

## 15. Social Science Research Council

*DA:* How did your own research. Began to change didn't it? For example you get into working .....now ..... How did you stop working for the Labour Party?

*MA:* Oh, I had to stop working for the Labour Party when I got the job with the SSRC. I said, "Look it is going to be very difficult for me to be a civil servant, and at the same time do the research for Labour Party. And I give them advice on their propaganda and their policy and so on. Civil servants aren't supposed to do that sort of thing. So will you in the future give all your research to Research Services, a straightforward commercial transaction and I will have nothing to do with it." But unfortunately Research Services said, "We are not interested in doing political research. We make much more money out of doing straight market research. A great pity. So that's how I stopped doing research for them. Then what happened you see, was that when I was about 60, fourteen, fifteen years ago, no, more than that, eighteen years ago! Good God! [laughs]. I thought, if I am going to make any change I ought to start making it now. And Michael Young began to get interested in futurology. And he said to me, "Would I be a consultant to his group on studying the future?". I said "Fine." And then, like an idiot, he said, "Of course we can pay you. " I think it was £3,000 a year as a consultant, and like an idiot I immediately went to the LPE Board, and said, "Of course I will hand over the £3,000 to you because you are already paying my salary and I wouldn't dream of taking two salaries." And they said, "Yes fine. As soon as you get your cheque get it to Mr. Trumper." [laughs]

*DA:* A mistake?

*MA:* A great mistake, yes! And then I worked as a consultant to the futurologists group on what's going to be the future that the world of Britain .....go on. It was quite interesting for a while, but it always seemed to me, "Oh God, the forecasts always go wrong." And the only interesting part was when I was asked by the Dutch to do surveys among the Dutch people as to what they thought about the future, what they thought was a desirable future, as distinct from what they thought would be the future. And compared the Dutch public views with the views of the Dutch élite on that. And, crudely, what happened was that what the Dutch public thought was going to happen materially was going to be fine, but what was going to happen morally was going to be pretty awful, drug addicts all over the place, kids not working, not being interested in work, increasing the crime. But they'd all be better off, they'd all have a lot more money. What the élites thought was that, morally, every Western

country would be finer, freer. They'd have wider outlooks, there'd be more humanitarianism. But unfortunately, they wouldn't be economically so well off. This was a very interesting contrast in between the two. And then they came along and said, "Look the Social Science Research Council...", the first approach was that they would like Research Services to declare itself a non-profit making organisation and undertake research for the Social Science Research Council. I said, "Well I am sorry they won't agree to that, I know. It is no use my bringing it up to the Board because it is such an asset to them." So they went back and said, "Well, too bad." Then they said, "Why don't you resign and join the SSRC? We will create a Survey Unit, and you will be the Director of it". I thought, "Well okay, fine, this is the time". So I did, and it didn't work out very well ... for two basic reasons: one reason.



**Mark, Dominic and Rebecca, 1970**