineteenth century.⁹⁵ The Guild wanted to provide the poor with a friend in order to help with their distress and to provide a local based community effort to deal with the problems caused by poverty. Connected to the civic consciousness movement, the Guild desired to enrol citizens of all classes in the fight against poverty. The Guild tried to set a professional approach to philanthropy and advocated social casework and investigation to deal with poverty. Co-ordination of relief amongst both voluntary bodies and the state was a high priority for the Bradford City Guild. The Guild wished to be an effective community response to the problems of the Edwardian Age.

The Bradford City Guild of Help was primarily a Liberal organisation, mostly a progressive, if not New Liberal organisation, although the distinction is fine. They were willing to accept small-scale social change in order to bolster their own position and remove the threat of socialism. The members of the Guild believed that poverty and all its incumbent problems could be solved without recourse to major social change. The Guild recognised that the poverty of the early twentieth century could not continue unchecked yet it was feared that if nothing was done to ease poverty, then the more radical solutions offered by the socialists would be advocated. Because of this, the Guild could be said to have been reacting in a small way to the agenda of the socialists, in particular, the Independent Labour Party.

The Guild of Help was a moralistic society who wished to inculcate a response of gratitude in the recipients of its assistance. The Helpers often condemned the moral character of those whom they were trying to help for reasons such as a dirty house. Some Helpers adopted a patronising and condescending attitude to their cases and were often indifferent to their plight. The Guild distrusted those they were supposed to help. Rather than being a friend to the poor, the Helpers were sometimes no more than an unwelcome interference to be avoided. The Guild failed to be a truly civic organisation as it failed to engage all members of the community in its mission. The Guild failed the very poor because they were unable to cope with the long-term economic causes of poverty.

⁹⁵Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, p. 165.

There was an element of social control to the Guild of Help, however this is not so obvious as in other activities at this time, such as in leisure. The Guild did wish to ensure that all its cases became self-supporting and this would have involved a change in behaviour for some. However if cases were unable or unwilling to do this, then the Guild would not pursue the matter further and would end the contact between themselves and the case. The Guild of Help was working; not with the destitute, aiming to convert them to self help, but with certain categories of the poor who were better placed to practice self help. They worked at the margins of poverty in Bradford.

This is not to say that nothing positive came out of the Bradford City Guild of Help. The Guild provided an opening for middle-class women in social work. The Guild of Help allowed women a participatory role in society and it seems ironic that this role was taken from them as the influence of the state increased.

The remit of the Guild of Help changed a great deal during the World War One. The Guild dealt with many cases of hardship of women who had not received any money from the government, which they were entitled to as their husbands had joined up. The First World War revealed the limitations of the Guild of Help. The Guild became subservient to the state during world war one as it was forced to co-operate to a greater extent than could ever have been foreseen. Although many cases receive help up until the early 1940's, the Guild effectively disappears during the early 1920's after becoming one of the major groups to form the National Council of Social Services in 1919.

The Guild of Help was to some extent a failure. That is not to judge its work through that convenient device, hindsight but it did not even fulfil the aims it set itself. Firstly, it was not an effective community response to poverty. There is little evidence that the Guild of Help engaged all members of society to help the poor and the movement remained a largely middle-class organisation. The Guild worked at the margins of poverty and many poor areas in Bradford remained out of their reach. They were a local-based organisation and were unable to tackle the problems of poverty associated with national and international economics; cyclical and structural economic unemployment was beyond the Guild. For the Guild of Help, the ability for cases to become self-supporting was more important than the depth of poverty a case suffered. The solutions offered by the Guild of Help were aimed

towards poverty caused through individually specific problems rather than large-scale economic causes. The Guild was a moralistic agency that looked to bring about reformation of its cases and ensure that they were grateful for its help. In this we can see parallels with the old philanthropy. However the Guild of Help provided a halfway house between state and charity and made state welfare more palatable to many members of the middle class. Although it cannot be seen as a step on the road to the welfare state, it did pave the way for more acceptance of state intervention to alleviate poverty.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHILANTHROPIC RESPONSES TO THE POVERTY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN - THE BRADFORD CITY GUILD OF HELP

The main response to poverty by the philanthropic community in Bradford was the creation of the Bradford City Guild of Help. Women and children were two groups who felt the brunt of much poverty and were often the focus of attention of social investigators and charitable organisations including the Guild of Help. The previous chapter focused on the response of the Guild to poverty in general whereas this chapter takes a more in-depth look at what the Guild of Help did to respond to the poverty women and children specifically. The system employed by the Guild of Help of visiting those in poverty meant that the Helpers became more familiar with the problems of poverty that affected women and children. The Helpers responded to the poverty of women and children in the same way as they responded to poverty in general, they investigated, made judgements and suggested appropriate solutions. The Guild of Help was better placed to respond to the problems of women and children, although their success was limited. As with the response to poverty of the working class in general, the Guild of Help looked to assist those best able to help themselves. This chapter seeks to show that the Guild of Help did nothing more than scratch the surface of women and children in poverty. The solutions offered by the Guild did not tackle the root causes of poverty.

There is very little literature relating directly to the Guild of Help and their work with women and children. The literature tends to focus either on the Guild of Help in general with some comments on women and children or on the lives of women and children in poverty but not in Bradford and not directly related to the Guild of Help. The studies on women and children in poverty include Carl Chinn's study of life in Birmingham, Elizabeth Roberts' study of three Lancashire towns and Maud Pember Reeves in London.¹ Both Chinn and Roberts draw on personal memories of their own families' lives in working-class districts whereas Pember Reeves produced a contemporary study based on visits to families in Lambeth. All of these studies are relevant to this chapter as they paint a picture of working-class life in industrial towns in the early part of the twentieth century. There are likely to be features highlighted in these studies which would also be seen in Bradford but it must be remembered two of these works were written with the benefit of hindsight and based on memories of the time.

Articles by Cahill and Jowitt and one by Michael Moore focus specifically on the Guild of Help but do not highlight any of the work that was carried out by the Guild.² The article by Michael Moore focused on the origins, beliefs and relations between the Guild of Help and the COS. There is no information on the type of help provided and to whom it was provided. These articles are more relevant to chapter one of this study. Cahill and Jowitt highlight background on how the Guild emerged in Bradford and how the Guild functioned in Bradford.

Laybourn has looked at how the Guild of Help helped the poor in Bradford and examined ways in which the Guild aimed to alleviate specific problems, such as the poverty of children, unemployment and the problems of the aged poor.³ Laybourn proposed that the Guild's interest in the welfare of children came from the Physical Deterioration Report of 1904 which highlighted the poor condition of urban children and proposed the need for school medical inspection. Laybourn also suggested that the Guild of Help played no role in this but were very interested in the Children Act of 1908 that ensured that children received medical care. Laybourn suggested that the Helpers of the Guild kept a close eye on the children of the poor. This can be backed up to some extent by some findings of this work the Guild of Help casebooks and some cases will be highlighted in this chapter that show that child welfare was a concern for the Guild of Help.

Why focus on women?

There are many reasons for the widespread poverty of women and children in Bradford during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Single and working married childless women were affected by poverty in similar ways to working-class men. Women working in the Bradford worsted textile industry would have faced similar problems to men in the same industry. Women were vulnerable to the same fluctuations in trade in the same way as men and as likely to be made unemployed or to become injured through an accident at work. However, unlike men, there were additional factors that meant women were more likely to feel the brunt of poverty, and once in poverty, to have less power to recover. Married women, who didn't work were vulnerable because they were dependent upon the income of

¹ Chinn, *They Worked All Their Lives*, Elizabeth. Roberts, *A Woman's Place*. Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week*.

² Cahill & Jowitt, *The New Philanthropy in Bradford*. Michael J, Moore, *Social Work and Social Welfare*.

³ Laybourn, *The Guild of Help*, 1994.

their husband. Married women and widows faced circumstances that made it more likely that they suffered greater effects of poverty than working-class men did.

Women had a longer life expectancy than men and were more likely to be left in a state of dependency in old age than men. Women were less likely to have any form of occupational pension or trade union or friendly society policies that would have provided an income. Women of any age were more likely than men to be widowed. Being left a widow was not just the preserve of the aged poor but also of young women, with children. Of the cases of the Guild of Help which were examined in the survey analysed in Chapter 1, just under twenty percent had a partner that had died, the majority of these being women. Some applicants to the Guild of Help, become widowed due to the illness and injury of their spouse during the period that the case runs.

Whether widowed, married or single, women had a reduced earning capacity than men, which meant poverty was a greater likelihood than for a man. A textile town such as Bradford did provide work for women but they were paid less than men and generally kept out of the more skilled areas of the industry. For instance the weekly rate of pay for a male wool sorter, not taking into account short or overtime, was around 32 shillings per week. A woman weaver working two looms could only earn on average between thirteen and seventeen shillings per week, which was not enough to provide for a family.⁴ If women were unable to secure work in the woollen industry, there was the alternative of domestic service but that paid poor wages and involved long hours. For those working women with young children childcare was a particular problem. Paying someone to look after children was not always feasible and it reduced the amount of disposable income left for the family to survive on. One solution to this problem was to take in work at home, such as the taking in of washing however, such work was often the most poorly paid. Home workers generally had to work very long hours in order to make any kind of income at all.

A woman did not need to be a widow or deserted wife in order to suffer far greater poverty than a man. There is much evidence, particularly from Maud Pember Reeves to suggest that when in poverty women deprived themselves of food first in order that their husbands and children could eat. For instance,

⁴ Board of Trade, *Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908 -1913*.

Dinner: 1lb of pork chops (9 ½ d) four to a pound, he has one. The other three are divided among seven children, with potatoes. She has an egg later. Supper: 6oz cold meat from cookshop, with a lettuce, for him. If any left over, she has some.⁵

Meat is bought for the man and the chief expenditure is made in preparation for Sunday's dinner when the man is at home. It is eaten cold by him the next day. The children get a pound of pieces stewed for them during the week and with plenty of potatoes they make a great show with the gravy.⁶

There is no mention at all in this case of what the woman herself ate.

Any yet, in order to feed him as well as this, his wife has to make about a third of the amount do for herself.⁷

Many women suffered chronic ailments related to poverty for much of their lives, not helped by childbearing. For example when Maud Pember Reeves was involved with a visiting scheme in Lambeth she noted that the first instinct of those working on the scheme was to exclude any women from the scheme who had pulmonary and respiratory diseases. However, it was found that these conditions were endemic and that it was therefore impossible to exclude those women suffering from them from the scheme.⁸ Pregnancy was a largely unavoidable hazard for working-class married women and also caused many problems additional to the actual pregnancy. Those already suffering poor health due to poverty were more at risk from pregnancy and birth. The letters collected by the Woman's Co-operative Guild illustrated this.⁹

The disparity between ill-health in women and men came to light to a small extent when in 1911 a small number of women were allowed to join the National Health Insurance scheme. These were women in relatively secure and well paid jobs.¹⁰ The scheme was overwhelmed by women in need of medical care and because of this, it was suspected that women were more likely to exaggerate health problems than men were. Indeed, the received wisdom on the problems of women and health at this time points to many women being

⁵ Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week*, p. 121.

⁶ Ibid, 97.

⁷ Ibid, 97.

⁸ Ibid, 8-9.

⁹ Margaret Llewelyn Davies, *Maternity - Letters from Working Women*, (First Published G.Bell and Sons, 1915, 2nd edition, London 1978).

¹⁰ Pat Thane, Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England. *History Workshop Journal*, Autumn 1978 Volume 6, p. 34.

perceived as being prone to malingering.¹¹ An investigation committee was set up and produced a report that detailed that women were more prone to chronic illness in particular illnesses relating to malnutrition.¹² The majority of women workers did not qualify to be included in the National Health Insurance Scheme and also were not normally eligible for benefits to cover health from trade unions or insurance societies as most would have been unable to pay the premiums. We can assume that many of these women who were not in a position to take up benefits to cover health, would have suffered similar, if not worse from illness associated with malnutrition. In consequence, some of these women suffered the effects of poverty and came to the attention of the Bradford City Guild of Help.

Why focus on children?

Children were, and indeed are one of the largest groups suffering from poverty. Children, reliant on their parents for support were unable to actively do anything about their condition. They were perceived as victims of poverty and were a relatively safe group for charity as they could not be held responsible for their condition and were therefore deserving of help. There was conflict, however, when their parents were held to be undeserving of help but the children were seen as deserving. At the beginning of the century many still held the view that the children of those who were undeserving should not be helped as this removed responsibility from the parents. There were problems in Bradford particularly concerning the issue of free school meals as many Conservatives and old style Liberals felt that children whose parents were regarded as undeserving should not be fed. Both F. H. Bentham, the Head of the Board of Guardians and H. B. Priestman, the leader of the Bradford Liberals exhibited this view in a number of debates on this subject.¹³ This will be examined further in Chapter 4 of this study. Both were also members of the Bradford City Guild of Help. Whatever the opinion of individual Guild members, the Guild as a whole did not operate a policy of discrimination when it came to children, deserving or not. Once the legislation was in place the Guild took advantage of its provisions.

¹¹ Barbara Harrison, *Women and Health*, in June Purvis (ed.) *Women's History, Britain, 1850-1945*, (University College London Press, 1995), p. 157-182.

¹² *Report of the Departmental Committee on Sickness Benefit Claims Under the National Insurance Act*, Cd. 7687 1914, p. 16.

¹³ See references to *Forward* in Chapter 4.

The Edwardian period saw concern for these two groups grow, particularly within the context of the eugenics movement. The middle-class panic and fears of race degeneration, both moral and physical, during this period led to the growing awareness of the problems of poverty faced by working-class women and children as mentioned in the previous chapter. The problems of infant mortality and the issues highlighted by the Physical Deterioration Report such as the need for medical inspection in schools was particularly relevant at this time and working-class women and children inevitably became the focus of attention. School medical inspection and school feeding will be examined closely in Chapter Four of this study. It was against this background that the Bradford City Guild of Help began its work. Having examined the work the Guild carried out with the poor in general, the intention is to focus on the work of the Guild with women and children. This work will show that the Guild was slightly more effective in dealing with some specific symptoms of poverty of women and children but as detailed in the previous chapter, they still had little success with poverty rooted in large scale economic causes. The main success the Guild had in tackling the poverty of these two groups came in connection with the municipal council, more specifically with some of the measures that the Independent Labour Party had agitated for, particularly free school meals.

The Guild of Help and Working-Class Women

The survey of the casebooks of the Bradford City Guild of Help has provided invaluable evidence concerning the problems of working-class women. What has emerged is, that women were very much the focus of the everyday work of the Helpers. This was clearly exhibited through the way in which the Helpers almost always focused their questions towards women where a woman is part of the case.

The work of Carl Chinn in Birmingham, Robert Roberts in Salford and the casebooks of the City Guild of Help have all suggested that it was women were held to be responsible for the welfare of their families. In almost all discussions about food and rent and the general management of the household budget, both Pember Reeves and the casebooks of the Guild of help address their queries to the woman of the house and usually comment as to how the woman manages with what she has. For instance Pember Reeves commented on a number of occasions, 'Mrs X is a good manager' or 'Mrs Q is a hard working woman, a good manager

and extremely intelligent'.¹⁴ Whilst men were acknowledged and perceived as the head of the household with a responsibility to provide for their families, it was clear that it was women who were responsible for the day to day running of the household and the immediate welfare of their children.¹⁵ Noted in the casebooks of the Guild of Help is that the head of the household should always be recorded as the main applicant. In all the cases in the survey described in the previous chapter where the applicants are married, it is the man who is noted as the main applicant. However the main discourse almost always is with the Helper and the woman. In her study of Middlesborough, Lady Bell pointed out that the wife's ability to manage money was equal to, if not more important than her husband's capacity to earn.¹⁶ The Helpers seem to have addressed many of the questions relating to the welfare of their cases to women rather than to men, even though men were more often regarded as head of a household.

In examining the surviving casebooks it has become clear that the Helper regarded women as the people responsible for the immediate welfare of their families, ensuring that they were clothed and fed. What may also have been important was that the Helpers had more contact with Bradford's poor women than they did with Bradford's men in poverty. This may have made Helpers more aware of the everyday problems faced by women in poverty. A possible example comes in case number 4456, a married couple, in poverty due to a combination of casual work and illness were referred to the Guild. The Helper always addressed the woman and held her responsible for the condition of the family which she described as 'decent, but the house was dirty'.¹⁷ The woman in the family was noted to be the chief wage earner as well as being responsible for the day to day family life.

Many of the casebooks open with a comment on the condition of the woman and her house. Although they were advised not to act in a judgmental or patronising manner towards the poor, the Helper's initial impression often determined how a case was to be treated and the helpers often were judgemental. That impression often relied upon the woman, how she kept the house and the condition of her family. If the woman gave an unfavourable impression, then often she would be mistrusted depending upon the attitude of the Helper. Often the first comment of a Helper, upon entering a house for the first time would be

¹⁴ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p. 87, 88-103, 132-145.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 66-145.

¹⁶ Lady Bell, *At The Works: A study of a Manufacturing Town*, London 1911.

¹⁷ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 3556.

concerned with the cleanliness of the house and the woman. It appeared that dirt was often regarded as a good indicator of how deserving a case may be. It appeared that dirt often equalled mistrust.

The Helpers often seemed to look to the women in their cases for a response to their help. The expectation of the Helpers appeared to be that the woman would show gratitude for the assistance given. When this did not occur the Helper often drew attention to this in the casebooks. Gratitude appeared to feature strongly in the work of the Helpers. If a case was initially regarded unfavourably, gratitude from those helped could change the view of the Helper. One woman was regarded with suspicion by her Helper, as she was perceived as rude and uncooperative when the case opened. This Helper did mellow as time went on and later changed her opinion when the woman expressed gratitude to the Helper for the assistance she received.¹⁸ However if gratitude was not shown, the consequences for the applicants could be harsh. One family on the verge of starvation was penalised by the Guild because of the attitude of the Helper, a young unmarried woman, to the woman who was seeking assistance for herself and her family. The woman in this case was pregnant, and the Helper knew that she and her family were starving. The Helper freely admitted that she did not give them any food despite their starvation because when she had done so previously the woman had not expressed any gratitude.¹⁹ This does not appear to be a very charitable stance, although the Helper was following the letter of the guidelines of the Guild of Help. It may indicate that some of the Helpers were not altogether in tune with new ideas on philanthropy.

Men were sometimes held to be responsible for the day to day life of poverty faced by their family. There were some examples in the casebooks of a man being held responsible for the condition of his family. These cases tend to be those when the man is clearly withholding money from his wife and the Helper held a good opinion of the woman. In one such case a family were in poverty even though the man had a relatively good wage. The problem was that he gave his wife little money with which to manage the household. The Helper, a man clearly blamed the man for the poverty of his family and saw his wife as an innocent victim. He wrote in the casebook that 'the man has got work but is a bad lot and a

¹⁸ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 4456.

heavy drinker, he ought to bring home a good wage'.²⁰ It was only when the case was as clear-cut as this that blame was attributed only to the man. The clear message in most of the casebooks was that the welfare of the family was the direct responsibility of the woman.

There were other reasons for the City Guild of Help addressing their queries towards women, many being purely practical. The majority of the cases dealt with by the City Guild of Help were married couples. Despite the fact that there was work for married women in Bradford, it was clear that many women only worked when their families were in need. Most married working-class women did not work as a matter of course. This was particularly true when there were young children involved. This meant in effect that women were more likely to be at home when the Helper called and, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the woman would have been spoken to by the Helpers of the City Guild.

One can also speculate that a possible reason for the Helpers addressing the women was that because most of the Helpers were themselves women. It was possible that these Helpers would have felt more comfortable asking personal and financial questions of another woman, rather than of a man. The evidence from the casebooks on this point is somewhat circumstantial. In the Handbook written by Walter Milledge, the Secretary of the City Guild of Help it was suggested that Helpers try to find some common ground between themselves and those who they were helping. They were encouraged to identify with some aspect of the lives of people they were trying to help, although it was rather unlikely that they had much in common as the majority of the Helpers were middle class.²¹ But despite this it was clear that women, who made up the majority of the Helpers, were more likely to address their questions to women than to men. Perhaps because of this, the Helpers became more aware of the everyday nature of poverty experienced by Bradford's women and as such were more at ease when dealing with the problems faced by women.

¹⁹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 5196.

²⁰ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 4596.

²¹ Walter Milledge, *Handbook*.

Problems of Working-class Women in Poverty and Solutions offered by the Bradford City Guild of Help

In order to gain some indication of how successful the Guild of Help were in alleviating the poverty of Bradford's women, we must first examine a few of the problems faced by these working-class women who came within the influence of the Guild of Help. The evidence from Bradford on this subject is somewhat patchy. Around 70 per cent of cases dealt with by the Guild were married couples. The survey analysed in the previous chapter highlighted a combination of factors which caused poverty, these combinations included, unemployment, low wages, illness or injury and casual work. The outcome from all of these factors was a reduction in the amount of income received into the household for either a short or a long term. The actual individual circumstances surrounding the causes of poverty varied widely. For example, a male partner may have been working short-time or casually or through illness or a woman may be have been pregnant, depriving her family of her income. What many of the casebooks examined was the day to day coping with the problems that arose from the lack of income. Carl Chinn and Robert Roberts both emphasised the day-to-day nature of the struggle for survival faced by working-class women. This quote from Roberts illustrates the dilemma one woman had between providing what a man wanted and balancing other needs.

After a violent quarrel with his wife, he found the next day that lunch consisted of the rent book between two slices of bread.²²

This quote does highlight that women's roles included ensuring that the conflicting needs of their family was met and that the family survived. This was acknowledged by the Helpers of the Guild of Help who tried to offer advice to women in their daily battle with poverty.

The Helpers wanted to give guidance to enable women to manage on a limited income. They were unable to deal with the real underlying causes of poverty. This perhaps, illustrates why the Guild could not hope to succeed in its own battle with poverty. The Guild was a local initiative yet the problems of poverty, such as, unemployment, casual work and low wages, were national, and as suggested in the previous chapter, the Guild of Help could never really have had much effect with national or international causes of poverty. The Guild

²² Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p. 86.

acknowledged this but felt that individual work could be of great value and help to alleviate poverty.

The Guild is not only a large and progressive charitable effort but is a social movement of wider importance, - that the conditions we are facing in Bradford are common national conditions. Every enlightened discussion of the problem of unemployment reveals that the solution is not to be found in any single remedy but in many social reforms and above all in much individual work.²³

The attitude of the Helpers towards working-class women was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand they were regarded as thriftless and wasteful but on the other some Helpers were aware that these women were able to stretch limited finances to what seemed like an almost impossible capacity. Working-class women, their behaviour and perceptions of them were of great importance to the Guild of Help. Quite often it was the condition and behaviour of the woman which determined whether or not the family would be considered able to practice self-help. If the woman were perceived to be deserving and capable then help would be offered. In one instance, a family had a very low income and were in poverty due to a combination of circumstances. The main wage earner was ill and his wife was six months pregnant. The Helper in this case was a man who considered the woman to be decent and capable of practising self-help. He commented that although the woman was six months pregnant and unable to work in the mill for much longer, she was capable of working as a cleaner in order to support her family.²⁴ Perhaps this is reflection in my opinion of the somewhat unreasonable expectations placed on working-class women by the Helpers. But, despite the circumstances of the family, they were considered able to practice self help because of the behaviour of the woman. In another case, the woman was seen as being undeserving of assistance because the Helper regarded her as untrustworthy as she thought that she drank and left her children on there own.²⁵

The Guild offered a variety of solutions to those surviving on small incomes. For instance, ways in which income could be stretched. This task fell to women in the cases of the Guild of Help. One view of the causes of poverty was that although poverty was not

²³ *Help*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 1906.

²⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 4276.

²⁵ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook no. 4976.

necessarily the fault of the individual, the money that did come into working-class households was not well spent. These attitudes emphasised that women were thriftless and thoughtless because they were not, in the eyes of the Helpers, making the best use of their money. One of the most frequent complaints related to food. Pember Reeves highlighted the problem and discussed the way in which working-class women spent their budgets. The main item of food in the diet appears to have been bread and potatoes. Any perceived extravagances were those for men who were provided with 'relishes' and given the largest supply of food. Middle-class observers were also critical of the lack of milk given to infants. Not that working-class women were unaware of the importance of milk to their children's diet, but rather that it was too expensive for them.²⁶

There is little evidence concerning working-class diet in Bradford, although the casebooks emphasised that as in other areas of the country, bread was the staple part of the diet. The Guild held the attitude that many women were in part responsible for the poverty of their families because they were not budgeting properly. The handbook produced by Walter Milledge warned the Helper to be aware of the possibility that women were wasting money. 'The woman's home is in a deplorable state because there is not enough money coming in, but also because she is thriftless.'²⁷ The air of suspicion was often there when the Helper called which further questions the role of the Helper as a genuine friend to those in need.

Food, being the most elastic item on the budget, was singled out as the area where savings or economies could be most easily accommodated. The journal of the Bradford City Guild of Help frequently ran competitions for its readers to devise budgets for fictitious families in certain situations. For instance, One competition asked entrants to send in an ideal family budget to meet the needs of, 'A labourer and his wife and their three children. (two girls aged five and seven and one boy aged nine). Their rent is 4s and 6d; wages are 24s per week.'²⁸ They asked how best the money should be spent in order to provide the maximum nourishment. The replies were published in the next issue. They were then criticised and mistakes pointed out. This was a form of training for the Helpers provided by the Guild. This knowledge was taken into the community and applied to the cases of the City

²⁶ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p. 99.

²⁷ Milledge, *Handbook*.

²⁸ *Help*, Vol. 1, October 1905.

Guild of Help, often with little success as most working-class women had much greater knowledge on the subject than they were given credit for as it was a problem faced on a daily basis. Indeed Pember Reeves emphasised the ability of many semi-literate and numerate women to calculate accurately in their heads, their family budget, even though they could not to do so on paper.

Many Helpers however did not go into the houses of the poor and analyse the family budget but, instead, tried to suggest ways to make money go further, for instance, by offering tips on getting cheap food or the best methods of cooking. In one instance a married couple were on a very low income due to the man being on test work. (i.e. a government work scheme) There was little prospect of him finding well paid work and so the Helper, a married woman assisted by attempting to teach the woman to cook cheap meals.²⁹ This was not a particularly successful attempt because; it may be assumed that like many working-class women she already knew how to make the food stretch as far as possible without the interference of a Helper from the City Guild. However, what it does show is the very practical way in which the Helper tried to tackle the situation, looking at a solution that involved living with the problem rather than looking at the root cause of the problem. The Guild of Help had no desire or ability to deal with the causes of poverty and instead looked to provide individual solutions to the problems of the cases. Like many others, the women resented the interference in her home. Women often engaged in resistance against the interference of the Guild. This usually took a passive form as to be actively resistant meant problems occurred. It may seem rather odd that an organisation which wanted to help the poor should come up against resistance from the very people they were trying to help, but it must be remembered that the Guild were quite often sent into a home on the recommendation of a third party. For instance, a woman may have applied for free school meals only to find a Helper from the City Guild had turned up on the doorstep. One case only lasted for a short period and no other help was given or asked for other than school meals.³⁰ They were not always welcome, although in some cases the Helper became involved with other problems of the family. For instance in one case which began in 1912, notified by school feeding, the Helper assists while

²⁹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3596.

³⁰ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4296.

the man is on strike, until he enlisted in the army in 1914.³¹ The most obvious way in which women resisted advice from the City Guild was to be out of the house if it was known that the Helper was due to call. This was quite a common occurrence in the casebooks. Another method was to listen to what was being said by the Helper and then to appear to ignore some of the advice. Cases where this happened were often regarded as being unsuccessful.

The Guild did try to offer more practical ways of dealing with the problem of limited income than just trying to get it to stretch impossibly. The most obvious was to find a way to increase wages. Married women in Bradford did not usually work as a matter of course, only when their families needed it. 'Of the total married women in the city 19.6 percent were engaged in occupation and 13.3 percent were engaged in work in the mills.'³² In many of the cases dealt with by the Guild of Help, work for women was the only real alternative to starvation or the Poor Law. Bradford, being a woollen textile town offered more employment opportunities for women than in many other towns. Although women were paid less than men were, many went to work in the textile industry in order to ensure that their families survived. This was usually full-time and was therefore not convenient for all women. The pay was less than that for men, usually around thirteen to seventeen shillings per week, full-time, but it did provide a stopgap for many working women.

The Guild of Help did not have any policy on married women undertaking paid work. It was left to the discretion of the individual Helper. Although many Helpers did not always encourage women to work, most recognised the need for women to support their families by any legitimate means and were practical in their suggestions for obtaining work. Many Helpers would have been regarded as progressive in comparison with the C.O.S. because they did not view working women as undeserving, but as explained in the previous chapter the Guild wished to assist those with the capacity to be self-supporting and women able to work would fall into this category. It was in the area of work that the Guild offered its most practical help. The Helpers often assisted women in finding work. This was either through the *Help*, Journal, which carried advertisements for those seeking work, and also from employers. The Helpers sometimes found work for their cases through their own personal contacts, for instance, writing to those whom they knew to recommend a person for a job.

³¹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4716.

What should be clarified here is that much of this work was casual, low paid and often in domestic service, either cleaning or washing. It was still significant because it allowed a family to survive. It should also be emphasised that many of the women were already working and did not need a Helper to find them work. For instance, one woman supported her family when her husband was unemployed. However she still needed help from the Guild because the amount she could earn, between eleven and fifteen shillings per week, was not enough to keep her family.³³ Another married woman worked in order to support her family when her husband was ill, but again, still needed assistance because she could not earn enough to keep her family.³⁴ The fundamental causes of poverty were something that the Guild of Help could do little about, as explained in the previous chapter.

Since the City Guild had no stated policy or guidance on married women working, there were bound to be variations in attitude amongst the Helpers. One male Helper saw nothing wrong in encouraging one particular woman to work, since her husband was ill and unable to work. She had been working full-time in the textile industry in order to support her husband and three small children. The Guild of Help was called in because the woman was six months pregnant and therefore incapable of working in a mill full-time. The attitude of the Helper was that even at six months pregnant she was capable of heavy cleaning work, a somewhat unrealistic and in my opinion, a potentially dangerous assumption.³⁵ Another Helper exhibited the opposite attitude to working women. The situation was one of a married woman with three young children to support, who was working. Her husband was earning low wages. The Helper did not approve of the woman working and she commented that 'the woman would be better off at home with her children than out at work'.³⁶ Therefore many of the decisions surrounding help given to working women were left to the individual Helpers which meant that the decisions taken were often arbitrary or lacked consistency.

Case 5956 in which the married woman helped her family through working highlights a problem common to many working married women that of finding adequate child care. Women who needed to work had to balance the need for money against the needs of her children and the cost of childcare. The options open to women were few. Carl Chinn and

³² Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Bradford, 1914.

³³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5876.

³⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5996.

³⁵ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4276.

Elizabeth Roberts noted certain patterns of childcare.. Chinn in particular uses the phrase “granny reared” to describe the practice of a grandparent, usually maternal looking after a child or children to enable the child’s parents to work. Chinn identified that this doesn’t just happen when women are working but at other times too. He described an urban community where children are fed, clothed and looked after by an extended network of family.³⁷ Other options included having a relative or a neighbour to look after her children, but this cost money and ate into women’s earnings. Another option was, for the eldest girl, if she was old and responsible enough, to look after the younger children. One thing that is notable about the cases of the Guild of Help is that this phenomenon of collective responsibility for childcare is missing from the cases of the Guild of Help. There are perhaps, two reasons for this. The first is that Chinn wrote from the perspective of memories of their own families and communities, societies like the Guild of Help do not feature largely in his study. Secondly, one of the reasons for help being needed from the Guild of Help may be the lack of the family support networks identified by Chinn. This does not mean that family support networks did not exist in Bradford, but that they are not identifiable in the cases of the Guild of Help. The introduction to this thesis examined other sources such as oral history transcripts, which highlighted some aspects of family support networks.

Many women opted to work at home so they could still look after their children. This was ‘sweated labour’, as it was amongst the worst paid, involved long hours and often the whole family had to take part in order to get the work finished. The few examples of home work to be found in the casebooks of the Guild of Help were largely women taking in washing.³⁸ There was not the same frequency of home work in Bradford as in other towns, Bradford being primarily a textile town with work based in woollen and worsted textile mills rather than the home.

Many of the women mentioned up to now worked when times were bad for their husbands. In many cases their situation was only temporary as they anticipated a time when their standard of living would improve when their husbands found more stable work or their wages improved or recovered from illness. This was not an option for widows, one of the

³⁶ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5956.

³⁷ Carl Chinn, *They worked all their lives*, p. 30.

³⁸ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebooks 4857 and 5976.

poorest groups in society. Of all the cases dealt with by the Guild almost twenty per cent were of widows, most of who suffered acute poverty. The majority had no choice whether they worked or not. It was an absolute necessity or they and their families faced the Poor Law. One widow had two children and worked full-time in order to support them. The Guild of Help was called in when she fell ill and was unable to provide for her family. They paid for her to go to a convalescent home in order to recuperate, from where she was able to return to work.³⁹ This was one good example of the City Guild of Help providing practical assistance, which allowed a family to remain self-supporting. A successful outcome in the eyes of the Guild of Help. Again, the capacity to be self-supporting was more important than the actual poverty.

An example of one such case, which appeared to have the ability to be self supporting, was case 3556. This case came to the attention of the Guild in November 1909. The reason for assistance being required from the Guild was because the man in the case had suffered an accident twenty-seven weeks prior to applying for help. The man in the case was recovering and was receiving compensation. The family had two young children under the age of five, one child attended school but his mother did not want him to have free school meals. The woman in the case did not work at the time the case opened but had previously worked as a cleaner. It was noted in the casebook that the woman had said a doctor had told her that the man in the case may never work again. The woman expressed an interest in getting a job and moving house as the family lived with an old woman and paid rent to her. The Helper then asked for a reference from the woman's former employer and received a good report. There are various visits throughout the October of 1909 with the Helper visiting the family at home and visiting the man in the infirmary and began to elicit small bits of information about the family. The process of gaining information about a case was ongoing throughout the case, although it was clear that the helper had formed an initial opinion at the start of the case. The Helper in the case found some cleaning work for the woman and although it wasn't regular, the woman took it. By the middle of November of 1909 the man had died and at this point more information about the family emerged. The woman had not actually been married to the man although they had led the Helper to believe that they were

³⁹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3836.

married. The consequence of this was that the woman would not now receive a pension. The woman in the case admitted that she wasn't married to the man but still referred to him as her husband. The case continued to be on the books of the Guild of Help and the Helper recorded that the woman had taken a job in a hotel and had moved. There is a comment that someone had told the Helper that the woman drank although the Helper noted this she did nothing to discover if it was the case or not. "I have been told that young Mrs R drinks but whether this is true or not I can't say".⁴⁰ The focus of the case seemed to shift at this point away from the woman and concentrated more on the welfare of the children. There is nothing in the casebook to suggest that this was a consequence of the Helper being told that the woman drank, although this may be the reason for a change of focus. The woman in the case lost her job at the hotel following an accident, when she was dismissed for negligence. The Helper records the deterioration in the health and welfare of the children until the circumstances were so bad that the woman went into the workhouse and her children were taken away, presumably by the NSPCC, as the Helper recorded that the "cruelty inspector" came to take them.⁴¹ This case is an illustration that on the surface a case can appear to have the potential to be self-supporting, but that in this case, the potential wasn't fulfilled and the case was given up.

The poorest group of widows dealt with by the City Guild of Help were the aged widows. Many were at the end of their working lives and faced destitution which all were obviously keen to avoid. Those aged widows whom the Guild felt could not hope to support themselves were passed to the Poor Law Guardians. The others were found work, took in lodgers, or a combination of both. One old widow wanted cleaning work, which was found for her by the Helper. Because she was old and unable to earn much, the Helper encouraged her to take in two lodgers, which she did, and her situation improved.⁴² In 1909 an aged widow went the Guild because she wanted more cleaning work but as time went on it seemed clear that she was unable to continue. The Guild found her a lodger and some washing to do at home.⁴³ This pattern of Help was not always repeated. One aged widow wanted more cleaning work but her employer had refused to give her a reference because she said the

⁴⁰ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3556.

⁴¹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3556.

⁴² Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3936.

⁴³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4856.

woman was too slow. The Helper suggested that, despite her age, the woman should take on restaurant work.⁴⁴ Unfortunately the case was given up by the Guild soon after this advice was given and there is no way of knowing if the woman followed the direction she was given or what happened to her. The City Guild offered its most practical advice to widows. In certain individual cases, there was success. What should be emphasised here is that the success was in the terms measured by the City Guild of Help, i.e. the cases became self-supporting. There is no evidence from the survey to suggest that any of the Helpers ever asked the question, why an aged widow should have to go out to work when it was clear that she was too old to support herself even though the Guild of Help was generally in favour of old age pensions when they were introduced in 1908.

Pregnancy and the Guild of Help

During the first two decades of the twentieth century women only seem to have become a focus of interest when they were able to have children. Working-class women seem only really focused upon within the context of the health of the general population. It was only when their health affected the wider sphere that their problems were of concern.⁴⁵ Eugenicists in particular were concerned with the health of working-class women within the context of the health of any children they might have. Interest in women's health outside this period was largely absent.⁴⁶ Poor health in working-class women can be attributed to a large extent to a combination of factors, such as poor housing conditions, occupational hazards and a poor diet. Inadequate diet amongst working-class women was a major problem. The practice of working-class women feeding first their husbands and then their children and finally themselves as mentioned earlier in this chapter, was widespread at this time.⁴⁷ The problems of inadequate feeding were further exacerbated by pregnancy. Although women had greater nutritional needs they did not get any extra food, which led to problems in childbirth and afterwards. It was here that working-class women came to the attention of the middle-classes and in Bradford this was reflected in many of the cases of the Guild of Help. When the health of a woman affected the health of her child, then great concern was raised.

⁴⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5176.

⁴⁵ Harrison, *Women and Health*, p.157-182.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.175.

In 1908, the Medical Officer of Health for Bradford raised the question of factors that caused infant mortality and commented that,

A large number of those who succumbed to atrophy and debility were victims of economic conditions: the father being out of work and the mother consequently receiving insufficient nourishment during pregnancy.⁴⁸

For instance, an inadequate diet in the mother could cause the child to be born underweight or even die. The Bradford Medical Officer of Health was concerned about this particularly in the later months of pregnancy and commented,

At this stage of pregnancy, also, malnutrition in the mother and inappropriate work such as factory labour have the most potent effect upon the well-being of the coming child.⁴⁹

It would also make breast feeding more difficult or unlikely and led to infants being hand fed or fed on inappropriate food. All of these factors were of major concern at the time. In Bradford, the Municipal Authority instigated a scheme whereby milk could be obtained for women who were in need of nourishment, which would enable them to breastfeed.

In one case, the mother had never been able to breastfeed her children, but within two days of this infants birth, sterilised milk was supplied to her and the extra nourishment has enabled her to continue breast feeding with most excellent results.⁵⁰

Pregnancy, childbirth and infant mortality was of particular concern to the City Guild; however, they took little initiative of their own. Most of the work they carried out on the health of women was concerning infant mortality and was tied in with the work of the Female Sanitary Inspectors. There were, however, many examples of Helpers providing families with food when they were in desperate need, although it must be remembered that this merely staved off hunger, however important that might be, it didn't really do anything to alleviate poverty. The work of the female sanitary inspectors will be examined in detail in Chapter 4 of this study.

⁴⁷ Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p. 84-85 and Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*. p. 113-131.

⁴⁸ Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Bradford, 1908.

⁴⁹ Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Bradford, 1913.

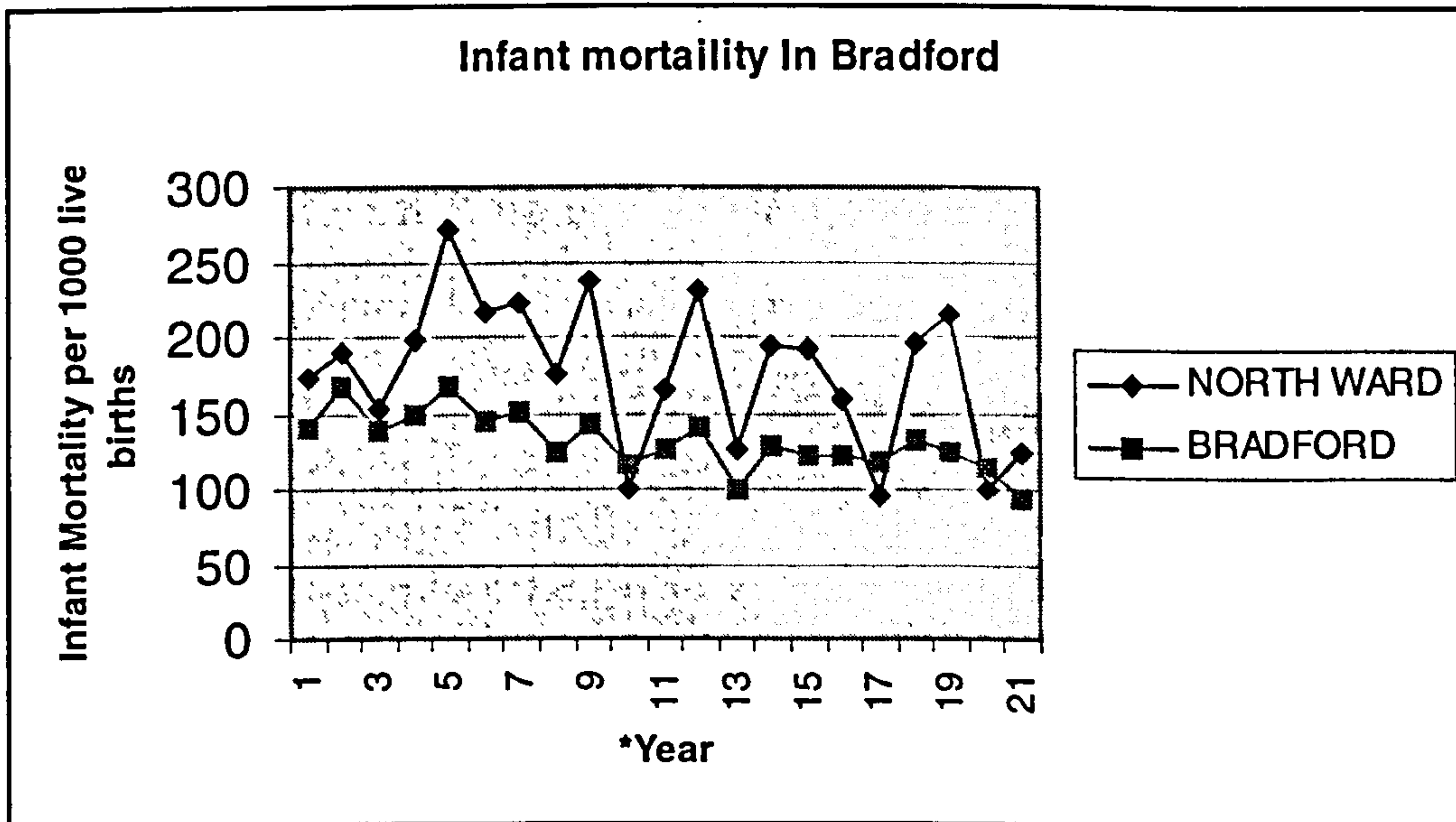
⁵⁰ Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Bradford, 1908.

The Guild of Help and Working-Class Children

Infant Mortality

Infant mortality was one of the areas of greatest concerns for the Guild of Help and wider social and political opinion. It was a particular problem relating to both childhood poverty and to working-class women in poverty. Working-class mothers were very much the focus of the infant mortality debate. The Guild and the Municipal Council felt that education was the key priority in the fight against infant mortality. Although the Guild of Help did not instigate any schemes to raise awareness of, or prevent infant mortality, they did work with the municipal authority in visiting new mothers and offering advice. The table shows the various fluctuations in the level of infant mortality for the city of Bradford. In only two years, 1912 and 1920, does the infant mortality rate fall below 100. It should be remembered that this was for the whole city and the statistics can be misleading. The statistics for North Ward has been presented because this was the ward selected by the Women Sanitary Inspectors for their infant mortality scheme. What is clear from observing the statistics is that the level of infant mortality in North Ward was considerably higher than the average for the city of Bradford. What is also clear is that the levels fluctuate in the north ward widely throughout the period. The levels for the city of Bradford fluctuate much less than for those of the north ward. Only on three occasions does the level of infant mortality fall in the north ward of Bradford.

Chart 2.1 – Infant mortality in Bradford



There are many individual examples of cases of infant mortality in Bradford found within the casebooks of the City Guild of Help and also within the records of the Female Sanitary Inspectors. For example one married couple was in a very bad state due to the fact that the man had been out of work for two months following months of shot time. As a consequence the woman has to go out to clean and did not get enough food during pregnancy. When her baby was born it was too weak and survived only one day.⁵¹ Another family were in a similar situation, already having two children they had subsisted for eight months on an average income of nine shillings per week and had to pay four shillings and six pence in rent. Most of their furniture had been pawned. Throughout her pregnancy the woman had eaten only bread. As a consequence, when the baby was born, it was too weak to feed and quickly died.⁵² In case 6456 the neighbours informed the Helper that the woman in the case was pregnant and had not been getting enough to eat and that one of her children had died.⁵³

A most valuable work on education and health was carried out by the Guild of Help in conjunction with the municipal council, specifically through the work of the Women Sanitary

⁵¹ Report of the Female Sanitary Inspectors to the Health Committee of the city of Bradford, September 1908.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 6456.

Inspectors. Indeed co-operation between the Guild of Help and the Women Sanitary Inspectors was important to the health campaigns run by the Guild. The Guild of Help found:

If all the homes in Bradford were clean and wholesome, poverty would be robbed of half its misery; if all mothers were instructed in the care of their babes, disease and deformity would be reduced considerably even without a great economic change in conditions. During the past year more Helpers have received instruction from the Health DepartmentIncreased co-operation with this department will be possible only when Guild workers are more accustomed to their work, and realise how much may be done in that direction.⁵⁴

A major initiative to reduce infant mortality began in 1906. The approach was twofold; the Sanitary Inspectors brought in a visiting scheme for women who had just had babies. The Inspectors also decided that births should be notified very quickly, not in six weeks, which was common practice and often led to births and deaths being notified together. They started a scheme whereby midwives were given stamped addressed postcards on which they notified births. The mothers were then visited once a month by the inspectors until the child was a year old. The weight of the child was monitored and education and advice given to the mother. The Guild of Help was recruited to provide voluntary workers to give supplementary visits to these infants. The minimum number of visits to each home was to be one per week.

On these visits, the Helpers offered advice to the women on how best to improve the health of their child. One of the biggest concerns of infant mortality was that of child feeding. Quite often when a child was born its birth weight was normal. However, the weight did not increase as expected during the first year of the baby's life.

The weight of infants at birth was generally above average, but after the fourth month there appears to be a falling off in weight until at the twelfth month they are below the average weight.⁵⁵

The solution advocated to prevent this weight loss, which left infants more vulnerable to infection, was to educate the mothers to breast feed their children or if this wasn't possible,

⁵⁴ *Help*, Vol. 2, 3, December 1908.

⁵⁵ Report of the Female Sanitary Inspectors to the Health Committee of the city of Bradford, December 1908.

to use a suitable substitute. They aimed to stamp out the practice of feeding children what adults ate or other inappropriate food.

Instruction in feeding and clothing infants forms one of the most important parts of our duties, and it is extraordinary what ignorance prevails in these matters. One constantly finds children of two years old not yet weaned, infants being fed every half-hour or whenever they cry; long-tubed bottles used, which are rarely properly cleansed, the insides of the India rubber in some cases being a seething mass of corruption; infants sharing chipped potatoes, herrings and the general food of the parents.....high infant mortality can hardly be wondered at.⁵⁶

It was felt that there was a high level of ignorance surrounding issues of child feeding. Education was seen as the solution. The advice given was not always accepted as it contradicted advice given from other sources.

One respectable, well dressed young woman told me that she had not given her baby the breast because she had been told by her own mother that by doing so she would starve the infant.⁵⁷

The scheme only ran in the North Ward of Bradford as there were not enough Helpers to cover every ward. The Inspectors felt that the number of Helpers involved was inadequate and that much more could be achieved if they had more volunteers. They felt that they needed double the Helpers in the North Ward and they had no Helpers at all in the other wards.

Opinions on infant Mortality

There were contradictory views surrounding the causes of infant mortality. Opinion was divided as to whether or not the incidence of working women caused infant mortality or not. For instance in 1901, Arnold Evans, the Medical Officer of Health for Bradford, did not believe that working women were to blame for infant mortality.

This small inspection has led me to believe that the high incidence of infantile mortality is not to any great extent the result of the employment of women in factory

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

work, but I am sure that it is largely contributed to by a widespread ignorance of the management and feeding of infants amongst the working-classes.⁵⁸

The lack of employment is a serious factor in the question of infantile mortality. Mothers in industrial centres are forced to give up breast feeding, wean the infant and themselves go to the mill to earn something towards the upkeep of the family.⁵⁹

However one of Evans' successors, when confronted with a rise in the infant mortality, attributed it to an increase in the employment of mothers.

It appears clear that the increase in the Bradford infantile mortality rate during the war has not resulted from ante-natal causes but chiefly from environmental causes acting after birth: of these causes probably the chief has been the very large increase that has taken place in Bradford in the industrial employment of mothers.⁶⁰

The Women Sanitary Inspectors were also critical of the efforts of the voluntary sector in general for not providing more assistance for mothers in need.

It has always seemed an extraordinary thing to me, that in an admittedly wealthy city like Bradford, there should be no society which helps to provide our poor mothers with skilled attention in the hour of need, especially as such provision would undoubtedly have a far reaching effect in helping to reduce the rate of infantile mortality. I suppose that the citizens of Bradford do not realise the seriousness of the fact that last year out of over 2000 cases, less than 300 were attended by trained skilled women.⁶¹

Those who held an unsympathetic attitude to the poor were subject to serious criticism for being unable to empathise with the problems of poverty. This could be seen as an attack on some of the Helpers, as the City Guild of Help prided itself on the ability of its Helpers to put themselves in the place of those it sought to assist.

Few realise to what hard drudgery many slum mothers are condemned. In fact, the inability to 'put yourself in his place' and want of imagination of some of those who pride themselves on being hard-headed is very pitiable to anyone whose daily work brings them constantly into touch with the denizens of slumdom. Amongst Christians it

⁵⁸ Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Bradford, 1901.

⁵⁹ Report of the Female Sanitary Inspectors to the Health Committee of the City of Bradford, September 1908.

⁶⁰ Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the city of Bradford, 1918.

⁶¹ Report of the Female Sanitary Inspectors to the Health Committee of the city of Bradford, March 1908.

is seldom remembered that the Christ came to save 'the lost', what are so often termed 'the hopeless', the 'undeserving'.⁶²

The Guild of Help acted as a liaison to the municipal authority in that the Helpers tried to assess the needs of the mothers and assist them in getting whatever help was available. For instance one woman who already had three children under five was visited by the Guild and on the recommendation of the Helper, was given milk from the depot run by the municipal council.⁶³ Another woman expecting a baby was also given milk on the recommendation of a Helper. She had four children and her husband was on a low income.⁶⁴ Although the information for this comes from the women sanitary inspectors, the Helper had carried out the assessment of the needs of the family. This is one small example of the Guild working in partnership with a public body. It would not have been possible for an organisation such as the COS to work in this way as it rejected all state help.

The very nature of the help offered by the City Guild was small scale. They prided themselves on providing an individual and personal service. Personal service may have helped some individual cases but on the whole they were only scratching the surface of poverty and infant mortality. The problems were deep rooted, and the Guild was unable to cope. Even when they worked in conjunction with the Municipal authority, there were not enough Helpers to make any significant differences.

Child Poverty and the Guild of Help: Problems and Solutions

Carolyn Steedman has raised the point that the early twentieth century saw childhood reconceptualised in British society.⁶⁵ She points out that children became the subjects of parliamentary legislation in a way in which they had not done previously. There was not a discovery as such of working-class childhood but more a growing recognition and a highlighting of the problems of children in poverty. Clearly there had been investigations into the condition of working-class children throughout the nineteenth century.

Children represented a very large poverty-stricken group. Their situation was unique because they could not in any sense be held responsible for their condition. Children could

⁶² Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors to the Health Committee of the city of Bradford, September 1908.

⁶³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5516.

⁶⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5296.

not be accused of being thriftless, nor could they seriously practice self-help. In theory, their treatment should have been free from the ideological concerns that surrounded the Guild of Help and the debate on the deserving and undeserving poor. However, this was not always the case. As clearly indicated, the Guild was an organisation which relied on individuals and much depended on the attitude of a particular Helper. It is clear that there was always going to be variations in the attitudes exhibited by particular Helpers. Whilst no Helper clearly blamed children for their poverty, some clearly blamed their parents and acted in such a way that punished the children for what the Helper perceived as the failings of their parents. It was possible that a family whose children were suffering from poverty would not be helped because of their parent's behaviour. One example of this attitude came when an unmarried Helper, knowing that the family were starving, did not bring them any food because their mother did not say thank you when food had been brought previously.⁶⁶ The Helper was not prepared to overlook the attitude of the woman in order to help the children. There are similar examples, but on the whole, the City Guild was quite positive in the area of child poverty.

Child poverty was a problem in Bradford as it was in other towns at that time. It had been suggested that problems of children in poverty related to dirt and disease rather than hunger, although the evidence of this in the first twenty years of the 20th century in Bradford is patchy.⁶⁷

A family with inadequate income would obviously have less money for food. This led to the inevitable problem of hunger. Lack of income meant less money for food and therefore inadequate diet. Whilst the evidence suggests that a mother would deny herself food first, she would give what she could firstly to her husband so he could work, and then what she would feed her children before herself. The diet of working-class children at this time seemed to revolve mainly around bread, tea and potatoes.⁶⁸ Although Pember Reeves added, 'children get a pound of pieces stewed for them during the week and with plenty of potatoes they make a great show with the gravy.'⁶⁹ It appeared to be a very monotonous and bland diet. Although the evidence from Bradford is patchy, there is some scope for thinking that

⁶⁵ Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain*, p. 62.

⁶⁶ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5196.

⁶⁷ Bradford Labour Echo 1 May 1897.

⁶⁸ Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p.94-103.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

most children fed a similar diet as elsewhere in the country.⁷⁰ There is little evidence in the case books relating to actual diet, unlike the cases collected by Pember Reeves.

Despite political denials, it is very obvious that inadequate income means less food and therefore, poor health. Underfed children were more likely to be in poor health. They were not just at risk from deficiency diseases such as rickets but also because lack of food caused the immunity system not to function at its full potential thus leaving children, particularly young children, open to opportunist diseases. This was further complicated by poor living conditions that facilitated the spread of disease, such as overcrowding, poor ventilation and cellar dwellings.

One solution to the problem of child poverty was to provide food for the children of the poor. Despite the debate surrounding the principle of providing free school meals to needy children, once the Education (Provision of School Meals) Act was in place the Guild took full advantage of it. The City Guild of Help had a positive attitude to the Education Act (School Feeding) 1906. This was an important innovation in the fight against child poverty. A great many of the cases of the City Guild were offered school feeding where appropriate. It was seen as an answer to immediate problems of hunger in children of school age and was also felt that it relieved the burden from many mothers and allowed their limited income to be stretched further. This topic has been further explored in greater detail in the chapter on poverty and politics and it is clear that it was successful in that many hungry children were fed. What must be remembered was that this was an initiative, which came about due to left-wing pressure and brought into force by Parliamentary Legislation. The City Guild advocated its use once in place. Again, the City Guild was reactive rather than proactive.

The casebooks contain many examples of families who were offered meals for their children. One family was suffering from poverty because the man, the main wage earner was suffering from TB and unable to work. The family consisted of three children under the age of ten and their only income was from a sickness benefit club. The Guild recommended the children for free school meals that were provided by the municipal council.⁷¹ Another family who were on the verge of destitution were also provided with free school meals. The family were in poverty due to a combination of unemployment and illness, had four children of

⁷⁰ Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p.78-100 and Pember Reeves, *Round About A Pound A Week*, p.78-100.

school age who were described by their Helper as 'ill due to lack of food'. The Helper recommended free school meals.⁷² Another family was given free school meals when the main wage earner fell ill and the woman had to support her children. She could only earn between eleven and fifteen shillings per week. The Guild again recommended free school meals.⁷³ Almost all the families in the survey who were offered free school meals for their children accepted them. There was one exception; a family in poverty due to the main wage earner being on strike had three children of school age in the family. As the Helper saw the situation as temporary, free school meals were offered to the children. Unusually, the woman refused to accept them. At this point the Guild closed the case because it was felt they couldn't help any more after the offer had been refused.⁷⁴

Poverty Related Disease in Children

Aside from the immediate problem of hunger, one of the major effects on children was poverty related disease. Many of Bradford's children were in poor health due to lack of food. Not all of these children had specific poverty related disease such as rickets, but many were underweight and generally run down. The Helpers tended to look out for children such as these and provide assistance. In one such case a family, were in poverty due to the low income of the main wage earner. There were four children who were in poor health due to malnutrition. The Guild found places in a convalescent home for the children.⁷⁵ In another case the children were in poor health and were sent on holiday by the Guild to improve their health.⁷⁶

For those children with specific health problems such as rickets the Guild offered help in the form of a place at Thackley open-air school. Inspired by the work of Margaret McMillan the open-air school was designed to provide children with an improved environment where their health could improve. The City Guild of Help recommended quite a few children to the open-air school in order to improve their health. One family applied for help for spinal support for their son. This was provided and they re-applied later in 1912 for more support. The

⁷¹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3713.

⁷² Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4196.

⁷³ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4236.

⁷⁴ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4956.

⁷⁵ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4036.

⁷⁶ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5036.

Guild gives the boy more spinal support which was again provided, but this time the Guild also recommend that the boy is sent to the open air school.⁷⁷ Unfortunately there was no report of his progress.

Most of the problems of child poverty dealt with by the City Guild of Help were fairly similar and the problems all too common to many families. There was however some cases which were more extreme. Some families had severe difficulties looking after their children and some were clearly neglecting them. Cases such as these were a serious challenge for the Guild, as were cases involving orphans. The action taken by the Guild varied according to the family circumstances and the attitude of the Helper. The couple had seven children between the ages of four and fourteen, their father was in prison and the older children were working to support the family. The solution put forward by the City Guild was to firstly recommend free school meals for the children who qualified, which was normal practice for the Guild. The Helper then placed one of the children in a home for children in order to take the pressure from the rest of the family. In another case the Helper did everything to try and keep the family together. A father of six daughters aged between five and fourteen was left widowed. His wife's sisters offered to take the children to live with them but the man refused. The neighbours had also tried to help him looking after his children but he refused all attempts at assistance. The situation was resolved when the children were taken away by the NSPCC and the man was put in prison. There appears to be more to this case than the Helper recorded.⁷⁸

The City Guild of Help was also an organisation that looked to safeguarding the morals of children, particularly young girls. One area of particular concern was sex and illegitimate children. The records show a few cases of teenage pregnancy, each with different responses and attitudes about it. One woman brought up her eldest daughter's child as her own and expressed concern about the situation and was worried about what the Helper thought.⁷⁹ Another case revealed a very different attitude towards the subject. The eldest daughter of a couple had two illegitimate children, one surviving. The Helper expressed concern about the morality of her mother because she saw nothing wrong with her daughter

⁷⁷ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4756.

⁷⁸ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 3608.

⁷⁹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 4936.

having an illegitimate child. The Helper also expressed concern about the woman's youngest child, a sixteen-year old girl being raised in a household where illegitimacy was acceptable.⁸⁰ There were other cases in the survey that highlighted this problem. The Helpers often expressed concern when they felt children were at risk from immorality but little or no action was taken.

The City Guild of Help dealt with relatively few cases of orphans. Most children in the cases dealt with by the Guild had at least one parent living. In one such case a family of six children were left without a mother. Their father was working and could not look after them. The solution that the Helper felt was quite acceptable was for the eldest child, a girl aged ten to get an exemption certificate and leave school. The Helper commented that 'she is a sensible little girl'.⁸¹ It seemed to escape the notice of the Helper that however sensible a child may be, it would be rather difficult for a ten year old girl to bring up five young children and look after a house. Even taking into the accepted standards of the day, this seems rather inappropriate. Another Helper had an entirely different view of a similar situation. An orphaned girl applied to the Guild for Help in keeping her family together. She and her two brothers and sisters went to live with her eldest brother who was twenty one and a widow with one child of his own. The Helper did not think it was a good idea to keep the family together and recommended that they go into an orphanage, which they refused to do. However they are persuaded to go into the orphanage and the eldest daughter was sent into domestic service.⁸² What can be clearly seen is that there was little continuity in the actions of the Guild.

Children presented the City Guild of Help with a real opportunity to make a difference. Their poverty could not be attributed to their own fecklessness or lack of thrift. The Helper could blame their parents if they so wished but no blame could ever be attached to the child. However, the City Guild did not achieve any really substantial results. Their major policy for child poverty was to pass the problem along to the Municipal Council and let them deal with it. Again, it is only when parliamentary legislation is in place that any progress is made.

⁸⁰ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 2776.

⁸¹ Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 5376.

⁸² Bradford City Guild of Help Casebook 1896.

Conclusions

The Bradford City Guild of Help were familiar with the problems of poverty faced by working-class women and children through building up knowledge of their circumstances through their visiting system. Working-class women and children often felt the brunt of poverty and specific poverty related problems and had less opportunity to escape their circumstances. Women had a reduced earning capacity compared to men, although the textile industry did provide work for women at a higher rate of pay than that of cleaning or shop work. Women also suffered from poverty-related health problems often made worse by pregnancy. The Guild of Help was not able to do anything about this.

Women were the focus of everyday work of the Helper. They were responsible for the day-to-day welfare of the families. The Helpers recognised this as almost all questions about the lives of the families in the cases were directed at women, although in the case of married women, her husband was almost always recorded as the head of the family in the case book notes. The Guild of Help did not make any attempt to deal with the underlying causes of poverty of working-class women. The helpers dealt with each case on an individual basis and looked to find a solution to the poverty of that particular case rather than attempting to deal with what had caused poverty in the first place. The solutions offered by the Guild of Help included advice about cooking cheap meals, although there is little evidence as to what the working-class women themselves thought about being offered advice on a subject they were more than aware of. The Helpers found work for working-class women, often through their own contacts. As identified in the previous chapter, the Guild of Help seemed most willing to help those best placed to help themselves.

With regard to a specific problem faced by working-class women and children, that of infant mortality. The Helpers provided a supplementary visiting service in the North Ward of Bradford for the Women Sanitary Inspectors. There is little evidence that this service was successful as the levels of infant mortality continued to fluctuate during the period.

Children were reliant on their parents for support and could not be considered to be in poverty through any fault of their own. The main response of the Guild of Help with regard to child poverty appeared to have been to advocate the uptake of free school meals, where available. Not all families offered free meals were willing to accept them. Those cases were often then

closed by the Guild of Help as they perceived the families were unable to help further. The Guild of Help was not an innovative organisation; the solutions offered were often those that were the most readily available. With problems of child health the Guild of Help found places in convalescent homes or at Thackley open air school. Whilst the Guild of Help did not tackle the root causes of poverty the solutions offered, in particular to the children with health problems would have been of benefit to the individual with the problem. However, there was little continuity in the solutions offered. What one Helper may have offered, another would have taken a different approach.

The Bradford City Guild of Help offered palliative solutions to problems it was incapable of curing. The Guild of Help responded to poverty through dealing with individual cases rather than causes of poverty. Because of this the Guild of Help were unable to do more than scratch the surface of poverty in Bradford. There is little evidence to suggest that the Guild of Help achieved substantial results for women and children. However the Guild of Help did have an impact on the lives of individuals if not on working-class women and children in general and what caused their poverty. The Guild merely endorsed the existing system and never attacked the real causes of poverty. It failed in its aim to provide a community-based solution to the problems of poverty.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL RESPONSES TO POVERTY - THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY IN BRADFORD

The great mass of the people we visit would be wretchedly poor even if they were teetotal and paragons of virtue and thrift and we do not allow the evil features of drunkenness and vice to prejudice our minds against the real underlying cause, low wages and irregular employment.¹

The Bradford Independent Labour Party (ILP) did not make a significant impact on many aspects of poverty in Bradford, the problems being too vast and the ILP not strong enough in number. The main response to poverty of the ILP was to offer policies to deal with the main problems that poverty brought to people in Bradford. The ILP also raised awareness of poverty and working-class life through highlighting and attacking such issues as housing, health and unemployment. The Bradford ILP were unable to put into practice many of the solutions proposed.

During the first two decades of the century, and in particular before the first world war, the ILP in Bradford provide an interesting case study of a political party offering local or municipal solutions to the problems of poverty. This is in the absence of the certainties of mass state welfare of the second half of the twentieth century or nineteenth century ideas of deserving and undeserving poor. The object of this chapter is to examine what policies and actions were taken by the ILP in response to poverty in Bradford. However unsuccessful the ILP were in the implementation of their policies, the work of the ILP represents an important step on the progression towards state welfare. The ILP challenged the prevailing ideology of Liberalism in Bradford. Although the Bradford ILP themselves never saw their attack on poverty as a stepping stone towards large-scale state welfare. Their main achievements cannot be seen in terms of the how successful they were in relieving poverty in Bradford but in that they kept poverty on local political agenda, raised concerns at a national level and helped to put an end to Liberals representing the Bradford working class. Unlike the Guild of Help the ILP were able to contemplate changes to society in order to eliminate, rather than alleviate poverty. Although not revolutionary, the ILP were radical.

This chapter aims to examine critically how political parties responded to poverty in Bradford, and concentrates on the work of the Independent Labour Party. The ILP is the

¹ Bradford Cinderella Club Report into Poverty, in *Forward*, 29 October 1904.

main focus of this study of political responses to poverty as the Party was the only one in Bradford to think outside of the accepted conventions of the time and offer new solutions to poverty. The chapter also explores briefly some of the national ILP ideas in order to put the policies of the Bradford ILP in context. It will explore various areas in which the ILP attempted to respond to poverty, including health, housing and unemployment. This chapter will also explore the limitations; both internal and external on Bradford ILP attempts to alleviate poverty.

The main political parties in Bradford were: the Liberals, the Conservatives, and the Bradford Independent Labour Party, although there were other Labour groups within Bradford, such as the Social Democratic Federation, the ILP was the most important to this study. Alfred Illingworth led the Bradford Liberal party until 1906 and then by his disciple, HB Priestman. The Conservative Party do not figure greatly in this study as they were largely unconcerned with municipal matters, particularly those relating to the poor and could not be described as a driving force in Bradford municipal politics. The concerns of the Conservative Party related more to national politics and the divisions within the Conservative Party at that time dominated their thinking. The Bradford Labour group was not a united political force but a collection of organisations that can be categorised under the umbrella of Labour. This included the Social Democratic Federation and the largest grouping, the Bradford Independent Labour Party. The main political party which tried to mount an attack on poverty in Bradford and to call for new ways to respond to poverty and the problems created by poverty was the Bradford ILP.

Although the ILP were small in number they kept poverty on the local political agenda and many members of the party were tireless in their efforts to raise the standard of living of the poor of Bradford. Keith Laybourn suggests that other than in education, the ILP main influence was to speed up events rather than radical changes in the nature of what was provided by the municipal council.² This is not disputed in this thesis. This chapter seeks to add to the understanding of poverty in Bradford and of the ILP.

There are some secondary sources of literature which concentrate on the achievements of the Bradford ILP during the early years of the twentieth century. One book

² Laybourn. 'The Defence of the Bottom Dog', p.241.

in particular features a collection of articles focusing on the ILP and their achievements.³ A number of these articles focus on Bradford during the first two decades of the century. Two of which are directly to this study. Tony Jowitt in his essay on Late Victorian and Edwardian Bradford examined why Bradford became the heartland of the ILP and how the Bradford developed into a centre of progressive ideas and politics.⁴ This article represents important background information for this chapter as it details the social and political conditions in Bradford before WW1. Jowitt highlighted the social conditions that existing in Bradford at the turn of the century and pointed out that the birth rate had fallen to well below the national average so that by 1900 Bradford has the highest proportion of one-child families in the country.

Table 3.1 - Population increases in Bradford 1801-1911⁵

Year	Percentage increase in population
1801-11	21
1811-21	64.1
1821-31	65.8
1831-41	53
1841-51	55.3
1851-61	2.8
1861-71	37
1871-81	23.9
1881-91	11.3
1891-1901	5.6
1901-1911	2.7

The paper went on to describe the housing conditions in Bradford and the wide variations in conditions across the city and the local political scene.

Another study that stressed more directly some of the issues described in this chapter is *The Defence of the Bottom Dog* by Keith Laybourn.⁶ The composition argued the ILP were not successful in pursuing anti-poverty policies and that the ILP were essentially a pragmatic party that favoured a gradual approach to change. The trade union influence that was in part responsible for growth and popularity of the ILP in Bradford was also responsible for limiting the types of policies put forward by the ILP to deal with poverty. The ILP did not want to alienate their core vote and as a consequence did not offer radical solutions to poverty.

³ James, Jowitt and Laybourn (eds) *The Centennial History of the ILP*.

⁴ Tony Jowitt, Late Victorian and Edwardian Bradford, in *The Centennial History of the Independent Labour Party*. Ryburn 1992, Halifax, p.95-113.

⁵ D.G. Ross, *Bradford Politics 1880-1906*. PhD thesis, University of Bradford 1977.

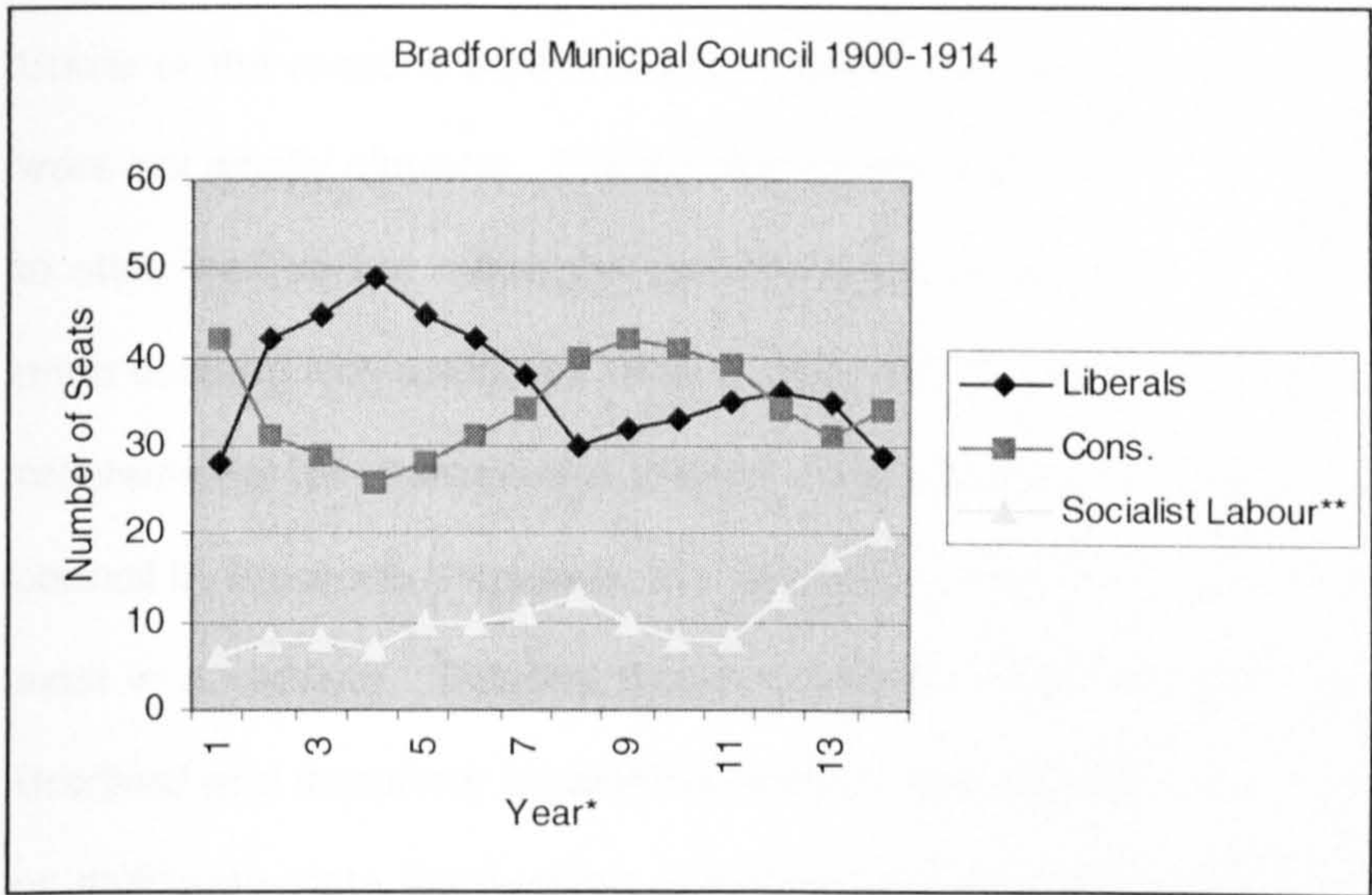
Context and Local Political Position

Table 3.2 - Political Composition of Bradford Council 1900-1914

Year	Liberals	Cons.	Inde.	Socialist		Total
				Labour		
				ILP	WMF	
1900	28	42	8	6		84
1901	42	31	3	8		84
1902	45	29	2	6	2	84
1903	49	26	2	5	2	84
1904	45	28	1	4	6	84
1905	42	31	1	5	5	84
1906	38	34	1	5	6	84
1907	30	40	1		13	84
1908	32	42	2		10	84
1909	33	41	2		8	84
1910	35	39	2		8	84
1911	36	34	1		13	84
1912	35	31	1		17	84
1913	29	34	1		20	84

⁶ Laybourn, *The Defence of the Bottom Dog*.

**Chart 3.1 - Seats Held by Main Political Parties in Bradford Municipal Council Elections
1900-1914**



*Year 1 refers to 1900

**The figures for the WMF and the ILP have been combined to produce a figure described as socialist Labour

The graph illustrates the general trends in the composition of the municipal council. Figures for independent councillors have not been included. We can see from the graph that the ILP in Bradford were not in a majority at any point in the pre First World War period. The number of seats for all political parties fluctuates over time. The fortunes of the Bradford Conservatives were particularly strong between 1907 and 1910, whereas the Bradford Liberals fair better between 1901 and 1906. Following the Liberals highpoint of 1903, the number of seats steadily decrease for the Liberals albeit with a small recovery in 1910 – 12 period, possibly on the back of national Liberal success in the implementation of social legislation such as old age pensions. The figures from the Bradford ILP and the WMF have been combined in the graph to illustrate the socialist vote. The graph shows a general upward trend up until 1909 and 1910. Following this dip in numbers the socialist labour vote beings to increase, at the same time as the Liberals' vote decrease giving credence to the view that the Liberals lost seats to the Bradford ILP.

It is easy but misleading, from a late 20th century perspective to see the quarrels between the Bradford ILP and the Liberals as the argument between 19th Century charity and 20th Century mass state provision welfare. Yet this is not how it was seen at the time. The

Liberals, ever fearful of socialism were seeking to take measures to prevent the poor from turning to socialism and to the ILP. The ILP, trying to raise the standard of the poor to enable them to reach a point where they might be receptive to the message of socialism and education, although this was complicated by the trade union influence on the Bradford ILP. Some of the reasons behind the ILP wanting to raise the standards of the poor in Bradford were not wholly altruistic. The ILP did not see themselves as taking the first step on the road to state welfare but rather the reasons were wrapped up in the thinking of the day of civic pride coupled with socialism. Rather than wait for the state to respond to poverty and related problems the ILP attempted to offer its own policies to deal with poverty through the municipal council in Bradford. However, the economic, social and political climate of Bradford did not exist in a vacuum. External factors controlled both the economic and social conditions of Bradford and therefore, an external solution was required. The Bradford ILP did not wait for or anticipate state intervention, but tried to offer radical solutions for Bradford. They were thinkers who tried to find radical solutions to the problems of poverty on a local scale. They were, however, not strong enough in numbers to push through many of the practical solutions suggested.

The fact that this chapter focuses largely on the ILP does not mean that the other political parties were not concerned by poverty, although each party seems to have had its own agenda. The Bradford Liberals recognised that poverty was a problem, but did not see it as the role of the municipal government to take responsibility for eradication. The Bradford Liberals reflected the picture of Liberals nationally in that they were a divided party. The progressive liberal faction had much in common with the ILP whereas the older 'laissez faire' Liberals held deeply entrenched beliefs in self-help, charity and individual responsibility. It was the old-style Liberals who held sway in Bradford. Bradford Liberals appear to be more concerned with retaining and recapturing the working-class support in an attempt to keep the Bradford workers away from socialism. In this way they exhibit similar views to the Bradford City Guild of Help. This is unsurprising given that many Bradford liberals or their families were actively involved with the Guild of Help. The Bradford Liberals offered a palliative solution that reinforced the prevailing ideology of traditional Liberalism. The Bradford Liberals did not want to see the structure of society changed in order to help the poor. Their aim was

to turn the working class away from ideas of socialism whereas the ILP looked to improve the situation of the poorest in Bradford in order that they might embrace socialism. The ILP arrived at their views from a completely different standpoint to the Bradford Liberals. They were the only party to try and offer more innovative solutions to the problem of poverty in Bradford.

The main quarrels of municipal politics in Bradford are between the Liberals and the Labour Party. Many of the proposals put to the Bradford Council were stalled or thrown out by the Liberal majority. The most bitterly disputed being the argument over school feeding which is detailed in a later chapter. It is to the credit of the ILP that they kept poverty, health, housing and municipal provision, on the local political agenda in the face of much opposition.

Limitations on the Bradford ILP

In order to fully understand the internal limitations within the Bradford ILP, we need to reflect on the origins of the party briefly. The Bradford Labour Union was formed in Bradford in May 1891. By 1893 it had 2,000 members, 19 clubs and two councillors. The Bradford Labour Church established at the end of 1892. This was followed by the opening the Labour Institute in 1893. The inaugural meeting of the national ILP took place in Bradford in January 1893. The rapid rise of the ILP in Bradford was nothing short of astonishing for a town where paternalistic politics, geography and a largely unskilled and non-unionised labour force had conspired to suppress the development of the working-class political party. The main driving force behind the change was the massive growth in trade unionism. In 1883 there were approximately 3,500 trade unionists in Bradford, by 1892 that figure had increased to 13,000. The main areas in which support had increased were largely unskilled and in those sectors of textiles traditionally dominated by men, such as the preparatory and finishing sections. The catalyst for change was the strike at Samuel Lister's Mill in Manningham on the 16 of December 1890. The strike lasted until April 1891 with some other departments of the usually unorganised textile industry coming up in sympathy. The strikers set out their message and aims in a Manifesto which stated that:

In the face of these low wages we are of the opinion that we should be doing not only an injustice to ourselves but to the whole of the textile industry in the West Riding of Yorkshire

by accepting the proposed reduction. Help us fight against the enormous reduction. Our battle may be your battle in the immediate future. ⁷

The strike emphasised the gulf between the middle and working class. It was made clear that the working class would not be given political representation from the Liberals and the Tories. The strike also crystallised the view of trade unionists such as E. R. Hartley that middle-class men should no longer lead the trade unions, as they were unable to relinquish their ties with the establishment parties. Although the middle-class trade unionists had supported the strike at Manningham Mills the real leadership came from men such as Fred Jowett and W.H. Drew who all got valuable experience from the campaign. The climax of the strike came following a protest meeting held to condemn the actions of the watch committee, which had prevented a political meeting the day previously. The military were brought in to suppress the meeting and a riot ensued. The industrial conflict was translated into political action. Charlie Glyde summed up the desire for representation. 'We have had two parties in the past; the cant's (sic) and the wont's and it is time we had a party that will.'⁸

A plan for poverty – what did the ILP offer that was different?

The Bradford ILP had distinct political ideas and ideals but had no coherent plan to translate them into action. And yet this was not a disadvantage for the Bradford ILP. The West Riding was home to influential socialists such as Philip Snowden, (Keighley) Fred Jowett and Margaret McMillan (Bradford) and as such had the reputation of a hot-bed of socialist thought. Jowett in particular is credited as the architect of the socialist city. Jowett was greatly influenced by John Ruskin. Ruskin wrote of his vision of a society where there was a right to work, a living wage and government training schools and workshops the effect of which would be to prevent unemployment from becoming a problem.⁹ Many of the schemes appear to be practical rather than theoretical models. It was not the theory of socialism but its practical expression. Jowett's position on state intervention was clearly stated in the following quotation:

⁷ *Bradford Observer*, 17 December 1891.

⁸ *Bradford Observer*, 27 April 1891.

⁹ John Ruskin, *Unto this Last*, (This edition London 1968).

Ruskin on the other hand was less hopeful of super-men bringing in the new social order. He realised that poverty; unemployment and ignorance are a national responsibility. He boldly declared for state intervention. It made me a socialist.¹⁰

Although Ruskin was looking for a national solution to the problems of poverty Jowett applied his writings and theories to the local political scene. Jowett did not wait to see if national legislation delivered solutions to poverty. He published his vision of the socialist city in 1907 in a manner that justified the action of the Bradford ILP and its municipal policies.

There will be bread for all, work for all and no fireless grates; but he finds that neither by tongue nor pen can he light the fire of hope or touch the imagination of the stunted victims of competitive industry, whilst they remain sunk in sordid poverty; so he must needs work his passage to the socialist city by means of municipal trading, housing reform, municipal coal, municipal milk supply and – education. ¹¹

Jowett was not alone in his view of the socialist city and the creations of socialism through improvements to infrastructure. Indeed the Bradford ILP's motive to drive poverty from Bradford can be traced to the wish to create a socialist city.

E. R. Hartley also published thoughts on the socialist city and reasoned why anti poverty measures had to be taken. He commented on the dire poverty of certain areas of Bradford. The North, South and West Wards contained the worst slums and the most desperate poverty and he stated how this inhibited the ability of the working class to become politically aware and active.

The South Ward is a Liberal, anti- Labour ward. What we have to think about the position is very little. It is not from people such as those who are to be found in this locality that our emancipation will ever come. Socialism is a science of government. It requires intelligent men and women to grapple with its tenets and to look for such among the mass of unfortunate wretches who make the sum total of wretchedness of the South Ward is to look in vain. The very people for whom we are working and toiling are our worst opponents – bitter and intolerant, unsympathetic and insolent, prone to live on charity than upon the rights of manhood and womanhood and if

¹⁰ F.W Jowett, *What Made Me A Socialist*. (London 1925), p.5.

ever such places are captured at all, they must be captured from the outside. For not until the death rate, the insanitation and the horrible mode of life are changed shall we ever see the South Ward of Bradford taking an intelligent interest in the affairs concerning it. This is no skit, but the sorrowful admission of the plain facts as I see them. ¹²

The rationale behind much of the thinking is that socialism is a theoretical system that cannot be understood without education. The poor cannot benefit from education whilst they live in poverty and are underfed. In order for the poor to benefit from education, their living conditions must be improved and then they are ready for education, once the poor are educated, they will be able to understand socialism. The ILP never had the opportunity to put his theory to the test.

The Bradford ILP had a distinct political agenda, the creation of socialism through education and social reform although they did not have a coherent plan as to how this would be achieved. The problem for the ILP was that they were limited by several factors: the size of the party limited what they could achieve, the ILP frequently held the balance of power in Bradford but this was not always enough to get their own way and implement their politics; the influence of the trade unions and that the problems of poverty were not contained within Bradford but were national and international problems and a solution tailored to Bradford alone could never have succeeded.

In order to understand fully the Bradford ILP and how it fits into the picture of changing welfare provision we need to explore what the ILP actually did to relieve poverty in Bradford. The subject of education will be tackled in the next chapter, which focuses on the responses to the poverty of women and children, by the ILP.

How did the ILP respond to poverty related problems?

Unemployment

Unemployment in Bradford was largely linked to the fluctuations of the main local trade, woollen and worsted textiles. The problems of the local trade, both long-term

¹¹ F. W. Jowett, *The Socialist and the City*. London 1907, p.87-88.

¹² *Bradford Labour Echo*, 30 November 1895. E. R. Hartley wrote as "Echoist".

competition and shorter term fluctuation was linked to national and international markets. Any solution to the problems of unemployment in the woollen and worsted textile industry had to take this into account.

Bradford had suffered heavily with unemployment from the late 1890's onwards and little was done by the major political parties to help the unemployed. The Bradford ILP could have been the group which was foremost in offering innovative solutions to the problem of unemployment and yet they took little positive action towards the problem.¹³ There were various different solutions put forward to deal with the problem of unemployment such as the eight-hour day or land schemes but all ultimately failed to deal with unemployment. These measures were advocated by Tom Mann 'That the enactment of a legal eight hour day should be encouraged, that land should be used for community purposes and work shall be remunerative to the unemployed should be provided'¹⁴ Yet for all of their plans there was no clear way that their policies could be fulfilled. No constructive system to deal with unemployment was to emerge from the ranks of the ILP in the following twenty years. This however is not all that surprising considering that at a national level people was also unable to solve the problem of unemployment, indeed it is an issue which has caused contention for all political parties during the twentieth century. It must be remembered that this is at time when unemployment, as a state was only just being recognised and the 1834 Poor Law had yet to be changed. The entire national system to deal with the unemployed could not possibly work in a time of depression. Attitudes were still harboured that if you were unemployed it was through idleness or drunkenness. Indeed one of the solutions to the problem of unemployment put forward by the Liberal Party in the 1890's was that the poor should abstain from drink.

The Bradford ILP did make some efforts to attack the problem of unemployment during the 1890's and early twentieth century. In 1893 soon after the formation of the Independent Labour Party, the conference of the Yorkshire Labour Movement was held in Bradford in November 1893. This conference urged that the eight-hour day be adopted by all government and municipal workers and also that no more than forty hours per week by

¹³K Laybourn, *Defence of the Bottom Dog*, p.221.

¹⁴Tom Mann, *Programme of the ILP and the Unemployed*. Clarion pamphlet; London 1893.

worked by any employee. The conference also recommended that public works be extended and that land colonies for the unemployed to work on be provided. However the reaction that these policies received a hostile response from other political parties. This intransigence by the other parties led to further appeals by the ILP and other socialist organisations for the council to take measures to deal with unemployment and yet little was done. The ILP conducted its own unemployment survey of the people of Bradford and the findings proved to be a shock for political parties of all colours. The survey revealed that over 27 per cent of the population were suffering directly due to the problem of unemployment and this figure did not include any inmates of the workhouse.¹⁵ Although the finding shocked the Liberal party into setting up a mayor's fund, very little was achieved in practical terms. The Liberal and the Conservative Party were not interested in creating any long term solutions to unemployment and once the crisis had passed they were no longer interested. On May 5 1894 a conference on the unemployed was held in Bradford. This conference debated issues of unemployment and how to deal with the different types of unemployment, such as land schemes or municipal cleaning for those casual workers without a job. The conference brought the land solution to the fore once again. The kind of schemes put forward included those of the Land Nationalisation League and the English Land Restoration League. The L.N.L. wanted land purchased and then run by an organisation that would let the land to working tenants. Under this scheme compensation would be given to the landlords. The scheme favoured by the E.L.R.L. and Henry George wanted very high taxes placed on land until the point was reached where landlord was unable to pay and had to sell the land which would then revert back to community ownership. The land issue disappeared when unemployment fell and re-emerged later in the early twentieth century when unemployment re-emerged, although by this time the solutions were not given so much time as in previous years.

On both the national and local fronts, the ILP attempted to keep unemployment on the political agenda although the policies they suggested were linked either to trade union demands or to municipal solutions and they had little success in implementing the resolutions. Solutions connected to trade unions or to local government were not adopted during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The ILP were not in a strong enough position to push

¹⁵ *Manifesto of the Bradford Unemployed Emergency Committee 1894, p.7.*

their solutions either in Bradford or nationally. In 1900 the report presented to the ILP national conference looked at unemployment, work and wealth. The report demanded an eight-hour day, a six-day working week and work for all able-bodied adults and a minimum wage of 6d per hour. This would enable them to:

In order to remuneratively employ the applicant, Parish, District, Borough and County Councils to be invested with the power to:

A, Organise and undertake such industries as they may consider desirable

B, Compulsory acquire land, purchase, erect or manufacture buildings, stock or other articles for carrying on such industries.

C, Levy rates on the rental value of the district and borrow money on the security of such rates for any of the above purposes. ¹⁶

Interest in unemployment rose and fell in Bradford when it becomes a problem in the city. It is not until 1903 / 1904 that the problems of the unemployed begin to be of political interest in Bradford again. It is probably no surprise that the Guild of Help also emerges at this time. The solutions that were put forward were no different to those proposed during the previous decade. The ILP in Bradford followed the national line of increasing local powers to deal with unemployment. However, in Bradford, as in national politics, the ILP was able to do little more than to raise the issue and keep it on the political agenda.

In 1903 and 1904 when Bradford suffered a protracted period of unemployment (following this the Guild of Help was formed) the national ILP were also raising concerns about unemployment. It was reported in an investigation into unemployment, that at an estimate, 20,000 people were out of work, which affected 60,000 people in total.¹⁷ The report and the resolutions put forward to the Conference in 1903 and 1904 again reinforce the solutions put forward by the ILP to unemployment would be linked to trade union policies and local government solutions. For instance, one motion carried at the 1903 conference asked:

¹⁶ Report of the Seventh Annual Conference of the ILP, Glasgow April 16, 17th 1900.

¹⁷ Cinderella Club Poverty Report, *Forward*, 4 October 1904.

That this conference with a view to securing the alleviating of the poverty and suffering due to unemployment, low wages and excessive hours of labour, demands legislation which shall:

A, Enforce the payment of an adequate minimum wage to all wage earners, particularly those who now receive less than 30 shillings per week

B, For a minimum working period which may not exceed eight hours per day or 48 hours per week

C, Empower local authorities acting singly or in combination to acquire land for cultivation and to establish industries so that men and women unable to find employment in the ordinary labour market may be employed on suitable and remunerative work which shall not involve disenfranchisement or any political disability and further condemns this action of the government in refusing to inquire into this urgent matter and calls upon all reforms, to unite in forcing those in authority to take action¹⁸

This motion is essentially the same as what was contained in the earlier report from 1900. In 1904 Fred Jowett, of Bradford ILP presented a motion to conference stating that

That it is the duty of the state working with local bodies to provide useful work for the unemployed without loss of franchise and with adequate wages.¹⁹

Jowett was following the ILP national party line on unemployment and the solutions put forward for Bradford were the same as those put forward by the national party.

The following two and three years saw that ILP conference looked at unemployment from a slightly different point of view in that in 1905 the Liberal government had introduced an Unemployed Workmen's Act. In 1905 there was a more positive approach than in 1906. In 1905 in his parliamentary report, Kier Hardy was optimistic that the then Unemployed Workmen's Bill was "the first time that the government had recognised the responsibility of the

¹⁸ Report of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the ILP, York, 13th & 14th April 1903.

¹⁹ Report of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the ILP, Cardiff, April 4th & 5th 1904.

state to find employment for deserving men and women out of work".²⁰ Whereas by 1906 when the Unemployed Workmen's Bill was enacted, the conference reported:

That the Unemployed Workmen's Act of 1905 utterly fails to deal adequately with the problem of unemployment and its drastic amendment is urgently necessary.²¹

The contrast between the two statements is marked, in 1905 there is optimism and the impression that the ILP have influenced the political agenda in order to secure a bill for the unemployed. In the following year, the ILP do not see many of their policies on the agenda of the Liberal government and this is reflected in the feelings aired at the conference.

In the parliamentary election of 1906 the policies and attitudes of the candidates for the seats in Bradford were examined and criticised in *Forward*, the newspaper of the Bradford ILP. George Scott Robinson, the Liberal and free trade Candidate for Bradford West presented his views on the unemployed when he said,

I rejoice that the Prime Minister has promised to consider this grave question sympathetically and that funds necessary for working the Unemployed Workmen's Act will be provided by the state and not be dependent upon charity.²²

In the elections of both 1905 and 1906, the ILP were critical of the approaches of other political parties to unemployment. In criticising one of the candidates in 1905 'Forward' commented:

We notice that Sir Francis Sharp Powell speaking on Monday expressed 'great sympathy' for the unemployed. Everyone expresses great sympathy with them. The trouble is that nobody in the two chief political parties ever gets much beyond expressions of sympathy.²³

Candidates in the 1906 election were Ernest Flower, the Conservative candidate who was treated with contempt by *Forward* as was Claridge the Liberal candidate for West Bradford. As far as the ILP in Bradford were concerned, Claridge was associated with Alfred

²⁰ Report of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Manchester, April 24th & 25th 1905.

²¹ Report of the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Stockton, April 16th & 17th 1906.

²² *Forward*, January 13, 1906.

²³ *Forward*, November 4 1905.

Illingworth and the old traditional liberalism, which was prevalent in Bradford. Fred Jowett, the ILP candidate, defeated Claridge in Bradford West. Inspiring the following poem:

A plausible weaver named Claridge, once sought for West Bradford in marriage.

But was left in the lurch, she would not go to church in Alfred Illingworths carriage²⁴

This quote summed up the feelings of the ILP regarding the Liberal party. Claridge was clearly associated with old Liberalism and its policies were rejected in Bradford. The ILPs' long standing policy of independence and non co-operation with the Liberal Party in Bradford meant that they were able to provide an alternative to Liberalism and take the seat. However, it did not mean that they had the answers to the problems of unemployment and still looked to a combination of municipal and trade union action to alleviate unemployment. As Laybourn commented

The trade-union movement framework of the ILP'S policies was extremely restrictive and clearly incapable of offering coherent policies to some of the major social issues of the day. But in the end the ILP saw its major task as being to capture working-class support. It had to offer the moderate policies that would establish its working-class credentials.²⁵

An example of the kinds of policies pursued by the ILP in Bradford in respect of unemployment comes in 1906 with an attempt to make a land grabbing scheme work. 'Under the leadership of Mr C.A. Glyde, about a dozen men have exercised their imperial prerogative and taken possession in the name of the unemployed, of a small piece of vacant land belonging to the Midland Railway Company at Girlington.'²⁶ Although local interest was attracted in the earliest days of the land grabbing scheme, the Girlington Klondyke, as the scheme was referred to proved to be a failure and did little to provide help to the small number of unemployed involved.²⁷

²⁴ *Forward*, January 13, 1906.

²⁵ Keith Laybourn, *The Bradford ILP and Trade Unionism*. In, James, Jowett & Laybourn (eds), *The Centennial history of the ILP*, Ryburn Publishing, Halifax, 1992, p.156.

²⁶ *Forward* 28 July 1906.

²⁷ Keith Laybourn, *The Bradford ILP and Trade Unionism*, in, James, Jowett & Laybourn (eds), *The Centennial History*, p.148.

Laybourn suggests that this proved to be the end of local action as a solution to the problems of unemployment and yet the ILP continue to offer a package of municipal and trade union solutions to unemployment, up until 1914.²⁸ Although at the 1907 national conference of the ILP, there is recognition that a national solution to unemployment is necessary, there is still the demand that this should be administered on a local basis. 'A national department necessary for the proper financing and co-ordination of any schemes should be administered locally.'²⁹

From 1908 up until the outbreak of war, the ILP remained critical of government actions on unemployment. Charlie Glyde of the Bradford ILP commented on the work of the Local Government Board in dealing with unemployment in 1908.

The government have voted £200,000 to the President of the Local Government Board to provide work for the unemployed and if the whole sum had been used it still would have found 8s worth of work for each workless man. The majority of the Distress Committee did not want to find work for the unemployed. They belonged to the capitalist class and in Bradford they voted the socialists down in every case. During the last and previous winter, investigators had been sent to the homes of the unemployed five times and twenty-five questions had been asked on each occasion. They had spent £80 on administration and had found work for only 5 out of 1500 men.³⁰

After 1909, the ILP begins to tie in the issue of unemployment with issues surrounding the Royal Commission into the Poor Law, in particular the Minority Report. Issues arising from the legislative programme of the liberal government also start to be brought in to the debate on unemployment. For the ILP, local solutions to the problems of unemployment began to drop off the political agenda as the policies of the national ILP moved on.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Report of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the ILP. Derby, 1st & 2nd April 1907.

³⁰ Report of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the ILP. Huddersfield, 19th, 20th & 21st April 1908. Debate on the Right to Work.

Councillor Day (Norwich) advocated legislation on the lines of the Minority Report of the Poor law Commission. He criticised the right to work Bill and strongly advocated that all reference to local government bodies be eliminated.³¹

The ILP failed to deal with the problem of unemployment largely because the solution could not lie, in retrospect in local initiatives as the problem was too vast. The ILP was distracted from measures to deal with unemployment by the various land solutions that could never be anything more than a temporary palliative. Other solutions put forward by the ILP and other left wing groups included redistribution of wealth in favour of the working class, paying trade union wage rates and municipalisation and nationalisation of services such as tramways, the coal and railway industry. For instance, in Bradford the ILP advocated

Municipalisation of the Coal Supply, Wool-combing Industry, Hospitals, the Blind Institute, Insurance, the establishment on Municipal Washhouses and Laundries, Municipal Sanatoria for Consumptives, and the institution of a Municipal Commercial and Savings Bank.³²

The ILP were little more than a pressure group on the subject of unemployment as it held very little power and so could not draft its own legislation. The Edwardian period was the transitional one; state help was needed to solve the problem of unemployment. Yet the thinking of many of the politicians was firmly rooted in the nineteenth century and it was not until the need for state help was recognised by the politicians would the problem of unemployment be tackled. By 1909 the ILP had moved on somewhat from its position of local action as a solution to unemployment and had begun to recognise and promote the value of national solutions, such as the implementation of the Minority Report. However it remained critical of many of the measures put forward by the government to deal with unemployment.

³¹ Report of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the ILP. Edinburgh April 1909.

³² Election Leaflet of Alfred Tuke Priestman, 17th October 1908.

HOUSING

Bradford is a town which abounds in dilapidated slum property³³

Absolutely the worst kind of house constructed in the country and that which is most fruitful in all the horrors of slum life, is the back-to-back atrocity which closes out light and air.³⁴

Little progress was made by the Bradford ILP in dealing with the problems of housing in Bradford until legislation by the national government following world war one. As with unemployment, the ILP in Bradford had little success in dealing with problems of poor housing, although they did manage to ensure that it remained on the municipal agenda despite not having the strength in numbers to ensure that many of their policies were pursued. As with unemployment, the solution to housing problems was seen as one for the municipal authority. Land could be purchased compulsorily and used for local authority housing. The housing issue is raised in the reports of the national ILP conferences, but mainly before 1907. The bulk of information relating to the ILP in Bradford and its attempts to ensure that housing was on the political agenda related to the period before 1907. In 1900 motions connected to housing were presented to the national conference of the ILP called for measures to enable local authorities to purchase land for local authority housing.

The land, being the storehouse of all the necessities of life, should be declared and treated as public property.³⁵

Compulsory Acquiring of land by local authorities, owners of bad housing to be compelled to clear up, fair rent courts established etc.³⁶

In 1902 a similar motion was carried albeit calling for slightly expanded demands. Councils and local authorities should act under the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890 and Amendment Act 1900 to borrow money to acquire land and build cheap, good houses (particularly in high rent slum areas). They wanted a saving bank set up and other funding to promote low cost loans for housing and period of loan repayment extended, more effective dealing with slum areas to increase powers of representation and registration of slum

³³ *Bradford Labour Echo*, 16th January 1897.

³⁴ *Bradford Labour Echo* 4th February 1899.

³⁵ Report of the 8th Annual Conference of the ILP, April 16th & 17th, Glasgow, 1900.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

ownership and granting of larger powers to capture land on the basis of its assessable value for the purpose of developing municipal housing estates.³⁷

Similar motions are proposed at almost every conference until 1907. For instance in 1906 a resolution was carried to:

Allow increased powers of the municipality to obtain land for housing and other purposes essential to the social well being on the community and to release complete nationalisation of the land.³⁸

What is significant is that the ILP were often not pressing for new laws in order to change housing policies but rather to make sure that local authorities utilised the powers they already had. For instance in 1904 E. R. Hartley, a Bradford Delegate to the national conference remarked that it was not new laws that were required but the enforcement of existing laws.³⁹ The struggle to ensure that local authorities enforced existing laws was evident in Bradford at the start of the twentieth century.

Improvements to working-class housing had a high priority for the ILP in Bradford and indeed also seemed to be a personal crusade of Fred Jowett, MP for Bradford West. The question of providing municipal housing was bound up in the wider questions of land and taxation. As it was with the questions on unemployment, land was a major local and national issue. In 1899 a series of articles were published by E. Halford on the subject of land and taxation in the election paper 'A Brighter Day'. This paper was concerned with the need to create better housing and no overcrowding.

Instead of buildings being crowded together as at present, shutting out light and air from workers and inhabitants, we might have wide streets and decent work-room and dwelling accommodation.⁴⁰

These ideas on the creation of an environment full of light and open space were relevant to the crusade of the ILP to change the living conditions of the working class. Margaret McMillan discussed these ideas at length in her writings on Bradford in relation to

³⁷ Report of the 10th Annual Conference of the ILP, March 31st, April 1st, Liverpool, 1902.

³⁸ Report of the 14th Annual Conference of the ILP, April 16th & 17th, Stockton 1906.

³⁹ Report of the 12th Annual Conference of the ILP, April 4th & 5th, Cardiff.

⁴⁰ E. Halford 'A Brighter Day', Election Papers Series 1, Bradford Archive 1899.

working-class children and schools.⁴¹ McMillan, Halford and many other ILP leaders felt that the working class could not be fully receptive to socialism whilst living in dire poverty.⁴²

It would seem that the ILP thought that there would be no point in measures were taken to educate the poor of Bradford if they then had to return to an environment such as slum housing.

The provision of municipal housing in Bradford had been a priority of the ILP from its earliest days. It was one of the main issues that Jowett campaigned for, although the subject did not attract much attention from other political parties until the early twentieth century. Indeed when Jowett raised the subject of municipal housing at a council meeting in 1894 he received only five votes. The perspective from which Jowett put forward his plans for municipal housing was that of health and hygiene. By 1898 Jowett was the Vice-Chairman of the sanitary/health committee and as such he persuaded the Bradford Medical Officer of Health to make an official representation to the health committee on the subject of the Longlands area of Bradford. This area was an exceptional health and overcrowding blackspot. Under the housing act of 1890 the council were required to introduce a scheme to improve the condition of that particular area. It was Jowett's wish that those living in Longlands would be provided with a new municipal house with a reasonable rent and proper sanitation. What Jowett had under-estimated was the firm opposition he was to receive from the local Conservative Party and the Liberty and Property Defence League. The Conservative Party had been winning support at a national and to some extent at a local level and also had a very powerful conservative pressure group in the form of the Liberty and Property Defence League. The landlords objected because the compensation they would receive under the scheme favoured by Jowett would be less than under another scheme, the compulsory purchase of streets improvements scheme. Opposition to Jowett was very strong and in 1899 his scheme was rejected instantly and referred back to the Health Committee, Jowett now being chairman. Jowett pressed again for changes under his revised scheme which to clear the Longland slum area. When the measure was debated Jowett provided all the statistics concerning the overcrowding and poor health of the inhabitants. The scheme

⁴¹ Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class*, p. 98-120, 201-202.

was reluctantly passed by one vote only to be overturned following more victories for the Conservatives at the municipal elections. The reason for this massive rejection was due in part to the intransigence of the Conservatives and the landlords.

In 1897 Jowett set out his ideas for land taxation. He argued that all Bradford land should be under the ownership of the municipal council. He backed up his case by saying that between 1861 and 1891 Bradford Corporation had carried out massive street improvements and had increased the value of the land by 250 per cent. The landlords had benefited by having their property and environments improved and were able to increase the rents on their properties without having to pay for any improvements themselves. If the Municipal council had paid for these improvements then they should have the land. What Jowett attempted to do was to force the landowners to release any surplus land, which could then be used for municipal housing.

In 1901 the Longlands scheme was finally approved and temporary housing was provided for those displaced until permanent housing could be built. However the scheme was not carried out until 1907. Opposition from the Conservatives and the Liberals of the Illingworth faction did not go away and it is not until national legislation following world war one was there any substantial improvement in housing. The ILP, however, did try to keep poor housing on the municipal agenda. One year after the Longlands scheme was finally completed, housing was still on the agenda of the local ILP. In the municipal election campaign of Alfred Tuke Priestman for the Manningham ward, housing is one of the issues highlighted when he called for the:

Abolition of insanitary areas and the erection by the Corporation of workmen's dwellings, to be let as near cost as possible, with the object of lowering rents; the dwellings to be provided, where possible, with a small plot of land for cultivation.

A substantial portion of the profits from municipal productive concerns shall be invested by the Corporation, where such profits are available, in building workmen's dwellings, instead of in the reduction of rates.

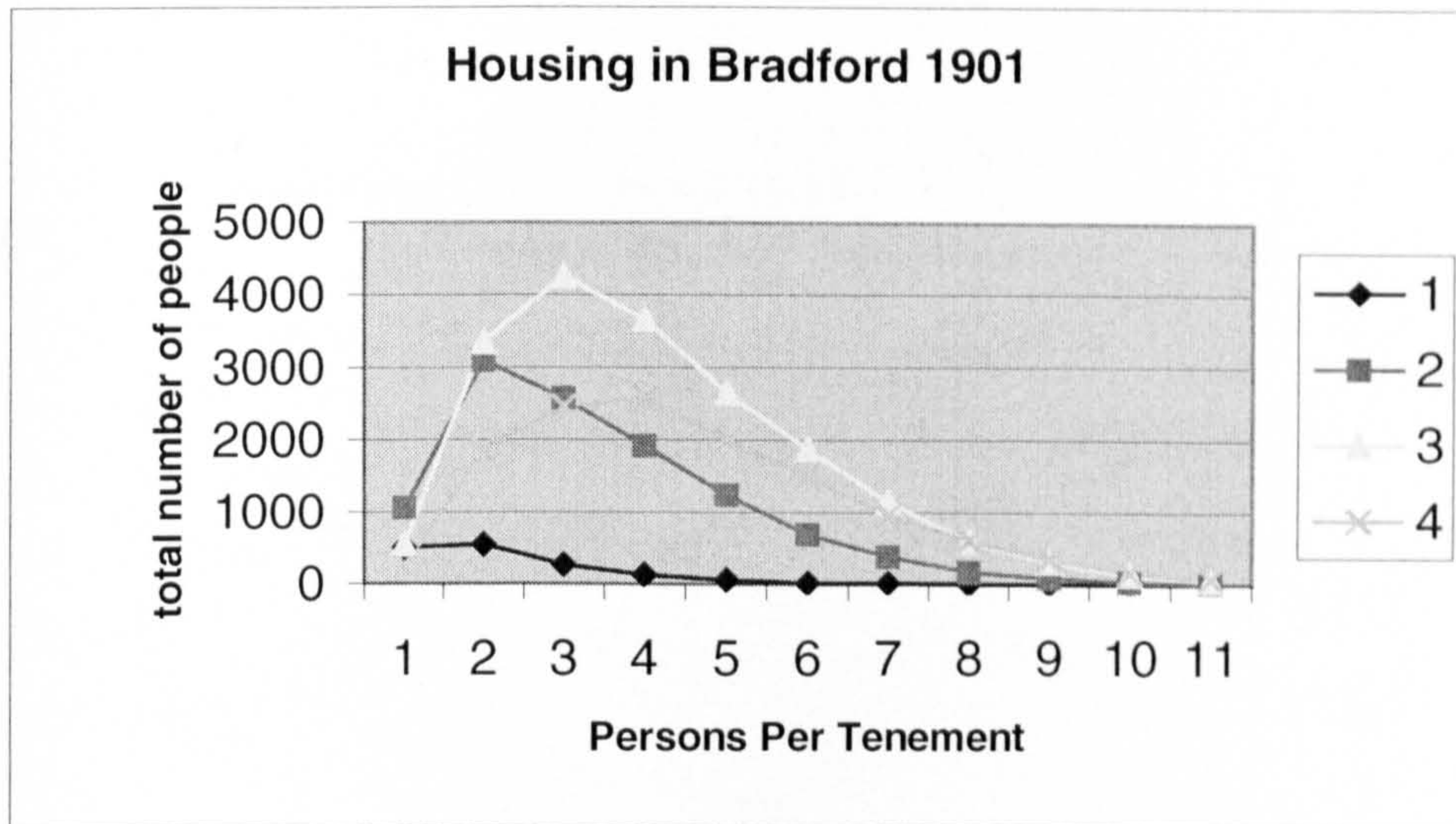
⁴² See page 127 for E. R. Hartley writing on the South Ward of Bradford.

Action to be taken under Part 2 of the Housing of Working-classes Act in order to remove such obstructive buildings as interfere with the free ventilation and lighting of dwelling houses, claiming at the same time from adjoining owners for the betterment of their property.⁴³

Despite the limited success that the ILP had in its struggle to improve housing through the Longlands scheme, there were very little improvements to housing in Bradford. The housing and overcrowding problems of Bradford changed very little in the first two decades of the twentieth century. There are some difficulties in assessing overcrowding owing to differences in data collection and presentation in the census. In 1901 in the census measure numbers of persons per tenement by the number of rooms in that tenement. In 1911 the data is presented as number of persons in private families by the number of rooms per tenement. In 1920 the census measured the number of people in a family by the number of families occupying different numbers of rooms. These differences in data make it difficult to assess any trends in terms of whether overcrowding lessened. However, when the figures for the three years are plotted on a line graph, it is easier to see that the pattern of overcrowding over first two decades of the century. The graphs for all three years shown in the census are remarkably similar, each showing that most people lived in three roomed properties.

⁴³ Election leaflet of Alfred Tuke Priestman, 17th October 1908.

Chart 3.2 Housing in Bradford 1901



The lines on the graph refer to the number of inhabited rooms. The line with diamonds inter-spaced, refers to one roomed property or tenement. As can be seen from the graph very few people lived in this type of property. Most of those living in one room were single people, (506) two people (547) or three people (261).⁴⁴ There were incidents of more than three people living in one room. For instance there were thirteen cases of more than six people living in a one room property, eight cases of more than seven people living in a one room and one case of eleven people living in the same one room.⁴⁵ One-roomed tenements made up only a small proportion, just over three percent of accommodation in Bradford. Most of the population of Bradford lived in two, (twenty-five percent) three (forty-two percent) or four (twenty-nine percent) roomed tenements.⁴⁶ There were 3092 families of two people and families 2574 of three people living in two roomed tenements. There were 684 of families of 6 people and 378 of seven people living in two roomed tenements.⁴⁷ There were 85 families of more than nine people and five cases of families of twelve living in two roomed tenements.⁴⁸ Most families lived in tenements of three rooms. Most of the families living in three rooms had

⁴⁴ See Table app3.2 Appendix 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

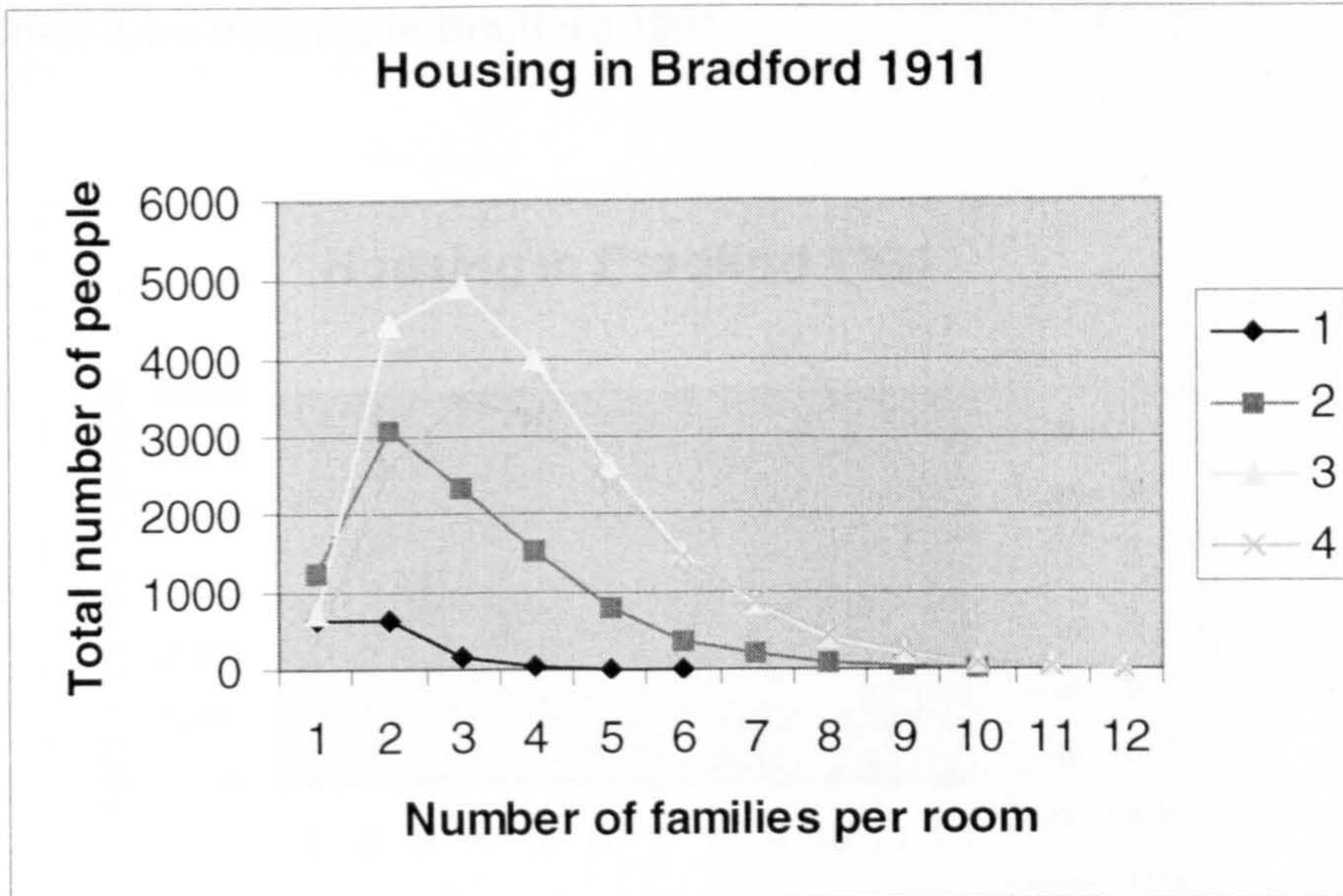
⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

five or less people living in the three rooms, although there were 1136 families of seven and 594 families of eight living in three rooms. There were twenty-two cases of families of twelve living in three rooms.

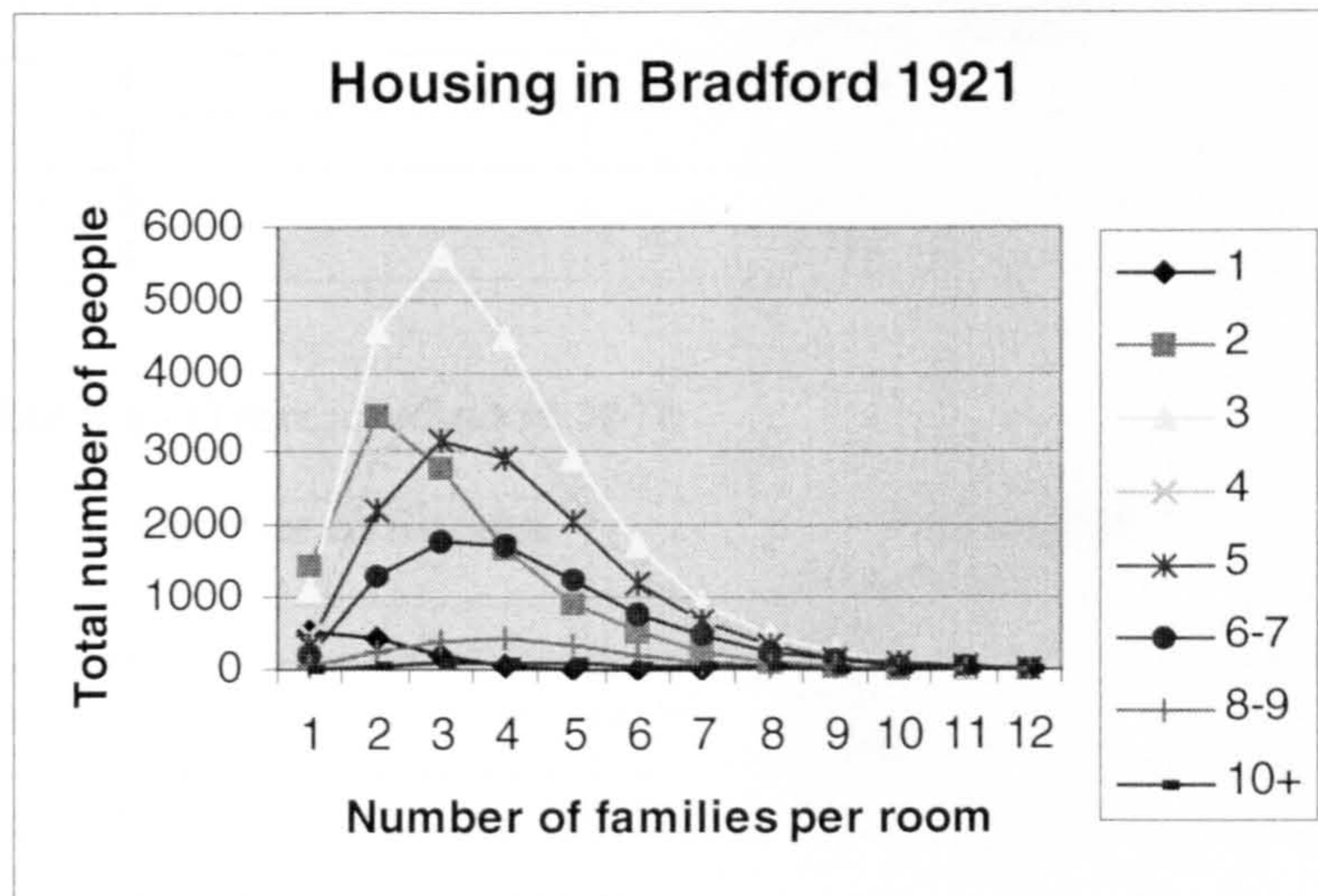
Chart 3.3 - Housing In Bradford 1911



In 1911 the picture of housing in Bradford was similar to that recorded in 1901, although some differences can be seen. In 1911 three percent of families lived in one roomed tenements. This is the same percentage as can be seen in 1901 although in terms of numbers, more families were living in one roomed properties in 1911 (2965) than in 1901 (2345). Twenty one percent (10742) of families lived in two roomed properties. This is compared to twenty five percent in 1901. Slightly more people lived in three roomed properties in 1911 than in 1901, forty three percent (10907) in 1911 compared to forty two percent in 1901. Thirty two percent (8814) of people lived in four roomed properties in 1911, compared to twenty nine percent in 1901. This presents a confusing picture of housing in Bradford. It would seem that more people were living in one-roomed properties in 1911 than in 1901. This suggests that there was some improvement in housing conditions and also deterioration for some too in terms of an increase in numbers of people living in one-roomed properties in Bradford during the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1911, the Longlands area with some the worst back-to-back housing of Bradford would have been cleared. If the effect of the Longlands area being cleared caused some small improvement in

housing provision in Bradford, then this would be directly attributable to the ILP and Fred Jowett in particular, although the argument for this is tenuous. However, what is also clear is that for some, the only affordable housing would have been one roomed properties and that whilst some people suffered less overcrowding in 1911, others suffered worse.

Chart 3.4 – Housing in Bradford 1921



The figures for housing in Bradford in 1921 are different to those for 1901 and 1911 because they present data about properties with more than four rooms whereas the census of 1901 and 1911 do not. This makes percentile comparisons somewhat problematic. However, comparisons with frequencies are still possible to do some comparisons with data. For instance, those living in one-roomed properties fell by 1921 to 1252. This was a fall of 1713. This suggests that the worst of the overcrowding in Bradford was alleviated by 1921.

Trends in Housing and Overcrowding

It is difficult to find a definitive measure of what overcrowding was. For the purpose of this study the level of overcrowding has been defined as two or more adults per room. (For actual numbers see Tables app3.2, app3.3, app3.4 Appendix 3.)

Table 3.3 - Overcrowding in 1901⁴⁹

Number of Rooms	Percentage overcrowded	Percentage not overcrowded
1	66.51	33.49
2	40.15	59.85
3	22.14	77.86
4	9.66	90.34

Table 3.4 - Overcrowding in 1911

Number of Rooms	Percentage overcrowded	Percentage not overcrowded
1	56.87	43.13
2	30.97	69.0
3	15.29	84.71
4	5.6	94.40

Table 3.5 - Overcrowding in 1921

Number of Rooms	Percentage Overcrowded	Percentage not Overcrowded
1	56.63	43.7
2	31.46	68.54
3	15.60	84.40
4	4.67	95.33
5	1.28	98.72

In 1901, almost two thirds of those living in one room were overcrowded. This had fallen to just over half those in one room by 1911, although there was virtually no change in 1921. Forty percent of those living in two rooms were overcrowded in 1901. This had fallen to thirty percent in 1911 but had risen slightly to 31 percent in 1921. Of those living in three rooms, twenty two percent were overcrowded in 1901 compared to fifteen percent in 1911 and in 1921. In 1901, almost ten percent of families living in four rooms were overcrowded, i.e. eight or more were living in four rooms. In 1911, almost six percent of families living in four rooms were overcrowded, this had fallen to just under five percent in 1921.

⁴⁹ Table app3.2 Appendix 3.

Over all, overcrowding lessens between 1901 and 1921. The period of greatest improvement in overcrowding is between 1901 and 1911. During this time, overcrowding improved substantially. The period 1911 –1921 saw only a slight improvement in overcrowding.

The worst excesses of overcrowding were reported by the women Sanitary Inspectors. Their work gave some indication what problems overcrowding caused. In 1901 the Sanitary Inspectors described the conditions in which one family lived.

Fourteen persons, all related, lived in a back to back house containing one room on the ground floor and two bedrooms: ten of them (equalling 8 ½ adults) slept in a bedroom of 1540 cubic feet.⁵⁰

In December of 1902, the Sanitary Inspectors reported 'a woman, her four adult daughters and two men lodgers were all sleeping in the same room'. It would appear, from the trends in overcrowding that these worst excesses had lessened by 1911.

It is difficult to measure what impact the ILP had on the problems of poor housing over the first two decades of the twentieth century. The period of greatest decrease in overcrowding corresponds to the implementation of the Longlands scheme, in which Fred Jowett had been instrumental in pushing through Bradford Council. However, it is difficult to say whether the ILP had a direct impact on the overcrowding in Bradford. Although the ILP did ensure that housing was kept on the municipal agenda.

Fair Contracts and Wages

Wages, working and living conditions were indicators of poverty and were of importance to the ILP although there is little evidence that it made any impact on these during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. It is clear that the ILP did try to keep wages and working conditions on the political agenda. The issues of working conditions and wages are linked to some of the demands of the trade unions in Bradford and because of the close links between the ILP and the trade unions, they remained an issue close to the heart of the Bradford ILP. One of the major demands of the ILP was that of "Fair Contracts", that all municipal council workers, contractors and sub-contractors be paid at trade union rates. That

⁵⁰ Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors, September 1901.

this issue appeared time after time on ILP election posters is testament to the influence of the trade unions on the Bradford ILP.

The national ILP conference raised the issue of a minimum wage on a number of occasions. In 1907 a report was presented to the national ILP on proposals for a minimum wage. The report concluded that a minimum wage had in some cases:

Proved to be very difficult to establish a legal minimum wage. The only attempts have been:

- a) by agreement between trade unionists and employers arrived at by conciliation Boards, and
- b) by government departments which either directly or indirectly employ labour.....

An example of the second is the government departments include in their contracts what is known as a Fair Wage Clause. This has been practically inoperative so far as fixing a minimum wage is concerned although it was intended to have that effect.⁵¹

However, the fact the attempts to establish a minimum wage had not been successful did not stop the ILP from remaining committed to the principle. At the same conference the report on the minimum wage was presented, this motion was also presented:

In the opinion of this conference, the publication of the mass of evidence in connection with sweated industries proves the necessity of a legal minimum wage provided that this is accompanied by old age pensions, shortening of hours of labour, the recognition of the right to work and fair rent courts.⁵²

The Fair Contracts issue was one that permeated many of the Bradford ILP campaigns and is a good example of trade union influence on the Bradford ILP and it appears in the election promises of municipal candidates of the ILP throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. For instance in the election campaign of Alfred Tuke Priestman in 1908, Fair Contracts were amongst the issues presented as part of the municipal programme of the ILP.

The resolute maintenance of the Fair Contracts principle: this meaning that all works undertaken shall be carried out at the standard rate of wages obtaining in the trade concerned, observing the hours which the organised workmen and employers in each

⁵¹ Report of the fifteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Derby, 1st & 2nd April 1907.

⁵² Ibid.

trade recognise, and generally under such honourable conditions as obtain in the industries involved in the contacts.⁵³

Fair Contracts remained on the agenda of the ILP although little progress was made.

The woollen and worsted textile industry being dominant in Bradford provided the best example of low wages and poor work conditions. An example of the sweated trades are the woolcombers in Bradford and in particular those who worked at night. The Bradford ILP consistently highlighted the poor conditions of the night woolcombers and ensured that their plight was kept in the public eye. In 1899 Bradford Trades Council published the recommendations of an enquiry into the conditions of the woolcombers. Their recommendations included

Saturday afternoon labour should be abolished.....night labour placed under the same conditions as day labour in regard to stoppages for meals; there should be a minimum of one and a half hours allowed for meals during which time the machinery is to cease, such period to be divided between the hours of ten and two.....That the maximum heat of a woolcombing shed should be from 80 to 90 degrees.⁵⁴

However, conditions do not appear to have improved much by 1904 when an open letter was published by the Bradford ILP highlighting the conditions of the woolcombers.

A full weekly wage for one of them averages about to £1, but owing to the fact that at least one third of their working time is spent idle owing to "slack time" the average weekly earnings of an adult male woolcomber is not more than 13 to 14s.⁵⁵

The night-comber, generally speaking is a bloodless, sickly cadaverous demoralised wreck of a man, with underfed stunted children very often physically deformed from birth. He lives in an insanitary house in an overcrowded foetid slum.....He does not spend his princely salary to the best scientific advantage. Sometimes he drinks, usually his language is not over genteel. But and this is the critical point – however great a sinner he is to himself or family is not the community hopelessly in his debt? I say, Mr Hall, without fear of contradiction that you and I know very well that he is a

⁵³ Election Leaflet of Alfred Tuke Priestman 17 October 1908.

⁵⁴ Annual Report of the Bradford Trades Council 1899.

⁵⁵ *Forward*, 24 December 1904.

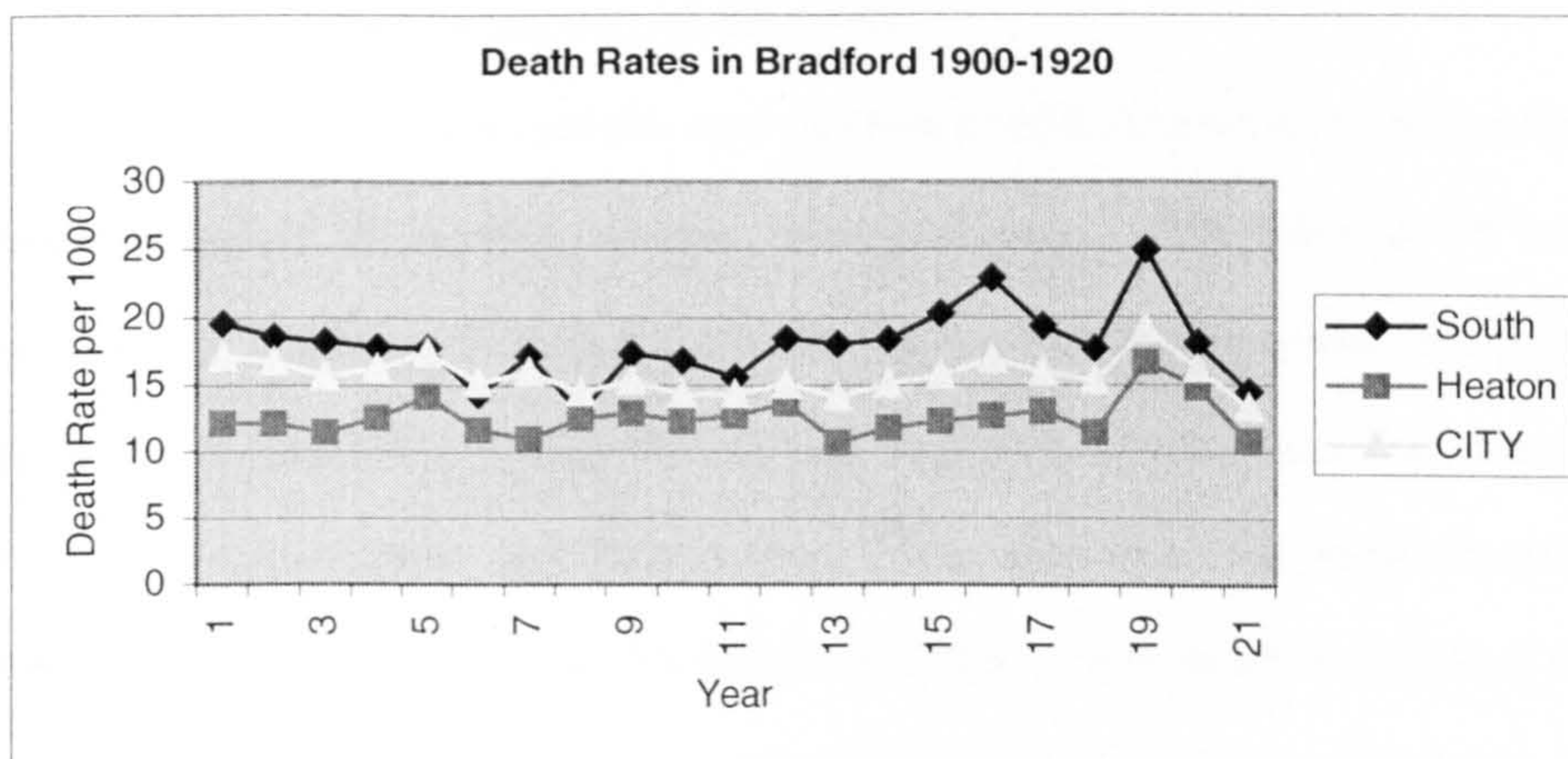
defrauded and terribly injured man. I maintain also that the margin of profit in such concerns as your own make it is very feasible indeed to raise the wool-comb operatives rate of pay to a more equitable basis.⁵⁶

There appears to have been little or no implementation of the recommendations of the woolcombers' enquiry published in 1899.

Death Rates

Jowitt described social conditions in Bradford at the turn of the century as appalling.⁵⁷ He noted that by the end of the nineteenth century there were wide variations in the social conditions that in turn produced wide variation in mortality rates. The infant mortality rate in the city will be discussed in the next chapter. However, the death rates for the first twenty years of the century show a similar picture to that highlighted by Jowitt.⁵⁸

Chart 3.5 – Death Rates for City of Bradford Compared with Two Wards



*Please note, the axis on this chart starts at 1, this refers to the year 1900 and so on.

The chart shows the death rates for the city of Bradford and for two of Bradford's ward. The south ward is shown here because it has been highlighted earlier in this chapter as a very poor ward. The ward of Heaton has been chosen as a contrast to the South ward. It can be seen that there were variations in the death rate in Bradford before 1914. In the South Ward in 1900 the death rate was 19.6 per thousand. This compares to 12.2 for the Heaton ward

⁵⁶ *Forward* 24th December 1904.

⁵⁷ Tony Jowitt, *Late Victorian and Edwardian Bradford*. p.105.

and 17.10 for the city as a whole. The death rate for the south ward remains higher than the average for the city of Bradford other than in 1907 when it was 12.97 compared to 14.47 for the city of Bradford. The death rates in Heaton remain consistently below the average for the city and well below the figures for the South ward. The policies and measures of the ILP could not have been expected to have an impact on the death rates in Bradford.

The next chapter focuses on the policies of the ILP in relation to women and children. These two groups were where the ILP had most impact on the health and social conditions.

Conclusions

The European war has so deeply disturbed and changed the economic conditions of the nation that previous proposals relating to terms of wages, pensions, taxation and industrial reform are rendered obsolete. Fresh proposals will therefore have to be formulated when it is seen how far these economic changes are likely to continue after the war – the scope of such proposals being in accordance with the increasing political and industrial organisation of the workers, the advancing standards and ideals of life and the growing capacity of the state.⁵⁹

Both the Bradford Liberals and the Bradford ILP failed to provide solutions to one of the main problems of poverty, namely unemployment. The reasons for unemployment were outside the control of local political parties and as such any solutions put forward were bound to have a limited effect. What the ILP did do was to suggest solutions that were connected to municipal government and local action. The land seizures were abandoned after notable failures such as the so-called Girdlington Klondyke. It is worth noting that the Bradford Liberal elite was also connected to a land colony scheme as the Bradford City Guild of Help supported one such scheme. Interest in local and municipal solutions to the problems of unemployment waxed and waned as unemployment rose and fell. The ILP ceased to see unemployment as an individual problem and began to connect to wider social issues around the time of the publication of the Minority and Majority Reports of the Royal Commission of the Poor Law. The ILP did try to offer solutions to unemployment in the form of local and municipal action although the ones that were tested did not prove to be successful. Once the

⁵⁸ Appendix3 Table app3.1.

⁵⁹ Report of the 27th Annual Conference of the ILP, Glasgow, April 1920.

ILP realised that unemployment was a problem that needed to be placed in a wider social policy context, it began to promote local action to deal with unemployment less and to accept and argue for solutions on a national basis, such as those outlined in the Minority Report.

The approach of the Bradford ILP to the problems of poor housing in Bradford differed to that put forward for unemployment. They did not call for new solutions to deal with the problems of poor housing rather that existing laws be applied to deal with the problems. The Bradford ILP had strong opposition from the local Liberal Party when they tried to eradicate some of the poorest housing in Bradford, that in the Longlands area. It took from 1901 when it was agreed to knock down property until 1907 for the scheme to be fully implemented. Even then, this was only one small area of poor housing. Conditions in Bradford housing did improve slightly between 1900 and 1920 although it is difficult to attribute this to any political party action. The ILP did call for some new action in terms of lobbying for fair rents. However, there is little evidence that this had any impact on the poor of Bradford.

The ILP did keep the poor conditions in which many of Bradford's working class lived on the local political agenda. The solutions put forward by the ILP were mainly trade union solutions such as the payment of trade union rates of pay and the establishment of fair contracts for municipal contract workers.

The ILP were restricted in two ways. Firstly because they were not strong enough in terms of numbers to put municipal solutions into practice. Secondly the ILP were limited and constrained in what solutions they could offer because of the trade union influence on the party. As Laybourn suggests, the trade unions were the main reason for the ILP capturing the support of the working class in Bradford, but trade union influence also acted as a check on the policies that the ILP were able to offer and made it difficult for the ILP to offer genuinely radical solutions to the problems of poverty.⁶⁰ There were however, two areas where the ILP had more success in implementing more successful policies and that was in the education programme for children, to some extent in response to women in poverty. Both of these policies will be explored in the next chapter.

⁶⁰ Laybourn, One of the Little Breezes, in *The Rising Sun of Socialism*, 1991, p.22.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL RESPONSES TO POVERTY IN BRADFORD - WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The more I understand and see into the lives of women belonging to my own class, the more I can get beneath the surface, the more admiration and genuine respect I feel for those who are struggling to bring up large families on insufficient means.¹

The effect of this debate [school feeding] is to put the issue very plainly before the citizens of Bradford. The predominant political party for the time being has determined that the disastrous effects of poverty are to be met on the old lines i.e. by charity and repressive Poor Law methods.²

The ILP and other political parties had more success in responding to problems of poverty specific to women and children than they did with the working-class population in general. There is more evidence available concerning what political parties did to respond to and alleviate poverty in Bradford for children, than there was for such problems as housing or unemployment. There is much more concrete evidence that the Bradford ILP were able to actually do something in the case of working-class children, the evidence is more patchy for working-class women. The Bradford ILP were always associated with advances in education and in particular in feeding the children of the working class. As in response to the poverty of the working class in general, the ILP proposed municipal solutions to the problems of poverty of women and children.

This chapter will show how the ILP responded to the poverty of children through the development of a programme of education and school feeding. The battle between the Bradford Liberals and the Bradford ILP for school feeding provides an excellent case study of the gap between advocacy of charity and the increasing argument for local or national government intervention. This chapter also seeks to argue that although the ILP did have success developing education policies in response to poverty, it did not have as much success in developing policies that covered other aspects of the lives of working-class children, most notably that of half-timers.

¹ *Forward*, 5 August 1905, P, Moulder, *The Lot of the Working Woman*.

² *Forward*, 17 December 1904.

This chapter seeks to explore what was done by the ILP in response to the poverty of working-class women in Bradford and to consider how much the ILP appeared to have been constrained by problems of trade union influence as they were with problems of unemployment. The debate on the extension of the franchise and how the ILP represented the position of women in society are important in helping to understand why the ILP did not have as much success with the problems of poverty of working-class women as they did with children. Their preoccupation with the suffrage issue limited the policies that were put forward in response to the poverty related problems of working-class women. They did, however, attempt to raise awareness of the problems through their paper, although an inconsistent message was given by a number of ILP writers. The problems of working-class women were almost always reported in conjunction with that of children or balancing working outside the home with caring for a family. This chapter represents a case study of how the poverty of women and children was dealt with by the ILP in Bradford at a time when the certainties of nineteenth-century ideas of charity and Poor Law were under attack but before the advent of the massive state welfare provision of the second half of the twentieth century.

Working-Class Women and the Bradford ILP

The evidence surrounding the way in which the ILP responded to the poverty of women in Bradford, is patchy. That is not to say that the ILP did respond to poverty of women. The main concerns of the ILP in relation to working-class women appeared to be related to two main themes. The first is concerned with working-class women's position within society, i.e. the roles that working-class women played and the second is related to the suffrage question. In order to understand why the ILP did not appear to do a great deal to respond to specific problems of poverty of working-class women, we need to explore the tensions that existed around the role of women. There was conflict within the ILP on how to treat women, as citizens in their own right or as extensions of their husbands and families. There was also conflict between the issue of female versus universal suffrage.

Between 1910 –1930 the Labour Party shifted its focus of interest from the industrial conditions of the skilled and unionised working class and to the conditions of working-class life in general. This working-class life was perceived from the main part by women. Its

condition of existence was analysed defined and documented in terms of health, infant mortality and welfare, maternity care and the lack of it, housing, the water supply, nutrition, education (particularly nursery schooling). These issues were women's issues and it was women who formulated them, spoke about them and wrote about them. It was women who performed the political task of using them to create an imaginative perception of the lives these conditions measured out, a sympathy for the people living under them, in the minds of skilled respectable, traditional, card carrying Labour Party members. It was women, using new political tactics like door-to-door canvassing, who took these issues back to the people who suffered the conditions they described and turned wastelands of despair into Labour fortresses.³

Carolyn Steedman pointed to some key areas for examining what the ILP did for working-class women in poverty. Health, infant mortality and maternity care will be examined in this study in order to see what the ILP and the other main political parties in Bradford were doing to help women in poverty. In order to understand what the ILP tried to do for working-class women in poverty, we need to explore some of the constraints and arguments about the position of working-class women in society.

Out of a total of 92000 who sought to join the army, over 2000 rejected at once. The remaining 71000 sent for further tests and another 24000 were rejected.⁴

It is now generally admitted that the woman question is the most important of all social problems⁵

The report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, which was published in 1904, highlighted the poor conditions of potential recruits to the army, in particular those from the towns. One of the biggest concerns was the fear of degeneration of the race. Inevitably attention became focused on women and in particular working-class women, as they were the ones having children who were too sick or unfit to defend the

³ Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class*, p. 8.

⁴ *Forward*, 29th April 1905, Excerpt from the Annual Report of the Army.

⁵ *Forward*, 10 March 1906.

country. The fear was that working-class women were having too many children and were ignorant about how to bring them up. This coupled with a high infant mortality rate combined to focus attention on working-class women. Whatever the reasoning behind the thinking, there were positive outcomes for working-class women such as improved maternity care, through greater regulation of midwives, better birth registration procedures and the opening of milk depots in order to provide unadulterated supplies of milk.

The ILP campaigned on a national scale and locally in Bradford, for measures such as these, especially to ensure that these services were provided by the municipal authority and not by private charity. However, the ILP did have some other issues to consider. The ILP was an organisation that allowed women and men to join on the same terms and there were many prominent and capable women members within the ILP. The conflict within the ILP was that there were those who did not necessarily think that women should be treated solely in terms of their roles within a home, whereas others did and there were all shades of opinion between the two opposing points of view. This effectively meant that it was difficult for the ILP to formulate clear policy on the issue of how to improve the lives of working-class women. This and the issue of whether the ILP should support female or universal suffrage meant the conflicting messages were presented by the ILP. This is true of Bradford as for the ILP nationally.

Limitations on the Bradford ILP

Carolyn Steedman, in her study of Margaret McMillan, argued that at the turn of the century, the working-class child was reconceptualised and taken out of the context of the society in which the child lived which allowed the particular problems of working-class children to be examined and focused as children rather than because of their role within society.⁶ This enabled the ILP to promote the interests of working-class children as children, rather than as members of a family or as workers in the labour force. However, there was no similar reconceptualisation of working-class women. During the first twenty years of the century, and in particular before the first world war, working-class women were dealt with largely in terms of the roles they played in society, that of mother, family member and worker. The role of mother within the home being held as the ideal. The ILP both nationally and in Bradford

followed this particular line and presented conflicting arguments as to how poverty of working-class women should be alleviated. The ILP did not appear to be sure whether women should be treated, as citizens in their own right or part of a family and a home and (largely) dependent upon men. Pat Thane, in her study of women and the Poor Law pointed out that for the most part, women were considered as dependants of men and that the Poor Law was unable to provide appropriate solutions for working-class women in poverty.⁷ The material from the ILP both nationally and in Bradford seems to show that members of the ILP did not present a consistent programme of how best to alleviate the problems of working-class women in poverty.

The ILP were an organisation that appeared to be very proud of its women membership and proud that women were full members in their own right and had equal status with men within the organisation. The ILP at a national level appeared to project the view that this equality within the ILP should be translated into equality within society.

Increased interest in both men and women in the question of women's social and political emancipation. One fundamental principle of the ILP is that exact equality of women and men in citizenship is indispensable to a nation's progress. More women have joined the party and undertook work, not merely as helpers, but in their own right.men are more alive to the importance of women taking their share in this work not merely as help-meets to them, but as fellow-workers on their own account. The whole question is now on a distinctly better level.⁸

There was disagreement within the ILP about whether women should be treated as workers or as home makers. Clearly the situation was the women had roles within both the domestic sphere and the world of work. However, the ILP found it difficult to formulate policy that would take account of these dual roles. The role of women as workers had implications for the trade unionists within the ILP. The argument often put forward was that women cheapened the Labour market and were largely not unionised. However, there is very little evidence that at a national level, this was a large issue. In Bradford, the issue of women

⁶ Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class*, p. 62.

⁷ Thane, *Women and the Poor Law*, p.31.

⁸ Report of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the ILP, 4th & 5th April, 1904, Cardiff.

workers and their effects on the labour market cropped up in the ILP newspaper. The writer urged women workers not to accept pay that was markedly less than that offered to men.

It is impossible to confine ourselves to occupations exclusively followed by women, because there are not enough of them; so wherever we come into competition with men for work, we must be careful to demand remuneration as nearly equal to theirs as we can. The effect of women's labour has almost always been to 'cheapen' the market, so that naturally men do not welcome the opposite sex as fellow workers. Women only worked when they were desperate and therefore would work for lower wages.⁹

There is little evidence within the conference records of the ILP or within the Bradford ILP newspapers and memoirs that the trade unionists tried to block women workers. However, they did press for women to become unionised.

The fact that women are contented with a lower standard of living than men and that often they are not entirely dependent on their own earnings for the maintenance even of that lower standard makes their rapidly increasing influx into almost every branch of industry a problem with which all thinking men are confronted. It is being gradually recognised that the solution of this problem is to be found in the trade organisation of all women wage earners.¹⁰

However, the fact the ILP often sometimes drew distinction between women who were married and worked and those who were single or widowed could indicate that married women were not welcomed as workers. For instance, in 1909 the national ILP conference called attention to the problems faced by women workers. However they specifically referred to widows and single women only.

That this conference views with indignation, the treatment meted out to Unemployed Women (widows and single women) under the Unemployed Workmen's Act. Recognising that an unrepresented, is an oppressed class, and that the increase in domestic legislation makes women's point of view necessary in politics, it calls upon the Labour Party to press forward by every means, the political emancipation of women.¹¹

⁹ *Forward*, 14th January 1905, Women's Column.

¹⁰ *Forward*, 10 March 1906.

¹¹ Motion from the Report of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the ILP, April 1909, Edinburgh.

Views such as the one expressed here give us an indication that many members of the Bradford ILP regarded the place of married women in society as being at home. However, this was not the reality for many working-class women. As we have seen from this study, many married women worked, both nationally and in textile areas such as Bradford.

For working women, one way of alleviating poor conditions was the same as that advocated by the ILP for men, that is to join a trade union.

Work by the women's labour league, Women's Trade Union League, Women's Co-operative Guild and Railway Women's Guild in rousing interest of women in their rights and duties as citizens, promoting the trade union organisation of women workers and urging forward means for the improvement of women's industrial and domestic conditions.¹²

It appeared that the ILP at a national level found it easy to deal with working women who were single or widowed and little mention is made of married women who stayed at home. Women who fell into these categories did not present difficulties to the ILP. Women whose position within society was not so clear cut were not so easy to deal with. In Bradford, many married women worked, largely out of necessity rather than choice, and it was these women working-class women who presented the Bradford ILP with a large challenge, how to deal with the poverty of working-class women. One solution which was put forward which underpinned many of the proposals was for a family wage to be paid to men and thus eliminating the need for a married woman to go out to work.

In Bradford, as at a national level there was conflict around what would be the best situation for a married woman. The majority of evidence relating to the lives of working-class women appeared in the Bradford ILP newspaper, *Forward* and in particular in the Women's Column. For instance in 1904, the Women's Column of the ILP asserted the main role for a woman was within the home.

I think domestic conditions are the best and most natural ones for women.....Any woman who is bringing up a family ought not to be at the same time earning bread for that family To do her work properly (bringing up her family) she will require all her energies and no amount of education of mind and heart can be too great to use in her

¹² Report of the 'Coming of Age' Conference, April 1914, Bradford.

life's work. On the other hand I think every woman should learn to earn her own living having if possible, a period at home in which she may become familiar with the domestic side of things.¹³

However, many women in Bradford worked and in particular in the textile industry, whether the author of the Women's Column liked it or not. Asserting that a woman's role was within the home did not help to alleviate the conditions of working-class women in Bradford. In 1905, the author of the Women's Column attempted to contrast the type of work available for working-class women. (Believe at this time the author was Elsie Ford Munro) On 4th February 1905, the author of the 'Women's Column' wrote that a 'women's natural work is domestic and looking after children'.¹⁴ In her article she tried to draw distinctions between women's work as a domestic servant and compared it to work in factories. She painted a very bleak picture of work in factories and a rosy picture of life in domestic service. To compare:

She spends her day in quiet rooms where the air is pure. Her occupations are various, but broadly speaking, the greater part of her time is spent in keeping clean and dainty the rooms under her charge..... She wears a clean and even dainty costume and at the present time she can choose her associates because she need not stay with either a mistress or a fellow worker who she does not like.

The factory worker goes to her work at 6am, good weather or bad, winter and summer. She spends her day in hot rooms, filled with the smell of oil and the roar of machinery and a certain amount of danger to life and limb. She cannot choose her associates; they may be good, bad, clean or dirty. She must put up with them. She leaves her work at 6pm if she is working full-time. It will take her possibly an hour or more to get tea and wash and dress so it is really after 7pm before leisure really begins and to rise by 5.30, she must be in bed in good time so we say she has three hours of her own.¹⁵

Her column the following week continued in a similar vein and continued to press the case for domestic service for women rather than factory work. She reported that women who

¹³ *Forward* 24th December 1904, Women's Column.

¹⁴ *Forward*, 4th February 1905 Women's Column.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

are domestic servants and healthier than those who work in factories, although no figures were presented to back this up and that

The degeneration of the race we hear so frequently nowadays is caused primarily by the lack of vitality in the mothers, and that in turn is brought about by unsuitable work.¹⁶

The unsuitable work she referred to most probably being factory work, bearing in mind her earlier writings. And so we find a view expressed in a Bradford ILP newspaper that it was working women who were responsible for racial degeneration. However, this view was not held by all members of the Bradford ILP.

Even the author of the diatribe against women working in general and in particular in factories, conceded that women's place in society was not the best. Although she tried to emphasise that there were ways and means that a women could achieve advantages, although she does not actually say what they were. The author of the Women's Column in January 1905 argued that women had not been subjected to degradation because in order to be degraded women had to at one time have 'been up' and she commented that women had never 'been up' and therefore could not be put down. She contested that poor women had power if they 'went about it the right way' though she also makes the point that this was not always recognised.

If the woman who is clever enough to recognise and act upon this principle is capable of thinking imperially and equally incapable of acting imperiously – the fear which is probably at the root of most men's objections to granting our sex the franchise.¹⁷

Not all contributors to the ILP newspaper held the same views as the writer of the Women's Column in 1904 and 1905. In August of 1905, P Moulder discussed the absolute drudgery and poor quality of the lives of working-class women, in particular those with large families and expressed sympathy and understanding. This contributor obviously had a different perspective from that expressed in the Women's Column.

The more I understand and see into the lives of women belonging to my own class the more I can get beneath the surface, the more admiration and genuine respect I feel for those who are struggling to bring up large families on insufficient means.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Forward* 11th February 1905, Women's Column.

¹⁷ *Forward* 7th January 1905, Women's Column.

¹⁸ *Forward*, 5th August 1905, Moulder, The Lot of the Working Woman.

By the September of 1905 it appeared that the Women's column had a new author, either that or the previous author had undergone a dramatic conversion. The author called for women workers to have equal status with men. It is highly likely that the author of the column had changed. That the opinion was so different concerning working women suggested that there was a great deal of conflict within the Bradford ILP as to the best way to alleviate the problems of working-class women.

Appears to be a great amount of misunderstanding concerning the all important question of protective legislation for working women. The one side declares that the only possible way to raise the industrial position of women is to give them all the protection which the law can afford. Just as confidently the other side states that to put home industries under the Factory Acts would mean starvation or worse still, prostitution for those concerned. Further, that no lasting good can be attained for women workers until they are put on equal terms with men.¹⁹

Again, the following quote from the paper further emphasises the gulf between the two points of view. In an almost direct reversal of the earlier column writer's advocacy of domestic service for women, the new writer draws on evidence to show that women who had been domestic servants and then go on to work in the textile industry, very rarely go back to domestic service.

My own experience of life in a textile factory cover a period of 20 years and I have often noticed that when young women and girls once work under protective legislation, they never again take kindly to work when no law limits the hours of labour. For instance, general servants who often find their way into factories very very seldom try to return to their former mode of life.²⁰

It is clear that this writer is talking from experience within the textile industry whereas the earlier columnist gives no indication of any direct experience of either domestic or factory labour.

However, the issue relating to the position of women within society that seemed to occupy the ILP at both a national level and in Bradford, was that of adult suffrage versus female suffrage. This thesis will not examine this in detail at the national level, but rather focus on the situation

¹⁹ *Forward*, 9th September 1905, Woman's Column.

in Bradford. What is clear from the point of view of the national ILP is that suffrage was the issue that occupied most space with regard to the position of women in society. Other measures that may have benefited working-class women were to some extent sidelined and subsumed in the campaign for the vote. The implication being that, depending on which form of suffrage was advocated that conditions would be better for working-class women when women were enfranchised or when everyone was enfranchised.

At a national level, the issue dominated the agenda on women's issues and the debate raged at conference after conference, getting progressively more and more hostile until the main actors in the female suffrage movement resign from the ILP following censure for not supporting Labour candidates in Cocker mouth and Huddersfield.²¹ There were motions passed almost every year in support widening the franchise. The difference being that after resignations of prominent female suffrage supporters such as Mrs Pankhurst, there appeared to be less conflict between the issue of female versus adult suffrage. For instance, at the 1905 ILP conference the discussion that followed this motion centred on the problems of politics according to class and sex.

That this conference reaffirms its adherence to the position taken at the last conference with regard to adult suffrage and enfranchisement of women, viz. that the ILP is in favour of Adult Suffrage with full political rights and privileges for women and the immediate extension of the franchise on the same terms as granted to men.²²

A member argued that until the issues around women getting the vote were resolved, they would continue to interfere in class politics. The motion was seconded by Christabel Pankhurst who argued that the alternative to the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was not adult suffrage, but manhood suffrage. Those that spoke against argued that they wanted women to have the vote, but all women and not just middle-class women. Theresa Billington spoke in support of the motion and said that she protested that the previous speaker referred to the ILP as a 'working mans party'.²³ This perhaps, showing the issues that influenced the way in which women were perceived within the ILP.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Report of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, April 1907, Derby.

²² Motion from the Report of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, 24th & 25th April 1905 Manchester.

²³ Debate on suffrage issues from the Report of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, 24th & 25th April 1905 Manchester.

The issues remained important to the ILP and at the 'Coming of Age' conference in Bradford there was praise and a special motion proposed for the work done by the Women's Suffrage Society.

This is pride for all of us in the fact that at a time when there was literally no public opinion support of the women's claim, the ILP by its dedications and its constitution and advocacy of 'votes for women' did very much towards creating that opinion which is now so manifest.²⁴

Although the ILP supported the campaign for votes for women, and emphasised their role in changing attitudes, they also highlighted the work of other organisations in improving the conditions for working-class women.

Women grasped opportunities for service and the exercise of good citizenship. Women's enfranchisement put aside for the moment. The women's movement, including Socialist Labour, trade unions, co-operative and suffrage combined in a major anti-war demonstration but when war broke out they organised hospital units and established maternity and child welfare centres throughout the country. Labour women formed the Central Committee on Women's Employment and were entrusted with the administration of the Queens' Work for Women Fund.²⁵

The national debate on suffrage was reflected to a large extent in the ILP in Bradford in that there was some conflict between those who were in favour of universal suffrage and those who were in favour of women's suffrage. For instance views from both sides of the debate were aired in the newspaper of the Bradford ILP '*Forward*'.

Adult suffrage is real reform.....women's suffrage is just tinkering at the old one²⁶

A columnist wrote in favour of women's suffrage in the Women's Column of *Forward* in November of 1905. Amongst the arguments presented in favour of women's suffrage, the writer highlighted that many women work:

18 thousand find employment in the Post Office alone. There are many women sanitary inspectors; there are doctors, public accountants, indexers, gardeners,

²⁴ Report of the 'Coming of Age' Conference, April 1914, Bradford.

²⁵ Report of the Twenty Second Annual Conference of the ILP, April 1915, Norwich.

²⁶ *Forward* 7th January 1905.

farmers, hairdressers, stockbrokers, lecturers and novelists. These of course belong exclusively to the middle classes. Among the industrial class it has been roughly estimated that some 12,000,000 women are employed in the manufacture of textile fabrics and close on 4,000,000 in workshops.²⁷

It is worth noting that this columnist singled out working women in particular as being deserving of the vote because of the contribution these women made to the economy. The columnist does not argue for the extension of the franchise for women on a general principle. Other ILP newspapers, did although argue for votes for women as a general principle. For instance:

It (the Bradford Pioneer) must wage a strong and vigorous fight for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men.²⁸

The conflict between the two views was not quite so important in Bradford than at a national level, as rather than fighting within the ranks; the ILP had the intransigence of the Liberals to contend with. It is important to examine the suffrage issue in Bradford as it enables us to understand what the Bradford ILP thought was the best solutions to alleviate the problems of poverty for working-class women and why solutions to the problems of poverty were not pursued.

The Bradford ILP newspaper published remarks made by Bradford Liberals in 1904 which set out their views on the issue of votes for women.

(women) Not qualified for the Parliamentary vote.....they lacked the reasoning power necessary for deciding how to record a vote.²⁹

By reason of her education and environment, a woman did not require a turn of mind capable of comprehending vast and diversified interest you know involved in what were known as imperial politics whilst at the same time performing the duty – ahem – towards home.³⁰

This can be contrasted with the views put forward by the Bradford ILP, which when arguing in favour of women's suffrage noted that

²⁷ *Forward*, 11th November 1905.

²⁸ *Bradford Pioneer*, 17th January 1913.

²⁹ *Forward*, October 29th 1904, from a report of the meeting of the Bradford Liberals at Bank Street Club.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Women have always been deprived of power to appeal for redress against their grievances....on the grounds of survival of the fittest, women should be enfranchised, also on moral grounds. There are five times as many male as female criminals showing that while women had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them, this they did better than men.....Australia and New Zealand have no difficulty where women are allowed a Parliamentary vote and why should we have any? Working women should at least have a say in legislation, which affects them quite as much as men.³¹

The suffrage issue dominated the debate on women during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Because of this domination other issues important to women in poverty have tended to be somewhat obscured. It seems that the ILP's response to women in poverty was to obtain the vote. There is not so much evidence as to what the ILP did to relieve the poverty of women as there is about the fight to obtain the vote. It is clear that the conflict within the ILP on suffrage and other issues meant there was difficulty in forming policy on issues specific to working-class women in poverty.

In order to try and find out what, if anything the Bradford ILP were doing to respond to the poverty related problems of working-class women, two key areas of working-class women's lives will be considered, that of health in particular maternity care and infant mortality. There is little evidence available that the ILP in Bradford took a direct role in health and maternity care or infant mortality. It appears that the main contribution of the ILP was to urge that services be provided by the municipal authority rather than by the charitable means that were favoured by the Bradford Liberals.

Infant Mortality

Infant mortality was a major issue for all political parties during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. It has been suggested that health officials were attached to one particular solution to the problem of infant mortality, that of education of mothers rather than any other.³² She maintained that this was put forward as the solution because infant mortality

³¹ *Forward*, 11th November 1905.

³² Jane Lewis, *The Social History of Social Policy: Infant Welfare in Edwardian England*. *Journal of Social Policy* 9,4,463-86, p.463. Carol Dyhouse, *Working-Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England 1895-1914*. *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 12, 2, 1978, p.251.

was perceived as a failure of motherhood. She pointed out that this enabled those concerned with infant welfare to promote more personal responsibility on the part of mothers. This solution downplayed any environmental causes of infant mortality. Lewis also described the health centres that were set up and points out that the baby clinics were always better attended than the classes on motherhood despite the voluntary bodies at the time insisting that the main business of the clinics was education, not medical treatment.³³

In the previous chapter it can be seen that the ILP tried to alleviate poverty through highlighting problems in the press and pursuing municipal solutions, where appropriate rather than advocating charitable answers. As can be expected the ILP followed a similar line in dealing with the poverty of working-class women. One service, that of women sanitary inspectors provided mainly through the municipal authority gives an indication of the conditions and problems experienced by working-class women in Bradford.

At the national ILP conference in 1904, one of the Bradford delegates proposed a motion encouraging the work of women sanitary inspectors.

It recognises, however, that the immediate remedial measures of a partial character are urgently needed, and strongly urges upon local authorities the importance of engaging trained nurses who shall act as sanitary inspectors and advisors to the poor, and so encourage better methods of feeding the young and that physical training in schools be insisted upon.³⁴

In Bradford there was one such inspector, Miss Stephen, who reported to the Health Committee of the City of Bradford until December of 1904 and afterwards to the Medical Officer of Health. She produced quarterly reports that outlined her work in the community. Before 1903 her role mainly involved investigating cases of overcrowding, but during 1903 an assistant was appointed and the remit of the sanitary inspector widened to cover inspection of workshops where only women are employed.

Up until March 1905, the reports of the sanitary inspectors were largely concerned with conditions of overcrowding, however in March 1905, the report picked out education of mothers in childcare as being very important. The women sanitary inspectors highlighted the feeding practices found in Bradford at the time.

³³ Lewis, *The Social History of Social Policy*, p.483.

Instruction in feeding and clothing infants form one of the most important parts of our duties and it is extraordinary what ignorance prevails in these matters. One continually finds children of two years not yet weaned, infants being fed every half hour or whenever they cry, long tubed bottles used, which are rarely properly cleansed, the inside of the India rubber tube in some cases being a seething mass of corruption, infants sharing chipped potatoes, herrings and the general food of the parents. High infant mortality can hardly be wondered at.³⁵

The sanitary inspectors also presented evidence as to advice given to working-class women on feeding children.

One respectable, well dressed young woman told me she had not given her baby the breast because she had been told by her own mother that by doing so she would starve the infant.³⁶

The women sanitary inspectors also reported that working mothers were to blame in some cases for the condition of their children, although they do not present any evidence to back this up.³⁷ They also blamed drink and laziness for the poor conditions of working-class families, citing that all cases of when neglect and dirt were found were caused by drink.³⁸

This quarter a careful investigation of every case of filth and neglect has resulted in the discovery that the alcoholic habit has in each case gone hand in hand with the conditions revealed. Alcoholism amongst women is a most serious matter as it seems to deaden all their finer feelings and renders them callous to the care of their homes and little ones.³⁹

Infant mortality was one of the most important issues of the first twenty years of the twentieth century. It is the issue that links the initiatives to improve the lives of working-class women with that to improve the conditions of working-class children.

³⁴ Motion from the Report of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the ILP, 4th & 5th April, 1904, Cardiff.

³⁵ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, March 1905.

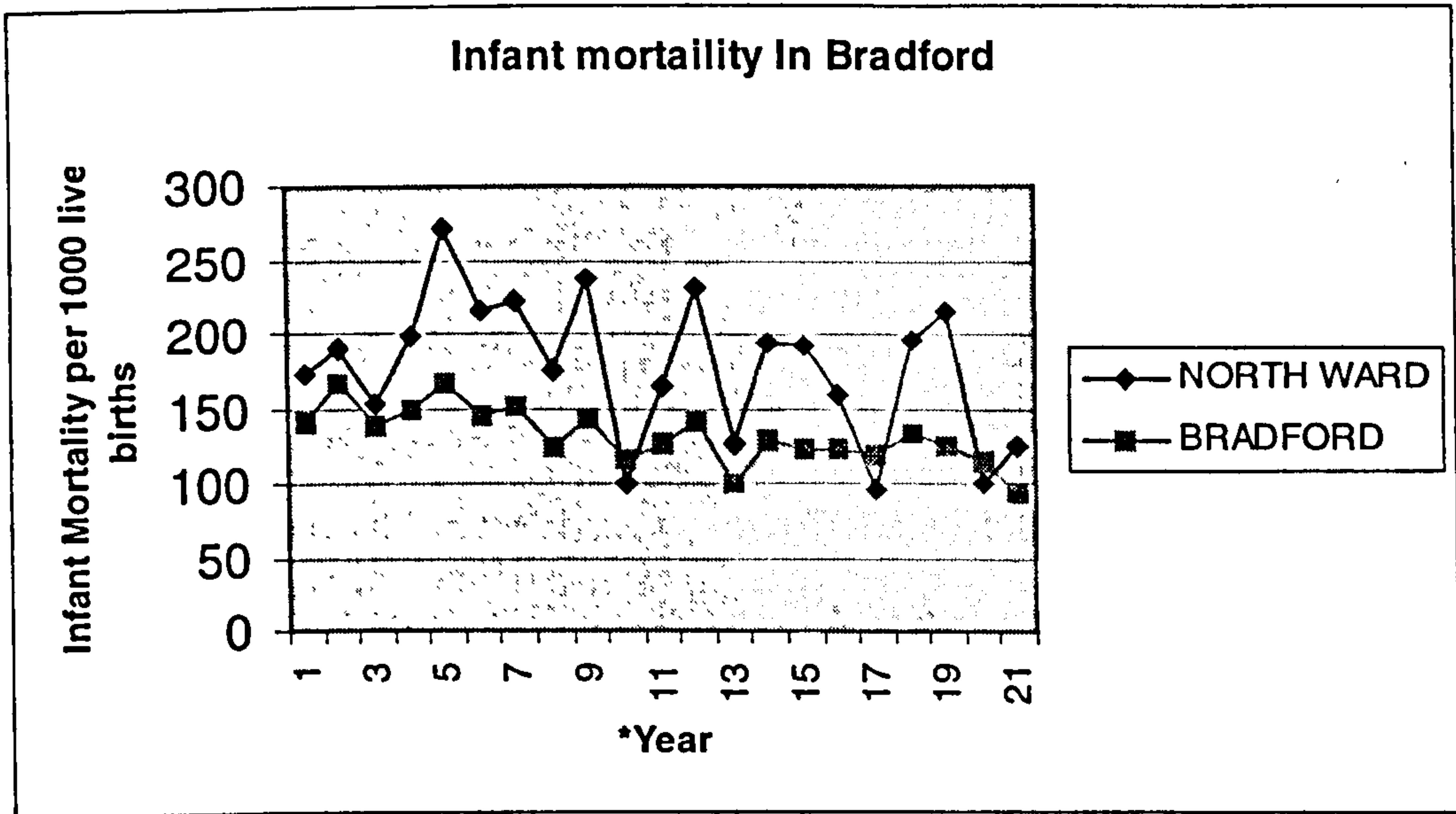
³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, December 1905.

³⁸ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, March 1906 and December 1906.

³⁹ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, March 1906.

Chart 4.1 – Infant Mortality in Bradford 1900-1921



* Year 1 refers to 1900, year 2 to 1901 etc

The graph shows the level for infant mortality for the city of Bradford and that of the North Ward. The North Ward has been used as a comparison because there was a higher incidence of infant mortality in that ward and it is where much of the visiting work carried out by and on behalf of the Sanitary Inspectors was carried out. The overall picture of infant mortality in Bradford is that in the period 1900-1920 it was gradually falling, but fluctuated year on year. The infant mortality rate of the North Ward is almost always higher than the average for the city in total. There are only three occasions when the infant mortality rate in the North Ward falls below the average for the city.

The response of the Bradford ILP to the problems of infant mortality are similar to those which the Bradford ILP put forward to deal with other symptoms associated with poverty. The ILP pressed for municipal action. This brought conflict with the Bradford Liberals, who with a majority on the council were able to make sure that the least amount of money was spent on providing services. The ILP was always critical of this, citing the long term effects of not providing municipal services.

Mr George Naylor, speaking at an election meeting in Allerton declared that "he would support a proposal to stop the municipal milk depot " if money was being lost

by it. We do not often find even a Liberal candidate prepared to vote on such a clear issue of death-rate versus property rate in favour of maintaining the death-rate and in order to reduce the other rate.⁴⁰

As the previous chapter shows, and this chapter also indicates, the ILP did put pressure on the council to alleviate poverty through the extension of services provided through the municipal government. In 1905 an Inspector of Midwives was appointed and the Sanitary Inspectors reports become more focused in this area rather than with overcrowding. It is difficult to say whether this was a direct result of the pressure of the ILP, but the ILP had supported this measure and called for more women Sanitary Inspectors. The first report concerning Bradford midwives came in December 1905. The inspectors found that they had originally been notified of 49 midwives practising in Bradford, they then found an additional 20 certified midwives and 24 uncertified midwives. Of those that were certified, only four were fully trained and a further six described as very satisfactory.

Many are of the clean and old fashioned type but very ignorant, quite a large proportion being unable to write and knowing practically nothing of disinfectants. Eight were decidedly of doubtful character.⁴¹

Women who worked were also blamed by the Women Sanitary Inspectors for the infant mortality. There is also some mention of drink as a cause of poverty and neglect.

The lack of employment is a serious factor in the question of infantile mortality. Mothers in industrial centres are forced to give up breast-feeding, wean the infant and themselves go to the mill to earn something towards the upkeep of the family.⁴²

The Women Sanitary Inspectors did not subscribe to the view that women who worked often provided more for their children than women who did not work and that work in itself might alleviate infant mortality rather than add to it. The Women Sanitary Inspectors highlighted one case where irregular work had meant that a pregnant woman had been forced to go out to work and whose baby had died. The Inspectors also highlighted a lack of food as well as the woman working as having caused the baby to die.

⁴⁰ *Forward* 4th November 1905.

⁴¹ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, December 1905.

⁴² *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, September 1908.

Man out of work for two months before the birth of the baby, on short time before that. Mother, badly fed throughout the pregnancy and forced to go out cleaning. The baby was very weak when born and survived one day.⁴³

The women sanitary inspectors in Bradford did not subscribe to the view of Dr John Robertson, the Medical officer of health in Birmingham who showed that the infant mortality rate amongst working women was actually lower than that of women who didn't work.⁴⁴ Carol Dyhouse pointed to the evidence put forward by Robertson that the earnings of the woman were important in working-class households and that women who worked weren't neglecting their families rather helping them instead.

In the September of 1907 Bradford Council adopted the Notification of Births Act and appointed a further two inspectors. A scheme was set up to combat the practice of notifying births within six weeks as this had led to births and deaths being notified together. Midwives were issued with stamped addressed postcards on which they notified births. The Bradford City Guild of Help provided voluntary workers to give supplementary visits to new mothers. Thirteen of the workers of the Guild of Help had been assisting in the north ward of the city. No other wards were covered by the Guild of Help at this time.

Minimum number of visits to each home must be one per week and it is important that for each worker to remember that she must regard herself as a true friend to the mother – a fellow sister who will do her utmost to help with gentle counsel and wise advice.⁴⁵

As has already been explored in chapter one and two of this study, the guild often did not provide 'gentle counsel and wise advice' but censure.

The Sanitary Inspectors reported on the conditions in which the mothers were living and speculated as to solutions to the problem of infant mortality. They wrote that their resources were not adequate and that they were only scratching the surface of infant mortality.⁴⁶ As their investigations into the maternity care provided to Bradford's mothers progressed, the inspectors suggested measures that might improve conditions for women and children. In March 1908 the Inspectors report asked why there was no charitable society that

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Dyhouse, *Working-Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England*, p.254.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, September 1907.

⁴⁶ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, December 1907.

provided help for working-class mothers.⁴⁷ Six months later the Sanitary Inspectors seemed to have concluded that the extension of the service through municipal funds was appropriate.

It may become necessary to follow the example of Liverpool and Glasgow and draw from municipal sources. The foundation of health is laid in infancy and it appears to be rather late in life to wait until a child has reached school age before it is to receive sufficient nourishment, yet but for the Cinderella club, such, at present would be the state of affairs.⁴⁸

The ILP linked the high infant mortality rate and the poor health that children had when they went to school. The solution that was advocated was for municipal government to be compelled to set up clinics, the cost to be paid by the national government.

That in view of the high infantile death rate and the large number of children who enter school suffering from physical defects, this Conference urges the government to make it compulsory on local authorities to establish baby clinics for the medical treatment of babies and children under school age and make grants for this purpose from national funds.⁴⁹

The Bradford ILP and Working-Class Children

The issue that the Bradford ILP claimed as their own was that of the welfare of children. The way in which the ILP responded to [the poverty of] working-class children in poverty was to try and remove questions of child poverty from the Poor Law and for them to be dealt with through education departments either municipal or nationally. The ILP in Bradford was particularly successful in responding to the poverty of children. Children in poverty had been on the agenda of the Bradford ILP in Bradford since Margaret McMillan had highlighted the problems in the 1890s. Much of the ground work to respond to the poverty of children was laid by McMillan and her work on the Bradford School Board. Carolyn Steedman explained how McMillan focused on children in their own right rather than in the context of a working-class family or in working-class culture. This separated working-class children from the failings of their parents and meant that the ILP were able to focus on

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Report of the Women Sanitary Inspectors*, Bradford, June 1908.

⁴⁹ Report of the 'Coming of Age' Conference, April 1914, Bradford.

them.⁵⁰ McMillan left a legacy of work and raised interest in the problems of Bradford's working-class children, ensuring that the business of education was very much the business of the ILP.

Education was fundamental to the ILP in order that the next generation would understand socialism, and in turn would support the ILP. That is not to say that the whole reason that the ILP responded to the poverty of children in the way they did was a future vote grabbing exercise. Their response to the poverty of children covered child health, education and work. The ILP at both a national and Bradford level kept issues relating to these on the political agenda. The ILP's response to poverty led, for the first time to children being treated in their own right rather than as the property of their parents.

On the face of it, the principle is revolutionary. Children in school become now for the first time in the eyes of the Poor Law, separate and distinct human beings with stomachs and citizen right, of their own; and are not as previously, merely detached astral sample factions of their parents.....But secondly it bears also on the right of the parent to retain the vote.⁵¹

The work of the ILP in responding to the poverty of children in Bradford covered health, feeding, equal opportunity in education and the employment of children. The most notable area where the ILP made the most impact was in child feeding, and also had some success in the others.

Children's health / cleanliness

McMillans' work on the Bradford School Board highlighted the poor conditions in which children were living. She first emphasised that children needed to be clean, before they were fed.

The other day I stood before a number of children – all very poor neglected, some living, or herding with a strange woman and strange bedfellows in one room, and sharing a tap with a dozen families and a basin with a dozen companions.

'Dears', said I 'you are very dirty'. Would you like to go into a bath? Great consternation on all hands. Some are silent and solemn as contemplating some awful

⁵⁰ Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class*, p. 62-65.

⁵¹ *Forward*, May 1905.

To Come (sic). Others shiver closer together. Well, would you like it? Said I. 'Tell me the truth.'

No I'd noan like it, said the dirtiest girl. I'm feared, I am of the water. It's cold.

But the little girl at the end of the form is contemplative. She looks at me with her soft dark eyes. Do you? She ventured timidly. 'Does a person take all their clothes off?'

She said.

'Have you never had a bath?' I ask.

'Yes, yes', says the little one telling a familiar lie. 'I has a bath. I has, every week.'

'And you don't take your clothes off then?'

'Please, teacher, no.' says the child. Mother never makes us take off our clothes.⁵²

McMillan's interest and focus on the health of children in Bradford was followed in the first two decades of the twentieth century by a concerted effort of the ILP to keep the issues on the agenda. The ILP tied in child health with education as a whole and as such, advocated that the health of children be dealt with through the education system either at municipal level or national level, but out of the control of the Poor law. This response to the poverty of children tried to tie all of the issues of child poverty together under the umbrella of education.

At a national level, the ILP called for medical inspection to be made as part of an education programme administered at the municipal level. School medical inspection would not provide an end to problems of child health but rather it would be a beginning and that treatment would be given. The following is an example of the ILP attempt to respond to the problems of poverty at a time of challenge to the ideas of nineteenth century charity and poor law and at a time when there was no comprehensive welfare state net.

ILP members should define the nature of the medical examination. They should work for a thorough general examination of all children on their entrance of school life and leaving it, free of charge. All children holding a 'bad health card' should be inspected every two months. An inspection is useless if no treatment is given. Provision to be

⁵² *Bradford Labour Echo*, 18 September 1897, Margaret McMillan, School Board Notes.

made for the school doctor to visit homes and do what is necessary to cure the children. Many diseases are due to neglect.⁵³

It is arguable that the ILP in Bradford were not following the national ILP's agenda on school medical inspection. Rather it may have been that the national ILP were following the agenda laid down in Bradford. Certainly Margaret McMillan had advocated school medical inspections as part of a programme of education, in Bradford during the 1890's. And during the first two decades of the twentieth century the ILP in Bradford continued to pursue a socialist education agenda that encompassed a joined up response to many of the problems of child poverty.

They must be taught habits of cleanliness by the provision of baths; they must be physically developed by a system of scientific gymnastics; the girls must be taught practically the principles of cookery and home economy; both boys and girls should be instructed in the laws of health. Finally the rights and duties of the citizen and the principles of government should occupy a prominent place in the school curriculum.⁵⁴

Other measures included washing baths to be built in every new school, half yearly dental treatment, feeding of children, supervised by the doctor and open air schools for delicate children.⁵⁵

Margaret McMillan, who made much impact on the thinking of the ILP as well as on the lives of Bradford's children, was still promoting the ideas she formulated during her time on the Bradford School Board.

Medical inspection had been part of the law of the land but the Act as it stood was wholly inoperative just in the places where it was needed most. They had secured medical examinations and the next step was to be treatment, which could not be got without cash.⁵⁶

During 1907 medical inspection was part of the education programme. It is difficult to see if the ILP were directly responsible for this, given that there was much interest in the health of working-class children in other political parties. However, the ILP carried out so much work

⁵³ Report of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Derby, April 1907.

⁵⁴ *Forward*, 21 October 1905, Verax, A Socialist Education Programme.

⁵⁵ Report of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Derby, April 1907.

⁵⁶ Margaret McMillan, in Report of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Huddersfield, April 1908.

and were so consistent in their advocacy of medical inspection that it can be concluded that the ILP must have had some influence.

Act of Parliament has made Medical Inspection compulsory on all Education Authorities. Information of a very detailed nature is required.⁵⁷

School Feeding in Bradford

What is the chief obstacle to the progress of the socialist party? It is the inert mass of ignorance and indifference which prefers the public house to the lecture room; and the betting news of the sporting press to any form of literature demanding thought. What effect have Socialist press or socialist platform on these?.....But their children can be educated so as to become useful and intelligent citizens. If socialists hope to realise their dreams in the near future, it is upon these that their efforts should be concentrated.⁵⁸

We do not conceal and never have concealed our belief in a plan of universal school meals as a matter of education if for nothing else.⁵⁹

The most notable success that Bradford ILP had in responding to the poverty of Bradford's children came with their sustained campaign for municipal school feeding. No other political party did more than the Bradford ILP to set the agenda and to pursue it until they achieved their aim of municipal school feeding. The achievement of the Bradford ILP in bringing about municipal school feeding was only part of the wider agenda of the ILP: that of providing a set of services for working-class children under the umbrella of education and outside of the Poor Law. Municipal school feeding challenged the nineteenth century Liberal ideology that parents should be wholly responsible for taking care of their children. School feeding challenged this and for the first time, the state, in the guise of municipal government became responsible for the welfare of children in the care of the education system. What is also important to remember is that municipal school feeding was the first response to poverty that did not involve pauperisation of the families involved. The children were treated as separate to their families and therefore their parents could not lose their vote if their children were fed by the state. As municipal school feeding had nothing to do with the Poor Law

⁵⁷ Report of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Edinburgh, April 1909.

⁵⁸ *Forward*. 18th November 1905.

Guardians, the families could not be pauperised. The state provided a service to alleviate poverty outside of both charity and the Poor Law.

The advocates of Charity and the Poor Law did not give up to municipal action without a struggle. The battle to set up municipal school feeding was one of the most fierce between the Liberals and the ILP.

Forward, the newspaper of the Bradford ILP outlined the debate on school feeding held in the council in 1904. The subcommittee of the Education Committee had been dealing with school feeding. The subcommittee asked the Cinderella Club to start feeding children and that the municipal government should finance it. The problem arose when the education committee refused to confirm the resolution of the subcommittee and argued that charity should finance the feeding. Fred Jowett, quoted Rowntree and Cinderella Club figures and predicted that children would grow up in poor health if the measures weren't implemented. The motion was passed with support from all sides (9 Labour, 13 Liberal and 13 Conservatives) although shortly afterwards, the Liberal caucus voted to challenge the resolution.

In the debate that followed the Bradford Liberals, in particular H.B. Priestman, argued strongly in favour of charity providing the funds, however not all Liberals supported him, Jacob Moser voted against him. Jacob Moser was one of the founders of the Bradford City Guild of Help and a 'new Liberal' as opposed to the Alfred Illingworth faction of old Liberals that appeared to dominate in Bradford. The old style Liberals of Bradford argued that charity had not failed in the past.

Voluntary Aid had never yet failed, our glorious traditions as a charity giving and receiving nation would always be upheld and if the necessitous children are fed and clothed will not the community be responsible for irresponsible breeding? It will be an evil day when the working-class need no longer struggle for existence.⁶⁰

Jowett lost the vote to the Liberals and commented that:

The effect of this debate is to put the issue very plainly before the citizens of Bradford.

The predominant political party for the time being has been determined that the

⁵⁹ *Forward*, 11th November 1905.

⁶⁰ *Forward*, 17th December 1904.

disastrous effects of poverty are to be met on the old lines, i.e. by charity and repressive poor law methods.⁶¹

In its campaign to bring about school feeding, the ILP took more than one angle in order to attract support for the campaign for municipal school feeding. There was awareness of the results of the report on Physical Deterioration and the ILP exploited this to some extent and tried to use the fears of racial degeneration in order to further the case for municipal school feeding.

Note on physical deterioration. These soldiers born in India and the colonies are far better than those in England....Could anyone desire a more convincing argument in favour of a proper universal system of maintenance for school children.⁶²

The aim of education should be to make citizen. We want to rear a race truly capable of bearing the 'burden of empire', a race of stalwart men and comely women.....to create a new race we must begin with the children. First and foremost they must be fed.⁶³

The ILP argued as to the futility of trying to teach children who had not had enough to eat.

Minds and Morals have a physical basis. It is cruel to tax the mind of a child who is deficient in nervous energy due to slow starvation.....The feeding of the child is a branch of education not of the Poor Law.⁶⁴

They also highlighted support from other areas such as Sir John Gorst, a Conservative and ex minister who had an interest in education and had carried out some work in Germany. Gorst compared the system in Germany somewhat unfavourably with that provided in the UK. Gorst also discussed ideas about laissez faire and concluded that they were not valid in the case of education.

Nearly all the teachers with whom I spoke agreed that it was not only cruel but next to useless to teach hungry children.....At all costs the child must be fed. Some people still cherish the foolish idea that by leaving the child to starve you are exercising some sort of moral suasion over the parents. That is all nonsense. If parents don't

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Forward*, 21st January 1905.

⁶³ Verax, A Socialist Education Programme, in *Forward*, 21 October 1905.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

feed their children, the state must. What you do with the parents afterwards is another question.⁶⁵

The lines between the Bradford Liberals and ILP were drawn and it was clear that there could be no compromises. The ILP prided itself on not making any pacts with the Liberals in Bradford. J.H. Palin, at the 'Coming of Age' Conference commented that:

There had never had had an understanding with Liberalism in Bradford because they had a Liberalism of the gradgrind order, which no one could possibly mistake for a progressive party.⁶⁶

The effort made by the Board of Guardians to feed the children of Bradford proved to be a disaster and was exposed by the ILP. A sustained campaign was kept up by *Forward* to ensure that the failures of the Guardians were widely known about. In setting up the school feeding scheme the Board of Guardians Committee contracted with the City of Bradford Co-operative society to supply the meals at a cost of 2d per meal. There are further expenses that the Guardians took account of. They charged for the serving of the meals and for the caretakers to assist with the preparation of equipment and other activities. The Guardians included all these costs which meant that the meals then cost about 3d per meal. The Guardians argued that they needed to work out the total cost because in some cases the meals were to be a loan to the parents and under the local Government Board order, the cost would have been recouped.

In August of 1905, *Forward* tried to work out how much money a family would have to spend based on the price of 3d per meal per person. The article then goes on to multiply the cost of the meals by the number of meals a person who have in a day, then in a week and then cost for a family of two adults and three children. The article priced the total cost of food, based on the rate the Guardians were charging a family would need £1 6s 3d per week for food alone. The article went on to point out how many families in Bradford had less than that amount to spend on food, asking how families who only had a pound to live on every week managed.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Forward*. 24th February 1906, Interview with Sir John Gorst.

⁶⁶ J.H. Palin, from the Report of the 'Coming of Age' Conference, April 1914, Bradford.

⁶⁷ *Forward*, 19 August 1905.

But out of the 50000 or 60000 families in Bradford, how many thousands have less than £2 per week? How many have less than 30s? How many are at or about £1 per week. How do they live?⁶⁸

The ILP used the price of the meals that were provided by the Guardian's to attack the Liberals for another angle. They pointed out that working-class women were often regarded as ignorant prone to wasting food and unable to take care of their families properly and yet, the ILP pointed out the guardians couldn't feed a family for the same amount of money as working-class families did every week.

We have been told pretty often that the average working-class mother is stupid and wasteful. If so, then upon the little retail transaction of feeding five persons, it is plainly impossible that she can do it on less than the figure charged by the Guardians, even if she is intelligent and careful.⁶⁹

Forward followed the progress of the Guardian's school feeding scheme closely and in September of 1905 published a further indictment of the scheme. The paper presented their evidence that the Guardians were providing a stale bun, watered down milk and a banana and charging 3d for each meal.

The first real intimation of the inadequacy of the meals came in the form of a sample of alleged milk taken from one of the feeding centres. On analysis, this vile liquid turned out to be composed of 53 parts water and 47 parts separated or skimmed milk from which 9/10 of the fat had been extracted.....The meals provided for each child consisted of a very stale 4oz current bun of a variety bought wholesale at 8d per dozen, when fresh.⁷⁰

The paper compared the meal provided by the Guardians with that provided at a middle-class school and paid for by parents and also compared the meals with those that had been provided by the Cinderella Club. The meals provided by the Guardians compared unfavourably to these other feeding schemes. And it complained that the children most in need of food were missing out because of the Board of Guardians.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Forward* 23rd September 1905.

The ILP continued to raise questions and be highly critical of the Guardians and their attempts at school feeding. An exchange of letters took place in the Bradford Daily Telegraph between Fred Jowett and F.H. Bentham, the then Chairman of the Board of Guardians. Further comments on the exchange were made by *Forward*. Jowett's position was that the so called free meals were rubbish, that the food provided was adulterated, not nutritious, that children were being given skimmed milk and water. Bentham replied that it was a matter for the health committee and that they hadn't been informed of the milk until later. Jowett countered saying that the Guardians were responsible for the milk in the first place. The guardian countered with 'The milk was not provided to give nutrition but as a beverage'.⁷¹

Jowett and two other members of the education subcommittee investigated further and found that at Holy Trinity school the bun provided was stale and it was 4oz, not the 8oz that the Guardians claimed. The curator of the school then said that instead of three gallons of milk being delivered as before (to which he had to add 3 gallons of water) 2 gallons was now being delivered and had to be watered down. 'And for this the parents are threatened with a charge of 3d'.⁷²

Bentham replied to Jowett and tried to blame the milk salesman for selling poor milk and pointed out that management costs were included in the price.

But I would remind him that the Guardians have not set up a catering department to provide meals for negligent parents at cost price. The charge of 3d includes working expenses.⁷³

Bentham did not answer any of Jowett's specific charges on the quality of a tested sample of milk, adulteration of the milk by curators under instruction and the insufficiency of food supplied.

At a City Council meeting Jowett was again critical of the failure of the Guardians and proposed an amendment that the Education Committee would take over school feeding from the guardians. H.B Priestman replied that the Guardians hadn't been given a fair trial and the 'Absolutely starving children would surely rather have a bun than nothing at all'.⁷⁴

Jowett's amendment was defeated by 28 votes to 24.

⁷¹ *Forward* 7th October 1905.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Report of Council Meeting, in *Forward* 7th October 1905.

Forward did not let up in its campaign against the Poor Law Guardians and continued to argue that it was impractical and immoral to pursue parents for money for school meals.

Out of the 50 cases that the guardians had obtained judgements against, 49 were bona-fide working men, in low water through misfortune or inability to maintain the struggle for existence. The other was a herbalist who fled town leaving debts, he had done this before and it was unlikely that the guardians would get any money from him. Only in one case does a defendant have wages above the Rowntree minimum for subsistence. In 12 cases the parents have been authoritatively assured that no payment would be required of them for the meals supplied. Many others were under the same impression. All of those who the Guardians have obtained a judgement against have large families, an average number of children per family – five.⁷⁵

Other critics of the Guardian's scheme included Dr Crowley, who had made a case study of 2000 children and extrapolated those results. This showed that there were many underfed children in Bradford, who the Guardians were not touching with their scheme.

Dr Crowley studied 2000 children and suggested that at least 6000 children in the Bradford area were underfed and that a further 15000 had 'nourishment below the norm. In one study of four schools where there were 1686 children, Crowley found that 1270 were ill fed and that only 145 were being fed by the Guardians.⁷⁶

Two important events occurred in 1907 that helped to speed up the setting up of municipal school feeding in Bradford. It is not possible to say whether or not municipal school feeding would have happened without these two events. It is very likely that it would bearing in mind the amount of work put in by the ILP that municipal school feeding would have happened anyway, but perhaps not so quickly. The death of Alfred Illingworth in January of 1907 was important as it enabled the Liberals to soften the hard line they had been taking on school feeding. His uncompromising attitude up to his death had made it impossible for the Liberals to make any changes in policies on school feeding.⁷⁷

The second important event was the passing of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act in December 1906. The Act allowed municipal governments to Act; they did not compel

⁷⁵ *Forward*. 17th February 1906.

⁷⁶ *Forward*, 20th February 1907.

⁷⁷ Keith Laybourn, The Issue of School Feeding in Bradford, *Journal of History of Education Administration*, July 1982, p.34.

them to act. A battle still had to be fought at local level. The issue was taken up in Bradford in February 1907 when the council discussed the adoption of the act. There were only 8 opponents to this. Before municipal school feeding was introduced in Bradford, the Local Government Board decided that charity had to be tried again before a municipal scheme could be started. The mayor's fund that was set up raised only £5, which had been contributed by E.J. Smith.⁷⁸ The Poor law Guardian Scheme for feeding children was dead in the water.

The municipal council set up a pilot feeding system between 27th April and 24th July 1907. A school feeding programme was introduced on 28 October 1907. The experience enabled municipal school feeding to be set up in five Bradford schools.

With regard to the future, the outlook is very bright. We may have to be troubled with the financial juggling of contending politicians, but the most satisfactory feature of the whole business is that the people of Bradford as a whole are so convinced of the righteousness of the step they have taken, that they may be trusted never to turn back.⁷⁹

Although this was a major victory for the ILP, they still called for further measures and pushed for the Feeding of School Children Act to be made compulsory on local authorities.

That another determined attempt be made to get the Feeding of School Children Act made compulsory and with added powers to allow the provision of meals during holidays.⁸⁰

The creation of a system of municipal school feeding was a major victory for the Bradford ILP. The represented a step forward for the ILP in their response to poverty of working-class children. The success in bringing about a system of school feeding that was paid for by municipal rates, was fundamental to showing that the old Poor Law and charity was not the only way to deal with the poverty of women and children.

Education and Employment

That this conference, pending the abolition of child labour, urges municipal authorities to pass bye-laws stringently regulating the labour of children engaged in selling papers,

⁷⁸ *Forward*, 15 July 1907.

⁷⁹ J.H. Palin, *Bradford and Its Children: How They Were Fed*. (ILP ©1908, London).

carrying milk and similar occupations and to take joint action in calling upon the government to pass a Bill giving municipalities full power to deal with the whole question of the street labour of children and at the same time to make provision for the well being of children affected by such provision.⁸¹

The feeding of school children was not the only way in which the ILP responded to the poverty of working-class children. The ILP were not just concerned with the health and feeding of working-class children but also with the opportunities that they were presented with through the education system. The ILP campaigned strongly for equality of opportunity for working-class children. The Bradford ILP again played a major role in keeping the issues of education on the agenda.

The half-time system of education, that by which a child went to school for part of the day and to work during the other, was vigorously campaigned against by the ILP. This system of education was mainly confined to the textile districts of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. When the half-time system was introduced in the Factory Act of 1833 it was the only compulsory education for working-class children and as such was seen as a progressive move.⁸² However there was some suggestion that the trade union influence on the party in Bradford held this back, although there is other evidence to suggest that the Bradford ILP were at the forefront of the campaign to abolish the system. It is arguable that the ILP at a national level appeared to be keener on pressing for the abolition of child labour, including the half-time system than the ILP in Bradford.

Resolutions to calling for the abolition of child labour were proposed and passed at every national ILP conference from 1900 to 1920. For instance in 1901 and 1903:

This conference approves the Board of Education's inquiry into child labour and trusts that decisive action towards its abolition may result. Pending this the Conference urges the municipal authorities in every district to pass bye-laws for its regulation.⁸³

⁸⁰ Report of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the ILP, May 1912.

⁸¹ Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the ILP, Glasgow, April 1900.

⁸² Edmund & Ruth Frow, *The Half Time System in Education*, (E.J. Morten, Manchester, 1970), p.25. Although the 1833 Act made provision for the system, it wasn't until 1836 that the act came into full operation.

⁸³ Report of the Ninth Annual Conference of the ILP, Leicester, April 1901.

That this conference places on record its appreciation of the growth of public opinion in favour of the abolition of child labour and calls upon the government to pass legislation at an early date in accordance with public sentiment upon this question.⁸⁴

Much awareness had been raised in Bradford as to the conditions in which half timers worked. Margaret McMillan was a formidable campaigner who highlighted the ill health of half timers and the lack of education opportunity for them. She argued that half time children were unable to benefit from education, as they were too exhausted.

The half-timers slept, exhausted at their desks, and still from the streets and alleys, children attended school in every stage and state of physical misery.⁸⁵ However, the Bradford ILP, for all its leaders' condemnation of the half time system, did not push as hard to tackle the issue as they did for school feeding. Perhaps they were conscious that much of their support in Bradford came from the very people who were sending their children to the mill half time.

Before World War One there was much call for regulation of child labour but not so much for the abolition of the half time system. The ILP in Bradford appeared to have been comfortable with legislation regulating the work of children on the streets, such as paper sellers. They did not seem to be happy to press for legislation to abolish the half time system, whatever the leadership may have felt privately about the system.

Under the Employment of Children Act, 1903 the corporation can adopt bye-laws laying down conditions on which children, other than those employed in a factory can be employed. The Health committee drew up bye-laws, which were moved by councillor Jowett. No child under 11 should be employed in certain occupations set out in bye-laws; limited to 30 hours work – half timers were limited to 30 hours work and 20 hours for full time scholars.⁸⁶

There is more evidence that the ILP made more of an effort to try and abolish the half time practice in the second decade of the twentieth century. The abolition of the half time system can be tied in with wider issues on equality of opportunity in education. The ILP campaigned strongly that children from working-class backgrounds should have the same educational opportunities as the children of the better off. The half time system limited the opportunities

⁸⁴ Report of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the ILP, York, 1903.

⁸⁵ Margaret McMillan, *Life of Rachel McMillan*, Dent, 1927, p. 87-88.

⁸⁶ *Forward*, 13 May 1905.

that were available to working-class children. The ILP both nationally and in Bradford had argued that all education, secondary and university should be free, not just elementary education.

Free secular primary, secondary and university education, with free maintenance while at school or university.⁸⁷

It is an anomaly that elementary education should be free while secondary and university education should be costly. The latter are fenced off as preserves for the rich!⁸⁸

These issues were still on the agenda of the ILP in 1908 when the national conference recommended that:

That this conference recommends the Labour Party:

- A) To press for a minimum age of 11 years for admittance to secondary schools
- B) Abolition of the present scholarship system admission to be only by Educational attainment.
- C) Ask for largely increased grants

To provide full maintenance grants to all scholars desirous of obtaining such education⁸⁹

As Carolyn Steedman pointed out, the ILP were fully aware that the education system reflected the class system and that the 1902 education act had blocked any development of a system of secondary education for working-class children.⁹⁰ The ILP in Bradford, and in particular, William Leach (editor of the Bradford Pioneer) argued strongly that working-class children should have the same opportunities as other children. He argues that employers' interests influenced the kind of education that was available for working-class children. The Bradford Pioneer, in an attack on 'vocational training' argued

Why not discard fancy names and call it "trade school training"?.....Who demands it? The commercial interest, goaded by fear of better continental systems. A plentiful supply of efficient workers – not educated workers – is what they seek.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Report of the Eighth Annual Conference of the ILP, Glasgow, April 1900.

⁸⁸ Verax, A Socialist Education Programme, in *Forward*, 21 October 1905.

⁸⁹ Report of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the ILP, Huddersfield, April 1908.

⁹⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *The ILP and Education: the Bradford Charter*. in James, Jowitt and Laybourn (Eds), *The Centennial History of the ILP*, p. 285.

⁹¹ *Bradford Pioneer*, 6 June 1913.

He also condemned the employers of Bradford for taking advantage of the situation during world war one and the demand for labour. The employers of the city petitioned the home office in order to relax the laws on child labour. Leach was one of the key architects of the 'Bradford Charter', a programme of education which would equalise education between the classes. The programme proposed, amongst other things that the school leaving age be raised to 16 and that this be compulsory. That would have had the effect of removing the half time system of education. The charter also proposed that no specialisation would be allowed in schools until the age of 15 and that higher education would also be free. The Labour Party adopted the Bradford Charter as its education programme. The ILP never adopted the charter.

Conclusions

The Bradford ILP had more success in responding to the poverty of women and children than they did for the working-class population in general. Success or failure in alleviating poverty was not the most important issue, the ILP was too small in number to expect it to get rid of poverty in Bradford. They did, however, ensure that the problems of women and children in poverty were kept on the political agenda. As in response to the poverty of the working-class in general, the ILP proposed municipal solutions to the problems of poverty of women and children.

The ILP did not appear to develop policies in response to the specific problems of poverty of working-class women. There was conflict within the ILP as to the best way to respond to the poverty of women, as there was no consensus about women's place within society. The debate on whether a woman should be treated as a citizen in her own right or as an extension of her home, husband and family limited what policies were offered in response to the poverty of women. Also, the suffrage question dominated the agenda of the ILP in relation to women. The debate on female suffrage versus adult suffrage dominated the agenda concerning women in the ILP. The idea that the position of women could be improved if they had the vote would perhaps have led to the conclusion that women should be treated as citizens in their own right. The agenda of the national ILP and the conflicts and debates within it were mirrored in Bradford.

The main response to poverty of children was to develop a programme of education covering school feeding, medical inspections, physical education, work and equality of opportunity of education. The ILP in Bradford built on the ground work of Margaret McMillan in the last decade of the nineteenth century and made the issue of education their own. The major success came with the introduction of school feeding following a lengthy battle with the Liberals and the introduction of legislation to permit school feeding, paid for by municipal funding. Other achievements were more modest but should not detract from the success the ILP had in responding to the poverty of working-class children and making the issue of education their own.

CONCLUSIONS

The Bradford working class was unable to do more for their families in response to poverty than to ensure that they survived in poverty. The greatest burden for ensuring survival of working-class families fell to working-class women, who adopted various strategies to increase the income and reduce the outgoings of their family. Nevertheless, assistance from outside agencies was needed to help with the struggle to survive. These outside agencies, from the philanthropic and political community had varying degrees of success in dealing with poverty and both the Guild of Help and the ILP were constrained by their own internal structures and beliefs which limited their efforts and success.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that the Guild of Help emerged in Bradford over ten years after the ILP. It could be said that the Guild of Help was to some extent responding to the challenge laid down by the ILP. The Guild of Help was a progressive Liberal response to poverty in Bradford to meet the challenge of the ILP. Although the ILP were small in number, they were prepared to think more radically about solutions to poverty. There was real fear amongst Guild of Help members that the working class would turn to socialist solutions if other alternatives were not available from other political parties. The Guild never intended to work with those who were destitute, that was the role of the Poor Law and the state. The Guild of Help could be seen as an attempt to work with those who were perhaps those most likely to be converted to ILP ideas and philosophies. The Guild of Help looked to help those who were best placed to help themselves.

The Guild of Help were more progressive than some of the nineteenth century philanthropic organisations, such as the COS. The Guild of Help was willing to accept that the state had a role to play in helping the poor and that poverty was not always due to an individuals' failure, but could be the result of economic circumstances. However, the Helpers of the Guild of Help were still made aware that individual failings contributed to poverty even when the cause was not necessarily the fault of the individual.

The Guild of Help was willing to accept small-scale social change and remove categories of need from philanthropy, particularly those who had little or no capacity to practice the self-help so beloved of the Guild of Help. It welcomed the introduction of Old Age Pensions as it helped to remove a category of poor that had no real capacity to be self-supporting. Indeed, the Guild of Help moved philanthropy on from the position of the

nineteenth century, in that it accepted that the state had a role to play in the relief of poverty and not just with destitution. The Guild of Help softened the hard edges of Victorian philanthropy and updated the ideas and made it more relevant to the middle-class of the early twentieth century.

The official policy of the Guild of Help was that poverty was not always the fault of the individual. However, the attitude of individual Helpers did not always reflect this policy and the Helpers did not take a consistent approach to dealing with poverty. The Helpers had some autonomy in dealing with their cases, which meant that much was left to their individual judgement. Solutions to poverty that were advocated for one family may not have been put forward in similar cases because one Helper may have taken a different view to another, placed in the same situation. The casework approach of the Guild of Help meant that each case could be dealt with on an individual basis with all circumstances taken into account but it also meant that some families were not treated fairly. Helpers' prejudices and whims could mean that a family were deprived of help for whatever spurious reason was put forward, such as failure to be grateful enough. Although it has been suggested that the Guild of Help put welfare in Bradford on a more professional footing, there is a suggested a lack of consistency in their approach to those in poverty which may mean that the professionalism it claimed was not spread throughout the organisation. It also needs to be remembered that the Guild of Help was a moralistic agency that wished to bring about a response of gratitude from those it aimed to help. Those who did not appear grateful enough may not have been offered the help they needed.

Despite its desires to engage the whole community, the Guild of Help failed in its attempt to be an effective community-based response to poverty. There is no evidence to suggest that the Guild of Help was able to engage the wider community and, in particular, the working class, in its philanthropic work. The commitment needed to be a Helper, in terms of time alone would have prohibited the participation of many of even the better off working-class. There is evidence of some involvement of two members of the ILP within the Guild of Help although both of these had left the Guild after speaking out against some of their methods, most notably the failure to provide a general relief fund.

The Guild of Help attempted to alleviate poverty for those best able to become self-supporting but had no wish or ability to attack poverty at the root causes, although it did make state welfare more palatable to the Bradford middle class. But it failed to stop the drift of the working class towards the policies of the ILP.

Through visiting and investigation, the Helpers of the Bradford City Guild of Help built up knowledge of the circumstances of working-class women and children and, because of this, were well placed to respond to their poverty. This did not happen and the Guild of Help did not respond adequately to problems of poverty specific to women and children. As with poverty in general, the Guild of Help looked for specific solutions to the problems of each family and not to the underlying causes of poverty, which they knew, in all probability to be beyond their capabilities. Where the Guild of Help was involved with specific initiatives concerning working-class women and children, such as infant mortality, there is little evidence of success. For instance, in the north ward of Bradford, the Helpers provided a visiting service for the women sanitary inspectors yet there is no evidence of any long-term reduction in the rates of infant mortality. With infant welfare visiting, the Guild of Help focused on the provision of advice for mothers rather than on the environmental causes of infant mortality. The Guild was unable to do more than scratch the surface of poverty of women and children in Bradford and it merely endorsed the existing system and never attacked or looked for the real causes of poverty. Nevertheless, on a positive note, its work and co-operation with the women sanitary inspectors showed that the Guild of Help was able to accept that the Municipal Council had a role in such matters as infant welfare and were able to work in partnership with it. If the Guild of Help were unable or unwilling to do little more than scratch the surface of poverty, then the ILP also faced obstacles in its fight against poverty in Bradford.

Other than with education the ILP lacked a coherent plan to deal with poverty in Bradford but managed to keep poverty and related social problems on the local political agenda. The ILP, although limited by the influence of the trade unions, did look more towards the elimination of poverty rather than the alleviation of poverty as favoured by the Guild of Help.

Most of the responses to poverty and related social problems put forward by the ILP were based on the municipal government and local action. However, the Bradford ILP was not in a position to do anything about the major cause of poverty, unemployment, that being a cyclical and structural based problem that could not be solved through local action. Interest in finding a Bradford-based solution to unemployment waxed and waned as unemployment rose and fell with the fortunes of the worsted textile industry. The ILP did try to keep other poverty related problems such as housing and poor living conditions on the political agenda, although they were not always able to do a great deal to implement their policies to try and solve these problems.

Unlike the Guild of Help, the ILP was prepared to consider wider social change in order to try and eliminate poverty. However, they were limited by their relatively small membership and by the tensions that existed between the working-class trade unionist members and the middle class socialists within the organisation. The trade unions were the main reason for the ILP growing influence and capture of working-class support but, also acted as a check on the policies that the ILP were able to offer in response to poverty. Trade union issues often dominated the agenda of the ILP and made it difficult for them to offer genuinely radical, socialist policies. The very reason for the growing influence and support of the ILP was the factor that limited the policies offered, other than in education.

Education was the one sphere where the Bradford ILP did seem to have a coherent plan and was able to have real impact on the lives of working-class children. Building on the work of Margaret McMillan, the ILP chose to attack the poverty of working-class children through the development of a programme that ensured that all children could benefit from education. The ILP benefited from a reconceptualisation of childhood in that there was growing acceptance that the responsibility for the welfare children was not held by parents alone. Margaret McMillan had asserted that children could not benefit in full from education if they were not well fed, clean and healthy. The policies developed by the ILP tried to address these issues and included the provision of school baths and physical examinations as well as municipal school feeding. Municipal school feeding in Bradford followed national legislation that enabled, but did not compel councils to introduce school feeding.

Following a lengthy battle with the Bradford Liberals, municipal school feeding was introduced in Bradford. That it followed national legislation should not detract from the efforts of the Bradford ILP in ensuring that school feeding was introduced in Bradford schools. The ILP had less success with other issues that affected the lives of working-class children. It is not clear to what extent the ILP in Bradford tried to remove the half-time system of child working in the textile mills. However there is evidence to show that at a national and local level, the ILP spoke out against the half-time system, but little evidence as to what was actually done to raise awareness of the problems of the half-time system within Bradford. The effort that secured school meals for working-class children was not put into the abolition of the half-time system, perhaps the issue was too close to the hearts of the trade unionists within the textile industry and those whom the ILP wished to court as potential voters.

The ILP also had little success in dealing with the problems of working-class women and did not seek Bradford based solutions to their problems. The ILP was caught up in the national debate on how women should be viewed, either as citizens in their own right or as extensions of the home, family and husband. The debate that dominated the agenda on working-class women was that of suffrage. The arguments between those in favour of women's suffrage and those in favour of universal suffrage limited the policies and the capacity of the ILP to respond to the poverty of working-class women in Bradford. It also appeared that many of the day-to-day problems of women in poverty were not a priority for the ILP in Bradford.

The ILP and the Guild of Help responded to poverty in two different ways, and neither of the responses should be seen as steps on the way to the large-scale extension of state welfare of the twentieth century. The ILP responded to poverty with an attempt to improve the conditions and the lives of the working-class so that they might become receptive to the socialist agenda. Education played a key role in this. The ILP looked to eliminate poverty and was prepared to advocate social change in order to make this happen whereas the Guild of Help would not. The Guild of Help was, to some extent, responding to the agenda of the ILP through targeting, not the destitute, but those who were at the margins of poverty and best placed to help themselves. These were the very people that the ILP were also aiming bring into the socialist fold, along with the better-off members of the working-class. The Guild

of Help did not try to eliminate poverty but sought to alleviate it and in contrast to the ILP the Guild of Help aimed for the balance in society to remain the same. The inclusion of those able to practice self-help would have bolstered the existing society as perceived by the Guild of Help. The Guild of Help feared the spread of socialist ideas as characterised by the ILP and were to a large extent reacting to the growth of the ILP. However, the Guild of Help was not able to alleviate poverty in Bradford and failed as a community-based response to poverty because they were unable to engage the wider community. The role of the Guild of Help was gradually eroded during World War One whereas the policies of the ILP in particular those on education were a continued influence and helped to shape the agenda of the Labour Party after 1918.

As both the Guild of Help and the ILP were fundamentally different, one being a political party whereas the other was a philanthropic organisation, although not without Liberal political influence and backing, it seems logical to accept that their methods to deal with poverty would differ. The Guild of Help focused on providing a casework-based approach to poverty whereas the ILP campaigned and proposed policies to deal with poverty. However, both groups emerged in Bradford within a twelve-year period and both were concerned with poverty and the lives of the working-class and neither organisation managed to gain support across the wider Bradford community.

The Guild of Help was willing to accept small-scale social change if it was beneficial to their own position whereas the ILP advocated change to society if it ensured that the working-class were able to benefit more. An example of this came with legislation to introduce old age pensions, which was supported by both the Guild of Help and the ILP. The motives for supporting this legislation were different for the organisations. The Guild of Help were not able to help the aged poor as they were unlikely to be able to practice self-help and therefore the legislation reduced some of their workload. The ILP supported the legislation for more altruistic reasons; it benefited those unable to help themselves.

The Guild of Help was a moralistic agency that wished to bring about a response of gratitude and a change in behaviour in those they helped. Those who weren't grateful or who did not show they were grateful were, on occasions, treated badly by those who claimed to be helping them. The ILP in contrast looked to bring about improvements to the poor in general,

whether they were best able to practice self-help or not. Although they also looked for a change in behaviour from the poor in that they expected that their policies would produce more supporters of socialism. Neither the Guild of Help, nor the ILP had much success in bringing about the change in behaviour they desired.

The Guild of Help was not interested in assisting the destitute. They still looked to the Poor Law to care for the destitute within the workhouse system. As has already been emphasised the Guild of Help were mainly interested in those best placed to help themselves. In contrast, the ILP were more interested in improving the conditions for all of those in poverty including those with the worst standards of living who, by the ILPs own acknowledgement were not likely to be socialists or ILP supporters. The Guild of Help on the other hand worked at the margins of poverty. Again, this is an indication of the more altruistic outlook of the ILP in comparison to that of the Guild of Help.

The solutions advocated by the Guild of Help were those most appropriate when escape from poverty was within the grasp of the individual. The Guild of Help was an organisation of individuals looking for individual solutions to individual problems. The ILP looked more to class-based solutions for collective groups. The ILP took individual problems of poverty that affected many people such as housing and education and consistently campaigned for improvements and were able to gain some support for this. However, because of their individualist approach, the Guild of Help were not able to prevent those it sought to help from supporting ILP policies. The Guild of Help were not a political party and they were not able to elicit support for their largely Liberal and Conservative political views.

The Guild of Help was familiar with the problems of poverty faced by women and children and was well placed to provide some help, but there is little evidence to suggest that they were very effective. The ILP also had little success with problems of poverty that specifically affected women as they were caught up in debates at a national level around perceptions of women and suffrage issues. This meant that the ILP were not able to provide policies and actions that would have specifically helped women in poverty. The ILP was focused on dealing with national issues that it would have been unable to implement unless it obtained political power.

Unlike the situation with working-class women, with children the ILP were not hamstrung by national conflicts and were able to look at long-term solutions for children in poverty. Education was the key solution. Their campaigning to provide municipal school meals for children was one area where they had much success. The premise for feeding children being that they would be unable to take full benefit from education if they were half-starved at school. Unlike the Liberals, and some members of the Guild of Help, the ILP were not concerned as to whether or not parents should pay or whether the scheme was an erosion of parental responsibilities. The Guild of Help used the Municipal scheme once it was set up, but would not have ever considered instigating it. The ILP on the other hand, made sure the scheme happened in Bradford again showing how the ILP were more capable of proposing radical solutions to the problems of poverty and, in this case, ensuring that their policy was implemented.

Neither the ILP nor the Guild of Help was capable of tackling the long-term underlying economic causes of poverty, nor were they expected to do so. Both organisations seemed to understand what was causing poverty in Bradford but were unable and sometimes unwilling to do anything about it. Long term causes of poverty were beyond both organisations. The issues were simply too vast. However, both organisations looked to treat some of the symptoms of poverty firstly through local action, the Guild of Help through its casework and the ILP through the Municipal Council.

To conclude, the Guild of Help was a more progressive charitable organisation than those that had gone before it. It did make state welfare more palatable to the middle-class although not, in their view as a step towards the creation of a welfare state. The Guild of Help was predominantly a reactive organisation that worked at the margins of poverty. It did not want to change the way in which society was organised, but rather accepted small changes that ensured that society stayed largely the same. The ILP, although not revolutionary, was more radical and more willing to contemplate change to society in order to improve the conditions for the many rather than the few. Their policies were often limited by their trade union membership and they had only small successes outside of the field of education, their success in campaigning for municipal school meals should not be overshadowed by the national legislation that preceded it. Neither organisation could have claimed to have had a

great deal of success in relieving poverty in Bradford, both organisations provide an insight into differing approaches to poverty in an uncertain and dynamic, pre-welfare state environment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Cross tab 1.1 - Marital Status of Case / Total Family Income

INCOME (shillings)	<10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	>45	Not rec
MARITAL STATUS										
Single	7	2								1
Married	69	28	24	12	10	2	3	2	4	2
Deserted	3	1	1	1	1					1
Widowed	17	10	4	3	1	1	1			6
Other	5	3	1		2					
Not Recorded	2			1						
TOTALS	103	44	3	16	14	3	4	2	4	10

Cross Tab 1.2 – Total Family income / Family Size

NUMBER of CHILDREN	No children	1-3	4-5	6-7	8+	Not Recorded
INCOME (shillings)						
<10	15	60	10	3	1	14
11-15	3	26	9	3		3
16-20	1	18	11	1		
21-25		11	5			
26—30		10	3			
31-35		1		1	1	
36-40		3			1	
41-46				2		
>46			1	1	2	
Not Recorded	3	15	7	3		1
TOTALS	22	129	46	14	5	19

Cross tab 1.3 - Total Family Income / Main Wage Earner

WAGE EARNER	Man	Woman	Child	Other relative	Other	Not recorded
FAMILY INCOME (shillings)						
<10	39	34	11	6	4	9
11-15	12	12	11	3	6	
16-20	18	5	7	1		
21-25	12	3	1			
26-30	11	1	1	1		
31-35	1		2			
36-40	2	1	1			
41-45			2			
>46	3		1			
Not recorded	15	8	1			5
TOTALS	113	64	38	11	10	14

Cross tab 1.4 – Marital Status / Main Wage Earner

WAGE EARNER	Man	Woman	Child	Other Relative	Other	Not Recorded
MARITAL STATUS						
Single	1	6		1	1	1
Married	107	25	21	6	5	11
Deserted		6	1	1		
Widowed	4	20	12	1	4	2
Other	1	6	2	2		
Not Recorded		1	2			
TOTALS	113	64	38	11	10	14

Cross tab 1.5 – Cause of poverty 1 / cause of poverty 2

CAUSE 2	Illness / injury	Casual work	Low wages	Desertion	Death	Old age	Other	Not recorded
CAUSE 1								
Unemployed	31	8	4	1	1	3	7	20
Illness / injury		23	18	1	2	10	9	23
Casual work	1		25	1	1	2	17	3
Low wages						1	5	2
Desertion			1					1
Death							2	4
Old Age								14
Other			3					10
Not recorded								1
TOTAL	32	31	51	3	4	16	42	68

Cross tab 1.6 – Cause of Poverty 1 / How Case Ended

CAUSE 1	Unemployed	Illness / injury	Casual work	Low wages	Desertion	Death	Old age	Other	Not recorded
ENDED									
Successful help	31	39	28	5		3	2	7	
Unable to help	26	24	10	2		1	1	3	
Given up	3	8	5				1	2	
Passed to another organisation	9	5	3	1	1	1		2	1
Moved	1	5	1				1		
Death	4	4			1		1	1	
Other	1		3			1			
Not recorded		1							
TOTALS	75	86	50	8	2	6	6	15	1

Cross Tab 1.7 – Cause of Poverty 1 / Association with Other Organisations

CAUSE 1	Unemployed	Illness / injury	Casual work	Low wages	Desertion	Death	Old age	Other	Not recorded
ASSOCIATION									
None	20	18	7	1					
COS	13	8	2	1		1	1	3	1
Poor Law Guardians	19	23	11	1	1	1	2	2	
Cinderella Club	5	7	9	1	1	1		1	
Samaritan Society	1	1				1			
Council	13	22	18	4		1		1	
Other	2	3	1			1		1	
8 (coding problem)	1	1	1						
Not Recorded	1	3	1				1	1	
TOTALS	75	86	50	8	2	6	6	15	1

Cross Tab 1.8 - Association with Other Organisations / Why Help Ended

WHY ENDED	Successful help	Unable to help	Given up	Passed to other organisation	Moved	Death	Other	Not recorded
ASSOCIATION								
None	25	12	3	1	3	2		
COS	10	13	1	5	1			
Poor Law Guardians	23	14	7	8	2	4	2	1
Cinderella Club	14	7	1	1	1		1	
Samaritan Society		2				1		
Council	37	16	4	6	1	3		
8 (coding problem)	1	1		1				
Not recorded	2	1	3		1			
TOTALS	116	67	19	23	8	11	5	1

Table ap1.1 Geographical Spread of Cases

Area	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Bolton Woods	A2	4	1.6
Barkerend Road	A10	10	4.0
Bradford Woods	A2	4	1.6
Thornbury	A3	7	2.8
New Leeds	A4	3	1.2
St James Market	A5	8	3.2
Bolton Road	A6	9	3.6
Wapping South	A7	6	2.4
Wapping North	A8	9	3.6
Otley Road East	A9	15	6.0
White Abbey	B1	6	2.4
Sandy Lane	B10	3	1.2
White Abbey	B2	9	3.6
White Abbey	B3	6	2.4
Manningham	B4	11	4.4
Lily Croft	B5	8	3.2
	B6	4	1.6
Girlington	B7	18	7.2
Allerton	B8	1	.4
Westgate	C1	11	4.4
Great Horton	C10	4	1.6
	C11	4	1.6
	C12	6	2.4
	C13 (also known as c7)	2	.8
	C14	1	.4

Area	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Longlands	C1X	1	.4
Thornton Road	C2	4	1.6
Brownroyd	C3	3	1.2
Listerhills	C4	2	.8
Listerhills	C5	2	.8
Crafton Street	C6	6	2.4
Broomfield	C7	4	1.6
Lidgett Green	C8	4	1.6
Horton Grange	C9	3	1.2
Bramley Street	D1	7	2.8
Little Horton	D2	3	1.2
Bowling	D3	10	4.0
Ryan Street	D4	8	3.2
St James	D5	1	.4
Ripleyville	D6	6	2.4
Dudley Hill	D7	5	2.0
Wakefield Road	D8	7	2.8
Bowling Backlane	D9	7	2.8

Form 1.1 Bradford City Guild of Help Research Tool

CASE NUMBER			
AREA			
DATE HELP STARTED			
WHY NEEDED			
Unemployment			
Illness / injury			
Casual work			
Low wages			
Desertion			
Death			
Old age			
Other			
Not recorded			
MARITAL STATUS OF APPLICANT			
Single			
Married			
Divorced			
Deserted			
Widowed			
Other			
Not recorded			
FAMILY SIZE			
No children			
1-3			
4-5			
6-7			
8+			
Not recorded			
NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED			
0-2			
3-5			
6-10			
11-14			
15+			
TOTAL FAMILY INCOME			
10s or less			
11s-15s			
16-20			
21-25			
26-30			
31-35			
36-40			
41-45			
46+			
Not recorded			

MAIN WAGE EARNER			
Man			
Woman			
Child			
Other relative			
Other			
Not recorded			
CHILDRENS EARNING			
None			
1s-5s			
6-10			
11-15			
16-20			
21s+			
Not recorded			
RENT DEBT			
PERIOD OF HELP (MONTHS)			
Religion			
Anglican			
Methodist			
Free Church			
Roman Catholic			
Other Christian			
None Christian			
None			
Other			
Not recorded			
SOCIAL CLASS OF HELPER			
Working			
Middle			
Upper			
Not known			
ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS			
None			
COS			
Poor Law Guardians			
Cinderella Club			
Samaritan Society			
Municipal Council			
Other			
Not recorded			
WHY HELP ENDED			
Not applicable			
Successful help			
Unable to help			
Given up			

Passed to other organisation			
Moved			
Died			
Other			
Not recorded			

Diagram 1.1 – Diagram of Social Forces taken from the case book of the Bradford City Guild of Help

A – Family Forces

Capacity of each member for
Affection
Training
Endeavour
Social Development

B – Personal Forces

Relatives
Friends

C – Neighbourhood Forces

Neighbours, landlords,
Tradesmen. Former and
Present Employers,
Clergymen, Ministers,
Sunday School Teachers,
Fellow church members, Doctors,
Trade unions, fraternal benefit
Societies, social clubs, fellow
Workmen. Libraries, educational clubs,
Classes, settlements, thrift agencies – banks
Stamp savings, building societies.

D – Civic Forces

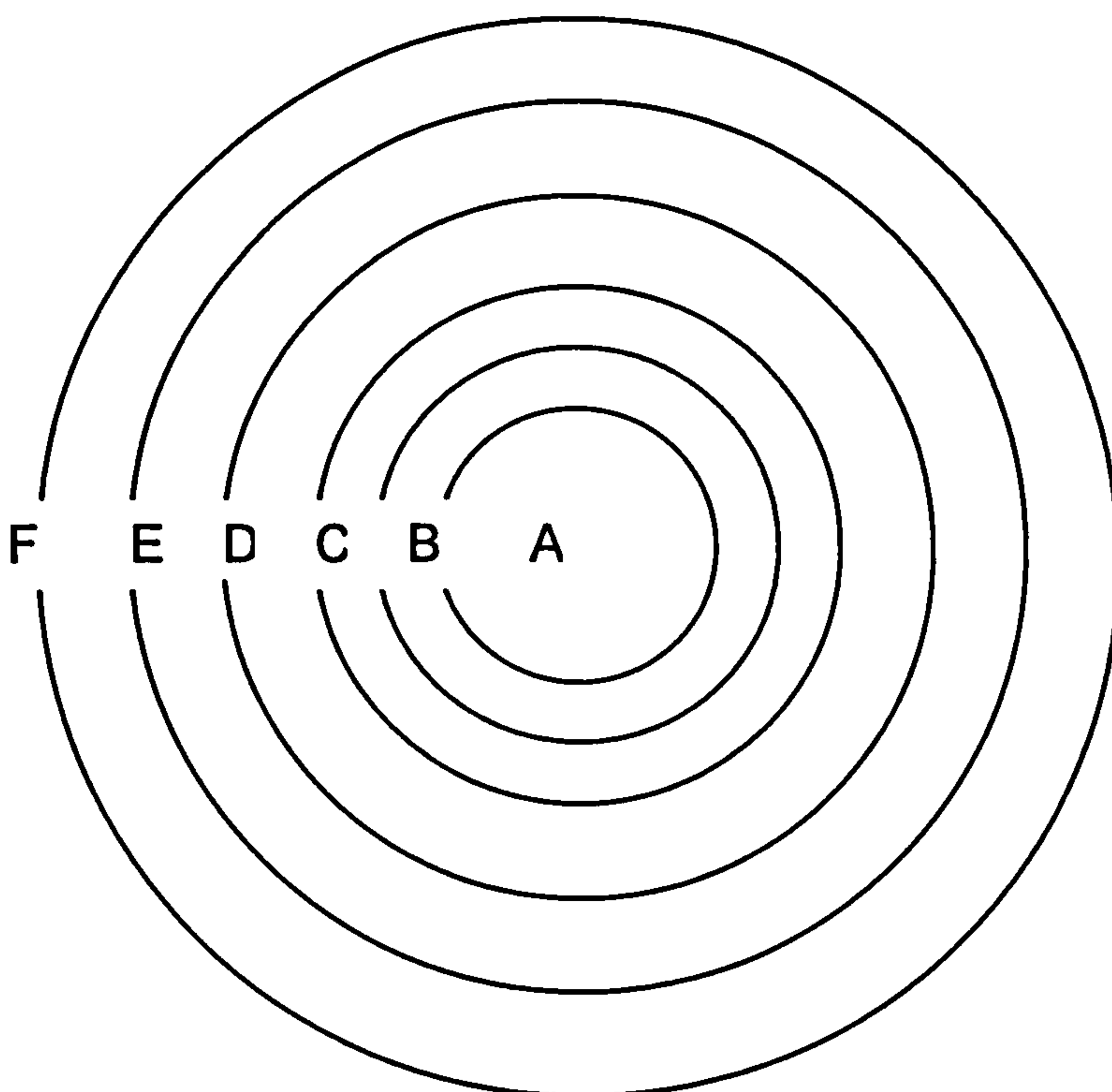
School teachers, attendance officers. Police, magistrates, reformatories. Health department, milk depot, sanitary inspectors, factory inspectors. Disinfecting station, free disinfectants, whitewash and brushes (apply town hall). Parks, baths.

E – Private Charitable Forces

Charity Organisation Society. Church or denomination to which family belongs. Benevolent individuals. National, special and general relief societies. Charitable employment. Cinderella club, children's summer holiday society, orphanages, day nurseries, society for protection of children. District nurses, ladies' charity, hospitals, convalescent homes. Poor man's lawyer. Discharged prisoners' aid society.

F- Public Relief Forces

Relieving Officer, District medical officer. Poor Law Hospitals and Sanatorium. Fever and Small Pox hospitals



APPENDIX 2

Table app2.1 - Infant Mortality in Bradford City and North Ward

YEAR	INFANT MORTALITY RATE. PER THOUSAND LIVE BIRTHS, FOR NORTH WARD	INFANT MORTALITY RATE. PER THOUSAND LIVE BIRTHS, FOR THE CITY OF BRADFORD
1900	173	141
1901	189	168
1902	154	139
1903	197	148
1904	272	167
1905	216	144
1906	222	152
1907	176	124
1908	236	143
1909	100	116
1910	166	127
1911	230	140
1912	126	99
1913	194	128
1914	192	122
1915	160	123
1916	95	119
1917	195	132
1918	214	125
1919	100	114
1920	124	93

APPENDIX 3

Table app3.1 – Death Rates in Bradford by Ward 1900-1920

Wards	Death Rates per 1000																				
	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920
North	15.2	18.9	17.55	18.55	21.91	16.79	17.21	16.67	17.09	16.18	16.67	20.60	19.37	20.05	22.58	20.41	16.89	20.44	25.48	17.34	15.44
South	19.6	18.61	18.23	17.83	17.73	14.33	17.20	12.97	17.37	16.85	15.56	18.53	18.10	18.44	20.36	22.91	19.44	17.73	25.02	18.13	14.52
East	13.7	13.88	13.83	14.39	15.71	12.88	14.60	14.34	14.65	12.08	11.78	14.29	14.23	14.37	13.00	14.39	12.97	14.90	17.23	14.19	14.56
West	16.0	18.10	16.18	19.02	22.06	14.90	18.26	13.80	14.05	16.25	17.81	20.04	19.39	22.58	27.48	25.87	22.22	26.50	28.23	21.16	20.34
Listerhills	14.9	15.34	14.30	15.90	14.37	15.53	16.13	14.49	14.15	15.19	13.63	15.74	13.76	19.25	16.27	18.49	15.49	16.87	20.75	15.15	15.22
Great horton	20.7	14.24	13.23	14.21	17.38	15.48	15.90	13.31	14.32	13.60	13.98	10.68	13.72	11.99	11.68	15.48	13.86	13.47	15.03	15.12	11.21
Little Horton	15.2	15.94	13.89	16.89	17.18	15.82	15.95	15.31	16.03	17.15	16.03	16.49	17.24	15.47	18.11	18.64	16.31	14.65	16.21	15.72	12.62
East Bowling	19.0	18.83	17.97	18.12	20.26	17.46	16.78	16.59	16.21	14.85	15.13	17.15	16.24	14.60	17.71	17.01	16.24	16.77	19.83	18.61	14.76
West Bowling	19.0	17.33	16.79	16.24	17.37	15.29	15.21	15.12	15.23	13.46	13.00	13.60	11.89	13.73	14.99	16.74	14.41	15.28	18.87	16.87	13.38
Exchange	18.9	22.78	17.77	19.21	19.55	12.54	15.72	14.25	16.32	19.23	20.89	21.47	19.93	19.28	24.12	26.08	26.25	20.77	30.41	26.84	16.51
Bradford Moor	17.0	19.71	16.15	17.30	18.57	14.18	14.76	14.88	18.18	15.24	15.48	15.12	14.44	13.19	14.19	16.94	16.23	14.65	16.85	13.71	11.88
Manningham	14.9	15.26	13.60	13.47	16.64	14.83	16.64	14.10	13.82	14.00	12.86	13.84	12.57	16.05	14.68	15.64	15.14	13.82	19.68	16.02	12.65
Bolton	14.5	12.60	11.44	12.72	12.13	11.38	11.28	13.09	11.25	11.72	9.79	10.53	11.22	12.40	12.57	12.44	13.13	11.55	15.83	14.95	10.35
Heaton	12.2	12.16	11.50	12.56	14.15	11.64	11.03	12.62	12.92	12.31	12.73	13.67	10.71	11.81	12.34	12.71	13.11	11.52	16.72	14.86	10.85
Allerton	15.7	14.10	13.83	14.90	13.06	12.65	14.57	13.38	12.82	9.89	9.20	10.14	10.45	12.37	9.23	11.20	13.23	11.81	14.86	12.83	11.42
Eccleshill	15.2	17.64	16.20	17.90	19.05	15.94	18.49	15.83	17.25	12.98	12.13	12.71	14.69	12.72	14.60	14.34	15.05	15.32	16.87	15.02	12.96
Idle	14.2	17.55	14.31	14.59	19.31	16.50	14.48	14.48	16.50	12.12	11.95	10.76	12.00	12.51	12.16	14.59	14.00	14.39	17.80	13.97	12.66
North Brierley East	16.7	18.13	20.93	17.72	16.90	18.54	20.36	14.50	17.83	15.60	13.87	15.46	14.86	15.32	17.10	16.08	18.51	13.13	20.39	17.26	12.49
North Brierley West		17.69	20.15	21.32	17.38	16.26	19.00	16.65	17.09	12.50	12.97	16.12	16.60	15.67	17.39	18.01	17.93	18.78	19.49	21.38	14.06
Thornton	17.8	19.30	19.42	16.60	19.06	16.15	17.46	15.93	15.22	15.15	10.73	20.10	13.11	12.75	12.61	13.98	16.02	12.18	18.55	17.25	12.28
Tong	15.8	24.20	21.59	18.08	19.70	19.26	18.46	12.14	15.81	13.67	13.95	16.28	13.76	17.68	16.34	14.99	16.95	15.95	21.33	16.63	15.25
CITY	17.10	16.71	15.70	16.23	17.38	15.13	16.00	14.47	15.37	14.32	14.30	15.07	14.17	15.11	15.76	16.90	15.99	15.34	19.13	16.27	13.31

Table app3.2 - Housing in Bradford in 1901.¹

No. Room in Tenement .	Persons Per Tenement												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1	506	547	261	122	51	13	8	1	1		1		1511
2	1050	3092	2574	1911	1244	684	378	167	85	26	5	5	11221
3	547	3352	4253	3668	2644	1872	1136	594	311	133	45	22	18597
4	242	1859	2463	2591	2002	1487	958	605	357	157	75	46	12842
Total	2345	8850	9551	8292	5941	4056	2480	1367	754	316	126	73	

¹ 1901 Census, Table 20, Total Tenements and Tenements of Less Than 5 Rooms Distinguishing Those Occupied by Various numbers of persons in County Boroughs, in Municipal Boroughs and Other Urban Districts, 1901.

Table app3.3 - Housing in Bradford in 1911²

Rooms Per Tenement	Number of Persons in Private Families												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1	643	623	165	43	12	5							1491
2	1232	3098	2333	1525	797	373	185	74	28	8			9653
3	738	4424	4917	4015	2582	1469	833	402	188	87	24	8	19687
4	352	2597	3492	3231	2347	1421	876	443	255	94	38	19	14813
Total	2965	10742	10907	8814	5738	3268	1894	919	471	189	62	27	

² Census 1911, Table 27A, Tenements in the Occupation of Private Families

Table app3.4 - Housing in Bradford 1921³

Number of Persons in Family	Number of Private Families Occupying the Following Number of Rooms										TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6-7	8-9	10+	10+	TOTAL	
1	543	1417	1067	493	316	177	51	16	4080		
2	444	3433	4586	2890	2192	1260	257	63	15125		
3	176	2719	5603	3943	3133	1729	369	78	17750		
4	62	1673	4502	3509	2900	1678	406	105	14835		
5	16	905	2895	2373	2037	1208	323	91	9848		
6	9	514	1684	1371	1204	733	180	64	5759		
7	2	225	878	747	650	455	104	51	3112		
8		100	469	377	313	234	52	32	1577		
9		33	248	206	153	144	30	14	828		
10		19	102	102	104	70	20	10	427		
11		4	50	35	38	29	11	6	173		
12		1	15	17	18	15	5	4	75		

³ Census 1921, Table 22, Private Families, Classified by Size of Family, Rooms Occupied and Density of Occupation

13				3	9	4	12	1	4	33
14					3	3	2	2		10
15					2		2	3		7
Total	1252	11043	22102	16077	13065	7748	1814	538		

APPENDIX 4

Table app4.1 - Reports of the Women Sanitary Inspectors

	09/1907	12/1907	03/1908	06/1908	01/1908- 01/1909*	01/1909- 01/1910	01/1910- 01/1911
First visits	64	262	617	492	2085	2654	2030
Breast Fed	48	226	498	430	1464	1972	1246
Mixed fed	3	14	69	35	250	424	396
Hand fed	13	22	50	27	331	213	352
Insured	38	124	417				
Illegitimate		9	32	20	110	72	152
Mothers working				29	200	345	331
Deaths				22	220	258	
Living in roomed houses	2	122	115				
Living in cellar Kitchen	1	6					
Living in Furnished rooms		5	9				
Revisits paid	373		1311				

Unfortunately the data was not recorded consistently.

*After 1908, the figures are reported on a yearly basis whereas before this date they were presented quarterly.

APPENDIX 5

Table app5.1 – Rates of Pay for Different Trades in Bradford (Taken from Board of Trade Report of an enquiry into working-class rents, housing and retail prices 1908-1913

Trade	Occupation	Weekly Rates of Pay
Building *	Bricklayers/Masons/Plumbers	37s. 2d.
	Carpenters/Joiners/Plasters	35s. 1d
	Painters	34s. 8d.
	Labourers	24s. 9d.
Engineering	Fitters	34s.
	Smiths	34s.
	Platers	38s.
	Labourers	22s.-24s.
Woollen and Worsted (Men)	Wool Sorters	31s-32s
	Washers, Dryers	18s-22s
	Combers	20s-23s
	Warp Dressers +	29s-32s
	Twisters	28s. 6d.-33s.
Woollen and Worsted (Women)	Weavers +(2 looms)	13s-17s
	Spinners	8s-11s
	Wool Combers	11s-14s
Woollen and Worsted (Dyeing)	Dyers (Cloth)	24s
	Grabbers/ Singers/Mercerisers	22s-26s
* full weeks wages in summer		
+ rates are for piece work		

The figures are for October 1905 except for the wool and worsted trade where the figures are for September 1906.

Table app5.2 - Records of the Bradford Typographical Society, quarterly report and statement of accounts

	Total members	Fully employed	Casual employed	Superannuated	Apprentices	Out of work allowance
Sept 1912	618	436	91	16	30	£81 2s
Dec 1912*	883	479	323	15	28	£145 7s 4d
March 1913	629	408	136	15	28	£135 14s 6d
June 1913	648	423	142	14	26	£242 7s 6d

The average payment to the typographical society for men was about 1s-1 1/2s per week.

For women the average payment was 6d per week.

*Funeral fund paid out one claim at a cost of £10

Table app5.3 Entries from Bradford Post Office Directory

	Building Societies	Co-op societies	Insurance societies	Pawnbrokers	Trade societies	Friendly / masonic societies	Other provident societies
1900	4	12	116	31	52	11	1*
1903***	5	17**	45	35			
1906	5	17	45	36	83	10	
1909	6	16	47	33	83	10	
1912	5	17	41	37	80		
1917	8	18	47	37	80		

*The Provident Clothing and Supply Company Ltd.

**The main new addition being the City of Bradford Co-operative Society.

***Trade Societies re-classified under Bradford and District Trade and Labour Council as
Affiliated Societies

Table app5.4 Population in Bradford 1801 –1921

Year	Population
1801	A 6393
	B 13264
1811	A 7767
	B 16012
1821	A 13064
	B 43527
1831	A 23223
	B 43527
1841	A 34560
	B 66715
1851	103778
1861	106218
1871	14530
1881	183032
1891	216361
1901	2979767
1911	288458
1921	285961

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