



## Issue 4 – June 2016

### In this edition:

***The EU Referendum: Questions of Welfare***

***SPA sends letter to John Hancock on anti-lobbying clause in government contracts***

***Modern Slavery Teaching***

***Obituaries: Helen Bolderson and Bob Holman***

***SPA Convenors' Group***

***SPA Submission to the Stern Review***

***SPA Conference and SPA AGM***

***Editorial Board Vacancies JSP and SP and S***

### **The EU Referendum: Questions of Welfare**

*Dr Simon Usherwood (Senior Lecturer in Politics, University of Surrey)*

As the UK moves towards its referendum on membership of the European Union in June, it is useful to consider what impact this might have on welfare. While the EU has only limited competence in this area of public policy, the potential for major change as part of a larger process should not be neglected.

The EU has traditionally seen welfare primarily in terms of equality of access and treatment between EU nationals: free movement across borders, access to national welfare schemes and non-discrimination. As such, much of its legislative work since the 1950s has been directed towards the removal of barriers and the reinforcement of the logic that in a single market there should be not only a defence of individual's rights, but also parity of treatment.

Of course, the EU has also gone beyond this, driven both by a desire to ensure certain minimum standards – for health and safety, for example – and by the idea of creating a more shared set of rights and policies. In this, the Working Time Directive stands as a key example.

Both of these two key areas of European-level activity would be changed by the UK leaving the EU. If Britain was no longer a part of the EU's single market, in a more distant new relationship, then there would be no reason or obligation to maintain non-discrimination for EU nationals, potentially cutting off welfare access to those currently in the country. Likewise, the British government might also decide that 'European' legislation was too burdensome – as with Working Time – repealing it and

introducing more flexible provisions.

However, while such developments are certainly possible, it is also important to note that there are a number of reasons why they might not take place. First and foremost, given that any leaving of the EU would create transition costs across public policy (not to mention the economy itself), it might be decided that since there is already policy in place, the benefit of changing to a different policy might not be worth pursuing in the first place. Recall that the UK has already taken a more flexible approach to Working Time than other member states, so the big upside benefits (to employers) of not applying it any more have already been secured.

Second, whatever the relationship with the EU in future, British companies might need to continue to comply with EU standards in order to export into the Union, standards that would have some welfare implications. Indeed, if access to the single market was to remain, then the UK would find that the large majority of welfare-related provisions would continue to apply (albeit now with no scope for the UK to influence their future development).

All of this points to two ideas to keep in mind as the referendum draws nearer.

The first is that welfare policy in the EU is not easily separated from the rest of its activities: it moves around and alongside more general market integration. For many, that has been a source of frustration, as different logics have rubbed up against each other. At the same time, that frustration has also produced a relatively stable set of European-level legislation.

The second point is that welfare remains largely in the hands of national governments in the EU. The key factor in the future shape of UK welfare policy post-membership will not be the EU, but rather the British government. Given the necessary lack of clarity about what that government might do – either entrenching into a more introspective political economy, or opening up to become a more globalised state – it is almost impossible to model what that might mean in practical terms.

This is also true if the UK stays inside the EU too: consider how welfare has changed since 1973, when the UK joined the then-EEC, or even since 2010 and the election of the Conservative-led government. As much as the EU matters, it does so primarily as a function of national politics. A vote one way or the other in the referendum is not going to be the decisive factor in the future path of British welfare policy.

*Dr Simon Usherwood is Senior Fellow on the ESRC's 'UK in a Changing Europe' programme, which provides independent academic research on UK-EU relations.*

*Simon Usherwood is on twitter at @Usherwood*

**SPA sends letter to John Hancock on anti-lobbying clause in government contracts**

**On 1<sup>st</sup> March Nick Ellison and Jane Millar sent a letter on behalf of the SPA urging the government to reconsider its proposals to introduce an anti-lobbying clause in future government grants. The contents of the letter are reproduced below.**

Dear Minister,

**Anti-lobbying clause in government grants**

The Social Policy Association represents more than 400 academics and researchers, many of whom are engaged in social research with government departments. We were therefore concerned to read your announcement on the 6th February that an 'anti-lobbying' clause is to be included in government grants. Our members are particularly anxious that this will have grave consequences for anyone engaged in policy-relevant work, which includes most of the social policy academic community.

The UK has a strong record in using research to inform and evaluate policy, increasing the transparency and accountability of government without political favour or bias. Indeed over the past two or three decades the focus on 'evidence-based policy' has led to the creation of more effective institutional structures

to use research evidence to better effect in the UK policy process. The recent Research Excellence Framework showed the impact of research on policy with 20 percent of all case studies submitted to REF2014 citing an impact of informing government policy. Within the social policy and social work area, where many of our members are found, overall about 44 per cent of the 'impact' submissions were judged to be at the highest level of international excellence, and much of this work related to government policy.

These impact case studies show that the relationship between research and policy is far from straightforward. The pathways to policy impact are complex, involve a range of stakeholders in and out of government, and are often not possible to predict in advance. There are many activities which such a clause may affect, including for example, researchers giving evidence to Parliamentary Select Committees, to government departments, to inquiries and consultations. Research also plays an important role in informing public debate and many social policy researchers are committed to ensuring that research findings are in the public domain. This is very much in the spirit of 'open access', as promoted by government and the Research Councils.

There is thus a significant risk that this clause would prevent researchers from fully exploring the policy implications of their work, particularly in relation to any unexpected or novel findings. Exemptions seems both unlikely to work in practice, as researchers cannot always predict policy implications in advance, and would add a further bureaucratic hurdle to the research process.

We understand that the aim is to ensure appropriate use of public money but we are concerned that this approach is likely to reduce the use, and value, of research evidence in policymaking across government. We believe that this would be a backward step.

We would therefore welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Nick Ellison, Chair of the Social Policy Association  
Jane Millar, Chair-Elect

## Modern Slavery Teaching

*Professor Gary Craig, University of Durham*

Now that the systems and policies consequent on the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are bedding in, and the nature and extent of modern slavery in the UK is becoming clear, I would like to build a case for modern slavery studies to be included in the next social policy benchmarking exercise.

As a next step, I want to scope the extent of current teaching around modern slavery in the UK in social policy or related courses. Could readers therefore please let me have details as follows of any teaching in which they participate or of which they are aware, covering issues such as human trafficking, forced labour or severe labour exploitation, domestic servitude: I appreciate that these courses may not be situated in a social policy setting.

1. Name of institution/School, Department
2. Type of course (seminar, one-off lecture, module, guest speaker

etc.)

3. Level of course (undergraduate, taught or research Master's, PhD)

4. Focus (if any) (no more than 20 words please)

5. Any other relevant comments

Thanks. Please let me have responses to [gary.craig@durham.ac.uk](mailto:gary.craig@durham.ac.uk) by July 20. The findings of this small survey will be summarised in a future edition of the SPA newsletter.

## Obituary

### Helen Bolderson



Many readers of this newsletter will remember Helen Bolderson, who has died aged 85. Helen taught for many years on the MA in Public and Social Administration at Brunel University, specialising in social security. The programme was distinctive in offering part-time study to officials from the (then) DHSS/DSS. Helen was also a tutor on their summer school, and undertook several research projects for the department. Throughout her working life, she promoted links between the policy and research worlds.

Helen was born in Berlin in 1930, and came to the UK as a refugee in 1938. She was the only child of parents who were determined that she should integrate fully into British life. Their efforts were highly successful - so much so that many people had no idea of her background - but they also contributed to Helen's capacity

for penetrating observation and ironic comment on the mores of her adopted country.

Helen did a BA in Sociology and an MA in Social Work at LSE, and worked for a time as a child protection officer for the London County Council. Later, she returned to LSE to do a PhD under the supervision of Richard Titmuss, who she greatly admired. Titmuss's influence is evident in the close interest in administration which characterised her work throughout her life. She was interested in the practices of government in the categorisation and treatment of people in the welfare state. She developed a theoretical framework in which both policy and administration could be seen as drawing on allocative norms developed in different social spheres, including the market, the charitable sector, and civil law. She applied this framework to disability provisions in particular and also to the comparative analysis of social security more generally.

Partly from her own experience as a social worker, Helen was always doubtful about the ability of the state to interfere beneficially in people's lives. At the same time, she was totally committed to collective responsibility for welfare. Much of her work was motivated by the quest to square this circle through the close analysis of administrative practices. She spent a lot of time in social security offices in different countries, talking to officials and gathering information about processes. She was thorough and patient in working through the details, and at the same time perceptive about how these details might function to exclude people or introduce arbitrary judgments.

Everyone who worked with Helen was left with a strong impression of her commitment to the principle that the state should promote justice and equity in its dealings with its citizens – and, indeed, with those who were not legally citizens and subject to exclusion because of their immigration status. In her retirement, Helen turned her attention to the asylum system, and became involved with the Refugee Council and the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Until shortly before her death, she was working on a history of UK asylum policies since 1905, tracing what was often a well-hidden policy process. She was an early user of the access provided by freedom of information legislation, although her enquiries were often blocked by an increasingly defensive and isolated bureaucracy. If anyone could find their way past the barriers it was Helen, unfailingly courteous but also persistent in her efforts to puzzle out what the government had done and why.

Helen's students remember her as a committed and dedicated teacher who took seriously their ideas and their experiences as practitioners in the welfare state. Some became lifelong friends. An excellent listener, Helen had a talent for enlivening social occasions by drawing out unexpected aspects of people's life stories, and she had no time for those too pompous to participate. She was a great observer of institutions and their absurdities, strikingly uninterested in status and academic hierarchies, often inclined to spend more time with a junior researcher than with a leader in the field (although she was thrilled, at the age of 73, to meet Harold Wilensky, who was then about 80 and happy to find

this unexpected fan). She is warmly remembered by many in social policy for her generosity, openness, insight and humour.

*After retiring from Brunel, Helen became a research fellow at Birkbeck, and her web-page there (<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/politics/our-staff/visiting-staff/helen-bolderson>) has tributes from friends in the social policy community as well as a record of some of her recent work. Further contributions are welcome – please send them to [d.mabbett@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:d.mabbett@bbk.ac.uk).*

### Deborah Mabbett

### Bob Holman

Sadly in June 2016 Professor Bob Holman died aged 79. In honour of his influence and contribution to society and to social policy we reprint below the obituary written by Terry Philpot originally published in the Guardian on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Bob Holman, who has died aged 79 after suffering from motor neurone disease, earned a unique place in social work, when, in 1976, he resigned his professorship in social administration at Bath University to become a community worker on the city's deprived Southdown estate. He saw his affluence and position as inconsistent with his Christian faith. He and his wife, Annette, and their two children, Ruth and David, moved from a comfortable middle-class area in the city to a home next to the estate and he started the project where he then worked.

Ironically, this thrust him into far greater prominence than university life afforded, as he published widely to propagate

ideas forged by his experiences. His advocacy, as well as the way he lived his life in a disadvantaged community, earned him many admirers, within and outside social work; some saw him as almost a secular saint.

As an academic Bob had published the groundbreaking *Trading in Children: A Study of Private Fostering* (1973), but, in his new life, he produced a veritable flood of books, articles and letters to newspapers. Many of his books had a pleasing combination of observation, anecdote and research.

To reduce poverty he believed, was not enough. Inequality, too, had to be tackled. He highlighted the desperate struggles of those with whom he worked and lived, but he also emphasised their strengths and ability to run their own lives. The single parents and unemployed people who ran the projects were for Bob evidence of the possibilities of working-class collective spirit and individual integrity.

After a decade in Bath, in 1987 he went to live and work on the vast and deprived Easterhouse estate in Glasgow. He always wanted to show what could be done to motivate and involve people and bring communities together. Bob spurned any distinction between himself and other residents, calling himself a "resourceful friend". His daily work involved filling in social security forms, accompany young people to court or helping a neighbour to raise a loan for a new cooker.

He was born in Ilford, Essex, the middle child of Robert Bones, a removal man, and his wife, Lily

(nee Simms). He later adopted the maiden name of his grandmother. Bob's primary education was disrupted by evacuation, of which he was to write a history; in his case, it involved stays in Surrey and Herefordshire. Following grammar school and national service in the RAF, he studied history and economics at University College London and transferred to the London School of Economics for his certificate in social administration.

Bob's attitudes to poverty and inequality and criticism of those whom he characterised as running a "welfare industry" – highly paid heads of voluntary organisations and directors of social services – were profoundly shaped by his Christian faith, which he had come to as a teenager. He saw in the life of George Lansbury, the MP for Poplar in London, pacifist, Labour leader and cabinet minister, who lived simply in his East End constituency, the epitome of the Christian socialism that he, too, sought to practise. Holman wrote a biography, *Good Old George* (1990). Later there came other labours of love: a biography of Keir Hardie, and another, *Woodbine Willie* (2012), about the pacifist clergyman and poet Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy.

In 1989 Bob helped to establish Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (Fare), a grassroots organisation, especially for families and young people. It encourages neighbours to work with one another; to keep young people out of the care and criminal justice systems; and to lift people's aspirations, while trying to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Bob's enemy's enemy became his friend when, always a socialist, he developed a friendship with Iain Duncan Smith, then Tory leader, who on a visit to Easterhouse seemingly underwent something of a conversion to the cause of social justice, after voting against every progressive measure of the Labour governments. The friendship did not survive Duncan Smith's role in the Coalition and Conservative cabinets.

From 1961 to 1966 he was a child care officer with Hertfordshire county council, also becoming a tutor in child care. He then held lectureships in social work and social administration at Birmingham and Glasgow universities. It was in Birmingham where the reality of widespread poverty dawned on him. At Bath university, though, he decided he was ill-fitted to be a professor: he disliked administration and not working directly with those he cared about.

Although he allegedly retired in 2004 and moved elsewhere in Glasgow, partly to look after his grandsons, Bob continued to write, speak at conferences, undertake voluntary neighbourhood work and act as visiting professor at the universities of Glasgow and Cardiff.

He turned down an MBE and, asked about collaborating on a biography, said: "If I have achieved anything, I hope it is seen in other people, not me."

In the aftermath of the Tories' return to office and Labour's obliteration in Scotland in May 2015, Bob wrote to me: "I can't do much in politics. I am going to write less ... After that – in the days I've got left – I want to

concentrate on local individuals. We cannot take them out of poverty but we can provide people with some togetherness and show that we respect, not blame them."

Within two months, that time left had shortened with the diagnosis of motor neurone disease.

Bob is survived by Annette, his children, David and Ruth, two grandsons, Lucas and Nathan, his sister, Janet, and brother, John.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jun/15/bob-holman-obituary>

*Following news of Bob's death a letter by co-authors of a report inspired by Bob last year was published in the Guardian on June 17th:*

In late 2014, he used his occasional Guardian article to invite the nine of us to write a report on poverty and inequality today, 70 years on from the tensions created between town and country by the attitudes shown towards children and mothers evacuated during World War II. Mainly strangers, but each of us fuelled by a life-long respect for Bob's values and work, we rose to his challenge, got together, and produced *Our Lives: Challenging attitudes to poverty in 2015*, interviews with 22 people in the different parts of England and Scotland where we work and live. Our abiding gratitude to Bob is that he prompted us to take action and then launched the report for us, at what proved to be his last public speaking engagement. He was too frail to join the report's re-launch in the House of Commons this year, but his wife Annette sent the following message: "Bob wishes the

meeting well. He says the report reflects reality, because it is written by people who know the poor and have given them a voice. It is now up to parliamentarians to take effective action to realise its aims.”

**Jo Tunnard, Tricia Zipfel, Josephine Feeney, Audrey Flanagan, Loretta Gaffney, Karen Postle, Frances O’Grady, Sally Young, Fran Bennett**

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jun/17/bob-holman-brought-all-of-us-together-to-research-poverty>

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### SPA Convenors Group

The next meeting of the group will take place at the SPA Conference in Belfast at 12:15 on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

### SPA Submission to the Stern Review

In March 2016, Chair of the UK SPA, submitted a response to Lord Stern’s review of the Research Excellence Framework

### SPA Conference

**The annual conference will be hosted Ulster University and take place in Belfast 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July. A full report of the Conference and Awards will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.**

To read more about the conference and to book, please go to:

<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/cpsp/2016-spa-annual-conference-belfast/>

The SPA AGM will take place during the annual conference. It will be held from 5.30-7pm, Central Hall, Conference Venue

### Journal of Social Policy and Social Policy and Society Editorial Boards

There are 4 vacancies on the editorial board of the Journal of Social Policy and 4 vacancies on the editorial board of Social Policy & Society.

#### *Editorial board nominations for the JOURNAL OF SOCIAL POLICY*

The editorial board meets twice a year. Throughout the year members are expected to referee a small number of papers submitted to the Journal and provide advice to the editors when required. Editorial board members serve a term of four years. Elections will be held at the AGM held at the Social Policy Association Conference in July. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, in the first instance please contact the editors, Patricia Kennett (p.kennett@bristol.ac.uk) and Misa Izuhara (m.izuhara@bristol.ac.uk), to discuss the role of editorial board members. The JSP editors welcome applications from all areas of social policy we would particularly like to encourage those specialising in the following to apply: employment and labour markets, comparative social policy, gender, poverty and well-being and quantitative methods.

Nominations should be emailed to the SPA Hon. Secretary, Tina Haux (T.Haux@kent.ac.uk). Please provide brief details of interests and experience, which

will form the basis of a short summary on the ballot form, and the names of a proposer and a seconder (both of whom must also be SPA members), by Monday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2016.

#### *Nominations required for the editorial board of SOCIAL POLICY & SOCIETY*

The editorial board meets twice a year, and members are expected to be involved in refereeing papers submitted to the Journal. Editorial board members serve on the board for four years. Elections will be held at the AGM at the Social Policy Association Conference in July. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, in the first instance please contact the editors, Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Liam Foster (l.foster@sheffield.ac.uk) to discuss the role of editorial board members.

Nominations should be emailed to the SPA Hon. Secretary, Tina Haux (T.Haux@kent.ac.uk). Please provide brief details of interests and experience, which will form the basis of a short summary on the ballot form, and the names of a proposer and a seconder (both of whom must also be SPA members), by Monday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2016.

