ORDER, INDUSTRY, VIRTUE: COUNT RUMFORD AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN POOR RELIEF

by

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ABSTRACT

Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford (1753-1814) was one of the most influential figures in eighteenth-century European philanthropy. Working in Munich in the 1790's, he devised a poor relief scheme that replaced sermons and punishments with encouragements and incentives. He sought to instil self-respect and industrious habits, and thereby to turn former beggars into useful citizens. He believed that habits of order, industry and virtue could be inculcated by creating a civilized and calming environment and by rewarding every effort at reform. This innovative method for managing the poor was based on Enlightenment beliefs regarding the rationality of man and the effects of the environment on human behaviour. Rumford stands at the centre of a phenomenon noted by many historians: that by the mid-seventeenth century, poverty was increasingly seen as a problem to be managed efficiently, as opposed to the mid-sixteenth century's fear of vagrancy as a serious threat to the social order.

Chapter one is an exegesis of Count Rumford's *Essays*, especially those in which he expresses his theory of social utility achieved through scientific investigation applied for the benefits of domestic life. In Chapter Two, I compare Rumford's theories and schemes with those of other European philanthropists, placing him in the context of poor relief projects operating elsewhere in Europe. Chapter Three analyzes his later years in England and his projects and influence there during the debates on the reform of the English Poor Law.

This thesis demonstrates why, despite his significant influence in the areas of scientific philanthropy and the preference of the English for 'managing' the poor, Count Rumford's successful poor relief scheme in Munich was not adopted in England. Pertinent to the conclusion are the significantly different governmental influences in the two countries, and the changing socio-economic attitudes and perceptions which the English public applied toward poverty and the poor. Working against Rumford's scheme was the fact that the English were against institutional relief for the poor, preferring outdoor relief. They were also against centralization of poor relief having a propensity for separate Societies to cure separate problems; and they feared that guaranteed relief and care would increase the total cost of poor relief to the economic ruin of the nation.

The principal source for this thesis is the set of essays on poor relief that forms part of Rumford's published collected works, supplemented by books, treatises, articles and essays written by his English and European contemporaries. I have also made use of relevant books and articles, most of them written within the last half-century by professional historians.

DEDICATION

I am pleased to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Jim McQueen, who has been my greatest supporter in every way; and to my mother, Irene Elizabeth Sims, who sadly did not live to see it completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although this thesis has been plagued by repeated medical interruptions, the constant encouragement from my family, friends, and former instructors has been instrumental in giving me the determination to see it through. Once again, I must acknowledge my husband, Jim McQueen, for his technical as well as psychological assistance. Also, I need to thank Maryanne Pope, Graduate Secretary in the Department of History, who buoyed my frequently sagging spirits and cheerfully guided me through the administrative maze. I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Dr. John Hutchinson and Dr. John Craig, who have been so generous with their time and knowledge. An additional note of appreciation must be given to my senior supervisor, Dr. Hutchinson, for his patience as well as his insistence on rigorous editing. And finally, it is essential that I acknowledge a sincere debt of gratitude to my neurosurgeon, Dr. Felix A Durity, without whose expertise this thesis would not have been written at all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"The land shall never be without poor" (Deut.xv). So says the Bible, and for centuries that, unfortunately, has been an undeniable truth. Yet, despite attempts by historians to analyze data regarding the everyday lives of the poor and the possible causes which provoked their descent into indigence, Robert Jutte claims that we still lack "a definitive or even comprehensive" study of the lives of the poor. With the exception of the few analyses of specific towns or parishes, most studies of the history of poverty have produced more "impressionistic generalizations rather than systematic and comprehensive research."[1] The biggest problem is the lack of reliable data: detailed statistics are rare and often merely estimates; few censuses exist; and definitions of who constitute the "poor" change over time and are often vague. To date the main sources are tax surveys, records of early modern welfare institutions, and early modern censuses of the poor although, ultimately, these sources all have their limitations for those wishing to interpret them. In this thesis we will try to understand the problem of poor relief through the words and actions of those who attempted to meliorate the condition of the poor. How did different societies define "poor"? What contemporary perceptions informed the solutions that were put forward?

By the mid-eighteenth century technological, economic, demographic, political, and ideological changes merely served to make the poor increasingly conspicuous and worrisome for those who were successful. For many, the perceived rapid changes that were taking place in their society were accompanied by growing concerns about the behaviour of, and possible threat from, the lower orders. A variety of responses were put forward by those who were better off and who feared that persons and property were in danger from the disorder of the discontented poor with their increased lack of morality and the absence of "true Christianity". In addition, concerns grew because more and more of the poor were falling into indigence due to illness, injury, or poor harvests which caused the poor rates to rise. The responses that were expressed were designed to keep the poor orderly and subservient, improve their Christian morality, and to inculcate frugality and industry among the poor in order to promote self-sufficiency and independence.

As the numbers of poor outgrew the traditional methods of assistance, some people

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[1] Robert Jütte, Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge, 1994),1,45-46.

began to believe that vagrancy and idleness could not be eliminated, but that it could possibly be managed in order to lessen its more serious effects. The age of science and the Enlightenment had produced theories that stressed the potential of experience and habit for facilitating order, virtue, and industry in the poor. Industry, or the inclination to toil diligently, was believed to be a necessary characteristic because the majority of the populace had to work to earn their subsistence. A failure to be industrious or a preference to be idle, on the other hand, was considered pernicious to moral health. To the members of society who prided themselves on being rational citizens, order did not mean mere obedience to the laws, or that the common people remain in their proper social order, but that all should conduct themselves with regularity within an established process and maintain a regular disposition. The concept of virtue, although containing many meanings at this time, primarily represented the voluntary conforming of life and conduct with the principles of morality and the standards of right conduct. When applied to the poor and combined with industry and order, it also meant to make a virtue of necessity: to do with apparent willingness what one in reality cannot help doing, that is, to submit to circumstances beyond one's control with good grace. In the eighteenth century many of the well-to-do performed their responsibility to society by grouping together to form institutions for managing the poor; helping them to help themselves and become more useful members of society, and thereby maintaining civil order and freeing the labourer from dependence and instability.

One of the most prominent "managers of the poor" in the eighteenth century was the American born Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford.[2] Although his character was complex, and much of his behaviour difficult to comprehend, in his eclectic experiences and the variety of accomplishments they spawned, he was not unlike his compatriot Benjamin Franklin - and in his day he was almost as famous.[3]

Born in 1753 in Woburn, Massachusetts, Rumford was possessed of an intelligent and inquiring mind. He openly preferred books, especially about mathematics and arithmetic to manual labour on the family farm, and was fortunate in receiving more education than most

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[2] Although Thompson was not made a count until later in his career, for clarity I shall refer to him throughout the work as Rumford.

[3] The biographical sketch presented here derives from: Sanborn C. Brown, ed., The Collected Works of Count Rumford (Cambridge Mass, 1970); Dictionary of National Biography; Reverend George E. Ellis, Memoir of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford with Notices of his Daughter, 1871 (Boston, 1972); W.J. Sparrow, Knight of the White Eagle (London, 1964).

children in his position. At age thirteen, Rumford was apprenticed for two years in the trade of importer and general dealer; following that, he worked for six months in a drygoods store in Boston. This latter position brought him into full contact with the growing tensions between the British government and the American colonists. Also at this time, his penchant for experimenting with science and mechanical apparatus was already manifest, and he demonstrated almost equal skill in drawing and engraving.

By the age of sixteen he was attending lectures at Harvard University as a charity scholar, acquiring an interest in guns and gunpowder, and beginning his life-long fascination with the study of heat. When the decision was made to study medicine as a career, he was able to exploit his gift for school teaching in order to pay Dr. John Hay, a local physician, for his lessons. Rumford was schoolmaster first at Wilmington, Massachusetts, and later at Rumford, New Hampshire. He was successfully able to manage the double workload due to his obsession with method and order, and capacity for rigid discipline; characteristics which he would retain throughout his life.

Through his teaching position in Rumford, he soon became a fixture within the well-to-do and influential family circle of the Reverend Timothy Walker, and by 1772 had married Sarah Rolfe, the minister's widowed daughter, through whom he became master of her large estate. He was introduced to John Wentworth, the Governor of the Province, at a military review at Dover near Portsmouth where Wentworth offered him a commission as major in the 2nd Provincial Regiment of New Hampshire. Thus we have Rumford at age nineteen, a local squire, a regimental major, knowledgeable about land, crops, and trade, and a devotee of scientific matters. In addition, he was already displaying confidence, resourcefulness, intelligence, ability, but above all - unconcealed ambition.

By 1774 the British and American differences over policy were becoming more bitter, and American opposition grew steadily, but Rumford remained a Loyalist who frequently gave aid to the British. When the British were forced to evacuate Boston in 1776, Rumford was sent to London with dispatches and a letter of recommendation from Governor Wentworth to the Secretary of State, Lord George Germain.

In London, Germain provided Rumford with a sinecure post within his ministry. Secure in his new country, Rumford began working on experiments regarding the velocities of projectiles. With the encouragement of Germain, he sailed on HMS *Victory* to further pursue his experiments by utilizing the firing of the ship's guns. In the same period, he read several papers

before the Royal Society, and in 1779, at the age of 26, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He also formed an enduring friendship with the Society's President, Sir Joseph Banks. Rumford's inexhaustible capacity for learning was also to be engaged in the study of gardens and farming - particularly from the well-managed estate of Lord Germain where he was a frequent guest.

In 1781 Rumford was granted permission to raise a regiment of the King's American Dragoons in America with himself as the titular lieutenant-colonel. At the end of the American Revolution, Rumford left America for the last time and sought active military service on behalf of Britain. This was not forthcoming, so consequently he successfully advocated half-pay pensions for his American loyalist troops and the rank of colonel for himself with the idea of pursuing military service with a European power against the Turks.

1783 found Rumford travelling in Europe where he was presented to Prince Maximilian of Zweibrücken who suggested that he stop at Munich and be introduced to his uncle Charles Theodore, Elector Palatine and Elector of Bavaria. After further travel and discovering that there was no possibility of military service against the Turks, he returned to Munich and asked Charles Theodore for employment. In one of many instances where Rumford was able to impress an authoritarian figure, he was made Colonel and aide-de-camp to Charles Theodore, and unofficially the tutor of Count von Bretzenheim, an illegitimate son of the Elector.

Bavaria was much in need of both social and military reform. It was backward in its farming practices and industries were almost nonexistent. Everywhere beggars were preying on frightened residents through aggressive begging or by simply stealing what they wanted outright. Morale among the mistreated common soldiers was at its lowest ebb, and mistrust of the military was common among the peasant farmers. The Elector was willing to support reforms in his country, as long as he agreed with them and was required to do little except provide minimal funding. When Rumford presented him with a plan for army reform, the Elector approved and provided added authority through a promotion to major-general, an appointment as adjutant-general, and a place on the Privy Council. Rumford was now in the perfect position to utilize his diverse experiences and considerable abilities in the service of his new master, and, not so incidentally advance his position in the world, as well.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to study eighteenth-century western European poor relief through the philanthropic writings and actions of Count Rumford. What situations did he and other philanthropists encounter when they endeavoured to aid the poor? Although Rumford

had acquired substantial military knowledge and would continue his scientific experiments throughout his life, we are predominantly concerned in this work to examine how his life experiences and scientific inventions informed his philanthropic activities. What were his achievements in Bavaria? What impact did he have on European poor relief in general? And finally, how were his ideas received and utilized by the English reformers?

CHAPTER 1

RUMFORD IN BAVARIA

Throughout his essays on public institutions[1], it is clear that Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford believed in a concept of social utility achieved through scientific investigation applied for the benefit of domestic life. Many of his social theories arose out of the variety of public projects which he undertook on behalf of the Elector Palatine, reigning Duke of Bavaria, whom he served from 1784. Among other practical reforms, he improved the composition and management of the Bavarian military, and devised a public system for aiding the poor and ending mendicity. Confident that his procedures could be universally adapted, by 1795 Rumford had begun the essays which describe his works in the hope of spreading his reforming ideas throughout England and other countries. He explained that he wrote these essays as "many useful improvements have been proposed by ingenious and enlightened men, which have failed, merely because those who have brought them forward have neglected to give directions sufficiently clear respecting the details of their execution."[2] His essays, however, were to be "examples of success"[3] filled with the "genuine results of actual experiments"[4] demonstrating in detail the methods used to reform the morals and behaviours of the poor.

The Reform of the Military

The common soldier fit into the category of "the poor" by virtue of birth (most were of peasant stock) and the dismal state of the military. Beggars, and in times of peace, soldiers were

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[1] These appear in Brown, Sanborn C., ed. The Collected Works of Count Rumford. Vol 5.(Cambridge, Mass,1970): "An Account of an Establishment for the Poor at Munich," 1-98; "Of the Fundamental Principles on which General Establishments for the Relief of the Poor May Be Formed in All Countries," 99-166; "Of the Excellent Qualities of Coffee and the Art of Making it in the Highest Perfection," 263-316; "A Short Account of Several Public Institutions Lately Formed in Bavaria; together with the Appendixes to Essays I, II, and III," 317-392; "Complete Report and Account of the Results of the Regulations Recently Introduced into the Army of the Electorate of Bavaria and the Palatinate," 393-438.

[2] Rumford, "Coffee", 307.

[3] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 81.

[4] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 4.

inherently indolent, expensive to maintain, and frequently injurious to society. Both groups were beset by the distress arising out of poverty and want, coupled with the low morale that is the result of being without hope of an improvement. In one way or another, they constituted a continual threat to the public. For their equipment recruits were burdened with a never-ending debt which increased annually because their pay never equalled their expenses. Officers were too busy with mercantilist paperwork and thoughts of profit, the effects of which made them "truly spoiled in heart, and entirely incapable of all those noble feelings which animate and distinguish a true soldier and deserving officer". Consequently, morale and efficiency were down, and desertions on the rise. In addition, as ever increasing prices were charged to the soldiers for their supplies, the subordinate dared not complain to his supplier, because the supplier was also his commandant. Now subordination and discipline suffered as well, through a lack of respect for the officers who were seen to be without benevolence, ability of character, or disinterest.[5]

The *chasseurs* (or mounted troops) who had been used for preserving peace and order in the country were as serious an evil to the peasants as the importunate beggars were for the urban citizens. Firstly, the *chasseurs* only enlisted for two years, and so never acquired subordination or discipline; moreover, they roamed freely "away from the oversight of their officers."[6] The major abuse, however, arose from the law decreeing that farmers were required to quarter them on demand and provide forage for their horses. The farmers would be so terrified on seeing the *chasseurs* approach that they would be obliged to buy them off, making the whole country ostensibly held to ransom. Although there were numerous complaints, the regulations were inadequate to control them, and there were not sufficient *chasseurs* to adequately perform their patrolling duty. As can be seen, the inculcation of order and industry among the poor would enable them to be happy and comfortable in their situation. This improved behaviour among the poor would also have the added benefit of improving the condition of society at large.

Rumford's first major reform project was to be the much needed reorganization of this imperfect military body, which would provide him an opportunity to experiment with his favourite theories regarding order, industry, utility, and human nature; these theories would soon reappear in his subsequent scheme to aid and rehabilitate the poor. As all of Rumford's plans

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[5] Rumford, "Complete Report and Account," 398, 400.

[6] Rumford, "Complete Report and Account," 418.

had to have the "good of society" at their core, he claimed that by making the formerly indolent and idle soldiers more comfortable and happy in their lives, and able to take pride in their own industry, they would become better soldiers and better members of society. The reformed military organization would introduce "a new system of order, discipline, and economy" among the troops. To this end, he not only improved the pay, provided clothing and equipment *gratis*, insisted that the barracks and quarters (both inside and out) be neat and clean, but in a foreshadowing of his poor relief theories, the men were to be taught to be industrious, and received "good and wholesome food, at a reasonable price". Schools of Instruction were established in all regiments for instructing the soldiers and their children, as well as the children of neighbouring citizens and peasants, in reading, writing, and arithmetic. All regiments would also have Schools of Industry where soldiers and their families were "taught various kinds of work" and were supplied with raw materials to work for "their own emolument". These schools were of value as they provided education for the poor and taught the spirit of industry to the young.[7]

"Nothing", asserted Rumford, "is so certainly fatal to the morals of the lower class of mankind, as habitual idleness,..."[8] therefore, his plans for the soldiers included permission to work for their own remuneration during their off-duty periods either in the employ of local citizens or in their own company garden plots. In their garden they might cultivate whatever they wished and might dispose of it as they wished, but "if [they] should be idle and neglect it [the garden], it would be taken from [them]."[9] The soldiers soon acquired considerable knowledge of advanced agricultural methods such as crop rotation and of growing new types of produce such as potatoes and turnips, knowledge which was in turn passed on to families and communities when the soldiers went home on furlough. Public walks were created throughout the gardens which encouraged curious spectators. The improved industriousness of the soldiers - whose labour provided much needed manpower for industry as well as farms - plus the new concepts of agricultural practices and individual garden plots, were instrumental in helping to raise the general standard of living among all Bavarians. When home on furlough, a "friendly intercourse

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[7] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 5-7.

[8] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 6.

[9] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 10.

between the soldiers and the peasants" was encouraged which greatly facilitated troop recruitment. The establishment of permanent regimental garrisons also prompted more men to join the military as they knew they would be staying close to home, and yet conveniently for the Elector, they would be accessible when needed.[10]

Further improvements abolished the hated *chasseurs* and produced reformed cavalry regiments which could be used to "preserve peace and safety"[11] through daily patrols during which the country's thieves, robbers and vagabonds would be apprehended. Instead of being quartered on the inhabitants, the four regiments were cantoned throughout Bavaria with small permanent barracks or houses for the men with adjacent stabling for their horses, and the expense levied on the citizens at large. The regiments provided their own forage, and the men had an allowance for their keep. Being forbidden to stop overnight at a peasant's house or to claim free quarters, the patrols now would cover their territory and return to their own quarters, and the country was provided "protection and security to their persons and properties"[12] at a low cost to the people. Officers were stationed in central areas in order to monitor the behaviour of the troops, and all relations of a mercantile nature between soldiers and officers were ended.

In order to "preserve peace and harmony between soldiers and inhabitants", to "prevent disputes between the military and the civil authorities", and as far as possible, "to remove all grounds of jealousy and ill-will between them...these troops were strictly ordered and enjoined to behave on all occasions to magistrates and other persons in civil authority with the utmost respect and deference; to conduct themselves towards the peasants and other inhabitants in the most peaceable and friendly manner...and, above all, cautiously to avoid disputes and quarrels with the people of the country."[13] This was clever public relations on Rumford's part as he sought to "abolish the hatred and unfriendly feeling of the civil to the military service, - a feeling of long standing in Bavaria, and very disadvantageous to the State."[14] The result would be to "unite the interest of the soldier with the interest of civil society" and to "render the military

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[10] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 8.

[11] Rumford, "Complete Report and Account," 419.

[12] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 22.

[13] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 20.

[14] Rumford, "Complete Report and Account," 422.

force, even in times of peace, subservient to the *public good*"[15] while maintaining a constant oversight of the countryside so that no thieves, robbers or beggars could remain undetected.

In all aspects of his work, Rumford appeared to consider the importance of being "useful" as vital to society[16], and in this respect could certainly claim success with his military reform. By making the soldiers more industrious, moral, and economically enlightened, he had been able to prove some of his theories regarding human behaviour, created a model for the rest of society, devised a method of communicating or demonstrating his ideas of improvement, facilitated civil and military accord, and found a way of "clearing the country of beggars, thieves, and other vagabonds."[17]

Now that he had gained experience in providing food, clothing, and shelter for large groups of people, and had acquired the means of apprehending the indigents, Rumford could concentrate on organizing "general and efficacious measures"[18] for the care and reformation of the poor of Bavaria.

Rumford's Scheme for Managing the Poor

Poverty can often involve the inability to procure the necessities of life without charitable assistance. In Rumford's estimation, it was this particular form of poverty which is "the heaviest of all misfortunes", bringing "physical evils, pain and disease,...mortifying humiliation and hopeless despondency."[19] Because local laws requiring each community to provide for its own poor had been neglected, begging had become, "by degrees, in a manner interwoven with the internal regulations of society"[20] and a threat to every decent, industrious citizen. He refers to the common beggars in the street as "the most miserable and most worthless of beings"[21]; "these

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[15] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 5.

[16] Rumford, "Coffee," 308.

[17] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 13.

[18] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 13.

[19] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 103.

[20] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 16.

[21] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 29.

detestable vermin [who] swarmed everywhere practising their horrid arts...upon the feelings of the public, and [who] levy involuntary contributions for the support of idleness and debauchery!"[22] Frequently, young children were stolen from their parents - cruelly maimed - and then used to "excite the pity and commiseration"[23] of the public. Some "inhumane parents"[24] even used their own children in this manner. At the very least, the children of beggars were brought up from infancy to know the base arts of fraud and deception, and if they failed to procure the required daily contributions, beatings were not uncommon. What was even worse, these beggars were neither old nor infirm and unable to work, but "stout, strong, healthy, sturdy beggars" who, "lost to every sense of shame", embraced the profession from choice not necessity, and who frequently added "insolence and threats" to achieve what "arts of dissimulation"[25] could not produce. Rumford claims that the extortion of property from a citizen through "clamorous importunity" or "false pretence of feigned distress" is very like stealing, and, therefore, the transition from begging to stealing is "easy and natural."[26] Consequently, it would follow that "thieving and robbing become prevalent where beggars are numerous"[27], and many houses were robbed when entered "under the pretext of asking for charity."[28]

According to Rumford, not only do the "swarms of beggars" pose a severe threat to the inhabitant's safety, and their extortions of contributions from every traveller bring shame on all citizens and their country, but they are also exorbitantly expensive to support. Their despicable schemes threaten to debase religious ideals. Begging costs the public twice; first, through the payment of the poor rates, and second, from the extortion of funds through begging. What he found even more scandalous, was that these beggars "laugh alike at the laws of God and of man"

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[22] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 15.

[23] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 14.

[24] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 15.

[25] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 15.

[26] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 17.

[27] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 17.

[28] Rumford, "A Short Account," 336.

and "no crime is too horrible and shocking for them." Even the holy is corrupted by their "lucrative trade with confessional testimonials." But, he says, there are still more evils arising from the prevalence of mendicity. The public had been harassed and beaten down by the overwhelming numbers and voraciousness of the beggars; demoralized by the repeated failure of schemes intended to cure these offenses, the public gradually sunk into a resigned sufferance. Consequently, the beggars become still more unruly and ungovernable, others join them, and the problem grows even worse.[29]

"Too long have the public honour and safety, morality and religion called aloud for the extirpation of [this] evil."[30] In order to effect the cure, Rumford had begging outlawed and those beggars who were able-bodied sent to the Military Workhouse where they would be given appropriate work, and find such assistance and support as they were in need of and deserved; others, despite being incapable of working, were still provided maintenance. For the rounding up of the indigent he utilized the military, the civil authorities, and even called for the help of the public. In addition he campaigned for the cessation of "injudicious dispensations of alms" which through "mistaken compassion"[31] encourages more vagabonds to adopt what had become a profitable trade. He admonished those who would give alms, claiming that their actions permitted the "herd of common beggars" to overpower the "truly distressed" so that the well-meaning gift becomes the "prize of impudence and imposition, and the support of vice and idleness" - while the "modest object of real distress" loses out.[32] Every inhabitant was requested *not* to give the beggars money, but to direct them to the House of Industry where they would be "reclaimed and made useful subjects."[33] According to Rumford's plan, both the soldiers and the beggars would be reformed through learning industry, economy, virtue, and order.

In order to reclaim them from their "vicious habits" and produce a radical change in their "morals, manners, and customs", the indolent and dissolute beggars would be arrested and taken to the town-hall. Here their names would be inscribed on a list, after which they were to be

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[29] Rumford, "A Short Account," 334-337.

[30] Rumford, "A Short Account," 334.

[31] Rumford, "A Short Account," 337.

[32] Rumford, "A Short Account," 338.

[33] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 24.

dismissed to their own lodgings to appear the next day at the newly erected Military Workhouse where, Rumford claimed, they all would find comfortable warm rooms, a hot nourishing dinner every day, and paid employment for those able to work. Also, a commission would be appointed to inquire into their circumstances, and to provide weekly assistance with alms where truly needed. Anyone caught begging a second time was to be "severely punished."[34] Those who from illness or injury were not able to go to the workhouse, or who "on account of young children they had to nurse, or sick persons to take care of",[35] found it more convenient to work at their own lodgings still got their free dinner through tickets received from the committee. Upon presentation of the ticket to the public kitchen, specific portions were allotted. It also should be noted that those of the poor who had their own lodgings and who showed an industrious application to their work, or distinguished themselves with "peaceable and orderly"[36] behaviour received rent assistance twice a year. Others, who were not able to work due to old age, could come to dine in the public hall each day, and shelter in a warm room was provided for them while they waited their turn at a table.

Those poor who were infirm or unable to "shift for themselves"[37] in public houses, and had no families or near relatives to take care of them had three choices. They might lodge with friends or acquaintances, or possibly be placed with a private family to be taken care of, or failing those options, they could be sent to a house which had been purchased and fitted up as a hostel for lodging them. In the house, they would be fed from a public kitchen, and be assigned their quarters so that the less infirm could help the more infirm. Those who were able could cultivate the garden for amusement (and own the produce), while paid work suitable to their strength was provided and the earnings "left to their disposal". In addition, they would be supplied with their food, clothing, and medicine at no charge, and those not capable of earning money were provided with a small allowance for luxuries.[38]

As for the truly distressed, Rumford asserts that "...humanity and justice require that

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[34] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 28,37.

[35] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 49.

[36] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 136.

[37] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 90.

[38] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 91.

peculiar attention should be paid to those who are bashful and silent, to those who, in addition to all the distresses arising from poverty and want, feel what is still more insupportable, the shame and mortifying degradation attached to their unfortunate and hopeless situation." These poor, who were not beggars, but struggled with poverty and want through their inability to provide the necessaries of life from their own industry, were to make their needs known to the committee at the head of the institution where their real needs would be assisted with alms. If they could work they were "taught and encouraged to be industrious."[39] Depending on how much they could earn themselves, the portion of alms was just enough that the total of the two was sufficient to provide the necessaries of life with the exception of what was provided by the institution.

And lastly, but certainly no less important to Rumford, there were the people who were "born to better prospects", but had become reduced by unmerited misfortune to poverty - "particularly widows and unmarried ladies with very small fortunes."[40] These individuals were permitted to send *privately* to the House of Industry for raw materials to be spun or sewn, and when the completed work was returned, they were paid at the usual rate set for the labour performed. To further assist them, soup from the public kitchens was available to be taken back to their lodgings.

Rumford's plans for the poor were to "furnish suitable employment to such of the poor as were able to work" and to "provide the necessary assistance for those who, from age, sickness, or other bodily infirmities, were unable by their industry to provide for themselves." This assistance could include food, clothing, shelter, medical care, pocket money, or all of these where needed. He also felt that "a general system of police was likewise necessary among this class of miserable beings, as well as measures for reclaiming them, and making them useful subjects."[41] To achieve these lofty goals would require orderly and methodical systems of administration, which Rumford was clearly capable of creating, as is demonstrated by the Institution for the Poor and the Military Workhouse.

The first major enterprise which Rumford set up was the Institution for the Poor, a

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[39] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 83-84.

[40] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 86-87.

[41] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 23-24.

charitable organization that was governed separately from the Military Workhouse. The governing committee, or *Armen-Instituts-Deputation* as it was formally called, directed all policing of the poor[42], the distribution of alms, and all the economic details of the institution. This committee was comprised of the president of the council of war, the president of the council of supreme regency, the president of the ecclesiastical council, and the president of the chamber of finances. The makeup of the committee was both politically astute and pragmatic on Rumford's part. He not only needed to show the public that he had the support of the most prestigious of those who administered the country's affairs, but he also required the support of those same elites to make his scheme work. The support of the council of war ensured the cooperation of the army as a market for his people's products as well as to help arrest the beggars; the supreme regency council demonstrated the Elector's approval; the ecclesiastical council allowed him to maintain positive relations with the Church; and the chamber of finance was necessary because part of his funding came from the government. Working with the committee was one counsellor from each of the respective departments who attended all committee meetings and "who performed the more laborious parts of the business". In addition to its meeting apartments, the committee had a secretary, a clerk, an accountant, and also the "ordinary guards of the police" were under its direction. No committee member received any pay, but performed his duties from "motives of humanity and a generous desire to promote the public good."[43] The staff was paid from the treasury or another department, and he specified that at *no* time were funds destined for the relief of the poor to be used for salaries, gratuities or rewards to any person employed in carrying on the business of the Institution.[44]

In order for it to be seen that all financial transactions were above board, a respectable public banker instead of a private treasurer was appointed to "receive and pay all moneys belonging to the institution, upon written orders of the committee." Exact and detailed accounts of all transactions were printed every three months and distributed at no charge among the public. Money distributed to the poor was given every Saturday in public "in the presence of a number

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[42] In the eighteenth century, the concept of policing included more than physical restraint in order to protect innocent citizens. It also included the maintenance of civil order through the enforcement of society's social arrangements and beliefs, as well as its moral values. In the case of Rumford's poor, this would include habituating them to industriousness and respectful habits.

[43] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 24.

[44] Rumford, "A Short Account," 346.

of deputies chosen from among the citizens themselves,"[45] and a list of receipts was posted. Munich had been divided into sixteen districts and all dwellings numbered and inscribed on the printed lists of alms, so that any citizens who so desired could go to the homes of the poor recipients and inspect the actual situation for themselves.

Working directly under the committee were Commissaries of the District, respectable citizens who were designated to be responsible for the inspection and police of the poor of their district. The commissaries were also responsible for seeing to the care of the sick, the distribution of alms, furnishing of clothes, and the collection of voluntary subscriptions. For attending to the poor, their assistants were a priest, a physician, a surgeon, and an apothecary; none of whom were paid except the apothecary, who was reimbursed for medicines. One of the commissaries, in rotation, always attended the meetings of the committee. All requests for alms were submitted to the commissary, and through them to the committee, although if immediate assistance was required it was provided "as was absolutely necessary."[46] When the death of a poor person occurred, the commissary assisted at the inventory of his effects (if any) and a copy was given to the committee. After the effects were sold, the sums received from the institution in alms, or expended for illness and funeral expenses were deducted, and the remainder, if any, was delivered to his heirs; otherwise the institution absorbed the expense. There were also Subordinate Committees to look after the details of employing and feeding the poor.

Funds for the institution for the poor came from four sources: "from stated monthly allowances, from the sovereign out of his private purse, from the states, and from the treasury or chamber of finances"; voluntary subscriptions of inhabitants; legacies left to the institution; and "from several small revenues arising from certain tolls, fines, etc., which were appointed to that use."[47] Due to insufficient public funds to adequately provide support for the poor, however, voluntary subscriptions were far and away the principal source, and therefore, the public's "approbation of the plan" and their "confidence in those who were chosen to carry it into execution"[48] were vital for its success. To gain the public's necessary approval, an abstract

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[45] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 25.

[46] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 26.

[47] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 27.

[48] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 23.

detailing both the problem and the proposed remedy was distributed, accompanied by a form on which the inhabitants were asked to provide their names, place of abode, and the sum they wished to contribute monthly for the support of the institution. Heads of households each received one with a duplicate form which would be sent back to the committee, and the contributions could be reduced or augmented at will simply by filling in a new form. These subscription lists were sorted by district, and a list prepared for the commissary of each district to facilitate collecting the contributions on the last Sunday morning of each month. The commissary would immediately deliver these monies to the banker of the institution and receive two receipts: one for himself and one to be put with his report to the committee.

Those who wished to contribute privately could send their money directly to the banker under a feigned name or motto, receiving a receipt and an acknowledgement under the pseudonym, printed in the *Munich Gazette*. Occasional small sums could be placed in poor-boxes fixed in all churches, and most inns, coffee-houses, and "other places of public resort." No one was compelled to contribute; no sum was too small to be welcomed; and, as begging had been outlawed, no other importunities on the public were to be permitted. Some charitable groups who had acquired traditional rights to ask for alms[49] were provided with alternate funds at the expense of the institution from their monthly allowance received from the chamber of finances, or public treasury of the state - not from the funds donated for the poor. Rumford was adamant that the public should only be required to make one voluntary donation, and claimed that to support and reclaim the poor would cost less than one half of the amount that they had previously been pressed into giving through direct alms. Grateful to have been relieved of the intimidating beggars, the local bakers and butchers gladly donated bread and offal meat (often in addition to subscriptions) on a weekly basis, which "considerably lessened"[50] the expenses of the institution.

In order to maintain the public's confidence in the honesty of the collectors of the donated foodstuffs, Rumford took several obvious precautions. First, the collecting carts went around every day at exactly the same time so that they would be recognized and known for who they represented. This was augmented by neatly painting the carts with the words "*For the Poor*". Tubs with the same signage were hung in the butcher's shops for the convenience of the

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[49] A few of these groups were the mendicant orders, directors from the hospital for lepers, travelling journeymen-tradesmen, and those who had suffered losses from fire.

[50] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 42,53.

meatcutters, and to encourage the shoppers to throw in any unwanted scraps or bones for the collectors to pick up. The collection of the much more valuable bread was rendered safe from abuse by an ingeniously designed box with a double-sided locked trap door. Once the bread was deposited, it could not be got out again until the steward unlocked the lid at the storehouse.

For the daily operations of the institution, printed forms were used to "preserve order, and facilitate and expedite business."[51] Rumford could have been paving the way for twentieth-century bureaucracy: his myriad forms included petitions, returns, lists of the poor, descriptions of the poor, lists of the inhabitants, lists of voluntary subscribers, orders upon the banker or treasurer of the institution, reports of monthly collections, accounts sent in by commissaries, of extraordinary expenses relating to the immediate relief of the poor, bankers' receipts, and account books. For example, one extremely useful innovation were the certificates of industry. To forestall idleness and fraud on the part of the poor, these forms had to be stamped to prove that individuals had performed their required work, or where illness precluded work that week, the ticket had to bear the signature of the commissary of the district. If no stamp or signature was produced, then no allowance was paid that week. Between his overseers, inspectors, and the printed forms, it was possible for the institution to be run in a "methodical manner, and [render] one operation a check upon the other, as well as in making the person employed absolutely responsible for all frauds or neglects committed in their departments."[52] In addition, all basic food supplies for the kitchen and raw materials for the workers were kept in locked store rooms and distributed only under close scrutiny, following detailed record-keeping; even the amount of fuel used to prepare the meals was scrutinized.

Rumford's second establishment to benefit the poor arose from his military reforms, and this was the Military Workhouse. The Workhouse came under the direction of the council of war as it was primarily designed to manufacture clothing for the army, and its original capital was advanced from the military chest. Its internal management consisted of a special commission of one deputy each of the counsellor of war; of the department of military economy, or of the clothing of the army; one captain (the inspector of the House and who lodged in it); and the store-keeper of the magazine (storehouse) of military clothing. Under Rumford's immediate supervision, the commission had charge of the sole government and direction of the

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[51] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 124.

[52] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 73-4.

establishment; of all its inferior officers, servants, manufacturers, and workmen; and of all mercantile operations, contracts, and purchases, etc. It also received orders and payment from the regiments for clothing and other necessaries. Cash required for doing business was kept in a chest with three separate locks, "of one of which each of the commissioners keeps the key; and all these commissioners are jointly and severally answerable for the contents of the chest."[53] The commissioners had a room in the Military Workhouse where the secretary of the commission was constantly in attendance, and the commissioners held sessions regularly twice a week and more frequently if needed. For large contracts for raw materials (especially with foreigners) the conditions were first submitted by the commissioners to the council of war for their approbation. For all lesser or daily business, however, the commissioners acted on their own immediate authority. In order to safeguard against abuses *all* transactions of the commissioners were recorded, especially accounts of all sales and purchases, and other receipts and expenses; all raw materials and manufactures were inventoried once a year; and a profit and loss statement was presented annually.[54]

All of the poor who were able, except those who worked at home, were employed at the Military Workhouse. Those who had no useful skills were started with easy tasks such as spinning with cheap materials like hemp. Instructors were provided and although most materials were ruined at first, the workers were still paid in order to encourage industry and keep up morale. As their skills improved and they received finer wool, worsted or cotton materials to work on, their pay was increased, but never above a reasonable rate. More experienced workers immediately started on flax and wool, although wool was to be the primary material. Old, lame and infirm men were put to carding wool, and old women who were too weak to spin, spooled yarn for the weavers. Children between the ages of four and seven were taught to knit and sew, while those too young to work were placed in seats erected around the rooms where the other children worked. Schooling in reading, writing, and arithmetic was provided for the children (and any adult who wished to participate) for one hour in the morning and the afternoon.

A highly organized system of checks and balances was devised for the prevention of frauds by either poor workers or employees of the workhouse. For example, raw wool was delivered from the steward to the master clothier and from him to the wool-sorters, and sorting

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[53] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 67.

[54] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 67.

of the wool was strictly supervised to prevent frauds by the wool-sorters. The sorted wool then went back via the master clothier to the workers to be wolfed[55], greased, carded, and spun under his inspection before transferring the material to the store-room for woollen yarn. For the rest of the cloth manufacturing process, the material would be passed through the hands of various supervisors who would each be responsible for it, and at any time in the process specific allotments could be identified, while the workers worked under supervision. Accounts between the senior supervisors were settled once a week. Similar security measures were employed for the spinners whose wages were paid by the clerk of the control based on spin-tickets containing the quality and quantity of the yarn and signed by the clerk of the spinners. The work was examined at numerous stages throughout the spinning process, and frauds could be attributed to the spinner by the accompanying spin-ticket. Where weight was lacking in the bundles delivered from the spinners, "a proportional deduction [was] made from the wages of the spinner" amounting to "a trifle more than the value of the yarn which [was] wanting."[56] Frauds in weaving were also prevented by repeated checks for weight. Similar precautions were taken to prevent abuses in the linen, cotton, and other manufactures being produced in the Military Workhouse. The methodical manner by which all operations became a check upon the others, and all employed persons were held absolutely responsible for all frauds and neglects in their departments resulted in an establishment which succeeded both financially and in reputation.

Rumford frequently proclaimed that the Military Workhouse had been instituted so that "all who are able to work may find employment and wages, and will be clothed and fed..., [and where] the really indigent find a secure asylum,"[57] and those who are ill, infirm or worn out by age will be effectually relieved. Nevertheless, the government of the Military Workhouse was quite distinct from the government of his other organization for aiding the poor - the Institution for the Poor. The Military Workhouse was "merely a manufactory", supported on its own private capital and had no connection with the funds destined for the poor. It was run under the "sole direction of its own particular governors and overseers, and carried on at the sole risk of the

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[55] Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "wolf." One of the many definitions given for this word refers to its use in the textile industry as "a beating or opening machine, for tearing apart the tussocks of cotton as delivered in the bale." Although the reference is from an 1875 dictionary, it would seem reasonable to also apply the definition to the earlier processes of preparing raw wool for weaving.

[56] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 73.

[57] Rumford, "A Short Account," 339.

owner."[58] The institution for the poor, on the other hand, was an "institution of charity, joined to a general direction of the police, as far as it relates to paupers."[59] The committee at the head of the institution (or *deputation* as it was called in this case) had "the sole direction of all funds destined for the relief of the poor in Munich, and the distribution of alms."[60] The deputation, however, also had the direction of the public kitchen and bakehouse which were established at the Workhouse, and of the details pertaining to the feeding of poor (these expenses being paid from the poor funds). They were also connected to the Workhouse as they provided the clothing for the poor and distributed rewards to those poor employed at the Workhouse who distinguished themselves by good behaviour and industry. This was a "mercantile correspondence" only, states Rumford, and the deputation had no right to interfere in the internal management of the Military Workhouse, but then he hastens to add that "the two establishments are so dependent on each other in many respects, that neither of them could well subsist alone."[61] The Military Workhouse provided a much needed place of employment for the poor, while the Institution for the Poor provided the necessary labour force to make the Workhouse financially successful.

The Psychology of Order, Industry, and Virtue

In the formation and daily running of both the Workhouse and the Institution for the Poor, Rumford was able to apply the lessons in human psychology which he had learned while reforming the Bavarian army. In his essays, his theory regarding human nature was clearly stated:

> The machine is intrinsically the same in all situations. The great secret is, *first to put it in tune*, before an attempt is made to play upon it. The jarring sounds of former vibrations must first be stilled, otherwise no harmony can be produced; but when the instrument is in order the notes *cannot fail* to answer to the touch of a skilful master.[62]

As he created his harmonious institution with his orderly methods, so he was certain that he could

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[58] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 65.

[59] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 65.

[60] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 65.

[61] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 66.

[62] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 61.

induce industry by creating harmony among the poor as well. First, he calms their "uneasy"[63] and "irritated"[64] minds with kind usage, personal cleanliness, warm rooms, and nourishing food, and gains their trust through kind usage and fair wages. In short, he *puts them in tune*. Then, he "plays upon them" with incentives such as "praise, distinctions, and rewards"[65] to produce his harmonious result. Why was Rumford so sure of success? Experience and not a little arrogance are the primary reasons for his attitude. Many years as a military leader and reformer had provided subjects for his penchant for scientific observation of human motivations, and, in addition, when he wrote these essays he had already had five successful years with his institution and workhouses. Because *his* own vanity was gratified by praise, distinctions and rewards, he naturally assumed that others are the same. There is more than a touch of arrogance in his assertion that his methods for bringing about change "cannot fail to be interesting to every benevolent mind."[66] Rumford is indeed the "skilful master" or *maestro - he* supervises all aspects of the scheme, and therefore, *he* makes the "notes" harmonize.

But Rumford's ultimate solution for rehabilitation was industry - "the only source of effectual relief to the distresses and misery of the poor."[67] Man, he claims, has "a natural propensity to sloth and indolence" which causes no problems in the "rude state of savage nature," but in a "state of civil society where population is great, and the means of subsistence not to be had without labour, or without defrauding others...idleness becomes a crime of the most fatal tendency, and consequently of the most heinous nature, and every means should be used to discountenance, punish and prevent it."[68] Not only does idleness promote thievery, which is harmful to industrious citizens, but also through lack of industry the poor cannot be of any use to themselves or to society. In his institutions, however, the "carrot" of encouragement would

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[63] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 32.

[64] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 108.

[65] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 60.

[66] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 29.

[67] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 149.

[68] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 130.

be advocated over the "stick" of punishment.[69]

In attempting to introduce a "spirit of order and industry" among the idle, one must not only "avoid all harsh and offensive treatment" which could only "irritate" and "render them still more vicious and obstinate"; but it is also indispensably necessary, he argues, "to do everything that can be devised to encourage and reward every symptom of reformation."[70] The incurable evils attendant upon poverty can only be alleviated by "the kind and soothing attentions of the truly benevolent,"[71] and "*examples of success* are sometimes more efficacious in stimulating mankind to action than the most splendid reasonings and admonitions."[72] Consequently, "the irresistible power of example"[73] will suffice to encourage industry among the poor when gathered in an establishment where others are cheerfully engaged in their occupations - permanent industry will then thrive from *habit*. Accordingly, the poor were trained to various jobs and tasks which progressively required more skill, and were paid well regardless of productivity in order to "keep up their courage, and induce them to persevere with cheerfulness in acquiring more skill and address in their labour."[74] "To excite emulation, praise, distinctions, and rewards [was also] necessary." Those who "distinguished themselves by their application, by their industry, by their address" were publicly praised, pointed out to visitors, and named as models for others to emulate, while those who "particularly distinguished themselves" received an elegant (though inexpensive) uniform as "an honourable mark of approved merit."[75] Children too young to work were placed on chairs around the hall where the other children worked. As they grew bored, the young children soon cried to be allowed to take part in the work for which the others were being praised and caressed. Upon receiving permission, they were gradually trained, and when promoted to more exacting tasks, they also were publicly rewarded. Rumford warns,

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[69] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 33.

[70] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 128.

[71] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 103.

[72] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 81.

[73] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 158.

[74] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 45.

[75] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 60.

however, that those children who cried when they were refused permission to join the work, would have cried *even more* if *forced* to work and reminds would-be reformers that "men are but children of a larger growth...."[76]

He also challenges contemporary opinions which asserted that "the poor are vicious and profligate,...therefore, nothing but force will answer..." with his belief that "*because* the poor are vicious and profligate, it is so much more necessary to avoid the appearance of force in the management of them, to prevent their becoming rebellious and incorrigible."[77] Kind usage from the hands of persons whom "they must learn to love and respect at the same time" may help reclaim even the most "wretched" and "miserable."[78] Another of the prevailing theories which he challenges was one which supposed that in order to make "vicious and abandoned people happy, *first* make them virtuous," but, counters Rumford, "why not make them first *happy*, and then virtuous! If happiness and virtue be inseparable, the end will be as certainly obtained by the one method as by the other; it is undoubtedly much easier to contribute to the happiness and comfort of persons in a state of poverty and misery than by admonitions and punishments to reform their morals."[79]

Many of Rumford's schemes relating to the reclamation of the poor seemed to be derived from eighteenth century concepts of liberal humanism which held that man's knowledge was the product of his experience, and emphasized the role of environment and education in determining ideas and conduct. Thus Rumford's optimistic views of the possibility of rehabilitation echoed John Locke's view of the nature of man. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* written in 1690, Locke asserted that sensations and the reflections of the mind on them are the "foundations of knowledge from which all the ideas we have, or can have, spring." He did not believe in man's innate wickedness, but *did* believe that as environment was the primary influence in the emergence of thought and the shaping of conduct, then essentially, by the use of their

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[76] Rumford, " Fundamental Principles," 127.

[77] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 127.

[78] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 118.

[79] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 30.

natural faculties... men could advance in knowledge and virtue.[80] By adapting these principles Rumford was certain that he could reform the behaviour of the indigents if he could change their environment, and so he wanted to make as great as possible a contrast between their former living conditions and what was now provided for them, while allowing them to reflect upon those changes. Therefore he concentrated on a few antithetical situations which *could not exist together*: cleanliness - filth; elegance - squalor; happiness - anxiety; and industry - idleness. Cleanliness contributed to tranquillity and contentment, extending even to one's moral character. "Virtue," he claimed, "never dwelt long with filth and nastiness; nor do I believe there ever was a person *scrupulously attentive to cleanliness* who was a consummate villain".[81] Filth and nastiness, on the other hand, made the mind uneasy and discontented. Elegance was considered orderly - squalor was a complete lack of order and economy. Consequently, the poor were to be made to feel the difference from their "wretched and deplorable" life in "miserable hovels, in the midst of vermin and every kind of filthiness"[82] to their new life in their neat, clean, spacious and elegant apartments in a large, commodious building set with an air of elegance in neat and orderly grounds. Rumford frequently noted that "those who are in distress are apt to be fearful and apprehensive,"[83] and to demonstrate anxiety. To counteract that behaviour, the kind usage and "tranquillity they would enjoy in [the] peaceful retreats would, by degrees, calm the agitation of their minds, remove their suspicions, and render them happy, grateful, and docile."[84] Once the poor had been made comfortable and happy, it would be possible to encourage "a spirit of industry and emulation among those who, from leading a life of indolence and debauchery, were to be made useful members of society."[85] Idleness was said to lead to immorality, but instilling habits of industry would provide for their future comfort and

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[80] Coates, Wilson H., et al, eds. The Emergence of Liberal Humanism (New York, 1966), pp. 83-84, 111.

[81] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 31.

[82] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 32-35.

[83] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 147.

[84] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 89.

[85] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 59.

happiness.[86]

The primary motive behind all of Rumford's plans and activities was the concept of "utility." As an acquaintance of that great promoter of utilitarian precepts, Jeremy Bentham, he was familiar with - and obviously subscribed to - the theory that the greatest happiness for the greatest number is the highest moral good. His acceptance of that axiom is reflected in his essays, where he states that: "...no political arrangement can be really good except in so far as it contributes to the general good of society..."[87]; "[b]ut if it be true that we are really happy only in proportion as we ought to be so, - that is, in proportion as we are instrumental in promoting the happiness of others..."[88]; and also, "[a]nd as the merit of an action is to be determined by the good it produces...."[89] As previously noted, Rumford believed that through an improved environment the soldiers and the poor could be greatly reformed in both manners, morals and customs in order that they might become orderly, cheerful, and diligent workers. He also advocated some basic education to help them live better, but not enough to educate them above their place in the lower orders where they were to remain, always under supervision, with order maintained through his systems of control.

Rumford claimed that the reforms to the military, such as better pay, food, discipline, made the soldiers more comfortable and happier in their lives, and that they became much more efficient at policing the countryside and protecting the people and property there. No longer permitted to be idle when off-duty, their new industriousness not only benefitted them as they were able to take pride in their work and earn extra money, but was also of benefit to society. When off-duty or on furlough they were encouraged to work for pay at manufacturing or agricultural jobs, thereby providing much needed manpower, and frequently they were employed as military labour on public works. Rumford claimed that in the newly established military gardens they learned advanced cultivating techniques while providing much of their own food, and both the military and the general public benefited from the increased knowledge and services provided by the Swiss dairy, veterinary school and school of agriculture that were established in

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[86] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 131.

[87] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 5.

[88] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 79.

[89] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 126.

the English garden at Munich.

As for the poor, in addition to having their wants provided for, they were also rehabilitated to habits of useful industry. These actions not only improved their happiness, but also improved the happiness of society. Productive work for the state was being performed while the poor also helped to provide for their own needs (and so reduced poor rates), bolstered the economy, improved public safety by eliminating begging and its partner thievery, and preserved public honour and the reputation of the country through the clearing of the streets and the knowledge that one had performed, "...one of the most sacred duties imposed on men in a state of civil society..."[90] - the care of the poor. A significant aspect of his schemes for rehabilitating the military and the poor included new methods for creating nourishing and inexpensive meals, improved ways of conserving the fuel used for cooking and warmth, and the upgrading of cooking stoves and utensils, all knowledge of which Rumford made available to the public to be utilized for making their daily domestic lives better. The rationale for Rumford's schemes was to produce peace and good order which he firmly believed would provide the best possible good for society.

The Validity of Rumford's Scheme

One of the most noticeable omissions in Rumford's essays is that he fails to give much indication of the possibility of a lack of cooperation by the inmates. At one point he mentions that some of the more "hardened" vagabonds attempted to evade the "arrests" and return to "their old practices," but that the military effectively dealt with the problem.[91] Warnings are given to prospective supervisors of the poor to avoid "harsh and offensive treatment, [and] encourage and reward every symptom of reformation, but if obstinacy must be punished, the supervisors should administer it "in the most solemn and *dispassionate* manner" and continue it only until the "*first dawn* of reformation appears."[92] He also notes that in the mornings, those who came late to the house were "gently reprimanded,"[93] but that continued tardiness without a sufficient

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[90] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 118.

[91] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 39.

[92] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 128-9.

[93] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 49.

reason resulted in the forfeiture of their dinner. Apparently on some unspecified occasions the mere threat and the fear of being banished from the house of industry was a sufficient deterrent because begging or alms were no longer available as options. These few cautionary observations do not seem particularly realistic given his claim for the severity of poverty in Bavaria, and it is likely that these omissions arise either from his need to create a positive response to his ideas, or that he has truly discovered the key to rehabilitation. He is not naive, however, and asserts quite strongly that precautions against fraud and abuses by *both the poor and those engaged in the business* must be ongoing, and visible to all.

Rumford further claims that his plan will succeed due to his thorough investigations and organizations with the "generous and well-disposed" voluntary monthly contributions of the inhabitants, plus the outlawing of "street-begging."[94] To guarantee his plan's adoption (and to satisfy his near obsession with order and control) he recommends that the institution should be "perfectly disinterested and owe its origin to pure benevolence and an active zeal for public good...."[95] It is also imperative that persons "employed in the management of a public establishment for the relief of the poor...be persons of known integrity" to counteract public opinion of the more inefficient houses of correction and houses of industry so as to encourage the public to contribute, and for the "good effects such a choice must have upon the minds and morals of the poor."[96] If these recommendations are followed, and the organizers at all times make their plans clear to the public, and exercise "the most perfect uniformity in the mode of treating the poor, and transacting all public business relative to the institution,"[97] success will be secured. In short, all employees must be accountable for their actions; there must be order and system throughout the institution; and the managers must communicate thoroughly with the public and be seen to be above board in all matters. Asking inhabitants of all ranks to take part in the scheme engages their "good wishes"[98] a circumstance of great importance to its success, and thus, inhabitants will support the institution so as to relieve themselves from the importunities

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[94] Rumford, "A Short Account," 340.

[95] Rumford, "A Short Account," 341-2.

[96] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 115-16.

[97] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 112.

[98] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 148.

of the beggars, to answer their Christian duty, and to restore honour to their country.[99]

Rumford's confidence in the complete validity of *his* scheme is repeatedly stated. Asserting that "nothing is more certain than that their crimes are very often the *effects*, not the *causes*, of their misery; and when this is the case, by the removing the cause, the effects will cease,"[100] he later states categorically that "when the cause of any evil is perfectly known, it is seldom difficult to find means to prevent it."[101] His solution provides an improved environment so that they will wish to live that way always, and will instil order in their daily lives. It demonstrates the uses of technology to increase domestic comfort and reduce expenses (improved fireplaces and cookpots, and recipes for inexpensive, nourishing meals). Assistance will be available for those who will *never* be able to earn enough for their own subsistence, and care will be provided for those who cannot help themselves, such as the old and infirm. Rumford does not intend to raise the lower orders out of their station in life, but seeks to make them happy and productive in it because they will always have to labour for their subsistence. The result of his work was to be the relief of the distresses of the poor, the creation of the "sovereign remedy for the numerous evils to society which arise from the prevalence of mendicity, indolence, poverty, and misery among the lower classes of society,"[102] and the "[engagement of the] good-will and cheerful assistance of the citizens with the measures adopted."[103]

Rumford believes strongly that any "honest man" should wish to assist in aiding the poor: "[the] care of the poor...I must consider as a matter of very serious importance. It appears to me to be one of the most sacred duties imposed upon men in a state of civil society, - one of those duties imposed immediately by the hand of God himself, and of which the neglect never goes unpunished."[104] He also claims that "...care of the poor...[is] an object of great national importance...inseparably connected with the peace and tranquillity of society, and with the glory

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[99] Rumford, "A Short Account," 343.

[100] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 79.

[101] Rumford, "Coffee," 274.

[102] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 104.

[103] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 25.

[104] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 119.

and prosperity of the state...."[105] In addition to his belief in the humanity of helping the poor, any honest and well-disposed man should also be useful to society through the application of scientific knowledge and virtuous industry. That this was both necessary and possible Rumford had no doubt: first create an orderly system designed to encourage a *controlled* situation for the reforming of the poor and alleviating importunities on citizens, and then with a "knowledge of mankind...and a good share of zeal, address, prudence, and perseverance, there are few schemes in which an honest man would wish to be concerned that might not be carried into execution in any country."[106]

In his essays offering advice to those in other countries who might privately wish to be of some assistance to the poor, Rumford suggested that in times of plenty affluent individuals could help procure cheap fuel or basic foodstuffs which the indigent could purchase in times of need *at the lower price*. They could also provide instruction for the poor in how to achieve economies in fuel for cooking and heating their homes, and in preparing inexpensive but nourishing meals. Two of his favourite methods of assistance, however, were the provision of raw materials for paid work for the poor, and the setting up of a public kitchen. Public kitchens would have far-reaching benefits as they could economically supply nourishing food to both the indigent and the industrious poor. In addition, they could also remove the fear of scarcity,[107] and therefore prevent hoarding and end speculation on food stuffs.

For assisting those in need, Rumford advocates large, general establishments which would provide neat, clean, warm rooms, suitable paid employment, and a hot nourishing meal. He adds that feeding the poor from a public kitchen would cost less than one half what it costs them to feed themselves; they would learn increased industry under proper direction where a "spirit of emulation"[108] would be excited among them; and being relieved from most of the expense of fuel for cooking or heating their dwelling, the cost of lodging would be reduced as they would only be home at night. He also suggested that the poor procure their own lodging where possible to prevent their "being crowded together" and feeling "confined like prisoners in poorhouses and

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[105] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 120.

[106] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles," 132.

[107] This fear was particularly prevalent in the 1790's when grain shortages were widespread.

[108] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 89.

hospitals."[109] Following the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, who coined the term "total institution," many social historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have either directly or indirectly applied the concept to their studies of state institutions such as the asylum, the prison, the reformatory, and the workhouse.[110] In their research they believed they were seeing a domineering authority exercising a total regulation of the inmate's daily life through institutional routines of often dehumanising repression and discipline in order to reproduce a social order which had been predetermined by themselves. Although in many ways Rumford's institution for the poor in Munich was a "total institution" in which control, industry and discipline prevailed, he was very much in favour of allowing the poor to maintain the very fundamental feeling of "liberty" which he felt was vital for all human beings.[111]

Rumford based much of his scheme on the theory of *preventing* the cause of evil, and this seems a valid point when considering the need to relieve the distresses of the poor in order to prevent the evils of mendicity. In spite of the acknowledgement that there will always be those who need assistance and voluntary donations provided to guarantee that aid, however, will there always be the work for those who *are* able? According to Rumford, his institutions prospered as they manufactured supplies for the army as well as for other poor institutions. How would this have worked if *all* European countries adopted his plan? Would there be sufficient demand for the product? Also, although he must have been aware of the development of mechanized factories in England, he does not seem to have considered how the spread of this technology might impact on his houses of industry. Would the managers have to purchase machines, or would some poor lose their jobs? The institution could not compete with machines and still pay

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[109] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 90.

[110] A selection of authors who wrote in support of this social control theory are: Erving Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, New Jersey, 1961); David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum (Boston, 1971); Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization (London, 1971), and Discipline and Punish (New York, 1978); Michael Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain. The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution (New York, 1978), "Total Institutions and Working Classes, A Review Essay in History Workshop 15(1983) pp. 167-173, and "State, Civil Society and Total Institutions: A Critique of Recent Social Histories of Punishment" in Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, eds., Social Control and the State 1983; Andrew Scull, Social Order/ Mental Disorder (Berkeley, 1989). Two volumes which deal primarily with theories which connect the rise of commercial capitalism with the need to create a docile workforce are: Dario Melossi and Massimo Pavarini, The Prison and the Factory, Origins of the Penitentiary System (1981); and the much earlier, George Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer, Punishment and Social Structure (New York, 1939/ reprint 1968).

[111] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 90.

fair wages. And as far as wages are concerned, what effect do the subsidies paid to augment wages have? If the labourer works harder and earns more money, do the subsidies stop? Would this tend to deter "the spirit of industry" or under Rumford's scheme are the poor beginning to take pride in completely providing for themselves? One wishes to ask these questions of Count Rumford himself.

CHAPTER 2

RUMFORD AND EUROPEAN POOR RELIEF

Count Rumford's all-encompassing plans for the poor were to relieve their distress by rehabilitating them to orderly living and industrious habits so that they could be useful to themselves, provide subsistence for those no longer able to provide for themselves, and clear the streets of the menace of importunate beggars. This was a total welfare program for all those living in destitution either from age, infirmities or disease, or because of the inability to earn enough to provide bare subsistence for their families. Furthermore, he encouraged worthy citizens to participate in his schemes, and claimed that by following his lead, the inhabitants of any city or country could be successful in ameliorating their problems of poverty while pursuing their Christian duty to aid the poor and promoting the prosperity of the state. But what of these plans? How new or original were his ideas for managing the poor? Did his attitude toward them differ from his contemporaries'? Can he be credited with breaking new ground in presenting his cure for a perpetual problem, or were his schemes actually regressive? Rumford's convictions were not formed in a vacuum. Many of his strategies appear to have incorporated his extreme version of the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for method and order. In addition, he incorporated his own practical applications of scientific knowledge with many of the concepts and systems of those who had preceded him. Consequently, in order to judge whether Rumford was truly innovative or merely borrowed from what had gone before, we first need to take a brief look at the legacy of European social welfare attitudes and programs which had preceded him.

The Sixteenth Century Movement For Welfare Reform

For decades, the prevailing theory shared by theologians, historians, and students of social history held that the Protestant Reformation brought about a reorganization of poor relief; that Protestants and Catholics treated their poor differently. In this view, because the Protestants denied that good works (including alms giving) were a means of securing salvation, they encouraged a secularization of relief agencies so that civil authorities assumed responsibility. Thus, it was argued, the Protestant church was responsible for creating new methods of dealing

with begging and poverty.[1] This perspective was apparent even in the sixteenth century. In 1531, theologians of the Sorbonne warned that if the poor relief system recently implemented in the Flemish town of Ypres forbade people to ask for alms or to give alms, it would be heretical - it "would be the part not of good Catholics, but of impious heretics, Waldensians, Wycliffites or Lutherans."[2] Numerous historians would perpetuate these charges. Historian R.H. Tawney claims that although there was some criticism of indiscriminate charity before the Reformation, it was not truly undermined until the Protestant attack on monasticism and hypocritical works. He argues that "...harsh discipline or deprivation to uproot the poor from idleness may have been prompted by political and economic changes, but it was prescribed by Puritan self-righteousness!"[3] This attitude was sustained by G.R. Elton in 1953 who, when trying to identify the anonymous author of a draft proposal for poor relief reform in 1535 England, claimed, "because of his opposition to indiscriminate alms, [he must be] a reformer in religion."[4] Davis also cites the work of Christopher Hill who argues that the Calvinist view of church polity convinced the rich not to give alms indiscriminately, and the poor not to expect them.[5] In her book on Habsburg Spain, Linda Martz discusses what she calls "the old theories" in which Protestants were believed to have encouraged self-reliance and industry through education and employment, while Catholics were promoting idleness and dependency through indiscriminate charity.[6]

In recent years, however, historians utilizing new sources - and often asking new questions - have not only found similarities between the programs of poor relief established by Protestants and Catholics, but also instances where the two groups have worked successfully together and even practices which had been attributed to the Reformation, but which now appear

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[1] Robert Jütte, Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge, 1994), 100.

[2] Quoted in Natalie Zemon Davis, "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy," in Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford, California, 1975), 17.

[3] R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1922), 262-264, quoted in Davis, 18.

[4] G.R. Elton, An Early Tudor Law (1953), 65 and 65, n.2, quoted in Davis, 19.

[5] Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (London, 1964), quoted in Davis, 18.

[6] Linda Martz, Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain (Cambridge, 1983), 1-6.

to have been in use prior to that sixteenth-century event. These historians claim that many practices for relief of the poor were drawn from earlier precedents established during the medieval era, including the many ways of redistributing wealth such as giving away food, money, clothes and fuel, the provision of free medical service, and the practice of price-fixing which continued beyond the sixteenth century. They also note that municipal participation in poor relief was already occurring well before the Protestant Reformation, pointing out that in areas as diverse as England, Hamburg, Lyon, and Turin, many town councils were acquiring the rights of supervision of hospitals and charitable institutions as early as the fifteenth century.[7]

The notion of a municipalized poor relief should not be construed as an expression of a lack of Christian values. Reorganization of welfare was based on municipalization and centralization, and was largely influenced by the size of the poverty problem growing beyond the ability of traditional solutions. Even the German monk, Martin Luther, and the Catholic humanist, Juan Luis Vives advocated that cities should be responsible for their own poor, with Vives calling for municipal control of charities. The poor relief reforms of the cities of Lyon and Ypres involved the cooperation of both municipalities and the Church for what was believed to be a more equitable and efficient distribution of charitable funds. When the reforms of Ypres were opposed by the mendicant orders, the theological faculty of the Sorbonne sided with the city, finding that with some qualifications, the changes were in agreement with the scriptures, the teaching of the Apostles, and the laws of the Church.[8] Across Europe, however, there was generally no decline in the Christian beliefs of the populace and religion continued to be an integral part of their everyday life. It was believed by most that "Christians gathered together in charitable service would also be better citizens...[and] the vision of a Christian community, tied together by gratitude and acts of kindness, by brotherly feelings in Christ's name, continued to occupy an important place in social thought."[9]

The many complementary methods chosen to aid the poor demonstrate that the problems of poverty did indeed cut across religious boundaries. English historian Brian Pullan cites the similarities between the General Hospital of Protestant Geneva and the *Aumône Général* of

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[7] Sandra Cavallo, Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy (Cambridge, 1995),20-25; Davis, 36-39; Jutte, 101; Mary Lindeman, Patriots and Paupers: Hamburg 1712-1830 (Oxford, 1990), 14.

[8] Jutte, 112.

[9] Donna Andrew, Philanthropy and Police (Princeton,N.J., 1989), 20-22.

Catholic France, while Mary Lindeman points out the similarities among the houses of correction meant to both punish and employ the "antisocial" poor such as the English Bridewells, the Zuchthausen of Lutheran Hamburg, the *hôpitaux généraux* of Catholic France, the Dutch tuchthuizen, and Catholic Spain's *hospicios* (beggar's hospitals).[10] Robert Jütte, in his review of recent historiography, found that both Catholic and Protestant communities had an equally strong tendency to discriminate between deserving and undeserving paupers (in fact, the concept of discriminatory charity had its beginnings in medieval times).[11] The deserving or impotent poor were those who through advanced years, injury or illness, widows or orphans, were unable to acquire subsistence through their own efforts. These people were an accepted, familiar part of society, normally looked after by the Church, through charitable almsgiving, or by their neighbours, and were not seen as any sort of threat to the stability of the social order. Also in this category were the shame-faced poor[12] - frequently widows - who had been born to a better life, but had fallen on hard times and were too proud to ask for assistance. For the most part, to avoid embarrassment they were provided quietly with aid by parish officials, clergymen, or lay confraternities. A consistent theme in the work of Natalie Zemon Davis is that there was "an international movement for welfare reform in Europe during the decades after 1520...," and Protestant cities, Catholic cities, and cities of mixed religious composition initiated similar reforms, and often learned from one another, while the fact that donations to the Lyon *Aumône Général* continued even after the First Religious War indicates that the Lyonnais "thought that misery was a greater danger than heresy to the life of Lyon."[13] The Ypres statutes were printed and translated, the statutes of Nuremburg, Lyon, Paris, Chartres, and Bruges appeared in print, and Juan de Mediña described the reforms in Salamanca, Zamora, and Valladolid. Many of the cities and states interested in reform also shared the same intellectual sources, such as the Catholic Juan Luis Vives who was published in several languages, the works of the many continental reformers, and also of the conciliarist John Major. Pullan argues that common

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[10] Brian Pullan quoted in Martz, 1-2; Lindeman, 24.

[11] Jütte, 100.

[12] In Spain, called the *envergonzantes*; in Italy, the *poverini vergognosi*; in France, the *pauvres honteaux*; and in Germany, the *declassé*.

[13] Davis, 52,59.

principles mostly followed from the "ubiquity of disease, crime, and crisis." Thus, agrees Davis, the context for welfare reform seems to be urban crisis brought about by the conjunction of older problems of poverty with population growth and economic expansion, while the values and insights needed for the reforms were often supplied by the businessmen, lawyers, and humanists who made up town councils throughout Europe.[14]

So what do the "new" historians believe were the real reasons for the changes in poor relief? The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Europe were marked by violence and mass deprivation. Any number of calamities could destroy the fragile economic system of the labouring people: illness; famine (whether due to weather, primitive agriculture, inadequate transportation, or grain hoarding); crippling injuries; reduced income through seasonal trades or foreign competition; and the disastrous effects of Europe's continuous wars (trade interrupted, loss of employment, devastation of crops). The rise in population which paralleled these lurking symptoms of misfortune only exacerbated their potential for catastrophe. Martz claims that many saw the "melioration of poverty" as both a moral Christian obligation and a political expedient. Poverty could foster uncivil and asocial behaviour; it sowed seeds of discord that could lead to sedition and rebellion. Poverty also "led the poor into wicked and amoral activities by depraving their morality.[15] As the increasing numbers of beggars and vagabonds grew from nuisance to a chronic plague during the sixteenth century, the poor laws of the Western European cities and states had begun to reflect the "fear of socially surplus populations, and a growing concern for public order and public stability.... [these] new destitute populations [were] less stable, less rooted, less accepted than medieval beggardom."[16] Where both clerical and lay citizens had hardened against the professional beggars, they now hardened against *all* beggars as the bearers of social disorder and disease. This change in attitude has led Davis to conclude that "a revulsion against mendicancy could grow independently of any religious critique of the merits of charitable acts."[17]

As the numbers of needy rose, the traditional forms of charity (private

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[14] Davis, 59-60.

[15] Martz, 8-10.

[16] Emanuel Chill, "Religion and Mendicity in Seventeenth Century France," in International Review of Social History 7 (1962):400.

[17] Davis, 26.

individuals/almsgiving, monasteries, hospitals) would never again be able to cope with the job of poor relief. Jütte points to evidence of the common features in a number of cities and states. These are: 1) the enhanced role of the state, which led to debates about the proper relationship between public and private charity; 2) the increasing rationalization, bureaucratization, and professionalization of relief work, reflected in the investigation and recording of each individual case of poverty to assess need and to facilitate the more efficient distribution of public assistance; 3) the intermingling of the reorganization of poor relief and education reform in the attempt to reduce poverty by habituating the poor to industrious habits, and by teaching pauper children a trade.[18]

Most relief schemes were locally initiated and community based, with either municipal domination or the combined forces of the church and the government exercising control. As informal relief was the easiest to organize, the primary method for dispensing aid was home or outdoor assistance through the parish, canton, or archdiocese. Two practices that were almost universally implemented throughout northern and central Europe were the pooling of revenues into a common fund and the centralization of relief agencies in order to ensure that aid went where it was most needed and would do the most good. That Catholic Lille had a communal fund as early as 1506 is proof that Martin Luther's recommendation of municipal community chests was not an original idea. It has been shown, therefore, that there was no reorganization of poor relief due to direct religious influence, nor does it appear that the Protestant Reformation was responsible for a radical shift from ecclesiastical to secular control of social welfare. There was, however, a change in attitude toward the poor through the sixteenth century arising from their growing numbers and increased visibility. Idleness and begging were looked upon as immoral and a potential source of disorder in society, while punishment and the fear of it were used as an impetus to promote industry, prudence, and virtue.

From Punishment to Management

Social attitudes toward the poor were altered once again when the Scientific Revolution merged with the philosophic Enlightenment to produce the "science of man". The "joining of the deductive capabilities of mathematics with the use of observation and experiment"[19]

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[18] Jutte, 101-103.

[19] Wilson H. Coates, et al., eds., The Emergence of Liberal Humanism (New York, 1966), 158-173.

permitted the increased scientific study of physical nature with man at its centre, instead of metaphysics which had been the previous field of study. By the eighteenth century, secular-minded philosophes were utilising analytical approaches to ponder the question of how men learned, and the adjacent field of psychology was born. A seminal thinker at this time was John Locke. Locke differed from, and eventually prevailed over, Descartes' theory of innate knowledge in his claim that knowledge was acquired by sense perception of reality, from which principles could be derived or deduced.[20] Man was proclaimed a rational being with the capacity to modify his behaviour. This study of physical science and epistemology led to a new meaning of the concept of "natural law". Nature was now felt to be friendly to man, and man, like nature, was believed to have a spontaneous tendency to perfection. This meant a rejection of the Christian belief in man's congenital depravity, and a proclaimed assertion of his basic goodness. The evil in society, therefore, was provoked in man by "a social order that smothered and frustrated his inherent goodness, [and so] instead of corrupt man saved from his heritage of sin, virtuous man was to be saved from the heritage of his evil environment."[21]

Taken together, these two novel concepts of how humans learn, and the impact of their environment upon what they learned, meant that the reform of the poor was gradually to depend less on punishment and fear (although never completely dismissed), and more on example and persuasion. The minds of men were to be moulded by the circumstances in which they were placed.[22] In an attempt to habituate them to a more civilized lifestyle their sense perception could be appealed to through improved personal hygiene, clean clothes and surroundings. Provision of vocational instruction, employment, and moral instruction was to pave the way for renewed self-respect as well as to inculcate desirable behaviour patterns. Reformers such as the Hamburg patriots, the members of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and Rumford himself realized, however, that the poor needed to be led, not driven into new habits, and so a desire for industry over idleness was to be encouraged through rewards and emulation;

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[20] Coates, 185.

[21] Coates, 191-193.

[22] William Godwin quoted in J.R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism (London, 1969), 161.

an appeal to their desire of bettering themselves.[23] Learning to be frugal with what they had was considered vital, and for those who were able, learning to save through enterprises such as friendly societies was promoted. Most important was to teach and give direction to the young so as to preserve the next generation from indigence. Inmates in asylums were to receive more fresh air and better food, to be separated by type of illness, and to have the use of restraint reduced; frequently they would be given responsibilities and occupations where possible. Even the treatment of serious criminals began to include the requirement that the prisoners were expected to reflect on their crimes during their incarceration. Often they were separated from each other so that the more serious criminal would not adversely influence the lesser offenders. At no time were these changes meant to provide a luxurious lifestyle or to allow the poor to forget their place in society, but sincere attempts were made to reform the minds and morals of the labouring poor and assist them to help themselves.

The new concept for reforming the poor owed much of its widespread existence to the work of the merchant class in England who had gained influence on thought and public affairs after the Restoration. At that time, society had already realized that the problems of poverty, employment, and national welfare were all linked together, and since 1660, the question of how to manage the poor for the betterment of all had become the dominant social problem. Although the poor would not be seen as a physical threat to the social order again until the eighteenth century, during the mid-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries national welfare and Christian beliefs necessitated that both the structural and the cyclical poor were to be assisted in procuring their basic subsistence. Also by this time, the merchants were no longer as obsessed as their predecessors had been solely with the concept of state welfare as expressed by the balance of trade; increasingly, they demonstrated a concern for the social needs of the community as well. Against charges that the merchants were merely cold self-serving opportunists, economic historian Charles Wilson claims that the social conscience of the trading classes was no less tender than that of their feudal predecessors - and possibly was even more sensitive. "The merchant did not move in society with the unselfconscious ease of the landed magnate, nor speak with the confident voice of the learned clerk. He was in general a little more anxious than they to stand well with

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[23] Eighteenth-century reformers believed in the uniformity of human nature and recognized the relationship between human passions and reason. Ambition was one of those passions. In his Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith claimed that there was "a uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition....", quoted in Coates, 312.

his fellow man...."[24] An early indication of the new attitude to reform occurred about 1650, when William Goffe in How to Advance the Trade of the Nation and employ the Poor, observed that "The poor ought to be encouraged and mercifully dealt with and kindly used, until their slow hands be brought to ready working and ought at first to have the highest price the commodity will bear to themselves."[25] About two decades later, Josiah Child's tract on interest rates and usury called New Discourse of Trade, contained in the appendix a note by Culpepper which clearly notes the growing realization of the failure of punishment to induce desired behaviour, and it begins, "He that is weary of his life fears neither axe nor gibbet...."[26] Although there was not always a consensus on methods for ending poverty, the debates on the poor which raged in the press, pamphlets, and Parliament, spread the idea to the populace of the need for compliant skilled-labour throughout the country. John Cary, a Bristol merchant and philanthropist, is described by Wilson as exemplifying the union of mercantilist principles with ideas of social reform. His Essay of 1695 (and subsequent editions) influenced cameralist ideas in the Germanies, Genovesi's school of economics in Naples in the 1750's, and France during the Ancient Regime.[27]

In the first part of the eighteenth century most Europeans, and Englishmen in particular, considered both the provision and encouragement of industry and industriousness as the main focus of their poor relief schemes. They insisted that even unprofitable work should be considered as an occupation for the poor, because idleness was perceived as unproductive and constituted a drain on society. For example, in the late seventeenth century, Englishman Sir William Petty proposed building a pyramid on Salisbury plain for no other reason than to keep the poor working, and although in eighteenth-century Hamburg, the Patriotic Society hoped that state-sponsored employment might provide enough profit to help pay for itself, it was generally believed that teaching the poor diligence and self-reliance was the prime goal.[28] Furthermore,

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[24] Charles Wilson, "The Other Face of Mercantilism," in Revisions in Mercantilism, ed., D.C. Coleman (London, 1969), 132.

[25] Wilson, "The Other Face of Mercantilism," 127.

[26] Wilson, "The Other Face of Mercantilism," 119.

[27] Wilson, "The Other Face of Mercantilism," 135.

[28] Andrew, 24,94; Lindemann, 25, 156.

idleness was still felt to lead to immoral behaviour, including thievery. In England, one of the predominant questions was why men laboured, and the answer which was promoted by most political arithmeticians, was that men laboured through "self-interest". The gradual change in attitude from the conviction in the sixteenth century of the need for relief for the deserving and punishment for the idle to the equally strong certainty in the eighteenth century that the poor only needed encouragement and morality for their betterment can be shown in the words of two of the participants in welfare reform. Thomas Munn, a successful seventeenth-century London merchant, claimed that "..penury and want do make a people wise and industrious."[29] On the other hand, in his 1772 *Lectures on the Elements of Commerce, Politics, and Finance*, Thomas Mortimer asserts that, "[to] toil incessantly in want, is too hard a condition for a human creature to endure. Men will not be labourious, but on the prospect of reaping some enjoyment therefrom; nay, it would be the most detestable tyranny to require it on other terms. The want of due encouragement must naturally make men sink into despondency or plunge into desperation."[30]

Many of this era's most ardent philanthropists were merchants and entrepreneurs who had risen to prominence primarily by their own initiative; consequently, in the tradition of Locke's assertion of the rational reformative capabilities of mankind, their schemes aimed to teach the poor to be less dependent and more self-reliant. These successful businessmen had money, time, energy, and business know-how to contribute to social reform, and they chose to do so by organizing joint-stock charities to which subscribers would donate. In order to keep their subscribers, the governing committee members had to prove fiscal responsibility, and the ability to train and either place or return the poor to employment; they should never be perceived as merely subsidizing idleness. An increasing number of these merchants chose to abandon passive charity to endow some form of active apprenticeship or instruction for the juvenile poor. Society now expected charity to promote change and improvement in the lower classes. There was a modified, but still Christian morality which Andrew sees as "Christian utilitarianism"[31]: moral and vocational regeneration to produce the greatest good of the individual and the good of the

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[29] Quoted in Coates, 135.

[30] Quoted in Andrew, 141.

[31] Andrew, 50.

whole. The philanthropists were driven by the belief that people could be reformed, and, therefore, the poor were to be habituated to a frugal, virtuous life of self-reliance - assisted and approved, of course, by their benefactors (poor relief at this time was nothing if not paternalistic).

Throughout Europe welfare schemes were established to improve the physical and moral plight of the lower orders. In great commercial cities like Hamburg, philanthropists concentrated on relieving the distress of the labouring poor and returning them to the workforce as soon as possible. To this end, the Patriotic Society,[32] which linked the common good with suitable care for the poor, instigated an extensive outdoor medical relief program, training and employment projects, and a host of preventative measures such as rent assistance or temporary business loans to keep the labouring poor independent. Until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, the French government attempted to control its poverty problem with *hôpitaux généraux* (for the deserving poor); *bureaux de charité* (mostly outdoor relief); *depôts de mendicité* (to confine beggars); and *ateliers de charité* (to provide wage employment for able-bodied beggars).[33] Through the work of its city council, Turin, Italy founded the *Ospedale di Caritá* as a charitable poorhouse which provided refuge and employment, although from the 1750s onward, the increasing control of the ducal government created institutions that were decidedly coercive and confining.[34] There were no major poor relief reforms in Spain at this time. The crown attempted to enforce its will through the creation of *Hospicios* (beggars' hospitals) to confine both the deserving and the undeserving poor, however, the state had neither the finances nor the administrative capabilities to sustain this project; they were also not able to override the strong traditional belief of the populace for individual almsgiving.[35]

In England, religious ideals and business acumen joined forces to provide superior

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[32] Lindemann, 78-82,91. A Patriot was defined in the Society's newsletter as "...a being for whom the welfare of his fatherland is a weighty concern, who acknowledges his God, who honours the ministry, [who] cherishes truth and order, [who] obeys the authorities, and who genuinely strives to advance the common good." *Der Patriot* No. 4 (27 Jan 1724). Later patriots held the same principles, but were more involved in the government, and expressed the attitudes of men who were prominent in both business, government, and intellectual life.

[33] The primary reference for this topic is Olwen Hufton, The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France, 1750-1789 (Oxford, 1974).

[34] Cavallo, 98,227.

[35] William J. Callahan, "The Problem of Confinement: An Aspect of Poor Relief in Eightennth-Century Spain," in Hispanic American Historical Review 51 (1974): 20-21.

guidance for the poor. Institutions such as workhouses, the Marine Society, and the Lambeth Asylum were developed to help train and employ the poor. Furthermore, in the 1780s the perceived need to restrain the vices of the impoverished and form their minds to virtue and religion motivated those of the merchant and monied classes to establish private charities such as Thomas Bernard's Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor; the Philanthropic Society, which included Patrick Colquhoun, Jeremy Bentham, and Robert Young as members; and Robert Raikes' Sunday School Movement.[36]

Due to a general lack of financing, a still fledgling system of bureaucracy, and only a partial understanding of the *causes* of poverty, most poor relief still maintained an aura of assistance *and* punishment. Attempts to alleviate the problems of the needy were tried by governments, institutions, and by society at large, but they were always insufficient. Consequently, to ensure peace and order, begging was usually made illegal, although in many Catholic countries informal aid through discriminate almsgiving was continued. Most of the philanthropic reformers in the Western European countries and cities were in contact with each other, so that many theories and reforms were shared, even though some earlier attitudes still seemed to be very deeply ingrained. Despite more positive initiatives to rehabilitate the poor, legislators considered the poor the most crime-ridden sector of society, and many citizens stressed 'the deception involved rather than the dire poverty which made the deception needful."[37] Thomas Adams sums up the situation of the poor as the paradox of the eighteenth century: "...[that] one must be made to labour for his keep - and the fact that often there was no work to be had."[38]

Managing the Poor: Rumford in the European Context

In the eighteenth century, numerous writers such as Samuel Johnson and Voltaire argued that a decent provision for the poor was the true test of a civilization - and public opinion for the

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[36] Andrew, 74-75, 174-176, 183-186; David Owen, English Philanthropy, 1660-1960 (Cambridge, 1964), 13-15, 91-98, 103-104.

[37] Hufton, The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France 1750-1789, 214,246.

[38] Thomas McStay Adams, Bureaucrats and Beggars (New York, 1990), 36.

most part came to agree.[39] The three-pronged question was: whom do you help? How much help do you give? And how do you give it? Reformers in Europe and England, influenced by their particular cultural beliefs and their specific circumstances, instituted programs to manage the poor which utilized one or more of the general methods of assistance. Confinement usually included some aspect of labour or vocational training, and was mostly used for the able-bodied unemployed or the very young. The aged or diseased might have access to a hospital. Outdoor assistance was provided primarily for the temporarily needy such as the ill or injured, but could also be extended to the aged, widows, or victims of harvest failures. There were also some attempts at preventative assistance such as medical aid or vocational training for the young in order to keep the poor working and independent, as well as to assist the next generation in gaining employment. Although these schemes could not prevent poverty itself, they could ameliorate some of its worst effects, and at the same time, reduce poor relief costs, benefit the nation or city, and satisfy the citizens' Christian duty. How did Count Rumford's workhouse scheme compare to some of these other programs?

Scope and Scale

In the sixteenth-century cities of Ypres and Lyon, poor relief reformers inaugurated what was essentially a cooperative reform by the municipality and the church to alleviate the miseries of the poor as a response to the fear of civil turmoil by masterless men. What were the aims of some of the eighteenth-century relief projects? In the agriculture-based economy of Spain, the primary purpose of charity was to ensure that the impoverished received food, shelter, and some medical aid. Some areas were able to provide grain for bread or to help with the seeding of crops. Hospitals were provided for the ill, aged, and incurables, but most aid was in the form of outdoor relief. Prior to 1760, few of the poor were expected to work for their assistance, and, where possible, both regional and foreign vagrants were helped as well. Most centres not only attracted vagrants from their own surrounding region, but also foreign vagrants from other Spanish regions and from other countries such as France.[40] The English Poor Law, which began in the sixteenth century and endured, albeit with numerous alterations and additions, throughout the eighteenth century, was a more discriminatory system. It included a combination

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[39] Lindemann, 80.

[40] Martz, 214-217.

of parish and urban relief programs designed to maintain social order and prevent crimes by wandering vagrants, while at the same time providing aid (either outdoor or in urban hospitals) for the resident deserving poor who were unable to help themselves. Meanwhile, the city fathers of Hamburg needed to find a way to assist not only the traditional deserving poor, but also their large workforce of unskilled labourers who could be thrown out of work anytime the flow of trade through the port was interrupted. There, begging was prohibited to ensure order, and volunteer citizens organized the relief, hoping that their welfare schemes would preserve and strengthen social loyalties as well.[41]

Rumford, too, wished to eliminate begging and restore public order while reviving civic pride. His somewhat paternalistic scheme was not unlike Hamburg's: he also aimed not to end poverty, but to manage the problem by helping the poor to help themselves. Rumford sought to instil self-respect and industrious habits to produce citizens useful to themselves and to society. He also appears to have shared Hamburg's desire to provide paid work for those who were able, aid as needed for the others, and yet provide only the necessaries of life. It is not surprising that none of the European countries or cities seemed interested in using their welfare projects to alter the place of the lower orders in the social hierarchy.

The size of the relief schemes varied considerably. Although the Spanish crown regularly made country-wide proclamations, and occasionally assisted in providing aid, the crown really lacked both the finances and the administrative capability to have total control. Many of the primarily decentralized charitable organizations were, consequently, restricted to the environs of a city or archdiocese.[42] The involvement and cooperation of secular clergy and city authorities was common in cities such as Toledo,[43] but it is the compassion and largesse of several of the Archbishops which are most frequently mentioned by historians. In England, by the middle of the seventeenth century, ostensibly there was a nationally binding poor law; however, it was interpreted and enforced at the parish level. Thus, regional differences and inter-parish squabbling could seriously affect the quality of relief for the poor. The Imperial Free City of Hamburg had the most clearly defined physical boundaries for welfare as it proposed to assist

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[41] Lindemann, 4,85.

[42] Callahan, 22.

[43] Martz, 157.

only its own citizens. Poor relief plans were strongly influenced by the Patriotic Society, whose members held important political positions and linked care of the poor to larger concerns of governance. Relief schemes were generally decentralized with the exception of the Board of Health which briefly coordinated all relief in 1712-1714 to deal with the plague. In 1788 a permanent central agency for controlling all forms of poor relief in the city called the General Poor Relief was established by the city council and the Patriotic Society. Hamburg's philanthropists were aware of relief schemes in other cities and countries, and assessed them for possible adaptation to their particular circumstances.[44]

Rumford was one of the welfare reformers with whom Hamburg kept in touch. This occurrence and the fact that both schemes were initiated on a city-wide scale, may explain some of the similarities in the poor relief policies of the two cities. Although Rumford's project had originally been created as an urban total relief plan to end all begging and provide assistance for all the deserving and undeserving poor as required, he insisted that it could be adapted on a country-wide basis and still be successful.

Target Population

Who were the people that poor relief was supposed to help? Catholic Spain had a long tradition of perceiving the poor as "the poor of Christ", and tried, as long as there were sufficient funds, to help them all. The deserving poor were the aged artisans, widows incapable of work, impoverished peasants, ill and infirm, orphans and young maidens[45], and they were aided through ecclesiastical handouts, designated general hospitals, *pósitos* (stores of grain), some confraternities, and traditional private almsgiving. The *envergonzantes* (shamefaced poor) were helped primarily by the confraternities who could visit their houses privately, while *hospicios* were created to provide shelter and food for both the resident and foreign beggars. After 1760, the crown attempted to make the *hospicios* quasi-penal institutions and incarcerated the deserving poor as well. The general charitable public opposed this move, and not only refused to contribute funds, but undermined the crown by continuing to distribute traditional alms. Hamburg also attempted to help all the deserving residents of their city, such as the working poor

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[44] Lindemann, 111.

[45] William J. Callahan, "The Problem of Confinement: An Aspect of Poor Relief in Eighteenth Century Spain", in Hispanic American Journal Review 51 (1971):10.

unable to acquire necessities through their own labour; the sick and invalids; widows, orphans, respectable spinsters, and the *déclassés*. Hamburg's system of poor relief refused aid to those who could, but would not, work, those behaving immorally, non-residents or undesirables (beggars, transients). In England, separate provisions in the Poor Law (not always uniformly carried out by the parishes) were made for both the permanent and temporarily impotent, the unemployed, and the idle poor. The impotent poor were the most sympathetically treated, usually receiving outdoor relief, while the unemployed and idle were usually set to work in either voluntary or quasi-penal institutions.

Rumford's plan was all-encompassing in that he employed idle beggars and able-bodied unemployed, aided the elderly, the young, the sick or injured, widows, and the shame-faced poor; in short, all those unable to procure the necessities of life without charitable assistance. Where he differed from some of the other schemes is that, unlike the Patriotic Society of Hamburg, he did not discriminate on grounds of worthiness. Rumford tried to give all the needy a chance for rehabilitation, although, once received into the program, he expected the poor to put forth honest effort. In addition, unlike England (and to some extent Spain) he did not forcibly confine his poor behind locked doors.

Organization

Charitable institutions in Spain were a collection of decentralized efforts to provide aid for the needy. Some assistance was provided by ecclesiastical handouts (clothes, money, bread) or hospitals, some was provided by the municipalities (such as the grain *pósito*), and other assistance was organized by a combination of ecclesiastical and municipal committees. Some relief efforts were temporarily centralized during times of plague epidemics, but most aid came from outdoor relief (including from private citizens), a large variety of general hospitals, and from the work of the lay confraternities. During the crown's attempt to control Spanish poor relief, *Juntas de caridad* (charity boards) were created, each composed of a municipal justice, a clergyman, and three prosperous and zealous residents.[46] Hamburg's poor relief system was organized and run by a voluntary group of non-professional, patriotic citizens. On the most intimate terms with the poor were the Relief Directors who assessed the poor in their districts, checked to ensure that situations were actually as portrayed, and disbursed aid as needed. In 1788

[46] Callahan, 11.

all the various forms of welfare in Hamburg were centralized under the General Poor Relief with strategies being planned within several branches of the city council. In spite of a national Poor Law, England actually had two systems for the welfare of the poor. Public charity was supported by the mandatory poor rate and administered at the parish level with the assistance of Justices of the Peace, clerics, and parochial relief officers. This left private charity free to associate in societies for promoting the reformation and improvement of specific groups of poor, for example, the Marine Society and the Lambeth Asylum[47]. These institutions were run by committees formed from their subscribers.

Despite Rumford's designated governing committees and the Commissaries of the District, he personally maintained control over all aspects of the Military Workhouse and the Institution for the Poor. Funds for the two organizations were kept strictly separate (a public banker was used for the Institution), and accounts were prepared regularly and could be inspected by the public at will. None of the management was to receive any pay, and the staff was paid from the treasury - not the donated funds. The public were also welcome to visit the Workhouse to view its operations. When Hamburg attempted to operate a spinning school to employ some of their poor, there was soon a backlog of poorly spun and unsaleable yarn; collusion among instructresses and supervisors aggravated the fraudulent practices of some workers, and equipment loaned to those working at home had somehow "gone astray". Rumford, on the other hand, avoided the problem of frauds and poor quality work through a strict system of checks and balances on *both* supervisors and inmates. The success of his project may be attributed in part to the fact that no part of the operation escaped his inspection.

The church was not excluded from Rumford's scheme, but the entire project was centralized under government control, although he also utilized the assistance of the army, city council, the merchants, and other responsible citizens. Rumford was a Deist, who, while eschewing the dogma of organized religion, sincerely believed in God. As a consequence of his beliefs, he was quite content to include the clergy as assistants to the Commissaries of the District, because they had knowledge of the parishioner's needs, gave succour to the poor where needed, and helped maintain the image of respectability of his relief program. The army also

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[47] The Lambeth Asylum provided religious and vocational training for young girls. The Marine Society trained older youth for naval careers; from 1756 to 1808, over 27,500 boys were equipped for service at sea and more than 36,000 landsmen volunteers were clothed as seamen for His Majesty's ships. See David Owen, English Philanthropy (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 59-60.

proved beneficial as he used it for testing his theories of reformation, and later extended its utility as a force for arresting the beggars and vagabonds who plagued the area. During the establishment of the Military Workhouse, the army chest provided the capital funds, and then became the primary market for workhouse manufactures.

Funding

A variety of funding sources were utilized for the different welfare schemes. Unfortunately, during the worst times, when the most people were in need of help, few people were able to contribute. Spain's projects were financed through private almsgiving, charitable donations, episcopal revenues, legacies and endowments; occasionally, the state might make some concessions regarding taxes or fines. Funding for England's poor relief was generally divided into public and private spheres. Public charity for a broad spectrum of the poor was provided by the mandatory payment of the Poor Rate into parochial central funds. Private charity was for more specific schemes or groups of people and was financed through voluntary donations (subscribers), legacies or endowments. The philanthropists that ran the private charities relied on their connections through business, family relations, or common interests to inspire and secure their supporters. Hamburg, on the other hand, was quite successful in the door-to-door collecting of "quasi-voluntary" alms.[48] These alms were further bolstered by additional funds from the city council and some endowments; all went into a central fund.

Rumford's very successful Workhouse was initially funded from the Military Chest, which was reimbursed from the sale of goods produced. Poynter criticizes Rumford for taking money from the Military Chest, but fails to note that the Military Workhouse employed soldiers on furlough as well as the poor, and that the start-up funds were paid back. Poynter also seems to be labouring under the misapprehension that the Military Workhouse and the Institution for the Poor were one and the same.[49] Rumford's Institution for the Poor was financed from stated monthly allowances, from the sovereign out of his private purse, from the estates of Bavaria,

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[48] In Republican Hamburg this distinction was necessary to designate that while not exactly voluntary, it still was not a tax.

[49] Poynter, 87-89. Rumford makes these differences very clear in his essays, such as "An Account of an Establishment, 65-68,74; Appendixes to the Essays on Establishments for the Poor and on Food, 334-351,388-389; Account of Regulations Introduced into the Electoral Army, 408,415,225,432.

from the treasury or chamber of finances, through revenues arising from certain tolls, fines, etc., legacies, and also by donated bread and offal meat from merchants. By far the biggest source of funds, however, was voluntary subscriptions donated by citizens happy to be freed from the importunities of the begging multitudes, and willing to utilize Rumford's collection methods to fulfil their civic and Christian duty. Because Rumford and the welfare reformers of Hamburg were regularly in contact with each other, it is difficult to judge which initiated the concept of house-to-house collections. There is no question that both Rumford and the Hamburg reformers considered good communications with their citizens as vital for stimulating support and a continuing flow of contributions.

Methods

How did our three sample countries compare to the Rumford scheme in their methods of relief? Despite the lack of industrial development, Spain was in contact with and aware of social developments happening in the rest of Europe; yet prior to 1760, its poor relief still resembled what had been done for the past several hundred years. Spanish poor relief was primarily maintained by the confraternities and the General Hospitals, supported by ecclesiastical handouts and traditional almsgiving. The confraternities provided domiciliary aid of food, clothes, or medicine to relatives of their own members, and to the *envergonzantes* as well. Hospitals existed in a variety of sizes with capacities of over five hundred to as few as eight patients; patients were treated with charity, compassion, and the provision of spiritual care.[50] There were large general hospitals for illnesses, and specialized ones for foundling children, incurables, skin diseases, syphilis, or insanity. Foundlings who were not adopted were put into service. The municipal *pósito* tried to distribute grain to the destitute for bread or for planting in the farmers' fields during years of poor harvests, and bread would be distributed daily from some cathedral cloisters. Numerous other monasteries, churches, and convents were responsible for administering charitable obligations on a smaller scale. Although attempts were made to find some work for the unemployed, work was not considered a prerequisite for relief until the mid-eighteenth century, when the crown decided that the poor should be made to work for the betterment of the state. At this time, leading prelates of the Spanish church usually supported begging restrictions and confinement, but Callahan claims that this was because they knew that

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[50] Martz, 160.

they owed their positions to a state that expected their cooperation.[51] There was no sign of any private philanthropic organizations such as those that appeared in England, but in the eighteenth century, there was conflict between the strongly quasi-penal attitudes of the crown and the traditional , deeply rooted ideas of the public regarding the question of charity.[52]

In England, care for the poor was not only a Christian duty, but was believed to be an important facet of the wellbeing and order of society and the nation. To this end, the deserving poor were assisted through outdoor relief by the parish, and workhouses were provided for the able-bodied unemployed. In 1723, Bernard Mandeville asserted in his Fable of the Bees that women with small children, the aged, and the infirm might (and ought to) do what they could to care for themselves and become productive citizens. His suggested method was for the provision of raw materials so that those who could not leave their houses could work in their own homes.[53] The idle or immoral poor who either would not work or who exhibited anti-social behaviour were confined in houses of correction to be reformed through punishment and forced labour, or, in accordance with the Settlement Act of 1662, were whipped and sent back to their parish of origin. Among their many projects, English philanthropists worked to improve the morals of the poor, provided for the raising and vocational training of foundling children, and attempted to reform prostitutes and cure syphilitics. General hospitals and lying-in charities were established in urban areas to provide medical assistance for the sick and injured or maternity care either in the institutions or in the patient's own home.

The welfare reformers of Hamburg had hoped to manage poverty efficiently. In the eighteenth century, their reforms were a blend of repressive and supportive measures: they declared war on beggars, yet were equally willing to provide employment possibilities and training; to subsidize rents; to advance money to artisans or labourers fallen on hard times; and to attend to the health of the labouring classes. In the last quarter of the century, the cameralist-inspired reformers recognized the connections between work, health, and education: lack of work creates poverty; the sick and invalid cannot work; and nor could those without the necessary skills. Consequently, there was a need to educate, discipline, and maintain the health of the poor

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[51] Callahan,9.

[52] Callahan, 22-23.

[53] Bernard Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees (Harmsworth, Middlesex, 1970), 274, quoted in Andrew, 28.

to prevent their impoverishment. Other preventive measures such as redeeming pawned tools or household items for honest, but impoverished artisans, or providing dowries for impoverished, marriageable young women had their antecedents medieval Christian charity. The reformers also repaid debts directly, distributed clothing, and sometimes provided interest-free loans to restart a shop, or to cover some immediate requirement.[54] These loans were to be paid back in small instalments - and most of the loans were actually recovered. By the eighteenth century, the *Zuchthaus* had become unable to cope with the expanding numbers of poor, but the reformers had decided that confinement was not the most beneficial practice for aiding the poor. They wanted the labourer reintegrated into the workforce, and able to manage his money in the real world. Unfortunately, attempts to create work often met with the problem of trying to find types of work that would not injure other labourers, and difficulties in locating reliable markets; frequently, the reformers could not assure the quality of goods produced. Despite these problems, Hamburg's poor relief scheme was considered one of the best programs in Europe until it was wrecked by the economic and political crises of the British blockades and the French military occupation.[55]

Rumford agreed with reformers of Hamburg in that he did not believe in confining his poor. He preferred them to live in their own lodgings to preserve their feelings of liberty, but for those unable to care for themselves he arranged shelter and care. Unlike Hamburg, which merely "preserved" the older poor on minimal alms until they died, Rumford provided not only adequate care, but pocket money, and, if they were able, gardens of their own to work. For the begging poor, however, his relief program was "quasi-compulsory". He had made begging illegal, so the poor faced limited choices: they could either stay and labour in the workhouse, starve, or find some other way to earn subsistence. For those who opted to stay (which were the majority), he provided a hot meal, warm working rooms, clean rooms and grounds, and fresh, well ventilated air, to "calm their minds" and habituate them to a different standard of daily living. Rumford also believed in encouragement through rewards and incentives and refused to employ corporal punishment. Good workers had particular attention paid to them, received nicer

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[54] Interest-free loans originated as communal pawnshops (*montes pietatis*) in central and northern Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A Christian reaction against Jewish and Christian moneylenders who took advantage of the temporary financial hardships of the working poor and small artisans, and administered by a board of governors, they rapidly spread throughout Europe as they responded to a real need. Jütte, 132.

[55] Lindemann, 101-102, 171.

clothes, earned more money, and might get assistance with their rent. All workers were to keep their wages for themselves, and pocket money was supplied for those unable to earn (such as the very old or ill). Medical assistance was available for all.

Was Rumford Innovative?

In examining some of the innovative concepts that Rumford brought to welfare reform, we should first consider two areas where *he* claimed precedence. First, Rumford claimed that he was the first to substitute habit for precept and punishment. Without searching any further than Adams' work on France, however, this claim can be refuted. In 1769, Bertier, the senior administrator in charge of *dépôts de mendicité*, instructed that by occupying all the inmates, they would "acquire the habit and capability of working and will lose that of an idle, mendicant life."[56] Furthermore, he also applied this theory to the formation of his *Corps de Pionniers*, the predecessor of Turgot's *Ateliers de Charité*. At about 1779, Prémion, the subdelegate at Nantes, recommended that looms grouped in a large open area would produce more order and more emulation leading to more discipline, progress, and profit for the inmate.[57] And finally, in 1783, the Abbé de Montlinot was working at Soissons for the rehabilitation of workers through motivation combining material and social incentives. He claimed that the "...want and reprimands of his comrades are far more likely to excite [the worker's] energy than any sort of punishment."[58] Attempts to reform the poor without corporal punishment also appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, the sixteenth-century humanist Juan Luis Vives called for the education of the children of vagrants in order to reform their bad habits. Thus it can be seen that not only had Rumford been preceded, but these ideas were already being put into practice even before he had begun his work in Bavaria.

Rumford's second claim, that he was the first to put happiness before virtue, is also easily disproved. In about 1579, the canon Miguel Giginta claimed that if one provides "adequate living quarters, food, edifying leadership, and employment, they [the poor] would become happy, well-

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[56] Adams, 95, 244-245.

[57] Adams, 89.

[58] Adams, 201-202.

behaved and contented citizens of the Christian commonwealth."[59] Even the sober and straight-laced Jonas Hanway did not recommend repressive measures, but pointed out the necessity of making the poor happy.[60] In his 1759 essay, Moral and Prudential Instructions, Hanway stressed the need for religion, obedience, and industry, cautioning the common people, "But you can hardly be honest unless you are industrious: and would you be a good man, you must add to industry and religion good nature, or a happy temper. Thus you will insure happiness..."[61] Rumford also seemed to equate happiness with "placid content", "cheerful industriousness", and "order and police".[62] It should be stressed that both of *these* examples which contradict Rumford's claims occurred before he had left North America.

Rumford was, however, quite innovative in other areas of his poor relief scheme. As mentioned above, he had a very extensive system of rewards and incentives to motivate his workers. There is little information to indicate that in this area others preceded him in scale or consistency. An institution for women that was established at Turin in the 1680's offered commendations, rewards, and a small percentage of the profits as incentives for work, but it was limited in scope and does not appear to have lasted very long. By 1755, the *Retiro di S. Gio' di Dio* of Turin was exploiting its female inmates with no pay, no freedom, coercion, and hard work.[63] Other institutions which turned to forms of incentives came much later, for example the Philanthropic Society in London, which was quite likely influenced by Rumford's earlier work.

While encouraging his poor to labour diligently, Rumford also made certain that nothing would encourage fraud or defective work. Obsessed with order and control, he had a comprehensive system of ledgers, forms, and tickets by which the origins of the raw material, and those who had worked with it throughout the various stages of manufacture would be identified, so that attempts to deceive or to produce poor quality goods could be readily discovered and rectified. His system also told his supervisors precisely how much each worker

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[59] Martz, 67-68.

[60] Andrew, 96.

[61] Quoted in John H. Hutchins, Jonas Hanway 1712-1786 (London, 1940), 135.

[62] Rumford, "Account of an Establishment," 47,59.

[63] Cavallo, 113,229-231.

had earned. This method of accounting worked equally well for both the labourers at the Workhouse and those who took work to their homes. In addition, Rumford's practical-mindedness extended to his method for ascertaining who was entitled to a daily hot meal. Within the Workhouse, the poor were known by sight to the supervisors and, therefore, the amount of bread which they were given as they filed through the diningroom door was all that was needed to indicate how much soup they were to receive. For those working outside the Workhouse, but permitted to go there for meals, and for the shame-faced poor who were allowed to send a servant to collect their soup, soup-tickets were issued which had to be stamped by a senior staff member. Although a few other cities attempted to utilize soup-tickets before Rumford's time, none had systems as all-encompassing or as successful as his. If the reformers of Hamburg had adopted his methods, they most likely would not have had the problems that they did with fraud, poor quality work, and lost equipment.

All around Rumford's Bavaria in the eighteenth century, cities and countries such as Turin, Spain, France, and England were using confinement to complement their outdoor relief. Even Hamburg, which generally rejected confinement as of no benefit for the poor, had its *Zuchthaus*. So why did Rumford decline to go this route and create his own plan instead? Although the labour of his poor was indeed quasi-compulsory, he was firmly against having any of the poor remain at the Workhouse overnight. In keeping with his optimism about reforming the indigent to improved habits, he believed that living in their own homes would help preserve a perception of liberty rather than the demoralizing feelings of confinement induced through the crowded dorm-like conditions of other institutions. Also, living on their own would allow the poor to remain part of the community, while saving the Institution for the Poor the cost of expensive buildings to house them.[64] And finally, because the poor were at the Workhouse from early morning until night, they were saved much of the expense of food, heat and light at home, thereby helping them economize.

Rumford was particularly successful in exploiting the needs of the Elector's army as a market for the products of his Workhouse. The only other instance of this potential market being utilized was in Turin, sometime between 1755 and 1786, when the state-run institutions for the

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[64] Saving money for the Institution was probably his main reason for allowing the indigent independent lodging, but it is not unlikely that he was also concerned about their morale and its effect on their rehabilitation.

poor produced low quality goods for themselves, the military, and government orders.[65] There does not appear to be a record, however, of either its success or its duration. When one considers the proliferation of wars across Europe in the eighteenth century, one cannot help but wonder why other countries or states (with the exception of Hamburg, which did not have a military, although it was part of the Holy Roman Empire), did not avail themselves of this latent market.

An area where Rumford was not only quite innovative, but also greatly influenced other relief schemes, was in the area of food for the poor and of the adaptation of scientific experiments for practical household application. His essay "Of Food and Particularly the Food of the Poor" was well received in many cities that had to deal with the problem of feeding large numbers of poor during a period of great scarcity. More specifically, the term "Rumford Soup" became a catchphrase for inexpensive, yet nourishing soups among charitable bodies in Geneva, Hamburg, Lausanne, Marseilles, Paris, Verona, Dublin, and London. Given the fascination that science held for intellectuals all over Europe, it was not surprising that Rumford's experiments with heat and light were transformed into very practical uses. His improvements of ventilation systems, chimneys and chimney flues, fireplaces, stoves, cooking utensils, and lamps caused him to be in demand for the general renovations of kitchens in numerous institutions and grand houses in Italy, Dublin, and London. In addition, his inventions of more efficient cooking utensils, coffee pots, and roasters were produced in a variety of qualities and price ranges so that they were accessible to all.

Revolutionary France

While Rumford was implementing his poor relief schemes in Munich, the French Revolutionary government was attempting completely to transform the poor relief system across all of France. Whereas Rumford had merely redirected private charity to a central fund, the French government planned to eradicate privation and mendicancy by replacing all private charity with an ambitious system of state-funded welfare. In this extremely centralized system, "command stretched down from committees and ministries in Paris to departments, districts, and communes, allowing for a high degree of standardization."[66] Permanent committees of deputies

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[65] Cavallo, 226-227.

[66] Alan Forrest, The French Revolution and the Poor (Oxford, 1981), 24.

were created such as the *Comité de Mendicité* which concentrated on diagnosis and prescription, and the *Comité des Secours* which was formed under the Legislative Assembly and was responsible for making assistance payments to the indigent, provisioning hospitals and poor houses, and processing and answering complaints and petitions. The decisions of the government were then delegated to the various regions for local authorities to implement.

Revolutionary thinking claimed that all men had a *right* to be able to feed and clothe themselves and their families - *le droit à la subsistence*. Sincere efforts were made to provide hospitals; pensions for widows, dependants of men in active service, and the seriously wounded; *assistance à domicile* (outdoor relief for temporary crises such as long illness or accident); *ateliers de charité*; benefit societies and insurance schemes (saving schemes to encourage thrift and responsibility while guaranteeing a small pension to avoid "sudden pauperizing unemployment"[67]; and provision for *enfants trouvés* (foundling babies). Price controls and in some cases cash grants were also established. The revolutionary government aimed to assist all those who fell below the poverty line: the elderly and very young unable to work; widows; seasonal agriculture labour; the ill or infirm; the insane, deaf and dumb, and the blind. Vagabonds and beggars, perceived as disruptive to society and as potential criminals, were incarcerated in *dépôts de mendicité*. *Assistance à domicile* was preferred over institutionalized assistance, and Rumford would have agreed with their theory that the provision of work for the able-bodied poor was the key to a successful scheme for effective assistance of the poor. Whereas Rumford was willing to allow both the deserving and undeserving poor an opportunity for rehabilitation through employment, the Revolutionary government clearly differentiated between the two; it offered one charitable assistance and the other, quasi-penal incarceration.

The reform ideas of the government were a continuation of projects from the previous twenty or thirty years, and at least until the fall of the Jacobins in 1794, were certainly comprehensive, worthy, and sincere even if the lack of finances and conflicting revolutionary policies made implementing them difficult.[68] The major innovation, however, was that the Jacobins were willing to listen to special interest groups, and to initiate changes - some of which

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[67] Forrest, 106.

[68] Forrest, 30.

were successful.[69] However, the subsequent administrations of the Thermidoreans and the Directory believed just as sincerely in free enterprise, the reduction of state intervention, and the need to greatly reduce the burdens on the state treasury. Soon the pension schemes, *ateliers*, and all aspects of *assistance à domicile* were either reduced or ended, and responsibility was handed back to local sources to deal with the problem as best they could. Despite the fact that many citizens did actually receive help, the governments faced two unassailable barriers: the vital necessity that war and national security come before all else; and the significant drop in revenues that occurred after the Revolution. Lofty ambitions and high ideals could not adequately be put into practice, and too many people were left destitute.

Rumford's quite successful program did not face these formidable challenges. Munich was a much smaller and more homogenous region which was enjoying stable government, and in which Rumford was able both to originate and control his poor relief schemes. Rumford's scheme was genuinely benevolent and despite his patronizing attitude to "his" poor, he did provide for their health, self-esteem, and employment while rejecting any notion of corporal punishment. France, on the other hand, was not only fragmented and regionalized with a lack of commonality in language, laws, and customs, but was also afflicted with internal strife and external wars. The French in the early days of the Revolution had compassionate and practical solutions for the problems of the poor, but as historian Alan Forrest has noted, the appeal of humanity was "frequently forgotten once the dictates of finance demanded it."[70]

Philanthropic Self-Justification

So far in this chapter we have been examining a side of philanthropy which Andrew has defined as "an inclination to promote [Publick] Good."[71] There is another sort of definition to be considered, however, when discussing philanthropic motivations and actions. Sandra Cavallo suggests that aside from the "demand" aspect of charity where the response is to the needs of the poor, one also needs to consider the "supply" aspect in which the "role that charity played in the *secular* circumstances of its dispensers" was often the dominant theme influencing the structure

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[69] For example, they improved the conditions for the insane and supported doctors such as Pinel in Paris; they also supported projects for the deaf and blind.

[70] Forrest, 115.

[71] Andrew, 5.

and aims of their giving.[72] In other words, noble and benevolent actions were also decidedly self-serving, and frequently related directly to the questions of status and prestige, or political conflict. There are numerous examples throughout Europe of this tendency.

In Hamburg during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Rat (municipal council) had funnelled private resources into public channels by offering individuals social recognition and a certain degree of power in return for financial support and the sacrifice of energy and time - often as honourary administrators.[73] Cavallo notes that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the pattern of closed court society in Turin frustrated those who had experienced notable economic rise, but were denied "full recognition in status and social terms."[74] The subsequent search for prestige led many to invest money and energy in charitable institutions: arenas for the celebration of prestige which were open to all the elites in the city.

According to Andrew, when the English gave sermons to encourage charitable donations, alongside religious obligations were preached the social and practical value of giving: personal and municipal honour; getting the poor out of sight; and business advantages (esteem and connections). She adds that many of the philanthropists who gave repeatedly in the late eighteenth century "...sought simultaneously to improve the public condition and their personal position".[75] In The Fable of the Bees, Bernard Mandeville did not see London's many benevolent foundations as emanating from true charitable sentiment: "Pride and Vanity have built more Hospitals than all other [Christian] Virtues together."[76] He declared that some philanthropists wished for praise and the reputation of worthiness, some for the satisfaction in "Ordering and Directing" their poorer brethren, some to relieve the "great Pain and Anxiety" that viewing or hearing others in distress aroused, some to cover their sins, some to posthumously secure themselves a place in heaven despite a life of indulgence and total self-regard, some for the hopes of solid financial rewards. All charity, he claimed, sprang from selfish motives.[77]

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[72] Cavallo, 1-3.

[73] Lindemann, 15.

[74] Cavallo, 152.

[75] Andrew, 21.

[76] Quoted in Andrew, 33.

[77] Quoted in Andrew, 89.

There was, however, at least one striking exception to Mandeville's view. Vincent de Paul was a member of the Company of the Holy Sacrament in the seventeenth century. He had cooperated with the *dévots* in improving the conditions of the galley convicts and in charitable and religious missions to the war-ravaged countryside, had even signed over the buildings of *Bicêtre* and *Salpêtrière* which had been "previously attributed to his own charities by the court."[78] He could not, however, condone the forced confinement of the indigent or the banishment of the foreign poor by the Company, and he was fearful of the size of the *Hôpital Général des Pauvres*. Uncertain if God would approve of the institution, he declined to have the direction of the *Hôpital* confided to his Lazarists. Vincent de Paul tolerated mendicity; he was opposed to the bureaucratized control of indigents. His mind was alien to the spirit of a rational crusade, and he was one of the few who were able to turn down "prestige."[79]

Could Rumford turn down prestige? Or was he yet another example of the dualism inherent in the practice of philanthropy? When Rumford arrived in Munich in 1784 to begin his duties as a civil servant of the Elector of Bavaria and the Palantine, he found an army badly in need of reform, and hordes of beggars and vagrants who were virtually out of control. Here was an almost ideal opportunity for him. Ambitious and with "exceptional ideas of order and thoroughness,"[80] Rumford first addressed his talents to the corrupt and inefficient army where he instituted regulations which ended corruption, reorganized peacetime policing procedures, and improved both the capability and morale of the common soldier with a variety of innovations. Thus, he won the approval of the regular soldiers, the commendation of the Elector, and the appreciation of the citizens. The status and prestige which he so ardently coveted were enhanced when he was quickly promoted from *aide de camp*, to major-general, and finally to adjutant-general. He ignored the hostility with which the professional army generals received his reforms.

Rumford then turned to the problem of the beggars and vagrants. When he was ready to begin his program by arresting all the beggars, he astutely employed the assistance of the Munich magistrates so that by acknowledging their prominence and appeasing the magistrate's egos he would encourage their approbation and active support of his scheme. By including the

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[78] Chill, 418.

[79] Chill, 417-418.

[80] Sparrow, 86

senior officials on the governing committee, Rumford was guaranteed the cooperation of the army (particularly important for arresting the beggars and as a market for manufactured goods), the church, the electoral government, and the treasury. It also allowed him to demonstrate to the citizens of Munich that he had the complete backing of all departments of the state. To further show that his plan was respectable in every way and therefore worthy of support, the individual Commissaries of the District were chosen from prominent citizens, and they were assisted by priests, physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries. In inducing the citizens to give financial support to his scheme, as was necessary for all successful charitable organizations, Rumford had to appeal to the hopes and motives of the donors. He did so most eloquently by promising to assist the deserving poor, to restore "peace and tranquillity" by removing the disorderly beggars, and to promote the glory and prosperity of the state, while providing fellow-citizens an opportunity to "gratify their pious zeal and humanity" with just one well-directed monthly payment of alms.[81] He also guaranteed the citizen-benefactors the opportunity to gain status and prestige by promising to publish their monthly pledges in the newspaper. Rumford had demonstrated that not only was he desirous of prestige, but that he understood that need in others.

All seemed to be going as Rumford had planned, but, unfortunately, the euphoria was not to last. In spite of his brilliant mind and incredible ability to organize, Rumford had a serious personality flaw. Although he could be charming when it was to his advantage, in general he was cold and arrogant and appeared not to realize how easily he alienated his acquaintances. Sparrow explains, "[He] exploited, and probably paraded, the influence he had with those in authority. And so he made enemies. He lacked the security which others felt from having an aristocratic background or family fortune...there was a want of ease with his equals."[82] He was also known to be petty in many of his dealings and excuses. This had been quite apparent when he incurred the hostility of the army officers, then there was a serious breach with the Munich City Council in 1791.

The alienation from the Council stemmed from what they saw as his arrogant disregard for their authority. One of Rumford's many accomplishments in Munich was the creation of the extensive park known as the English Garden. Shortly after it was opened, some grateful citizens sent a letter of thanks to the Elector, and pleased by their gesture, Rumford had the letter printed

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[81] Rumford, "Fundamental Principles", 120; "Address and Petition", 338-339.

[82] Sparrow, 63.

and distributed among the people. His action greatly piqued the City Council who accused him of "propaganda behind their backs," and threatened action against the officials whom Rumford had persuaded to sign the copies of the letter. Rather than trying to mollify the Council, as he might well have done, he chose instead to challenge them through the Elector. During a meeting, Rumford casually mentioned to the Elector that the City Council had tried to block "a spontaneous expression of regard for the Sovereign", and the Elector's response was to dismiss the whole City Council. A few months later, in May of 1791, the former Council members were obliged to go to the Elector and apologise for their behaviour. In spite of their apology, they were stripped of civic rights for life.[83]

An ambitious Rumford was now caught in the power struggle between the Elector and the Munich Council. The Council was jealous of its authority and prestige in the city, and resented the Elector who neither came from Bavaria nor demonstrated any particular concern for it.[84] The Elector, on the other hand, was fully cognizant of his political position and his right to complete authority over Bavaria, Munich, *and* its people. Rumford was further compromised when the Elector chose in 1791 to have him ennobled as a Count of the Holy Roman Empire and a Knight of the Order of the White Eagle. To the Munich elites, Rumford was clearly in the Elector's camp.

By 1795, the situation was getting more and more disagreeable. Though he had kept his popularity with the citizens of Munich, the Council and the army officers were still greatly opposed to him, and the Elector's power was waning as he aged. Rumford's motives for going to Bavaria had been to promote his abilities and further his career; the situation in Bavaria and the patronage of the Elector had allowed him to accomplish his objective. He realized, however, that soon the aging Elector would no longer be able to restrain Rumford's enemies, and there would be no further opportunities to advance himself. Asking for a leave of absence, he left for England in 1796 where he received exactly the welcome that he felt he deserved, and in 1798, he closed his house in Munich and returned to London, virtually ending his association with Bavaria. Rumford's essentially successful stay in Bavaria had been only marginally based on his desire to reform the army or provide benevolent aid for the poor; he had been looking for power and prestige and the opportunity to experiment with his theories of applying science to the

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[83] Sparrow, 91-92.

[84] Sparrow, 74.

common good. He was thwarted by his own personality deficiencies and by the jealousies of others in power who were loath to have him impinge on their sphere. One needed either powerful friends or exceptional diplomacy to survive for long when political conflict entered the world of philanthropy.

Conclusion

Throughout Rumford's Europe, the combination of rapidly increasing population and economic growth which caused high inflation and greatly reduced real wages had resulted in increasing numbers of the impoverished for whom traditional methods of help were insufficient. New methods of aid were urgently required, and many of the solutions, which derived from previous practices, often included some form of increased centralization and bureaucratization and were influenced by Enlightenment thought and the Scientific Revolution.

When compared to other attempts to ameliorate the unfortunate condition of the paupers, it is soon apparent that Rumford's ideas were not always his own. Although he provided inspiration to other reformers - especially those in other German and Austrian towns - he also garnered procedural ideas from them. This being said, however, it is also true that when he did utilize the methods of earlier reformers, he did so in a particularly efficient manner that few could equal. He also proved himself very capable of taking other men's theories and turning them into practical realities; for example, Locke's theory of the potential for the environment to alter men's behaviour. Both borrowed and original ideas were adroitly combined to produce his most effective and highly successful scheme in Munich for managing the indigent of all descriptions.

The key to this success was *management*. Rumford was unsurpassed in his ability to create an all-encompassing system worked out so that even the smallest detail of the daily regimen would proceed in a methodical and orderly manner. In addition to his elaborate network of checks and balances composed of ledgers, forms, and tickets, all the components of the scheme were personally overseen by the mastermind himself.

Although many of his personal relationships were either strained or short-lived, on a more general scale Rumford clearly understood some of the psychological forces that drove men's behaviour. Since his youth, Rumford had been a living example of Adam Smith's theory that all men desire to better themselves. Rumford encouraged his poor to do the same, within their own sphere, of course, by providing work for wages, and education for those adults who desired

it.[85] In addition, as part of his strategy for gaining public support for his project, he demonstrated that he thoroughly understood the necessity of communicating all of his plans to the citizens of Munich and of guaranteeing that in all of its actions the scheme would be (and would be seen to be) completely businesslike and trustworthy. His system of a centralized, single payment charitable institution would allow the citizens to appease their need to perform their Christian duty, bolster their civic pride, and enhance their feelings of self-esteem all at the same time. Rumford's plan for managing the poor of Munich was clearly a three way success: it satisfied his desires; gave the citizens what they wanted; and provided the indigent with what they needed. Despite his unpleasant relationship with the Munich City Council, his reputation for philanthropy in Munich was solidly earned. Would the English prove as receptive to his methods?

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[85] The young children received two hours of mandatory education each day.

CHAPTER 3

RUMFORD AND THE ENGLISH

England in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century - the England to which Rumford returned - was engrossed in an endless public debate regarding the state of the nation and the problem of the poor. The paradox of rapid economic growth[1] concomitant with the stresses of war and frequent, though transitory, economic downturns resulted in subsistence prices and significantly rising rents, while real wages declined disastrously. The resulting increase in unemployment and destitution was made even more visible in the growing urban centres and by the proliferation of printed materials such as pamphlets and essays, many of which concerned care for the poor, the suppression of vice, and the regulation of trade and industry.[2] Englishmen - especially the rapidly expanding middling classes - realized that something had to be done about the threat to the economic and moral health of the nation. A variety of frequently conflicting theories and solutions were put forward, usually based solely on their creator's perceptions of what caused indigence and of England's national needs. Rarely was there consensus of opinion and although there were some attempts at systematic analysis, sufficient information was difficult to obtain.

It was into the middle of this atmosphere that Rumford made his two most significant visits to London: one in 1795-96 and the last in 1798-1802. Thus, his reception and his activities in London at that time are inseparable from the ideas and perceptions which the public brought to the debate over the problem of poor relief. What were these theories and proposed solutions? Did Rumford play an integral role in them; and ultimately, what effect or influence did he have on the English and their approach to poor relief?

Rumford and the Evangelicals

By far the most influential and successful group of philanthropists in the late eighteenth

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[1] John H. Hutchins, Jonas Hanway 1712-1786 (New York, 1940), xv. England's national income increased from nearly £120 million in 1770 to £430 million in 1812.

[2] Lee Davison et al., eds., and introduction, Stilling the Grumbling Hive (Stroud, England, 1992), xv.

century were the Evangelicals.[3] The group was comprised mostly of the rising middling class of factory owners, merchants, and professional men whom the aristocracy would have considered to possess "no cultural heritage"[4], but who found an acceptance within the unintellectual character of the evangelical movement. Such a one was Sir Thomas Bernard, a wealthy retired conveyancer and devout Churchman who eventually would be a member of twenty-six societies and vice-president of seven; on the committees of two; governor of four; virtually in control of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and also, for a time, of the Foundling Hospital.[5] In addition to his firm religious beliefs, much of Bernard's philanthropy stemmed purely from his honest desire to "meliorate the domestic habits of the labouring class...."[6]

These predominantly nonclerical Anglican activists considered the national difficulties of England to be the result of the decline of religion and morality in all classes of society, but particularly in those of the lower orders. Moral reform, therefore, was the key to ameliorating the wretched condition of the poor. Donna Andrew has noted that even though they strongly believed that moral improvement was required before there could be social change, the Evangelicals also enthusiastically embraced the concept of a "systematic, scientific approach to social problems based on universal rules of human psychology...."[7] It was this attitude to philanthropy that caused their interest in the work of Count Rumford, even if their religious attitudes would make the relationship relatively short-lived. Owen claims that the Evangelicals "reforged the link between philanthropy and religion," causing a good deal of secular philanthropy to become infused with the spirit of evangelical Christianity.[8] They realized that charity could not only answer the material needs of the poor, but could be used to inculcate approved social attitudes; the poor should not only be comfortable, but pious as well.

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[3] For the purposes of this paper I will follow the lead of David Owen, English Philanthropy 1660-1960, (Cambridge, Mass.,1964), 93, and use the term "evangelical" to include the entire community of English Bible Christians, and "Evangelical" only for those within the Church of England.

[4] Maurice J Quinlan, Victorian Prelude (Hamden, Conn., 1965), 108.

[5] Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians (Cambridge, 1961), 356,358.

[6] Sir Thomas Bernard, Pleasure and Pain, 1780-1818, ed. James Baker, 49.

[7] Donna Andrew, Philanthropy and Police (Princeton, N.J., 1989), 169.

[8] Owen, 94.

The most successful years of the Evangelical movement were the thirty years when it was led by William Wilberforce. Wilberforce, a young, wealthy Member of Parliament for Hull was converted to the cause in 1785 and proved an able leader. He astutely realized that much of the moral behaviour of the lower orders was greatly influenced by the examples set by their social betters, and so used his close personal friendship with the Prime Minister to gain access to the circles of the aristocratic ruling class. Much of his success as a leader was due to his ability to promote moral reform among the ruling class without appearing to criticize them. Within the Evangelical movement were at least eighty very active philanthropists - mostly wealthy men of commerce - who subscribed to at least fifteen societies each; Wilberforce himself subscribed to an estimated seventy organizations.[9] He was also influential as the leader of the most prominent members within the Evangelicals, known as the Clapham Sect. This sect was comprised of an ultra-conservative group of distinguished men, from the Clapham area near London, who believed very strongly in the need for reform in the manners and morals of the nation.

These and other Evangelical philanthropists established societies for religious and moral reform such as Bible societies and the antislavery crusade.[10] Societies for charity, benevolence, and education that could be made to contribute to moral reform were formed as well, and they did not hesitate to take over already existing societies controlled by others if they could be made useful. For example, they created institutions such as the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, promoted Sunday Schools, and occupied senior positions in the Marine Society and the Foundling Hospital, while the Philanthropic Society was almost completely under Evangelical control by 1815.

One of the many schemes to ameliorate the sad lot of the poor and make them more independent of charity was the Evangelicals' flagship institution, the Society for the Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor (SBCP). In the summer of 1796, Bernard and fellow Evangelical philanthropists Wilberforce, Shute Barrington (the Bishop of Durham), and the Honourable E.J. Eliot discussed the possibility of creating an organization for bettering the condition of the poor. Bernard was already familiar with and admired the scientific work of Rumford, who had by this time published his essays and returned to Bavaria; consequently, a

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[9] Owen, 93.

[10] Beginning in 1788 and aided by the Quakers, Wilberforce and other Evangelicals waged a nineteen-year struggle for the abolition of the slave trade in England; it ended successfully in 1807.

correspondence between the two men ensued with Rumford providing much encouragement and offers of assistance to the group.

The aim of the members of the Society was to be a clearing house for circulating "*useful* and *practical* information, derived from experience and stated *briefly* and *plainly*."[11] They intended to use their influence to educate the poor into becoming provident, to have more self-respect, and to be morally responsible.[12] Rumford was seen as a pioneer in using science to achieve these goals. They particularly admired how his methods of organization had successfully provided a way for the residents of Munich to perform their Christian duty to their poor and for less expense than when begging was prevalent; the perceived exorbitant cost of the poor rates in England was of no small concern. Rumford's ability to restore peace and good order to society by making his poor more virtuous, orderly, and industrious without disturbing the existing social hierarchy was precisely what the SBCP desired to do. Furthermore, they wished to utilize his formidable knowledge of food and fuel economy: of particular use was his work in improving fireplaces, cooking utensils, and soup recipes. It was stated in the Rules and Regulations for the Clapham branch of the Society for Bettering the Poor that the adoption of Count Rumford's methods of relieving poverty would inaugurate "a new era in the science of managing the poor".[13] Such was Rumford's prestige at this time for his scientific philanthropy that when the SBCP was granted the King's Charter in January, 1800, its organizers "acknowledged Rumford as its godfather"[14] by making him a life member of the committee.

Rumford and the other members of the SBCP got along quite well in the early stages of their relationship. In addition to their strong interest in the use of science for the common good, they shared many other similar ideas regarding the science of welfare. They agreed, for example, on the need to appeal to the desire inherent in every man to better his condition. This was, Poynter claims, an interpretation of Adam Smith's doctrine regarding the source of progress in commerce and industry that must be allowed to operate among the poor.[15] Prospects of

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[11] Report of the SBCP, I. 265, quoted in J.R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism (London, 1969), 92.

[12] Andrew, 174,176.

[13] Andrew, 174n.

[14] Poynter, 92.

[15] Poynter, 92.

advancement would do more to encourage the poor to industry than punishment or coercion, and none in that group doubted that the poor could attain the moral standard required of them. For purposes of discrimination, personal knowledge of the poor would be gained by a system of upper-class visiting as done in Munich and Hamburg.[16]

However, there were also areas of thought where there was disagreement. The members of the Society never intended totally to reproduce Rumford's poor relief scheme from Munich - they were all very much opposed to workhouses of any kind. Years of experience with the English version which often included crowded, unsanitary conditions, jobbing of the poor, incompetent management, and less than desirable results caused the members to refer to them as "a crude instrument inimical to proper moral discrimination"[17]. The fact that Rumford's Workhouse did not confine the poor, because he wished them to remain an integral part of the community and to feel a sense of liberty, - and that he strove to provide an economical, well managed, *improved environment* where he could calm agitated minds, gain trust, and alter attitudes, did not change the members' opinion.

Another difference between the two parties surfaced as members of the SBCP increasingly stressed the more Evangelical side of their philanthropic endeavours. At one time Rumford and Bernard had agreed on the theory that by increasing the happiness of the poor, virtue would follow. In 1798 Bernard had written in the Report of the SBCP that the science of philanthropy "will add to the virtue of the nation, by increasing its happiness", but in later Reports his opinion had changed to the belief that " [no] plan for the improvement of the condition of the poor, will be of any avail - or in any respect competent to its object - unless THE FOUNDATION BE LAID IN THE MELIORATION OF THEIR MORAL OR RELIGIOUS CHARACTER."[18] Rumford, on the other hand, continued to maintain the opinion he had expressed in his essays, that as happiness and virtue were inseparable, the provision of an improved environment would encourage an improvement in the manners, morals, and customs of the poor.[19]

Increasingly, the Evangelicals insisted that moral reform was the key to ameliorating the

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[16] The Munich system of visiting is described in Chapter I, and that of Hamburg in Chapter II.

[17] Quoted in Poynter, 96.

[18] Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, 2:11; Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, 3:101-102; 5:17-18; quoted in Andrew, 176-177.

[19] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 30, 60-61.

wretched condition of the poor and eventually charity in most Evangelical controlled societies became a secondary aim behind rapidly narrowing religious views. For example, by 1799 the interests of the Clapham members of the SBCP had become, "the discovery and relief of cases of real distress, the assistance and rewarding of honest industry, the detection of fraud and imposture, the discouragement of idleness and vice, and the employment of children at an early age, so as to improve the condition and morals of the Poor."[20] Visits were instigated to judge the appeals for relief, including an assessment of the degree of industriousness and the frequency with which the individuals attended church. Piety and moral disposition were the qualifications for benefits. Examples of their methods of relief included old age pensions, factory regulations, health and medicine, and Bernard's favourite - general education for the poor. Rumford had also been interested in providing education, medical care, old age pensions, and humane working conditions, but they were all included as part of his *unified scheme* for the management of the poor, and he steadfastly refused to discriminate on the basis of worthiness.

Religious beliefs may well have played a significant role in other ways as well. The Evangelicals were convinced that the cause of all the nation's problems was the lack of *true religion*, and so to do away with irreligion was considered to be in the best interests of the English people. Ford K Brown notes that in the Age of Reason (published 1794-1796) Thomas Paine declared himself a Deist while openly attacking organized religion. This attack upon orthodox beliefs was also considered an attack upon the state as the King was the head of the Church of England. Thus, ardent Evangelicals like Bishop Porteous pursued tracts such as the Age of Reason on the grounds of irreligion.[21] Rumford was also a known Deist, a fact which could have significantly tarnished his reputation with this fervently religious group. Bishop Porteous claimed that even charity, if not "grounded on true evangelical principles...may be very good pagan morality...but it is not Christian godliness!"[22] Despite these fundamental differences, however, Rumford's working partnership with Bernard would be resumed during the planning for the Royal Institution.

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[20] Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, London 1798-1808,II, 347.

[21] Brown, 78-81.

[22] Bishop Beilby Porteous, Sermons on Several Subjects, 3:136-137, quoted in Andrew, 168.

Rumford's Other Influences

By the time of Rumford's return visit to London in 1795, his successful use of science for food and fuel economy in his Military Workhouse in Munich and his organizational capabilities for getting things done were already known to the English; his reputation as a philanthropic manager of the poor was at its peak. Very soon after his arrival, the Secretary for Ireland, Lord Pelham, invited him to Ireland where he supervised a heating apparatus for the Irish House of Commons and introduced many improvements to workhouses and hospitals in Dublin. For his contributions, he received thanks from the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Lord-Lieutenant, and was elected a member of the Irish Royal Academy and Society of Arts.[23] Back in England, the Evangelicals' desire to reform morals and use systematic scientific approaches to increase frugality and providence among the poor initially caused Rumford to be much in demand. Bernard, who had just become treasurer of the Foundling Hospital in that year, sought Rumford's expertise in renovating that charitable institution's kitchen, fireplaces, and ventilation system.[24] Improved cooking utensils and chimney flues cut coal consumption by more than two-thirds, and considerably more savings were made utilizing Rumford's inexpensive but nourishing soup recipes.[25]

According to Owen, during the harvest failures of the mid-1790's and the grain importation difficulties of the war years, soup kitchens and other cheap-food charities sprung up, and by 1797 a group of London volunteers led by Colquhoun was "feeding ten thousand individuals twice a week at a penny a meal or less." It would seem that the inspiration for these soup kitchens may have been Rumford's kitchen on the Foundling Hospital Estate, because Bernard notes in Pleasure and Pain, 1718-1818 that "[the] Soup-houses, began at Iver &[sic] on the Foundling Estate, had been established in several parts of the Metropolis...as a temporary remedy...for the Scarcity which then existed.[26] Although the soup kitchens survived, it was not

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[23] Rumford had already been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1779 for his work on the cohesion of bodies, went on to become one of its vice-presidents, and was awarded its highest honour - the Copely Medal - in 1792.

[24] Often the treasurer of an institution held considerable power and was looked on as the "executive director" as he was the only administrative officer to live on site.

[25] Ruth K McClure, Coram's Children (New Haven, 1981), 203; Andrew, 181; Owen, 106.

[26] Bernard, 57-58.

long before men such as Bernard and Colquhoun decided that in order to make soup an agency of social betterment the poor should be taught to make inexpensive meals themselves.[27] In Munich, Rumford had already been promoting social betterment by requiring proof of work from those who were able before granting a free meal, thus encouraging the poor to industry and stimulating self respect. He also instructed the poor in more thrifty habits of heating and cooking.

Another instance where Rumford may have provided inspiration is suggested by the Philanthropic Society. The Society was founded in 1788, "to unite the purposes of charity with those of industry and police..."[28] in order to improve the behaviour of the youth of the lower orders. Because the primary goal of the members of the Society was to help those who wished to help themselves, their method was to work for the elimination of crime and the inculcation of industrious habits by removing children from bad parents and training them in useful trades. Natural parents had to demonstrate improved respectability before being allowed a supervised visit with their children. Around 1794-1795, the Society tried rewarding their boys for productivity, and the boys output increased by more than half. This incentive policy may well have been a reflection of Rumford's work in Munich, because Rumford himself was the guest of honour at the Philanthropic Society's Annual Fundraising Dinner in April, 1796.[29]

Rumford's philanthropic reputation was greatly enhanced by the publication of his Essays, Political, Economical and Philosophical, (London, 1796). His more judicious readers could easily see his argument for the necessity of combining a desire for industry on one hand with the promotion of a more virtuous attitude on the other so as to produce more orderly and socially acceptable behaviour among the lower orders. This need for improved order was largely fuelled by fear among the ruling class of the obvious dislocation of the social hierarchy - believed to be fostered by the Revolution in France -- and also by the unrest among the labouring poor in England caused by several years of poor harvests. By 1798, the Annual Register was proclaiming that "the French Revolution illustrated the connection between good morals and the order and peace of society more than all the eloquence of the pulpit and the disquisitions of moral

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[27] Owen, 108, 109.

[28] Owen, 120-121.

[29] Andrew, 183, 81N.

philosophers had done for centuries."[30]

The Poor Law Debate

No one in the second half of the eighteenth century who was concerned about the condition of the poor or interested in the economic and social wellbeing of the nation could be indifferent to the Poor Law debates. Were the laws beneficial? Should they be repealed or reformed? Theories and proposals proliferated until the reforms of 1834 - although even then the questions were not truly answered.

Two related laws constituted what came to be known as the Old Poor Law. The first originated in 1601 (43 Eliz. c2), and created a legal, compulsory, secular and national system of relief that would provide assistance for the deserving poor and employment for the able-bodied unemployed. In 1662, the Act of Settlement (14 Charles II, c12) was added to permit parish overseers to return unemployed new arrivals to their original parish of settlement. Until the parliamentary reforms and the creation of the "New" Poor Law in 1834, however, this was not truly a national system because constitutional central governments after the Civil War still delegated authority to the parishes. It was at the parish level that the laws were interpreted and enacted; consequently, they could undergo numerous revisions based on local perceptions as to who constituted the poor, why they were poor, and what could - or should - be done about it. Urban poverty was often considered separately from rural poverty, but both were contentious issues in London and Parliament.

Desire for reform of the Poor Law was accelerated by what Himmelfarb calls "urgent social conditions": rapidly growing cities (with all the inherent problems); numbers of craftsmen and domestic workers languishing in declining trades or reduced to factory workers; former freeholders forced to become day labourers, cottagers, or even paupers. These changes were aggravated by several "fortuitous" events such as a series of bad harvests which brought food shortages, high prices, and swollen relief rolls; and by the Napoleonic War, which disrupted trade and depressed industry.[31] But what made the situation even more serious to the ratepayers, and acted as a barometer of the declining situation of the poor, were the rapidly rising

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[30] Maurice J. Quinlan, Victorian Prelude (Hamden, Conn., 1965), 100.

[31] Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 134-137.

poor rates.[32]

Theories about why the poor were poor abounded, and were often conceived with inaccurate statistics to back them up, or with no statistics at all. The majority of those theories charged the poor with various aspects of idleness, improvidence, and immorality, on the assumption that these were inherent characteristics of the lower orders. In 1795, Edmund Burke, while declaiming against the arbitrary combining of the labels "labouring people" and "poor", argued that "the labouring people are only poor, because they are numerous. Numbers in their nature imply poverty. In a fair distribution among a vast multitude, none can have much."[33] A few considered the spectre of recessional unemployment and the detrimental effects of the increase in large farms at the expense of the small landholder, but did not join with the others in thinking the poor incapable of improvement. Bernard's comments in the 1816 *Quarterly Review* might just as easily have been written by Rumford twenty years earlier about his work in Munich:

> ...that little exertion, and less expense, if wisely directed, may produce much good; that the poor are well disposed to second the efforts which are made for their advantage, whenever they understand the benefit; and that the lower classes become improved in other respects in proportion to the improvement of their circumstances.[34]

Nevertheless, most would have agreed that the existing Poor Law had to bear some of the blame because "the laws which multiply the poor"[35] guaranteed subsistence regardless of immorality or improvident behaviour. What the reformers could not agree on, however, was a solution to end the problem of rising poor rates.

Rumford never directly criticized the Poor Laws, but merely offered as a solution his management scheme from Munich. Although it was originally an urban solution, he felt that if overseers in all the parishes co-operated, they would soon be able to exchange the Poor Rates for less onerous voluntary contributions while inculcating order, virtue, and industry among the poor.

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[32] The poor rates in 1785 amounted to just under £2 million; in 1803 they had more than doubled to just over £4 million; and by 1817, they were almost £8 million: Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 134.

[33] Edmund Burke, "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity", ed. Henry G. Bohn, (London, 1855), 634, quoted in Andrew, 182.

[34] "Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor", Quarterly Review 15 (1816): 205.

[35] Joseph Townsend, A Dissertation on the Poor Laws 1786, (Berkeley, Cal., 1971), 18.

In England, unfortunately, the adaptation of his plan to the less populated countryside may have been faced with some unsurmountable problems. Rural parishes had few residents of wealth for voluntary donations of sufficient amounts, and it would have been self-defeating for the bulk of the funding to fall on those just barely out of indigence themselves. Rumford's plan also required that the needy reside off the premises, and so lodging could become a problem over a large rural area as compared to a more compact urban environment. And finally, his employment schemes were highly labour intensive at a time when industrialization was beginning to be a significant force in England. In the countryside, the only part of Rumford's scheme which may have been practicable were his suggestions to the wealthy landowners for stockpiling basic foodstuffs and fuel and selling them to the needy below cost, and for teaching the poor more frugal methods of cooking and heating. As shown by his work with the Bavarian soldiers, it is likely that he would also have been in favour of allowing the poor small garden plots or grazing land to help make them more industrious and self-supportive.

Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus

Two preeminent influences on the ideas of the English public at this time were the Scot Adam Smith and the Reverend Thomas Malthus. Smith was both a moral philosopher and a political economist, and his An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, first published in 1776 is probably best known for his anti-regulatory and anti-control doctrines of free trade. Although not opposed to the Poor Law, Smith was against the Act of Settlement because he claimed it violated natural liberty and restricted the free movement of labour. John Howlett, however, challenged Smith's view of the Act of Settlement in his tract *The Insufficiency of the Causes to which the Increase of the Poor and of the Poor's Rates have been Commonly Ascribed* (London, 1788), "How seldom do the young and healthy, while single, find any difficulty in changing their residence, and fixing where they please....Were it otherwise, how has it happened that Sheffield, Birmingham and Manchester have increased, from almost mere villages to populous towns...."[36] Nonetheless, Smith had an optimistic view of the possibilities of social progress, and believed that all men desired to better their condition. Therefore, he saw "the system of natural liberty as the instrument of salvation, the means by which the poor would share in the wealth of the nation, self-interest would promote the general good, and economic

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[36] Poynter, 5-6.

prosperity would bring about moral progress."[37] This challenged the contemporary opinion that hunger and low wages were necessary to make the poor work; a view expressed, for example, by the agriculturalist and writer Arthur Young in 1771, "[everyone] but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor, or they will never be industrious."[38]

Smith's great influence was primarily the result of his offering relevant theories for a rising capitalist society. He was less successful, however, with his applications for the poor. It would seem that many of his self-proclaimed followers often held differing views of the poverty problem, and therefore could propose very different solutions while still claiming some of Smith's basic principles. For example, Sir Frederic Morton Eden, who had been pursuing his own investigation into the state of the labouring classes, agreed that individuals should not be restricted by government regulations in the pursuit of their economic interests, but then added that if progress imposed occasional suffering on individuals, those individuals must be sacrificed to the good of the majority. Smith's theory claimed that all levels of society should progress and benefit. Eden also advocated the reform of the Poor Law as it was "adverse, in many points of view, to the exertion of honest industry" and encouraged "idleness, improvidence, and immorality."[39] Edmund Burke claimed to be a disciple of Smith, yet he too had his own interpretation of the essential principles. Burke argued for non-intervention in trade, but then also insisted that to be consistent there should be no government interference in labour. That is, if a labourer - for any reason, including old age - could not acquire subsistence on the free market, he would have resort only to private charity.

Another unique interpretation of Smith came from those who advocated the natural law doctrines of the political economists. Their idea was to reform the Poor Law in order to allow wages and prices to reach their natural level. According to Joseph Townsend, it seemed that constant provision for the poor upsets the "symmetry and order of that system, which God and nature have established in the world," and he referred to the Poor Laws as "[these] laws, so beautiful in theory, [which] promote the evils they mean to remedy, and aggravate the distress they were intended to relieve." Townsend was in favour of substituting voluntary charity for

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[37] Quoted in Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 198.

[38] Geoffrey Taylor, The Problem of Poverty 1660-1834 (London, 1969), 86.

[39] Sir Frederic Morton Eden, The State of the Poor (New York, 1965), I:470-1.

compulsory Poor Laws, because "to promote industry and economy, it is necessary that the relief given to the poor be limited and precarious."[40]

We have no proof that Rumford had ever read the Wealth of Nations, but he was in England during the time of the first few editions and if he had not read this extremely popular book, he no doubt would have heard the discussions it engendered. Certainly some of his later Bavarian reforms demonstrated conceptual similarities to Smith, such as his insistence on adequate money wages, his belief that man labours for self-betterment, and his assertion that encouragement and rewards rather than compulsion promote industry, virtue, and self-respect.

Though Adam Smith's influence was still strong after his death in 1790, it was to receive a major challenge in 1798 with the publication of Reverend Thomas Malthus's antithetical Essay on the Principle of Population. Where Smith had been an optimist about the progress of man, Malthus was a pessimist. His theory was based on the idea that the rate of population growth tends always to outstrip the means of subsistence unless sufficient checks are imposed.[41] These checks which would reduce the population after it came into being, could be "Positive" ones such as starvation, sickness, war, and infanticide, or "Preventative" ones to inhibit the increase of population through delay of marriage, restraint of sexual passion, and forms of sexual intercourse that did not result in procreation. He believed that "Positive" checks would operate chiefly among the poor.[42] This general theory caused Malthus to be against any schemes that would promote increased population, such as the Poor Law, which guaranteed support despite improvident behaviour. Private charity should be sufficient when needed. At the same time, he was against Arthur Young's self-help plan to provide land for labourers because it, too, would encourage larger families, and he feared that there would not be enough land for future generations. He did, however, approve of farming in general as it increased the food supply. Education was also recommended as an aid to moral restraint. In addition, Malthus asserted that the poor could never rise above subsistence or their numbers would rise, too. With this assertion, he refuted the whole of Smith's theory by depriving the poor of the moral status they enjoyed in Smith's market economy, and rejecting Smith's promise of moral and material

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[40] Townsend, 36,17,51.

[41] Michael E Rose, The English Poor Law 1780-1930 (Newton Abbot, Devon, 1971), 43-46.

[42] Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 105-107.

progress.[43] Malthus stated that the means of keeping the population in check would work "against any very marked and striking change for the better, in the form and structure of general society, by which I mean, any great and decided amelioration of the condition of the lower classes of mankind." [44]

Malthus's Essay on Population made a tremendous impact on the middling and upper rankings of the English public, because it seemed to reflect their fears and anxieties in a period of "acute stress and rapid change", while telling anxious people what was happening to them and what course of action they should follow.[45] Although few could openly accept what seemed an uncompromising and overly negative theory, he was largely responsible for the trend away from Smith's concept of a growing population as a source of wealth of the nation, and away from charities which merely preserved the life of the pauper toward those charities which inculcated morality and independence to them.[46] Over the years, aspects of Malthus's theory would even appear in the rebuttals of his many detractors, or of those who wished a more restrictive system of poor relief.

Proposed Solutions to Reduce Poverty

By 1790 according to Andrew, three clear ideas were expressed in the writings and projects of English philanthropists: strong feelings against institutional care; an uncertainty about the value of encouraging population growth; and a determination to eradicate debilitating dependency.[47] In the early eighteenth century workhouses had been favoured as a means to provide vocational and moral training and as a more equitable and efficient use of charitable funds. But by the mid-eighteenth century, workhouses were rapidly falling out of favour due to frequent problems with incompetent management, abuse of inmates, worker inefficiency (few provided instruction as Rumford did). Sometimes the employment utilized (especially spinning and weaving) caused distress to others already employed. Workhouses were also often used as

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[43] Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 101n.

[44] Quoted in Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 101.

[45] Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 130.

[46] Rose, 46.

[47] Andrew, 156.

houses of correction so that the impotent, the vicious, and children were mixed together without supervision. In 1786, the Reverend Joseph Townsend noted that parochial or provincial workhouses had proven more expensive than outdoor relief, provided little or no work or profit, and deprived the poor of their liberty. He added that many, rather than face the terror of a workhouse, "struggle with poverty until they sink under the burthen of their misery: they [workhouses] do not provide benefit to the public, the landowner, the farmer, or the poor."[48] Townsend was, however, in favour of using the law that threatened incarceration in a workhouse as a means of preventing fraudulent claims on the poor rates, but the Workhouse Test Act would be completely repealed in 1795, and outdoor relief substituted to aid the industrious poor. Other reformers included William Young who described the workhouse as a "gaol without guilt,"[49] and who was quoted approvingly in 1797 by Frederic Eden in his State of the Poor.[50]

The majority of reformers at this time not only preferred outpatient and outdoor relief,[51]but throughout the 1790's they believed that the numbers of poor were too great for the workhouses to contain. Magistrate and social reformer Patrick Colquhoun was opposed to workhouses, but felt that if they must be used, then they should be under the control of the central government, with separate buildings reserved for pauper infants; the virtuous, aged, and infirm; and the vicious and depraved.[52]

In 1796, Prime Minister William Pitt declared that relief for the poor was "a matter of right and an honour instead of a ground for opprobrium and contempt."[53] To ensure those rights he proposed a Bill for The Better Support and Maintenance of the Poor, which included a number of current as well as new relief practices, and aimed to establish Schools of Industry in every district based on the Rumford Institutions in Munich. Pitt may have favoured Rumford's scheme because it was clearly a response to increased numbers of poor and beggars, and had proved to

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[48] Townsend, 54-55. Emphasis added.

[49] Quoted in Himmelfarb, Bentham's Utopia, 116.

[50] Eden, I:403.

[51] Andrew, 137; Rose, 18.

[52] Himmelfarb, Idea of Poverty, 85-86.

[53] Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, 32:709-710 (Feb. 12, 1796), quoted in Himmelfarb, Ideas of Poverty, 74.

be a most efficient way to manage the poor for their own benefit. Rumford had also forestalled social unrest by putting potentially dangerous beggars, drifters, and vagabonds to work in his Military Workhouse. Isaac Wood, one of the founders of the successful Shrewsbury House of Industry in 1783, wrote of his opposition to Pitt in a letter to Sir William Pulteney saying that he did not question Rumford's ability or success; his objection was, on the contrary, that there were not enough Rumfords to go around. "If indeed a Rumford... could be found to execute the office of "Manager of the Poor" in every District School of Industry to be established throughout the Kingdom much fewer objections would lie against the measure!"[54]

Support or opposition for Pitt's Bill became irrelevant, however, when so many additions were made in committee that the Bill became too comprehensive and confused in aim and, consequently, had to be withdrawn before it was debated. On the other hand, many of the Evangelicals - although opposed to workhouses and to treating the idle and negligent in the same manner as the virtuous and industrious - took pieces of Pitt's bill and tried over the years to get them enacted.[55] They were particularly interested in outdoor relief and education outside of workhouses.

Many philanthropists agreed that guaranteed relief and care in an institution like the workhouse would increase the total burden of poor relief, harm the national economy, and ruin the labourer's character. By 1815, a few of these philanthropists and some members of Parliament had slowly begun to consider workhouses as potentially useful again, but only as a method for keeping the behaviours of the idle indigent from contaminating the virtuous working habits of the labouring poor. The perceived rise in the cost of poor relief caused the threat of the workhouse to be used as a deterrent to those mendicants who seemed to prefer living off charity instead of performing honest labour.

Adam Smith had claimed that a growing industrious population was the true source of the wealth of nations, but in the 1790's the benefits of a growing population were increasingly in question. Joseph Townsend argued,

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[54] Isaac Wood to Sir William Pulteney, Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury, Observations on the Bill for the better Support and Maintenance of the Poor, (1797), 6, quoted in Sparrow, Knight of the White Eagle, (London, 1964), 185-186.

[55] Raymond G. Cowherd, Political Economists and the English Poor Laws (Athens, Ohio, 1977), 22. A letter from Bernard to the bishop of Durham in 1807 shows that the SBCP was still working to enact the benevolent reforms that Pitt had recommended in 1796.

> But should the population of a country get beyond the produce of the soil, and of the capital in trade, how shall these people find employment?...When a trading nation is obliged to spend more than the revenue which is derived from commerce, and not from accident, but as the effect of some abiding cause, exceeds continually the profits of its trade, without some substantial reformation, the ruin of that nation will be inevitable.[56]

After the mid-eighteenth century, in order to keep their public support, even charitable institutions such as the Magdalen and the Foundling Hospital had to prove that they were not merely creating more dependent poor. And in the Quarterly Review of 1808, W. T. Comber noted that many who agreed with Malthus "deduce all the political and moral evils which exist in society, from an excess of population, inferring a deficiency in the means of subsistence, and the decay of our wealth and prosperity from this cause...,"[57] consequently potential subscribers were against supporting charities which they believed were only increasing the numbers of unproductive, and therefore expensive, lives. Other solutions for encouraging self-help among the poor were added to those of Rumford and the SBCP. Arthur Young, President of the Board of Agriculture, had argued for the idea of giving land or a cow to agricultural labourers instead of relief to assist them to gain subsistence and to become more independent. This plan was successfully defeated - mainly by the Board of Agriculture, and by Malthusians who feared a population increase - in spite of Rumford's very successful experiment with garden plots for the soldiers in Bavaria as an incentive to work and support themselves. Many reformers, including the SBCP, wished to replace the Poor Law with some form of contributory scheme, such as the purchase of annuities, contributions to friendly societies, or the provision of safe places in which to deposit savings. These incentives to save would have been useful only as a safeguard against destitution because those who were already indigent had nothing to save. As early as 1797 charity banks were set up by philanthropists in the countryside to promote virtues of prudence and foresight.[58] Wilberforce wanted savings banks to be provident institutions "to teach the poor what they were capable of doing by their own exertions"[59], and in 1813 Sir George Rose,

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[56] Townsend, 47.

[57] W. T. Comber, "An Inquiry into the State of National Subsistence, as connected with the Progress of Wealth and Population," Quarterly Review 10:158.

[58] Cowherd, 50-51.

[59] Wilberforce, Parliamentary Debates, XXXIII, 841, quoted in Cowherd, 53,51.

supported by the SBCP, established the Provident Institution to serve the western part of the Metropolis. By the end of the Napoleonic War, virtually all groups of reformers agreed on the utility of savings banks as institutions of self-help, but could not agree on how to organize them.

Discussions were also held on the advisability of rating wages. Samuel Whitbread tried unsuccessfully in 1795 and 1800 to get legislation passed which would set a minimum wage. He was defeated in part due to the reluctance of Parliament to interfere in the free market, and by Prime Minister Pitt's promise to draft a major reform of the Poor Law. In support of higher wages were such contemporary luminaries as Jeremy Bentham, Rumford, John Howlett, and Nassau Senior, while opposed were Joseph Townsend, Thomas Malthus, Sir Frederic Eden, and, of course, most of Parliament. Instead of rated wages, an allowance system had been established by many parishes, primarily to help the indigent in times of scarcity, but also to subsidize the labourer's wages where subsistence could not be earned. Allowances were based on a scale involving the size of the family and the cost of bread. Ratepayers, the squirearchy, and clergy held a generally negative view of this solution, suspecting a "malign connection between outdoor relief, idleness, large families, unemployment, and high poor rates..." which allowed them to claim that the allowance system had caused pauperism to spread.[60] No one seemed to have a clear understanding of where poverty came from, or how it was to be dealt with.

Bentham's National Charity Company

Most Englishmen in the eighteenth century were anti-centralization and public administration was only rudimentary, but one who fervently campaigned for a centralized system for managing the poor was the philosopher, jurist, and social reformer Jeremy Bentham. In Pauper Management Improved, (1797), Bentham's rather monopolistic plan was to incorporate the hitherto disparate and independent parochial poorhouses into the ultimate management system for the poor. That system would be called the National Charity Company, a joint-stock company with a Board of General Direction that would sit in London. The Company would erect two hundred and fifty Houses of Industry, an equal distance apart, across England and Wales. Each would have its own governor, but all would be run by the same rules. The crux of the system was its panopticon or "all seeing" architecture, which permitted the staff to have the inmates

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[60] Geoffrey Taylor, The Problem of Poverty 1660-1834 (London, 1969), 39. Although not the first plan, what came to be known as the Speenhamland System received the brunt of the criticism.

under observation at all times, day or night, without being seen themselves. This was derived from Bentham's belief that "the more strictly we are watched, the better we behave."[61]

Who would be held in these great monuments to efficiency? At this time Bentham held the belief that "poverty is the state of everyone who, in order to obtain subsistence, is forced to have recourse to *labour*. Indigence, [on the other hand], is the state of him who, being destitute of property ... is at the same time, either *unable to labour*, or unable, even *for* labour, to procure the supply of which he happens thus to be in want."[62] Bentham wanted Parliament to sanction his plan for managing the poor so that the National Charity Company would legally have the power to create the circumstances necessary to gain complete control over all the indigent in the country. With the National Charity Company, all forms of simple outdoor relief would be discouraged. Even those who were essentially self-maintaining, but needed only a small amount of assistance would be labelled indigent and compelled to enter into the House in order to receive relief as would their family. Also, it could take a very long time to work their way back out (especially for the children who would be designated "apprentices"), and even then their situation on the outside would still be unchanged. Bentham's Company was to be authorized to compel to enter into the Houses all "persons, able-bodied or otherwise, having neither visible nor assignable property, nor honest and sufficient means of livelihood, and detaining and employing them."[63] This would include any who had been tried for crimes and acquitted, or not tried due to lack of evidence, or who had served their time and been released, but had no employer; and all this on grounds of suspicion only without benefit of trial or recourse to appeal. *All* would be obliged to work at below market wages to earn their keep, even the very young, the aged and feeble, mutilated, blind, deaf and dumb. To any criticisms of violated rights he used his skills of redefinition to argue that "liberty necessarily is circumscribed in direct proportion to the increase of security; the liberty which his plan would in fact destroy was the liberty of doing mischief."[64]

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[61] Quoted in Charles F. Bahmueller, The National Charity Company (Berkeley, Cal., 1981), 114.

[62] Bentham Papers, CLIIIa.,21, quoted in Poynter, 119.

[63] "Outline of a Work Entitled Pauper Management Improved," in The Works of Jeremy Bentham, 1838-1843, ed. John Bowring, (New York, 1962), 8:370.

[64] Quoted in Bahmueller, 154.

Once inside, the inmates were only released when they had earned enough to pay their extensive "self-liberation" account (no cash wages paid, just the equivalent applied to their bill), or in the case of the young apprentices, when they had reached twenty-one years of age. They were expected not only to be self-maintaining, but also to earn profits for the Company, too. Another significant aspect of Bentham's plan was his "less-eligibility principle" which meant that inmates of the House were not to live as well as the worst-off independent labourer. Not only was this concept to act as a deterrent to those outside, but it proved most economical; where charity and economy came into conflict, economy always won. Thus, the poor in the House would eat coarse, unpalatable food; enjoy minimum hours of sleep; wear distinctive, humiliating clothing; and work the maximum hours. Bentham's justification for this was that although the paupers had given up their liberty, they had gained security of basic necessities. His plan would end all other forms of relief - especially outdoor - so that the indigent would have to enter the House. In the poor-Panopticons, Bentham (or rather the Company) would have complete control over a greatly expanded number of dependent members of the lower orders.

When Jeremy Bentham wrote his proposal for a new rationalized and centralized Poor Law reform - namely his poor-Panopticon - he claimed that he wanted as chief director "the services of the most renowned contemporary administrator of the poor, the idol of the progressive reading public:Count Rumford."[65] But the motive behind this statement may be suspect. Bahmueller notes that in his articles for the Annuals of Agriculture, Bentham claimed that Rumford's "essays relative to the Poor, are entitled to a distinguished place...." The comment may have been "Benthamite diplomacy, or rather hypocrisy" adds Bahmueller, as "his real feelings were that, agreeing with Wilberforce, there was 'not much in it'."[66] Bentham was not convinced of the worth of Rumford's all-encompassing plans for poor relief. Although he did approve of the scheme for "a general roundup of beggars," Bentham strongly believed that Rumford's Institution for the Poor was not all-encompassing enough, and that it should be more like his "single, self-enclosed, centrally administered network of poorhouses...."[67] Nonetheless, Bentham did admire Rumford's administrative abilities, and felt that his illustrious

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[65] Quoted in Bahmueller, 112-113; Poynter, 133.

[66] Bahmueller, 112-113. Bentham's "not much in it" comment was part of a letter to his brother Samuel Bentham.(Bentham to Samuel Bentham, 20 Feb, 1796 [B.M. VI, 149]).

[67] Bahmueller, 72-73.

name would be a political asset in promoting the National Charity Company. There are, however, several reasons why it is unlikely that Rumford would have accepted the position.[68] Rumford and Bentham were alike in many ways: both were ambitious and egocentric, and they both relished being in control; consequently, Rumford could never have put up with Bentham's assured meddling and insistence on *ultimate* control. The two also had similar views about both the importance of industry for the wellbeing of the poor, and the absolute necessity of precise systems of administration. They also shared a strong predisposition for detailed scientific study: Rumford in extensive experiments to apply science to benefit society; Bentham in research programs to quantify and qualify that society through sociological statistics. Ultimately, however, they could not agree on many of the fundamental aspects of how to treat the poor.

Although Rumford was equally as obsessed with control as Bentham, and in the accepted eighteenth-century manner was just as arrogant and paternalistic in his treatment of the poor, he was never as restrictive or repressive as Bentham. For example, as we have seen earlier, Rumford's scheme encompassed a much smaller segment of the poor population, and he never denied them their liberty. The poor either lived in their own lodgings in the community, or where necessary, were helped to find a place. While they were compelled to work in the Military Workhouse, they could leave if they wished, but begging was forbidden. Rumford was also economically-minded and the meals were frugal, yet in his Workhouse the emphasis was on making the poor comfortable and soothing their agitated minds so that they could become orderly, virtuous, and industrious. In addition, his poor were paid a decent wage which they were permitted to dispose of as they pleased. Security against fraud consisted of his precise system of bookkeeping which included both spin and meal tickets - and which operated to control *both* employees and inmates. Despite the financial success of the Military Workhouse, Rumford still required (and got) funds from the public to assist with the expenses of the impotent poor. It should have been apparent to all in England that if a man of Rumford's undoubted ability was incapable of devising a completely self-supporting poor relief plan, it was unlikely that anyone else could.[69] Bentham expected his plan to do away with the need for the Poor Law, but still

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[68] *If* it was even offered. Bentham may have been suggesting Rumford with the idea that the public would insist that he be in charge himself - his writings certainly suggest that possibility.

[69] Unless, like Bentham, one was willing to treat the poor as "...that part of the national livestock which has no feathers to it and walks with two legs." quoted in "Pauper Management Improved," in The Works of Jeremy Bentham, ed. Bowring, 8:366.

expected the Poor Rate to be paid to his National Charity Company.

Rumford had returned to England and left again while Bentham was still trying to get Parliament to approve his Poor Law Reform. To be fair, Bentham realized that private charity was no longer sufficient, and he would have provided positive aid such as frugality banks, pawnbroking at fair rates, some education for the pauper young, and a guarantee that no one would starve. It was, however, at the cost of dehumanizing and repressive incarceration. At just this time, Eden was claiming in his State of the Poor that "A prisoner under the custody of his keeper, may perhaps be confident of receiving his bread and water daily; yet, I believe, there are few who would not, even with the contingent possibility of starving, prefer a precarious chance of subsistence, from their own industry, to the certainty of regular meals in a gaol![70] Unfortunately for Bentham, his great plan for the management of the indigent ran counter to many of the firmly held precepts of his fellow reformers, who preferred outdoor charity to institutionalization. Their primary goals were to help the poor to be self-reliant and independent of public aid; the number of dependent poor were to be *reduced*, not *increased* as Bentham would do, by adding new categories of dependent poor and insisting there would be "no relief but upon the terms of coming into the *house*."[71]

Bahmueller suggests that the National Charity Company was Bentham's own "idiosyncratic application of his philosophy, not the voice of Utilitarianism, itself...."[72] Ultimately, the only part of his plan to survive was the inclusion by Edwin Chadwick of the "less-eligibility principle" in the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. It should be noted, however, that the Poor Law Commission felt that loss of liberty in a workhouse was of itself sufficiently "less-eligible".

English Epilogue: London and The Royal Institution

When Rumford returned to England in 1798, he had expected to be received by the King as Ambassador from Bavaria. However, because he was still a subject of the British crown, his

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[70] Eden, I:58-59.

[71] "Pauper Management Improved," The Works of Jeremy Bentham, ed. Bowring, 8:383.

[72] Bahmueller, 212.

appointment was refused, and Rumford had to seek other ways of occupying himself. At first he considered going to the United States, and pursued the possibility of returning there through the American Ambassador Rufus King. United States President John Adams, himself an admirer of Rumford's scientific work, offered him the choice of the office of lieutenant and inspector of artillery, or, engineer and superintendent of the military academy. Rumford gratefully declined, but presented the President with a model of a new field-piece he had designed as a personal acknowledgement of the compliment.[73]

Certainly one of the reasons Rumford declined the American offer was that he had found a new project for his talents in London. Some years earlier, he had written about the need for science and art to embrace one another and "...direct their united efforts to the improvement of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, and to the increase of domestic comfort."[74] In January,1799, Rumford met with a committee of eight men, including Bernard, appointed by the SBCP to discuss what they eventually decided should become a separate entity from that Society. In planning what would become the Royal Institution, Rumford insisted on the government ministers being made aware of their proposals and that the founders intended to use Rumford's services for the arrangement and management of the Institution. Rumford not only wanted to safeguard his British and Bavarian pensions, but he had learned in Bavaria the advantages of government sympathy. He also sought the endorsement of Sir Joseph Banks and the Royal Society even though the Society and the new Institution would not be in direct competition with each other. Whereas the venerable Royal Society was serving the purpose of advancing the practice of science, the Royal Institution was to be in the unique position of diffusing scientific knowledge to the public.[75] Although there were many distinguished men eager to become involved, the main responsibility for advancing the project would lie with Rumford, Bernard, and Banks. At the end of 1799, the King granted a Royal Charter and the Royal Institution of Great

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[73] Charles Maechling Jr., "Count Rumford: Scientific Adventurer," History Today 22 (April 1972), 253, suggests that the offer from the American President was likely made on the understanding that Rumford would respectfully decline. This would contradict the assertion in Morris Berman, Social Change and Scientific Organization (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978),13, that "...in fact, Rumford was planning to return to America in 1799."

[74] Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, "Proposals for Forming a Public Institution" in The Collected Works of Count Rumford, Vol. 5(Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 446.

[75] Sparrow, 196.

Britain was formally established.

The two main objectives of the Institution were, "the speedy and general diffusion of the knowledge of all new and useful improvements in whatever quarter of the world they originate...",[76] and what would today be called the teaching of applied science. The first would be achieved by the Repository, a large and permanent - though changing - exhibition of all new mechanical inventions with full size working models, accompanied by a detailed description and correct drawings. The second would be facilitated by a large lecture theatre and a fully-equipped science laboratory. The capital and income would come from members' subscriptions, donations, legacies, and money taken at the door from visitors to lectures and the Repository. Nine Managers would be elected who would be responsible for the property of the Institution, and authorize the spending of its money; they were to serve without pay, meet weekly, and keep regular records.

It was voted that they should purchase an available house on Albermarle Street, and proceed with their plans. Dr. Thomas Garnett was the first to be appointed Professor and Public Lecturer in Experimental Philosophy, Mechanics and Chemistry. A Mr. Webster was hired as Clerk of the Works as well as to incorporate a school for producing good mechanics by teaching elementary technical knowledge for dealing with plans and drawings. Both Rumford and Webster hoped that eighteen to twenty young men would be boarded at the house for a three to four month course consisting of practical instruction during the day and evening lectures with Webster.

Rumford was one of the few at that time who realized the importance of improving the technological knowledge of England's workmen. He saw the need to bridge the gap between the manufacturers and the men of science; to facilitate the application of science to common purposes of life. Unfortunately, too many of the members were against educating common workmen or, as Sparrow puts it, "the voice of fear and privilege spoke and of short-sighted conservatism...."[77] Even in the Institution's superb lecture theatre, "separate accommodation, with separate staircases, was provided for the ingenious mechanics and the people of quality."[78] Although Mechanic's Institutes eventually appeared around the country within the next 40 years,

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[76] Rumford, "Proposals", 455.

[77] Sparrow, 117.

[78] Sparrow, 121.

by cancelling the mechanic's program England lost the opportunity of the benefits which the Institution tried to offer in being the "first centre of full-time scientific and technological instruction...."[79]

Morris Berman, in his book on the early years of the Royal Institution, seems to cast aspersions on Rumford's professionalism by asserting that his much-vaunted plans for the Royal Institution were actually copies of then existing institutions. In a footnote, Berman claims that

> Rumford was well aware of the existence of the *Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers* (1794) in Paris, and several authors have followed Elie Halévy (*History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*. Vol.I...)in asserting that the RI was a deliberate copy. Thomas Kelly, in *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*... states that the RI was derived from Anderson's Institution in Glasgow (1796), and Vernon ("Foundation and Early Years of the RI") tends to agree. Thomas Garnett, the RI's first professor, taught at Anderson's before coming to the RI, and describes it in his *Observations on a Tour Through the Highlands*.... It also had instruction for working men, a library, a repository of inventions, a laboratory and a workshop. Its lecture theatre was very similar to the one at the RI, and it is probably not irrelevant that the architect of the latter, Thomas Webster, was a Scot.[80]

According to K.D.C. Vernon, however, Rumford had sent for Thomas Garnett from Anderson's Institution and had sought his advice for plans for the Royal Institution, and "it is evident that several of the ideas which Rumford adopted had been previously tried out by Garnett and others at Anderson's which had been founded in 1796."[81] While both versions are essentially correct, the manner in which Berman's is expressed suggests fraudulence on Rumford's part rather than a desire to utilize what Rumford saw as sound ideas.

A similar criticism would also apply to Berman's suggestion that Rumford's departure from London in 1802 was due to quarrels with his associates and to him failing to get his own way. Berman claims that letters and diaries show Rumford's reputation was all that was needed by the "real movers" behind the Royal Institution, and that they "found it necessary to render his real position innocuous...[and] in reality, he was very nearly superfluous."[82] There is no

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[79] Sparrow, 117.

[80] Berman, Social Change,14.

[81] K.D.C. Vernon, "The Foundation and Early Years of the Royal Institution," Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, No. 179 1963, 381.

[82] Berman, Social Change, 16.

question that Rumford certainly was extremely disappointed in his failure to establish the Repository as he had envisioned it or to retain the mechanics' education program. By the Spring of 1802, he realized that his original plans were too ambitious for the available finances and had to accept that while the Repository brought opposition, the lectures brought money, and therefore, for Rumford the Royal Institution was to be a partial failure.[83] No human being as arrogant, egocentric, and dictatorial as Rumford clearly was could have escaped arguments and making enemies. Nevertheless, Bernard and the others at the SBCP had earlier enthusiastically supported and made use of much of his work, while Banks had previously been acquainted with him through the Royal Society; they were aware of the type of man they were going to be dealing with. In Pleasure and Pain, (1780-1818), Bernard comments on the association between himself and Rumford over the Foundling Hospital alterations and notes, "...a similarity of pursuits having produced a considerable Intimacy between us, & having since given me opportunities of seeing a good deal of the Interior of his Mind & Character."[84] Vernon refers to Banks as "a friend of Rumford's"[85], and there are letters extent from after 1802 that show Banks still writing *as a friend* to Rumford in France. Not all quarrels are major disagreements, and differences are bound to happen among strong-willed men. As further proof of Rumford's quarrels with the Managers, Berman quotes some of Rumford's obituaries, and George Peacock who was Thomas Young's biographer in 1855. Sparrow, on the other hand, has satisfactorily shown that some of the negative obituaries may have been the result of personal animosity by those who waited until Rumford was dead to get their revenge, and, in the case of Peacock, the words of a man unacquainted with the events.

Although membership was increasing steadily and Garnett's lectures were very well attended, the Repository, even though scaled down, was falling behind schedule with only a few exhibits set up, and the March, 1800, minutes show the majority of Managers decidedly leaning toward pure science. Rumford fought back to preserve his first aim of the Institute to increase the standard of living and benefit industry; it was a losing battle.

Rumford had freely made his inventions available, but he was naive in business practices

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[83] Sparrow, 137,140.

[84] Bernard, 51.

[85] Vernon, 368.

and could not understand why other manufacturers would not do the same. They also failed to send their mechanics to the Institution to learn about improved methods. He did not realize that while he had his pensions to live on, manufacturers had to invest large amounts of their own capital in a new product and relied on their patents to make their living. Mathew Boulton, in a letter to his father, expressed his opinion that such institutions may be necessary, and even useful, in a backward and feudal Bavaria, but were not needed in England which had taken the lead of all manufacturing countries without such aids as Rumford suggested.[86] Young Boulton could well have been correct, but one also wonders how much insular sentiments such as his contributed to what many economic historians describe as England's manufacturers being surpassed in the mid-nineteenth century by those of Germany.[87] Did they fail to understand that there is always room for improvement?

As part of his progress report to the Institution's managers in the fall of 1801, Rumford outlines the progress the Institution had made including the completion of the great kitchen, but there was no mention of the Repository. He concluded the report by saying, "the Royal Institution may therefore be considered as finished and freely established."[88] Rumford had achieved everything he had set out to do except the Repository, and that had proved impossible. He accepted that fact, and therefore decided in 1802 to leave London, but to return annually to be available for advice if the managers needed it.

It is most likely that his reasons for leaving London in 1802 stemmed from his desire to do more work in Bavaria. He wanted to be certain of preserving his pensions there, and had promised the Elector that he would return when the Institution was in order. Also, on a previous visit to Paris he had formed a personal attachment with Madame Lavoisier, and most importantly for his self-esteem he was treated with deference and honour by many of the great in that country. When he left in 1802 he retained his home in London and only failed to return in 1803 because he was denied permission to travel through France. He did, however, maintain correspondence with several of his associates from the Institution, including Banks.

As noted earlier, no doubt Rumford did argue with the other Managers - given his

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[86] Sparrow, 128-129.

[87] Dr. J.W.T. Gaston, Lectures on A History of the English 1699 - Present. Fraser Valley College, March 27, 1991.

[88] Quoted in Sparrow, 133.

temperament and that of the others it was inevitable - but not enough to drive him away. The Institution, as far as it could be, was finished. Several contemporaries who had known him personally, such as Thomas Young from the Institution, wrote in a short account of Rumford's life and work for the Encyclopedia Britannica that "[he] was so accustomed to labour for the attainment of some object, that when the object itself was completely within his reach, and the labour was ended, the prospect which ought to have been uniformly bright, became spontaneously clouded, or even the serenity became unenjoyable for want of clouds to afford a contrast."[89] Rumford lived for constant activity and loved a challenge.

Although in the end the Institution did not entirely reflect Rumford's concept, that it grew and succeeded as rapidly as it did was due in no small part to his energy and efficiency. Many fine scientists, such as Sir Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, Sir James Dewar, and John Tyndall would work there and their discoveries gave it renewed life and secured its eminent place as a centre for the diffusion of inspiration and scientific knowledge. The Royal Institution of Great Britain continues to this day.

Conclusion

When Rumford left London in 1802, he left behind a nation still at loose-ends over its poor relief problem. No consensus had been reached as to whether the poor themselves, or possibly forces beyond their control, were responsible for the increase in indigence. The extreme conservatism of the middling and upper classes and fear of the possible insurrection by the lower orders, caused by the French Revolution and poor harvests, fuelled heated disagreements between those who wished to aid the poor and those who merely wanted to keep them in their place. Too many individual theories existed to allow for any cohesive plan to develop, and every perceived evil required the formation of its own Society for prevention or reformation.

Rumford stayed above the debates, but was enthusiastically received, however, because of reputed organizational abilities and his practical solutions for improving the living conditions of the poor. Reformers such as the Evangelicals, who wanted to use scientific methods to encourage self-sufficiency among the poor, were eager to utilize his applications for frugal cooking and heating, although they would eventually prefer to base their aid more on morality

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[89] Quoted in Sparrow, 135. The Austrian General von Werneck also agreed that Rumford "was apt to neglect an enterprise when he had brought it to a certain maturity," quoted in Sparrow, 136.

than need. His proposals for the Royal Institution were warmly approved, and many were implemented despite the later failure of the Repository and the training program for workingmen.

Nonetheless, Rumford's Bavarian version of an all-encompassing scheme stood little chance of getting a positive hearing from the English reformers. Too many of them were anti-centralization, anti- institutionalization, and pro-outdoor relief. Also there was no absolutist government to provide the support which he had enjoyed in Bavaria, and which had been necessary to guarantee the full implementation of his plan. His obsession with method and order in a nation which, for the most part (Jeremy Bentham excluded), had shown little interest in administrative improvements was another barrier to his ideas. Apart from discrepancies in theories about centralization, workhouses, and employment for the poor, one of the major stumbling blocks to Rumford playing a more significant part in English poor relief must have been his personality. Sparrow accuses Rumford of "sometimes attacking his opponents by trying to brush aside criticisms when a more reasonable attitude might have served him better" and claims that he failed "because he tried to force his philanthropic ideas on his friends and colleagues at the Institution in a manner which was not palatable to them."[90] Vernon confirms this appraisal with his assertion that "...men such as Hippisley and Bernard were not prepared to submit any longer to the dictatorial, arrogant and irritable Rumford with his ambitious and unrealistic plans."[91] Within the milieu of intelligent, strong-willed and assertive philanthropists, Rumford's unhappy tendency to arrogance, egotism, and domineering insistence on control often tried the patience of even the most tolerant of men. "Rumford throve best in an atmosphere of deference and adulation, which of all people in the world the English were bad at exuding."[92] The English would continue their debates and proposals long after the Poor Laws were finally reformed in 1834. Rumford moved from Bavaria to France in 1805 where he concentrated solely on his scientific experiments until his quiet death at Auteuil in 1814.

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[90] Sparrow, 82; W.J. Sparrow: The break between Count Rumford and the Royal Institution, (Typescript, 1962), quoted in Vernon, 401.

[91] Vernon, 394.

[92] Maechling, 253.

CONCLUSION

Rumford possessed two talents which helped put him at the forefront of poor relief reformers during his lifetime. First, he expertly adapted concepts from earlier years such as creating happiness before virtue and putting habit before precept and punishment, to eighteenth-century ideas of humanism and rationalism in forming his scheme for managing the poor of Munich. Then, given his pragmatic character and obsession with order and industry, it is not surprising that he focused his considerable abilities on interweaving his scientific and social reforms. Nothing (with the possible exception of receiving praise or deference), satisfied him more than the scientific improvement and utilization of common items for the betterment of everyday life at all levels of society. These attitudes, and his practical application of them, constituted his main contribution to eighteenth-century philanthropy.

The problem of poverty was considered to be one of the most serious social issues of the eighteenth century, and many worthy reformers valiantly attempted to find a solution. However, they were handicapped by a lack of factual knowledge about the numbers of poor, little understanding of the labourers' needs, and only rarely could they agree with one another on what caused indigence in the first place. Proposed solutions were frequently influenced by a physical fear of the discontented lower orders and the perception that long held social bonds were being torn apart (made particularly worrisome following the events of the French Revolution). Often, but not always, their schemes reflected genuine concern for the afflictions of the less fortunate. Their solutions were usually derived from two opposing schools of thought: theorists who insisted on the values of incentives to labour, and those who promoted deterrents to idleness. Some theorists, then, were optimistic about the character of the poor, and some were pessimistic.

Count Rumford was optimistic. Widely read and a keen observer of mankind, Rumford believed in the Enlightenment concept of man's essential goodness and that the immoral and wretched behaviours of the impoverished poor were the result of their afflictions rather than the cause of them. He claimed, "...for nothing is more certain than that their crimes are very often the *effects*, not the *causes*, of their misery; and when this is the case, by removing the cause, the effects will cease."[1] The idle and unemployed frequently turned to activities detrimental to society: begging, prostitution, and theft became ways to survive when other means were gone;

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[1] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 79. Italics in the original.

hooliganism and vandalism were the actions of idle hands expressing frustration and discontent; drinking to excess numbed the mind for a short time and allowed the destitute forget their hopeless condition. Rumford was certain that he had the solution for the afflictions that caused these problems. Rumford's scheme to manage the poor was based on Locke's psychological concept of environment and incentives; change their environment in order to change them. The poor were disorderly, idle, and immoral, but he was confident that he could inculcate order, industry and virtue through an improved environment consisting of kind usage, decent nutrition, cleanliness, and an appeal to their innate desire to better themselves.

Order and industry would first be imposed upon the poor until it became a desired way of life. Further, Rumford reasoned that where order and industry were first instilled, virtue would naturally follow. With his help, the poor would acquire self-respect, provident habits, less dependence on hand-outs, and thus they would "[become] good and useful members of society."[2] Rumford considered happiness and virtue as inseparable, but his idea of putting happiness before virtue was not original. Others, such as Miguel Giginta and Jonas Hanway, had extolled the idea before him, but he was one of the few reformers to put the idea into practice in his day. He believed that because the indigents had no sense of shame or remorse, precepts, admonitions, and punishments were of little use. It was easier to first make them happy (which he equated with "cheerful industriousness" and "placid content"), then virtuous. The accuracy of his thinking is readily apparent in the success of his management of the poor in Munich. Examples that support his success include enthusiastic letters written by Gouverneur Morris of Philadelphia after visiting the Workhouse in Munich, the desire of Prime Minister William Pitt to have houses of industry in England patterned on those of Munich, and Rumford's early influence with the SBCP.

Despite his detailed plan to alleviate their unfortunate situation, Rumford was not particularly fond of the indigent. He would not, for example, go among them socially, but in a decidedly paternalistic way recognized them as human beings whose deplorable condition could not be ignored. Neither did he pity them. He believed that pity was merely a "selfish" sentiment which stimulated assistance primarily to relieve the suffering of the *observer* of distresses in others. Benevolence, on the other hand, he claimed "springs from a more noble origin. It is a good-natured, generous sentiment ... which teaches us how most effectually to contribute to the

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[2] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 61.

well-being of our fellow-creatures."[3] Rumford's concept of benevolence included making provision for the poor, managing the poor, and acting upon them rather than with them; concepts commonly held by other reformers of the time. Although their destitution was to be relieved, the poor were to remain the lowest order of society. His scheme for improving the condition of the poor meant that the majority of them would spend virtually the whole day within the walls of the Military Workhouse, therefore their physical environment outside those walls was not specifically addressed in his essays. It would seem reasonable to believe, however, that many of his poor might gradually come to desire more clean and orderly surroundings similar to that enjoyed at the Military Workhouse. Thus the change of lifestyle enacted within the walls of the Military Workhouse may be said to have influenced attitudes and behaviours outside the walls, as well. The environment for the very old and infirm definitely changed for the better, because Rumford created asylums for them where their last few years would be spent in clean and safe lodgings with basic necessities provided. He also provided an opportunity for the déclassés to earn a wage anonymously and obtain their daily meal, thereby giving them security while preserving their self-respect. Although unable to persuade all of the adult indigent to change their vicious ways, Rumford was particularly hopeful to create an improvement in the next generation, because they would be raised in a different environment from the start.

Rumford's talent for practical science allowed him greatly to improve the production of heat and light at a significantly reduced cost. He also improved the efficiency of everyday cooking utensils. Applying this utilitarian knowledge to his social reforms, he was able to care for his poor with less expense than previous reformers, and he could help the poor become more provident in their homes, as well. That he was successful in his endeavors is demonstrated by the fame and prestige which Rumford enjoyed during his lifetime. Even after he had left Bavaria, his remarkable English Garden including the commemorative placque dedicated by Munich's citizens in 1795 remained, as did the statue with which he was honoured in the Maximilian strasse. His ability was also noted by the English. Most successful among his host of innovations were his inexpensive soup recipes, improved fireplaces, and more efficient roasters. In fact, such was his reputation that fellow reformers such as Sir Frederic Morton Eden acknowledged him a "scientific expert" in his The State of the Poor (1797).[4] In 1796, Samuel

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[3] Rumford, "An Account of an Establishment," 79-80.

[4] Eden, I:496.

Taylor Coleridge gave Rumford's Fifth Essay a favourable review in his journal the Watchman, and had the fireplace in his Derby cottage "rumfordized" by the landlord. Contemporary literature also acknowledged the pervasiveness of his achievements. The heroine in Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (London, 1818), noted of the Abbey that "[the] fireplace, where she had expected the ample width and ponderous carving of former times, was contracted to a Rumford...."[5]

The main reasons that Rumford was accepted so quickly in London were that his reputation for success with poor relief in Munich had proceeded him, and that his essays on inexpensive food and heat were published at a time of great scarcity in England. Unfortunately, his poor judgement in some key areas meant that unqualified success would not be forthcoming. Either he did not realize - or possibly did not care - that he constantly offended his peers. In Munich he had the support (and therefore protection) of the Elector, but in England he was on his own. His own impatience and ambition frequently caused him to drive himself to exhaustion and physical illness, and he drove his co-workers with equal ferocity. Through tough management and sheer determination he kept the completion of the Royal Institution on schedule, but he also made enemies in the process. Always preferring to work alone, his temperament was not suitable to working within the collective philanthropic societies which were so popular with the English in the eighteenth century. Moreover, Rumford's belief that the English only needed to adopt his Munich plan for managing their poor was misguided. The acceptance of one single all-encompassing scheme was very unlikely given the English penchant for creating separate societies for each individual social problem. Moreover, he did not fully comprehend the strong aversion of the English to workhouses, and does not appear to have tried beyond his essays to convince them that his were different. There was some justification in charging many of the English workhouses with being dirty, disorderly, unproductive, using excessive punishment, rife with fraud by management, and farming the poor for profit. On the other hand, Rumford's scheme included work for all who were able and instruction where needed, clean and orderly surroundings, habits inculcated through example and incentives instead of precept and punishment, workers paid a fair wage, and a recordkeeping system to prevent fraud by either the poor workers or the employees of the workhouse. Furthermore, he did not appreciate the

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[5] Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey (London, 1975), 140. Northanger Abbey was the result of the 1797-98 revision of the shorter work Lady Susan, but was not published until 1818.

problems inherent in the English parish system. With a weak central government, the parish was the unit of real power in England. The self-importance of many of the parish officers and their reluctance to share power would have made the integration of Rumford's management scheme throughout the country almost impossible. Neither was he able to offer the more technologically advanced English any suggestions for marketing the goods produced by their poor other than those he had used in Bavaria. Finally, there was also a potentially problematic omission from his original scheme. Although he had provided hospitals and medical care for the ill, and had claimed that in his workhouse "*there* will the really indigent find a secure asylum, and those unfortunate persons who are prey to sickness and infirmity, or are worn out with age, will be effectively relieved...,"[6] he does not make mention of any provision for the mentally disturbed.

Rumford's greatest achievements occurred while in Bavaria where he was supported by the absolute power of the Elector. There he produced his very successful all-encompassing scheme for managing the poor that clearly demonstrated the practicality of his theories on human behaviour and the benefits that science could bestow on everyday life. His inexpensive soup recipes and his ingenious devices for providing more efficient heat at less expense were adopted across Europe. Overall, he was less successful in England. The English were less willing to tolerate his personality, and were not open to adopting his total poor relief scheme. In general, however, they did recognize his expertise in practical science and philanthropy and sought his advice and assistance with the SBCP and the formation of the Royal Institution. Frequently they were also willing to utilize many of his innovations such as soup recipes, improved fireplaces and chimneys, and his incentive theories.

Today Rumford's legacy is confined to his soups and fireplaces. As late as 1981 the homeless of London were being fed with Rumford soup,[7] and despite the extra material cost, his fireplaces and smokeless chimneys are still being installed in custom-built homes because of their elegance and efficiency.[8] But what is missing is his rationale for managing the poor. Now that the emphasis of historians has spread to encompass social history as well as political and military events, perhaps Rumford's achievements will become more widely known. He effectively

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[6] Rumford, "Address and Petition to the Inhabitants and Citizens of Munich," 339.

[7] Bahmueller, 72.

[8] "Bob Villa's Home Again" on the Public Broadcasting System, KCTS in Seattle; "This Old House" on the Public Broadcasting System, WBGH in Boston.

demonstrated man's capacity for improvement and the value of using incentives over punishments. Although the general definitions of order, industry and virtue have altered somewhat over the centuries, those ideals are still a necessary component of our society, especially as we continue to try to find solutions for our increasing problems with poverty.

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