



THE Joseph Rowntree  
REFORM TRUST LTD

# **TRUSTING IN CHANGE**

**A STORY OF REFORM**

**CENTENARY EDITION 2004**

Published by The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd.  
The Garden House, Water End, York, YO30 6WQ  
Tel: 01904 625744 Fax: 01904 651502  
[www.jrrt.org.uk](http://www.jrrt.org.uk) [info@jrrt.org.uk](mailto:info@jrrt.org.uk)  
Company registered in England No. 357963

Text by Tony Flower

ISBN 0-9548902-0-5

© The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd 1994, 1998, 2004

## **FOREWORD**

Democracy works because it admits the possibility of change. It enables us to decide what is or is not legitimate, and to change our minds if something better comes along. But democracy itself cannot bring about change. In deciding what is acceptable and what needs to be reformed, we first have to provide the options, by imagining for ourselves how things could be other than they are, or by seeking out a diversity of other points of view; those of the lone maverick with a controversial idea as well as the accumulated wisdom of the great movements of history.

Seeking out such options and thinking through the consequences of choice and change is a continuous process. It is also hard work, and reformers need all the help and encouragement they can get. Joseph Rowntree knew that better than most, having made a lifelong study of poverty and the other great social ills of Victorian England. By the turn of the nineteenth century he had also made a considerable fortune from the chocolate and confectionery company that bore his name, and was thus better placed than most to lend financial support to the cause of reform and social improvement. That is why he founded three trusts, each designed to reflect and develop different aspects of his thinking about contemporary social problems and how they might eventually be solved. This is a brief account of the work of one of those trusts, set up a hundred years ago not in remembrance of the past, but to provide a legacy for reform in the future.

The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd. has been working for change ever since, having itself undergone many changes through the years - including changing its own name (from the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust Ltd.). Its legacy of reform quietly reverberated throughout the twentieth century; in its early days contributing to the new climate of opinion that eventually led to the formation of the Welfare State, and helping to ensure a balance of financial equality within the British political system. In more recent times the Trust has played its part in powering a renaissance of reform amongst the present generation, contributing in modest, but often timely ways to the causes of liberation in Africa and to Solidarity in Poland; towards the launch of organisations such

as Amnesty International and Friends of the Earth, and to a host of other groups working for change in Britain, from the Child Poverty Action Group to those working specifically for constitutional reform, like Charter 88. The Trust's consistent championing of constitutional issues, from Scottish and Welsh devolution to electoral reform, is now widely acknowledged to have played a key part in Britain's moves toward the creation of a new constitutional settlement in the late 1990s.

As it completes its first century, the Trust continues to build upon Joseph Rowntree's original vision. Its principal aim remains that of keeping reform on the political agenda, since (as Carl Friedrich wrote, in *Man and his Government*) 'democratic order is built, not on an agreement on fundamentals, but in the organising of its dissent.' So the Trust's task for its second century is to continue strengthening the hand of honourable dissenters; the new visionaries and changers-of-minds - not just for the sake of change, but to maintain the possibility of change which Joseph Rowntree sought, and democracy ensures.

## **A FORCE FOR REFORM**

The story of the Trust is not so much a linear chronology of events since its foundation in York by Joseph Rowntree, the chocolate manufacturer and Quaker, in 1904. It is more a series of phases reflecting different interpretations of its founder's original reformist vision. Hence the provenance of its current political agenda is very much rooted in the modern world, and in changes that have occurred only since the 1970s, but it is also a modern reflection of concerns that Joseph first developed in the 19th century. His interest in 'maintaining the purity of elections' has, for example, been translated into support for thorough-going constitutional reform, and his strategy of ensuring the freedom of the press by investing in newspapers and periodicals evolved into support for the Campaigns for Freedom of Information and for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

But, crucially, it was the use of the very structure of the Trust that really put it on the map as a powerful force for reform. Joseph had deliberately set up the Trust as a company to avoid the restrictions incurred by grant-making charitable trusts in return for their tax exemption, and the Trust's non-charitable status remains almost unique amongst grant-giving bodies to this day. It was, however, the reactivation of its consequent ability to fund not merely non-charitable, but also overtly political causes, which breathed new life into the Trust during the rise of the pressure groups in the 70s; which powers its pro-activity today, and which will help ensure, in years to come, the continuity of reform that Joseph sought.

## **PHASE ONE: A FAMILY TRUST**

In its first phase, up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Trust established itself as one of the major philanthropic institutions of the period, reflecting and developing not only Joseph Rowntree's charitable instincts, but also his instincts about the nature of charity itself. These were set out in the remarkably prescient Memorandum which Joseph wrote as the founding document in 1904. Here, he drew a firm distinction between seeking short-term remedies for 'the superficial manifestations of weakness or evil' and the much more difficult task of searching out their underlying causes. It was this task which needed the most support, he argued, since the effects of evil were all too obvious and elicited aid from many other sources.

The many and varied projects which the Trust undertook were the direct result of such guiding principles and of the Rowntree family's special interests in ensuring freedom of expression (especially by strengthening the hand of the liberal press), in promoting temperance and anti-gambling movements, and in working for the relief of poverty. The projects in which the Trust became involved were not in themselves as overtly political as later projects were to become, but they could not have become so without the foundations - both in thought and action - which Joseph laid down.

## **ORIGINS**

Joseph founded the Trust itself, along with two other Trusts, in December 1904, when he was 68. The Village Trust (subsequently renamed the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, and now the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) was originally set up to create and administer New Earswick, one of several 'model' villages that were being developed at that time by other enlightened industrialists like Sir George Lever and the Cadbury brothers. The remaining pair of Trusts were the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust Ltd., both of which were charged with the much more general remit, and for Joseph, the religious objective, of getting to the heart of the social, economic and political problems of his day - but with

the distinction that the former was to be a charitable body, whereas the latter would be a limited company. It is this company - JRSST Ltd. - that eventually became, in 1990, the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd.

All three Trusts were endowed with shares in the chocolate company, and this original merger of mission and money often leads to two misconceptions: that the three Trusts are linked, and that they are linked to the company. In fact, they have always been legally separate bodies, with separate boards of trustees or directors, and even the Trusts' residual connection with the company as shareholders was severed once and for all by the Nestlé takeover in 1988 of what was by then Rowntree Mackintosh Ltd. What they do share, however - apart from their location in York - is their common birthright.

## **LIBERALISM AND QUAKERISM**

This common inheritance echoes through the work of all three Trusts, although Joseph himself was creatively vague about the remit that JRSST should take into the future. He realised, in a quotation borrowed from James Lowell, not only that 'new occasions teach new duties' but that 'time makes ancient good uncouth'. He did not want to proscribe the Trust's freedom of action in an ever-changing future, for to do so would have run counter to his strongly-held beliefs in both liberalism and the Quaker tradition.

Joseph had been a lifelong liberal and regarded a strong Liberal Party as a vital factor in the life of the nation. A long strand of liberalism subsequently ran through the life of the Trust, and continues to this day. But it has not necessarily taken a party political form. Indeed, Joseph's own support for the Liberal Party must be viewed within the context of the largely two-party system that existed at the time. His liberalism did not so much reflect the views of a particular party, as the values of personal and corporate responsibility which Joseph also espoused as a lifelong Quaker.

As a kind of clergyless do-it-yourself Christianity, the Quaker movement devolves responsibility upon its members, respecting their ability to think and act for themselves - rather as liberalism aims to decentralise

power to those it affects. It thus encourages a measure of personal resourcefulness and initiative, and an outward-looking concern for the society in which we all live, through a form of enlightened self-interest which even the most hardened agnostic might find attractive.

In Joseph's terms, Quakerism meant that wealth and property beyond the needs of the individual should be used for the common good - hence the setting up of the Trusts. But the underlying interest was in the nature of freedom, in our individual and corporate responsibility to maintain it, and in the interconnectedness and interdependence of any action that might create or destroy it - especially, in this context, political and social action. In short, we make the beds in which we lie; we construct our own reality and can therefore change it. But this makes it doubly important first to find out what is going on in the real world.

## POVERTY

Joseph disapproved of 'Charity as ordinarily practised'. Writing in 1868, when under 35 years old, he said 'the charity of endowment, the charity of emotion, the charity which takes the place of justice, creates much of the misery which it relieves, but does not relieve all the misery it creates'. He was concerned to discover the underlying causes of injustice and particularly of poverty, rather than just to throw money at it. His own writings on the subject, and especially those of his son Seebohm, based on studies in York, demonstrated that poverty was not so much the result of personal failure as of the complex economic and social factors beyond the control of the individual - which the liberal/Quaker analysis, along with other analyses, said we could do something about.

On reading Seebohm's *Poverty - A Study of Town Life* Winston Churchill declared that he had been 'reading a book which fairly made my hair stand on end'. Indeed, what Booth did for the East End of London, Seebohm did for York. In one of several follow-up statistical studies to his original research in 1899, he concluded that while great progress had been made since his original study, in 1936, 17.8 per cent of the population still lived below the poverty line. Some sources would say



that the percentage of people in the 1990s living at or below the official safety net is nearer 20 per cent. But 60 years ago, Seebohm was saying that every one of the causes of poverty - unemployment, poor health and so on - were capable of remedy without dislocating industry or our national finances. He went on to serve on Beveridge's subcommittee looking into subsistence levels; his figures being used in the Beveridge report of 1942, and his Human Needs Scales becoming the basis of the rates of relief laid down in the provisions for the Welfare State.

### POSITIVE ACTION

Joseph died in 1925 at the age of 89, having seen his Trusts take on many of his main concerns: education - especially adult literacy - temperance, the alleviation of poverty and bad housing, the improvement of civic life and of the electoral process.

He had given his original JRSST directors wide powers and few directions. The Trust having been born of his concerns about the social problems of his day, and the need to study their underlying causes, he nevertheless realised that research alone is not enough. Positive action was also required to enlist public opinion in the war against 'the great scourges of humanity' and in support of 'the right measures of social advancement'. Hence the Trust's original interest in the press as a conduit of influence, as well as of free expression. Many provincial newspapers and influential periodicals which had been in danger of closing down in the period before the Second World War had been given a new lease of life by the Trust, and had actually become a source of income rather than of expenditure by the outbreak of war, so successful was this backing. By 1939, 45 per cent of the Trust's expenditure had been on newspapers and periodicals. Titles owned or part-owned included *The Northern Echo*, *Morning Leader* and *The Star*. This interest was not, however, without its problems, Joseph having come under attack for condemning gambling whilst allowing newspapers under the Trust's control to carry betting tips. Periodicals came to be seen as a better bet for advancing liberal ideas, with *The Nation* being launched in 1907 (later to be merged with the *New Statesman*), followed by the *Contemporary Review*, the *Athenaeum* and *British Weekly*.

## **PHASE TWO: CHARITY AND POLITICS**

The second phase in the Trust's development, broadly between 1939 and 1970, represented a continuation of its essentially charitable work, especially in its pivotal role in establishing the University of York. But this period also saw an increase in a form of soft partisan political giving. Despite the Trust's liberal background, its first political grant had in fact been to the Labour Party in 1910 to help finance a delegation wishing to visit European capitals. The Liberal Party itself had to wait until 1935 before it received its first grant, with the total given to the Liberals by 1939 being only 0.89 per cent of the Trust's overall expenditure. But during the war the Trust stepped up its support for the Party, bailing it out during a particularly difficult period and spending some 20 per cent of its income on liberal causes for the next twenty years. It wasn't until 1965 that the Trust's prescient support for Amnesty International began to herald things to come.

### **THE LIBERAL PARTY**

By 1940 the Liberal Party was so weak that its survival was in jeopardy. An emergency grant was therefore agreed and regular support was given thereafter, apart from a hiatus in 1950 when the annual grant to the central party organisation was temporarily withdrawn because the Trust judged that the Party was being badly led, and was fielding too many candidates in the General Election. However, the grant of £1,000 a year was restored following frantic pleas from the party chairman.

Such support was offered, however, not just because of the Trust's liberal roots, but because of the perception of an increasing (and increasingly unhealthy) polarisation of British party politics between capital and management on the one side and trades unions and employees on the other. This began to take the Trust into the more general arena of political problem-solving and a renewed exploration of the nature of democracy. Joseph's concerns for maintaining the 'purity of elections' had begun to be translated into maintaining the purity of democracy itself, which meant encouraging an exchange of views and ideas among everybody involved in the political process, redressing

the balance of financial inequality between the parties and stimulating radical change.

This led, in turn, to early support for the newly-formed Liberal International and to the Trust setting up the Acton Society. The Society was formed in 1948 as a liberal answer to the Fabians, named not because of the eponymous historian's absolute-power-corrupting-absolutely sobriquet, but because of what was perceived as his clear vision of the nature of Liberty. The Society continued to be a main agenda item for the Trust for many years afterwards, providing a forum for the discussion of liberal thought - especially in its studies of the health service, nationalisation, decentralisation and the impact of size and scale upon different kinds of organisations.

### **A CHARITABLE PERSPECTIVE**

Meanwhile, for similar reasons, at the start of the Trust's second phase in 1939, it was decided that some areas of work could be handed over to its sister charitable trusts, leaving JRSST to concentrate on objectives within its special terms of reference, but not in theirs. The newspapers were also making profits by now, and since the injection of relatively small capital sums could no longer determine the purposes of such publications, the emphasis had begun to move towards the regular grants to the Liberal Party, as well as to the traditional support for civic issues, anti-gambling and temperance legislation. The Temperance Legislation League, which advocated state control of liquor traffic, remained almost entirely financed by the Trust at this time. It gave evidence to the Home Office committee on post-war reconstruction, and pressed for the creation of community centres on new estates where liquor would be controlled - a policy which happened to be supported by the Labour Party. But on this issue the benevolent ghost of Joseph Rowntree had to admit failure. The Trust effectively gave up efforts to promote temperance reform after 1946 (by which time official interest had begun to flag within the Attlee government), though not its concern about alcoholism. It continued to amass enough evidence to convince the Ministry of Health of the need to create treatment centres for alcoholics, which remain vital institutions today.

A spectacular success for Joseph's legacy of interest in education and civic life was the establishment of the University of York. The Trust gave its first grant to the York Civic Trust Academic Development Committee in 1949, which represented the initial step in what was to be a fifteen-year campaign for the creation of the city's own university. The Trust's support eventually bore fruit, and culminated in a £150,000 grant, the gift of Heslington Hall and a substantial amount of accompanying land on which the university was built.

The Trust's central role in the creation of the university was an achievement of the first order. But as a classically charitable venture it can be coupled with the fact that the Trust had regularly been giving a third of its income to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust as an indicator of its essentially conventional approach, if not of a certain lack of imagination in its spending policy at this time. Indeed, during the early fifties, only 10 per cent of its income was being spent on the non-charitable purposes which it was constitutionally able to support, and by 1955 it had gone even further down this road in setting up its own charity, the JRSST Charitable Trust, to manage 'charitable objects where the grant is not intended to be of sufficient duration to be given under deed of covenant'. This meant that the Trust could then directly control its charitable giving instead of having to operate at a distance through the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, but it also compounded the fact that the Trust was still thinking like a conventional charity.

Even as late as 1967, four fifths of the Trust's net income remained devoted to non-political work (although the range of such work was increasingly wide), with its political spending remaining firmly focused on liberal causes and interests. Apart from continuing support for the Acton Society and the Proportional Representation Society (which later became the Electoral Reform Society), grants made in the 50s and early 60s included those to the Industrial Co-Partnership Association (which had first received support in the 1920s), the Campaign Against Capital Punishment, and the Liberal Party Research Department.

## NEW AWAKENINGS

Other grants demonstrated the increasing range of the Trust's charitable support, though not its political giving. They included those made to the Outward Bound Trust, the National Association for the Single Woman and her Dependants, and for an organisation setting up a number of mobile language laboratories. A grant was also made to the Runnymede Trust through a joint race relations group which had been set up with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

An early precursor of the Trust's hardcore political work, and its international reach, can nevertheless be found back in 1955 with its support for the Africa Bureau. Joseph Rowntree's original emphasis had been upon 'changing the face of England', but the Trust recognised in this a responsibility for the welfare and education of people in former colonial territories. A few grants were therefore made to Quaker schools in Kenya and Botswana, but the first proto-political departure took the form of support for the Bureau, whose *Digest* became a unique source of authoritative information on affairs all over Africa - especially on issues of discrimination and inequality of opportunity.

Ten years later in 1965 the Trust then took its first serious dip into politically hot water. It provided generous and very early support for Amnesty International, followed in 1968 by support for one of the new breed of pressure groups, the Child Poverty Action Group. In both instances, however, funds were provided in the form of charitable grants (in Amnesty's case, by supporting its charitable Prisoners of Conscience Fund). It was not until after the appointment of the Trust's first full-time secretary, in 1969, that its full non-charitable power was brought into play.

## **PHASE THREE: A NEW POLITICAL AGENDA**

The Trust really started to come into its own in the 1970s. The students of the sixties had stepped out of a psychedelia of hopeful idealism into a badly-lit decade of discontent, creating a flowering of pressure groups where before there had been merely flowers. Casual protest matured into professional political action as a new wave of energetic youth teamed up with older, more hard-bitten survivors of an earlier vanguard of reform to lobby for change. But there was something missing, and that was money - very often just the relatively small amounts needed to establish an office, or to pay a telephone bill. Most conventional sources of funding were denied to such groups precisely because of their political activity. So an unconventional source was required; one that did not have to abide by charity law, and one with a sufficiently wide remit to accommodate the range of activity that the pursuit of change necessarily requires.

The Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust fitted the bill. Just as Seebohm Rowntree had made Churchill's hair stand on end fifty years before, with his revelations about the true causes of poverty, so the Trust embarked upon a series of ventures that ruffled a few more feathers: supporting the liberation movements in Portuguese Africa was an unheard-of thing for an elderly British trust to undertake, but its pioneering of research assistance for opposition frontbenchers, and its establishment of free premises for pressure groups of all political persuasions was equally radical at that time.

### **ACTION ABROAD**

This third phase in the Trust's development was therefore very much more ecumenically, and unashamedly political. By the start of the 70s it was decided that the Trust's freedom to make political grants was so rare that such giving shouldn't be confined to the Liberal Party, nor indeed to this country. The Trust wanted to keep the democratic process as a whole as lively and efficient as possible, wherever it was under threat.

One of the first projects within this developing policy was the Trust's wholly remarkable support for the liberation movements in Portuguese

Africa. This was entirely a matter of sending butter rather than guns, but the Trust's aid for schools and hospitals in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and for several groups working in support of the liberation movements in the UK, sent some clear political as well as humanitarian messages. This was followed by a period of several years during which unobtrusive support was given to the victims of colonialism and apartheid throughout the continent, which included support for the emerging democratic parties in former Rhodesia.

In the 1970s grants were also given to persecuted minorities in Russia and Eastern Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia where support was given to lawyers defending prisoners of conscience and to the samizdat press. In 1977 the Trust contributed to the Orlov Defence Fund, in support of the Russian dissident Professor Yuri Orlov, and by 1980 it was helping the cause of Solidarity in Poland, by buying an offset-litho printing machine for use by the independent press.

Grants such as these did not have to be large to achieve real change. For example, the Trust's support of successful lobbying by the Center for International Policy for a US Congressional amendment prohibiting loans to regimes practising apartheid cost only £6,000. The thought behind such action had, however, required a large-scale shift of attitude about what it was possible for the Trust to achieve, and its renewed potency as an agency for change had also enhanced its effects at home in Britain.

## **CHOCOLATE SOLDIERS**

On the domestic front, the protection of the democratic process began to focus upon parliament itself. One of the Trust's best achievements stemmed from the realisation that opposition front benchers had no more funding for research assistance than backbenchers, and were therefore significantly hampered in their duties of shadowing government ministers who had the full panoply of the civil service behind them. The Trust therefore offered funding to all three parties (when not in power) to avoid any accusations of partisanship, under what it called the Political Fellowship Scheme. Inevitably, the research assistants whom MPs took on as a result came to be known as 'Chocolate Soldiers'.

The scheme had been introduced during the Conservative administration of the early 70s, and when the Labour Party regained power it remained acutely aware of the ridiculous situation it had been in, while in opposition, of having to rely on the help of a private trust in this way. A new scheme was therefore introduced by the then Leader of the House, Edward Short, in which for the first time opposition parties would receive state funding for research purposes, based on the number of votes any party had received in the most recent election. Chocolate soldiery thus became 'Short Money'. The exercise represents a model project for the Trust in that a need had been perceived and provided for in a small way; the powers-that-be had then realised that a gap was there to be filled (and had been shown how this could be achieved), and had eventually ended up plugging it for good.

### **CHOCOLATE BOFFINS**

Another important project which the Trust initiated in the mid-1970s (as opposed to simply reacting to incoming proposals) was the formation of the Outer Circle Policy Unit. This was in fact the largest initiative of the period in terms of cost, but it is only one of several good examples of the Trust's gap-filling role. The gap here was that conventional research organisations with charitable status were not able to advocate legislative change, and often lacked any kind of a channel for communicating their findings and ideas to the legislators or members of the opposition. The Trust could, however, use its non-charitable money to fund a body which would then bring the results of existing research to bear on policy-making, and which could involve itself directly in the political process by, for example, drafting Parliamentary Bills. Hence the OCPU became an important conduit of political thought which would have been very difficult to fund in any other way, and followed in the Trust's evolving tradition of resourcing the otherwise unresourceable. It was, however, always regarded as a useful, but short-term, experiment for the Trust (showing, like the chocolate soldiers project, how a gap could be filled), and its five-year run finished in 1980.



## **WIDENING SUPPORT**

Although the Trust has not been wholly consistent in refusing funding for the unconditional, general purposes of political parties, it has for the most part stuck to those democratic initiatives which have been put forward by pioneering individuals or groups irrespective of their party allegiance. Hence, during this period, it helped Keith Joseph with some of the initial costs of setting up the Centre for Policy Studies, as well as helping organisations like the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and individual politicians as ideologically varied as Tony Marlow and David Blunkett. At the time of the Lib-Lab pact in 1977, the Trust therefore felt able to give substantial support to David Steel on the grounds that his initiative was in the national interest rather than that of either party, and continued to give many smaller grants to organisations like the Manifesto Group of Labour MPs and to several Young Conservative organisations.

## **PRESSURE GROUPS & POLAND STREET**

Back at the beginning of the pressure group boom in the early 1970s, it had become increasingly obvious that the primary need of most groups was simply for decent accommodation; a large component of many applications being requests for help in paying rent for often unsuitable offices. The Trust therefore came up with the quite revolutionary, if Quakerishly practical, idea of buying a single building to house many of these groups, and in 1970 bought a long lease on 9 Poland Street, a 7,200 square feet 1920s office building just off Oxford Street in central London.

Poland Street thus became a convenient and famous roost for a multitude of small organisations looking for cheap, or in this case, free office space - given as a supplement to, or instead of, a conventional grant for periods of up to ten years. In due course, a bookshop and a publications support unit were added to the building's other shared facilities, such as a much-used communal photocopier. All this helped to cement a strange camaraderie among groups as deliberately varied as the Socialist Environment and Resources Association and the Tory

Reform Group, along with the beginnings of what are now major institutions such as Friends of the Earth. The roll-call of more than fifty organisations that benefited from free space at Poland Street also includes Gingerbread, the Low Pay Unit, the 300 Group, The Liberal Parliamentary Association, the Socialist Society and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

Broadcasting reform had, indeed, become a natural target for the Trust during the 70s, given its traditional interest in the press and publishing and the importance for democracy of maintaining the freedom of the Fourth Estate in whatever form it takes. The Acton Society had given evidence to the Annan Commission on the future of broadcasting in the run-up to the expiry of the BBC's charter in 1976, and the Trust also began supporting a number of pressure groups working in the field, including, firstly, the Standing Conference on Broadcasting, and then the Channel Four Group.

Meanwhile, in the belief that not all groups needed to be located in central London, in 1977 the Trust also bought the old Baptist Chapel and Sunday School in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, and converted the chapel for use as offices and conference facilities. This became the Birchcliffe Centre, where residents included The National Campaign for Electoral Reform, The Pennine Development Trust, The Campaign for the North, and the Association of Liberal Councillors.

But just as Poland Street had come to be a by-word for pressure-group activity in the 1970s, so it came to symbolise the pressure-groups' decline after a decade of debilitating Thatcherism. Apart from a desperate need to refurbish the building before the lift and other services became seriously dangerous to life and limb, it had also come to be used more and more as merely storage space for the archives and dead typewriters of now defunct organisations. It was eventually closed down in 1990 for a complete refit, enabling it to re-emerge as an income-generating asset financing the Trust's other work. The Birchcliffe Centre too was beginning to have served its purpose by this time. Its original function as a northern version of Poland Street had never been as successful, and by the early eighties it had been leased to the Pennine

Heritage Trust which oversaw the imaginative conversion of the Sunday School building into a 62-bed hostel for school parties and others. The freehold itself was eventually given to Pennine Heritage in 1993.

## **REWARDING REFORM**

Joseph Rowntree had urged his original Trustees to support and assist, wherever possible, 'the work of effective individuals dedicated to the improvement of society and the lot of their fellow man' - and woman. The Trust certainly likes people to work in their own way and on their own account, and continued its particularly kindly and far-seeing practice of giving personal awards throughout this period - as indeed it continues to do today. They are not awards for which people normally apply, or publicise, but are given instead to those with a track record of social or political entrepreneurialism, or simply to individuals with a good, controversial, non-charitable idea. Those who have been recipients have found it a greatly liberating experience, since the awards are often given as a complete surprise and always without strings.

## **SHIFTING SANDS**

The most interesting political development of the early 1980s was the formation of the Social Democratic Party. Given the Trust's earlier support for the Lib-Lab Pact and its positive implications for the democratic process, the Trust watched the development of this new attempt to break the mould of British politics with great interest. There was interest, too, because of the potential threat to the Liberal Party, combined with the opening of a new door for many liberal values, and, perhaps, the possibility of another kind of realignment in the future. But there was also another genuine gap to be filled here. The Short Money which the Trust had pioneered didn't apply to new parties which emerged during the lifetime of a parliament, so whatever colours the SDP was to nail to its mast, in the interests of straightforward fairness the Trust agreed to pay the salary for an administrative secretary for the new party. It was also at this time that the Trust initiated the Hansard Society Commission Report *Paying for Politics*, which examined the

whole question of how political parties should be financed.

Other sands were also beginning to shift, making political navigation that much more difficult. By 1980, the Trust had decided to close down one of its major projects, the OCPU, and far less money was being spent abroad now. By the end of the 70s the Trust was only residually active in foreign affairs, although it supported independent fact-finding visits to observe the two elections in Rhodesia, and maintained its brio in giving the only UK grant to the International Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (one of the follow-ups to the Brandt Report).

Nevertheless, the Trust's international activity was noticeably tailing off, and there was also a change of tone in, and the quantity of, applications from those groups and individuals who were being affected by, or who were protesting against, government cutbacks of various kinds. The Trust couldn't replace budgets previously funded by government and now curtailed, and it would have been invidious to choose between so many tragedies. It began to look, instead, for positive alternatives to what was, perhaps after all, an over-inflated public sector. Support was given to Job Ownership Ltd., for example, which propagated the case for properly-run worker-owned co-operatives, and to Youthaid for its valuable work on the plight of the young unemployed.

There was also a significant increase in the number of applicants who were concerned about nuclear-powered electricity generation at this time. The Trust funded a number of those groups and individuals who were sceptical of the wisdom of such schemes, as indeed it funded environmental protest against motorway expansion. But the increase in applications related to such worrying developments, to the growing problems of unemployment and to organisational rescue operations within the voluntary sector itself, were increasingly rarely matched by any great efflorescence of new ideas or reformist energy. It was as if some dead hand had fallen upon creative reform. And it had.

## **PHASE FOUR: PARADISE POSTPONED**

Mrs Thatcher's unremitting certainty that there was no alternative didn't merely infuriate the opposition and all those working for reform; her maximising of the effects of financial markets minimised the effects of the political market, undermining the mechanisms of change which sustain not only the processes of reform and healthy opposition, but also of government itself.

Whether lending support to parliamentary parties or extra-parliamentary pressure groups, the Trust's emphasis had come to be focused on activity in the political marketplace. The trouble now was that everyone was taking their stalls home. The SDP's unrequited candidates had returned wall-eyed to business; the Labour Party was comatose and the newly-named Liberal Democrats had returned to their constituencies to prepare for oblivion.

Some pressure groups, it is true, had successfully worked themselves out of a job, but most simply felt exhausted and disenfranchised. New reformist blood was also hard to find, with a newly depoliticised, upwardly mobile-phoned youth muscling its way into the City rather than the voluntary sector.

It was time for a re-think. The fourth phase was one of thought rather than action; but thought of a pro-active kind which, it was hoped, would flow seamlessly into action. It was by no means a simplistically anti-Tory phase; but it did represent a renewed quest for change which was eventually to outlast the Conservative administration itself.

## **ARMING THE OPPOSITION**

The quest should only have lasted until the General Election of 1992, but - with the prior removal of the Iron Lady as the most visible of enemies - the opposition, the government and the electorate had fallen back into a post-modernist mish-mash from which nobody really emerged as the victor. Except that the Conservatives won.

The Trust had, however, tried to avoid this unhappy state of affairs. In the late 80s, it supported a number of initiatives which were trying to

mobilise a new 'popular front' such as Common Voice, *Samizdat* magazine and Charter 88. The object was to help set the agenda for the forthcoming Election by developing a counter-consensus based upon a perceived popular desire for constitutional and electoral reform. Charter 88 was perhaps the most significant development and the Trust provided it with major financial backing. It attracted many thousands of signatories from people in all walks of life, and organised constitutional conferences, its famous 'vigils' at St Martins-in-the-Fields, and an innovative, if controversial, 'Democracy Day' one week before the Election. *Samizdat* aimed instead to mobilise a 'popular front of the mind' by developing a subscription list which read like a *Who's Who* of surviving dissidents. Common Voice (previously Tactical Voting '87) concentrated on identifying the 'battlefield seats' where astute voting could wreak havoc with Tory majorities - publishing the results in *New Statesman* and *Society*, and in the book *Can the Tories Lose?*

The fact that the *Statesman* was still around to publish such results was also the Trust's doing. It had purchased a half ownership in the ailing *New Society* in 1987 and brokered its merger with the not-much-less-ailing *New Statesman* a year later to help maintain the publication of at least one weekly journal of comment and analysis of a left-of-centre persuasion. The Trust's support of David Marquand when writing *The Unprincipled Society* is further evidence of this trend towards supporting the cerebral rather than the purely practical at that point in the political cycle.

Practical political support nevertheless remained an essential component of the Trust's activities, constituting support across the whole non-Tory spectrum. It helped fund the Liberal Democrats' General Election campaign and supported the Association of Social and Liberal Democrat Councillors. But the Trust also supported the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly - just as it had previously given funds to Plaid Cymru and Mec Vannin (the Isle of Man party established to champion the rights of Manxmen) - and it gave funding to the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, and, later on, to the Labour Party Working Party on Electoral Mechanisms (the Plant Commission). Moreover, the Trust gave a number of personal grants to Labour MPs to help with research

expenses and particular projects, including Tony Blair, Paul Boateng, Anne Clwyd, Frank Field, Joan Lestor, Marjorie Mowlam, Clare Short and the then Shadow Chancellor, John Smith. Since there was still no state aid for opposition front bench travel requirements at this time, Gerald Kaufman, as the Shadow Foreign Secretary, received special support.

In the early 90s the Trust also started to use major opinion polls as a way of arming the large constituency pressing for electoral reform, constitutional change and improvements in civil liberties, and to forearm the press and the electorate by keeping these issues on the public agenda right up to the Election itself. The Trust funded its first MORI '*State of the Nation*' poll in March 1991, inviting many of its supporters to submit questions to be asked of the general public. The questions were essentially about public attitudes to constitutional reform, and the poll became the most extensive and definitive study of public attitudes on this subject ever carried out, giving a major boost to the movement for constitutional change which had become a key topic for the Trust as well as for the country at large. Another poll, by Gallup and Irish Marketing Services, followed - on the future of Northern Ireland - and received extensive press coverage (since it gave overwhelming support for the continuation of the inter-party talks which had been initiated by the Secretary of State, Peter Brooke). A second MORI poll in September 1991 assessed the effect on each party's voters of the inclusion of policies in support of constitutional and electoral reform, freedom of information and a Bill of Rights, against other policy measures.

Even the right-wing Institute for Economic Affairs was given support at this time to encourage the development of its support for constitutional reform. The funding followed its director after he left the IEA and launched the European Policy Forum, a think-tank established to tackle the agenda for Britain and Europe in the 90s and beyond. Such continuing support for those people who were trying to think their way out of the political slough, from any and every rational perspective - survived the Election. For example, in 1993 the Trust supported the launch of another independent think-tank, Demos, partly for its willingness to embrace progressive individuals from the worlds of

finance, industry and commerce, and its express desire for keeping parliamentary parties at arm's length, but mainly because of its aim to support lateral thinking about the Big Problems in the medium, rather than the short term.

## BEHIND THE LINES

Meanwhile, political life beyond the short term necessities of fighting the Election continued to receive Trust support. It helped two organisations working on employment issues; Full Employment UK and the Campaign for Work (which had received its first funding, as Charter for Jobs, in 1985), and maintained its traditional interest in publishing and the freedom of the press. The Trust had in the past lent support to radical publishers such as Victor Gollancz, and more recently, to the highly successful women's publishing house, Virago. In South Africa, it invested in the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail*, started by a group of journalists from the progressive *Rand Daily Mail*, which had ceased publication in 1985. It also invested in *Fortnight* magazine in Northern Ireland, and provided support for the *British Review of Journalism*. In addition, the Trust came to the aid of *New Statesman and Society* once again, this time by buying its premises and leasing them back with an initial two-year rent-free period.

Other groups receiving aid at this time included the Campaign for Freedom of Information, Tenants' Choice (which undertook a Housing Act test case in the soon-to-be-notorious borough of the City of Westminster, on behalf of Waltherton & Elgin Community Homes Ltd.), the European Movement, the Jersey Rights Association, and Women against Rape. The Trust also supported the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (following eviction from its base in St Botolph's in 1988 by the then Bishop of London), and the Stonewall Group - which was set up in response to Section 28 of the Local Government Act to lobby for equal rights and social acceptance of homosexuality.

Parliamentary intervention has proved to be one of the Trust's most successful pursuits, and there are two good examples of this in the early 1990s. First, the support of *Open Lines*, a publication designed to force



the government to resume publication in *Hansard* of answers to MPs' written questions. This practice had stopped when written questions began to be referred by ministers to chief executives of the Next Steps agencies, thus representing a basic infringement of the freedom of information. With Trust backing, this situation was eventually overturned, and letters sent to MPs by the Agency chief executives in response to parliamentary questions are now printed among the written answers in the Daily Official Report.

Similarly, the Trust had for some time been funding a travel fund for all opposition front bench spokespeople - not just for the shadow Foreign Secretary - in a continuing attempt to prove the case for providing state funding for such needs (on the grounds that it was inequitable not to do so, much in the same way as the Trust had pioneered 'Short Money'). The battle was eventually won, when, in November 1993, the Leader of the House announced the establishment of a Foreign Travel Fund of some £100,000 a year for opposition spokespeople, and complimented the Trust for its role in securing this important innovation.

## **A NEW NAME AND A NEW HOME**

The Trust had been formed nearly forty years before the setting-up of the Welfare State, which Seebohm Rowntree had played his own part in creating, and long before the term 'social services' had come to have the precise connotations that it has today. As 'The Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust' the organisation had long felt a little hamstrung. So in 1990 it was decided to find a more appropriate name, one which more accurately described the Trust's function. There was really only one option, and from then on it has been called The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd.

By 1992 the Trust had also matched its new name with new premises - which were themselves built in a spirit of reform. The Garden House, in the grounds of The Homestead (originally Seebohm Rowntree's home) in Water End, York, was one of the first purpose-built offices in the country to receive a Building Research Establishment BREEAM certificate for its environmental credentials. Its ownership is shared

equally with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Homestead itself being the offices of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

## **PARADISE POSTPONED AGAIN**

Keeping the cause of reform alive, in the face of some dreadful political setbacks and misalignments in the 1980s and early 90s, had not been easy. But the darkest days followed the 1992 General Election: Labour wobbled badly, not least on Proportional Representation, the Liberal Democrats were demoralised and the Conservatives were still in power. It is impossible to gauge the absolute effect that the work of a small Trust like JRRT had on the cause of constitutional reform during the ensuing Parliament, but its conscious decision to redouble its efforts at a time when the cause of reform was badly traumatised probably had considerable influence, not least on a government-in-waiting. Throughout the 1992-97 Parliament, the Trust's work was a coherent story of sustained and deliberate concentration on constitutional issues: focusing on getting the Labour Party to commit to constitutional reform and equipping shadow ministers with research assistants working on the issues; backing to the hilt the principal pressure group, Charter 88, in its attempts to force constitutional reform up the agenda, funding numerous other bodies working in the field, and helping to keep the Liberal Democrats afloat. Having made the judgement that an improved performance at the polls by the Liberal Democrats would improve the prospects of constitutional reform, the Trust offered the Party significant financial support at this time.

## **PICKING UP THE PIECES**

After the April 1992 election, the Trust's priorities were not only to continue supporting constitutional reform but also to seek opportunities to support co-operation between the opposition parties. It was now seen to be even more important to maintain as much pluralism as possible in the face of continuous domination by one party - again, not because the Trust was anti-Tory but because it is pro-democracy. Indeed, it aimed to encourage anyone expressing concern about the centralisation of

power and the erosion of democratic freedom, within the Conservative Party just as much as within the Opposition.

Both Constitutional and electoral reform therefore remained key issues. To ram home the point, to the electorate as well as to the powers-that-be, the Trust funded another major opinion poll the weekend after the Election, *'Replaying the 1992 General Election'*, which showed how different the situation would have been had the real Election been conducted under a system of proportional representation. But the main thrust of the Trust's support was for organisations like the Voting Reform Information Service, the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, and, particularly, for Charter 88 and the Institute for Citizenship Studies (for its Legal Affairs and Birth of Democracy projects), along with think-tanks with rather wider remits like Demos and the European Policy Forum. The latter was particularly important because it provided a right-of-centre critique which helped to ensure that reform was not seen to be confined within a pinkish ghetto. Finally, the Trust's continuing support for the Liberal Democrats was not just for old times' sake, but part of a hard-headed strategy to help maintain political diversity and keep reform on the public agenda.

Such funding was pro-active on the Trust's part, and, indeed, a full third of its budget during the 1992-97 Parliament was spent on its own initiatives, including the commissioning of public opinion polls on constitutional issues and the generation of original work such as an evaluation of new forms of democratic participation in the proposed Scottish Parliament.

While the other two-thirds of the Trust's spending was not pro-active in this way, it was rarely reactive. Most applications were rejected because they fell outside the Trust's precise remit of non-charitable giving for closely thought-through, tough-minded political purposes, and those which succeeded mostly did so because they fitted the Trust's agenda, not the other way round.

The nature of that agenda was clearly reflected in the accounts during this period. Of the almost £3 million which the Trust distributed in grants during the 1992-97 Parliament, at least two thirds was specifically given

for the cause of constitutional reform, and almost all the remainder was in some way related to constitutional issues

## **DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout the 1992-97 Parliament, the Trust continued to support various groups and individuals working on the development of democratic processes and structures, spending nearly a quarter of a million pounds on projects ranging from a local campaign against proposed constituency boundary changes, through examinations of new forms of democratic structures such as City Regions and City States, to a campaign urging young people to register and vote, and a study urging politicians to take more notice of the feelings of the increasingly large and active group of older members of the electorate.

In particular, the Trust gave grants for work being carried out by the Institute for Citizenship Studies (to define British citizenship and contribute towards a model of European citizenship), to WaterWatch (for its monitoring of the privatised water industry and its campaign for regulatory reform) and to the Genetics Forum (for its campaigning for proper regulation of human genetic engineering).

Helping to generate a positive reformist climate, as well as supporting particular campaigns, remained part and parcel of the Trust's work. That is why it continued to give a number of private, personal awards to 'strengthen the hand' of outstanding individual reformers, and to support new intellectual initiatives at critical junctures. For example, having given the independent think-tank Demos some early seed-money at the beginning of the 1992-97 Parliament, towards the end of that Parliament the Trust supported Nexus, Britain's first 'virtual think-tank', which set up a forum for centre-left thinking on the Internet. Partly to help everyone keep track of all these bodies, the Trust sponsored, in 1994, the publication of Parliamentary Monitoring Services' *Directory of Pressure Groups and Think Tanks*.

## **RIGHTING WRONGS**

The Trust continued to allocate funds during this period in pursuit of its traditional concerns for bridging legislative gaps and helping to right obvious, and some less obvious, wrongs. The amounts sought in this category were often only two or three thousand pounds, which meant that, under the Trust's Small Grants Scheme, such grants could be considered at any time - not just at the Quarterly Meetings - and could therefore have immediate effect.

Recipients of such precise placement of support in the 1992-97 Parliament included the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom (for an analysis of media ownership), the National Abortion Campaign, the Jersey Rights Association, the National Pensioners Convention, the Westminster Objectors Trust (following its allegations of vote-rigging in the Conservative-controlled City of Westminster Council under the leadership of Dame Shirley Porter), Wales Against Opencast, The Green Alliance (in support of its opposition to the use of 'Henry VIII' clauses in the Deregulation and Contracting Out Bill of 1994), Presswise (formed to help those harmed by irresponsible journalism), Complaints Against Solicitors Action For Independent Adjudication, and Words at Work (which promoted the writing of Parliamentary Bills in plain English).

Larger grants were given to Fairshares (for its campaign for pension rights for divorced women), the New Economics Foundation (for work on the development of Local Exchange Trading Systems), the Campaign Against Pornography, the Campaign Against the Asylum And Immigration Bill, the Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement, and Freedom To Care (for its work in support of whistleblowers).

Recipients of major grants in the cause of legislative reform included Inquest (for its campaign for the reform of the inquest system), the Friends, Families and Travellers Support Group (for work including a campaign against those aspects of the Criminal Justice Bill which unjustly targeted travelling people), and Release Publications Ltd. (to initiate and encourage informed public debate on drugs abuse, and on any necessary changes to the law).

## NORTHERN IRELAND

Despite several attempts during the 1992-97 Parliament to end the tragedy of Northern Ireland, the problems remained as intractable as ever. The Trust played what part it could in helping to achieve some movement towards permanent peace, partly by making donations to most of the political parties in the province, and partly by funding groups working to improve communication and inter-communal dialogue. Grants were given in this period to the Ulster Democratic Party, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Alliance Party and the Ulster Unionist Party (the latter to pay for research assistance for David Trimble when he became party leader in 1995). The Social Democratic and Labour Party did not apply for funds at this time, but had received earlier funding from the Trust, and was, indeed, given further funding after the 1997 General Election as part of a new raft of funds which was made available to Northern Irish parties at the beginning of the renewed talks process. All such grants were to aid the process and mechanisms of a successful peace settlement.

Other groups and organisations which had received Trust support at this time included the emergent Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (which needed funding to enable them to participate in the 1996 elections and thus qualify to take part in the All-Party Talks). Continuing funding was also given for *Fortnight* Magazine and the think-tank Democratic Dialogue. In addition, allocations were made in 1993 for an opinion poll on the recommendations of the Opsahl commission (the independent citizens' inquiry on Northern Ireland) and in 1994 for a North & South Ireland Attitude Survey.

## EUROPE

The importance of the European Union in the development of an ever-more inclusive, international, democracy - let alone its importance for Britain's economic prosperity, could not be underestimated. Europe nevertheless remained the worst casualty of widespread political xenophobia in the run-up to the 1997 election, and the Trust's strategy of helping the right-of-centre European Policy Forum, in the hope that it

could at least help marshal pro-European Tory support, could do no more than drip-feed a seriously disabled campaign. However, the Trust still took the view that the European project had to be a cross-party issue, and, assuming that various realignments would take place within a new opposition, it gave a further grant to a pro-Europe Tory organisation, the Conservative Group for Europe, just before the Election.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

The Trust's long-standing commitment to constitutional reform was significantly reinforced after the 1992 election. Concentrating on devolution for Scotland and Wales; reform of the voting system, freedom of information and a raft of structural reforms, the amount given to individuals and organisations working in this field during the 1992-97 Parliament was nearly three quarters of a million pounds, outweighing by far monies spent on other activities, and not including the quarter of a million pounds spent on the Trust's own opinion polls on constitutional issues or the million pounds given to political parties for activities directly or indirectly linked to the cause of constitutional reform. The total given was approaching £2 million.

### **Devolution**

The Trust was a key supporter of moves towards both Welsh and Scottish devolution. In Wales, the Trust gave grants for the Parliament for Wales Campaign and Yes for Wales, and supported a joint Welsh and Scottish 'Hands Across The Borders' conference. In Scotland, it had been a major supporter of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, gave some initial support to the Coalition for Scottish Democracy (later renamed the Scottish Civic Assembly) and to an initiative to start an all-party campaign in support of a 'yes' vote in the referendum (from which Scotland Forward developed when the Labour Government was elected). Well in advance of the election and the subsequent decision to create a Scottish Parliament, the Trust also commissioned the drafting of a set of proposals for improving democratic participation in such a Parliament - in particular how it might, in periods of pre-legislative public consultation, use Information Technology to increase citizen

empowerment. This work was carried out by the John Wheatley Centre and the Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh, one of the results of which was the publication of the seminal report *A Parliament for the Millennium*.

### **Rights and votes**

In its continuing support for a Bill of Rights, the Trust funded a series of seminars on civil liberties priorities for the next government, organised for senior shadow ministers by Liberty.

On voting processes, the Trust was a major supporter of the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (LCER), and it also gave help at this time to other groups working on voting reform such as the Voting Reform Information Service and the Voting Reform Group.

Whilst reform of the electoral system remained in doubt, even if a Labour Government was returned (which is why the Trust concentrated its efforts in this respect on LCER, and indeed on continuing support for the Liberal Democrats), it was felt that a new Labour Administration would look much more favourably upon the cause of freedom of information. The Trust therefore contributed rather less to this, although it was particularly successful in encouraging an unusually wide range of interest-groups (notably the Consumers' Association) to focus on the subject, by funding a conference on the disastrous lack of public information on Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis.

The BSE conference was part-organised by Charter 88: arguably the most important extra-parliamentary organisation working for constitutional reform, and responsible in large measure for getting the issue firmly on the political agenda by the time of the 1997 Election. In 1988, the eponymous start of the Charter, reform of the constitution was generally considered an irrelevancy. Less than ten years later, nearly fifty thousand people had put their names to the Charter; the 1997 election was fought in large part on constitutional issues, and significant constitutional change was in prospect for the first time in at least fifty years. The Trust's grants and loans to Charter 88 of nearly half a million pounds from 1992 to 1997 reflected the centrality of the issue to the



Trust's overall mission, and the importance which it attached to the work of Charter 88 in particular.

## **OPINION POLLING**

The Trust's MORI (later ICM) *State of the Nation* polls (mainly probing public attitudes to constitutional reform), and more specific polls (testing the effects of different voting systems and looking at attitudes to sleaze in public life) had become a respected benchmark of public opinion on the issues since their inception in 1991. The overall effect of such polls is impossible to quantify, but they had a considerable trickle-down effect: for example, most political commentators (including the BBC's Election '97 service on the Internet) used the figures at one time or another to demonstrate the importance which the general public attached to reform, and the increase in that interest which the polls were able to track over time.

Nearly a quarter of a million pounds was spent on such polls between 1992 and 1997, not only providing statistical building-blocks for campaigners and political commentators, but also laying the foundations for other polls. The Trust can, for example, take credit for pioneering election 're-play' polls, in which members of the public are asked, after an election, how they would have voted had alternative voting systems been used. The Trust commissioned the first such poll in 1992, and was delighted when the Economic and Social Research Council (with a top-up grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust) funded a similar exercise after the 1997 election.

## **PARTY GIVING**

As the General Election approached, increasing attention was paid to the sources of political funding in this country, and rightly so. That is why the Trust lodged a summary of its record of political giving with the then recently appointed Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey, in October 1996. In fact, given that the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust is a company rather than a charitable trust, it was at this time technically Britain's largest corporate political donor by

far. An analysis by Michael Pinto-Duschinsky showed that the Trust's political gifts of almost £1.5 million in the 1990s were as large as the combined political payments of the ten largest company donors to the Conservatives. The Trust's political giving was not only of a different scale than that of companies like Hanson, United Biscuits or Forte, it was also quite different in kind, being almost wholly devoted to the cause of constitutional reform.

### **Conservatives**

Grants were made to members of all the main political parties during this period, as well as to several parties in Northern Ireland, as outlined above. Clearly, however, the Trust had concentrated its funding on the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties, partly because the Tories were in power. If democratic order is indeed 'built in the organising of its dissent' it is vital to help those in opposition, but it is also logical to support constructive dissent within political groupings as well as between them. That is why the Trust gave grants, not only to pro-European Tory groups, but also to the Macleod Group and, later, to Conservative Mainstream, within the Party itself.

### **Liberal Democrats**

Whilst the Liberal Party had always been the main beneficiary of the Trust's political giving, continuing and increased support for the Liberal Democrats at this time was by no means merely traditional. After the 1992 Election, the Trust took a positive decision to plough large sums into the Party, and, particularly, into the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors (ALDC) for the sake of maintaining a healthy democratic process at a time when the Liberal Democrats were at their nadir. The ALDC was targeted because of the need to fund the resilience of the Liberal Democrat's community politics approach, and, *inter alia*, of the Party itself, and thus to facilitate the electorate's growing tendency to vote tactically in the face of continued domination by the Conservatives. The Trust judged that this might also encourage informal Lib-Lab collaboration as the best hope for defeating the Tories, and to help Labour face up to its electoral problems at that time, particularly in the

south of England. However, given the Liberal Democrat's tacit role as the largest pressure-group working for constitutional reform, by far the overriding reason for giving the Party significant support was that it was the best way to keep reform on the public agenda. Following the 1992 election, the Trust therefore gave the Party centrally over a half a million pounds as well as pro-actively allocating major grants to the ALDC and providing funds for particular local campaigns.

### **Labour**

Apart from two modest grants to Labour MPs Judith Church and Tony Wright to assist their re-election campaigns (in recognition of their work as co-opted members of the Trust's Labour Sub-Committee), and a grant to Giles Radice MP for his analysis of why the south did not vote Labour in 1992 (published as the Fabian pamphlet *Labour's Southern Discomfort*), all of the Trust's substantial grants to the Labour Party of well over £400,000 between 1992 and 1997 were given for work on constitutional reform. The overall aim was to bolster the Party's commitment to reform, and the particular aim was to provide support for shadow ministers charged with the preparation of policy related to constitutional issues.

To these ends, the Trust contributed to the costs of research assistance for the Leader's Office and for individual MPs including Hilary Armstrong, Judith Church, Doug Henderson, Geoff Hoon, Mo Mowlam, George Robertson, Jack Straw, Malcolm Wicks and Tony Wright. The largest single grant was to John Prescott's office to support work on the Regional Policy Commission.

Funds were also made available in this period to support viable moves towards practical co-operation between Labour and Liberal Democrats at any level, but particularly at local level, to ease lines of communication and concert effort on constitutional reform. A small sum was given to the Electoral Reform Society for a project on Coalitions and Co-operation in Local Government, but the bulk of funding under this head was given to LINC, the Labour Initiative on Co-operation, which promoted co-operation between candidates in the constituencies.

Lastly, of all the initiatives taken during this period, one of the most adroit was the Trust's sponsorship of the John Smith Memorial Lectures, given by Tony Blair in London, Gordon Brown in Edinburgh, Mo Mowlam in Belfast and Robin Cook in Brussels. These very well-attended, and well-publicised, events deliberately provided the opportunity for the Party's senior figures to take up their late leader's challenge to push constitutional reform to the top of the agenda, and were indeed used to set out most of Labour's constitutional policy for the first time. The text of the lectures was published by the Trust after the 1997 election, on the third anniversary of John Smith's death.

## **PHASE FIVE: PARADISE PAROLED**

The 1997 General Election looked like a genuine turning point in British history: our own version of the breaching of the Berlin Wall, or the release of Nelson Mandela. But just as the events in Germany in 1989 or those in South Africa in 1990 represented great expectations for the future, they also marked the culmination of shifts and changes which happened years before: they were symbols of change, not change itself.

If successful politics is about symbolism; about finding ways of expressing the thinking of the people, then Labour won, not just because the Tories had so spectacularly lost the plot, but because Tony Blair had a brand new story to tell, and a brand new way of telling it. He seemed the embodiment of sleazeless, honest and trustworthy change, and the electorate duly charged him with the responsibility for articulating and implementing that change in the biggest landslide since 1945.

Yet Blair was only partly responsible for creating the positive reformist climate in which such change might, at last, take place. That was the result of years of toil by a host of individuals and extra-parliamentary bodies who had kept the cause of reform, particularly constitutional reform, alive, and it was those reformers, bolstered by the will of the people, whose new task was closely to monitor the new Government's performance, demanding that it lived up to expectations and delivered genuine, explicit, reformation.

The Trust responded to the needs of these challengers by boosting expenditure by some sixty per cent to around £5 million during Blair's first Parliament, with over seventy five per cent of this being pumped into overtly political activity. Much of this also remained highly pro-active, given the Trust's initiatives in opinion polling and in helping to create groups like Make Votes Count and the Campaign for English Regions. Such groups met with varying levels of success, but they are unlikely to have existed at all without the Trust's help. Without waiting to be asked, the Trust also ploughed funds into most of the parties in Northern Ireland at a particularly crucial moment in their history; it continued to shore up reformers within the Conservative Party, and it further boosted support for the Liberal Democrats.

## **PARTY SUPPORT**

Naturally, the Trust's funding of the Conservative and Labour Parties reversed after the 1997 election. With Labour in power, the Trust reduced its funding of Labour causes by over eighty per cent, most of the remainder being a throw-over from a previous funding package for LINC (the Labour Initiative on Co-operation), which had worked on the common agenda of Labour and Liberal Democrats for constitutional reform. The total amount given to Labour-related projects was only just over one per cent of the Trust's political budget for 1997-2001, whilst the residual amounts which had previously been given to the Conservatives jumped to over thirty per cent. This expenditure was specifically targeted at the more democratic and Europhile elements in the party, particularly the Conservative Group for Europe and the Mainstream group. At the same time, the Trust doubled the amount given to the Liberal Democrats, spending over forty per cent of its total budget on Liberal causes between 1997 and 2001, including half a million pounds each for the Liberal Democrats' local election campaign in 1998; their Euro elections campaign in 1999, and their General Election campaign in 2001. In the same period, the Trust continued its tradition of supporting minority parties with grants being made to Plaid Cymru and the new Scottish party, Highland Alliance, and it allocated over £275,000 to Northern Ireland, helping to support most of the major parties during the peace process leading to the Good Friday agreement, specifically giving a third of this money to women's political groups in the province.

## **STRENGTHENING THE HAND**

### **Parliamentary equality**

Apart from supporting women working for peace in Northern Ireland, and continuing to support groups such as the Abortion Law Reform Society and Women Against Rape, the Trust redoubled its interest in supporting another issue concerning women which also remains in all our interests to redress: the continuing gender imbalance in Parliament. Following the use of all-women shortlists by the Labour Party prior to the 1997 election, the number of female MPs in Westminster doubled to

120, but, partly as a result of this practice having been found illegal, the number of women MPs elected in 2001 fell for the first time in a generation. The Trust thus funded a number of initiatives designed to counter this trend, including Engender in Scotland (which worked for equal representation in the then proposed Scottish Parliament), the Nancy Seear Trust (which offers small grants to female Liberal Democrat candidates) and, principally, the Fawcett Society, which works tirelessly to smash glass ceilings for women in all walks of life. Similarly, the Trust gave significant support to Operation Black Vote, which grew into the biggest and most effective group campaigning for increased Black Minority Ethnic representation in Parliament.

### **Press and Broadcasting**

The Trust maintained its traditional interest in supporting press and broadcasting freedom, and particularly the protection of the public service ethic, at a time of considerable technological and regulatory development, culminating in the creation of the vast new communications regulator, Ofcom, of which one of JRRT's directors was to become the first Chair on leaving the Trust. During this period, funds were made available for several campaigning groups, including the Campaign for Quality TV, Public Voice (representing the voluntary sector) and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (representing practitioners). The Trust also helped fund a series of hard-hitting papers by the international broadcasting guru, Professor Michael Tracey, which fed directly into the House of Lords debates during the passage of the new communications legislation. The Trust also lent support to the independent magazine *Red Pepper* to enable it to develop its investigative journalism, and particularly its reputation amongst would-be whistleblowers in both the corporate and public sectors. Latterly, the Trust would go on to help launch *Spinoff* magazine, a publication produced by and for young people to try to counter the growing political ennui amongst the 18-30 age group.

### **A renaissance of pressure groups**

If the rise of the pressure groups can be traced back to the early 1970s, and symbolised by the Trust's housing of many of them in its Poland

Street premises, and if their decline was due to a perceived state of permanent Conservative rule, symbolised by the eventual conversion of Poland Street into a commercial investment, then a rebirth of interest might have been expected with the election of a Labour Government. The Trust certainly witnessed an increase in applications from ‘watchdog’ campaigners in the late 90s, there being a resurgence of applications from environmental groups, which the Trust generally thought could be funded elsewhere (membership of such groups exceeding that of political parties), and from a host of other groups that were considered to be generally charitable. But the Trust did fund a number of such groups where they were pressing for directly political action, such as the Centre for Council Tax Reform, the Capital Transport Campaign (working for wholesale public transport reform in London) and Transport 2000 (for whom the Trust provided a ‘war chest’ to work up local road campaigns which specifically drew people into wider political engagement).

The Trust also funded the UK Noise Association (which successfully, if temporarily, campaigned against night flights into Heathrow airport), Dr Zakaria Erzinclioglu (fighting for the provision of independent forensic analysis in legal actions); Angel Action (calling for the repeal of the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971) and Transform (calling for the decriminalisation of drug possession); Corporate Watch (campaigning against the influence of commercial interests in higher education); the Association of Independent Hazards Centres (aiming for reform of occupational health and safety enforcement); Stonewall (campaigning for legal and social equality for lesbians and gay men), and groups monitoring water supply companies including WaterWatch. Inquest, the group monitoring prisoners’ deaths whilst in custody was also supported at this time, as was the Association of Community Health Councils in England and Wales (known by its wonderfully apt acronym, ACHCEW).

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL REFORM**

Labour’s promise to be a truly great reforming government could not have got off to a better start with the immediate decision to make the Bank of England independent and to include the prospect of Scottish



and Welsh devolution in the first Queen's Speech of the new Parliament. Likewise, the Trust's support for constitutional reform underpinned most of its giving across all sectors during Labour's first term. Its main contribution continued to take the form of support for Charter 88, which took the lion's share of the twenty per cent slice of the political budget which was allocated to constitutional reform in 1997-2001. It was, for example, awarded over £150,000 for its 'Pinocchio' campaign during the 2001 General Election, which pilloried Tony Blair for dragging his feet on electoral reform and reform of the House of Lords. Since its eponymous formation in 1988, Charter 88 actually received more than £1.25 million from the Trust, nearly a third of that in the last three years of Labour's first Parliament. Such funding was to come to a halt early in the second term, as did Labour's promise, as the Trust and everyone else reassessed the wholesale shifting of political goalposts that was making Mrs Thatcher smile in her political grave.

Nonetheless, in the first term, the Trust had built on its long-standing support for national devolution by backing a Council of the Isles; funding work by the John Wheatley Centre on the proposed Scottish Parliament; and continuing to fund the Yes for Wales Campaign. With the national argument largely won, attention then turned to local constitutional reform, which saw the Trust backing the campaign to ensure a referendum for the London Mayor, and later for other local mayoral referenda in Ealing, Lewisham and Liverpool. The major thrust was, however, for English regional devolution. The Trust was instrumental in setting up the Campaign for English Regions (CFER) which acted as an umbrella for all the separate campaigns, with their varying levels of readiness and enthusiasm. The northern regions were always more advanced than those in the south (excepting the traditional separatism of Cornwall), so the Trust gave special backing to the North East, as the region most likely to achieve devolution in the first round, and to Yorkshire and Humberside, which had similar ambitions but which was also the Trust's home patch.

Within the general programme of constitutional reform, the Trust continued its specific support for electoral reform until the 2001 election, spending over £425,000 on the Make Votes Count campaign which it

helped set up but which ultimately failed in its mission to persuade the government to reform the voting system. The Trust also spent £70,000 on Fairshare, which successfully campaigned for the Executive Bill to introduce STV for local elections in Scotland, and it supported tacticalvoting.net, which set up a website advising people how to vote tactically in the General Election in the absence of a proportional system. Amongst all the reforms that the Trust has helped win in its first hundred years, proportional representation at Westminster has proved the most elusive of its causes, caught in a Catch 22 of being forever a cause of whoever is in opposition. Similarly, the other Holy Grail of House of Lords reform had still only been partially glimpsed as the Trust entered its second century. Support had been given to the Campaign for a Democratic Upper House and to Charter 88 for work on this issue, and Tony Blair did indeed send (most of) the hereditary peers back to spend more time with their estates, but it was a hollow victory in the absence of any democratic reorganisation of the rest of the system.

All of this work had been underpinned by further major opinion polling, with the Trust commissioning two more *State of the Nation* polls conducted by ICM in 1997 and 2000. Apart from demonstrating consistent public backing for a proportional system of voting, these benchmark polls continued to be a trusted indicator of opinion on human rights issues (including the growing concerns about tolerance and asylum); on opening up and devolving government, on the general state of British democracy, and on the issue that would come to dominate British politics: trust in government. The 2000 poll marked the tenth anniversary of the series of *State of the Nation* polls, and this was marked by the publication of a ten year review, *Voices of the People*, by Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts, Trevor Smith and Stuart Weir.

## **EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

Apart from continuing support for pro-European Tories and institutions like the European Policy Forum and the snappily-titled Independent Commission for the Comprehensive Review of the Institutions and Procedures of the Union, the Trust stepped up its support for European collaboration during Labour's second term by offering major funding to

the Britain in Europe campaign in the run-up to what was hoped to be an early - but as it turned out, endlessly delayed - announcement of a referendum on the Euro. International affairs beyond Europe continued to be less of a priority for the Trust, although it backed the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium (as used by our armed forces abroad to the detriment of civilians); the Campaign Against Arms Trade; the Campaign Against Sanctions in Iraq and Fair Trials Abroad.

As with the Trust's prescient interventions in Africa and elsewhere in the late 70s, the Trust nevertheless made a notable exception to its normal international policy at this time in offering major support for the democratic process in Zimbabwe. It had helped the emergent democratic parties during the transition to independence, and was now to offer well over £400,000 in (indirect) support of the Movement for Democratic Change, the main party opposing President Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party, when it was still lawful to do so in Zimbabwe, and in helping to support a range of other democratic institutions, including the independent press. This meant that, with support for Britain in Europe and others, an unusually high ten per cent of the Trust's total budget was thus spent on foreign affairs during the late 90s, well over half of it in attempting to alleviate the democratic crisis in Zimbabwe.

## **SECOND TERM BLUES**

In the year following the 2001 General Election, the Trust, most unusually, made no party donations at all, whereas it had spent a third of a million pounds on direct party support immediately after the previous election. The main reasons were that the Conservative party was so disabled that it was hard to discern any part of it that could be usefully assisted; the Labour Party didn't need, or want, any help, and there was at that time a mutually agreed embargo on offering further help to the Liberal Democrats, given the Trust's recent generosity. As far as Northern Ireland was concerned, it remained a sad fact that little real progress had been made in the peace process and the Trust was disinclined to continue pumping in what were significant amounts of money for small parties. After the election, the Trust did, however, support a group within the Labour Party, originally called Progressive

Social Democrats and then 'Compass', which comprised the leading lights of all the Labour-leaning think tanks like the Fabians and IPPR, and which aimed to steer the party in a more progressive and radical direction. Similarly, the Trust supported a new Tory group, Cchange, led by Francis Maude, which aimed to regenerate centre-right politics and promote the decentralisation of power away from Westminster. Lastly, in 2002, the Trust accepted a renewed bid for support from the Liberal Democrats since they remained a victim of a huge imbalance in the funding of the three main parties, and, unlike their rivals, were unable to call upon the help of a few very wealthy individuals. The Trust thus decided to award the party a further £1.5 million to help fund various elections up to 2005 - the largest donation the Liberal Democrats had ever received from any source.

Otherwise, this was not a very exciting time for reformers. It was of course the time of 9/11 and looming warfare in the Middle East, so eyes were not focussed on the minutiae of domestic reforms. The Trust nevertheless continued to support a number of crusading writers and campaigners through grants or personal awards (the list, since 1997, having included Anthony Barnett, Steve Byrne, John Carr, Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, Angela Harris, Charles Landry, Tom Nairn, Raymond Plant, Dan Plesch, John Ross Scott, Stuart Weir and Peter Wilkinson), and grants were made to on-going organisations like the Centre for Reform, the Liberal Summer School, Liberty and Anthony Barnett's innovative on-line political magazine, openDemocracy. The Trust also supported some straightforward good causes like the Omagh Victims Trust; funded a group led by Sir Kenneth Calman working on the future of the NHS, and supported Parliament First, a group led by Mark Fisher MP seeking reform of the House of Commons.

These were all good causes, and good people, but the Trust was increasingly taking the view that it should itself take the initiative in re-energising the reform agenda, and the creation of its own projects became the hallmark of the post 2001 period.

## MAKING BIRDS FLY

The Trust's expenditure on general domestic reform during Labour's first term was running at about ten per cent of the total budget. After the 2001 election this soared to over half of the total spend, directly reflecting a renewed and expanded phase of pro-activity. Firstly, the Trust revisited the question of state funding of political parties, commissioning research from New Politics Network, organising a cross-party seminar on the issue and contributing to the Electoral Commission's consultation in 2003. It did so for the very good reason that state funding would not only help redress some of the financial inequalities that the Trust had fought against since its foundation, but also because it would release Trust funds, currently committed to the Liberal Democrats, for other purposes.

One such purpose would be to monitor the democratic component of government policy, and a second prong of the Trust's renewed pro-activity was to have a close look at Labour's increasingly widespread, and increasingly controversial, use of the Private Finance Initiative and Public-Private Partnerships in the public sector. The Trust commissioned a report on their implementation and democratic consequences from one of the top academics in the field, Professor Allyson Pollock, coupled with a separate commission to produce a series of journalistic case-studies of PFI projects in schools, hospitals and care homes.

Thirdly, as a non-charitable foundation, the Trust proposed an objective and critical analysis of the whole philanthropic establishment, which would make the case for moving towards much more creative modes of giving. 'The Future of Philanthropy Project' proved to be a model of constructive collaboration between the Trust and its research partner, the Centre for Civil Society at the LSE, and the resulting book *From Charity to Creativity: Philanthropic Foundations in the 21st Century* by Helmut Anheier and Diana Leat, received widespread coverage in the press and specialist journals.

Fourthly, the Trust decided that its main contribution to the celebration of the centenary of all the Joseph Rowntree trusts should be based on the

key theme of citizenship. It thus allocated a major budget of over £350,000 for this purpose and commissioned the Institute for Citizenship to produce a programme encouraging and supporting active citizenship amongst young people, the emphasis being on the creation and further development of opportunities for the young to participate in the democratic process so that they would be better able to understand and influence how decisions are made in their schools, communities and in the wider world. The project was based, appropriately, in York, but was intended to be used as a model for similar schemes throughout the UK.

Fifthly, following a spate of disturbances linked to racial attacks in Oldham and other northern towns during the summer of 2001, and the growing likelihood that the far right parties would start gaining local seats, the Trust took a number of initiatives to counter such threats. Working with the Commission for Racial Equality, it first set up a project in Oldham called 'Side by Side' to provide a forum for different racial groups to work together. Then, given the electoral success of the BNP in a number of northern towns in the period up to 2003, funds were set aside to assist both mainstream political parties and anti-fascist groups to campaign for anti-racist, inclusive politics during the local elections in 2003 and the European and local elections in 2004. Major gatherings of local and national politicians and third party groups were organised to help promote positive campaigning messages and strategies to halt the rise of far right politics. In addition, the anti-fascist organisation, Searchlight, was given a grant to set up a campaigning website and to provide training and support for third party groups to ensure that the anti-fascist vote was maximised.

Lastly, if the far right was proving itself more adept at exploiting the feelings of alienation in some of our northern towns, and if in rural areas we were being persuaded by movements like the Countryside Alliance that pursuing single issues is the only effective way to participate in the political process, then such developments were only part of a more general malaise in the democratic process. The 2001 General Election not only produced another historically huge majority for Labour, but also the lowest percentage turnout since 1918. Despite

significant constitutional change since Labour came to power, confidence in Parliament and our political representatives continued to wane, and nosedived with the war in Iraq. At the same time, when new technologies and increased access to information should have meant that citizens' voices were being heard more loudly, they were becoming increasingly more frustrated when they were not heard at all. The internet had revolutionised our potential 'connectedness', but more and more people were feeling less plugged in to their communities and their government.

At a time when it had become commonplace to assert that democracy was in crisis, the Trust thus decided to find out just how common this view was, and what could be done about it. In its last act of its first century the Trust therefore returned to first principles and began a new programme of work about what it meant to be a citizen in Britain at the beginning of the twenty first century: what it should mean in a fully-functioning democracy, and, if there was a difference, by what means it could be improved. The programme included the commissioning of a new *State of the Nation* poll, and a wide-ranging assessment of democratic progress in the UK by the political analyst, David Clark, published as *Paving the way for a democratic century?* (available on the Trust's website). This gave particular emphasis to the question of public engagement as it impacts on the future of British democracy, and underpinned a new drive by the Trust to initiate and support a full-scale "Citizens' Inquiry", in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which would invite the public, rather than government, to propose constitutional, institutional and cultural ways of increasing the quality and extent of public participation in decision making in Britain.

This partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust is the result of an important feature which has emerged over the past decade and more, namely the growing collaboration between the Reform and Charitable Trusts in the promotion of democracy. This owes much to Grigor McClelland's initiative in proposing the formation of a Democracy Committee of the JRCT following the 1987 general election. At the outset it made provision for co-opting a Reform Trust director. This has facilitated a productive partnership, entirely consistent with Joseph

Rowntree's wishes, between the two sister trusts whereby the Reform Trust, as a limited company, funds the campaigning and promotional activities of those engaged in constitutional reform and the defence of democracy, while the Charitable Trust supports the necessary related research and educational work.



## **INTO ANOTHER CENTURY**

Keeping reform on the public agenda will always be the Trust's main priority, at least until such time as charity law allows other bodies to take up the banner of political diversity and change to the same extent that the Trust has been able to do. Even then, few other bodies would have the political clout that the Trust is able to muster throughout the hinterland of those it has supported, and none would have been exercising such influence for a hundred years past.

As it is, the Trust remains the only source of funds of any significance in Britain dedicated to financing political and campaigning groups and individuals, and it thus continues to bear the responsibility bequeathed by Joseph Rowntree to act on their behalf. Indeed, the Trust must bear this responsibility for as long as it exists, since reform must always be necessary. Reformers can never relax. Turning reformist thinking into action is a permanent priority, and this means maintaining the momentum presently achieved as well as helping to build the new institutions necessary to sustain a new generation of reformers - and finding them in the first place.

One of the Trust's tasks may therefore be to help recreate, in new forms, the pressure groups which disappeared during the Thatcher years and then seemed only briefly to revive when Labour was returned to power. Such institutional disengagement of social and political processes, combined with public disaffection, is profoundly damaging to the democratic process. Yet disaffection with Thatcherite conservatism in particular, and politics in general, did not turn into systemic apathy. It was, after all, the British electorate which so emphatically gave Tony Blair his landslide in 1997, and confirmed his position in 2001. Nor did the electorate turn against politics during Blair's second term: it began turning, once again, against politicians, the issue this time being not sleaze but trust.

The challenge is thus to reconnect people and politics. Just as Tony Benn once said that broadcasting is too important to be left to broadcasters, so politics is too important to be left to politicians, and the

Trust will need to find ways of promoting the necessary popular engagement which that implies. It will need to continue responding pro-actively as well as reactively to a more volatile set of circumstances - sometimes going with the grain of politics; sometimes seeking to influence that grain; perhaps mobilising new constituencies in industry, commerce and the professions as well as in or near the political realm in this country and, where appropriate, abroad. There is a finite limit to how far the Trust can take on overseas commitments, but it would not rule them out (as it did not rule them out when help was so desperately needed in Zimbabwe) nor would it rule out collaboration with similar organisations in other countries in order to achieve its goals.

The creation of a new political/constitutional settlement clearly provides the best safeguard for a civilised society, and the Trust has played a major part, through its own endeavours and those of others whom it has supported, in securing the constitutional reforms we now have. But new enactments will not be sufficient in themselves. There needs to be concomitant cultural change whereby the members of the electorate finally move from being passive subjects of the crown to becoming truly pro-active citizens of the re-constituted Britain. The Trust will therefore continue to foster constitutional change by supporting specialist groups working in the field, but it may also strive for marriages between such groups and between other constituencies of interest; building coalitions of ideas topic by topic, involving itself in more sophisticated lobbying and parliamentary tactics, generating engagements between intellectual Montagues and Capulets as well as among the politically converted. Above all, the Trust's aim remains the creation of a positive reformist climate; 'to create a politics and a constitutionalism radical in temper, but classical in form,' and to protect and nurture the art of the possible.

## **APPENDICES**

### **FINANCE AND STRUCTURE**

The policies and action of all three Rowntree Trusts (The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd. - formerly the Social Service Trust: JRSST - The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) were always independent of the original Rowntree chocolate company, and from each other, although their original endowment was in company shares.

Until the 1970s the Trusts owned over 50 per cent of the company's total shares between them, the continuing success of the company throughout the twentieth century having therefore provided them with vastly more capital than Joseph Rowntree could have imagined back at the time of their foundation in 1904.

All three trusts had decided to diversify in 1975 on the grounds of prudent investment policy, but JRSST had gone further in two respects: firstly in divesting itself of all its Rowntree shares because of objections to some of the company's employment practices in South Africa (thereby incurring a huge tax bill), and, secondly, in undertaking a much wider programme of diversification. The Trust's assets are now invested in equity investments (mainly by way of investment trusts) and property.

From the Trust's present capital of £27 million, directors allocate a potential grant budget of around £1 million each year, excluding administrative expenses and the substantial amount of tax which the Trust is obliged to pay as a limited company. Directors also have the power to spend capital to boost grant expenditure if the need arises.

The Trust has two subsidiary companies. JRRT (Investments) Ltd, which is the holding company for the Trust's investment portfolio, and JRRT (Properties) Ltd, which holds the Trust's investment properties.

All the directors of the non-charitable Trust automatically sit as trustees of The JRSST Charitable Trust, unless they are beneficiaries of the charity. It is a registered charity endowed by JRSST Ltd. in 1955. It is used to fund activities in line with JRRT's aims, but which can be paid for with tax-exempt money.

## **DIRECTORS AND STAFF**

The Trust currently has nine directors, including the Chairman, which has proved to be an optimum number for generating constructive discussion. It also helps to maintain the Quaker practice of making decisions without resorting to a vote, although only a third of the directors are themselves Quakers.

The staff consists of a Trust Secretary, a Project Adviser and an Administrative Secretary, all based in the Trust's offices in York.

The directors' main task is to bring their variety of expertise and experience to bear on identifying issues which they feel it would be appropriate for the Trust to pursue and promote, and to judge incoming proposals on their merits. The kind of judgements made are whether such proposals remain within the Trust's ambit of giving in the ever-changing circumstances and priorities of the political world - and whether the proposal is likely to work.

The aim is to assess, with minimum fuss, the purpose of the proposal in question; the individuals involved; the amount required and for how long, as well as its relationship to the current interests of the Trust. The directors are not, however, obliged to agree to any request for funds, since the Trust is after all a private company.

It is the board's prerogative to elect a new chair from time to time, but only eight people have in fact held this office throughout the Trust's long history. Their periods of office are included in the consolidated list of directors given opposite.

## CONSOLIDATED LIST OF DIRECTORS

The original directors were (in order by date of appointment):

Joseph Rowntree (Chair 1904-1925)	1904-1925
Arnold Stephenson Rowntree (Chair 1925-1938)	1904-1951
Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree (Chair 1938-1951)	1904-1954
John Wilhelm Rowntree	1904-1905
Joseph Stephenson Rowntree	1904-1920
Oscar Frederick Rowntree	1904-1931

Subsequent directors were:

John Bowes Morrell (Chair 1951-1963)	1906-1963
Elihu Richard Cross	1913-1916
William Charles Braithwaite	1915-1922
Ernest Edwin Taylor	1925-1951
B Philip Rowntree (including a break between 1958 and 1969 when he acted as Executive Officer of the Trust)	1938-1977
William Bowes Morrell (Chair 1963-1981)	1938-1981
Francis David Stuart	1941-1946
Edward F W Goodman	1946-1986
John H Black	1948-1949
Oliver Sheldon	1950-1951
Roger Cowan Wilson	1950-1974
Michael H Rowntree (Chair 1981-1987)	1951-1992
Charles Philip Fothergill	1954-1959
William Wallace	1959-1969

Richard S Wainwright	1959-1984
Lionel Robbins	1960-1963
Richard S Rowntree	1964-1994
Jo Grimond	1967-1985
Pratap Chidamber Chitnis	1975-1988
Elinor M Goodman	1983-1990
David A Currie	1991-2002

The current directors (June 2004) are:

Trevor A Smith (Chair 1987-1999)	1975
David T Shutt (Vice-Chair 1989-)	1975
Christopher J Greenfield	1983
Archibald J Kirkwood (Chair 1999-)	1984
Christine J Day	1991
Diana E Scott (Vice Chair 2003-)	1995
Pam Giddy	2000
Peadar Cremin	2003
Mandy Cormack	2003