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CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE | *THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE*

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TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* SHAPING THE COMMUNITY CONCEPT: EXAMPLES FROM UNITED STATES' HISTORY

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* MASTER OF ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* 1977

SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* DR. O. F. G. SITWELL

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SHAPING THE COMMUNITY CONCEPT:
EXAMPLES FROM UNITED STATES HISTORY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1977

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled . . . . . .

. . . . . Shaping the Community Concept: . . . . . .

. . . . . Examples From United States' History . . . . . .

submitted by . . . . . Marie Dinwoodie . . . . . .

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in Community Development.

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Date . . . . . April 12 . . 1977

ABSTRACT

This thesis was designed to explore contemporary ambiguities in the community concept through an examination of the form it took during four periods of United States' history, proposing that in past conditions and mental images are the origins of present misunderstandings. The four investigations include the phenomenon of Communitarianism between 1830 and 1850, the social settlements between 1890 and 1910, relations between the Resettlement Administration and the southern tenant farmers between 1930 and 1940, and the strategy of Community Action which was a feature of the 1960s. During each period the concept of community reflected prevalent mental images interacting with a changing environment. Communitarians were immersed in religious expectations and an agricultural economy; settlement workers combined religion and science in a milieu oriented toward industrialization. Political viability was important to New Deal community building which had strong Romantic and rationalistic overtones, while Community Action theorists stressed "process" in an atmosphere of organizational consolidation dominated by faith in social sciences.

Many forces contributed to the proliferation of definitions of community during the periods studied, but the idea was stable in certain respects as well. In each of the periods the idea of community centered on the dynamics of interaction with society rather than on Utopian permanence and withdrawal. These characteristics relate well to Ferdinand Toennies' formulation of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. This may be because Americans have shared with Toennies presumptions about the division of authority in society and the dominance of the individual in matters of social organization. In the past these presumptions have

been confirmed by the potential of the American environment. Changes in this environment may bring a new challenge to the American concept of community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Dr. O. F. G. Sitwell for his insight, his time, his interest, his criticism, and his tolerance, each of which has made a contribution to this thesis and to the spirit of the university.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The Ambiguous Community Concept

In 1963, the community theorist Roland Warren was provoked to develop a new interpretation of the American community. The stimulus to this effort was predominantly "The Community 'Problem'" a composite of symptoms of social disorganization such as mental illness, delinquency, crime, apathy, and alienation, which seemed to be widespread.[1] Warren's cry did not reverberate in an empty wilderness. It received acknowledgment from many directions. By the following year, the "community problem" had become the focus of the War on Poverty launched by the administration of United States' President Lyndon Johnson toward the realization of his dream for a Great Society:

> This nation, this people, this generation, has man's first chance to create a Great Society: a society of success without squalor, beauty without barrenness, works of genius without the wretchedness of poverty. We can open the doors of learning. We can open the doors of fruitful labor and rewarding leisure, of open opportunity and close community -- not just to the privileged few, but to everyone.[2]

Within four years most of the War on Poverty programs had been frustrated. In particular the strategy of Community Action, which was a major weapon in the war, was in great disrepute. Many attributed the

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[1] Roland Warren, The Community in America (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963), p. 14.

[2] Lyndon Johnson quoted in Sar A. Levitan and Robert Taggart, The Promise of Greatness (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 3.

universal disillusionment to divergent expectations within the idea of community.[3]

The failure of these promising programs through confusion emphasized the importance of coming to a better understanding of the idea of community. In her book The Sociology of Community, Jesse Bernard writes that "the call for new community paradigms is coming from many corners."[4] She remarks on the widespread feeling that the idea of community has become a "will-o'-the-wisp," useless or inhibitory of clear thinking.

Incentives for a more effective understanding of community are strong. The costs of social welfare spiraled upward through the decade following the War on Poverty, draining away government spending options, perhaps contributing to inflation, encouraging unemployment and personal isolation.[5] At the same time these expenditures have not ended the conspicuous disorders which comprise "The Community Problem." Warren predicted "far-reaching reorganization in community theory" from "mature reexamination of some of the relatively naive conceptions of the community" that have characterized past investigations.[6] The impulses, he suggests, are the widespread changes in society, but also changes in the dominant framework for theory. He notes the great con-

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[3]Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty (New York: The Free Press, 1969); Robert Levine, The Poor Ye Need Not Have With You: Lessons From the War on Poverty (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 50.

[4]Jesse Bernard, The Sociology of Community (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1973), p. 189.

[5]Levitan and Taggart, pp. 283-285.

[6]Warren, p. 339.

tribution that can be made by a body of scientific knowledge applied to understanding the community idea in the new framework. The possibility of achieving "control" over community phenomena, according to Warren, will be one of the contributions of the advances in community theory.

The development of community theory in response to special problems in society, the diligent application of empirical research techniques to build a basis in scientific knowledge, and the unprecedented willingness of society to allocate funds for social welfare and social intervention, indeed, provide a mosaic in which control over the "community problem" may be achieved. However, the spectre of success looms as menacingly as the disorder of failure.

Great benefits have come from the application of the principles of the social sciences to social problems. However, in the same way that engineering in agriculture and industry has achieved short-term successes, the relation of those benefits to broader and longer processes has been ambiguous. Just as a return to a more encompassing view of natural processes has been useful in evaluating the merit of applying the resources of science, the new capability for control existing in social science theory and methods may be able to profit from a longer and broader view of society. Some of the contributions that can be made are cogently outlined by the sociologist Peter Park.

Park suggests that sociology has particular limitations in its use as a science, even though it has adopted scientific deductions, hypotheses, instruments, measurements, and mathematics, because of the manner in which it derives concepts. Conceptualization, Park believes, is primarily "deductive," scarcely distinguishable from "common sense."

There are some interesting reasons for this, and one of the major ones is that sociology emerged as an "applied" science.

> The justification of sociology in the minds of many who profess it, as well as those who finance sociological research, rests on its promise of utility. Sociology, on the one hand, is thought to be worthy of support because it would help solve social problems and make the world a "better" place to live in, and grappling with social problems, on the other, is said to help sociology develop as a science, a "pure" science.

But, the difficulty according to Park is that "a social problem-oriented sociology betrays our deep-seated tendency to view the world as evolving around us, for our benefit, and to construct conceptual schemes premised on the criteria of 'good' and 'bad,' 'right' and 'wrong'" according to the contemporary norm.[7] In Park's opinion, the concept, thus, precedes the tool of empirical investigation, but is not itself preceded by induction from the broadest possible observation of phenomena, a process Aristotelian but not Gallilean.[8] While applied science has certainly not been free of the "common sense" conceptualizations Park criticizes, and in sociology conceptualization has been more sophisticated and self-conscious than he credits, his arguments emphasize a danger that exists in attempting to build community models, for the purpose of solving community problems, wholely through deduction and subsequent testing. For even if they can be utilized to "control" specific features of the social scene, the relation of the model and the phenomenon is not integrated into a more comprehensive framework of knowledge about social processes. Thus, it is especially desirable to utilize the broadest possible format of scope and methods in the development of social concepts.

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[7] Peter Park, Sociology Tomorrow (New York: Pegasus, 1969) p. 44.

[8] Park, pp. 53-64.

The Method of Investigation

When social planners in the 1960s attempted to use the concept of community in promoting their visions of a better society, they found expectations for its realization to be confusing and contradictory. Exhortations to "clarify" the community concept have been strengthened by that experience, and subsequent efforts at social intervention. Responses have taken various forms. This paper was designed to explore contemporary ambiguities in the community concept through an examination of the form it took during four periods of United States' history, proposing that in past conditions and mental images may be the origins of present misunderstandings. To do this, secondary works, memoirs and periodicals have been reviewed. Each of the four studies was undertaken to provide insight into the expectations held for the concept of community in a particular time and setting. Further it was hoped that over the span of time, certain patterns of persistence and adaptation might be discerned. Lastly, it seemed likely that this research would indicate fruitful directions to be pursued in contemporary community theory and in the theory of community development.

The selection of the examples to be developed was intended to emphasize a broad time span, a wide representation of community expectations, and changing social and economic conditions. Further, it was hoped that communities could be seen both from the "inside" and from the "outside." Also, it was important to focus investigation where sufficient original research of a high quality existed. The community concept, thus, was to be explored in four settings, through investigation of a specific phenomenon of the time.

Communitarianism, 1820-1850. The focus of the first investigation was the rise of Communitarianism between 1820 and 1850. During these thirty years, hundreds of experiments in cooperative living were launched by intellectuals and by ordinary citizens. Withdrawing from the mainstream of American life to small "utopias," Communitarians were at the hub of nineteenth-century dissatisfactions. The ineffectualness of traditional beliefs and institutions led to frustrations compounded by the encroachment of industrial concentration and urbanization, and the final breakdown of rationalizations for slavery. Feeling betrayed by their institutions, Americans asserted their right to "truth" in politics and religion by laboriously designing social units which might, through their success, lead to the restructuring of all society. Communitarians presumed a natural harmonious relationship between man and society which had been corrupted. They rejected piecemeal change and institutional adjustments. They held fast to confidence in man's "real" nature, his potential for pure and natural relationships with God and his fellow man from which he was being constrained by nineteenth-century society. Rationalistic and religious, Communitarians put the burden of change squarely on society. There was strong conviction that the total reorganization of society to meet the requirements of the millenium not only should, but could occur. While disagreeing on aspects of truth, Communitarians agreed on the community as the vehicle for achieving it.

The Social Settlements, 1890-1910. Between 1890 and 1910, a different mosaic of economic and social conditions had come to prevail. The Civil war had resolved the question of national consolidation, which had been a tantalizing uncertainty to the Communitarians. Immi-

grants were flooding the cities in response to the needs of urban industrialists. There was little doubt that agrarianism, as the dominant mode of resource development, was obsolete. "Organismic" theories of social organization became pervasive in the wake of Darwin, Spencer, and Durkheim. Reformers came to view society as the imperfect product of an inexorable unfolding process in which complexity and interdependence played determining roles. They retained the optimism of the Communitarians regarding human potential and the perfectability of society, but focussed on minor adjustments to be made by both. They visualized a "Great Community" held together by "common consciousness."[9] Toward this end, scores of independently established settlement houses sprang up in urban neighborhoods, providing for improved communication between the culturally and economically isolated immigrant populations and "established" American society. Just as the Communitarians had conflicted in their understanding of truth, however, the settlement workers' role in achieving the Great Community began taking contradictory forms. In these workers' attempts to hasten the adjustments of society, they subordinated expanding the common consciousness of the Great Community to building effective alternative communities from which immigrants might press for the economic standards that would allow them to be full members of American society. Ethnic associations, labor unions, and political machines all fell under the umbrella of community rhetoric for the emerging "radical" Progressive reformers.[10]

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[9]John Dewey, "The Search for the Great Community," Scott Greer and David Minar, eds., The Concept of Community (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 333-38.

[10]Staughton Lynd, "Jane Addams and the Radical Impulse," Commentary 32 (July 1961) 54-59.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the Resettlement Administration. The 1930s constituted a major reform period precipitated by a cataclysmic economic crisis. Intellectuals, who in preceding generations had ignored, criticized, or worked outside of government, swelled the ranks of New Deal bureaucrats, bringing diverse intellectual currents together. Conflict theories of society, such as Marxism, made an important contribution to their perceptions, but romantic feelings about alternate groups and sub-cultures were legitimized through the rationalizing medium of cultural anthropology. Antagonism to social planning subsided in face of the derangement attributed to laissez faire. These disparate ideas happened to come together in the wake of a strong, romantic, individualistic "back-to-the-land" movement. One of the results was the unprecedented involvement of government in the establishment of planned communities, accompanied by frustrating confusion as to their function and purpose among both public and bureaucrats.

Generally, the New Dealer saw society as impersonal and imperfect, reflecting temporary power relationships in competition for the available resources. Society, like individuals, was neither good nor bad, but expressed through natural rivalry in which government should guarantee the outer boundaries. However, with crisis conditions undermining the effectiveness of intermediate organizations, individuals began relating to the Federal government for minimum standards of employment, relief, and order. In the South, tenant farmers who had lost their role in the changing cotton economy came together in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in an attempt to develop a base for improving the conditions of their lives. From Federal recognition of

the interests of labor and from publicity about their desperate plight, these predominantly black tenant-sharecroppers were able to derive feeble support for national standards of civil rights. They developed a continuing expectation of direct supportive relations with the Federal government because of conditions associated first with their role, and then with their race.

Southern black Americans, who had thus gained moral and economic resources from New Deal promises and, particularly, New Deal labor and community programs, began challenging traditional community concepts. Supported by their strengthened relationship with the Federal government, the Blacks attacked the meaningfulness of regional communities and of the "worker" community in which they had been nurtured. Community took the dimensions of the bond of racial identity.

Community Action. By 1964, when the Community Action Programs were begun by the government under the umbrella of the Economic Opportunity Act, the country had enjoyed two decades characterized by strong economic growth. Paradoxically, the growth of the economy was accompanied by drastic increases in the costs of social welfare. By the time the legislation was passed, from the national revenues between $20 and $30 billion annually were devoted to social programs for the poor. While rationalizations for this discrepancy took several forms, the point of view that dominated the formulation of Community Action stressed the importance of the attitudes of the poor as the barrier to their entry into the mainstream of economic life.

Swinging wildly between dispensing political resources to support the challenge of "alternative communities," and fortifying the domain of social work professionals in promoting the national culture,

the administrators of Community Action reached consensus on the value of "participation" as the tonic for the debilitating alienation of the poor. While to a spectrum of critics of Community Action, participation had to be justified by concrete changes in institutions, or dramatic improvements in "socializing" services, the willingness to participate was a goal in itself to many social theoreticians, and became the hallmark of the community "system."

Relating the Evidence to Ideas about Community. It was expected that a wide range of material from various disciplines would be helpful in efforts to generalize from the four studies. A survey of Utopian literature was made prior to the selection of the examples to be used. As the evidence was organized, it was scrutinized according to diverse interpretations of community, society, and social processes. Special attention was paid to diverse community conceptualizations, which seemed to fall into three categories: those concerned with describing and prescribing the "particular," those concerned with the relationship of the models to each other, and those attempting to understand the relationship of diverse community conceptualizations to each other and to their environment.

Particular conceptualizations of community were reviewed by George Hillery, who found ninety-four distinct applications for the concept.[11] In a chapter devoted to a review of community models, Warren grouped them into categories according to their basic approach. The community concept has been developed around the idea of space, demography, the sharing of institutions and values, around premises of

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[11]George A. Hillery, Jr., "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement," Rural Sociology 20:2 (June 1955):111-23.

interaction, power distribution, and interpretations of systems theory, he notes.[12] Nevertheless, Warren's organization does little to bring this large collection of information into a coherent, interrelated unit.

A step in this direction was taken by Scott Greer and David Minar. "The importance of the concept of community," they wrote, "lies in its very ambiguity."[13] They call attention to several "antinomies" within the concept of community which are persistent, and which account for much of the disorder in the body of knowledge about community. They note, first, a continual tension between individual interest and societal interest. Secondly, the authors cite tension within the concept between the part and the whole, and between parochialism and universalism. They note opposing expectations of stability and change, as well as unresolved conflict between normative and empirical usages.[14] The antagonisms were conspicuous and troublesome in the examples developed for this paper. While considering these contradictions as related "antinomies" was more helpful than attempting to establish the dominance of a particular interpretation, Greer and Minar did not deal with the forces affecting resolution of the tension in a particular setting.

Maurice Stein developed a framework in which he gathered together the major American community studies. He hoped to organize the studies in such a way that rather than revealing unique characteristics, "Each investigation becomes a case study illustrating the workings

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[12] Warren, pp. 21-51.

[13] Scott Greer and David Minar, The Concept of Community (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), p. 331.

[14] Greer and Minar, pp. x-xi.

of generalized processes in a specific setting."[15] He concluded that the nature of community through time was best viewed "as an organized system standing in a determinate relationship to its environment. The system-environment model then focuses on this relationship between the two."[16] Stein is responding to evidence in the studies which suggests that to achieve coherence in the community concept through time, its perimeters must be expanded rather than narrowly bound. This seemed a promising direction.

Thus, an attempt was made to develop the evidence of the four examples with awareness of the broad range of conceptualization about community, but with no commitment to any view. The studies were to reveal various, and perhaps contradictory, expectations for the community concept existing in theory and in practice in a particular setting. Then an effort was made to search the examples for patterns of persistence and change in the expectations for community, and relate them to a theory in which even the peripheral information was not resonantly inconsistent. The framework that the evidence suggested as most relevant to understanding the idea of community in the United States is one of the most well-known and often quoted -- though perhaps "least read"[17] -- of the treatises on social organization, the theory of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, developed by Ferdinand Toennies.

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[15]Maurice R. Stein, The Eclipse of Community: An Interpretation of American Studies (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 4.

[16]Stein, p. 101.

[17]Ferdinand Toennies, Ferdinand Toennies on Sociology: Pure, Applied, and Empirical, Trans. and eds. Werner J. Cahnman and Rudolf Heberle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. viii.

Toennies' attempt to categorize human interaction into dynamically related emergent forms of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft provides a framework in which many divergent expectations for community can be reconciled. Presumptions regarding the primacy of the individual and the division of authority in society on which Ferdinand Toennies based his treatise have been broadly shared by Americans during the period studied, and their power has been reinforced by opportunities for confirmation existing in the American environment.

If the processes described by Toennies are heuristically accepted as particularly relevant to the American community, there are conspicuous implications for the study of theories of community and community development. Processes relating to motivation and perception in group alignment would become a major focus of investigation, hopefully bringing considerations of territory, ideology, and human need into a meaningful relationship as sources of group potency. The refinement of procedures governing group interaction gains importance. Existing structures and attitudes are not viewed as pathologies to be corrected and former models are not necessarily naive.

The contemporary conception of community tells us about society today, but it also tells us much about the past and the people. What we do with this information will be a vital part of the idea of community and the reality of society in the future.

Chapter II

COMMUNITARIANISM, 1820-1850: RISE OF A CHIMERICAL ANTI-INSTITUTION

The Setting for Communitarianism

"The demon of reform" is abroad in the land, wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson of the 1840s. "The doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour."[1] Between 1820 and 1850, literature and oratory abounded with articulate statements of women's rights, proposals for penal reform and temperance, alternative theories of education, ideas for new forms of marriage and family, and demands for the abolition of slavery. Each of these causes inspired its own framework of thought and action, but in the mid-nineteenth century phenomenon of Communitarianism, they interlocked.

The flurry of "utopian communities" during this period has sometimes been depicted as an aberration in American objectives. According to historian Michael Fellman, however, Communitarianism was "neither opposed to the current of American society nor alienated from it." It was, rather, "one expression, if an extreme one, of the possibilities for social reconstruction at that time."[2] Soon, the anti-slavery movement overwhelmed the rhetoric of integrated, holistic

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[1] C. S. Griffin, The Ferment of Reform, 1830-1860 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1967), pp. 1-2.

[2] Michael Fellman, The Unbounded Frame (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. xvi.

reform. Political and economic consolidation, coupled with its unexpected rewards and requirements, eclipsed the claim to legitimacy made by the small experiments. For a few decades, however, the establishment of a "community" was a reasonable and socially responsible reaction to the confusion and fluctuations of the times.

The two dominant characteristics of the early 1800s that spanned the Atlantic Ocean were industrialization and social change. By-products of these phenomena were increasing wealth and institutional impotence. For individuals, the matrix created an ambivalence between the need for greater security and the desire for greater opportunity. For society, Michael Fellman reiterates, it created "an unbounded frame." Unlike Marx and the later "scientific socialists," however, the American Communitarians responded from the ideology and experiences of a religious and pre-industrial environment.[3]

When Adam Smith became the philosopher of the free economic system, he did so in a context in which certain moral principles were implicit. However, the contractual relations which became the adjunct to industrialization created a new class of "poor" -- those able and willing to work, but who lacked a function within the system. At the same time, these individuals were increasingly dependent, though uprooted from traditional sources of mutual support. Coincident with the isolation and impoverishment of industrial workers was a large increase in the wealth of society as a whole. Expectations for improved living conditions increased with the capacity of society to provide them. Christian intellectuals, in particular, noted the

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[3]Stow Persons, "Christian Communitarianism in America," in Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., Socialism and American Life, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), 1:150.

discrepancy between the "real" and the "ideal." The institution that had previously served them, the church, like other institutions was no longer a dominating social power. Similarly the bar, which had performed a notable service in formulating ideals for the new Republic, was losing identity as a unified force. Jacksonianism brought mass democracy into the political parties, and traditional economic regulators, such as the Bank of the United States, fell before the unbridled young-man-on-the-make. The decline of the institutions which had long served and with which Americans were familiar became widely heralded as a fact. But, curiously, there were those sensing new restraints. Arthur Bestor, one of the best known students of the period, suggests that Communitarianism was one attempt to deal with the problems of a "developing and industrial society, in which insecurity was increasing, in which the gap between employer and worker was growing wider and more impersonal, in which the mechanisms of exchange were becoming so complex and gigantic as to threaten the independence of the small man everywhere."[4]

Thus, social inequities and uncertainties seemed to be increasing, even though the resources of the whole society provided unprecedented potential for their resolution. At the same time, traditional institutions which had interacted in a way to regulate the excesses of the young society had weakened. Moreover, the weakness of the declining institutions was interpreted as confirming the self-sufficiency of the individual in American society. This point of view was rationalized by intellectuals. Americans proclaimed "natural rights" in politics,

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[4]Arthur Bestor, Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950, p. 60.

and a direct relation with God in place of the church. Reconciling the clamorous ideology of "individualism" with the uncertainties and the weighing constraints of the new social reality became the sphere of a chimerical "anti-institution" -- the community.

The Theoretical Framework and American Experiments

This was the milieu in which the ideas of Scottish industrialist Robert Owen found fruition in the United States. His community, New Harmony, on the Wabash River in Indiana, provided an ideological and physical framework for interlocking past and future, as well as the diverse objectives of contemporary discontent. This community, launched in 1824, sparked a decade of experimentation and adaptation according to the experiences and environment peculiar to each attempt. For the thirty years under consideration, two sets of theories dominated the Communitarian effort -- those of Owen and those of the Frenchman Charles Fourier. Additionally, the religious communitarian groups persisted, and a minor role was played by Icarian communities, which derived theories from Etienne Cabet.

Robert Owen. Owen was born in 1771 in Newtown, Montgomeryshire. After a youth spent in various trades, at twenty he and a partner set themselves up as manufacturers of cotton spinning machinery. The little time Owen had free of economic demands was devoted to cultural activities, particularly the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. During the next ten years Owen married the daughter of David Dale, owner of New Lanark Mills which was purchased by Owen and his partners. Between 1800 and 1824, Owen was "sole manager and dominant partner of

the largest spinning establishment in Britain."[5] During this period, Robert Owen is known as a humane, philanthropic employer, a political activist, and a theoretician of social reorganization.

Owen had accepted the radical notion of the times, that the fulfillment of the "nature of man" was intimately associated with his environment. In a speech at New Lanark in 1816, he asked:

> What think you . . . , my friends, is the reason why you believe and act as you do? I will tell you. It is solely and merely because you were born, and have lived, in this period of the world, -- in Europe, -- in the island of Great Britain, -- and more especially in this northern part of it.[6]

Owen educated himself in the principles of the Enlightenment: along with his French contemporary Fourier he expressed the appeal to reason, consistency and the "laws of nature." From the Scottish moralists, Owen drew conceptions of social responsibility. In this intellectual mood, the poverty and human suffering he saw associated with the uncontrollable currents of social change and industrialization provoked a generalized response.[7] New Lanark became a model of paternalistic community development, integrating educational theories of Pestalozzi, Oberlin, and Fellenberg into the daily routine. Owen prepared elaborate proposals for the relief of unemployment and pauperism, which he pursued through legislative channels. His subsequent rejection of institutional reforms was encouraged by the political frustration of many proposals, and the impotence of those enacted to alter the disorder associated with industrialization. The experience

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[5] J. F. C. Harrison, Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) p. 6.

[6] Harrison, p. 80.

[7] Harrison, p. 235.

confirmed his tendency to reject piecemeal change and normal political processes, in favor of total social reorganization.

When the opportunity to purchase the Rappite property in Indiana was presented to Owen, he had been experimenting with small-scale Communitarianism in Britain. He was already, according to his biographer J. F. C. Harrison, a "millenialist sectarian":

> The millenialist sectarian was one who rejected what was being done in this process [industrialization], rejected the values, goals, institutions of society -- all that for the Owenite was meant by the "old, immoral world." Early industrial society in Britain and the young expansionist republic in America created social realities which were divorced from the social and religious values which they professed. . . . Owenism was an expression of this conflict and an attempt to resolve it through the creation of a socio-religious ideology which was compatible with industrial-scientific civilization while rejecting competition and commercialism.[8]

Owen arrived in the United States in December of 1824 to view the Indiana property that he had been offered. His arrival was greeted enthusiastically, and he met with many of the outstanding intellectuals of the time, with the President of the United States, and was invited to speak to both Houses of Congress. By this reception he was convinced that his experiment would be situated auspiciously, and that it held very real possibilities to influence the development of the total society.

The New Harmony Experiment. The purchase, realized in early 1825, involved 30,000 acres of land, nearly 3,000 under cultivation. It included nineteen detached farms, 600 acres of land rented to tenants, orchards, vineyards, and a substantial collection of good buildings, well-planned and laid out around a public square. The site

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[8] Harrison, p. 138.

had housed and amply provided for one thousand members of a German religious sect led by George Rapp. Perhaps contrary to the agreement, the Rappites began a quick exodus to new property as soon as Owen had signed the papers. The Rappite evacuation permitted throngs of unscreened enthusiasts to situate at New Harmony, and their expectations preceded the plans of Owen and the constitutions of the community. Owen d attracted many who would gain from a communality of property, though at this time he probably held a paternalistic and experimental image for New Harmony himself. As well, reformers of many ilk flocked to New Harmony to pursue specific causes related, not to the needs of the new community, but to Owen's general exhortations for social reorganization. The first year, in which Owen continued to prepare for the beginning, did much to insure the inevitability of the community's end.

Owen returned to England soon after he completed his negotiations with the Rappites, leaving his son, Robert Dale Owen, in charge of the new property. Lacking his father's charisma, Robert Dale Owen and his executive committee could not curb the separate impulses of the zealous community builders. When Owen returned with the impressive personnel required for his "scientific" school at New Harmony, he was already faced with regaining control of the settlement -- a task greatly at odds with most of the antagonistic expectations within the community, and his own ideological resources. An anonymous "Illinois Farmer" wrote to the New Harmony Gazette, "that the principles of Robert Owen, or any society founded upon them, will not and cannot succeed. They will at the outset commit suicide on themselves, if steadily adhered to."[9]

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[9]George Browning Lockwood, The New Harmony Communities (Marion, Indiana: The Chronicle Company, 1902; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press Inc., 1971), p. 118.

Owen's environmentalism interfered with his judgment of men's character; further, even sincere idealists often did not have the specific skills needed at New Harmony. The community was committed to education, dancing, discussion and lectures, which were greater luxuries in the frontier environment than they had been in the company towns of the British textile industry. Critically misjudging the nature of New Harmony's malaise on his return in 1826, Robert Owen responded as a remorseful authoritarian father. Instead of his characteristic firm hand and shrewd managerial skills, Owen put forth a proposal for moving rapidly into "communality." According to Owen's son, writing later, the Declaration of Principles affirmed "liberty, equality and fraternity in downright earnest."

> It found favor with that heterogeneous collection of radicals, enthusiastic devotees to principle, honest latitudinarians and lazy theorists, with a sprinkling of unprincipled sharpers thrown in.

Services to the community were no longer to be rewarded in proportion to their worth, as under the Preliminary Society, but equal privileges and advantages were assured to every member of the community. "I made no opposition to all this," Robert Dale Owen reported. "I had too much of my father's all believing disposition to anticipate results which any shrewd, cool-headed business man might have predicted. How rapidly they came upon us!"[10]

In response to the untimely Declaration, a separate community of MacCluria was created, which included some of the most promising leadership of New Harmony and past friends of Owen. Almost immediately, another community, Feiba-Peveli, emerged and attracted more of Owen's

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[10]Lockwood, p. 128.

intellectual core. A third dissassociation was led by a native American, Paul Brown. At the same time that the Declaration was inspiring separation from the community, its implementation was not pursued within New Harmony. The disorder, in fact, caused the general committee to return dictatorial control to Owen. Rumors of private property sales became widespread. While the fragmentation of New Harmony boded ill for Owen's venture in North America, it was a process which provided for the proliferation of "Owenist" communities, on the basis of disparate images inspired by the experience of New Harmony. Owen, himself, briefly flirted with new beginnings in Texas and Mexico, while disposing at the same time of the New Harmony property, and relinquishing responsibility for the New Harmony experiment. In 1829, he returned to Britain and devoted himself to the pursuit of spiritualism.

The Contribution of Charles Fourier. Unlike Robert Owen, who personally launched the period of Communitarianism in which he hoped to realize his theories of social organization, Charles Fourier never came to the United States. In fact, there is considerable evidence that his elaborate schemes were deliberately designed to forestall small-scale experimentation. His work was transmitted by the American Albert Brisbane, who was already steeped in the growing North American tradition of experimental Communitarianism, and a native of a geographical area associated with radical reform. Brisbane was "the pampered son of a wealthy New York State land speculator."[11] He had been travelling and studying in Europe in the post-Owen period, when he was "struck" by Fourier's vision of truth. His initial understanding of Fourier was not

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[11]Fellman, p. 6.

on a practical level, but as a "spiritual vision." Fellman notes that "his first impulses after his sudden insight were mystical. He was 'possessed with the strongest desire to get away from this world and to be able by some means to participate in that Grand, Cosmic life.'"[12] Brisbane, however, was too much the American to achieve contentment on this ethereal plane. Seymour Bassett suggests that "Fourierism in Brisbane's hands was the social reform which claimed to embrace and justify all the partial reforms of the day." He continues, "Brisbane turned a static structure based on assumptions which American Protestants would never have accepted, into what looked like a simple, workable, and dynamic program," -- "a veritable popular front of reform."[13]

The proselytizing center of the Fourierites was the office of Horace Greeley's New York Tribune. Greeley, in 1838, was serving on a municipal committee aimed at alleviating hardship in New York in a depression winter. His particular distress over the human suffering caused by a failure of the "system," encouraged a positive attitude toward young Brisbane, who soon gained access to a column in the Tribune's pages. According to Lindsay Swift, Brisbane's writing was "doggedly sincere," but tedious -- "though an American, he lacked the national quality of humor, the possession of which would have saved him some Gallic extravagances."[14] But in an atmosphere of revivalism and reform, with Owenism still warm, the potential for Fourierism was not in Brisbane but in the widespread receptivity of American reformers.

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[12]Fellman, p. 6.

[13]Seymour Bassett, "The Secular Utopian Socialists," in Egbert and Persons, p. 176.

[14]Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm (1900; reprint ed., New York: Corinth Books, 1961), p. 272.

Furthermore, more important than the elaborate formulations of "passional equilibrium" and the intricate dimensions of Phalanxes, was the resolution of a basic problem of Owenism -- the communality of goods. Owen had saved Communitarianism from the sole possession of marginal religious groups, but his economic arrangements remained exotic for Americans. The simplified Fourier, on the other hand, so that association [illegible] trusted and tried American institution -- the joint-stock company -- was possible.

Many attempts at Communitarianism resulted from the energy the movement received from the Fourierites. The first was at Sylvania, Pennsylvania; the last and largest was the North American Phalanx at Monmouth, New Jersey. The most delightful and best immortalized was Brook Farm.

The Sylvania Experiment. The Sylvania Association existed between 1843-45. Horace Greeley served as the Treasurer of the Association which was formed by "warm friends of the cause from the cities of New York and Albany."[15] The executive committee issued this message:

> This Association was formed early in 1843, by a few citizens of New York, mainly mechanics, who, deeply impressed with the present defective, vice-engendering and ruinous system of society, with the wasteful compilation of its isolated households, its destructive competition and anarchy in industry, its constraint of millions to idleness and consequent dependence or famine for want of employment, and its failure to secure education and development [sic] to the children growing up all around and among us in ignorance and vice, were impelled to immediate and energetic action in resistance to these manifold and mighty evils. Having earnestly studied the system of industrial organization and social reform propounded by Charles Fourier, and been led to recognize in it a beneficent, expansive and practical plan for the melioration of the condition of man and his moral and intel-

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[15] John Humphrey Noyes, The History of American Socialisms, (1870; reprint ed., New York: Hillary House, 1961), p. 233.

> lectual elevation, they most heartily adopted that system as a basis and guide of their operations.[16]

In a pattern shared by other associations, the land for Sylvania was selected while snow-covered, by a landscape painter, a cooper, and a homeopathic doctor. Four-and-one-half acres, when cleared of brush by the associationists, yielded eleven-and-one-half bushels of buckwheat. The 136 Communitarians lived in two frame houses, and the upper story of a grist mill. There was no suggestion at Sylvania of the grandiose plans of Fourier -- it was, the noted Communitarian J. H. Noyes observed, one of a "whole brood of unscientific and starveling 'picnics'" that followed Brisbane's excitations.[17]

North American Phalanx. North American Phalanx was able to hold its economic problems at bay and persist for more than a decade. Its apparent success, however, was a failure by Communitarian standards. The New York Tribune described life at North American in 1853:

> The Phalanx people, having deferred improving the higher faculties of themselves and children until their lower wants are supplied, which can never be, are heavily in debt; and so far as any effect on the outer world is concerned, the North American Phalanx is a total failure. No movement based on a mere gratification of the animal appetites can succeed in extending itself. . . .[18]

Portrayed by the movement's friends as slack-jawed and drab, members of North American Phalanx were probably glad to follow their predecessors in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, New York and Wisconsin into disembodiment, if for opposite reasons.

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[16] Noyes, pp. 235-36.

[17] Noyes, p. 247.

[18] Noyes, p. 495.

Brook Farm. The Communitarian paradox of succeeding through failure and failing through success, early noted by the sage Illinois farmer in the New Harmony Gazette, was nearly solved in the most memorable of all Communitarian experiments -- Brook Farm. While claimed by the Fourierites, Brook Farm was launched earlier and independently of the main enthusiasm for Fourier. The founder, George Ripley, had been a Unitarian minister in Boston, who had come to the uncomfortable notion of "the impossibility of harmonizing Christian doctrine and Christian life under existing social conditions."[19] Ripley was part of a group of illustrious mid-nineteenth century intellectuals sometimes called Transcendentalists, who met regularly for discussions and exchange. In the strongly religious environment, the discussion often turned to the intellectual challenge of attaining a sensible relationship between Christian conscience and the demands of life. Through Brook Farm, it was hoped, "social relations would become rewarding, work joyous, leisure creative, intellect and labor unified, individual and society harmonious. . . ."[20]

Brook Farm was begun in 1840. Stock was sold and officers were selected. Simple arrangements regarding the value of labor were agreed to. Every applicant for resident membership was to be received on two months' probation. The title "Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education" reflected the dual nature anticipated for the Association, for the principles of the school had to be vindicated in the possibilities of the farm.

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[19]Swift, p. 129.

[20]Joseph Schiffman, introduction to Swift,

The farm, located at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, was not large -- less than 200 acres -- and Ripley hoped for no more than support for ten families. The original farm house and a large barn stood on the picturesque acres. The school was in a building which the group rented across from the Brook Farm property. In 1842, the Association raised another house, referred to as the Eyre, into which the Ripleys and their library were moved. As well, a large music room with the Brook Farm piano was established, and four student dormitories adjoined. This building became the cultural center of the property, just as the original farm building, called the Hive, was the center for eating and associated "living" activities.

Soon, another building, the "Cottage," was constructed. It has been described as the most elaborate of the Brook Farm buildings, but according to Lindsay Swift, who viewed it, it was "pathetically" rustic, and gave some indication of the actual level of inconvenience that must have prevailed at Brook Farm. An ornamental nursery and greenhouse was one of the final expressions of the commitment to beauty-and-practicality which characterized the pre-Fourier days. That the community's demise became associated with the construction of its most elaborate building -- a Phalanstery -- is appropriate. In retrospect it seems clear that this last stage of expansion and elaboration characterized by the adoption of Fourierism reflected a changing current. In this context the Fourier philosophy itself seems to be transitional between a period in which small social experiments were viable, and the forthcoming period of economic and ideological consolidation.

Agriculture at Brook Farm was under the direction of a highly skilled farmer. The Associationists diversified with shoe-making,

carpentering, printing, and the manufacture of Britannia-ware lamps and coffee pots. Men and women served alike in the various occupations, including housework, and there was regular interchange of tasks. Nevertheless, the unceasing labor necessary to keep the farm producing at a high level might well have produced the atmosphere of fatigue which doomed North American Phalanx. In a letter from the farm, Nathaniel Hawthorne expressed the dilemma: "It is my opinion, dearest, that a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung-heap or in a furrow of the field just as well as under a pile of money."[21]

The Tension Between Internal and External Objectives

The conflict between reform objectives and internal needs was largely resolved for Brook Farm by its school. Associated with the foremost thought and scholars of the day, it brought revenue to the community and provided for interaction between the community and the society it hoped to reform. Further, it established the Communitarian ideal and experience squarely in the mainstream of the American intellectual heritage. On the staff and among the students were leading literary and political figures who shared, in Hawthorne's words, "generous hopes of the world's destiny."[22]

Owen had hoped for a school of similar stature at New Harmony, although perhaps he neglected to appreciate the need for continuous interaction with society which characterized the Brook Farm Institute. He gathered together a distinguished coterie of scientists and educators

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[21]Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr., American Dreams (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 37.

[22]Parrington, p. 40.

while abroad during the first year of New Harmony's existence. Instead of finding seclusion within the new social order of New Harmony, however with the community's failure the scientists and intellectuals were broadly dispersed. Inadvertently, the effect was similar to that which was planned to extend the impact of Brook Farm. Communitarianism became a thread transcending special capabilities and interests, time and geography. In the nineteenth-century communities, the special causes of reform were united. Through the communities it was expected that the apathetic would become aware, and the extremists -- "one-idea" men like the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison -- would take cognizance of the "whole." "The institutions of the phalanstery," Bassett suggests, "would radiate throughout society and heal it."[23]

Communities as a Hub of Reform. The small numbers of persons associated with secular Communitarianism in the United States between 1820 and 1860 -- estimated as low as 4,000 -- does not adequately reflect the significance of Communitarianism as a "hub" of reform -- interlocking past and future as well as the myriad of special causes of the day. John Orvis, who had joined Brook Farm in early 1844, was the son of association-minded Hicksite Quakers. He became a publicist for Fourierism when Brook Farm attempted to take on those principles. Later in his life he went to England to study Rochdale cooperatives and returned in 1865 to engage in a systematic effort at introducing them in the United States. According to Lindsay Swift, writing at the turn of the century, "It was a part of Orvis' social creed that to Brook Farm were traceable many of the movements which for the past fifty years in

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[23]Bassett, p. 179.

America have looked toward the improvement of industrial conditions; and although his disappointment grew as one star of hope after another rose and set, he was no more sceptic in regard to social possibilities when he died, in April 1897, than he had been as a Brook Farmer. . . .[24] While there were many communities designed to further some specific reform, the indiscriminate manner in which their memberships rotated confirms the centrality of the communal experience. Ultimately, the causes of the vicissitudes of labor, of slavery, of ignorance, self-estrangement, and ill health could be traced to a common root -- the principles on which society was organized.

The "Causes" Shared By Communitarians. Nearly universal among Communitarians was a concern for perpetuating the relationship men had experienced with "land." All of the experiments retained a romantic notion of the value of land, regardless of its ability to satisfy the needs of the community. Owen, first of all an industrialist with a proven grasp of factory economics, bought 30,000 acres of wilderness for his community. The perceptive Perfectionist John Noyes noted in 1870 that "judging by our own experience we incline to think that this fondness for land, which has been the habit of Socialists, has much to do with their failures. . . . Land, land, land, was evidently regarded by them as the mother of all gain and comfort." He further notes, in a rare spurt of humor, that the communities were probably "wrecked by running aground."[25]

Establishing proper relations between the sexes and the emancipation of women were aspirations common to many of the communities.

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[24]Swift, p. 180.

[25]Noyes, p. 19.

Vegetarianism was a tenet at Skaneateles, and at the authoritarian community of Fruitlands diet played a major role. Upswings of phrenology, mesmerism, and cold-water cures drove Communitarians from one refuge to the next carrying a piece-of-this and a piece-of-that to tie into the new model for social reorganization. In addition, a circuit of speakers and visitors kept the communities informed about each other, and chafing over common exhortation.

Slavery, in particular, occupied the attention of many of the communitarian reformers. One Frederick Cabot, an ardent abolitionist, attached himself to Brook Farm:

> His going to Brook Farm seems to have occasioned some criticism from his old friends; but in an unpublished letter to Miss Caroline Weston, dated December 1, 1844, from Brook Farm, he defends his conduct on the ground that while he loves the slave no less he loves humanity more, and adds: 'I feel that Association is doing and will do more for Anti-slavery than anything else can.'[26]

Neither was [illegible] in thinking so. An English associate of Robert Owen, Frances [illegible], had perceived a relationship between slavery and community. Leaving New Harmony, she established an "emancipation community" at Nashoba, Tennessee. With continuing support from young Robert Dale Owen, she purchased several slave families, hoping the slaves would achieve the skills necessary for emancipation while providing the economic base for the community to persist. Her community faltered when she added "free love and free inquiry"[27] as elements of the internal organization, a step which exceeded the tolerance even of Communitarians.

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[26] Swift, p. 122.

[27] Harrison, pp. 85-86. Also William H. Pease and Jane Pease, Black Utopias: Negro Communal Experiments in America (Madison, Wisc.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963).

There were others for whom slavery was an aspect of the general question of labor in an industrial society. Robert Owen was originally responding to this problem. According to the author Charles Dana, who was a Brook Farmer, remedying the "institution of domestic servitude" was one of the first considerations in the formation of Brook Farm.[28]

The Basis for Communitarianism In the American Past

That which the causes had in common, however, was not always perceived as it was by the Communitarians. Orestes Brownson, at one time a radical reformer, wrote in 1844 about the thread which he observed:

> . . . The age in which we live is the age of quackery. We are overrun with quackery, with quackery of every description. I refer not merely to quack medicines, which, though bad enough in all conscience, are by no means the worst or most deleterious species of quackery with which we are infested. We have quack economics, quack politics, quack law, quack learning, and quack divinity: quackery everywhere, and sometimes, one, in a fit of despair or spleen, far ies howhere anything but quackery.[29]

The "great and essential th" that his contemporary reformers were overlooking, was to Brownson that "the new must always have its support in the old, and grow out of it, and be mere its fulfillment, or it will fail. . . ."[30] Communitarianism, thus, was vindicated of Brownson's scorn, for the forms it took between 1820 and 1850 certainly had "support in the old," and did definitely "grow out of it." While it was true that many of the theoretical impulses came from Europe, and many of the causes it adopted were ephemeral, it was the long tradition of "Yankee tinker-

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[28] Noyes, p. 222.

[29] Walter Hugins, ed., The Reform Impulse, 1825-1850 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), p. 249.

[30] Hugins, p. 251.

ing" that had ultimately determined its character.[31] Some of the components of Yankee tinkering existed in North American ideologies, others in the physical and social environment, and others were a product of their interaction in her past.

Earlier Communitarians. Communitarian history in America, according to Arthur Bestor, began in 1663. The leader of the first experiment, Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy, had been in England in 1659, shortly after the uprising of the Diggers under the leadership of Gerard Winstanley. There he published a Communitarian plan: A Way Propounded to Make the Poor in These and Other Nations Happy, by Bringing Together a Fit, Suitable and Well-Qualified People unto one Household-Government, or Little Common-Wealth.[32] Back in the Netherlands, Plockhoy recruited a colony and established a "commonwealth" at Lewes, Delaware. The attempt was wiped out by the British conquest of New Netherlands, plundered, it was written at the time, "to a very naile." Other short-lived attempts at religious communitarianism followed. These were characterized by religiously homogeneous settlers from Europe seeking a refuge and isolation in the open lands of the New World.

A settlement was founded at Eprhata, Pennsylvania in 1732 by Johann Conrad Beissel. Four years later, a community of Moravians was established on the Savannah River in Georgia. This community soon relocated at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and established related settlements at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, Vachovia, North Carolina, and at Lititz, Pennsylvania. While the Moravians spread widely, Bestor concludes that

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[31] Noyes, p. 239.

[32] Bestor, p. 27.

"only with the Shakers did communitarianism make a real impact upon American opinion at large."[33] Perhaps this is because with the Shakers, Communitarianism became linked with ideas which were already firmly rooted in North America.

Ann Lee was one of two female "prophets" which appeared in England around 1770. As a young woman she had joined a sect of dissenting Quakers -- "Shaking Quakers." After an unfortunate experience in marriage, she declared that cohabitation of the sexes was the greatest of all sins. Her garrulousness and the success of the sect netted her brief imprisonment from which she emerged spiritually "enriched," and the undisputed leader of the small group. In her new role of Messiah, she led a group of converts to Niskeyuna, New York, in 1774, where the group worked hard and cooperated in order to achieve financial solvency and to avoid censure for its religious views. By language and tradition prepared to participate in the total society of the new land, the Shakers, nonetheless, reacted to the potential America held for Communitarianism. The availability of land, the harsh conditions of frontier life and the need to combine capital, coupled with the successful precedent of earlier groups, encouraged the Shakers to adopt a separate communal existence. In the hands of the English speaking, evangelical Shakers, however, a social form which had been associated with withdrawal and isolation moved into the theater of American life. Arthur Bestor wrote that "the Missionary journey that Ann Lee and the elders of her church made through Massachusetts and Connecticut in the years 1781-83 was a momentous event in the history of communitarianism. American converts quickly outnumbered the original immigrants, for the first time

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[33]Bestor, p. 30.

in the history of such sects."[34] In fact, by the 1850s this non-reproducing, celibate community of Shakers numbered about six thousand, organized into eighteen branches.[35]

Strong incentives for Communitarianism existed for European religious sects in the persecutions they experienced in their homelands and the possibilities they perceived in America. Economic necessity, linguistic barriers, and the desire for religious integrity combined with a composite of frontier conditions to reinforce communitarian life. But, the response of native Americans to the Shaker appeal, which seemed to contradict concurrent conspicuous emphases on "individualism," was related to another important ingredient of American ideology.

The Millenial Mentality. Millenialism was a conspicuous feature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In America it had taken particularly virulent forms, although it was a major aspect of Protestantism on both sides of the Atlantic. According to J. F. C. Harrison, "There was general agreement in millennial theology that the world was to be transformed by the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth."[36] During the late seventeen-hundreds a general belief developed that the millenium was imminent. Among the millenialists in Britain were Shaker Ann Lee and another self-professed prophet, Joanna Southcott. In the United States, as well, a well-heralded prophet had appeared -- Jemima Wilkinson of New Jerusalem, New York.

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[34]Bestor, p. 31.

[35]Harrison, p. 99.

[36]Harrison, p. 95.

The expectancy of American millenialists had been cultivated during the Great Awakening by the American revivalist Jonathan Edwards, and had been reinforced by the more recent agitations of Charles Grandison Finney. What had become known as "burnt" districts because of their response to the revivalists, were later to figure strongly in the Communitarian response, quickly spawning Joseph Smith's Mormons and ultimately becoming the stronghold of Fourierism.[37]

Millenialism had a variety of components. According to Harrison, "It was first and foremost an ideology of change, and change which was sudden, total and irrevocable"; "the change envisioned was not an improvement of the present, but an utter rejection and replacement of it by something perfect."[38] Secondly, it was expected that the millenium was to occur on earth and would be experienced by those who had been "saved." These chosen individuals had a transcendent role proclaiming the truth and establishing conditions for the millenial period. Thirdly, the millenial mentality "reduced all complicated issues to a simple clear-cut choice between good and evil; political, economic and social problems were thus decided in absolute terms."[39] Political activity and institutions, therefore, were largely irrelevant compromises at best and corrupting influences in their usual forms.

These beliefs were widely held in the United States at the time Ann Lee attracted followers. However, they were not yet associated with Communitarianism, nor had Communitarianism emerged as a legitimate alternative for native Americans. The Shaker appeal accounted for both these

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[37]Noyes, p. 267.

[38]Harrison, p. 101.

[39]Harrison, p. 102.

transitions. By the time Robert Owen appeared to dazzle seaboard intellectuals, there was a firm basis for millenial Communitarianism among native born Americans. That was exactly what Robert Owen had to offer.

In a 4th of July speech entitled "A Declaration of Mental Independence," Owen noted that his measures "may not improperly be termed the beginning of the millennium." The year previous, he had informed the President and Congress of the United States that "the time is now come, when the principle of good is about to predominate and reign triumphant over the principle of evil . . . old things shall pass away and all shall become new."[40] Owen's disillusionment with British social institutions in achieving reform figures prominently in the development of his theories. His strange disregard for the development of institutions at New Harmony suggests that he considered the "universal sabbath, or reign of happiness" at New Harmony would inevitably be fulfilled. Owenistic communities that spun off from New Harmony expressed a potpourri of views about what was wrong with the existing society, but they shared the ingredients of millenialism.

Brook Farm, usually considered a "secular" community, was imbued with millenialism. Elizabeth Peabody, writing in the Transcendentalist journal Dial, October, 1841, states the case: "The Kingdom of Heaven," she wrote, "as it lay in the clear spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, is rising again upon vision. . . . Why not have our daily life organized on Christ's own idea. . . . For each man to think and live on this method is perhaps the Second Coming of Christ."[41] William Henry Channing,

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[40] Harrison, p. 106.

[41] Noyes, p. 110-111.

speaking about Brook Farm, referred to "the establishment of universal unity, of the reign of heaven on earth. . . ."[42] The Hopedale community, formed in Massachusetts in 1841, claimed to be the Church of Christ on Earth, and requested that its members "follow their own highest convictions of truth and religious duty, answerable only to the great Head of the true Church Universal."[43] Furthermore, its constitution prohibited all voluntary participation in any anti-Christian government, whether by doing military service, commencing actions at law, holding office, voting, petitioning for penal laws, aiding legal posses -- "all resistance of evil with evil. . . ."

In millenialism, therefore, there is the basis for holistic, integrated reform. There is a mandate for action, both in strong, individual perfectionism and in pointing the way for others. Further, there is disregard and hostility for existing impure social institutions and confidence in the possibility of complete change from evil to good. Millenialism existed in the United States well before the high tide of Communitarianism, and in this evangelical heritage social reformers found a conceptual basis and rhetoric for their ideas of utopia. The merger of secular reform objectives with the methods and attitudes of millenialism contributed to a change in the dominant mode of thinking about communities. The community was not a social institution nor a form of withdrawal from the uncertainties of society. It was instead a vague extension of the individual in his "true" relations with God and the outside world. This concept of community was perfectly attuned

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[42]Noyes, p. 225.

[43]Noyes, p. 122.

to the American political ideal of "natural rights" and the extreme forms it had assumed in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Philosophy of Natural Rights. The intellectual leadership of the American revolution was immersed in the philosophy of "natural rights" which was an ou growth of the work of European theorists John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. When Thomas Jefferson asserted that each individual was "endowed by his creator" with inalienable rights which could not be infringed upon by government or institutions, he expressed sentiments broadly felt and aspirations for the new nation that were shared by many. The point-of-view that was made famous by the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner emphasized that the particular conditions of American life predisposed Americans to a philosophy compatible with the demands of the frontier.[44] The impact of frontier conditions -- open land, open society, free opportunity, social volatility, minimum regulations -- was construed in the mid-1800s to have permitted a special human independence justified by natural right, but extended to support a myth of self-sufficiency. According to the chronicler of the pre-civil war period Stanley Elkins,

> . . . it was a society whose very energy and resources had themselves become a kind of stability. For such a society, traditional guarantees of order had become superfluous. Its religion was so dynamic that it needed no church; its wealth and opportunity were so boundless that a center of financial power could lose its meaning; and in its need for politicians and lawyers by the thousands it could do without a governing class and ignore many an ancient tradition of bench and bar. Thus for the American of that day it was the very success of his society -- of capitalism, of religious liberalism and political democracy -- that made it unnecessary for him to be concerned with institutions. Had he a "past"? Yes: it was already two hundred years old, but

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[44] Russell Nye, This Almost Chosen People (East Lansing: Michigan: State University Press, 1966). Also Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, 1947)

> he could afford to forget it. Had he once known "institutions"? Yes, of a sort, but he could now ignore their meaning: His style of life did not depend upon them. His new system of values could now question "society" itself, that very society which had made success possible and which offered him his future. Because he no longer seemed to need it, it became an abstraction which even bore certain allusions to the sinister. He was able to imagine that "stability" resided not in social organization but in "human nature". He no longer appeared to draw from society h's traditions, his culture, and all his aspirations: indeed he, the trancendent individual -- the new symbol of virtue -- now "confronted" society; he challenged it as something of a conspiracy to rob him of his birthright. Miraculously, all society then sprang to his aid in the celebration of that conceit.[45]

In the brief period during which frontier hardships had become tolerable, and preceding their recognition of emerging institutions, Americans toyed with asserting that frontier "individualism" was integral to their character and was an adjunct of their "inalienable" right. However, by the time the ideal of frontier individualism became widely cherished, the conditions that had sustained the illusion were gone. Those who had accepted the rhetoric of self-sufficient "individualism" experienced uncertainties and constraints which left them threatened. The unprecedented awareness and assertion of individualism at this time stemmed from its discrepancy with the increasingly complex and discordant social environment. Industrialization and urbanization increased dramatically in the Communitarian period. Depression cycles yielded sharply felt results. Complexes of transportation were developing tight control over the fate of the "yeoman" farmer. Emerging land policies were hampering resettlement, for which more capital was required all the time. Furthermore the American's self-sufficient individualism was no more under attack than another aspect of his self-image.

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[45]Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 32-33.

The Image of the Garden. America as a "garden" had long been associated with a mystique of regeneration through the pure bounty of nature. President Thomas Jefferson had stated the desires of Americans to remain agrarian, and suggested the deep conflict and resentment that would result from the entry of "the machine." Popular attempts to reestablish the cult of individualism and agrarianism were factors associated with the rise of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency. At a more erudite level, as well, changing realities were demanding the reassertion of old ideologies.

The Community as an Anti-Institution

Elkins has written that "the most notable intellectual expression of the 1830s and 1840s in the United States -- Transcendentalism -- was quite unable in this respect to 'transcend' its culture and its age at all; that, so far from 'revolting' against the age, Transcendentalism embodied in aggravated form certain of its most remarkable features -- anti-institutionalism, its individual perfectionism, its abstraction, and its guilt and reforming zeal."[46] Whether one would retreat from all the institutions of society as did Henry David Thoreau, alone and in the wilderness at Walden; into one's study at Concord as did Emerson; or into voluntary association at Brook Farm like George Ripley, did not compromise the underlying affinity for "uncorrupted human nature."

The dilemma for the three friends, and for a large part of society, was to discover the environment in which men could live in security and dignity, and at the same time remain true to their "pure human nature," unhampered in direct relationship with God and in harmony

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[46]Elkins, p. 158.

with each other in the American garden. Could a framework be devised to govern men's relations that would not be government? Americans needed an institution that was not an institution. Sectarian communities in pristine rural settings performed this function for their converts. Much of the radical experimentation that characterized the communities' proliferation between 1820 and 1850 was directed at resolving the paradox for society as a whole.

The Search for Tr[illegible]. John Humphrey Noyes, author of The History of American Socialisms, was himself a leader of one of the most controversial and long-lasting communitarian attempts. Coming to fruition at Oneida, Noyes' community achieved Perfection through his absolute control. The phenomenon of "complex marriage" was intended to extend a sacred kinship relationship throughout the society. Noyes' community could not be an "institution" because all would think and interact as one human being -- or one family of human beings -- in direct communion with God. "The social functions of production, education, worship, and amusement were all conceived in familial terms . . . Noyes once observed that his form of communism could easily be extended if employees would substitute the family relationship for the prevailing labor system . . . In a real sense its business would be sanctified."[47] A member of Oneida reflected in 1866: "I believe that under God Mr. Noyes will drill the Community 'til we shall all feel that we do not belong to ourselves; and we shall gain the entire confidence of the world. We shall show them an organization that they can give themselves to, with perfect safety."[48]

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[47]Persons, p. 146.

[48]Fellman, p. 54.

At the opposite pole was Josiah Warren, an anarchist who left New Harmony to found a "Community of Individual Sovereignty." He felt that Owen had "overlaid and smothered the Individual in the multiplicity and the complexity of Institutions." "The search for the true community for Warren was the quest for a social arrangement where no behavior or belief was dictated by external force and where, consequently, every action corresponded with personal desire."[49] Warren's anarchism found echoes in Paul Brown's community, and the experiment at Skaneateles. Skaneateles, also in Massachusetts, went so far as to reject the authority of Jesus Christ himself, stating that "while we admire the precepts attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, we do not regard them as binding because uttered by him, but because they are true in themselves. . . ." They further asserted that governments not based on voluntary cooperation are "organized bands of banditti, whose authority is to be disregarded."[50]

The Transcendentalists were also experimenting. Brook Farm was conceived not as a "collective institution" but as individuals united for self-perfection.[51] A lesser known Transcendentalist community, however, was Fruitlands, under the leadership of Bronson Alcott. Fruitlands was severely ascetic in contrast to the joyful atmosphere at Brook Farm, and very authoritarian. Isaac Hecker, who participated in them both, noted that at Fruitlands, "They wish to purify the soul and body by the discipline of restraint and constraint. Instead of 'acting out thyself,' it is 'deny thyself'. Instead of liberty it is mutual depen-

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[49]Fellman, p. 8.

[50]Noyes, p. 165.

[51]Elkins, p. 153.

dence."[52] For Hecker, seeking the real "order" of life, both experiments were frustrating and futile attempts of men "to create order." For him it was as conceivable that order existed in freedom, as for freedom to exist in order, but he had to have evidence apart from the frenetic efforts of the Communitarians that what was engaged in was "true." Perhaps it is significant that Hecker informed Alcott that his chief source of dissatisfaction with Fruitlands was "that there was very little fruit."[53]

The Legacy. The variety of forms taken by the communities between 1820 and 1850 were attempts to reconcile widespread American disenchantment in institutions with human need for the framework which those institutions provide. Some believed this could be done through "spiritual oneness"; others attempted to design continuing anarchical relationships. There was confidence that the attempts would be absolved of institutionalism by being true. The temporary role thrust upon the Communitarians was cut short by the imperatives of the Civil War. The "forming of a nation" precluded further serious experimentation at social reform through the examples of the small communities. Faith in the institutions of industry, government and labor characterized the next two major reform periods in United States history -- the Progressive period, and the period of the New Deal. Nevertheless, the concept of community in the United States today carries the unresolved notion of a special role as "anti-institution," although the underlying assumptions which evoked this role in the 1820-50 period are unrecognized

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[52] Fellman, p. 31.

[53] Swift, p. 101.

and unscrutinized. "The most enduring aspects of a social movement are not always its institutions," according to Owen's chronicler, J. F. C. Harrison, "but the mental attitudes which inspire it and which are in turn generated by it. Habits of thought may long outlive the institutions of the movement. . . ."[54]

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[54]Harrison, p. 24.

Chapter III

COMMUNITY AND THE SOCIAL SETTLEMENTS

1890-1910

Impulses Toward New Community Models

In the late nineteenth century, independent from one another, several colonies of well-educated and idealistic young people took up residence in the most wretched areas of North America's exploding cities. These efforts became known as "social settlements," a persistent reality bridging the life and thought of the poor and the rich, the new and the old, the real and the ideal. During a general upheaval of social consciousness the settlements staked a boundary area -- bringing together the religious and enlightenment ideas of man's relation with society, contributing to the transition from agrarian modes of association to those that would dominate an industrial nation and, particularly, providing liaison between the burgeoning ethnic communities and the evolving consciousness of "America." The settlement movement persists, sometimes in the actual buildings that housed the original endeavors, but more often in the understanding and experiences with which it enriched American life.

A look at the settlements that sprinkled urban America between 1890 and 1910 reveals an obsession with "community"[1] and earnest efforts

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[1]David E. Price, "Community and Control: Critical Democratic Theory in the Progressive Period," American Political Science Review 4 (December 1974):1663-1678.

to promote the advantages associated with that concept. The settlement movement is intimately related to the reform current in American history which has been termed Progressivism. Variously interpreted as the product of a "status revolution" for intellectuals, of agrarian nostalgia, of changing ideological currents, or of the upsurge of the Social Gospel, Progressivism emerged as a loose-knit coalition of responses to changing social conditions. The great "waves" of immigration which brought millions of Europeans to growing American industries profoundly altered the realities of New World life in the late nineteenth century. The consequences of laissez-faire industrialization became conspicuous aberrations of fundamental American expectations. At the same time, organismic theories of society were gaining acceptance. Emerging from industrial conditions in Europe, the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim reflected particularly the growing current. The new concepts were integrated into the thought of American intellectuals studying abroad and soon affected University programs in the United States. In this context, the social system was perceived as sound and inevitable, though perhaps incomplete. However, poor coordination and communication within the system resulted in the dysfunctions and social disorganization being noted by the reformers. As a group, Allen Davis noted, the settlement workers "were optimists who fit Henry May's description of people who 'wanted to make a number of sharp changes because they were so confident in the basic rightness of things as they were.'"[2]

The first immigrants that came to change their lives in America were predominately from Northern Europe. Duri g the mid-eighteen

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[2]Allen F. Davis, Spearheads of Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. xii.

hundreds, Germans, Scandinavians, and dispossessed Irish arrived in large numbers and began "moving up the ladder." Between 1890 and 1919, another wave of more than eighteen million immigrants entered the United States.[3] As the earlier groups moved out of the beach-head districts, however, these arrivals found denser housing, more competition for jobs, and, because of their cultural origins, greater barriers. By the late 1890s, the immigrant population was increasingly made up of groups from Southern and Eastern Europe -- in large proportion Italians and East European Jews. At one time, New York had a larger Italian population than Rome. The "foreign colonies, as such," doubled and tripled their numbers between 1890 and 1910.[4] While there is little doubt that these colonies eased the arrival of the newcomers, at the same time conditions within them assaulted human dignity. Forces were working to bring this to the attention of the nation.

The English tradition of concern, philanthropy, and reform which had produced the multi-faceted proposals of Robert Owen continued to find new modes of expression appropriate to industrial London. The well-educated young American of this period nearly always completed his education in Europe. Women, in particular, were exposed to developments in Europe from which they were sheltered at home. The most famous of all settlement workers, Jane Addams, traced the evolution of the settlement idea as she developed it to experiences she had had in London.

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[3]Melvyn Dubofsky, When Workers Organize: New York City in the Progressive Era (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), p. 15.

[4]Julius Drachsler, Democracy and Assimilation: The Blending of Immigrant Heritages in America (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920), p. 63.

Secondly, the poignant writings of Jacob Riis, representing a new genre of journalism, epitomized a growing feeling of revulsion to the conditions of the slums. Riis' photographs did not portray villainous international menaces to order -- a view encouraged by popular interpretations of contemporary labor violence -- but showed tired faces, impossible living conditions, and the pathos of childhood under want and uncertainty. The Danish immigrant, himself well-acquainted with tenement living, released How the Other Half Lives in 1890. He followed, two years later, with The Children of the Poor. Riis' work contributed to coalescing popular support for ameliorative measures, at a time when ideas rooted in Durkheimian theory were becoming compelling to intellectuals. Because of economic and social changes, these same intellectuals were looking for a new role in society, satisfying intellectually, professionally and morally. This was the context in which the social settlements were established, beginning their eighty-year interaction with changing urban neighborhoods.

Origins of the Settlement Movement

The First American Settlements. On September 18, 1889, the most famous of all the social settlements opened in an old mansion in the Nineteenth Ward of Chicago. The house had been built in 1856 for a real estate dealer and philanthropist, Charles Hull. Surviving the Chicago fire of 1871, it had served as a hospital, factory, apartment house, office building, and furniture store.[5] Hull House, as it had continued to be known, was refurbished as a social settlement by

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[5]Allen Davis and Mary Lynn McCree, eds., Eighty Years at Hull House, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), p. 15.

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. Through the fertile mind and prolific pen of Miss Addams, as well as its many activities, it was to achieve unusual distinction and renown.

It was, however, at this stage only one of many similar efforts which seemed to emerge spontaneously. The same fall, College Settlement opened in New York, under the leadership of Vida D. Scudder and other graduates of Smith College. In 1891, Andover House opened in Boston's South End, later taking the name South End House. Robert A. Woods, the head of the South End Settlement House, became a major continuing figure in the settlement movement. Lillian Wald and Mary Brewster, two nurses in New York, made their own decision to begin a residence on the Lower East Side, but by the time of its fruition at Henry Street they had come into contact with College Settlement and remnants of Stanton Coit's earlier Neighborhood Guilds. Graham Taylor, with experience and connections in the ministry and academic circles, moved quickly to expand the Chicago settlement domain. In 1894, he opened Chicago Commons, and began publishing a periodical oriented to the settlement movement -- The Commons. Between 1889 and 1910, more than 400 settlements emerged.[6] In the Handbook of Settlements of 1911, thirty-three states laid claim to having settlements, and settlement personnel had assumed leadership in national organizations concerned with social welfare. All, however, claimed a common heritage which could be traced back to the work of Samuel Barnett at Toynbee Hall, in the area of Whitechapel, in London.

Toynbee Hall. In 1872, the Bishop of London wrote to a young curate regarding a position in the parish of Whitechapel. "Do not

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[6]Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, Handbook of Settlements (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1911), p. vi.

hurry in your decision," he wrote, "it is the worst parish in my diocese, inhabited mainly by a criminal population, and one which had, I fear, been much corrupted by doles."[7] The product of young Barnett's decision to accept this parish was the settlement of Toynbee Hall. Students from Oxford spent varying periods of time in the Whitechapel area, learning and working. According to Mrs. Barnett, the role of Toynbee Hall was to be "a skillful host," introducing two ways of life, inspiring trust and mutual learning.[8] While the evolution of Toynbee Hall could be traced from John Ruskin and the London Working Men's College,[9] developments to which the United States was independently linked, Toynbee Hall seemed a fresh and provocative source of ideas.

The first American to visit Toynbee Hall with the professed intention of borrowing was Stanton Coit. After three months at Toynbee Hall in 1886, he was working with Charles Stover and Edward King on the Lower East Side of New York in a settlement they called Neighborhood Guild. The Guild was to be an extension of the family, the "true moral unit of society."[10] Unlike trade unions or organizations like the YMCA which offered specific services, the Guild hoped to bring together the needs of the family and the neighborhood. The Guild would be an expression of unity, geographically based and many-faceted, transcending the divisiveness industrial conditions brought to lower class family and neighborhood life.

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[7] Henrietta Barnett, "The Beginnings of Toynbee Hall," in Lorene M. Pacey, ed., Readings in the Development of Settlement Work, (New York: Association Press, 1950), p. 10.

[8] Barnett, in Pacey, p. 19.

[9] Davis, pp. 7-8.

[10] Stanton Coit, "The Neighborhood Guild Defined," in Pacey, p. 25.

Jane Addams visited Toynbee Hall in 1888, and Robert Woods was sent to England in 1890 to study the English settlement movement. Prior to assuming his position as head of South End House in 1891, he published a book entitled English Social Movements.[11] Toynbee Hall entertained a constant stream of American idealists and reformers as the settlement was becoming established in the United States.

The Settlement Philosophy

Society as an Organism. The basic consideration of those undergoing search and study prior to the launching of settlements was to develop a type of institution to meet the needs of the poor which reflected the assumptions of the new reformers. The settlement movement sought a relationship with the poor which expressed its confidence in human responsibility and its faith in societal processes. Charity itself was old and established in both countries, and distinguishing the settlement movement from vehicles of charity assumed considerable importance. Between 1820 and 1850, the energy of the reform movement had diffused itself in an unbounded frame.[12] The dispersion and independence of developing communities encouraged the view that any of these communities might be a model for social reorganization, and this optimism became the impulse for many experimental utopias. However, by 1890, the question of national consolidation was resolved. Industrial growth and the entry of millions of immigrants into urbanizing areas precluded serious proposals that society could be guided by the agrarian, anti-institutional, and segmented models of the past. Yet the

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[11] Davis, pp. 12-13.

[12] Fellman.

discrepancy between the real and ideal in American society was as glaring for the intellectuals of the 1890s as it had been for George Ripley and his Communitarian associates. In turning to organismic theories of industrialization and economic specialization, the reformers possessed a more adequate model for what they perceived happening in contemporary America. The forces which they saw about them were an expression of society's progressive move toward complexity and specialization. What they saw happening inevitably in the economic sphere -- mutual dependence and consolidation -- they hoped to facilitate in the social sector.

"Scientific" Millenialism. Most of the settlement workers came from the families of ministers, and their rhetoric proclaims a continuing confidence in the eventual fulfillment of "God's kingdom on earth." For their generation, however, it was not the revivalist's radical change of heart that was needed, or the rejection of contemporary social organization, but the gradual perfection of relations among men and institutions. Jane Addams noted some of the motivations of the settlement movement:

> I have divided the motives which constitute the subjective pressure toward Social Settlements into three great lines: the first contains the desire to make the entire social organism democratic, to extend democracy beyond its political expression; the second is the impulse to share the race life, and to bring as much as possible of social energy and the accumulation of civilization to those portions of the race which have little; the third springs from a certain renaissance of Christianity, a movement toward its early humanitarian aspects.[13]

Enhancing the relations of man with man required the exchange of knowledge and understanding, and this was the first objective of the

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[13]Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," in Christopher Lasch, The Social Thought of Jane Addams (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965), p. 29.

settlement houses. However, they were soon involved with the institutions that affected the quality of life in their neighborhoods. The energy they brought to empirical research of social conditions brought results which affected their philosophy. Settlement workers, thus, entered the political arena for objectives shared by Socialists, trade union leaders, machine politicians, and other unexpected companions. Settlement "millenialism" stressing scientific processes was in harmony with the ends of conflicting dominant interpretations of industrial social development, whether predicting advancement through the dialectic, through the marketplace, or the internal processes of the organism. The theorists' convergence on what Benjamin Nelson termed "redemptive futurism" permitted the reformers to accept diverse patterns in the processes of society and remain sanguine about its ends.[14] Beyond rejecting charity, violence, and major social reorganization, the settlements were self-consciously experimental and pragmatic. Their outlook and activities were not constant things, but adapted to time and circumstance.

Pragmatism. In the writings of Henrietta Barnett, Lillian Wald, and Jane Addams are almost identical statements of their initial impulse. When each had learned of the plight of the poor, she saw the lack of such knowledge in others as the only barrier to the problem's remedy. "To my inexperience it seemed certain that conditions such as these were allowed because people did not know, and for me there was a challenge to know and to tell," wrote Lillian Wald.[15] Her reference to naiveté

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[14] Benjamin Nelson, "Community -- Dreams and Realities," in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., Community (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1959), p. 135.

[15] Lillian Wald, House on Henry Street (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1915), p. 8.

suggests the Toynbee Hall matron's observation. "If men, cultivated, young thinking men, could only know of those things they would be altered, I used to say, with girlish faith in human good will. . . ."[16] Finally, this same evolution is noted by Jane Addams: "I think that up to this time I was still filled with the sense which Wells describes in one of his young characters, that somewhere in Church or State are a body of authoritative people who will put things to rights as soon as they really know what is wrong."[17] These remarks reflect maturing expectations based on the settlement experience and experience in society, as well as the hopeful candor and lack of dogmatism which characterized settlement thinking. Communication was certainly, as suggested by Jean Quandt,[18] a major factor in the establishment of the settlements. But the tradition of empirical sociological studies which came to form part of the information flow from the settlement, coupled with moral outrage, gave the settlements an activist role as Spearheads of Reform.[19] The changing thrust of the social settlements is indicated by a review of their activities.

The Settlement in Action

Hull House. According to the Handbook of Social Settlements,

> Hull House was opened by two women, backed by many friends, in the belief that the mere foothold of a house, easily accessible, ample in space, hospitable and tolerant in spirit, situated in

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[16] Barnett, in Pacey, p. 13.

[17] Jane Addams, "The Snare of Preparation," in Lasch, p. 23.

[18] Jean Quandt, The Small Town and the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970).

[19] Davis.

> the midst of the large foreign colonies which so easily isolate themselves in American cities would be in itself a serviceable thing for Chicago. Hull House endeavors to make social intercourse express the growing sense of the economic unity of society and may be described as an effort to add the social function to democracy.[20]

The neighborhood, according to the Handbook, comprised a mixed factory and tenement quarter. In the area were a large Greek colony, a congested colony of Russian and Polish Jews, and a great Italian colony. These groups had displaced groups of Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, Dutch and French. At the time the Handbook was published, individual frame dwellings were rapidly giving way to factories and dense tenement housing. Clothing manufacture had become a dominant local industry. There was also an active business center in the area.

Hull House opened its slate of activities with a neighborhood reading group. Ella Gates Starr led the study of George Eliot's "Romola." The first "resident" besides Miss Starr and Miss Addams led discussions of the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne and enriched them with first-hand observations. This "charming old lady," a Miss Sedgewick, had known Hawthorne at Ripley's Brook Farm, where they both had been residents during the 1840s. Soon after, a kindergarten opened at Hull House, and a boys' club followed. Edward Burchard, the first male resident at Hull House advertised the art exhibit laboriously gathered by Miss Starr from wealthy Chicagoans, walking between sandwich boards along the streets and into the saloons. Burchard was also the night guard for the paintings.[21] If these activities alone made up the Hull House program, it would have been "dessert for the factory system," or as

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20 [illegible] and Kennedy, p. 54.

21 Davis, p. 42.

Sinclair Lewis caused a character to remark, "a cultural comfort station."[22]

However, in the first years of Hull House, total activities were greatly diversified. In 1892 and 1893, the first major social studies were prepared. An "Investigation of the Sweating System for the State Bureau of Labor Statistics," was followed by a study of the slums of Chicago for the national Department of Labor. This work intensified, until a new resident, joining Hull House in order to write a book, found nearly every other person there writing books.

Miss Addams in 1893 put in a bid for the contract to remove garbage for the area, which had one of the highest mortality rates in Chicago. A resident carried on this work until the position was abolished in part of a developing battle between reformers and the established ward politicians. In 1893, the first public playground was established in response to a letter of outrage sent by a Hull House resident to a Chicago newspaper.

One of the first outreach attempts of Hull House was to invite a young labor organizer, Mary Kenney, to use the facilities of Hull House. Miss Addams herself delivered circulars door-to-door, up and down the steps of the tenements to advertise the first labor meetings.[23] Through Miss Kenney and the young laborers, a cooperative housing club for young women -- the Jane Club -- was established near to Hull House.

Miss Kenney, Florence Kelley, who had been appointed factory inspector by Illinois Governor Altgeld, and another resident of Hull House, Alzina Stevens, promoted an attack on child labor and the sweat-

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[22]Davis, p. 17.

[23]Davis and McCree, p. 34.

ing system which resulted in the Illinois Factory Act of 1893. While the legislation, shockingly permissive though it was by later standards was even so struck down in the courts, the documents of these investigators continued to affect change and convey to the immigrants another set of American values from that to which they were most frequently exposed.

Hull House ran the first public bath in Chicago. It ran a day nursery from its opening until the function was taken over by the city. The services of a physician or visiting nurse were often available through the settlement, and the settlement led in having these services extended officially. Employment services were a major and continuing contribution. In response to an attempt to convert a public school into a factory, Hull House produced empirical evidence that at least 3,000 children were already being denied space in the inadequate educational facilities that existed for the area. In promoting facilities to meet the needs they saw in the community, the reformers at Hull House entered more and more actively into politics. In 1896 and 1898 they supported candidates against the political machine of the ward. The intent, however, of the settlement was expressly opposed to having it become "a dreary place full of dreary furniture and dreary people with their minds fixed on social progress. . . ."[24]

Hull House was frequently referred to as "one of the best clubs in Chicago," and in spite of the moralism which distinguishes the period, the settlement brought exciting currents of thought into the area. The art gallery and the music school flourished throughout its existence. Benny Goodman learned to play clarinet in the Hull House brass band.

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[24]Viola Carruthers, "A True Path to Progress," in Pacey, p. 152.

English was always available to immigrants, but civics, literature and history were also offered. A Shakespeare club was maintained. One report indicates that a boys' club flourished on a program of chivalric tales.

Public lectures formed a part of the Hull House program. In Ann Vickers, Sinclair Lewis has them described as "lectures delivered gratis by earnest advocates of the single tax, trout-fishing, exploring Tibet, pacifism, sea-shell collecting, the eating of bran, and the geography of Charlemagne's Empire."[25] Perhaps to be guilty of the charge was an exceptional accomplishment in an age too dutiful to embrace the joyous optimism of Brook Farm.

Henry Street Settlement. In contrast to the ethereal beginnings of Hull House was the work of Lillian Wald and Mary Brewster in New York. Miss Wald and Miss Brewster were nurses, and their first experiences with the desperately poor were professional experiences. Nevertheless, in Miss Wald's account of the founding of the Henry Street Settlement, health needs were only a part of her concern. "We were to live in the neighborhood as nurses, identify ourselves with it socially, and, in brief, contribute to it our citizenship."[26] Nursing, she noted, would provide an "organic relationship" with the Lower East Side where the women decided to settle.

The nurses had come into contact with College Settlement, the Smith College endeavor under Vida Scudder, and the groups continued to cooperate. From their first location on the upper floor of a tenement,

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[25] Davis, p. 41.

[26] Wald, p. 8.

Lillian Wald notes, the women began the process that would be carried on at Henry Street:

> Gradually there came to our knowledge difficulties and conflicts not peculiar to any one set of people, but intensified in the case of our neighbors by poverty, unfamiliarity with laws and customs, the lack of privacy, and the frequent dependence of elders upon children.
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> Workers in philanthropy, clergymen, orthodox rabbis, the unemployed, anxious patients, girls in distress, troublesome boys, came as individuals to see us, but no formal organization of our work was effected till we moved into the house on Henry Street, in 1895.[27]

While Hull House had wasted little time in becoming concerned with problems of health, one of the first requirements of the Henry Street Settlement was that it should give some "fun to neighborhood children celebrating a birthday."[28] "I yet remember," wrote Miss Wald, "the thrill I felt when I realized that this gift was not for shoes or practical necessities, but for 'just what children anywhere would like.'" The songs sung by the children -- "She's More to be Pitied than Censured," and "Judge, Forgive Him, 'Tis His First Offense," were noted wryly by the young nurse, who gained the children's esteem as their swinging teacher.

In addition to the visiting nurse program and the introduction of nurses serving the schools and communities jointly, Henry Street Settlement also became involved in the demand for playgrounds. Soon both convalescing facilities and vacation opportunities for children in outlying areas of the state were made available through the Settlement. An additional advantage of the rural stays was the semblance of order surrounding the basic living tasks. Children who had never sat at

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[27]Wald, p. 24.

[28]Wald, p. 77.

tables or slept in properly made beds were able to do so. Housekeeping centers in rented tenements also attempted to teach with the resources available to even the most poor. The young students went shopping, did accounts, and learned the use of disinfectants and the control of vermin. Study rooms and coaching were provided in the Settlement for school children, and a small library was kept for pre-schoolers.

Like Henry Street distinguished itself greatly in providing nursing services throughout Manhattan and the Bronx, first aid houses, facilities for country convalescence, and a milk dispensary for mothers, it also organized a gymnasium, kindergarten, boys' and girls' clubs, and classes in both technical skills and liberal arts subjects. Like Hull House, it lent its support to the organization of the Women's Trade Union League, and sweat shop conditions prompted continuing involvement with labor. And, like Hull House, when "communication" failed in altering conditions, lobbying and political activity became its second nature.

Chicago Commons and South End House. Graham Taylor of Chicago Commons Settlement and Robert Woods of South End were the men most continuously associated with the settlements. In the Handbook prepared by himself, Woods notes the purposes of South End House:

> To foster and sustain the home under tenement conditions; to rehabilitate neighborhood life and give it some of that healthy corporate vitality which a well-ordered village has; to undertake objective investigations of local conditions; to aid organized labor both in the way of inculcating higher aims and in the way of supporting its just demands; to furnish a neutral ground where separated classes, rich and poor, professional and industrial, capitalist and wage-earner, may meet each other on the basis of common humanity; to initiate local cooperat. for substantial good purposes; to strive for a better type of local politics, and to take part in minicipal affairs as they affect the district; to secure for the district its full share

> of all the best fruits of the city's intellectual and moral progress; and to lead people throughout the city to join in this aim and motive.[29]

The aim of South End House, he continued, "is to work directly in one neighborhood, indirectly through the city as a whole, for the organic fulfillment of all the responsibilities, whether written down or implied, for the wellbeing of the community, that attach to the citizen in a republic." The population surrounding South End House was also mixed with factories and tenements, but had retained a predominantly Irish identity. Like Hull House and the Henry Street Settlement, South End had a kindergarten, a variety of clubs, nursing facilities, country centers, and technical and liberal arts education programs.

Pluralism in the Great Community

Among the 400 settlements in Woods' 1911 Handbook, there was great similarity of purpose. However, few of them had such articulate spokesmen as Jane Addams and Lillian Wald to elaborate on the understandings and the ideologies underlying the activities. A scrutiny of the settlement programs confirms that considerable effort was being made to Americanize the immigrant populations. The philosophical impulses to the development of settlement houses stressed this need. Overcoming the isolation of the immigrant's life -- his separation from the values and standards of earlier Americans -- was the dominant concern of the settlement personnel. Many thinkers of the Progressive period, of which Jane Addams was one, stressed the importance of stimulating the "collective consciousness."[30] John Dewey, a board member of

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[29] Woods and Kennedy, p. 125.

[30] Quandt, p. 130.

Hull House and ardent supporter of the settlement movement wrote in Psychology and Social Practice:

> The question of the amount of wages the laborer receives . . . of the hours and conditions of labor, are, after all secondary. The problem primarily roots in the fact that the mediating science does not connect with his consciousness, but merely with his outward actions. He does not appreciate the significance and bearing of what he does; and he does not perform his work because of sharing in a larger scientific and social consciousness. If he did, he would be free. All other proper accompaniments of wage, and hours . . . would be added unto him, because he would have entered into the ethical kingdom.[31]

For many critics of society, a major problem was getting the individual to identify himself with the whole, a process which would lead to the moral regeneration of society. To many, the immigrant communities appeared to be conglomerates of anomic individuals, living in conditions of social disorganization. This was the root of the problems being exposed in the cities. It was a problem which "required for its solution primarily a psychological answer -- a shift toward greater moral commitment to the social order."[32]

It is from different perceptions of the poor pioneered in the settlements and expressed vividly by Jane Addams among others that major re-interpretations of societal processes emerged to alter the predominant meanings of community. Experiences at Hull House modified Jane Addams' personal perceptions and expectations and affected the development of a Hull House visitor -- Robert Ezra Park of the University of Chicago. A core of challenging ideas was being formulated: the immigrant was not isolated. He was enmeshed in social organization. This organization had special problems because it was in constant contact

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[31]Quandt, p. 130.

[32]Quandt, p. 133.

with a much stronger system. While immigrants derived the means of their existence from the immigrant community, most of them derived goals and ends from the community they perceived as "American." Therefore, regularizing the relations of these two levels of social organization became a significant contribution of the settlement house, which stood on the boundary between them.

"When the Settlement workers came to their work with the idea of building or restoring the neighborhood in the city, they often discovered that each immigrant or Negro group had already established a community of its own. . ."[33] Each ethnic community developed institutions patterned on the traditions which came with the group. While overlooked by some and romanticized by others, the ethnic community was both nurturing and exploitative. Furthermore, the character of the ethnic community affected the development of institutions which attempted to moderate the relations between the ethnic community and American society. The Irish, for example, embraced the political machine, while the Jews tended to come together in trade unions.[34] While the mainstream of Progressivism was fighting the corruption of the political machine and attempting to produce "rational" institutions, Jane Addams was noting its importance to the poor. And while fear and suppression characterized dominant reaction to the unfolding trade union movement, Jane Addams saw it as a functional way to encourage the realization of American values among immigrants.

The Dilemma of The Ethnic Community. A sociology professor from Smith College -- a college long involved in settlement work -- wrote a

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[33]Davis, p. 84.

[34]Dubofsky, p. 17.

book discussing the problems of Democracy and Assimilation. He noted the prevailing "fallacy" that the process of Americanization was a problem of individuals. Julius Drachsler suggested that what should be considered is "immigrant community life, in all its variegated phases, rather than the detached, atomized, and, therefore, unreal immigrant laborer."[35] From early studies, there are poignant descriptions of immigrant communities. Konrad Bercovici wrote in the New York Times Magazine his impressions of New York:

> I strolled over Third Avenue into Mulberry Street. I was in Sicily at one end of the street and in Piedmont at the other end. The very same odor of fried fish I had tried to escape in Naples assailed my nostrils. The very same impudent cries of the Genoese fishseller greeted my ears. From one end of the street to the other not a word of English except the vilest curses. The signs over the doors in Italian. The clothes of the people, the litter on the streets, the colored shawls tied under the chins of the swarthy wrinkled faces of the prematurely aged women! It was all Italian. It was Italy, with separate provinces and dialects; and in my complete edification I witnessed knife play between a Sicilian fish-peddler and a Calabrese loafer. On the corner of the street stood a policeman. I was tempted to ask him "Please where is America?" But he stared me out of my wits.
>
> I walked out of Mulberry Street and fell into the Greek quarter. It looked more like some side street of Stamboul. Cafes every ten feet. Long-mustached sleek fellows were playing cards and drinking coffee from small cups.
>
> I soon came into the Jewish quarter. Here and there a sign in another language than Hebrew. I wandered into the Syrian quarter on Washington Street. Beautiful laces and heavy brocades in the store windows. Goldsmiths working on the door sills with their legs crossed under them, and the little anvil between the knees. Sellers of sweets passing up and down the street. Vendors of lemonade in red fezes, and the whole atmosphere impregnated with the odor of decomposing sugar from dates and figs. It was Smyrna or Jaffa or the Port of Athens. A young, barefooted boy sold a newspaper printed in the Arabic language which was eagerly bought by everyone.
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> For days and days I searched for Americans but the only thing American I saw was the dollar. And even his Majesty's name

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[35]Drachsler, p. 65.

> was not everywhere the same. The French called it "piece," the Italian, "peze," the Russians "ruble," the Germans "thaler," the Rumanians, "leu."[36]

Under the facade seen and reported by Bercovici was a matrix of institutions governing immigrant life. Each group had mutual aid and benefit societies, church organizations, and provisions for sickness and death. As well, informal traditions provided for the needs of the immigrants. Settlement workers expressed amazement at the ready response to need among the needy. Remote relationships were honored with food, shelter and whatever assistance was in the capacity of the donor to provide. The small resource base of the immigrant communities, however, greatly affected their ability to provide for the subsistence of their members. Furthermore, the communities were beset by other problems. The distinguished sociologist Robert Park came to endorse the immigrant communities wholeheartedly:

> The type of organization which the immigrants bring with them from home is one which we ought to appreciate. It represents the individual's responsibility to society which we have in a measure lost, and are consciously attempting to restore by the reorganization of the local community. It is a type of organization which can be made the basis of all kinds of cooperative enterprise -- the basis in fact, on which the local community will again function.[37]

While suggesting that the Old World communities provided a model to be imitated, Park also suggests that they had great difficulty persisting on the American scene. Within the ethnic communities were many individuals whose activities could not be controlled by mechanisms adequate within the traditional European environment. In their aspirations to rise in American society, they willingly preyed on their more naive

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[36] Drachsler, pp. 67-68.

[37] Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted (New York: Harper and Bros., 1921; reprint ed. New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 295.

countrymen, selling insurance, burial plots or political favors. While such institutions as the "Black Hand" extorted the resources of less cooperative Italians, among the Jews great hardship was endured willingly to finance the aspirations of a few. Furthermore, the barriers between immigrant generations increasingly weakened the significance of the ethnic community to provide subsistence and interpretation for its members.

The dilemma of the ethnic communities was expressed perceptively by Jane Addams. "The poor," she wrote, "are accustomed to help each other and to respond according to their kindliness; but when it comes to worldly judgment, they use industrial success as the sole standard."[38] Thus, even if in the old world the tradition of community interdependence and control was effective, the introduction of the unclaimed resources and the expectations of American society significantly altered that. The political philosopher Gordon Catlin proposes that community can be an "end," a "good, of direct enjoyment to social man," as well as serving as a means to other ends.[39] The immigrants found great difficulty in pursuing New World goals from Old World communities, and "the shattered aspirations and the frustrations of immigrant workers made lower-class neighborhoods the battleground for trade-union gospelers, social reformers, Socialists and Tammany politicians," Dubofsky notes.[40]

For the settlement worker, the dilemma manifested itself daily. Miss Addams remarked on the conscience-stricken social worker advocating

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[38] Jane Addams, "Democracy and Social Ethics," in Lasch, p. 69.

[39] George E. Gordon Catlin, "The Meaning of Community," in Freidrich, p. 132.

[40] Dubofsky, p. 21.

saving in slum households. "The visitor says, sometimes, that in holding her poor family so hard to a standard of thrift she is really breaking down a rule of higher living which they formerly possessed; that saving, which seems quite commendable in a comfortable part of town, appears almost criminal in a poorer quarter where the next-door neighbor needs food, even if the children of the family do not."[41] The attempt to create "moral solidarity" seemed to founder on the economic level forced upon the immigrant groups.[42] The newcomers could not achieve the economic standard American values demanded, and accepting American cultural standards interfered with their ability to function within the immigrant community which sustained them. While a common consciousness of the "higher aims of living" remained the goal of settlement workers, they began focussing on the stages to be passed along the way.

The Community of Labor. In the first years, Hull House identified itself with labor organization. In 1895 Jane Addams wrote: "The settlement, then, urges first, the organization of working-people in order that as much leisure and orderly life as possible may be secured to them in which to carry out the higher aims of living; in the second place, it should make a constant effort to bring to bear upon the labor movement a consciousness of its historic development; and lastly, it accentuates the ultimate ethical aims of the movement."[43] This view of the labor movement was in the tradition of other Progressive thinkers.

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[41] Addams, "Democracy and Social Ethics," in Lasch, p. 69.

[42] Drachsler, p. 197.

[43] Jane Addams, "The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement," in Pacey, p. 40.

The young sociologist Charles Cooley had supported the function of "occupational groups," "not organized primarily for group struggle," according to Jean Quandt. "Rather, they were organized to envelop the individual in an intimate association where fellowship, security, and standards of workmanship led him to identify with the common good. Thus, the main purpose of unions was to foster the sense of belonging so necessary for moral health."[44] This point of view is compatible with the controversial article Miss Addams wrote concerning the causes of the Pullman Strike. Withheld from publication for eighteen years because of its content, the article contends that the cause of the strike was the preoccupation of the employer with providing economic goods to his workers. He had moved toward objectives selected by himself, without the involvement of the workers:

> He has to discover what people really want, and then 'provide the channels in which the growing moral force of their lives shall flow.' What he does attain, however, is not the result of individual striving, as a solitary mountain climber beyond the sight of the valley multitude, but it is underpinned and upheld by the sentiments and aspirations of many others. Progress has been slower perpendicularly, but incomparably greater because lateral.[45]

In 1904, Miss Addams noted that in spite of the nation's fear of labor unions, the unions provided, "the first real lesson of self-government to many immigrants . . . for the union alone has appealed to their necessities."[46]

After entering a relationship with labor through its invitation to Mary Kenney, Hull House went on to sponsor the formation in Chicago

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[44]Quandt, p. 132.

[45]Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear," in Lasch, p. 122.

[46]Davis, p. 92. Quoted from a University of Chicago Convocation Address.

of the Women's Trade Union League. It gave continued support to the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and incubated a number of vital trade-union leaders. Melvyn Dubofsky, an historian of labor during the Progressive period, has noted the relationship:

> These more militant but less numerous reformers actively entered the trade-union arena or enlisted in the Socialist Party. Few captured the spirit better than Gertrude Barnum. Miss Barnum, offspring of a prominent Chicago Democratic family passed from the University of Wisconsin to the realm of Jane Addams, Hull House, and genteel middle-class reform, and then to the rough and tumble existence of trade-union organizer for the ILGWU. She had slowly come to the realization that the conditions making social settlements and charity necessary must themselves be eradicated.[47]

It is not likely that a person of Miss Addams' perspicacity missed the challenge trade unions would bring to the "organismic" view of society which she supported. But the discretion that caused her to bring a neighborhood figure along whenever she spoke about Hull House activities, sustained her non-judgmental role based on the underlying faith in human responsibility and societal processes peculiar to the settlements.

Community Through the Political Machine. Another institution which attempted to provide for the interaction of the ethnic community and American society was the political machine. While the excesses of the political machine in Chicago were singled out for attack by the settlement workers, Jane Addams noted its relevance to the particular problems of the immigrant groups. In the second of two campaigns waged against the machine incumbent of Chicago's Nineteenth Ward aldermanic position, the settlement workers prepared a poster contrasting their candidate, shown in overalls with a lunch bucket, to Johnny Powers,

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[47] Dubofsky, p. 24.

drinking champagne and wearing a diamond stick pin. "To the chagrin of the reformers," Jane Addams later noted, ". . . it was gradually discovered that in the popular mind a man who laid bricks and wore overalls was not nearly so desirable for alderman as the man who drank champagne and wore a diamond in his shirt front. The district wished its representative to stand up to the best of them."[48]

In John D. Buenker's attempt to restore the image of the political machine he points to the attention the machine paid to the problems of everyday existence in immigrant life, compared to the rhetorical exhortations of the reformers:

> Beyond moral regeneration, the patrician based his program primarily upon what has been dubbed "structural reform," tinkering with the mechanics of the governmental system on the assumption that the introduction of more businesslike methods would be sufficient to remake urban life. . . .
>
> Most immigrant voters realized instinctively that honesty, efficiency and economy in government would do nothing to alleviate their condition and could severely cripple the system's ability to dispense favors.[49]

In exchange for the rather intangible resource of the immigrant's vote, the "political machine" supplied employment services and emergency help. Martin Lomasney, a famous Ward leader in Boston, once said that there should be "in every ward a guy that any bloke can go to when he's in trouble and get help -- not justice and the law, but help."[50] That help might consist of food, a rent payment, funeral expenses, or clothing. Sometimes it consisted of providing bail, intervening in legal charges, or obtaining a license or permit. Not their own labor, their

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[48]Davis, p. 156.

[49]John D. Buenker, Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 26.

[50]Buenker, p. 4.

ethnic community, nor the adoption of American cultural standards could provide the immigrants with the fruits of their cooperation with the political machine. Beyond access to these concrete services, the political machine provided a career-ladder for immigrants which recognized their roots in the ethnic community and their aspirations to mobility and success in America. Naturalization and voter registration, frequently provided for in the "political clubhouse" behind the neighborhood saloon, were among the early "personal" experiences of the newcomers. Jane Addams recognized both the role of the saloon and the political machine in the lives of her friends:

> Indeed, what headway can the notion of civic purity, of honesty of administration, make against the big manifestation of human friendliness, this stalking survival of village kindness? The notions of the civic reformer are negative and impotent before it. The reformers give themselves over largely to criticisms of the present state of affairs, to writing and talking of what the future must be, but their goodness is not dramatic; it is not even concrete and human.[51]

To the reformer, justice, reason, civic duty and the public good dominated priorities. The real needs of the immigrant family were better expressed personally -- and perhaps even politically -- by the urban machine.

The Radical Progressives. Thus, the political machine, like the labor union, provided for the day-to-day needs of the immigrant. The numerous organizations for self-help among the ethnic communities were limited to the resources held by the ethnic communities -- for the most part this did not include jobs, political access, or minimal social services. The political machine brought the resources of the larger society to meet immigrant needs, albeit selectively. It was a process

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[51] Jane Addams, "Why the Ward Boss Rules," in Lasch, p. 129.

that could be understood by the newcomers. The machine politicians adjusted the processes of society to provide services for themselves and their voting base. The development of the labor unions was to stress a "confrontation" approach to needed adjustments, as well as some of the co-optating techniques of the machines. Nevertheless, the two differed from the conservative reformers of the settlement houses in that they saw the basis of cohesion in the day-to-day needs of the people. The settlement workers represented a philosophy in which it was expected that a proper consciousness provided the basis for community. The adjustment of consciousness through understanding -- interaction, knowledge, research and structural changes to enhance this process -- was their preeminent concern. They felt that the capacity for responsibility among adults who had sufficient information and common cultural objectives would move them toward the ultimate moral social organization -- the "Great Community." The irony was "that organization seemed to destroy community," as the historian R. Jackson Wilson noted.[52]

In a pragmatic fashion they shifted to support for the institutions around them which they saw meeting the needs of the people of the areas they hoped to serve. They then tended to "sanctify" these institutions according to the model of society they held. Miss Addams noted that the labor union was "at bottom an ethical movement," "a manifestation of the orderly development of the race."[53] Dubofsky has commented on the "sanctity of purpose" attributed to trade unions by supporting

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[52]R. Jackson Wilson, The Quest for Community: Social Philosophy in the United States, 1860-1920 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968), p. 174.

[53]Addams, "The Settlement as a Factor," in Pacey, p. 39.

reformers, including settlement workers.[54] Miss Addams compared the techniques of the political machine to her image of traditional "village kindness." The terminology for community organization of any type claimed the mystique of "extended family" from settlement workers. The prospect of a millenium fulfilled through "scientific" processes was real to this generation, and whatever they saw altering conditions toward the fulfillment of the values they held -- intimacy, classlessness, participation -- was eligible for their umbrella of respect.

As they came to terms with institutions they saw performing a role in their constituents' lives and brought outrage and political force to bear on the system they endorsed, the settlement workers struck an "inter-generational" bridge which linked them to the reform emphases of the New Deal. It has been pointed out that the settlement houses were the incubator of the New Deal. Harold Ickes, Eleanor Roosevelt, Frances Perkins and Norman Thomas served a stint as settlement house residents. Davis notes that "the amazing group of people at the settlement reads like a twentieth century Who's Who."[55] Nevertheless, Gerald Suttles, looking at the neighborhood surrounding Hull House at the present time found slums and poverty.[56] Like its reforming predecessors, the Settlement had not changed the dominant impulses of American life. However, just as the Communitarians of the 1840s, the settlement workers during their time contributed to man's continuing search for an arbiter between the lonely individual and society.

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[54]Dubofsky, p. 36.

[55]Davis, p. 6.

[56]Gerald D. Suttles, The Social Order of the Slum (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Chapter IV

THE SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS' UNION AND THE RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION, 1930-1940

The Relationship Between the Tenant Farmers and the Resettlement Administration

The most distinguishing feature of the 1930s in the United States was the physical and mental disorder resulting from the Great Depression. The crisis was of such magnitude that it challenged deeply-held ideas about the mechanisms of social order. Further, it called for practical ameliorative measures prescribed for their effectiveness rather than their consistency with reigning ideals. The charismatic Franklin Roosevelt promised an attack on misery in contrast to the indecisive theorizing of the incumbent Federal administration. On the promise of a New Deal for Americans, he was swept into the White House in 1932. Roosevelt maintained his position by balancing concessions to the cries for restoration of pre-depression order with support for the forays of reformers seeking fundamental change. One of the arenas in which these purposes collided was agriculture.

The desperate plight of Americans involved in agriculture was one of Franklin Roosevelt's most immediate concerns during his campaign and early days in office. New Deal attempts to cope with the derangement led to the formulation of the Agricultural Administration Act. The administration of this Act, however, actually increased hardships experienced by Southern agricultural laborers. Outraged idealists

became concentrated in a reform-oriented agency, designated the Resettlement Administration. This agency systematized unprecedented ventures by the government into altering man-land relationships, specifically through planned communities.

Response to these communities was affected by concurrent developments. The protection that other New Deal legislation had given to union organization permitted expectations inspired by Rooseveltian rhetoric to coalesce among the suffering agricultural laborers, predominantly tenant farmers and sharecroppers. In Arkansas there emerged a surprisingly strong association, The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (STFU). Drawing on concepts of worker brotherhood and solidarity long associated with the struggling American labor movement, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union combined them with broadly accepted agricultural and religious values. Under this respectable umbrella, the bi-racial workers' union nurtured the development of black leaders who subsequently returned to emphasizing the uniqueness of the black experience. While the black leaders were responding to what they perceived as an inferior position within the workers' brotherhood, this study suggests they were responding as well to the promise that they might gain economic and institutional expression of their racial identity through the Federal community building program.

Thus, in the New Deal period government officials turned to the concept of community, by interest and territory, in seeking a solution to the national disorder. A response relevant to this study was made by black tenant farmers for whom the territorial community had become unviable. They identified first with the community of labor which was enjoying a vigorous resurgence. However, before finding the nurture and

support for which they hoped, black tenant farmer leaders abandoned the community of workers for the community of race.

Agricultural Policies of the New Deal

Development of AAA. On the heels of his inauguration, Roosevelt called a meeting to attack the problems of agriculture. He and Secretary Henry A. Wallace invited farm organization leaders and rural editors to discuss agricultural needs. This meeting fulfilled a campaign promise to Edward O'Neal, president of the extremely powerful American Farm Bureau Federation, for immediate action to restore farm prices.[1] The crisis of depression conditions brought a sense of urgency, however, to trends which had been maturing for many years. The romantic image of America's independent farmer had, for a great part, become a romantic image. If, by 1930, "more than half of all Southern farmers did not own the land they farmed, and nearly three out of four cotton farms were operated with tenant labor," it was not an abrupt increase over the national tenancy rate of 35% which prevailed in 1900.[2] For Negro farmers, of whom 77% were tenants in 1935, the rate had changed very little through the first third of the century. The policies emerging from the consultations of these early meetings were passed in May 1933, as the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The legislation seemed to confirm the domination of agriculture by powerful commercial farmers of the South and Mid-west who were already linked to professionals in the

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[1] Sidney Baldwin, Poverty and Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 50.

[2] Eugene Conrad, The Forgotten Farmers: The Story of Sharecroppers in the New Deal (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 1-2.

land-grant colleges, state agricultural extension services, and in farm organizations. There seemed to be little provision for alleviating conditions of chronic poverty and the general social malaise which had long afflicted many branches of agriculture, including the "family farm."

Rexford Tugwell Leads the Call for Reform. Attending the March 10 meeting of agriculturists was a man unknown in the close-knit fraternity that had constituted agricultural leadership in the United States. His appointment to the Department of Agriculture conjures the significance of dubbing Roosevelt "the Lion and the Fox."[3] Rexford Tugwell, new Assistant Secretary to Wallace, delivered an address calling for "fundamental reform," "readjustment of man-land relations" and "comprehensive economic and social planning."[4] While the words were taken as harmless rhetoric by most, little time passed before his critics would delve anxiously into Tugwell's past, fixing on a poem of his college days:

I am strong,
I am big and well-made,
I am muscled and lean and nervous,
I am frank and sure and incisive.

I bend the forces untamable;
I harness the powers irresistible --
All this I do; but I shall do more.

I am sick of a nation's stenches,
I am sick of propertied czars . . .
I have dreamed my great dream of their passing,
I have gathered my tools and my charts;
My plans are fashioned and practical;
I shall roll up my sleeves -- make America over![5]

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[3]James McGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956).

[4]Baldwin, p. 52.

[5]Bernard Sternsher, Rexford Tugwell and the New Deal (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1964), p. 5.

While Tugwell could honestly claim a rural background, he was above all an intellectual rigorously trained in economics. Ascending rapidly at Columbia University, Tugwell wrote prodigiously and contributed regularly to liberal publications. His convictions associated him periodically with Socialists of the League for Industrial Democracy and with the American Civil Liberties Union. Furthermore, he had toured the Soviet Union in 1927, and his criticisms of the society never gained the public notice associated with the travel. Finally, added to his other disabilities, he dressed fastidiously, a characteristic which fascinated his critics. In his willingness to "make America over," Tugwell let himself be cast in a difficult role. Privately, Roosevelt urged his former brain-truster into programs of fundamental reform, while he tied himself practically to those already holding power.

Few weeks had passed before clear divisions were recognized between the "boys with their hair ablaze"[6] who were Tugwell's men in Agriculture, and their opposing numbers who saw the depression as a temporary crisis in a sound industry. Before the end of 1935, the young radicals were the victims of a great "purge" in the Department of Agriculture. Precipitating the crisis was a seemingly minor clause regarding tenant farmers which appeared in the Agricultural Administration Act.

Displacement of Tenant Farmers. In their attempts to raise farm crop prices, agricultural administrators were striving to reduce production. Agreements were sought with cotton producers which committed them to take land out of production and to accept quotas on alternative crops in return for the promise of guaranteed prices. Even without abuse, the

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[6]Conrad, p. 106.

program caused tenant hardship, since entire blocks of land to which long-term tenants had been attached became unproductive. However, the cotton planters had themselves been hard pressed by the melange of conditions associated with the depression, and when the opportunity came to increase their revenue, with a coordinate decrease in their responsibilities, many could not resist. The displaced tenants, white and black alike, were even more bewildered by their increasing insecurity, since with the rest of the nation they strongly identified with Roosevelt's promises of improved conditio under the New Deal.

Rising expectations, coupled with new attempts to protect labor organizers, provided opportunities for cooperation among the growing numbers of displaced tenants. The resources mobilized by the Federal government in fighting the economic crisis undermined local traditions and power relationships, raising the possibility of change. Unsettling the situation even further was an ideological climate in which the hierarchy of American values was under scrutiny. The ideas of the Social Gospelers, the Populists, the Wobblies and other associationists were allowed to emerge from the wings and became hopelessly entangled with the rising wave of popularity enjoyed by ideologies of the Soviet Union. How these conditions were expressed through the relations of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union with the agencies of the New Deal, particularly the Resettlement Administration, is a fascinating episode in the evolution of the idea of community.

The Emergence of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union

The Incentives. Norman Thomas, the long-time leader of the Socialist Party in the United States, made a journey to Tyronza, Arkansas

in 1934. After addressing a group of sharecroppers in the high school auditorium, Thomas shared dinner with two Tyronza businessmen. These two, H. L. Mitchell and Clay East, had become the confidantes of sharecroppers displaced from a nearby plantation -- Fairview Farms -- owned by Hiram Norcross. Under the provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, tenants on the Norcross plantation were entitled to one-half of the parity payments made by the government for land taken out of production. Norcross adapted this payment -- always made through the plantation owner -- to meet his own interpretation. Further, he began a series of evictions to reduce the number of tenants to whom he owed responsibility.

During the dinner discussion, Thomas, Mitchell and East concluded that what was needed to aid the displaced tenants was a union. Mitchell and East presented this concept to a group of irate sharecroppers soon after. The eleven whites and seven Blacks attending voted unanimously to work toward this end.[7] It was decided, further, that a bi-racial union would protect Blacks from the violence typically accorded their protests, while protecting the whites from being undercut by a substantially larger and lower economic group. In addition to its emphasis on inter-racial cooperation, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union had elements of most respectable reform currents alive in the United States in 1934.

The Random Radicals. Donald Grubbs, historian of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, referred to its leadership as "random radicals."[8] While the Socialist philosophy of Norman Thomas was compatible, it never

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[7] Conrad, p. 86.

[8] Donald H. Grubbs, "Gardner Jackson, That 'Socialist' Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal," Agricultural History 42:2 (April 1968):126.

dominated the pragmatic organization. Clay East and H. L. Mitchell, nominally Socialists, had been influenced by the entire spectrum of American reform ideas, particularly the writings of Upton Sinclair.

> The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union turned out to be as southern as cotton itself. Its agrarian radicalism owed far more to Mitchell's eclectic, youthful discontent, to the Populist party, to the western element of the Industrial Workers of the World, and eventually to the Christian Social Gospel, than it did to New York socialism. Its terminology was biblical and its tactics pragmatic.
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> The initial STFU demands drawn up by Mitchell and the first sharecropper members themselves show no traces of plagiarism from Socialist sources and, even in their style, are simple and angry dirt-farmer outcries. Its first constitution, written mainly by union president J. R. Butler, a self-educated school-teacher, is an amalgam of Populist, IWW, and American Federation of Labor sentiment.[9]

The strong influence of Christian principles on American radicalism is especially apparent in the instance of leadership for the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Norman Thomas, who personally lent the union a sheltering wing, always appeared more comfortable with the ideas of Jane Addams than with more militant expressions of socialism. The Union's best friend in Washington, Gardner "Pat" Jackson never deviated much from the intense New England Christian moralism which permeated his family through his father's marriage to Indian-advocate Helen Hunt Jackson.[10] Further, both white and Negro leadership in the South was heavily drawn from the ministry. Ward Rogers, a young Methodist minister, was a graduate of Vanderbilt University and attended seminary in Boston. Howard Kester, a prominent figure in STFU, was a graduate of Princeton and Vanderbilt Divinity School. He was, however, also a member of the

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[9]Grubbs, "Gardner Jackson," p. 126.

[10]Murray Kempton, Part of Our Time, (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1955), pp. 37-82.

Executive Council of the Socialist Party.[11] Claude Williams, later named communist, was an ordained Presbyterian minister.

The Role of Black Ministers. The Negro leaders had little formal training, but were usually themselves sharecroppers who had received "the call." E. B. McKinney of Marked Tree, Arkansas, was a garrulous preacher of considerable repute. A. B. Brookins was another Arkansas minister periodically terrorized by night riders for his allegiance to STFU. In the Bootheel area of Missouri, not far from the activity of Tyronza, a Negro minister named Owen Whitfield was to figure in the search of displaced tenants for community. Union meetings frequently were in church buildings, and union music was adapted from popular hymns.

The Union Shelter. Within a few months of its organization, the bi-racial union had at least 1,400 members, enough to attract the attention of the planters.[12] Harassment and brutality against union leaders and members began in earnest. The traditional violence against union organizers, however, could be countered during the New Deal period in a manner that violence against Blacks could not. And while activism in the STFU required great courage from black and white members alike, black leaders, in fact, came under an umbrella of Federal protection in their role as labor organizers which was not accorded to them as organizers of black men. United with white sharecroppers and prestigious intellectuals, pursuing the traditional objectives of agrarian reform -- through Rooseveltian "bargaining" expressed in

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[11] Conrad, p. 91.

[12] Conrad, p. 93.

biblical rhetoric -- the talented black leaders were able to transcend the arbitrariness of regional prerogative. Across the nation support welled up for the "plight of the sharecroppers." Expressed by social and intellectual leaders and developed by the media, sympathy for the displaced tenants came to weigh heavily on the American conscience. In this milieu, a nucleus of black leadership emerged, reliant on the regularization of human relations through Federal intervention and linked for survival to intellectuals in the Roosevelt administration who were taken with such antagonistic ideas as the moral value of going back-to-the-land, rational community planning, conflict theories of society, and the romantic new science of "cultural anthropology."

The Department of Agriculture

Conservatives vs. Reformers. Rexford Tugwell was, indeed, the hope of the intellectuals of the 1930s for substantive reform in agriculture. In his role as Assistant Secretary under Henry Wallace, he was able to nurture the hopes of many young idealists who had turned to government seeking a vehicle for change. Reformers who might have been Communitarians in the 1840s, or settlement workers at the turn of the century, now plunged into the foray of right-and-wrong as bureaucrats in the alphabetical agencies of the Roosevelt administration.[13] While the top job in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration went to George N. Peek, an energetic and conservative agriculturist, the agency was nevertheless decorated with what Peek referred to as "an entirely new species."[14] Jerome N. Frank, a success-

[13] Richard H. Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Thought in the Depression Years (New York: Harper and Row), 1973 p. 55.

[14] Baldwin, p. 54

ful corporation lawyer who had also been a research scholar at Yale University Law School, was placed in charge of the Office of General Counsel in the AAA, and filled it with compatible associates. The AAA Office of Consumers' Counsel was headed by Frederic C. Howe, a well-known and experienced reformer who had written many serious books on such topics as municipal reorganization, monopoly and socialism. His deputy was Gardner Jackson, whose role with the STFU was predecessed by active support of Sacco and Vanzetti, the labor radical Tom Mooney and the "bonus army."

The reformers in the Roosevelt administration looked at the immediate crisis as an opportunity for fundamental change, while the conservatives tended to concentrate on [illegible]ing the abnormalities of the depression. The issue of the ten[illegible]mers, however, went beyond either viewpoint. The catalyst for disag[illegible]ment among co[illegible]vatives and reformers was a clause in the legislation which specified that a planter was to maintain a constant numb[illegible] of tenants. In the early days of the AAA, this clause had not been taken seriously by administrators interested in gaining the cooperation and the "sign-up" of the cotton planters. However, as the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union began actively trying to insure a voice for sharecroppers and tenants, insisting that they receive their proper share of parity payments, instigating legal action and arousing public opinion, the nature and number of [illegible] tenants became a fundamental consideration. Large families which required a lot of "furnish" were undesirable, but to the plantation owners the most undesirable tenants were trouble-makers. Union members were paramount among those considered troublemakers.

Thus, when it became evident that the AAA would have to involve itself directly with tenant grievances, planters made considerable

attempts to alter the composition of their tenantry. This provoked a legal opinion from the office of Jerome Frank, which came as a shock to plantation owners and AAA administrators alike. The formal interpretation, to supercede informal administrative patterns, was that not only the number of tenants must remain constant, but the tenants themselves could not be displaced for a union-related cause.

The Purge of the Reformers. Southern agriculturists considered this interpretation a barbaric invasion of their cultural prerogatives; administrators desperately seeking cooperation and support were appalled. To Secretary Wallace the furor indicated that the Agricultural Adjustment Administration could no longer function pursuing incompatible objectives. Reluctantly, he responded by firing Frank and most of the liberal sympathizers within AAA. Ironically, the issue over which the radicals were purged from the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was an issue in which their position could only have been termed conservative or "reactionary."

The trend toward the displacement of tenants had been growing. The economic gap between the mainstream of American society and the tenant farmer had become so enormous that observers wondered if they were not the most depressed group in the modern world.[15] Breakthroughs in mechanization were coming rapidly to the cotton industry. To insure the position of the tenant farmer, except in its implications for civil liberties and Federal-state relations, was hardly an aspect of the quest for "fundamental reform." However, Federal support for the rights

[15]Donald H. Grubbs, Cry From the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 5.

of tenants in the collective bargaining process was coincide with other experimental Federal programs, which in the consciousness of STFU leaders and imaginative bureaucrats had great promise. The program focussed upon by the leaders of the desperate tenants was yet, in 1935, a hodge-podge of idealism and indecision. Incorporating political motivation with intellectual currents from disparate sources, the Roosevelt administration was erratically dabbling in rural and urban "planned communities." Just as Tugwell's position in Agriculture became untenable, Roosevelt prevailed upon him to attempt to coordinate a grand new agency -- the Resettlement Administration -- under whose jurisdiction all these programs would be placed.

The Resettlement Dream

Contributing Philosophies. Tugwell was handpicked to head [Resett]lement by Roosevelt, but the men differed dramatically in their interpretation of the agency. Roosevelt had dabbled in programs to send people back-to-the-land during his tenure as governor of New York. At that time, he seemed to be responding to three strains of thought: the traditional reverence for land in American ideology, the nineteenth century agitators of the back-to-the-land movement, and the intellectual current stemming from the Communitarian experiments of the mid-1800s which had been especially strong in the "burnt" areas of New York.[16] Roosevelt had actually attempted to apply some of the principles of subsistence homesteading on property he owned in Georgia. Tugwell, on the other hand, tended to subordinate these "romantic" considerations, and actually referred to Roosevelt's vision as "utopian." Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the legislation providing for the encourage-

[16] Baldwin, p. 68.

ment of communities relied heavily on these sentiments for its passage through Congress.[17] Tugwell, himself, relished the opportunity for "planning," and for technological efficiency which he thought could be implemented toward the joint improvement of impoverished people and impoverished land. The comprehensive new communities appealed to him, and there was significant reason for him to believe that his objectives and Roosevelt's were compatible. For many exciting minds in the 1930s would have said that it was so. These were the years in which intellectuals "rediscovered" the life of Mexican communities; epoch studies of unspoiled human groups were written by the rising wave of cultural anthropologists which included Ruth Benedict. After the emphasis of the Progressive period, it seemed a resurgence of the legitimacy of the microcosm -- justification for permitting pockets of Americans to live tranquilly outside the great industrial consciousness.

Predecessors of Resettlement. In legislation, the beginning of this trend toward Federal community building appeared in the National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in July of 1933. Twenty-five million dollars was allotted for "making loans and for otherwise aiding in the purchase of subsistence homesteads."[18] While, like succeeding legislation, the provisions of the Act did not offend the image Americans held for their basic industry, agriculture, the administrators of the program attempted to make realistic adaptations, since impoverished subsistence homesteaders had been flooding into the cities for decades.

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[17] Paul K. Conkin, Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1959), p. 36.

[18] Baldwin, p. 71.

M. L. Wilson, appointed administrator of Subsistence Homesteads, under Secretary Harold Ickes of the Department of Interior, stretched the legislation to its limits. Wilson was broadly educated in the humanities as well as in agriculture, and had been involved in an experimental cooperative farming project sponsored by the Ford Foundation in Montana. According to Wilson's assistant, Quaker social worker Clarence Pickett, "Every kind of new idea concerning community life that had been brewing in the minds of people over the country found its way to the office of Dr. Wilson and myself."[19] At the end of two years, nevertheless, the programs of Subsistence Homesteads had been frustrated to the point that they had only used slightly more than a quarter of their available funds.[20]

Another major predecessor of Resettlement was the Rural Rehabilitation Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Agency. This agency, begun a year after Subsistence Homesteads, planned twenty-nine communities, giving advice, providing equipment and purchasing land. Like Subsistence Homesteads, they had great difficulty putting plans into reality.[21] Meanwhile, the rhetoric of these agencies and their widespread activities were inspiriting the hopes of those who had continued to suffer under the New Deal, such as the tenant farmer and sharecropper.

Political Advantage. At the same time that the community programs were mired in difficulties and frustration, they were loudly interpreted as a great threat. Influential groups felt the emphasis on

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[19]Baldwin, p. 72.

[20]Baldwin, p. 75.

[21]Will Alexander, "Overcrowded Farms," Agricultural Yearbook: Farmers in a Changing World (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1940), p. 870.

cooperation was not in keeping with American ideals, and that this administrative emphasis exceeded the jurisdiction of the legislation. Roosevelt greatly desired to improve the administration of the programs, which were his pet and a special concern of Mrs. Roosevelt; he also wanted to consolidate them as a political disadvantage under an individual who would take the responsibility off the Roosevelt administration and onto himself. When this became possible under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, Roosevelt created the Resettlement Administration by executive order, and gave it to Tugwell.

The Tasks. Under the agency's jurisdiction would come activities of the Land Program and Rural Rehabilitation Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Association, the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the United States Department of Interior, the Debt Adjustment Program of the Farm Credit Administration, and the state Rural Rehabilitation Corporations. The tasks of the agency included suburban resettlement, rural rehabilitation, land utilization and rural resettlement. The Resettlement Administration inherited 4,200 employees from the agencies it was superceding. While many communities were started by preceding agencies, and completed under the succeeding Farm Security Administration, it was in Resettlement that expectations coalesced and serious consideration was given to a legitimate role for long-term cooperative economic arrangements as a basis for community life. More than 200 resettlement projects were begun before the war effort brought the country into "one" purpose and one economy, with the displaced tenants among others pouring into the cities for economic advantage and the mirage of social mobility.

Resettlement Inspires New Community Expectations. Thus, there was considerable governmental activity that suggested the possibility for Federally-sponsored communities with their own resource base for the displaced tenant farmers. The precedent encouraged a strong orientation toward Federal communities to grow among blacks and whites who had found common cause in the Union. When J. R. Butler wrote the constitution for the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union he mirrored the programs of the early Federal agencies, incorporating them into his own variety of agrarian socialism. Butler expressed the need to replace tenancy with "occupant ownership and cooperative order of society."[22] H. L. Mitchell concurred, probably for more precise reasons. Always pragmatic, he felt that the only hope for the tenant farmers to compete in commercial agriculture was on a big scale, which could only be done cooperatively. The intellectual leadership of the Union, including Howard Kester, Gardner Jackson, and Professor William Amberson of the University of Tennessee all expressed themselves strongly and repetitively for "communities" -- in contrast to seeking guarantees of tenancy or promoting the idea of individual homesteads.[23] Will Alexander, Tugwell's deputy, was a compassionate Southerner strongly oriented toward the possibilities of economic cooperation as a basis for new communities for the suffering tenants. Nevertheless, the legacy of these ideas and expectations for the shaping of the community concept is not in a network of autonomous, cooperative agricultural communities. That which was desired by intellectuals, bureaucrats, practical union

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[22]Grubbs, Cry, p. 64.

[23]Grubbs, Cry, pp. 131-135.

leaders, tenant farmers and the President and his wife assumed quite different form in the context of the times.

The Amorphous Community

The Challenge of STFU. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union was marching on many fronts. Attempting to build class consciousness among workers was controversial even in the industrialized North where a tradition of worker organization existed. It was a much greater threat where the economy and the "way of life" were linked, as they were in Southern agriculture. In addition, however, the Union was challenging the subordinate position of the black man in its bi-racial composition. Thirdly, the Union was attempting to use national values and the power of the Federal government to force changes on the tightly organized southern political system. And finally, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union began an attack on "yeomanry" itself, proposing the collective use of land and machinery and cooperation in social services and marketing. Any one of these would have been sufficient to insure the Union's demise; that the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union advocated them all, existed for several years as a major influence and endures to this time in its contribution to conceptions of community life and radical thought, is impressive. It is not strange that in engaging such formidable opponents, the appearance of the Union took on scars which caused alarm even among its friends.

Black Separatism. One of the changes that conditions generated in the Union related to the role of its black leadership. These men, nurtured as labor organizers, found that being black still dictated the conditions of their lives more than being "workers." Violence directed

at the Union hit much harder on them; rewards that came to the Union were largely confined by society to the white minority. As a result, articulate black leaders began advocating "separatism," but at the same time they maintained the rhetoric of labor, which emphasized group bargaining. Neither did they change from the STFU policy of gaining intervention on the local scene by Federal agencies and hoping for Federal resources -- particularly, Federal communities -- to increase their independence from local control.

E. B. McKinney was involved with the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union from its earliest days. He was a preacher of high standing in the town of Marked Tree, Arkansas, whose efforts had been instrumental in unifying the blacks and whites in a common Union effort. However, by 1936, McKinney was threatening to pull away from Mitchell because "the Negro is the Goat of the S.T.F.U."[24] By September of 1938, McKinney was expelled from the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union for attempting to organize Negroes separately. His predilection for the work of Marcus Garvey, Negro nationalist, was revived. "McKinney's long-time Garveyism had grown stronger as he observed black people getting beaten, year after year, to produce rewards for poor whites."

> If Negroes could not even take the reins of an organization in which they were the majority what hope was there for them? "We do not know our power," he cried to a friend; "We are like a mule, which looks into a man's eyes and sees a whole world too big for him to handle, and he submits to him and lets him work him to death."[25]

Nor was McKinney alone in this interpretation.

In 1936 a white planter, born in Indiana, educated in Michigan and obsessed with the economics of Thorstein Veblen, asked H. L. Mitchell

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[24]Grubbs, Cry, p. 114.

[25]Grubbs, Cry, p. 176.

to send an organizer to his area, the "bootheel" of Missouri. In response to Thad Snow's request, Mitchell sent John Hancox, a Negro poet and songwriter better known as "John Henry." Almost immediately however, the local came under the leadership of an impressive black sharecropper-minister named Owen Whitfield. Whitfield had many personal contacts from his service to churches in the Bootheel, and he used the churches and the pulpit for union organization -- what he termed "applied religion."[26] Whitfield, like McKinney, began his efforts working strongly for bi-racialism in the Union. Also, like McKinney, he became a vice-president of STFU. Through the intervention of Snow and STFU, Whitfield was able to move onto a government community project nearby, at La Forge, in New Madrid County, Missouri. From this time, he hoped for a similar opportunity for other sharecroppers.

In 1938, the zealous Whitfield wrote to Roosevelt arguing for homes for sharecroppers similar to La Forge. A "colonization plan is our only hope."[27] To the executive secretary of the St. Louis Urban League he reported that he was "organizing a campaign to get his people 'in readiness for a drive on the federal government' in order to get the Farm Security Administration to continue its homesteading projects similar to the one already established at La Forge."[28] Indeed, Whitfield's drive to achieve realization of the community ideal was an epoch moment for the sharecroppers, gaining national interest and accelerating Federal program development. It also moved Whitfield

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[26]Louis Cantor, A Prologue to the Protest Movement: The Missouri Sharecroppers' Roadside Demonstration (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969), p. 32.

[27]Cantor, p. 56.

[28]Cantor, p. 66.

strongly into "separatism," and did much to hinder the ability of the STFU to provide a meaningful community of any type for its members.

The public attention drawn by STFU to the administrative consequences of the Agricultural Administration Act had drawn dividends. In spite of Wallace's purge, there remained considerable feeling in the Department of Agriculture and in the public at large that the sharecropper situation required attention. Thus, the inexorable displacement of the tenants was given another impulse when in 1938, agricultural administrators implemented changes requiring planters to give croppers a higher percentage of the Federal crop payment. Since there were always large labor surpluses in the Bootheel, the planters had been moving for some time to "day" labor. With the new regulation, at least an additional quarter of the crop payment was at stake, and mass evictions began in earnest.

Whitfield had learned that up to nine hundred families would be asked to leave their premises on January 10, 1939. He began to look for help wherever he might find it. In St. Louis he contacted the central body of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and a former Communist party organizer to solicit support. Both the CIO and the Communist Party were groups with which the STFU was embroiled in conflict. Mitchell was trying to retain some local autonomy for the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in response to centralizing efforts of the national labor organization with which STFU had affiliated. This group, the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) had appeared to be the only channel through which STFU could join the national labor movement. However, the CIO affiliate was under the control of known-Communist Donald Henderson.

E. B. McKinney, in the meantime, was working toward his variety of black "separatism" with the help and encouragement of discredited STFUer Claude Williams, who had been expelled for suspected Communism. Mitchell was walking a tightrope between his need for a base in the national labor movement, and his fears of centralization, Communist doctrine, and the image of Communist association. Relations between Whitfield, desperately concerned with "help," and Mitchell, as desperately searching for policies to save the Union, became exceedingly strained.

The Image of a Black Community. As the date of the evictions loomed, Whitfield made the decision to stage his protest. Those evicted would move onto the public highway, and starve "where people can see us."[29] By noon of January 10, there were more than 1,000 persons camped along the roadsides. Federal officials noted that ninety to ninety-five percent were Negro. Signs they carried were a direct appeal to Roosevelt and Federal intervention. One chastised, "We voted for Roosevelt. Now Look Where We Are At."[30] Missouri officials did everything to obstruct Federal involvement, letting few people through to the campers and very little relief. When the publicity, nevertheless, became intolerable, they decided to move the demonstrators forcibly. Whites and Negroes were purposefully separated. Barns, open fields, a churchyard and a cabaret were among the facilities provided. Privies and drinking water were non-existent according to observers. While struggling to keep out Federal relief, the planters

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[29] Cantor, p. 57.

[30] Cantor, p. 65.

were assigning responsibility for the demonstration to the Federal authorities. J. V. Conran, a local planter, expressed the prevailing feeling that rather than the local conditions, the presence of the La Forge project was the cause of the Bootheel's troubles. He asserted, "They put that damn thing down here."[31] His words were shadows of an earlier pronouncement made in Arkansas. "It would have been better to have a few no-account, shiftless people killed at the start than to have all this fuss raised up. We have had a pretty serious situation here, what with the mistering of the niggers and stirring them up to think the Government is going to give them forty acres."[32]

Whitfield, in the meantime, had fled for his life to St. Louis. His family, in spite of Whitfield's close relationship with Hans Baasch, the director of the La Forge project, abandoned their home and belongings to save their lives. Whitfield was able to get enough financial support from activists in St. Louis to purchase ninety acres, to which some of the displaced tenants eventually moved. Others ultimately received aid from the Farm Security Administration or relief agencies. Some of Whitfield's St. Louis friends were Communist, an embarrassment to Mitchell and STFU, and fuel for the fire which kept inter-worker brotherhood meaningless. With Whitfield's disenchantment over what he felt was the Union's unwillingness to help "his people," while it endlessly squabbled with the CIO, UCAPAWA, and its own dissidents such as Claude Williams, came an increase in his awareness of the uniqueness of being black. Williams willingly fanned the fire, but Whitfield had an exchange with Roy Wilkins of the National Association for Colored

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[31]Cantor, p. 87.

[32]Conrad, p. 164.

People at this time as well. From this point on, "my people" to Whitfield were Negro people, not tenant farmers.[33]

Raymond Wolters in his study of Negroes and the Great Depression notes that the greatest Negro intellectual of the times was running a similar gamut. William DuBois had been an ardent Union advocate, printing the symbol of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) on the masthead of his publication Crisis. In the midst of the depression, according to Wolters, DuBois returned to an emphasis on "racial solidarity, self-help and the group economy."[34] Instead of deriving benefits from "biracial working class solidarity," the Negro was being "hampered by his white-brother laborer."[35] DuBois wrote in 1934:

> It is the race-conscious black man cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race, and the great step ahead today is for the American Negro to accomplish his economic emancipation through voluntary determined cooperative effort.[36]

The opportunity for "voluntary determined cooperative effort" was that which was being sought by Owen Whitfield, and it is interesting to see what his labors produced.

The Government Response. The government project at La Forge was one in which both contentment and economic rewards were substantial. In contrast to most programs, the Federal government had purchased a plantation and given opportunity to the existing tenants to participate

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[33]Cantor, p. 111.

[34]Raymond Wolters, Negroes and the Great Depression: The Problem of Economic Recovery (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1970), p. 238.

[35]Wolters, p. 236.

[36]Wolters, p. 249.

in new programs. The plan for La Forge, however, was not "collective," but included one hundred individual homesteads rented to sixty white families and forty Negro families. Each family was provided with a home and an operating loan. The government formed a cooperative association which operated a cotton gin, warehouse, cotton seed house, store and other services. As well, educational services in soil-conservation and home management were available. At the time of the roadside demonstration, the La Forge project was economically sound, with little tenant dissatisfaction. In fact, according to Baasch, he had received 10,000 applications in 1939 for admission to the project.[37] Further, in interviews conducted by the STFU in the Bootheel, there was nearly unanimous affirmation of its desirability as a way of life. When government responded to the demonstration with new projects, however, three of the four types were aimed at resolving the problems of day laborers. These projects improved the standard of living of workers in the Bootheel, but they ignored the problems of "man-land" relationships. They did not decrease the dependence of the laborer on the vacillations of the cotton planters. Neither did they unify the workers in any way, although the burden of relief was shifted to the Federal government. Whites, furthermore, were rewarded in the projects disportionate to their minor role in the catalyzing demonstration, though not necessarily to their proportion in the total population.[38]

Community leaders greatly resisted the extension of the La Forge concept. Their hostility stemmed from many threats it posed.

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[37]Cantor, p. 68.

[38]Carey McWilliams, Ill Fares the Land (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1942), p. 292.

Clearly, the La Forge project was believed to raise expectations and increase discontentment among agricultural workers. As well, local power structures were threatened by the intervention of Federal programs. These two considerations did not prevail against the introduction of Federal projects geared to the needs of the planters for day labor subsisting in Federally financed housing between seasonal operations. The spectre of economic independence raised by autonomous communities of former tenants, such as at La Forge, was substantially more threatening, and this was enhanced by the cultural need to have control over the aspirations of the black community. While it is usually noted that the bi-racial nature of La Forge, and some other Federal community projects, raised the ire of nearby residents, the mixed composition actually seems to have guaranteed Black subordination. Thirteen rural communities were begun throughout the New Deal exclusively for Negroes; other projects like La Forge accepted both whites and Blacks but used policies of segregation. Eventually Blacks were moved into some projects intended for whites.[39] However, in no instance was the director of any rural resettlement project, white or black, a Negro, although both Tugwell and his successor Will Alexander expressed their desire for it.[40] In administering the projects, any positions which demanded contact with both Blacks and whites were filled with whites. That this remained so suggests a fundamental problem frustrating the black leaders attempting community building in the DuBois model. The communities were

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[39] Allen Francis Kifer, "The Negro Under the New Deal, 1933-1941," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1961), p. 202.

[40] Donald Holley, Uncle Sam's Farmers: The New Deal Communities in the Lower Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 185.

ultimately subject to the willingness of society to provide them, since prior to the organizational thrust of the civil rights movement the Negroes had few resources of their own.

Whitfield saw in the Federal community building program a promise particularly suited to the needs of southern black people. The frustration of his hope was related to the challenge that black communities, Federally sheltered, brought to the economy and way of life in the South. While the realization of the "black community" had unique incentives in the nature of organization and experiences common to Negroes in the South, it also had virulent opposition which derived from the same sources. Thus, while the Blacks and their representatives seemed to want communities more than any other group, the obstacles to their realization were also substantially greater. Nevertheless, these antagonisms might have been resolved except for the manner in which they related to anachronisms in the entire Federal community-building program which led to its misinterpretation, and ultimately to its ignominious demise.

The Frustration of New Deal Community Building

Jurisdiction in a Democratic Society. In the crisis conditions of the depression, the nation's sense of injustice welled up at the plight of the tenants and sharecroppers. Alleviation of their condition received broad public support, which permitted the government some discretion in intervening locally. The government itself, however, was under as much attack as the local agriculturists for contributing to the indignities of the tenant farmers, since their displacement was precipitated by an extremely controversial act, soon struck down by the

Supreme Court. Divergent interests and contradictory ideals both contributed to blocking realization of the community projects. Where compromises were reached which permitted the construction of the projects, they shared the fate of other New Deal programs, acquiring contradictory dimensions under decentralized administrative procedures. Far beyond the realm of the intellectual dreamers, local administrators did not see the community projects as the spearhead of a coming wave of cooperation, but as vanguards of education, socialization, and acculturation. They were not life, but preparation for life.

The Anachronism of a Rational Community. Tugwell opened a cooperative project at Plum Bayou, Arkansas, placatingly "These five homesteads that you see here are not for everyone. They are only for farm families who have proved their good intentions and have shown definite ability to succeed."[41] Success, for the project administrators, indicated that the participants would reach national economic and social standards. The criteria which were used for the selection of project participants stressed characteristics which conflicted with the needs of the institutions provided for "cooperation." Project participants in most cases, could not be in debt, they could have only a small number of children, and they had to be within prime-age categories. In most cases they had to be willing to move to the project and to leave behind aged or needy relatives. Family groups were discouraged for fear of cliquishness. Further, they had to have recommendations from regional community figures, such as the county-agent, citing initiative, intelligence, and adaptability. Selectees were then provided with a

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[41] Holley, p. 143.

house, tools, equipment, schools, and social services, the costs of which were frequently yet unspecified. The projects were expected to repay capital investments, which greatly exceeded that which the area had previously provided, and at the same time support a higher standard of living than the workers had ever had, including such innovations as eyeglasses and pianos. On many agricultural projects, those selected were not able to work outside for wages even if the need for cash should arise. They were also compelled to forego competitive shopping in order to support the cooperative marketing facilities and were required to spend a great deal of time with home demonstration agents and agricultural extension officials. One client commented that "your entire life down here is controlled by regulation and everything you do must be done by rule and rote, which is all right during a period when you're 'proving yourself,' but there comes a day when the very spirit of Americanism reels against the constant invasion upon family life you're subjected to."[42] He complained of demands to have his home on exhibition, with visitors "sticking their noses into every room, closet, nook and cranny at all hours."

During the trial period, project participants could be evicted for being uncooperative, financially insolvent, or culturally inept. While undergoing these rigors, participants were constantly being subjected to alterations in policy. Promised deeds never materialized; projects were discontinued, changed from cooperative to individual or from white to black. The continual shuffling forced participating families to limit their commitment in order to facilitate reentry into the outside. Will Alexander, Tugwell's assistant who later headed

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[42]Holley, p. 151

Resettlement's successor, the Farm Security Administration, painfully reported an exchange with a tenant at the Lake Dick cooperative farm in Arkansas:

> We're getting along just fine. We got the best house to live in we ever had. We got some good land to plow. We got plenty to eat. I'm working harder than I used to, but the kids are better off, and the wife don't have to work in the fields any more. A few more years on this project and we can buy us a piece of land.[43]

Uncertain goals, administrative procedures combining insensitivity and paternalism, and policy vacillation caused heavy turnover of participants on most projects.[44] Nevertheless, the projects which were mortally afflicted with the conservative "rationalism" of social work professionals striving to build communities fulfilling national standards of "equality" and economic success, were at the same time hampered by the "radical" image the communities held in public opinion. The consequences of this were compounded where the projects were associated with the demands of social insurgents such as H. L. Mitchell and Owen Whitfield.

The Taint of Foreign Ideology. Across the nation the fate of the Resettlement communities was affected by the Communist movement. The Communist ardor of the 1930s created an atmosphere in which all reform efforts could be clouded with the taint of foreign ideology, and this atmosphere hampered programs which had flawless credentials. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, and particularly her black separat-

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[43] Baldwin, p. 277.

[44] The La Forge project was an exceptional case. When that plantation was purchased by the government, existing tenants were offered the opportunity to stay on the land. For various reasons, this proved much more successful than selection procedures devised for other projects.

ists, repeatedly provoked legitimate suspicion. In dealings they shared with Resettlement's "Rex the Red" Tugwell, public response tended to exaggerate symptoms of alien influence.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union emerged as a traditional response to malaise in agriculture, exhorting its members in rhetoric familiar to Americans. When Mitchell found Communist contacts being forced on him in his relations with nearby Commonwealth College and Don Henderson of UCAPAWA, he resisted strongly. The Union expelled Claude Williams for suspected Communism and finally suffered a mortal wound over the Communist issue. Nevertheless, in the rhetoric of the planters, "outside Communist agitators" dominated the union and "stirred" their happy tenants to un-American aspirations. This fear of the STFU was compounded when it shared purposes with the Resettlement administration. The governor of Missouri wrote to Henry Wallace that an investigation would reveal "un-American and Communist practices," in the governmental projects.[45] Most residents of the Bootheel believed that the project at La Forge was "communistic"; its Scandinavian director Hans Baasch, trained in rural cooperatives, was believed to be implementing Soviet-inspired collectivism.[46]

Indeed, leaders of STFU as well as the reformers in government were desperately attempting to move away from the Progressive model of society in which there was a common will to be expressed by a benevolent governing institution for the benefit of all citizens, toward a model legitimating distinct interests, and the regularization of their interaction. In the 1930s reformers no longer regarded government as an

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[45]Cantor, p. 72.

[46]Cantor, pp. 152-153.

"impartial instrument for dispensing social justice but as an arena in which power might be transferred from one group to another."[47] That this model became confused with Marxist ideology when it could not even manage to alienate the good-will being showered upon the black sharecroppers by Christian liberals is an especial irony. Mitchell once lamented, "Our support has got to come from labor -- depending on liberal, religious, etc., groups can't last."[48] Nevertheless, he was never able to make the relationship with labor as sustaining as his other foundations; the union was never so strong as when it was under the wing of Gardner Jackson, who above all wanted to extend the benefits of American life to all with justice and kindliness.[49] Jerold Auerbach concluded in his evaluation that the STFU functioned more as a protest movement than as an expression of special interests.[50]

If the dilemma plagued the leaders of the Union, it was a constant source of despair to the administrators of the sympathetic government agencies. Will Alexander at one point remarked on the different pressures on him to socialize the sharecroppers into the stream of American life:

> Sometimes, looking at our pack of friends, I felt schizophrenic and the more numerous and diverse they became the more remote I felt from the real world of the needy sharecropper and tenant living in some shack along Tobacco Road.[51]

The government community projects were enthusiastically adopted by those

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[47]Pells, p. 55.

[48]Grubbs, Cry, p. 170.

[49]Grubbs, "Gardner Jackson", and Kempton.

[50]Jerold S. Auerbach, "Southern Tenant Farmers: Socialist Critics of the New Deal," Labor History 7 (Winter, 1966): 17.

[51]Baldwin, p. 298.

who saw them as a way of extending American cultural aspirations and opportunities to those who had been excluded.

The Changing Community Concept

When the Bankhead-Jones farm tenant bills, with their emphasis on private purchase and personal loans, finally passed combined House-Senate scrutiny, many felt that the nation had reasserted its course after a dangerous fling at "collectivization." At the same time, the National Association of Colored People was still attempting to obtain the opportunity for agricultural cooperation among black farmers to fulfill the illusion provoked by the dream of Resettlement.[52] The evidence, however, does not indicate that the Resettlement Administration ever posed any threat to characteristics of agrarian individualism such as uncertainty, indebtedness, the fortuities of land speculation, or helplessness before large institutions such as banks, railroads, planters, government, or social service professionals. Further only two percent of the total projects engaged in common ownership -- the others provided opportunities for individuals to cooperate.[53] For the most part, it seems that the policies of selection and administration never transcended the society-oriented model put forward by Progressives in which acculturation and agreement were stressed.

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[52] Wolters, p. 63.

[53] Joseph W. Eaton, Exploring Tomorrow's Agriculture (New York, Harper and Bros., 1943) p. 47. The manner in which the government vacillated on the conditions of ownership of individual homesteads within projects undoubtedly contributed to the confusion as to what projects were "collective" and what projects were "cooperative." In some projects conditions of ownership were not resolved prior to the post-war liquidation of the communities.

Federal community building had to be based on values held commonly across the nation, and this proved a weak basis for cooperation. The symmetrical white frame houses that came to typify Resettlement communities expressed equality but not identity. Neither Roosevelt's Arcadian dream nor Tugwell's bent for planning could provide the vitality that time had given the tenants at La Forge, that ideology might have given the STFU, and that discrimination had given to the Blacks. Community building, nevertheless, went on under the New Deal, both in the manner in which Federal resources were channeled when possible through local governments and intermediate organizations, and through protection of civil liberties.

Community was an essential value to such conservative agriculturists as Wallace, Peek, and M. . Wilson. Each one of them strongly favored decentralization in planning and administration related to agricultural programs. They repeatedly stressed the value of "grass roots" input and control. In administering the Agricultural Adjustment Act, the men turned naturally to county committees, composed of experienced local agriculturists and advisers from regional land-grant extension programs. This structure, they believed, insured the integrity of the communities. The view of community came into conflict during the New Deal period with dramatic shifts in perceptions of allegiance, common interest, and the distribution of resources for legitimating informal authority.

Mitchell's group demanded that the oppressive local farm committees which had strengthened the planters and had allowed manipulation of AAA programs be altered to reflect the correct proportion of sharecroppers and tenants in the regional population. "That clearly

would be in keeping with true democratic processes," he noted.[54] However, there seemed to be endless controversy over this point. Owen Whitfield, by 1940, had diverged from Mitchell.

> After some success in getting Negroes on local county committees in Missouri, Whitfield was quite pleased. 'I worked hard to get such a committee with a man of our race on it in each county,' he wrote, 'because it meant so much to us.' Whitfield wrote that it did not matter 'whether he belonged to the UCAPAWA, the STFU or whether he belonged to any union or not just so there was a Negro on it.'[55]

The strong resurgence of the "racial community" has been more provocative to the contemporary community concept than the largely contractualized bonds of worker solidarity. The concentration of ethnic minorities in urban areas has partly alleviated its contradiction with the concept of regional autonomy. In the 1930s DuBois recognized the folly of each individual fighting the battles of civil rights in his search for belonging and community. His successors have agreed, strongly focussing on the inalienability of the black identity. With no country or territorial resource base of their own, however, a "gemeinschaft" withdrawal was no feasible alternative for Blacks. Jesse Bernard interprets the new black community as a "fighting phalanx.[56] Wilson Carey McWilliams writes, "In black militant thought community and unity are not merely devices, tactical means to win admission to the 'open society' and then to be abandoned. Community becomes a permanent principle, a constant political need."[57]

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[54]Cantor, p. 25.

[55]Cantor, p. 11.

[56]Bernard, p. 129.

[57]Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 606.

As the depression gave way to the economic growth associated with the beginning of World War II, enterprising whites moved easily into the national economy in California and Northern industrial cities. Blacks, as well, moved on a large scale to the cities, ending their press for new rural projects, although the idea of a black "group economy" under black control was never realized through the community program of the New Deal. In 1941, W. E. DuBois was asked to discuss the impact of "Federal Action Programs and Community Action in the South."[58] The lasting phenomenon in his view was "a new and direct connection between the Federal Government and the individual citizen" such as the South had never experienced before. He continued:

> I cannot prove how clear this new conception of the basic relations of political activity to economic well-being has become, how deeply it is sunk but certainly the instrument known as the Federal Government has rescued the South from the depths of depression and sooner or later there is bound to come the question: how can this political instrument which is Federal Government be used more widely and efficiently for the well-being of the mass of people?[59]

When the final liquidation of the rural communities begun under the New Deal was taking place in the late 1940s, Owen Whitfield was in Chicago working with Claude Williams and the Institute of People's Applied Religion, concentrating even yet on organizing and improving the life of "his people."[60]

As the possibility and desirability of an independent economic base in a community project faded, the black leaders carried their aspirations with their numbers to the cities. Black militance, strongly

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[58]W. E. B. DuBois, "Federal Action Programs and Community Action in the South," Social Forces, 19 (March 1941): 377ff.

[59]DuBois, p. 379.

[60]Cantor, p. 146.

related to the perceived capacity of Federal intervention to assure both right and solvency, was a pronounced feature of the urban political scene in the 1960s and was strongly associated with the perceived bonds of the community of "race."

Chapter V

COMMUNITY ACTION: THE PROCESS OF UTOPIA

The Multiple Objectives of Community Action

Confusion in Community Action. "The times," Daniel Moynihan wrote, seemed to facilitate the convergence of the "shaggy unexact communitarian anarchism of the Paul Goodman variety" with the "shiny, no-nonsense, city-as-a-system Robert S. McNamara style" of thinking about group life.[1] The child of this convergence, Community Action, was a social strategy outlined in 1964 under legislation entitled the Economic Opportunity Act. Signed by President Johnson, but conceived in the aura of optimism emanating from the early days of the Kennedy administration, the provocative incentives for Community Action did not survive the national neuroses catalyzed by the Vietnamese War. Campaigning in 1968, Presidential candidate Richard Nixon pointed to the "programs for the unemployed, programs for the cities, programs for the poor," which had nourished an "ugly harvest of frustration, violence and failure across the land."[2] On his election, with public indifference and support, Nixon dismantled the Office of Economic Opportunity, ending Community Action.

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[1]Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 42.

[2]Sar Levitan and Robert Taggart, The Promise of Greatness (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 4.

By 1964, the United States was spending between $20 and $30 billion annually in social programs related to the poor.[3] These funds were at the disposal of a wide variety of government agencies, each of which reflected a core of prerogatives and policies associated with its perceived objectives. The program for Community Action was allotted few funds of its own. It was conceived as a method for allowing communities, through the participation of their members, to initiate and coordinate social programs on their own behalf. Each community was to be represented by a council which was expected to respond to local needs in planning and coordinating programs and preparing grant requests. Each project was to be administered by an approved Community Action Agency. According to one of the originators, James Sundquist, the Economic Opportunity Act provision (202,a,3) that Community Action programs "must be developed, conducted and administered with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and members of the groups served just seemed to me like an idea that nobody could quarrel with."[4] Community Action, nevertheless, became second to the statutes of Prohibition in generating controversy and universal disillusionment. The problems of Community Action, according to another of its designers, Robert Levine, resulted from "the notion of community and the notion of participation -- both of which preceded the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. . . ."[5]

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[3]Levitan and Taggart, p. 20, estimate that in 1974 dollars the amount was $53.5 billion.

[4]Sar Levitan, The Great Society's Poor Law (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 36.

[5]Robert Levine, The Poor Ye Need Not Have With You: Lessons From the War on Poverty (Cambr ge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 50.

Daniel Moynihan entitled his study of Community Action Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding in recognition of the confusion which plagued Community Action strategists attempting to respond to conflicting expectations of community. The idea of community, broadly held to be desirable and attainable, when translated to government policy resulted in interminable and irreconcilable competition, reflecting conflicting views of man and society and the special antagonisms of the concept. The manner in which the program evolved did much to insure this.

The Problem of the Permanently Poor. The time of World War II was a time of social mobility. The post-war period was a time of economic growth; economic policy under Eisenhower stressed the inevitable "trickle-down" of prosperity. The symptoms of a stratified labor market emerged in the mid-1950s, however, among expressions of concern for urban decay, racial disparity, inequities in education, and the effects of automation. Intellectuals and some liberal politicians began drawing attention to "pockets" of poverty which did not respond to national patterns of economic growth.

Soon after Michael Harrington's book The Other America was published, a member of the Council of Economic Advisers, Robert Lampman, began sending information about poverty to President John Kennedy. John Kenneth Galbraith, who had long lamented the plight of the poor, had written in 1958 that there could be no "political payoff" in fighting poverty. "Any politician who speaks for the poor is speaking for a small and inarticulate minority."[6] Nevertheless, by the early 1960s, a composite of circumstances had affected the credibility

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[6]John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1964), p. 328.

of poverty as a po[illegible] issue. Furthermore, theories and techniques for dealing with p[illegible]verty [illegible]ad emerged which seemed to be [illegible]compatible with the political objec[illegible]es.

The Political Impulse. The dominant factor in making the alleviation of poverty a political consideration was the emergence of the politically powerful civil rights movement. Blacks, often among the disadvantaged, were by the 1960s able to affect voting patterns of their own group, sympathizers, and those who feared further social instability through their activities. The movement of Negroes from the South to Northern cities affected the fortunes of the Democratic party, with which they were strongly aligned. Thus, as Southern allegiance to the Democratic party faltered, the ghetto vote for the Democratic Kennedy in his 1960 victory was a strong sixty-nine percent.[7] However, a coalition of conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats in Congress had blocked civil rights legislation during Kennedy's first two years of administration. To stay a viable candidate required certain moves. According to Frances Piven and Richard Cloward, "A way had to be found to prod the local Democratic party machinery to cultivate the allegiance of black voters by extending a greater share of municipal services to them, and to do this without alienating urban white voters. It was this political imperative that eventually led the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations to intervene in the cities. . . ."[8]

The Community Action Troika: Power, Order, and Process. The pressure on Kennedy to respond with a program that could put resources

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[7]Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), pp. 255-56.

[8]Piven and Cloward, pp. 255-56.

in the hands of urban Blacks was strengthened by other seemingly harmonious considerations. According to Norman and Susan Fainstein, "While the impetus to recent policy can be attributed partly to pressures exerted by black leaders, its content was framed by college professors, foundation officials and occupants of positions in the federal government." They continued, "The reform program of the 1960s can be traced both to a growing consciousness among members of the upper strata of the extent of poverty and their perception of the danger to social stability. . . ."[9] Thus, while the poor hoped for resources for social change, the chief threat to the "Quest for Community" being experienced in the 1960s by most Americans, according to Daniel Moynihan, was disorder. Just as the aspirations of the poor had been frustrated by migration, automation, and the development of complex organization, mid-America was also feeling loss of control and comprehension in life. For the poor, and especially their self-appointed black spokesmen, the Federal resources were seen as a basis of power to change the institutions which had forced them into a position of disadvantage and exclusion. In the view of middle-class Americans and their spokesmen in Congress, community involvement would provide rewards and incentives for demonstrating sound American values on an individual basis, and bring an element of local initiative and accountability to the disbursement of Federal welfare monies. These two fundamental and antagonistic impulses to the development of the Community Action program comprised the root of irreconcilable misunderstandings over its implementation, and its evaluation.

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[9]Norman Fainstein and Susan Fainstein, Urban Political Movements (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. 26.

For various reasons, these contradictions did not emerge in the planning stages of Community Action. One of the most important was the predisposition of professional social planners to look beyond these controversial assumptions, concentrating instead on the mechanics of the social system. Robert Boguslaw has described planners who swayed to this bent of the 1960s as the "New Utopians," hoping to perfect the processes of society:

> They [the new utopias] are designed to deal with some perceived limitation in the existing organization of men and materials, they attempt to improve an existing state of affairs, and they frequently are utterly visionary in concept and disappointing in execution.[10]

Thus, the contradictory assumptions were left unresolved by professionals associated with the development of Community Action, and a final "political" analysis was paralyzed by the national trauma of Kennedy's death.

The Methods of Community Action

Contribution of the Ford Foundation. When Kennedy's planners began thinking about poverty programs, a convenient and reputable package of ideas and innovations came to their attention. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Ford Foundation had attempted to develop experimental, "coordinated" approaches for alleviating the multiple problems of urban transitional areas. Initial efforts concentrated on the role that could be played in the community by a school system with expanded responsibilities for adult and community services. Soon the Foundation was evolving strategies which reflected prevalent combinations of low budgets and high aspirations. Grants made by the

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[10]Robert Boguslaw, The New Utopians: A Study of System Design and Social Change (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 5.

Foundation were intended "as a stepping-stone to larger grants that would stimulate broader and more coherent community approaches to the physical and human problems of the grey areas. . . ."[11] This willingness to engage in consciousness-raising was a departure in policy for semi-public agencies, although it was entrenched in the radical tradition. Secondly, the Ford Foundation resolved the problem of locating "grantees" by responding to community initiative at design, coordination and administration. The Ford Foundation began referring to its programs as Community Action programs.

Soon after his election, President Kennedy had established the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. The Committee was headed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy. This committee came into contact with a Ford Foundation project in delinquency entitled Mobilization for Youth. This youth program was under the influence of Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin of the Columbia School of Social Work, who had developed a theory of delinquency derived from contemporary interpretations of "anomie." This Ford Foundation program ultimately exerted great influence over the President's Committee for Juvenile Delinquency through David Hackett, personal friend of Attorney General Robert Kennedy. The two groups exchanged ideas and personnel, and their efforts became mutually reinforcing in outlook and strategy. When the opportunity for recognition and expansion of the programs became likely, internal disagreements based on philosophy and project evaluations were

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[11] Peter Marris and Martin Rein, Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the United States (Chicago: Aldine Press, 1973), p. 17.

subordinated to the shared desire for expanding the role of the professional advocate of the poor.[12]

Agency Resistance. The techniques that had been developed and called Community Action by the Ford Foundation were further sheltered from meaningful debate by the actions of Federal agency spokesmen involved in the planning process. The Departments of Agriculture, and Commerce, of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), of Housing and Home Finance (HHF), and the Labor Department all had programs which related to the emerging War on Poverty. It was clear that the role of some of these agencies could change. HEW wanted responsibility for the programs; Labor wanted to be placed in charge; HHF, at least, wanted to administer its own. Agriculture and Commerce would accept administration by a Presidential assistant but not by another agency. Such protective activity had rationalizations in the process-oriented models prevalent among social scientists.[13] Thus, instead of responding with the outrage that characterized Jane Addams when faced with bureaucratic obstinacy, the hopefully amoral reformers were confirmed in their developing expectations for community initiative and coordination. At a distant, and as yet unmobilized local level, "umbrella agencies" would be established to "coordinate" the multi-faceted attack on local poverty in the Ford Foundation pattern. The budgetary allotments for the War on Poverty would be the allotments of the participating agencies to a great extent, although the Office of Economic Opportunity was estab-

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[12]Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Professionalization of Reform," The Public Interest 3 (Fall 1965):6-16.

[13]Roland Warren, "The Interorganizational Field as a Focus for Investigation," Administrative Science Quarterly 12 (December 1967): 396-419.

lished to accredit the local Community Action Agencies, to fund their administration, and to allocate dollars for a limited range of experimental programs. The office would have $750 million the first year and anticipated $1.5 billion thereafter.

Complications From Kennedy's Death. The committees preparing the President's program against poverty were meeting when notified of his death in Dallas. Although Johnson moved with alacrity to adopt Kennedy's plans, what the two men brought to the developing program stand in sharp contrast. Kennedy's death affected the attitude of confidence and optimism on which the programs were based. While "systems" and "process" were the jargon of the New Frontier, they did not sit comfortably on Lyndon Johnson, nurtured in New Deal reform techniques. The new leader, whose paramount identity remained with Texas, had a wary appreciation for the role of local government and inviolable regionalism. Further, he shared the nation's widespread discomfort with academia. The appointment of Sargent Shriver to head the Office of Economic Opportunity reinvigorated the program with Kennedy mystique. In deference to Shriver's success with the Peace Corps, the OEO was allowed to retain jurisdiction over the newly-formed Job Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), visualized as a domestic Peace Corps, in addition to Community Action. Thus, the contradictory expectations and the inflammatory potential in the objectives, assumptions and methods of the OEO were not debated until they made their public debut.

Two Thrusts for Community Action

Activities during the first days of the Office of Economic Opportunity confirmed both its ideals and its political shoring. The

opening of the Office of Economic Opportunity, according to Robert Levine, "was an era that attracted some of the brightest social thinkers in the country, but perhaps not those with the most well-organized minds."[14] Operating under the philosophy, "To Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom," the Office of Economic Opportunity funded over one-thousand Community Action Programs (CAPs) within the first eighteen months of operation. Perhaps reflecting the difficulties besetting the national Democratic party, CAPs threw seemed toward a direct relationship with black voters in the cities. During the years of Community Action, in fact, three times more dollars per capita poor" was sent into urban target areas than to the impoverished of rural areas, and much of this had the appearance of political patronage.[15] Levine characterized the 1965 role of Community Action under Shriver as the "advance guard for the overthrow of local establishments."[16] Mayor Shelley of San Francisco noted the impact in his city: ". . . [this program] has the potential for setting up a great political organization. Not mine. Because I have had nothing to say about it."[17]

Resources for the Black Community. Blacks, as a result of civil rights agitation, were better organized than most disadvantaged Americans. When the legislation providing for Community Action was passed, militant black leaders were ready and experienced in organizing and in dealing with the morass of intricacies associated with Federal

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[14]Levine, p. 53.

[15]Piven and Cloward, p. 259.

[16]Levine, p. 36.

[17]Ralph M. Kramer, Participation of the Poor: Comparative Case Studies in the War on Poverty (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969), pp. 59-60.

programs. In many cities they were able to form accredited "umbrella" agencies, apply for Federal funds, and achieve an enviable position in commanding the resources available through Community Action. Not only did they create new "institutions" which supplemented and competed with existing municipal agencies, but they began challenging authority over existing municipal services. In New York the black drive for control over "community" schools offended its staunchest liberal supporters with emphatic anti-Semitism. Careful observers noted that Community Action Programs there "brought previously non-existent political and financial resources into the ghetto, provided a forum for dissidence and rewards for protest action, offered legal services to protesters and stimulated the development of radical ideology. . . ."[18] Across the nation similar circumstances inspired similar results.

Emerging from the Ford Foundation Mobilization for Youth program, a Harlem Theatre project for youth was funded by OEO. HARYOU-ACT was immediately charged with being infiltrated by Communists. In its materials radical ideas were expressed; furthermore, it became known that HARYOU-ACT subsidized a theater project known as Black Arts Theatre. This theater produced "incendiary" anti-white materials by Negro playwright LeRoi Jones. "The plays were offensive to many citizens, and Shriver, himself, referred to them as 'vicious racism.'"[19] Furthermore, the mishandling of funds became an issue, as it would for many CAPs, and there was a threat upon the life of the responsible investigating official.

The Child Development Group of Mississippi began as a Head Start administrator, but surreptitiously slipped into attempts to organize

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[18] Fainstein and Fainstein, p. 232.

[19] Levitan, p. 87.

black poor.[20] It further received notoriety for hiring individuals to manage Head Start who were not "qualified" to provide Head Start services. Again the agency experienced administrative and accounting peculiarities.[21] Senator John Stennis launched a vociferous attack, which caused OEO to back off in funding.

Later, the Office of Economic Opportunity responded to the request of groups left over from the Selma, Alabama civil rights demonstration to fund an agricultural cooperative in Alabama. Disregarding the governor's veto, the project was granted Community Action status before opposition within the community, FBI investigation of "Communist" infiltration, and the poor land base caused the project's disbandment. By far the most disturbing episode, however, was the revelation of the large grants made to Chicago's Blackstone Rangers, which were glibly displayed for mid-America by Arkansas Senator John McClellan in special Senate hearings. According to the journalist of pop culture Tom Wolfe,

> Some of the main heroes in the ghetto, on a par with the Panthers even, were the Blackstone Rangers in Chicago. The Rangers were so bad, the Rangers so terrified the whole youth welfare poverty establishment that in one year, 1968, they got a $937,000 grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington. . . .
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> The police would argue that in giving all that money to gangs like the Blackstone Rangers the poverty bureaucrats were financing criminal elements and helping to destroy the

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[20]"Head Start" was one of the most uncontroversial and widespread of the OEO sponsored projects. It emerged from designs called "National Emphasis Packages" which were set up to help the disadvantaged deal with program development and implementation. Head Start was a pre-school program to bring children from disadvantaged groups up to the achievement level of their "advantaged" counterparts.

[21]Levine, p. 69.

community. The poverty bureaucrats would argue that they were doing just the opposite. . . .[22]

The publicity granted to such controversial OEO ventures rewarded Community Action with the illusion of a maverick image disproportionate to its support for anti-establishment minority groups. Such concurrent events as the Watts riot and the Selma, Alabama civil rights demonstration became vaguely and erroneously associated with Community Action efforts. The capacity for perceiving threat and disorder was finely honed in segments of American society in the early 1960s. Kennedy's death contributed to the uncertainty, and growing campus unrest confirmed the spectre of chaos looming on the horizon. The brewing dissension over involvement in Vietnam cast intellectuals in an uncertain light, and their esoteric theories for fighting poverty assumed part of the burden of their growing unpopularity. Lyndon Johnson, though sincerely committed to his principles for the Great Society, reflected the feelings of the American "heartland" when he spoke of the "kooks and sociologists" in OEO.[23] Thus, while outrage was growing among Americans of a conservative persuasion, disillusionment with what was happening set in on those who had hoped that through Community Action the poor would gain sufficient power to affect mainstream society.

The Plum and the Thumb: Services Through Participation. In a provocative study of Community Action under the Office of Economic Opportunity, Stephen Rose focussed on programs in twenty cities. In

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[22]Tom Wolfe, Radical Chic and MauMauing the Flak Catchers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1970), pp. 140-41.

[23]Levine, p. 84.

the initial response made by the communities to the provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act, no "poor" people, no civil rights groups or even "neighborhood" representatives moved to seize power. Rose found that the mayor's office initiated action in fifteen of his twenty cities and other public agencies such as welfare in ten of the cities. The board of education figures prominently in twelve. City councils, local universities, labor councils and churches played minor roles.[24]

The significance of this pattern emerged subsequently, as Rose finds the initiating agencies administering nearly eighty percent of the funds obtained by the Community Action Agencies. Rose, who has interpreted the design of Community Action as an attempt to give power to the poor, is appalled to find that ninety-four percent of the programs developed by Community Action Agencies sought to "socialize" the individual, and furthermore, expanded the influence of established service agencies. An additional 2.85 percent was devoted to changing "incomes," and a meager 3.13 percent was directed toward "institutional change."[25] The role of the Federal agencies in protecting themselves from changes in their "legitimate domain" of activity encouraged OEO planners to adopt the strategy of the Ford Foundation in hoping for "coordination" of programs at the local level. In order to participate in the programs made available by the Economic Opportunity Act, therefore, a new institution had to be developed within each community rapidly enough to meet deadlines for project applications. At the same time, a high level of awareness and skill was necessary for the new

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[24]Stephen Rose, Betrayal of the Poor: The Transformation of Community Action (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1972), p. 129.

[25]Rose, p. 142.

organization to respond to the legislation. These two factors virtually assured that existing administrative or service agencies would figure prominently in the initiation and development of the community "umbrella" agency, although where civil rights groups had been active they were able to provide alternative, though not necessarily more representative, leadership.

The angry contingent of mayors that descended on Vice-President Hubert Humphrey after the opening of the Office of Economic Opportunity were, thus, responding on two fronts. While demanding reassurance, recognition, and a closer definition of who might be considered to represent the "community," their organizations moved to garner the Federal resources for the dollar-deficient municipalities by hurrying to provide the various frameworks for the participation demanded by OEO. Although lamented by Rose, the possibility for expanding municipal authority was the incentive that provoked local governments to provide channels for citizen participation that had long-term consequences. Within the first year Community Action Programs had provided warm "counter-alienation" participation experiences for hundreds of thousands of Americans, and for the locales granted funds, services had been substantially improved through Community Action Agencies. Moynihan notes that, by 1966, the mayors "realized it might be difficult to live without them, especially in administering the host of neighborhood programs that OEO had invented."[26]

Hence, the 1966 Congressional funding bill reflected attitudes of tolerance tempered with shrewd appraisal. Research and Demonstration for OEO was severely cut back in allocations. Dollars for the popular

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[26]Moynihan, Maximum Feasible, p. 157.

and uncontroversial National Emphasis packages were specifically earmarked. When Congressman Edith Green introduced an amendment to limit Community Action Agencies in 1967, it was not clear to whom it would be most advantageous. Designed to pacify intervention-fearing "bosses and boll weevils," the amendment established "limits" to the representation the poor could have on Community Action Councils, and it provided that private Community Action Agencies could be taken over by the relevant governments if they desired to do so. The amendment seemed to end the possibility that Community Action Agencies could entertain "power orientations," but it also aided OEO in convincing the public that this was unlikely. After the Green amendment was passed, nearly ninety-seven percent of the Community Action Agencies retained their original identity.[27] As a measure alleviating fear and hostility in the public, the amendment served some purpose.

While the unclarified intent of the Office of Economic Opportunity provided capability for contradictory types of Community Action, local variations compounded them as though by quantum leap. The gradual replacement of the intellectual idealists who staffed the original OEO office with efficient bureaucrats and administrators is sometimes correlated with a switch in OEO policy from supporting the organization of the poor to their socialization. The chronology of OEO ventures, however, suggests that both concepts of Community Action existed throughout the life span of the agency, achieving realization in particular community settings and recognition in relation to changing public attitudes.

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[27] James L. Sundquist, On Fighting Poverty: Perspectives from Experience (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 241.

Community Response to Community Action

Ralph Kramer, Professor of Community Organization in the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, studied the reaction of five California communities to the proposals for Community Action. The communities which he studied -- San Francisco, Berkeley, Contra Costa, Oakland and Santa Clara Counties -- displayed distinctive modes of interaction, and the studies call attention to the range of variables affecting the realization of Community Action in a particular setting. A brief summary of three studies done by Kramer provides some useful details.[28]

San Francisco. Prior to the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, San Francisco had experienced three major sit-ins, and numerous other manifestations of a strongly-led civil rights movement. The original Economic Opportunity Council of thirty-nine was appointed by Mayor John Shelley days of the Presidential signature. The committee emphasized representatives of business, industry and labor, though an immediately enthusiastic black community was represented. Four target-areas were selected which contained eighty percent of the city's Negro population, but only about one-half of the designated poor. Attempts to begin interviewing within these areas, and the establishment of local councils were interrupted by the protestations of two community groups -- the Citizens United Against Poverty (CUAP) and the Mission Community Action Committee.

The joint demand of the groups was that the council should not proceed with application for OEO funds until it was clearly established

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[28] Kramer.

that the "poor" had the right to be consulted, to review and veto programs, and to insist on employment policies that would not exclude those lacking formal education and professional training. As well, they wanted majority representation on the executive committee of the Economic Opportunity Council through representation from neighborhood councils.

The Mayor, who apparently hoped to maintain control over the Council through his appointments, ignored then violently opposed the CUAP proposals, but there was obvious division among his already-appointed Council members. When it appeared that CUAP would be able to delay the Council submissions until the deadline set by OEO had passed, Shelley made concessions. On these, however, he reneged, when he was reinforced by other mayors meeting with Hubert Humphrey in Washington.

When thirty-nine community organizations came to the support of CUAP, in defiance of the Mayor, [illegible] capitulated to their demands. To an unprecedented degree, authority for Community Action decentralized among neighborhoods. The early stages concentrated on elaborate "grass roots" organization based on field workers, neighborhood councils, "district" service centers, and finally the area boards, which contributed a majority representation on the city council and executive council.

In Western Addition, the target area of San Francisco which had provided the nucleus of civil rights leadership, eleven months passed before thirty-two members could be selected. Only four of these could be considered "poor," -- the others were ambitious, affiliated, and active members of the Negro community, all employed. While the board positions attracted little interest, the $400,000 budget which permitted

ver a hundred paid jobs, was closely contested. There was fierce competition for positions. "At one time there were 220 disgruntled applicants for 14 neighborhood organizer jobs," Kramer notes. The disappointed applicants linked with residents who sought "services" instead of "organization." Personal vendettas and endless squabbling" -- the politics within Western Addition vying for the new external resources -- led to the eclipse of this experiment.

Oakland. In Oakland, Kramer reports another pattern. The shift from involvement in Ford Foundation projects to OEO projects went with little controversy. Mayor Houlihan appointed twenty-five board members, including a black judge as chairman and a vice-president of Kaiser Industries as vice-chairman. Appointed minority leaders as well as business and labor leaders, most of whom were experienced in community affairs, sat on the council. Service-oriented programs were outlined and target areas designated, with only passing comment that area boards would be desirable at some time. The view of most Oakland Economic Development Council members was that any committees that could be formed within the designated target areas "should only provide advice regarding program implementation and feedback regarding impact, unmet needs, and priorities."

Soon, however, religious leaders, as well as some Mexican American groups expressed concern over the composition of the Council. There were vague attempts to form an alternate "anti-establishment" council. The result of this agitation was an advisory report prepared by a Negro priest, Father Clarence Howard. The area committees were to be elected "democratically" by residents of the target areas. Each area could determine the number of representatives it felt was desir-

able, and while it was hoped that the members would be "truly representative," no criteria were established to insure this. Contacts were to take place through a service center using the resources of social workers, public health nurses, and school children. The relationship of the target area organizations to the Oakland Council remained unspecified, and when a deadline approached, the Council acted independently.

In general, however, as target area representatives were integrated into the Oakland Council, they held expectations that they would be performing an important role. In the absence of specific clarification of their functions, the target area leaders "increasingly referred to their role in terms of much greater authority and responsibility than understood by the Oakland Economic Development Council, and certainly by its executive leadership. In spite of the fact that these individuals held dubious claim to representing the "poor," they were hostile to being represented by "the Mayor's committee," who "judge everything according to their own experience."

When demands by target area leaders were accompanied by slow downs in their "willingness to participate," they gained access to the Executive Committee. With an established domain, the target area representatives began seeking autonomy within the neighborhood service centers. One member expressed the coincident increase in aspiration and frustration: "They first came out here and said a whole lot about controlling our own destiny and all that stuff and I believed it, but it was all a bunch of lies. DHR (Division of Human Resources) works for City Hall."

At the same time that antagonism with authorities increased, the target area boards were subject to high turnover rates. They had no programs for communicating with their "constituents," and most were not reporting to neighborhood organizations at all. The target area representatives, however, were able to repudiate OEDC leadership in favor of selected small self-help projects. They walked out of the council when their victory was overturned. Reorganization took place which attempted to broaden the basis of representation and community organization. The resolution of this internal struggle seemed to accompany pressure by City Council on the authority of OEDC. Eventually the Oakland Council severed its relations with the City Council and began operations as a non-profit, non-governmental agency.

Contra Costa. Yet another pattern of development emerged in the study of Contra Costa. A social planning body called the Council of Community Services responded quickly to the provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act. In conjunction with the Public Health Department the Council prepared data and called extensive information-sharing meetings. An Economic Opportunity Council of 162 persons was convened by invitation; it included representatives from low-income areas in the county. The steering committee included seven representatives of low-income areas and seven each from governmental agencies and other community interests.

This council submitted over fifty proposals requiring $5.5 million and designed to create 800 new jobs. While providing some specific funding, OEO suggested changes in the administrative structure that had been proposed. The County Board of Supervisors would be the Community Action Agency, with an enlarged advisory committee including

the twenty-one member steering committee which had helped design the original proposals. The format was rather unique in that county government assumed both administrative and fiscal authority for the Community Action Program. The composition of the advisory council fluctuated but attempted to be "broadly representative in order to reflect both geographical and social-economic factors and shall specifically include adequate representation of the target groups."

During the formative period of the council, Council of Racial Equality (CORE) representative James Vann presented a letter examining the basic organization and future plans of the Economic Opportunity Council. The articulate and precise proposals contributed to an expanded role for CORE in the leadership of the Council. Negro leaders had been responsibly active in mainstream private and public agencies in Contra Costa County and moved easily into the Economic Opportunity Council.

Kramer reports that under Vann's leadership the Council acquired an "open" atmosphere. Meetings were held at various locations in the county, with bus transportation and car pools provided to increase participation by different segments of the community. Representatives of county departments, neighborhood councils, and the poor sat "side by side, each with one vote." Meetings, Kramer indicates, "assumed a town meeting character." Efforts were made to refine and improve representation. Elections with specific eligibility criteria stressing accountability were planned. Ultimately sixty elected representatives of the poor were seated on the one-hundred member council, while the "white liberals" stepped gracefully aside and the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution agreeing to abide by the recommendations of the council.

Earl Raab has called the provision for Community Action a "sociological surprise package." "No Machiavellian bureaucrat planned this package," he continued. "It is what it is because of what happened to it on its way to the poor."[29] Thus in each community where Community Action became a reality it took on distinct features. However, there have been many attempts to find dominating variables governing the realization of Community Action. Community variations relating to the "Goodman-ish" presumptions for Community Action, as well as variations relating to the "McNamara" emphasis on the processes of Community Action have both been identified and cited.

Power and Order: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Linked in Theory. In the formulation of the program which became known as Community Action, conflicting assumptions about the nature of man, the nature of society, and the nature of community remained unresolved. The social theoreticians who had developed Ford Foundation programs were largely enmeshed in a web of ideas which focussed on altering the adjustment of the individual to society. While talking about alienation, their framework of systems ideology stressed its philosophical opposite, anomie.[30] Further, in the ninety years that had elapsed since the concept's reinvigoration by Emile Durkheim, anomie had changed in professional usage from a dysfunction of the social system to a composite of individual perceptions about

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[29]Earl Raab, "Which War and Which Poverty?", The Public Interest, 3 (Spring 1966):56.

[30]J. E. Horton, "Dehumanization of Anomie and Alienation: A Problem in the Ideology of Sociology," British Journal of Sociology 15(1964):283-300.

social life,[31] which had affected the individual's mobility, in particular. By 1960, this composite included the experience of meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness, powerlessness, and self-estrangement.[32] In Melvin Seeman's influential article outlining one of the dominating social ideas of the era, alienation, he combines elements of anomie with elements of alienation, without recognizing the inherent competition between the two concepts, and in this he paved the way for Community Action strategists.[33] For while the theories that grounded Ford Foundation projects stressed the adjustment of the individual to society in order to counter his "meaninglessness, isolation and normlessness," -- and this appealed to conservative congressmen -- the political thrust to Community Action emerging from the civil rights movement stressed attacks on society to alter the individual's "powerlessness and self-estrangement." With resources of his own, in this view, the poor individual, who had been constrained from the fulfillment of his identity and recognition of his proper role in society, would attack the institutions that had stabilized his disadvantaged position. While the immediate furor, disillusionment, and the demise of Community Action largely stemmed from these conflicting, unscrutinized assumptions regarding the purposes of Community Action, the consequences of Community Action suggested their irrelevance. When implemented on the level

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[31]Robert K. Merton, "Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction," in Marshall B. Clinard, ed., Anomie and Deviant Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 229.

[32]Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," American Sociological Review 24 (December 1959):783-89.

[33]Joachim Israel, Alienation: From Marx to Modern Society (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971).

of each responding community, Community Action did not encounter entrenched attitudes of alienation or anomie which might confirm the premises of one view over the other. Furthermore, that which was designed to alter society frequently contributed to its confirmation, and that which was expected to socialize the individual contributed to the awareness and pursuit of his self-interest. In sum, the variability of human behavior seemed greatly to exceed the bounds placed upon it by the major theories of consensus and constraint.

In Kramer's study of Western Addition in San Francisco, the hub of the civil rights movement, members of Shelley's "establishment" committee supported the move for "grass roots" control when requested to do so by a spectrum of community organizations. The cooperating organizations were ultimately vindicated in their trust, as the "poor" of the areas responded wholeheartedly for jobs, but reluctantly to ideological exhortation. The black community, which had been solid in efforts to achieve access to "civil rights," fragmentized in face of individual economic opportunities. In Oakland, the representatives of the poor emerged at the insistence of community leaders. They subsequently responded with a strong sense of self interest, using effectively the weapons at their disposal but never exceeding the boundaries set for their argument with the establishment. In Contra Costa, if one can believe the Kramer study, a strongly organized minority group fulfilled itself in "town-meeting" democracy, at the behest of an appreciative establishment community.

Complementary in the Perceptions of the Poor. According to the research of Norman and Susan Fainstein in New York, the attitudes of the poor could not have been considered anomic. They describe black women

who had been active in PTA, graduated to tenant organizations and rental disputes, worked consistently in neighborhood organizations for the benefit of their children, served as "teacher-aides," and perhaps attended night school at sporadic intervals. Another California-based study of the representatives of the poor finally resorted to calling them "deviant poor people."[34] The representatives had a high level of participation in organizations and high aspirations. They viewed themselves as "working class" rather than "lower class." Representatives of community agencies serving with them on boards remarked that "the Community people share middle-class values; do not make conflict for conflict's sake; and do not reflect the 'nittygritty' of extreme poverty." Nevertheless, according to externally applied criteria, most of them ranked as "unstable poor" and "copers," in the "mainstream of poverty," and "in the lowest income group."[35]

In a study of mobilization patterns in five poor neighborhoods, another scholar, Stanley Greenberg, notes that the "poor" displayed only "a remote sense of shared perspective, common goals, or strategic affinity."[36]

> The poor of these five neighborhoods face the issues of working class solidarity, redistribution, justice and equality, not from a history of class struggle, but from a relationship with the ruling classes, sometimes marked by trust and cooperation, often by ambivalence and only infrequently by group conflict. It is not apparent that the poor desire a redistribution of wealth or hold beliefs that contradict the 'ruling ideas.' It is not apparent that they feel a natural affinity for other workers; in fact, the poor of these neighborhoods have had to

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[34]Dale Rogers Marshall, The Politics of Participation in Poverty (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1971), p. 49.

[35]Marshall, p. 30ff.

[36]Stanley Greenberg, Politics and Poverty, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), p. 43.

> struggle against other working class groups to gain jobs and a fair wage. The class position of the poor, consequently is ambiguous, vacillating between both sides of what is perhaps an illusory class division.[37]

To Stanley Greenberg, the attitudes and behavior of the poor are largely governed by "the mediating role of calculated effectiveness."

Merged in Consequences. The consequences of the Community Action Program were as surprising from the standpoint of its assumptions as the attitudes which were revealed. The "co-optation" of the participating poor became a cliche of Community Action evaluators. Roland Warren, Ann Bergunder, and Stephen Rose concluded that participation as it was encouraged under Community Action served a "confirming" function for establishment decisions and programs.[38] Sherry Arnstein, a consultant to many Federal agencies on the role of citizen participation concurred. "Participation," she wrote, "allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but it makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo. Essentially, it is what has been happening in most of the 1,000 Community Action programs. . . ."[39] While the attitudes and behavior that have been noted might suggest this, the consequences often did not.

Dale Marshall wrote that, "a major theme implicit in this whole analysis of participation is that the socialization of the poverty rep-

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[37]Greenberg, p. 194.

[38]Roland Warren, Stephen Rose and Ann Bergunder, The Structure of Urban Reform (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath, 1974).

[39]Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett, Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change, Praeger Special Studies in U.S. Economic and Social Development (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 72.

resentatives makes them more aware of their latent interests and thus increases their conflict with the boards."[40] The Fainsteins noted the formation of communication linkages among potential activists, and increased public awareness as by-products of participation in New York. Sar Levitan notes that "a major achievement of CAAs was that they offered young Negroes and representatives of other minority groups the opportunity to develop administrative and executive capabilities."[41] Evaluators agree that one of the lasting contributions of Community Action emerged from the National Emphasis program of Legal Services, in which the "poor" learned to use conventional channels to "lever greater concessions from the power structure."[42] Follow-up studies of "the representatives of the poor" have found them in "parallel-institutions" of a more radical nature and in responsible positions with innovative social agencies. There is considerable evidence that their mobilization potential along interest lines has been increased, as well as their skills, although it has continued to be focussed toward the realization of national values. Further, the level of services offered to the disadvantaged in many communities was dramatically raised, and most of these services have been continued under the auspices of state and local governments. The legitimacy of "para-professionals" was greatly enhanced under Community Action, and procedures for citizen participation substantially refined.

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[40] Marshall, p. 145.

[41] Levitan, p. 116.

[42] Marris and Rein, p. 269.

The Promise of Process

The nature of the Community Action program -- incentives held out by a Congress which quickly responded to public perceptions of threat -- contributed to the emergence of modes of expressing self-interest which were compatible with national values. Projects not restricting their activity to a domain in which this was possible did not become, or long remain, Community Action Projects. However, this was not the only governing force. No matter how important the assumptions on which Community Action operated were to conservative congressmen and civil rights leaders, who endlessly disputed their fulfillment, many social theoreticians were confirmed in their continuing disregard for the controversy between power and order which plagued the program. As the Communitarian experimenters of the nineteenth century largely disregarded normative disputes regarding whether freedom existed in order, or order in freedom, in favor of discovering "true" patterns for fulfilling natural social processes, much of the impulse to Community Action was on the development of the processes to fulfill "natural" social patterns. However, while the end for the Communitarians was the individual's attainment of perfection, the end for the theorists of the 1960s was continuance of the social system, largely through enhancing attitudes and conditions contributing to individual mobility.

Roland Warren writes about a "valueless" community model in which, "the model thus becomes a series of equations rather than a specific Utopian prescription, just as the economist can contribute to the analysis of utility maximization without prescribing what preference scales are to be used."[43] This type of model, he continues, does not

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[43]Roland Warren, "Toward a Non-Utopian Normative Model of the Community," American Sociological Review 35 (April 1970):226.

"dictate the content, but provides the decision-makers with the 'cost' in one value which an increase in the realization of another will entail." The goal, he earlier notes, is to assure the "system's continued adaptability to its environment," and thus, its continuance. This article seems to confirm the thesis of Robert Boguslaw:

> Probably the most distinctive characteristic of classical utopian designs is the basic "humanitarian" bent of their value structures. . . . And perhaps the most notable difference to be found between the classical system designers and their contemporary counterparts (system engineers, data processing specialists, computer manufacturers, and system designers) consists precisely in the fact that the humanitarian bent has disappeared. The dominant value orientation of the utopian renaissance can best be described as "efficiency" rather than "humanitarianism."[44]

During the early 1960s the "system" was being threatened by evidence of stratification which social scientists related to attitudes held by the poor. Community Action emerged partly by design and partly by accident, as a method for reducing the personal frustration and the threat of social disorder associated with the lack of mobility that had become the experience of the "hard-core" poor. Community Action strategists were not necessarily opposed to "humanitarianism" but they felt that a properly functioning system provided the best opportunities for the realization of a melange of humanistic objectives. The parts of that system included a domain of authority in which professional intervention for societal objectives was legitimate, and a domain of authority which might better remain with "indigenous non-professionals," "natural" community leaders, and parochial objectives.

Attacking the barriers within the system took many forms. Shriver deliberately eliminated bureaucratic processes from the evalu-

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[44]Boguslaw, p. 202.

ation of applications for Community Action funds. For the first year of Community Action, he personally passed on the thousands of applications that came to the office. However, Shriver's attack on social work professionals for "fouling up the poor"[45] and the tolerance Community Action showed for record keeping in shoe boxes were aspects of the overriding strategy of greasing the system with citizen participation.

According to Earl Raab, "'Participation' as a principle of the anti-poverty program has emerged . . . as a value in itself, and the value is Power, political power."[46] Because of the terms of the Economic Opportunity Act, without the "participation of the poor" it was impossible for locales to garner the rewards of the new legislation. The manner in which the "representatives of the poor" used this power led to arguments that their role was simple confirmation of the wishes of the existing power structure. This interpretation was reinforced because the expansion of funding which was anticipated by planners in response to Community Action never materialized. Conversely, the threat of disorder associated with Community Action as well as the financial demands of the Vietman war led to the reduction of resources available to Community Action planners, and ultimately to its elimination.

During the final stages of community action, an observer noted the "endless round of frustrating meetings" in which slum residents were expected to "jump through the same old participation hoops,"

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[45] Levine, p. 55.

[46] Raab, p. 51

hoping for resources that couldn't begin to solve their problems.[47] The prevalence of this pattern led Sherry Arnstein to attack participation as a "procedure" of Community Action in terms of her expectations for it.

> Its administrators -- mental health experts from social workers to psychiatrists -- assume that powerlessness is synonymous with mental illness. On this assumption, under a masquerade of involving citizens in planning, the experts subject the citizens to clinical group therapy. What makes this form of "participation" so invidious is that citizens are engaged in extensive activity, but the focus of it is on curing them of their "pathology" rather than changing the racism and victimization that create their "pathologies."[48]

Nevertheless, the consequences of citizen participation under OEO have been significant to individuals and to society. While it seems true that the poor accomplished less through participation than many hoped, and more through participation than short-range project evaluations revealed, it is also true that this debate was incidental to the major concerns of Community Action formulators. In retrospect it seems quite clear that the focus of many of the theoreticians of Community Action was to combat alienation as it was interpreted at the time. Indeed, the stress of Community Action was on the contribution that the individual must make to the health and continuance of the social system on which he had become utterly dependent. But, the mode of Community Action reflected a concept of societal health premised in the primacy of the individual, the legitimacy of group life, and the "natural" exchange of members and goods in a sector guaranteed by society.

Like their reforming predecessors, Community Action advocates held sway briefly, and then looked to their failure for proof of their

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[47] Marris and Rein, pp. 265-66.

[48] Cahn, p. 76.

success. Descendents of a long tradition of reform through the idea of community, Community Action idealists struggled for truth in social processes. They adopted the Progressive reformers' view of the inevitability and richness of the complex social system around them, but rejected their ethic-laden outrage and the static millenial destiny which set the settlement workers' boundaries. With the New Dealers, they tended to stress the impersonal and amoral forces at work, but they never confined their vision to the institutional forms expected by reformers of the 1930s. Community Action wanted to be the process of Utopia, the continuous renewal of community and society through the development and mobility of each individual.

Chapter VI

THE PRODIGAL IDEA

Summary

The preceding studies reveal that the idea of community in the United States has been enriched by constant interaction between alternative images of what is desirable and changing circumstances dictating the boundaries of what is possible. This process has contributed to proliferation of expectations for community, for applications of the concept which emerge locally in time and space, nevertheless, have had the capacity to persist and reappear. Changing expectations for the concept of community are certainly not random, however. In the studies developed for this paper expectations shift in concert with dominant trends in society. The conceptions of community promoted by Communitarians were based on assumptions derived from an environment oriented toward religious thought and an agricultural economy; the settlement workers formulated expectations in a milieu heavily laced with new promise in natural science. During the New Deal period community was inextricably linked with viability in politics, and the ascension of the social sciences in an atmosphere of organizational consolidation was a prominent factor in community conceptualization during the 1960s. Further, a change in the nature of resources available to sustain communities may have encouraged a trend spanning the studies toward less territorial modes of realizing the community ideal.

The search for community, according to Robert Nisbet, has been a central force provoking Western philosophy for thousands of years. "The power of the idea of community" he suggests is "in fear of the opposite of community" -- mental, spiritual, emotional and social isolation.[1] Concern with community thus, while a major focus of all Western philosophers, is accentuated during periods of change or social crisis when the perception of "anticommunity" is strong. The search for community, according to Nisbet, is the search for an "escape from the void combined with justice and personal fulfillment," and its direction is to resolve the problems of jurisdiction and authority in human social organization.[2]

The examples used in this paper confirm the expectation of community as a goal and a transcendent good. The reform orientation of community builders confirms the impulse of the spectre of "anti-community" emerging from situations of crisis and social change. The examples are dominated and unified by concern for the basis and function of legitimate authority. Even further, however, there are indications that throughout the period studied the concept of community in the United States reflects a particular orientation based on a composite of assumptions about the nature of man and the nature of society which have been reinforced by the American environment. Thus, the concept of community in the United States shares the expectations for community which are common to it as a focus of Western thought, but within that framework the examples suggest a particular emphasis related to partic-

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[1]Robert Nisbet, The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), p. 2.

[2]Nisbet, p. 3.

ular assumptions and particular conditions. The examples suggest that the special characteristics of life in the United States have placed the focus of the community concept on the dynamics of community and society. The foundations for this atypical community expectation exist in the religious and Enlightenment sources of continuing American "beliefs," and in the particular nature of events in the American environment during the past two centuries, some of which are revealed in the preceding studies.

The nineteenth-century Communitarians were seeking an environment in which men could live in security and dignity, and at the same time remain true to their "pure human nature," unhampered in direct relationship with God and in harmony with each other in the American garden. For this purpose they aspired to create "anti-institutions" which they called communities.

The impulse to Communitarianism was in discrepancies between the conditions of life for many Americans and idealizations of that life that had emerged from Romantic and Enlightenment sources of thought. Communitarians of all ilk shared the presumptions of the "true" nature of man derived from natural rights political philosophy and from Protestant religious views. Man's "soul" as Hawthorne suggested, should not be the dollar's, but God's and his own. Fourier's plan for Cosmos, some have said, was a rational design by a "mad-man." Nevertheless, through its millenial fervor, it became harmonious with the models of the Christian intellectuals who were expecting to build God's kingdom on earth.

The manner in which the internal structure of communities were experiments in discovering mechanisms of legitimate control is one of

the most interesting aspects of the Communitarian example. The conspicuous tolerance Communitarians exhibited toward a variety of governing principles had two supports. Communitarians believed that the millenium would vindicate truth. Secondly, the control over the individual by the community was granted voluntarily for the purpose of realizing his "true nature," and limited by the rights the individual was guaranteed as a citizen of the United States. Unlike the full commitment of "salvation" which provided members for sects such as the Shakers, the secular Communitarians experimented with many forms of limited contractual partnerships guaranteed by the society of which the communities formed a part. It is possible that Owen, in taking advantage of the inexpensive land in the American West for community building, hoped for his community to be the nucleus of a new society. However, conditions in the American environment allowed the proliferation of groups committed to Communitarianism as a "community of communities," each resolving its goals and internal structures according to predispositions of those ascribing. Nashoba was intended to prepare slaves for entry into society; Brook Farm was intended to prepare students for a strong role in the life of their nation. In the case of North American Phalanx, the unusual economic self-sufficiency of the community was considered no justification for a continuing existence when the Phalanx was no longer oriented to interaction with society.

The Communitarians, thus, were impelled by a strong commitment to the preeminent value of the individual. Within sectarian predecessors of Communitarianism, Protestant millenialism had made a contribution to the active role that communities oriented to individual development must make in society. This was compatible with the strong emphasis on

natural rights that Americans relied on to regulate the jurisdiction of the Federal government. The abundant resources of land, plus the rewards that could still be garnered by small unspecialized industries, permitted the Communitarians to rely on a territorial and economic base for achieving a role in affecting the development of society according to their interests and ideals.

The most pervasive idea that settlement workers brought to the concept of community was the image of society as a biological organism. However, while this idea may have the potential in contemporary thought of dispelling criticism of institutional failings, it did not have this effect on settlement workers. Like the Communitarians, those that gravitated to settlement work were steeped in Christian ideology. The final development of the organism, thus, had firm dimensions in the minds of settlement workers, and there was no question that the societal organism, any more than the human organism, would develop independently of the fixed boundaries of God's will. While their image of society was "organismic" within pre-determined limits, the millenialism that set those limits differed dramatically from the faith of the Communitarians. Settlement workers accepted the social organization in which they were enmeshed as legitimate and potentially perfect. Their efforts were directed, not at the complete replacement of something evil with something good, but at facilitating existing, continuing processes of interaction. They expected this interaction to be internal and harmonious, rather than external and rancorous. They expected all aspects of American society to function as a single, dynamic and committed, integrated form, reflecting the "common consciousness" and moral solidarity of a loving, sacred unit such as the family.

Contradictions in their thought and expectations, coupled with conditions in the turn-of-the-century American environment, led to modifications in their dominant concept of the community. First of all, the moral order in which they had confidence became clouded. They found not so much ignorance, as intransigence and indifference among those whom they felt should respond to the needs of the poor when they were revealed. Among the poor, they found highly developed ethical relations which contributed to survival, but hampered acculturation. The Christian ideals of the settlement workers bound them to act on behalf of their fellow man, and their commitment to science and knowledge compelled them to forsake ideology in favor of results. Like the Communitarians, the settlement workers began to focus on the mechanisms that the small community could develop both for achieving self-preservation and meaning, but as well for involving itself in the unfolding of the nation. In recognizing the legitimacy of the "ethnic" community to exist apart from the American "consciousness," settlement workers accepted the functionality of pluralism contradictory to their organismic theory. They then were compelled to recognize problems of regularizing external community relations, such as those faced by the Communitarians. The forms that gained recognition from the settlement workers -- particularly the political machine and the trade union -- were "sanctified" with rhetoric within their model of a sacred, social organism, although the assumptions of the reformers were in direct conflict with the nature of authority that view implied.

Unlike the settlement workers, New Deal reformers began their efforts recognizing two distinct types of social organization, although the boundaries were not always discernable. New Deal theorists accepted

communities as unique units, legitimated by geography, common interest or feeling, whose external relations should be regulated by a brokerage government. They also recognized a direct relationship of each individual with the Federal government which defined limits to the sovereignty the community held over the individual. The expectations for these two types of social configuration related to beliefs and conditions long associated with the American experience.

New Dealers accepted many of the varied expectations for community life that were expressed by earlier communitarians. Community life had the potential for being pure and "natural," as well as integrated, organized, efficient, sacred and organic. Group consciousness provided a basis of potential authority in interactions with society. While individual communities were expected to be united and regulated normatively, society itself was united on values so transcendent that they could be considered amoral. Society was not a substitute for community, but a supplement. New Deal expectations became confused, however, in the scale of flux that accompanied the depression.

The economic crisis of the 1930s created conditions of great social and economic disorder. Regionally, communities did not have the resources to provide for their residents. Entire geographic and social units collapsed. Large segments of the population became excluded from the obligations that could be met by local governments or voluntary charities. Significant numbers of individuals were no longer meaningfully related to mediating communities, and in desperation began relating directly to the Federal government and its charismatic leader, Franklin Roosevelt. Communities, thus, which had cooperated a century-and-one-half before to invest the Federal government with its regulating

powers, were now being consciously encouraged by that government to find a new basis of cooperation and a new sphere of legitimacy. Attempts were made to stimulate organization among laborers, to rebuild viable geographic associations, and finally, community on the basis of race emerged prominently under Federal protection.

The rational and "amoral" nature of bureaucratic community building, precluded the normative rights, duties, and interdependencies that might have held the communities together in an "organic" fashion. Successful community building that took place under the New Deal, thus, was done by independent organizers under Federal protection of their civil rights. The challenges these emerging groups brought to the social order were loudly interpreted as government assaults on ideology even though the unwillingness and inability of government officials to act in this sector accounted for many of their failures.

By 1964, when Community Action was launched, the view of society as a unified "system" had resumed importance. However, few social scientists were imbued with its sense of destiny and divine purpose as the settlement workers had been. Furthermore the unit that was visualized had more features of an efficient machine than a biological organism. In the milieu of the 1960s, the possibilities of destruction accompanying social disorder seemed so great that the continuance of society was self-justifying, quite apart from its diverse expressions of morality. Danger to the great and neutral apparatus was perceived in the "rigidities" that had begun to afflict many parts of the system, and in the frustration and alienation experienced by individuals who perceived them as "rigidities." Thus, the correction might take either of two forms. When the enabling legislation was passed, it was seen to

hold possibilities for generating discreet attacks toward the redistribution of positions and goods; it also held possibilities for stimulating the commitment that the poor and disadvantaged felt to the preservation of the "system." Both strategies were designed to increase the perception of individual opportunity and mobility. While these orientations were loudly proclaimed to be incompatible and this debate did much to terminate the Community Action Programs, they were to the instigators of Community Action merely two sides of the same coin. The coin was to keep the machine running, because regardless of specific value orientations, the continuance of meaningful human life had come to depend on its processes.

As Community Action was realized, it became apparent that latent among Americans was the strong feeling that community was more than "means" to maintaining social order -- it was harmony between the means of social order and more specific personal ends. However, it also became apparent that the demarcation of community had become increasingly amorphous even since the New Deal period, with community functions and purposes fulfilled discriminatingly in many separate arenas. The competing and intertwined norms peculiar to various human roles -- worker, black, parent, Westerner, Catholic or "professional" -- were now held in restless abeyance by a common but vague faith in the individual's direct relation to the resource-wielding Federal government. Where the individual's propensity to strict and guarded regulation of personal commitment was confronted with the tangible resources made available through Community Action, unexpected potential for realignment, involvement, and community resurgence was revealed. The change in attitudes that was desired by Community Action theorists strongly related to

restoring resources for rewards and sanctions to community groups whose traditional resources had been garnered by the forces of complex organization.

A fanciful social scientist has proposed that all the ideas for behavior and institutions validated in man's past exist in an energy-emanating reservoir which he calls the "polylogical field."[3] This field is a source of innovative responses whenever conditions challenge existing conceptualizations. Perhaps it is the continual threat of the "anticommunity" which provokes the active persistence of so many expectations for community from other times. In the limited American context of these examples the concept of community has acquired the potential for many expectations which are troublesome in the modern scene.

Contemporary expectations for community include the dream of Arcadia, which Noyes noted caused many communities to run "aground" in the 1850s. The expectation of community as the perfect product of "millenial" change processes still permeates thinking about communities which is more hopeful than useful. The "organismic" view of society has continued to lead wistful communitarians into efforts at "sanctifying" complex organization through assertions of common consciousness. Further, there are still communes, settlement houses, labor unions, ethnic groups and "planned" communities each providing definitions of the community concept. However, particular continuing characteristics of the American scene may have resulted in a particular focus for the community concept which transcends the disharmony among the survivals

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[3]Hans Linde, in Harald Mey, Field-Theory: A Study of Its Application in the Social Sciences, International Library of Sociology and Reconstruction, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 152.

and the variety of new conceptualization. The examples developed for this paper su t a continuing, atypical focus for the idea, not on the tightly-knit integrated, single consensual unit of the traditional Utopias, but on the mechanisms for maintaining and extending that unit within a dynamic social environment. The antinomies which Scott Greer and David Minar cited as vital to the American community concept account for many divergencies in the idea of community. However, within the American historical context, they may not be antinomies at all.

The origins and early development of the United States encouraged adoption from Europe of social paradigms which discriminated between one's conscience and one's contracts. Immigrating religious groups and business corporations sought to live internally by consensus, but by agreement in tolerance with others seeking the same opportunities. Concurrently, the development of economic specialization and forms of industrialization both in Europe and the colonies enhanced this tendency. The abundance of resources in the American environment allowed communities to develop without challenging their neighbors. The pre-confederation United States was a collection of communities, together in location and New World experience, but separated by purpose and national allegiance. These characteristics of life and social order in the United States had gone through a two-century evolution before Ferdinand Toennies formulated his concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, which, nevertheless seem to have particular relevance for the American scene.

Ferdinand Toennies' Model of Community and Society

Gemeinschaft became in translation, Community, and Gesellschaft for English students, Society. According to his translator Charles Loomis,

the concep appeared as a "synthesis of rationalism and romanticism, idealism and materialism, realism and nominalism."[4] They blended ideas which the author had found compelling, particularly those put forth by Thomas Hobbes and Karl Marx, with the social environment from which he had emerged. Of well-to-do "peasant" derivation in Schleswig-Holstein, the young Toennies responded to the forces of modernization and "rationalization" affecting the life of his small village. In Toennies' enthusiasm for the century-old social contract theories of Hobbes, he was fortified against the wave of "organismic" theories that was conspicuous in European sociology. At the same time, presumptions regarding the centralization of power which had been associated with Hobbes' Leviathan had moderated in the one-hundred year interval. The pluralistic conceptualization of authority put forward by Johannes Althusius had found advocates among contemporaries of Toennies.[5] Further, with the transfer of models from the natural sciences to society came an upsurge in the "comparative" study of societies. Toennies remarked on his debt to Henry Sumner Maine, author of Ancient Law, for affecting his ideas of jurisdiction and authority.[6] Thus, his theories combined social contract concepts that had been drawn upon by the "fathers" of American confederation with ideas related to the changing economic and social forms he saw about him. In affirming always that the ultimate determinant of social configurations was human "will," his theories related to

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[4]Toennies, Ferdinand, Fundamental Concepts of Sociology, trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York: American Book Company, 1940), p. x.

[5]Nisbet, p. 410.

[6]Toennies, Ferdinand, Ferdinand Toennies on Sociology: Pure, Applied, and Empirical, trans. and ed. Werner J. Cahnman and Rudolf Heberle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. xvi.

American predispositions more than they did to dominant European theories of the turn-of-the-century. During fifty years of sociological endeavor Toennies developed different facets of his concepts, and from his own work, the mediating efforts of his translators, and from the changing social setting have some opportunities for conflicting interpretations.

For many, the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft became descriptive of sequential states of human interaction. The integrated, simple and loving form of the past, Gemeinschaft, preceded the complex, rational associations of the modern state of Gesellschaft which has come to prevail. Alternatively although related, was the interpretation that the forms occurred cyclically with Gesellschaft existing as a form of "deterioration." This notion of the two forms expressed and implied criticism of "modernity," and the negative aspects of Gesellschaft became obsessive to many who found use for the concepts. The recent presentation of Toennies' works by Werner J. Cahnman and Rudolf Heberle convincingly suggests that Toennies visualized Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as emergent companions through time -- inextricable ideal forms rising to dominance in different realms -- both with negative and positive features and capability in realization.

The four examples from American history that have been presented suggest an endless fugue in which Gemeinschaft or Gesellschaft may be periodically developed or subordinated, but that the two ideas share one nature, inextricably intertwined and interdependent. Each of the forms, imperfectly as it may achieve manifestation, contributes to the function and continuance of the other. Together, they are the process that provides for community in an "open" society.

The antinomies to which Greer and Minar point which plague the contemporary American concept of community do not exist in conflict in the Toennies' framework. According to Toennies, such antinomies in concepts associated with social organization occur because "p an ntroversies" are confused with divergence in "pure theory." Diver- s of this sort," he writes of the widely presumed tension between dualism d socialism, "are deeply rooted in moral sentiments and subject lin ons," but seldom in an objective analysis of the facts.[7] With concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, Toennies hoped to "absorb" some of the divergencies, which he compared to mistaking conflicting therapeutic procedures in medicine for the knowledge of physiology.

In the study of Community Action under the Office of Economic Opportunity the question of stability and change within the community concept figured strongly. Rather than being in opposition, however, the potential for one seemed to confirm the other. Strong, integrated ethnic groups which could be considered communities of the Gemeinschaft type produced individuals capable and eager to interact with society in the associational, or Gesellschaft realm. Further, the efforts of the government to encourage participation by individuals seemed to arouse the capacity of these individuals to recognize needs and obligations they shared with a "community" of others. The fluctuating recognition of common interest during the New Deal period confirmed the existence of "latent" communities, perhaps "nascent groups" in the modern terminology of Theodore Lowi, as well as strong faith in the associational

[7] Toennies, Pure, Applied and Empirical, p. 20.

sector of American life.[8] In Toennies' view, social configurations with characteristics of the Gemeinschaft ideal type, through their very success may expand and proliferate, and thus increase the importance of Gesellschaft configurations. The associational forms peculiar to Gesellschaft are derived from the input and legitimacy of the Gemeinschaft, or community sphere of authority. The examples developed from United States history confirm Toennies' view that Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft cannot be extracted one from the other, but exist in a continual state of emergence. The vehicle for this "emergence" is for Toennies, and for the examples, the phenomenon of "individualism."

Rather than society and the individual existing as polar opposites within the community concept, they are complements in the process of interaction that must occur in modern "open" societies in which communities come into continuous contact with one another. Individualism, rather than being the antithesis of meaningful group life, is in the Toennies' view, its mechanism. "There is no individualism in history and culture," he wrote in his preface to Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, except as it emanates from Gemeinschaft and remains conditioned by it, or as it brings about and sustains Gesellschaft."[9]

"The germinal forms of Gemeinschaft" according to Toennies, are motherly love, sexual love, brotherly love and sisterly love.[10] He expanded these relationships to include unions of persons who "feel and know that they belong together."[11] This natural relationship may be

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[8]Theodore Lowi, Politics of Disorder (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[9]Toennies, Pure, Applied and Empirical, p. 5.

[10]Toennies, Pure, Applied and Empirical, p. 76.

[11]Toennies, Pure, Applied and Empirical, p. 151.

derived from recognition of common descent-kinship or blood ties that can reasonably be believed in -- or through spatial proximity, such as living together in a designated and limited geographic region. Further, common thinking from working together and sharing experiences is a basis for a Gemeinschaft relationship. On the other hand, the foundation of Gesellschaft relationships is the act of barter or exchange among natural communities. While Toennies stresses exchange of economic specialization, reflecting his immediate enthusiasm for Marx, he also indicates the validity of cultural exchange as foundation for the development of associational protocol. While the impulses to Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft forms of social interaction differ, the forms they may assume are also different. Within "community," authority may take "fraternal" or "paternal" forms, but the basis of the cohesion is always in exploitation of human inequalities and dependencies according to group norms. Individuals, he argues, who are nurtured and supported in the community are not constrained from cultivating the differences and inequalities of the interrelationships in a way that provides them with authority and resources -- directed toward the unification, preservation and extension of the community in a potentially hostile environment -- but also containing the foundation for personal mobility within the neutral zone in which the individuals from different communities engage in exchange. To the contrary, the basis of Gesellschaft is the mutual recognition of equality in interaction and exchange, justified largely in terms of the "social contract."[12] Toennies, a preeminent scholar of the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes, accepts qualified "harsh" Hobbesian premises regarding the purpose of the social

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[12] Toennies, Pure, Applied and Empirical, p. 78.

contract in the realm of human organization he terms Gesellschaft. While the individual gains strength and justification from the resources of his community, he is restrained by the possibility that others have greater resources and greater strength, and thus agrees to regulative mechanisms which take the form of the Federal "state." Thus, in a mutual plea for tolerance, the individuals whose nurture is rooted in hierarchical communiti s based on normative concord, accept the guarantee of equality when as individuals they leave the community domain and enter into relations transcending community norms and authority.

Throughout the vignettes from American history, Toennies' view receives confirmation. Individualism has served as a mechanism of interaction between community groups that has preserved the integrity of the community, brought resources to the unit and spared it from attack, and often enhanced its contribution to the social order. The guarantees made by society to the individual have permitted him to interact with protocol in an arena largely ungoverned by shared norms. Further, these guarantees, which in the United States have existed in the form of a statement of civil rights and civil liberties, provided a sphere in which individuals have been mobile between "communities." Within this area the potential for the formation of new Gemeinschaft groups has been affirmed -- Communitarianism, the emergence of trade unions and the growing self-awareness of the black community are conspicuous in the studies.

The concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft bring a different perspective to the questions of universalism vs. parochialism, and the opposing interests of the part and the whole within the community concept as well. "Parochialism" through particular norms and through

territory are both bases for the development of the Gemeinschaft form. However, acknowledgment of the "whole," or the "universal" is another function of human will, for which it must serve the supplementary need of providing for interaction and exchange. The part and the whole, the parochial and the universal, are mutually dependent aspects of human nurture and human interaction. Tension between parochial ideals and the universal or "common consciousness" was an aspect of the quest for community conducted by the settlement workers. In adopting the organismic theories of society widely popular at the turn of the century, the settlement workers accepted the presumption that the "universal," the social organism, provided the justification for forms of human interaction. The view implied a central core and common purpose in the whole social unit, a "universality" of consciousness in which the parochial was, in fact, "deviant," and undesirable.

The confidence in the "divine" dimensions of the individual and society which permeated the thinking of settlement workers prevented them from pursuing the concept of the "organism" when it conflicted with their other convictions. Similarly, Toennies had rejected the model of the biological organism because it conflicted with the idea that all human organization was the product of "human will" to achieve vehicles for nurture and exchange. The settlement workers turned away from attempts to impose the universal, and began focussing on mechanisms of interaction among special "parochial" interests, expressing their special commitment to an "open society," which, with Christian ideals, dominated their political values. While the New Dealers accepted the legitimacy of special interest as the foundation of national association, they stumbled on the ephemeral and transitory boundaries of the

Gemeinschaft community. Geographic and social communities had lost their viability, even though the New Dealers looked to them for the continuance of social order. However, new Gemeinschaft units emerged from the "individualization" that had occurred when communities failed to meet their obligations to their members and many citizens had moved to the cold refuge of Federal guarantees.

There is no question as to whether Toennies' view is "right" or "wrong" in determining the absolute mechanisms of the world that we know. It is helpful, however, that Toennies, in sharing presumptions and perceptions which contributed to the structures and aims of citizens of the United States for the past two hundred years, provides a framework for reconciling contradictions in ideals of social organization, and particularly the concept of community. The reaction to feudalism, coupled with the rise of science, trade and Protestantism in Europe provided conditions which encouraged the development of social contract theories. The promise of the American environment was a further stimulant. John Locke wrote in 1690 that "in the beginning all the world was America."[13] The manner in which "America" was settled and governed, and the "undefined" nature of resources in the American environment invested the ideal of social contract with pluralism it did not have in the European context of the eighteenth century. By the time Toennies wrote the chief legacy was a strong commitment to investing the individual with primacy in questions of social organization and dividing authority in society.

The commitment to the individual was not a challenge to community according to the assumptions shared by Americans and Toennies,

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[13]Fellman, p. xi.

but the assertion that community dominion could not be extended without limits. It was an assertion of the possibility of mobility and exchange, as well as a curb on centralization of power. Toennies' dispensation of sovereignty to human will is harmonious with the strong emphasis on the divinity of the individual that has merged in the United States' social thought from Christian ideas and the "natural rights" philosophy of politics.

The Challenge to the Past

The mechanism Toennies saw for the interaction of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft was the phenomenon of individualism. The current inability of the individual to garner resources from his community that will support his mobility in the Gesellschaft sector was the threat perceived by Community Action theorists. They responded with attempts to enhance "cultural" authority and uniqueness, as in their Blackstone Ranger adventure, as well as with efforts to stimulate a stronger economic base within "natural" community units -- wistfully financing Community Development Corporations and other marginal economic endeavors such as Elk culture, fence post production, and local hand crafts. Considering the meager resources of Community Action, the scale of success achieved in provoking community alignment, individual optimism, and mobility was possible only because these remained "the dominant wish"[14] of a large part of the American population.

A corner post of Toennies' work is that the Gesellschaft sector should be largely devoted to "exchange." In society today it is dif-

[14] A definition of utopia from Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method, 1936; reprint ed. Harvest Books, Harcourt Brace and World), p. 209.

ficult to see what can be generated within the communities that can be bartered. The Communitarians produced buckwheat, Oneida silver, Britannia ware pots, new ideas, and incomparable academic preparation for Harvard University. The product of communities of the 1960s that brought them consideration was the threat they posed to social order. Office of Economic Opportunity reaction to this resulted in surprising resurgencies of ethnic identity, markets for the products of "appropriate" technology, and refocussing of community services. Nevertheless, these phenomena will probably remain in the backwaters of a current dominated by the needs of and for vast dimensions in energy technology, rationalized child-rearing, and the mixed blessings of "common consciousness." There are, nevertheless, two directions of inquiry that could lead to resolving some of the problems being experienced by the idea of community today.

The first is the pursuit of more adequate knowledge concerning individual motivation and the perception of group identity and alignment. The second is a fuller understanding of the mechanisms in which all manner of "communities" can relate to one another without compromising their unique domain of authority, nor overzealously infringing on others.

Anthony Oberschall has synthesized a largely overlooked tradition of thought about group processes which he feels solves three problems of dominant social theories:

> The first point of weakness is the failure of sociologists to analyze microlevel and group processes from a dynamic rather than static perspective, a promising procedure even when a dynamic system cannot be fully specified. Game theory and the contributions of Boulding (1962) have been largely overlooked by sociologists. The second point of weakness is the lack of theory of group formation and of mobilization and the filling of this gap with mass society theory and ad hoc applications

> of psychologistic concepts such as alienation and relative deprivation even though the empirical evidence keeps accumulating against them. Olson's theory of collective action (1968) has shown a way out of this difficulty. The third point has to do with incorporating motivational assumptions into theory, specifically, what relative weights to give rationality and non-rationality in social action -- and to interests as opposed to beliefs and ideologies.[15]

In putting forward his alternatives, Oberschall adopts a central idea he calls "resource management." In this framework, territory, ideology, force, and even discrimination can provide the resource base for community realization under particular conditions, yet the possibilities are comprehensible under the same theories. If the resource management framework were developed in conjunction with full utilization of the potential in new approaches to "federalism," perhaps relations between communities coalesced by resources besides territory could achieve regularization transcending the fortunes of politics.[16] In these two directions, the contribution of the social sciences to "controlling community phenomena" might be to reconcile economic and social demands of today's world with the visions Americans have held of community and society in the past.

Even without the tools of social science, however, it should not be expected that the idea of community will be a passive mirror for man's fumbling attempts to exploit the planet. The vision men hold for it has given them inspiration, energy and self-restraint, each invested with power toward social change. "Gemeinschaft" is the dream for millions of Americans, Jesse Bernard noted,[17] although even Toennies

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[15] Anthony Oberschall, Social Conflict and Social Movements (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), pp. 3, 28.

[16] Stephen L. Schechter, ed., "Federalism and Community: A Comparative View," Publius 5:2 (Spring 1975).

[17] Bernard, pp. 106-107.

would deny it had ever existed or singularly filled the human need for order and meaning. In attempting to create the dream, Americans have careened widely in supporting the individual or his control, his equality or his opportunity. Capriciously combining personal rights and property rights, legal and material advantages, education for adjustment and self-expression, localism and centralization, planning and laissez faire, the idea of community has sponsored unending challenge and reform among competing models. Not as a result, but within these "reform" movements have existed unparalleled opportunities for the realization of the ideal of community. The intensity of commitment, affection, and common purpose within groups promoting alternative visions of society is well-documented. Communitarians rejoiced in the community experience; Hull House was Chicago's "best club." For New Dealers, the "capacity to act -- to commit oneself to a cause quite apart from its philosophy or program -- became a form of personal and collective salvation."[18] Therefore, perhaps in the greatest social malaise are the greatest impulses to community.

The past does not determine the future, but understanding the past helps to determine the boundaries of ideas and possibilities through which hopes and plans must be steered. The idea of community has been exceedingly wayward, mixing provocatively with subsistence farming, cold water cures, Zen, and the eating of bran for most of its American life. Nevertheless, while finding companionship in the lunacy in community, one should not overlook the possibility that at some point it may cast these constraining associates aside, and demand to know its "roots" and its "real nature."

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[18] Pells, p. 98.

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