

# PART 1

# Reasons for Social Work

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# 1.1

## Poverty and Social Exclusion

*Chris Jones*

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Social work in Britain and elsewhere is immersed in poverty and social exclusion. The overwhelming majority of those who use or have social work imposed upon them are poor and drawn from the most disadvantaged sectors of the population. This has always been the case, despite changes over time in the ways in which society describes and understands poverty. As Alvin Schorr (1992, p. 8), the North American sociologist, observed,

The most striking characteristics that clients of the personal social services have in common are poverty and deprivation. *Often this is not mentioned*, possibly because the social services are said to be based on universalistic principles. Still, everyone in the business knows it. One survey after another shows that clients are unemployed or, to observe a technical distinction, not employed – that is, not working and not seeking work. Perhaps half receive income support, as many as 80 per cent have incomes at or below income support levels. (Emphasis added)

That this stark characteristic of social work's client population is often *not mentioned* says much about social work's relationship to the poor and the peculiarity, even peculiarity, of British social work as a state agency dealing with the poor. For social work, while dealing with the poor, appears reluctant to admit to this central reality. Yet it is often poverty and the associated absence of social and political influence and resources which combine to corrode the lives and well-being of clients and undermine their capacities to manage – whether with their children, partners, ageing or illness. In this respect, it is vital to note that poverty has never simply been about insufficient material resources, important as that is; it is also, as Novak (1995) has reminded us, about a person's relationship to society: his or her place and position. In capitalist societies, such as Britain, we can be even more precise in identifying some key features of that relationship, where poverty commonly entails low social status, powerlessness, restricted life choices and a myriad of interconnected disadvantages in housing, education, employment, health and

leisure. Such a web of disadvantage can be exceptionally difficult for people to break out from, as reflected in the enduring forms of class stratification evident in British society over two centuries or more. When joined with other forms of systemic differentiation, such as 'race' and gender, the consequences of poverty become even more dire (Becker and MacPherson, 1988).

These consequences are stark, as many social work practitioners know well. We also have rich and diverse research data that detail the impact of poverty and inequality on those at the bottom of society (see especially Wilkinson, 1996). You are, for example, more likely to live a shorter life than your more advantaged counterparts, your children are at greater risk of serious illnesses and accidents, you are more likely to be a victim of cancer and heart disease, attend the worst schools, live in the most stressed neighbourhoods, experience the most degrading forms of employment – if any at all – and be exposed, with impunity, to the most stigmatizing depictions of your life and character. This in brief is the terrain of social work. From its origins in the Victorian Charity Organisation Society (COS), modern social work (in contrast to earlier forms of charity) has been class specific rather than universalistic. It is concerned in particular with the lives of the poorest in society. This chapter will, in broad terms, argue that social work as an activity has failed the poor and achieved rather little in terms of mitigating the consequences of poverty on some of the most vulnerable in society.

### **Coming to Terms with Poverty**

One key to understanding social work's relationship to poverty is to recognize that it has consistently sought to explain the problems confronting its clients as being primarily a consequence of individual and family weaknesses rather than rooted in the manner in which society operates and functions. This conservative approach, which underpins the way in which capitalist societies reproduce poverty and inequalities and focuses on the character, morals and lifestyles of the poor, enjoys considerable support, not least among the elites of society who seek to legitimate their privilege by reference to their own assumed superior capacities and abilities. Societies employ considerable effort and resources to secure such a perspective and over time have used religion and, more recently, the social sciences to bolster and legitimate such a perspective. In its downward gaze the inadequacies of the poor are seized upon to explain why the roots of poverty are to be found in the poor themselves (superbly illustrated by Murray, 1990). Simultaneously, capitalism is exalted as the best possible socio-economic system available to humanity, offering the best chances for general human welfare. This triumphalism has been especially evident since the collapse of the Soviet empire towards the end of the twentieth century.

In this enduring debate about the cause and character of poverty in contemporary society, social work is but one of many state welfare practices and activities which operate from within a conservative paradigm (Jones and Novak, 1999). Nevertheless, because of its unique position within the panoply of state welfare services, in being engaged with some of the most impoverished in society, it offers an especially interesting location from which to explore the manner in which such an

ideology is developed and implemented, and the ways in which social work both reflects and contributes to a broader set of societal beliefs concerning poverty. Social work, especially in the statutory sector, has a more general relevance in illuminating the difficulties and tensions which emerge when capitalist societies try to do something about poverty, rather than simply contain and regulate the poor. As we shall discover, social work's attempt to 'do something about poverty' has led to it having, at times, a somewhat problematic relationship with the wider welfare regime and the state in general, especially with respect to those agencies which tend towards highly punitive and stigmatizing strategies for dealing with those who are perceived to have little economic and social value such as clients.

### **The Poor as the Problem**

Within modern British social work, the pioneers of the COS were especially important, as they set out the key principles of the activity. I would urge those interested in understanding the development of social work to take special note of the works of Charles Loch (1904), Bernard and Helen Bosanquet (1914) and Octavia Hill (1884). While not all their ideas and policies came to fruition, they deserve recognition alongside those such as Beatrice and Sydney Webb for their enduring influence on British social policy. Their work was sophisticated and closely argued and laid much of the basis for social work's subsequent theoretical and practical development. The crucial theoretical perspectives underpinning their notion of social work were drawn from idealist philosophy, of which Bernard Bosanquet (1895) was a leading figure at the close of the nineteenth century. This philosophical position, in brief, accords primacy to morality (ideas, values and personality) in the determination of peoples' position and well-being in society. It did not entirely discount wider societal influences – such as sanitation and the need for adequate housing – on well-being but, in contrast to the materialist perspective which places primacy on structure, and, in Marxist analysis, on the character of capitalism itself for causing poverty and hardship, idealism asserts character as the key determinant. Their position is clearly illustrated in this passage from the COS's monthly journal:

There can be no doubt that the poverty of the working classes of England is due, not to their circumstances (which are more favourable than those of any working population of Europe); but to their improvident habits and thriftlessness.

If they are ever to be more prosperous, it must be through self-denial, temperance and forethought. (*Charity Organisation Review*, 1881, vol. 10, p. 50)

For these social work pioneers, the problem of poverty and destitution was not insufficient material resources among the working-class poor but their morality; for them, changing the individual character (and behaviour) of the poor was the only solution to the problem of poverty. The 23rd *Annual Report* of the COS (1891) succinctly summarized this perspective:

Speaking broadly and after all due deductions made, one may say that character is the key to circumstances; he, therefore, that would permanently mend circumstances must

aim at character. All that can be done externally to improve circumstances should be done, but there will be no lasting betterment without internal change.

The idealist perspective of the COS offered both an explanation of poverty and destitution and a guide to intervention and practice. Social work, after all, is not simply in the business of explaining poverty but is about social action: doing something about poverty and human suffering. It is this commitment to action, rooted in the belief that the poor can be helped and placed in a position to benefit and contribute to social development, that partly explains the liberal and humanitarian reputation of social work. For in contrast to more conservative opinion, which has argued that the vast majority of those at the bottom of the social system are there as a consequence of their flawed biology (a particularly pernicious ideology which endures with respect to racism and which has recently enjoyed renewed respectability in the concept of an 'underclass') and for whom nothing can or should be done, social work, with some important qualifications, has tended to offer *within* the conservative framework a more optimistic perspective on the poor as 'redeemable'. In recent years, especially evident in the ascendancy of new right administrations in Europe and the USA, this more optimistic perspective has come under attack and been denigrated as leading to an unduly soft treatment of the poorest and the creation of dependency among social work clients (Cannan, 1994/5).

### **Casework and Social Democracy**

With hindsight we can now see that what we might call classical social work in the terms originally mapped out by the COS pioneers enjoyed its most productive period in the era of social democracy, which in Britain lasted for approximately 30 years between 1945 and 1975. At that time, there was a broad consensus between the main political parties and within the elites more generally that social work could and should be developed as a state activity on the basis that family casework could make a difference in the alleviation of poverty and especially its associated social problems of family breakdown, child neglect and juvenile delinquency. Drawing on aspects of Freudian psychodynamics, social work positioned itself as *the* social strategy for tackling and reforming that 10 per cent of the population who seemed to be locked in the most abject poverty. Described as 'problem families', they were considered incapable of benefiting from the progress associated with Keynesian economic policies of full employment and the significant expansion of state welfare implemented after 1948. Here we saw the idealism of social work come to maturity. Full of bombast about the potential of social work to bring about lasting change (claims which were never realized and later came to rebound negatively on the occupation), social work commentators and practitioners argued that they had the tools and knowledge in casework to affect enduring change in the character and morality of the poorest. Remaining firmly within the conservative paradigm of locating the problems of the poorest in terms of their character and morality, especially focused on working-class mothers, social work argued that by intervening in these families and establishing close relations with the mothers it would be able to foster the lasting *internal* changes so beloved by its COS pioneers. Given the expansion

of British social welfare after 1945, there was now broad support for the idealism of social work, with its emphases on the culture of poverty and cycles of deprivation as being the causes of poverty. Even so, it took until the early 1970s for social work to be granted its own state agency in the form of local authority social services departments (social work departments in Scotland), which gives some indication that support for social work was perhaps never wholly enthusiastic. On the left there were those who believed that those who suffered the most severe deprivation needed better benefits rather than social work, while on the right, including many within the state's criminal justice system, there was opposition to social work's liberal approach to clients as being too soft and inducing welfare dependency.

Considerably influenced by Freudian perspectives for at least two decades after 1945, social work developed some rather perverse practice in relation to poverty, albeit wholly understandable within the idealist framework. From the standpoint of clients, it must surely have been perplexing to find that one's poverty and all that went with it was now considered to be no more than a surface manifestation of deeper psychological problems. Poverty *per se* was not the issue, but 'deeper disturbances in family relationships' (Rodgers, 1960, p. 89). Just as Helen Bosanquet had contended a century earlier, social workers could be found who argued that the hardships and suffering of clients were not because they lacked money but due to emotional difficulties which made them spend their income in the wrong way (Smith and Harris, 1972).

Such perspectives meant that social work practice tended to individualize social problems and underplay the hard material realities of their clients' lives. Indeed, material relief, especially cash assistance, was to be a resort of last means to offset emergencies which might threaten the ongoing casework relationship. Wrapped up in all kinds of psychologistic concepts, this approach meant that material assistance was both difficult for clients to secure and often given under close supervision. Such practice is now well entrenched in social service agencies; currently it is common practice for agencies to avoid cash assistance wherever possible and to provide clients instead with vouchers to use in designated budget stores. Of course, such vouchers are better than no help at all, but they remain for clients a humiliating and degrading form of assistance which marks them out as unworthy and different from the majority. Moreover, as with other forms of state relief, the process of securing even such minimal support can itself be humiliating and can further erode clients' self-esteem. To be blunt, it is disrespectful welfare.

### **A Difficult Strategy**

In its purest form, it was hoped that, through the casework relationship, clients, especially families with children, could be rehabilitated to orderly citizenship. Social work has never been so ambitious as to think it could completely eradicate poverty through this approach, but it did believe that casework could assist poor families to manage their poverty in ways that were less anti-social or that could provide them with the insights and values which would ensure that their children, instead of drifting into crime and other forms of so-called parasitic behaviour (such as long-term welfare dependency), might be in a position to have productive, self-

sustaining working lives. As experience has demonstrated (as one would expect given the conservative definition of poverty and the poor), it has been a difficult strategy to implement.

The difficulties have been many. On the one hand, social work proved unpopular with clients. From its very origins, the working-class poor have been generally antagonistic towards social work intervention. They have rejected social work's downward gaze and highly interventionist and moralistic approach to their poverty and associated difficulties. Over time they have become fearful as social workers have accrued more statutory powers to remove children and others from families who were deemed unresponsive to their interventions. It would seem that for many clients and potential clients there is a perception of social work as part of the problem and not part of the solution. For example, according to Ratna Dutt (2000, p. 28), director of the Race Equality Unit, 'the perception of social workers in the black communities is that any involvement with social care agencies will result in negative outcomes for black people'.

Then there are the intrinsic difficulties associated with the casework approach itself. It is a somewhat perverse approach, given the context. Therapeutic relationships are hard to establish in any event, but all the more difficult when applied to a reluctant participant (most clients come to the attention of social service agencies not voluntarily but via third party referrals, usually from other state agencies such as the courts, police, general practitioners, health visitors or schools). Then there are the problems associated with the differential powers of social workers and their clients, which make for a very unequal relationship irrespective of the associated social and class distances. Bryan and her colleagues (1985), in their powerful study of black women's lives in Britain, recount how many black women experience social workers as disrespectful and condescending – hardly the basis for a therapeutic relationship.

If these problems were not sufficient to torpedo casework by the early 1970s, many social workers themselves had become either antagonistic to or agnostic on the approach. The social work enterprise itself has long recognized that holding social workers to the 'correct line' is incredibly difficult. The COS created the first formal social work courses at the beginning of the twentieth century in part as an attempt to inculcate what they hoped would be a body of knowledge to immunize social workers from being disheartened by the obvious long-term and piecemeal casework approach. Moreover, as with later social work leaders, they saw professional education and training as a means of regulating entry to the occupation in the hope of keeping out those who might take a rather more radical and questioning stance with respect to poverty, hardship and despair. It is not easy to maintain an idealist position and practice when faced with the material realities of people's lives, many of these people being concentrated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods which in their common misery and degradation more redolently suggest that the problems might be systemic rather than individual or familial.

### **Towards Regulation and Marginalization**

By the end of the twentieth century, Britain had more social workers than ever: 53,900 in 1998. Social service agencies were second in scale and size to education



departments in local authorities, and, as for the previous fifty years, were focused on the most disadvantaged and impoverished in society. Yet state social work activity is now a very different activity, and one wonders to what extent it would be recognizable to its Victorian pioneers. At the very least social work no longer exhibits the confidence and vision of its early years, or the optimism of those involved in its growth and expansion in the years following the Seebohm reforms. Little is now said of the potential of casework to redeem the lives of the most damaged in society or its capacity to restore clients to orderly citizenship. Its public profile and image is generally one of degradation, with tabloid media which seem to rejoice in publicizing its disasters and mistakes.

Much of social work's earlier confidence stemmed from its self-belief that it was of such value in the alleviation of deeply rooted social and family problems that it deserved to be at the leading edge of social welfare, shaping and influencing social policy development. That dream was never realized. Instead, social work has come to occupy an increasingly significant but *residual* role within the welfare system, maintained by both Conservative and New Labour governments because of its value in managing and supervising the most marginal in society. Of course, if some clients are 'saved' by this activity then it is to be welcomed, but its key tasks are more negatively defined in terms of control, rationing, supervision and trying to make arrangements that reduce even further the welfare burden of such people. So we have this paradox: social work agencies remain, bigger than ever before, yet as an activity it has never been so marginalized and criticized.

### **Social Work and Social Exclusion**

Some may argue that this state of affairs is not surprising given the legacy of nearly twenty years of Conservative governments in the last quarter of the twentieth century, whose onslaught on state welfare provision included the denigration of all those professionals employed within the state, including social workers, teachers, nurses and doctors (Hay, 1996). Yet even with the election of a Labour government in 1997, which ostensibly rejected some of the more brutal aspects of the new right's underclass perspective and replaced it with the seemingly more humanitarian concept of social exclusion, social work has not enjoyed a return to favour.

Influenced by developments within the European Union, New Labour's embrace of social exclusion seemed to offer social work a more promising future. With its focus on those on the margins of society including the vast majority of social work's clients, it offered a more sympathetic analysis and welfare practice than that dominated by the underclass discourse, with its pessimistic and damning assessment of the poorest (Levitas, 1998). Moreover, it chimed with social work's longstanding view that the problem of poverty was not primarily an issue of insufficient money (in the form of benefits or wages). Instead, social exclusion pointed to the multi-faceted aspects of deprivation and suggested a process (including racism and sexism) whereby people became excluded. As Tony Blair argued, 'It is a very modern problem, and one that is more harmful to the individual, more damaging to self-esteem, more corrosive for society as a whole, more likely to be passed down from generation to generation, than material poverty' (Blair, 1997, p. 4).

Yet the countless initiatives launched by New Labour to combat social exclusion have rarely involved social work directly. In part this stems from the narrow focus of social exclusion strategies and policies on people of working age capable of employment. As Lyons (2000) notes, New Labour places great emphasis on waged work as the route out of social exclusion, typified by the variety of New Deal initiatives, including one directed at lone parents. For many of the current clients of social work accessing waged work is neither relevant nor appropriate. This might be due to age or sickness, or the sheer difficulty of managing chaotic lives with few sustaining social networks, which characterizes the lives of many who become clients. It would seem that New Labour's embrace of social exclusion does not involve a new role for social work services. Instead, it confirms social work's residual status, leaving it as a resource-starved agency attempting to manage those who are more clearly identified as losers and failures.

So where does this leave social work and social service agencies in relation to poverty and the poor? The answer appears to be marginalized in terms of the social exclusion agenda, but mainstream with respect to the management and control of the most impoverished and damaged. Social work is accorded little or no value as a positive strategy for combating social exclusion, but is given substantial responsibilities for managing, maintaining and supervising those who are among the most damaged by poverty and those, such as the elderly and sick poor, who are seen as having no value or further contribution to make to social and economic development.

### **Social Work Practice**

This rather pessimistic analysis is confirmed by my research into the activities of state social workers in northern England (Jones, 2001). My interviews have revealed starkly the changed character of state social work and the manner in which its caring and supportive aspects have been supplanted by a more bureaucratic and regulatory approach to the plight of clients. In the process of interviewing statutory, and largely experienced, front-line social work practitioners in local authorities I have been confronted, without exception, by a highly demoralized, stressed, under-resourced, massively regulated (and audited) social work service. Irrespective of their specialisms, the social workers all confirmed that they are working with clients who because of changes in eligibility criteria for receiving social work assistance were often stressed and impoverished. More than that, and as one would suspect after thirty years of welfare roll-back and new disciplinary processes embedded in British state welfare, the social workers spoke despairingly of their clients' hopelessness and their own inability to secure anything like sufficient resources and services to ease the situation. Yet, as these social workers observed, raising benefit and pension levels would bring about a significant improvement in the lives of most of their clients. But within the New Labour project, such measures have been ruled out, as Peter Mandelson argued: 'Let us be crystal clear on this point. The people we are concerned about, those in danger of dropping off the end of the ladder of opportunity and becoming disengaged from society, will not have their long term problems addressed by an extra pound a week on their benefits' (Mandelson, 1997, p. 7).

None of the social workers I interviewed spoke of their clients needing casework or suggested that their clients were in this situation because of some deep-rooted internal dysfunction. For them poverty and its associated lack of opportunity were the consequences of socio-economic trends and political priorities. One sees here the impact of some of the recent critical streams within social work education – especially the contributions of anti-racist and feminist perspectives – on practitioners, although ironically, with increased managerialism and regulation of practice, the space available to social workers to work in accordance with anti-oppressive values is now much more restricted. This in part was reflected in the modesty of the practitioners' goals in terms of alleviating the hardships of their clients, such as maximizing their welfare benefits and services. Yet within a welfare system that had become more restricted, regulated and controlled even these objectives were difficult to realize. Their agencies made these tasks hard to achieve, although some through sheer dint of experience and skill had manoeuvred themselves into positions where they had some capacity to secure resources more successfully than their inexperienced colleagues. Even so, I was regaled with tales of bureaucratic hurdles, forms and reports, meetings of panels of managers who had to be persuaded to release even the smallest of resources. It became evident that many of these controls had an interrelated focus of managing inadequate budgets *and* controlling the activities of social workers.

Running through these stories was the sense that the primary tasks of state social work did not involve any meaningful sense of rehabilitation or positive support and could not be interpreted as part of the social inclusion agenda of the New Labour government. Neither could it be conceived as having any impact on alleviating poverty. Preventative work with families was almost wholly absent. Contrary to the expectations of the 1989 Children Act, families tended to be supported only *after* their children had been placed on the 'at risk' register – only when it could be shown that the children were suffering from considerable neglect or abuse. Even then, the assistance accorded was highly regulated, often difficult to secure and in many cases inadequate to meet the families' needs. While I do not discount the value of some of the support given, this approach is deeply at variance with the ideals of classical social work with its stress on the importance of preventative work. Moreover, these accounts give credence to Frances Rickford's (1994) comments on child protection work, which indicated that social workers 'are spending their time policing the parenting habits of extremely disadvantaged people who need practical support more than surveillance'. And as one recently retired social worker added, 'social workers are aware that the risks allegedly posed by these parents would disappear if they had the resources of a more privileged family' (Searing, 1999/2000, p. 17).

Statutory social work with the elderly and ill poor revealed similar accounts. Agencies' community care budgets were wholly inadequate to the needs of clients, so that only those in the most severe need were accorded help. Social workers told of the labyrinthine processes involved and of endless assessments and reports to establish their clients' eligibility for domestic and nursing care. In most agencies, the social workers were not allowed to present their cases to the resource-giving panels but had to rely on their managers, who in turn as budget holders would have already determined which cases could go forward to panels. It was disturbing to hear social workers recall instances where a relatively limited intervention and

### THE EXPERIENCES OF POOR PEOPLE

In 1996 the French charity ATD Fourth World published a report about British social work and its impact on those living in long-term poverty. It was not positive about social work and argued that the ideals of partnership enshrined in the Children Act 1989 were rarely achieved. One consequence of the social work experiences of poor people was that many families don't seek out social work help when they need it. Listen to the voices of the clients quoted in the report:

Mary Totham cares for her three grandchildren and lives on benefits of just £100 per week. 'We get our clothes from Oxfam shops. We just about cope. Holidays are out of the question'. She has not been impressed by her experience of social workers. 'They sent a young girl who had no experience at all. "I know how you feel" is her favourite line. They should ask me what I feel. . . . Professional social workers have this boundary of professionalism and friendship that they cannot cross. I accept that, but when you are in crisis they always see the negative. You may have spent three years trying to keep that crisis at bay.'

Maria Jones, a lone mother with two children, said, 'All we want is for social workers to come across to us as people. They sometimes come into your home and tell you that it is untidy. Most of them are disgusted by us.'

From *Community Care*, 13–19 June 1996, p. 10.

resource package could significantly improve the quality of life for an older person yet they were denied such help because they were not yet sick enough.

This inability to help was a key factor contributing to the stress of the social workers (a finding supported by Balloch et al., 1999, p. 68). Their feelings were compounded by their almost unanimous condemnation of their middle and senior management, who in the eyes of the practitioners were almost totally obsessed with budget control and new audit and performance targets that had been imposed by government – and in this respect they reported that New Labour was worse than the Conservatives. One result was that social service agencies had taken on many of the qualities of a factory system. Throughput and turnover of clients was accorded the greatest importance by managers: take the referral, do the assessment and where possible close the case quickly – all confirmed through a wide range of reports and forms which had to be completed to strict timetables. While unable to quantify, I gained the sense that many clients got no further than the assessment, and that many could be assessed on multiple occasions over a relatively short time span. Little wonder then that in a recent research project in Liverpool (Anderson, 1999), people living in a highly deprived part of the city perceived the social services department as having no value in their survival of poverty. They were seen as places that gave you nothing (but an assessment).

### Conclusion

It is hard to be optimistic about British state social work at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In a deeply polarized society, its functions and purposes have

been significantly changed and the ambitions of its early leaders confounded as it has become the new Poor Law. Like its predecessor, this new Poor Law is not in the business of rehabilitation or social inclusion (however flawed this conception might be), but is primarily concerned with rationing and gatekeeping resources to some of the most needy in society: people whose plight is generally hidden from the rest of the population. Equally hidden are the activities of social workers. Many state social workers are deeply frustrated and feel undervalued, which is why so many want to leave and so few now want to enter the occupation (as reflected in the 55 per cent drop in applications for social work training between 1995 and 1999: *Guardian*, 2 February, 2000, p. 8).

For the poorest, social work remains a deeply suspect activity and one which is now seen as having even less relevance to their struggle with poverty.

### FIVE KEY POINTS

- Poverty remains overwhelmingly the most common problem confronting social work's diverse client population.
- Irrespective of specialisms and other divisions, social work is an activity which is overwhelmingly concerned with the lives and conduct of the most impoverished sections of the population.
- Individualism and familialism within social work theory and practice have enfeebled the profession as a critic of enduring inequality and the systemic reproduction of poverty in Britain.
- Many state social workers today do recognize the destructive and corrosive nature of poverty on the lives of their clients, but they lack the necessary power, organization and influence to shift government policy.
- Social work does not figure in any significant way in recent government policies on combating social exclusion.

### THREE QUESTIONS

- ? Why are social workers so uneasy about their role and responsibility *vis-à-vis* people in poverty?
- ? Are there any differences between the Charity Organisation Society's concept of the 'undeserving poor' and the concept of 'underclass' popularized by the New Right in the 1990s?
- ? What would a social work practice look like which took a more critical social perspective on poverty and inequality in contemporary society?

### **FURTHER READING**

- 1 Becker, S. and Silburn, R. (1990) *The New Poor Clients*. London: Community Care.
- 2 Wilkinson, R. (1996) *Unhealthy Societies*. London: Routledge.
- 3 Jones, C. and Novak, T. (1999) *Poverty, Welfare and the Disciplinary State*. London: Routledge.