

Poverty (1965)

TRAINING SERIES FOR SOCIAL AGENCIES

vol. 4)

READINGS IN:

IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

CHANGING INTERPRETATIONS OF BEHAVIOR

SOCIAL AGENCIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

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DELINQUENCY PREVENTION TRAINING PROJECT YOUTH STUDIES CENTER

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Volume IV

READINGS

ON

POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES,

Edited by

Robert Schasre
and
Jo Wallach //

The Delinquency Prevention Training Project*

Youth Studies Center

University of Southern California,

Civic Center Campus

Los Angeles February, 1965

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"I've been poor and I've been rich; rich is better."
Fanny Brice

"That amid our highest civilization men faint and die
with want is not due to the niggardliness of nature,
but to the injustice of man."
Henry George, Progress and Poverty

PREFACE

The Youth Studies Center, under the direction of Dr. LaMar T. Empey, is an interdisciplinary organization at the University of Southern California whose activities focus upon youth behavior through a variety of research, demonstration, and training projects. The Delinquency Prevention Training Project is a unit within the Center whose major concern is to develop training materials for those organizations and educational institutions who are involved in the training and retraining of practitioners and administrators in social agencies. Additionally, the Training Project conducts and evaluates experimental, university-based training programs involving public and private youth-serving organizations.

The present reading series was compiled during the development of special training materials for demonstration projects currently underway in Los Angeles under the sponsorship of the Youth Opportunities Board of Greater Los Angeles. The Board is a special purpose agency whose objective is to bring to bear the full resources of major governmental powers upon the problems of youth unemployment, school drop-outs, and juvenile delinquency. Both the Youth Opportunities Board and the Center's Delinquency Prevention Training Project have been supported by grants from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development, Welfare Administration, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in cooperation with the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime.

The Training Project has been working closely with the Youth Opportunities Board in the development of a variety of training programs for professionals and sub-professionals in a number of youth-serving organizations in the Los Angeles area.

In attempting to evolve special curricular materials for use in Board training activities, the Training Project has conducted an exhaustive survey of the most recently published and non-published materials which hold generic relevance to practitioners in all social agencies working in an urban setting. In compiling and editing this reading series, efforts have been made to secure those articles which would contribute to a better understanding of client groups and prevalent societal conditions. Particular emphasis has been placed upon increased understanding of the poor and the culturally disadvantaged. Many of

the articles also offer suggestions regarding the ways in which agencies can modify existing structures and practices so as to more effectively meet the pressing challenges of the 60's. They have been selected for their clarity and ease of reading, as well as being reflective of the most recent thinking in the areas being considered.

Toward the end of providing the reader with the broadest possible insights into these topical areas, the writings of sociologists, psychologists, economists, psychiatrists, anthropologists, businessmen, journalists, educators, social workers and others have been included in the reading series. It is anticipated that these differential perspectives will allow for the widest possible range of perspectives in training seminars.

Included in the series are the following: Volume I, Implications of Social Change; Volume II, Changing Interpretations of Behavior; Volume III, Social Agencies and Social Change; Volume IV, Poverty in the United States; Volume V, Reaching the Disadvantaged Child; Volume VI, Dropouts and Training; Volume VII, Delinquency and Treatment; and Volume VIII, Planned Change.

In addition to the reading series, the Training Project has also recently published a bibliographic series which might be considered as complementary to the reading series. The areas in which bibliographies have been compiled are: (1) Poverty in the United States; (2) Urban and Community Development; (3) Formal Organizations; (4) Problems of Automation; (5) Education, Drop-outs, and Youth Employment; and (6) Organizational Change.

It is hoped that the bibliographic and reading series will be of use in the formulation of agency in-service training programs, inter-agency training programs and as collateral reading for courses being offered by colleges and universities.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the authors, organizations, and publishers who have cooperated in our effort by granting permission to utilize the selections which appear in this series.

Training Project staff involved in the compiling, editing, and production of the bibliographic and reading series are: Annette Gromfin, Joyce Jones, Ingrid Swenson, Diana Butcher, and Judy Maero.

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INTRODUCTION

Two basic themes run through the selections presented here. One theme addresses the subject of poverty from the standpoint of currently expressed concern on the subject; another theme addresses poverty through an examination of its nature. This latter theme is rather ably presented within the context of a particular concept called the "culture of poverty".

Taken individually, the selections offered here do not treat either of the two themes separately. The sequence of presentation, however, does have implications for a somewhat separate consideration of them. The first five articles deal, in the main, most directly with the culture of poverty. In order of their appearance, the following are treated: a definition of the concept called the culture of poverty; the relationship between the culture of poverty and the American system of social classes; the relationship between urbanism and poverty; some major implications of poverty as a determinant of attitudes and behavior; and the relationship between poverty and education.

The last four selections more directly reflect social and political concern over the existence of poverty. The following aspects of this concern follow in sequence: the United States as a predominantly affluent social system; some characteristics of "the rich" as they constitute part of the U.S. class structure; and the positive and negative implications that the culture of poverty poses for appropriately planned social and political action.

Throughout all of these selections, the subject of social change as a basic unit of analysis is obvious. It is, perhaps, most relevant in relationship to the changed nature of poverty itself when contemporary poverty is compared with the poverty of the past.

Robert Schasre

Los Angeles, California
February, 1965

THE CULTURE OF POVERTY*

by
Oscar Lewis

I want to take this opportunity to clear up some possible misunderstanding concerning the idea of a "culture of poverty." I would distinguish sharply between impoverishment and the culture of poverty. Not all people who are poor necessarily live in or develop a culture of poverty. For example, middle class people who become impoverished do not automatically become members of the culture of poverty, even though they may have to live in the slums for a while. Similarly, the Jews who lived in poverty in eastern Europe did not develop a culture of poverty because their tradition of literacy and their religion gave them a sense of identification with Jews all over the world. It gave them a sense of belonging to the community which was united by a common heritage and common religious beliefs.

In the introduction to The Children of Sanchez, I listed approximately fifty traits which constitute what I call the culture of poverty. Although poverty is only one of the many traits which, in my judgment, go together, I have used it to name the total system because I consider it terribly important. However, the other traits, and especially the psychological and ideological ones, are also important and I should like to elaborate on this a bit.

The Helpless and The Homeless

The people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging. They are like aliens in their own country, convinced that the existing

* Reprinted from Trans-action, a publication of the Community Leadership Project, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., Volume 1, Issue 1, November, 1963.

institutions do not serve their interests and needs. Along with this feeling of powerlessness is a widespread feeling of inferiority, of personal unworthiness. This is true of the slum dwellers of Mexico City, who do not constitute a distinct ethnic or racial group and do not suffer from racial discrimination. In the United States the culture of poverty of the Negroes has the additional disadvantage of racial discrimination.

People with a culture of poverty have very little sense of history. They are a marginal people who know only their own troubles, their own local conditions, their own neighborhood, their own way of life. Usually, they have neither the knowledge, the vision nor the ideology to see the similarities between their problems and those of others like themselves elsewhere in the world. In other words, they are not class conscious, although they are very sensitive indeed to status distinctions. When the poor become class conscious or members of trade union organizations, or when they adopt an internationalist outlook on the world they are, in my view, no longer part of the culture of poverty although they may still be desperately poor.

Is It All Bad?

The idea of a culture of poverty that cuts across different societies enables us to see that many of the problems we think of as distinctively our own or distinctively Negro problems (or that of any other special racial or ethnic group), also exist in countries where there are no ethnic groups involved. It also suggests that the elimination of physical poverty as such may not be enough to eliminate the culture of poverty which is a whole way of life. One can speak readily about wiping out poverty; but to wipe out a culture or sub-culture is quite a different matter, for it raises the basic question of our respect for cultural differences.

Middle class people, and this certainly includes most social scientists, tend to concentrate on the negative aspects of the culture of poverty; they tend to have negative feelings about traits such as an emphasis on the present and a neglect of the future, or on concrete as against abstract orientations. I do not intend to idealize or romanticize the culture of poverty. As someone has said, "It is easier to praise poverty than to live it." However, we must not overlook some of the positive aspects that may flow from these traits. Living immersed in the present may develop a capacity for spontaneity, for the enjoyment of the sensual, the indulgence of impulse, which is too often blunted in our middle class future-oriented man. Perhaps it is this reality of the moment that middle class existentialist writers are so

desperately trying to recapture, but which the culture of poverty experiences as a natural, everyday phenomena. The frequent use of violence certainly provides a ready outlet for hostility, so that people in the culture of poverty suffer less from repression than does the middle class.

In this connection, I should also like to take exception to the trend in some studies to identify the lower class almost exclusively with vice, crime and juvenile delinquency, as if most poor people were thieves, beggars, ruffians, murderers or prostitutes. Certainly, in my own experience in Mexico, I found most of the poor decent, upright, courageous and lovable human beings. I believe it was the novelist Fielding who wrote, "The sufferings of the poor are indeed less observed than their misdeeds."

It is interesting that much the same ambivalence in the evaluation of the poor is reflected in proverbs and in literature. On the positive side, the following serve as typical:

"Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke, 6:20)

"The poor are the proteges of the Gods." (Menander, The Lady of Leucas, c. 330 B.C.)

"It is life near the bone, where it is sweetest." (H. D. Thoreau, Walden, Ch. 18.)

"The poor man alone,
When he hears the poor moan
From a morsel a morsel will give."
(Thomas Holcraft, Gaffer Gray.)

"Yes! in the poor man's garden grow
Far more than herbs and flowers,
Kind thoughts, contentment, peace of mind,
And joy for weary hours."
(Mary Howitt, The Poor Man's Garden.)

"Poverty! Thou source of human art,
Thou great inspirer of the poet's song!"
(Edward Moore, Hymn to Poverty.)

"Happier he, the peasant, for,
From the pangs of passion free,
That breathes the keen yet wholesome air
of ragged penury."
(Thomas Gray, Ode on The Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude.)

"O happy unown'd youths! Your limbs can bear
The scorching dog-star and the winter's air,
While the rich infant, nurs'd with care and pain,
Thirsts with each heat and coughs with every rain."
(John Gay. Trivia. Bk. II, I, 145.)

"My friends are poor but honest."
(All's Well That Ends Well, I, iii, 201.)

The following illustrate the negative elements in some of the stereotypes of poverty:

"All the days of the poor are evil."
(Babylonian Talmud, Kethubot, 110b.)

"He must have a great deal of godliness who can
find any satisfaction in being poor."
(Cervantes, Don Quixote, Pt. II, Ch. 44.)

"Poverty is no disgrace to a man, but it is con-
foundedly inconvenient."
(Sydney Smith, His Wit and Wisdom (1900), p. 89.)

"The resolutions of a poor man are weak."
(Doolittle, Chinese Vocabulary II, 494 (1872).)

"What can a poor man do but love and pray?"
(Hartley Coleridge, Sonnets—No. 30.)

"If you've really been poor, you remain poor at
heart all your life."
(W. Somerset Maugham, Introduction to Arnold
Bennett, The Old Wives Tale, in Ten Novels.)

"The life of the poor is the curse of the heart."
(Ecclesiasticus, 38:19.)

"There is no virtue that poverty destroyeth not."
(John Florio, First Fruits, Fo. 32.)

"Poverty makes some humble, but more malignant."
(Bulwer-Lytton. Eugene Aram. Bk. 1, Ch. 7.)

"The devil wipes his tail with the poor man's
pride." (John Ray. English Proverbs. 21.)

"The poor, inur'd to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means."
(William Cowper. Hope I. 7.)

In short, some see the poor as virtuous, upright, serene, independent, honest, secure, kind, simple and happy, while others see them as evil, mean, violent, sordid and criminal.

Most people in the United States find it difficult to think of poverty as a stable, persistent, ever present phenomenon, because our expanding economy and the specially favorable circumstances of our history have led to an optimism which makes us think that poverty is transitory. As a matter of fact, the culture of poverty in the United States is indeed of relatively limited scope; but as Michael Harrington and others show, it is probably more widespread than has been generally recognized.

Poverty Here and Abroad

In considering what can be done about the culture of poverty, we must make a sharp distinction between those countries in which it involves a relatively small segment of the population, and those in which it constitutes a very large section. Obviously, the solutions will have to differ in these two areas. In the United States, the major solution proposed by planners and social workers for dealing with what are called "multiple problem families," the "undeserving poor," and the "hard core of poverty," is slowly to raise their level of living and eventually incorporate them into the middle class. And, wherever possible, there is some reliance upon psychiatric treatment in an effort to imbue these "shiftless, lazy, unambitious people," with the higher middle class aspirations.

In the undeveloped countries, where great masses of people share in the culture of poverty, I doubt that social work solutions are feasible. Nor can psychiatrists begin to cope with the magnitude of the problem. They have all they can do to deal with the growing middle class.

In the United States, delinquency, vice and violence represent the major threats to the middle class from the culture of poverty. In our country there is no threat of revolution. In the less developed countries of the world, however, the people who live in the culture of poverty may one day become organized into political movements that seek fundamental revolutionary changes and that is one reason why their existence poses terribly urgent problems.

If my brief outline of the basic psychological aspects of the culture of poverty is essentially sound, then it may be more important to offer the poor of the world's countries a genuinely revolutionary ideology rather than the promise of material goods or a quick rise in the standards of living.

It is conceivable that some countries can eliminate the culture of poverty (at least in the early stages of their industrial revolution) without at first eliminating impoverishment, by changing the value systems and attitudes of the people so they no longer feel helpless and homeless—so they begin to feel that they are living in their own country, with their institutions, their government and their leadership.

THE AMERICAN LOWER CLASS: A TYPOLOGICAL APPROACH*

by
S. M. Miller

In recent years increasing attention has been directed to the "lower class"—those existing at the economic and social margins of society. The current concern with the limited economic prospects of school drop-outs,¹ the discussions of "hard-core," and "multi-problem" families,² the casualties of the welfare state,³ the analysis of the number of Americans living below the "poverty line,"⁴ and of the "submerged fifth" in Britain⁵—all reflect the growing awareness of the underprivileged in presumably affluent welfare societies of a high level of industrialization.

Much confusion exists in these discussions. Those concerned with psychological and social dislocations ("disorganization" is the commonly used word) tend to underestimate the importance of economic pressures, and those interested in economic deprivation frequently discount the role of social and psychological problems in preventing people from coping with their difficulties. Who is or is not "lower class" is a moot point, as different axes of demarcation are utilized. As I have explained elsewhere, I prefer to use terms like the "new working class" rather than that of the "lower class." Since most of the literature is couched in terms of the "lower class," I have used this term here despite my objections to it.

A way of classifying a population is a way of thinking about them. A frequent practice is to classify that large number of people who are members of households where the breadwinner is not involved in some kind of white collar (i. e. middle class) occupation as "lower class."⁶

* Reprinted by permission of Social Research, Vol. 31, No. 1, Spring, 1964.

This category is then considered to have high homogeneity and is treated as though it constituted a group with a great centrality of attitudinal and behavioral patterns. This orientation has probably led to much of the confusion and conflict in discussions of the characteristics of those at the lower end of the social structure. For example, the inconsistent results concerning methods of child-rearing may be due to the variations from study to study among those who are sampled as members of the "lower class."

It is becoming a more common, though not a consistent practice, to mark off distinctions within the manual category. Frank Riessman and I⁷ have argued that a working class of skilled and semi-skilled regular workers would be distinguished from unskilled, irregular workers who might be called "lower class." Preferably, the latter group might be called by less invidious terms like the "unskilled," "marginal workers," or "underprivileged workers," restricting this latter term, used by Allison Davis, to a narrow scope.⁸ But even where a distinction is made between the "working class" and the "lower class," the criteria of classification are frequently obscure or conflicting.

Two approaches, not always clearly noted, are employed in defining the lower class. One approach emphasizes the definition of groups in terms of "class" characteristics, especially economic role or income. The other employs "cultural" or "status" criteria such as style of life. The Hollingshead index, based on occupation, education and place of residence, is in the tradition of the first approach.⁹ Walter Miller's discussion¹⁰ of the "lower class sub-culture" is along the lines of the second. Social workers' discussions of the "lower class client" and the "multi-problem family" almost always employ style-of-life indicators.

The two approaches intertwine but seem to make independent contributions to elucidating the characteristics of the "lower class" or the poor. Consequently, I have brought them together in an effort to move away from a broadly and vaguely defined "lower class" into a specification of types of lower-class individuals. The effort is to utilize class and status variables in categorizing a population. The combination of the two produces problems, but these may be outweighed by the difficulties and obscurities produced by the current shifting between the two sets of dimensions in discussing groupings and issues: Walter Miller's "lower class"¹¹ is not Lee Rainwater's.¹²

Obviously other dimensions like education or region should also be employed. Class and status dimensions should be more carefully marked off than in the following discussion. Unfortunately the material

to do an adequate job is lacking. The purpose here is to show one way of approaching the problem of differentiation among the poor in order to direct more attention to the recognition of variations among the poor.

The Class Criterion

The advantage of using an economic indicator in defining the lower class is that it specifies a political-economic category to which legislation and other remedial programs could be devoted. Emphasis on style-of-life indicators can be confusing because the meaning of attitudes or behavior or what they lead to can be quite different for the rich, for the middling well-off, for those "getting by," and for the poor. The same behavior may have different roots and consequences in varying milieus.

On the other hand, the class or occupational criterion is not as clearcut as it appears. Some unskilled workers have stable, fairly well-paid jobs and are thus not a pressing social or economic problem. (This is particularly true where the unskilled worker is employed in a unionized, mass-production factory.) Many semi-skilled and fewer skilled workers suffer some degree of irregularity of employment, especially due to seasonal factors. Another problem is that a considerable number of poor families (35 to 50 per cent) have no member in the labor force. ¹³

Consequently, I would suggest that an income criterion is more useful today than an occupational criterion in the definition of the lower class. The recent analyses of poverty in the United States can be employed for this purpose. ¹⁴ They show remarkable agreement, despite their different procedures, in estimating that one-quarter to one-fifth of the United States population lives below the poverty line. The level of income defining poverty varies depending on family size, composition, age, region, and type of community. For our purposes we can ignore these complexities and put the poverty line at a \$4,000 family income, following Keyserling. It is the population falling below this line which, if we want to use the term, could be called "lower class," or "low income," or "the poor."

The advantage of utilizing the economic criterion, and particularly the income definition, is that it specifies a socio-economic category towards which policy can be directed. For example, Morgan reports, ¹⁵ following Lampman's earlier lead, that 10 billion dollars would bring all spending units now below the poverty line to an income level above poverty. Questions of the distribution of income and of social services can be pinpointed then in terms of how they affect this particular population.

Obviously, income levels and sources of income vary considerably among the low-income population. Keyserling distinguishes between the very poor, the poor and a higher income group who suffer what he terms "deprivation" but not outright poverty. What income level is used affects deeply the characteristics of the poor. Lampman uses lower income limits than Keyserling or Morgan. Consequently, he describes a poor population with 50 per cent of the heads of households out of the labor market, while the others, using a higher income level to define poverty, report only 35 per cent of the heads as out of the labor market. We do not have data but it is reasonable to deduce that a higher percentage of Lampman's poor are on welfare than is true of Morgan's or Keyserling's.

Clearly, different income cut-off points shape the characteristics of the low income group. The lower the income level used, the more economically and socially different are the poor.

Definitions of poverty and the poor are not technical problems but social and ideological issues. The recipients of low income are not basically a "welfare poor." Only one-fifth of Morgan's poor receive welfare assistance. The social scientists and social service specialists who write of the "welfare poor" are discussing only a slice of the poor; those concerned with "hard-core" and "multi-problem families" are, in turn, analyzing only a very thin wedge of this small slice.

The income criterion has several components: the level of income, the stability or regularity of income, and the source of income (employment or welfare). A number of observers believe that it makes a difference, holding income constant, whether a family is supported by welfare or not. The knowledge for making a refined classification of these components is lacking. I have resorted therefore to combining them into one indicator of economic security (roughly combining income and stability), and then dichotomizing this indicator into the two simple dimensions of high (security) and low (insecurity). Lumping together these components and dichotomizing them is inadequate.¹⁶ But we cannot at present describe each of the cells of what should be an 8-cell or 16-cell table. I think, however, that the cells of a 4-cell table can be usefully discussed. This capsulated table should rapidly be expanded as we acquire more knowledge and understanding.

The Style-of-Life Criterion

The style-of-life variable also offers difficulties. It refers at least to attitudes and behavior in the areas of family relationships and consumption patterns. A major difficulty is that the content of

the "lower class style-of-life" is debatable. Further, evaluative judgments (as implied in the concepts of "family disorganization," "social disorganization," or "family instability") are invariably involved. As yet, it is not possible to formulate a clean-cut classification which avoids cultural biases and still is of use in formulating a judgment about the impact of life style on individuals. For example, does the absence of a permanent male figure mean that the family is inevitably "unstable," and that children are necessarily psychologically deformed by living in such a family? Assessments such as these are difficult to make because much of our knowledge and theorizing about fatherless families is based on middle-class situations.

I employ the notion of "familial stability/instability," a dichotomization of style of life, to summarize a variety of elements. Familial stability patterns are characterized by families coping with their problems—the children are being fed, though not necessarily on a schedule; the family meets its obligations so that it is not forced to keep on the move; children are not getting into much more trouble than other children of the neighborhood. These are not satisfactory indicators; they are, at best, suggestive of the kind of behavior which is characteristic of stability among the low income population. The aim is to be able to describe the degrees of effectiveness of different styles of life in handling the same environment, granted that our vocabulary is inadequate for this task.

Class and Status

The two approaches can be welded together by cross-classifying the two dimensions of the two variables of economic security and familial stability in a 2 x 2 table:

TABLE 1
Types of Economic Security and Familial Stability

		Familial	
		Stability	Instability
Economic	Security	+	—
	Insecurity	—	—
		++(1)	+—(2)
		—+(3)	— —(4)

Cell 1 is referred to as the stable poor; cell 2, the strained; cell 3, the copers, and cell 4, the unstable.

To some extent, life-cycle stages may be involved here, as some young people escape from cell 4 via cell 2 or cell 3 to cell 1, representing a more stable pattern, and beyond. Or families may drop with age from cell 1 to cell 3, where they have lowered economic security but maintain family stability.

Each of the cells contains many variants. While I believe the four types are an improvement over analysis in terms of the lower class, it is important to recognize that each type has many variations. One kind of variation is determined by whether the family is stationary in its particular pattern or moving to greater or less security-stability. My general orientation is to emphasize flux, rather than assuming a permanent position in a pattern.

The Stable Poor

Cell 1 (the stable poor) is characterized by stability, economically and familially. This cell points to the regularly employed, low-skill, stable poor families.

The rural population, both farm and non-farm, undoubtedly make up the bulk of the stable poor, since this is the majority of the American poor; a re-calculation of Morgan's data suggests that only 30 percent of the poor live in metropolitan areas. The majority of all the poor and of the stable poor are white rural Southern populations. In addition, the non-urban poor are probably represented in this cell to a greater extent than they are among all the poor. Aged persons are also over-represented and constitute a large part of the poor who suffer from downward mobility, since most of them were better off at earlier points in their lives. Leftover third-generation immigrant populations in large cities are probably under-represented. ¹⁷

A number of Negro families are of the stable poor. They have higher social status in the Negro community than their economic counterparts have in the white community because of the general scaling down of incomes and occupational levels of Negroes in the United States. For reasons discussed below, Negroes and other groups affected by discrimination are probably becoming more important politically as well as in relative size among the urban stable poor.

The children of cell 1 families are of all the children of the poor those most likely to be educationally and occupationally mobile. Cell 1 might be considered the "take-off" cell, representing the

phase necessary before many can really make a big advance. But this is a dangerous metaphor, for obviously many youth from families in more difficult circumstances are able to make considerable gains.

The stable poor, then, are a varied group; one component, the aged, has a poor economic future, except to the extent that social security and old-age payments improve, and a declining future as an intact family unit.

The Strained

Cell 2 (the strained) portrays a secure economic pattern, but an unstable family pattern. This might involve a life-cycle problem, *i.e.*, at certain points the families of low-wage, unskilled workers are likely to exhibit unstable patterns. Examples might be "wild" younger workers or alcoholic older workers who disturb family functioning. Or, the pattern could manifest the beginning of a move into cell 4, as a low-income family finds increasing difficulty in maintaining its economic security because of family and personal problems or the economic situation. Obviously, the two possibilities may be closely connected.

Movement may be viewed inter-generationally as well as in terms of life-cycle patterns. Many of the offspring of strained families "may fail to match the economic security of their parents" and experience inter-generational skidding.¹⁸

Strained familial relations may not, however, result in skidding. In earlier periods, immigrant groups faced considerable internal strain arising from the conflict between the younger and older generations in the course of acculturation. Nonetheless, the second generation generally improved its economic circumstances. The instability of today's strained families is regarded as more "pathological" than that of the immigrant populations, although some social work accounts of families at the turn of the century differ little from current reports of "poor family functioning." The current stress is on parents' fighting and drinking, illicit sexual relations of parents, and neglect or brutality towards the children. Whether the economically secure and familially unstable are characterized by these patterns is not clear. If they are not, the offspring of the strained family may not be a prey to skidding. Further, not all children of deeply conflicting or hostile families are inevitably unable to maintain or improve their economic position.

I have looked at cell 2 as a transitional condition. This view may be misleading: many families persist with a low but steady income and a great deal of internal strain.

The Copers

The copers of cell 3 manifest economic insecurity and familial stability—families and individuals having a rough time economically but managing to keep themselves relatively intact. This group probably increases considerably during periods of extensive unemployment. Probably a considerable number of Negroes are in this group and their children are more likely to be mobile than those living in cell 2-type situations.

This cell probably contains a disproportionate number of families affected by downward mobility. Both Morgan¹⁹ and I²⁰ have shown the sizable number of sons of non-manual workers who end up in manual (and sometimes low-income) positions. In Great Britain 40 per cent of those born in non-manual families move into manual occupations. Many of these downwardly mobile persons are probably more likely to retain a stable family style than others in the same economic predicament. As in other situations, however, a minority of the downwardly mobile may manifest extreme familial instability, which would place them in cell 4. Limited data suggest that children of downwardly mobile families have a better chance of rising occupationally than children of families which have been at this low level for some generations.²¹

The Unstable

In cell 4, the unstable have neither economic nor personal stability. It is this group which is probably most generally called the "lower class," and Jerome Cohen has suggested to me that the term "lower class" might be usefully restricted to this group. Since this recommendation is unlikely to be consistently utilized by social workers, economists, sociologists, political scientists and others interested in low-income populations, I have not adopted it, preferring to focus attention on the varied segments of the low-income population. Within the unstable group there are degrees of stability and strain—not every family is a "hard-core case" or has a "multi-agency problem." Nor do we have sufficient data over time to assert that once in cell 4, always in cell 4. It may be that families and individuals occasionally manifest both economic and personal instability, then overcome these problems for a while. Later they may again suffer from illness, unemployment, emotional upset or familial instability.

As important in some ways as distinguishing cell 4 from the other three cells which make up the lower class, is it to note that cell 4 contains an extremely varied grouping. In it are partially urbanized Negroes new to the North and to cities, remaining slum residents of ethnic groups which have largely moved out of the slums, and long-term (inter-generational) poor white families, the déclassés of Marx. Also included are the physically handicapped and the aged who have dropped through the class structure. The low-income class generally and the unstable in particular comprise a category of unskilled, irregular workers, broken and large families, and a residual bin of the aged, physically handicapped and mentally disturbed.

In some cases, social characteristics handicap the low-income groups: for example, recent rurality (resulting in unfamiliarity with urban problems and lack of appropriate skills) and discrimination. These groups—Negroes, former mountaineer whites—have the worst problems. They also have perhaps the greatest potential because removing their social limitations would lead to major change. Their handicaps are less self-inflicted and self-sustaining. This may not be as true for mountaineer whites as for Negroes. Aside from people dropping into the poverty class along the life-and-physical-cycle, the whites in the lower class who have no good, i.e., social, reason for being there, are most likely to be intractable to change.

Hylan Lewis ²² has suggested the categories of clinical, pre-clinical and sub-clinical to delineate patterns among the poor. I would substitute the word "chronic" for "clinical." The chronic poor refers to the long-term dependents, part of whom are the "hard-core"; the pre-chronic poor are a high-risk group who are moving toward a chronic situation but have not yet become chronically dependent. The sub-chronic poor are those who have many characteristics of dependence but have a greater ability to cope with their problems. ²³

A number of forces can lead individuals into chronic dependence. Lower-class life is crisis-life, constantly trying to "make do" with string where rope is needed. Anything can break the string. Illness is most important—"Got a job but I got sick and lost it"; "We managed until the baby got sick." The great incidence of physical afflictions among the poor—frequently unknown to the victim—are obvious to any casual observer. Particularly striking are the poor teeth of many. The tendency of lower class people to somaticize their emotional difficulties may be influenced by the omnipresence of illness.

Familial and personal instability may be the sources as well as the consequences of difficulties. While some frequent concomitants of low income life such as matrifocality do not inevitably produce grave difficulties in family life, they frequently do. Alcoholism, an inability to handle aggression, hostility or dependence—one's own or others' toward one—can deeply disturb family functioning. A variety of direct personal aid may be necessary.

Sophistication along these lines of analysis has frequently tended to denigrate the importance of structural factors in producing "personal inadequacies," "social disabilities," and "familial instability." The work of Raymond Smith²⁴ and Edith Clarke²⁵ strongly suggests that illegitimacy is related to economic conditions—the better the economic conditions among the "lower class" Negroes of the Caribbean, the lower the rate of illegitimacy. Kunstadter²⁶ similarly argues that matrifocality as a "lower class" trait is related to a particular set of economic characteristics.

Prolonged unemployment, irregular employment, and low income are important forces leading to a chronic pattern. Low-paid and irregularly employed individuals do not develop an image of the world as predictable and as something with which they are able to cope. The control or direction of events appears to be (and frequently is) an unattainable achievement. When these individuals suffer long-term unemployment, they are less likely than other unemployed, who have had the experience of fairly regular employment, to maintain personal stability. (Maslow²⁷ has argued that those who have had a stable past are more able to manage in disastrous circumstances than those who have had considerable prior deprivation.) A high-employment economy has relatively fewer hard-core cases than a low-employment economy. The American community studies suggest that the lower class is smaller in numbers in times of prosperity than in periods of depression. Peter Townsend in an informal lecture recently declared that during the 1930's in England it was believed that 500,000 to 1,000,000 of those not working were unemployable. In 1940, with the pressures of the war, it was discovered that only 100,000 were really unemployable. Thus, structural change would be of great importance in reducing chronic dependence.

Strategies

Three basic policies are possible: (1) direct economic change, such as providing steadier employment, or raising incomes through the provision of a national minimum level of income; (2) direct services, such as case work activities to strengthen the ego-functioning

of the individual, or family assistance through home-maker help; (3) indirect change affecting the climate—social, psychological, political— of the neighborhoods in which the poor live.

What would lead one type of low-income population in a given direction would not work at all for another type. A panacea does not exist because there is no one thing which will have a pervasive impact in all cases. What is crucial for one type of problem may be insignificant for others.

I find the concept of elasticity useful here.²⁸ It points to the extent of change resulting from input of additional services or income. Some types of the poor have high income elasticity—a little change in income produces a big change in behavior; other types may have low income elasticity but have high education elasticity or high casework elasticity. Still other types will respond rapidly and deeply to new housing, to a steady job, to counseling, or to a package of such ingredients rather than to, say, case work alone. The concept of elasticity brings into focus the issue of different remedies for various types of problems. The issues of costs, and of substitution of choice of different services or resources are made vivid by confrontation with the concepts of elasticity and productivity (the return per unit of expenditure).

The stable, those in cell 1, would be immediately helped if their incomes were raised so that they came closer to the American standard of life. Unionization of industries in which they work (especially in service trades and occupations), shifts from low productivity land and industries to highly productive industries, and occupational retraining would be important. In some situations, individuals have to be prepared for retraining (where, for example, the level of literacy is low) or aided in moving to new localities where opportunities are greater. They may need help in adjusting to new urban conditions, but this adjustment would probably not be very difficult where jobs and housing are adequate. The stable poor, in short, would have a high income elasticity, rapidly improving and adjusting to increases in their income.

The inadequacy of social services and payments in the United States forces many into cell 1. Improving and extending social security, which at present maintains many only at the level of penury while a substantial number are not covered by it, would move large numbers of persons from cells 2, 3, and 4 into cell 1 and lead many of the stable poor into the society. Harrington²⁹ and

Titmuss³⁰ have pointed out that social services in the United States and Britain do not seem to be benefiting the poor as much as those in the middle income range. Obviously, changes in social policy are necessary here.

Some of the strained of cell 2 might require some case work help in improving family conditions and operations, but other approaches might also be effective. If these persons live in a locality that manifests high rates of disturbances, they might be helped by moving to new areas. For some, an improvement in economic conditions may be necessary in order to get deeper family changes. Undoubtedly, a number are not sensitive to income changes or to neighborhood climate change, and sustained case work help would be necessary.

Familial instability may be a carry-over from an earlier period when the family suffered from economic insecurity; the family has not caught up with its economic improvements. But, as Seymour S. Bellin and Jerome Cohen have pointed out, in some families where economic conditions have improved after a long period of economic deprivation and family difficulties, withdrawing the stress of economic insecurity may be insufficient. The toll of the stress frequently must be overcome. Special help may be necessary to bring about familial changes of great importance. Social agencies should be adapted so that they are able to meet the requirements of these families at the time of need and to provide aid in ways which fit the outlook of these families.

The copers of cell 3, who maintain family stability in the face of grave economic difficulties, obviously need economic aid. Many of them would be helped by improvement in welfare payments and practices; others, where there is a working head of household, would be advanced by regularization of work and/or shifting to more remunerative fields. The needs of the stable and of the copers would seem to be similar. Improvement of the economic dimension would push more of the copers into the mobility possibilities of the stable poor of cell 1 and beyond.

Cell 4, containing the unstable, is the most discussed grouping of the poor today. Many, if not most of those in this category are on welfare allotments; women head many of the family units. A general improvement in economic conditions would not have much economic impact on the unstable because they are largely out of the labor force and out of the economy. It is widely believed that unstable families do not have a high income elasticity but the evidence is not strong. Specific programs aimed at this group

would be important. Present-day welfare service are insufficient since they are largely budgetary and policing activities. Concentration on improving the educational achievement of the youth of these families would perhaps be more important than a diffuse effort to achieve better family functioning.³¹ A number of interesting and aggressive case work services have been offered, but their degree of long-term success is unclear. A variety of direct services may be effective with some of these families, including continuous homemaking and baby-sitting services, provisions for nurseries and all-day schools, and consumer buying protection.

It may be that a less direct approach would be effective. It would involve trying to mobilize politically the communities in which the unstable live with the more stable poor so as to provide greater feelings of strength and control. Improvement of family conditions may be anticipated. But far more important, a general change in a low income community, precipitated perhaps by the mobile, the strained and the copers, may spread to affect the unstable of the community as well. The social actionists, of whom Saul Alinsky is the best-known, have this implicit strategy.

In all of the strategies it is necessary to be clear about what exactly is the target population. This is frequently determined on the basis of the numbers involved, though there is always the delicate choice of helping a lot of people a little or a few people a lot. The second step is to discover what works with whom. There is probably nothing that will help all lower class people in one move although, as suggested above, a steady, meaningful, well-paid job as a general base of action should not be underestimated. A decent level of living as the minimal responsibility of an affluent society may be a crucial goal. But there are certain things that alone will help some groups. We have to find the right things for the right groups at the right time.

Political Action

The poor are not rapidly declining; inequality in income and wealth appear to have been increasing in recent years; the incomes of Negroes are no longer advancing relative to those of whites; pension and assistance schemes are maintaining many in poverty rather than providing a "welfare state" standard. The decline in the number of poor between 1947 and 1957 has been due, Lampman contends, to general economic advance rather than to a redistribution of income and wealth in favor of the poor. Improvements in social services and a decrease in inequality would require a shift in the allocation of national product towards improving the relative position of the bottom 20 per cent of the population.

These issues are political ones. They will be affected by the possibility that the present American poor may prove to be more politically active than is usually true of the poor. If this happens, it will be because a large slice of the urban poor is made up of Negroes who have ethnic as well as economic forces moving them. Samuel Lubell³² has argued that Negroes in large cities will furnish a new base for Democratic ward machines. They are becoming more and more politically active and demanding. This self-organization is not only important in getting changes from the government, but it is also serving to change lower-class Negro communities from within. Local leaders are developing, and the orientation of many community agencies to provide leadership and direction to lower-class communities will become increasingly ineffective. The conservative orientation of gaining change and social advance through an harmonious arrangement with local power forces is being superseded by disadvantaged groups themselves actively pressuring for the kinds of changes—in housing, in schools and the like—that they believe to be important.

As these pressures build up it is likely that the desegregation issue will emerge as a social class issue affecting all lower-class persons, and not only as a racial issue affecting Negroes alone. Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, who, with Negroes, increasingly make the poor of the large metropolis a "colored poor," are moving into the stable and coping patterns and beginning to develop political effectiveness. Poverty may not be treated as a racial issue affecting only Negroes. Even where Negroes operate alone, the impact of their demands will affect all the poor as they achieve better schools, better housing, better jobs, better social-services.

Cause and Consequence

A good deal of the tone of discussions of the lower class, even by sociologists, has a negative quality. On the other hand, a few seem to have a romantic feeling about the lower class, particularly its juvenile delinquents, whom they see as rebels against the horrors of middle-class, conformist America. The former view suffers from the assumption that the lower class has little potential for change; the latter, that there is nothing better in present-day America to which it can change.

Among other things, the glorification theme ignores, as Frank Riessman has pointed out, the impact on the lower class of its limited education.³³ The negative view frequently confuses, as Keyserling has noted, cause and consequence. The personal instability of many lower-class persons may be a consequence of economic instability

as well as a cause of it. The chain of cause-and-effect over time frequently becomes blurred. An effective way of cutting into the chain so that change will occur becomes the key issue. My feeling is that structural forces have been underplayed recently as a mode of change, while the "culture of poverty" has been over-stressed.³⁴

The negative view has the danger of not seeing positive elements in lower-class life. By ignoring these elements, social policies can frequently worsen them. For example, in an exciting study of a Puerto Rican slum, Helen Icken Safa has analyzed the community and familial solidarity of the residents of a slum barrio. When families were moved into public housing, community ties were weakened. Perhaps this was because the project social workers centered their efforts on the wife, while the husband's role and responsibility in the family and community diminished.³⁵

It is perhaps a "heuristic" fallacy, as Riessman has said, to believe that lower-class people are willing and capable of positive change. This is not always true, but if professionals and social reformers lack confidence in the poor, little can be accomplished either in the social services or in political action. An optimistic outlook may not insure success, but without optimism, it is doubtful if anything can be moved. Frequently, disenchantment and cynicism capture accurately a slice of life, but they are also immobilizing, for they ignore the constructive and energizing role of hope.³⁶

Conclusion

A clearly defined "lower class" does not exist. As Peter Townsend has noted, the population embraced by this term is a varied, changing group:

"A misconception is that in a relatively prosperous society most individuals have the capacity to meet any contingency in life. Only a poor and handicapped minority need special protection or help. This ignores the infinite diversities and changing conditions to be found in any population. Men gain or fall in status and living standards; at one stage of their life their dependencies are minimal, at others unduly numerous; sometimes they need exceptional help to achieve qualifications and skills held to be desirable by society; and at all times they are susceptible to the vicissitudes of prolonged ill health, disability, redundancy of unemployment, and bereavement, which they are usually powerless to control or even reasonably anticipate. Unanticipated adversity is not the peculiar experience of one fixed section of the working class."³⁷

In England, Dahrendorf contends,³⁸ the unskilled category represents a temporary condition; individuals at various stages of the life cycle may drop into it, but for only a comparatively few is it a permanent position. In the United States this is not as true, and if caste pressures grow, it will be even less true.

The changing economy of America is producing new property relations; at the same time it is producing new working classes and lower income classes.³⁹ The analysis of data and the development of our concepts have not kept up with the increasing differentiation within these populations. Many pressures and counter-pressures exist in any stratum. Despite a modal pattern, considerable variety in values and behavior occurs. Since cross-pressures affect the lower class to a considerable extent,⁴⁰ we should look for types of behavior patterns even among people apparently very similar in objective characteristics. Those at the social bottom see only a vague and ill-defined "them" above them, and those above believe that those below are all rather similar. But those at the top know how much differentiation within the top actually takes place; those at the bottom are aware of much more differentiation than are the outsiders looking in. In particular, what has been taken as typical of the most unstable bottom has been generalized to apply to all who are poor or who are manual workers.

The label "the lower class" increasingly distorts complicated reality. We must begin to demarcate types of poor people more sharply if we are to be able to understand and interpret behavior and circumstance and to develop appropriate social policies. Evaluations of commentators are frequently masked as description. The interpretation of behavior frequently assumes that all outcomes are necessarily desired and normatively prescribed. Anti-social behavior is viewed as heavily sanctioned rather than as the interaction of weak sanctions and difficult reality conditions.

The resurgence of interest in the poor augurs well for a rethinking of the new kind of poverty in the "welfare state," which is unlike the mass unemployment of the 1930's or the grinding poverty of the employed workers of the nineteenth century. Our "received wisdom" should be superseded by new categories and concepts. New wine is being poured into old conceptual bottles and the special quality of the new is being lost.

FOOTNOTES

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1. Cf. Patricia Cayo Sexton, Education and Income: Inequalities in our Public Schools, (New York: Viking Press, 1961), pp. 10 ff., and S. M. Miller, Carolyn Comings and Betty Saleem, The School Dropout Problem—Syracuse, (Albany: New York State Division for Youth and the Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1963). Herman P. Miller points out that the disadvantage of not having a college diploma grew from 1939 to 1958. See his "Money Value of an Education," Occupational Outlook Quarterly (September, 1961), p. 4.
2. Janet E. Weinandy, Families Under Stress, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1962).
3. Audrey Harvey, Casualties of the Welfare State, (Fabian Tract 321, London: Fabian Society, 1959).
4. Michael Harrington, The Other America: Poverty in the United States, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962); Conference on Economic Progress, Poverty and Deprivation in the United States, (Washington: Conference on Economic Progress, 1961; the main author of this analysis is Leon Keyserling and it is known as the "Keyserling Report"); Gabriel Kolko, Wealth and Power in the United States, (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1962); Robert J. Lampman, "The Low Income Population and Economic Growth," Study Paper No. 12, Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, December 16, 1959, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959); James N. Morgan et al., Income and Welfare in the United States, (New York: McGraw Hill and Company, 1962).
5. Brian Abel-Smith, "Whose Welfare State?," Norman MacKenzie, ed., Conviction, (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1958).

6. "The terms 'lower class' and 'middle class' are used here to refer to systems of behavior and concerns rather than groups defined in conventional economic terms." William C. Kvaraceus and Walter B. Miller, Delinquent Behavior: Culture and the Individual, (Washington: National Education Association, 1959), p. 62.
7. S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman, "The Working-Class Subculture: A New View," Social Problems, IX (Summer, 1961), pp. 86-97.
8. Allison Davis, "The Motivation of the Underprivileged Worker", in William Foote Whyte, ed., Industry and Society, (New York: McGraw-Hill and Company, 1946), pp. 84-106.
9. August B. Hollingshead and Frederick C. Redlich, Social Class and Mental Illness: A Community Study, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1958), pp. 387-97.
10. Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues, XIV, No. 3, (1958), p. 6, footnote 3. In his penetrating analysis Miller notes the existence of "subtypes of lower class culture" but does not pursue this point. While his emphasis is on cultural characteristics such as "female-based" household and "serial monogamy" mating patterns, he elsewhere employs educational, occupational and income variables to define the lower class. See his "Implications of Urban Lower-Class Culture for Social Work," Social Service Review, (September, 1959) pp. 229 ff. His major stress is on cultural or status characteristics as defining the lower class culture.
11. Ibid.
12. Lee Rainwater assisted by Karol Kane Weinstein, And the Poor Get Children, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960). See also the distinctions made within the lower-lower class by Martin Loeb, "Social Class and the American Social System," Social Work, 6 (April, 1961), p. 16.
13. Keyserling, op. cit., Lampman, op. cit.
14. See footnote 4.
15. Morgan, op. cit., p. 3.

16. Not all families receiving welfare assistance should automatically be classified in the economically insecure category. For the aged, perhaps, welfare assistance does not constitute a lack of security. In general, however, the fact of welfare assistance would put a family in the economically insecure category.
17. Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press), 1960.
18. Dennis Wrong, in a personal communication, has influenced this and the following paragraph. "Skidding" is discussed in Harold Wilensky and Hugh Edwards, "The Skidder: Ideological Adjustments of Downward Mobile Workers," American Sociological Review, 24 (April, 1959), pp. 215-231.
19. Morgan, op. cit.
20. S. M. Miller, "Comparative Social Mobility," Current Sociology, IX, No. 1, (1960), pp. 1-89.
21. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
22. Hylan Lewis, "Child Rearing Among Low Income Families," Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, June 8, 1961. This paper and others by Lewis are among the most stimulating on the problems of low-income patterns. Also see Hyman Rodman, "The Lower-Class Value Stretch," Social Forces, 42, (December, 1963).
23. I have used the terms "dependent" and "dependence" here for want of a sharper term; I find the concept of dependence murky and frequently used to cover a variety of conditions which a writer does not like.
24. Raymond T. Smith, The Negro Family in British Guiana, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1956).
25. Edith Clarke, My Mother Who Fathered Me, (New York: Humanities Press, 1957).
26. Peter Kunstadter, "A Survey of the Consanguine and Matrifocal Family," American Anthropologist, 65 (February, 1963), pp. 56-66.

27. A. H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1953), pp. 80-106.
28. Carlsson has reintroduced the concept of elasticity into sociological thinking. Gosta Carlsson, "Okonomische Ungleichheit und Lebenschancen," Kolner Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 5, (1961), pp. 189-199.
29. Harrington, op. cit.
30. Richard Titmuss, Essays on 'The Welfare State,' (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), Chapter 2, "The Social Division of Welfare," and Income Distribution and Social Change, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962). Although Titmuss is a seminal thinker in analyzing changes in the social structure of the modern society, he has been almost completely ignored by American sociologists.
31. Cf. S. M. Miller, "Poverty and Inequality in America: Implications for Social Services," Child Welfare, (November, 1963), pp. 424-5. Republished in the Syracuse University Youth Development Center Reprint Series.
32. In his syndicated column which appeared in the Syracuse Herald-Journal (Nov. 14, 1961).
33. Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962).
34. Harrington seems frequently to write and speak as though all low-income persons are bound in an immutable chain of apathy and ineffectiveness, characteristics of "the culture of poverty." He has obviously extended this term beyond the intent of Oscar Lewis who introduced it in his Five Families, (New York: Basic Books, 1959), and in The Children of Sanchez, (New York: Random House, 1961). Warren Hagstrom has countered this view in his "The Power of the Poor," (Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1963).
35. Helen Icken Safa, "From Shanty Town to Public Housing," (Syracuse University Youth Development Center, 1962). The peculiar stresses of public housing life may be functional equivalents of the economic conditions of matrifocality discussed by Kunstadter.

36. Cf. S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman, "Working Class Authoritarianism: A Critique of Lipset," British Journal of Sociology, (September, 1961).
37. Peter Townsend, "Freedom and Equality," New Statesman, LXI, No. 1570, (April 14, 1961), p. 574.
38. Ralf Dahrendorf, Unskilled Labour in British Industry, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, London School of Economics, 1956, pp. 429-430.
39. S. M. Miller, "Poverty, Race and Politics," in Irving Louis Horowitz, ed., The New Sociology: Essays on Social Values and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964)(forthcoming).
40. See Miller and Riessman, op. cit., and Hylan Lewis, op. cit.

THE CULTURE OF THE SLUM*

by
Allison Davis

One can see, if one goes far enough, millions of children living under conditions of severe physical and cultural deprivation; the Jewish, Italian and Polish children on the lower East Side of New York, and across the Hudson in Union City and Jersey City; the Negro children in the slums around Halstead and Maxwell Streets in Chicago or near Rampart Street in New Orleans, or in a thousand other neighborhoods in Chicago, Memphis, Harlem, Detroit, Cleveland and Los Angeles; the Puerto-Rican and Mexican children in New York and Los Angeles. Only such a proposal as Jonathan Swift's, for preventing the children of the poor from becoming a burden to their parents and their country, could do justice to the dehumanizing conditions of life in the shanties or fire trap tenements in which American children, born in the bottom income groups, live and grow up.

I

The actual daily pressure of 5 to 10 hungry stomachs to fill, backs to clothe, and feet to cover forces the working-class parent to reduce his ambitions to the level of bare subsistence; to lower his sights as far as long-term planning and studying for better jobs and for finer skills are concerned; to narrow, limit, and shorten his goals with regard to the care, nutrition, education, and careers of his children.

This terrible pressure for physical survival means that the child in the average working-class family usually does not learn

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the "ambition," the drive for high skills, and for educational achievement that the middle-class child learns in his family. The working-class individual usually does not learn to respond to these strong incentives and to seek these difficult goals, because they have been submerged in his family life by the daily battle for food, shelter, and for the preservation of the family. In this sense, ambition and the drive to attain the higher skills are a kind of luxury. They require a minimum physical security; only when one knows where his next week's or next month's food and shelter will come from, can he and his children afford to go in for the long-term education and training, the endless search for opportunities, and the tedious apple polishing that the attainment of higher skills and occupational status requires.

The deprivations, the shocks of fortune, the drain of illness and malnutrition, as well as the social and psychological disorganization, reduce the efficiency of the underprivileged worker. A society that puts families into this kind of physical and social environment actually cripples both the ability and the work motivation of its workers. If there is one thing that modern psychology makes clear, it is this: men cannot be motivated successfully to work hard or to learn well, simply by putting the screws upon them. The starvation theory of wages may or may not have been abandoned in actual industrial practice, but it is certain that other theories of social punishment, and of economic pressure, other theories that men will work hard and well only when they are compelled to by economic or legal necessity are still very popular. But the analysis of our system of economic and social prestige, as well as the findings of psychologists, make it clear to any realist that men work hard and learn well only when there are increasing rewards available.

To improve the underprivileged worker's performance, one must help him to learn to want and to be anxious to attain higher social goals for himself and his children. All one can get out of methods of starvation conditions in wages, or of threat and intimidations, is more of the same inferior work and more concealed resistance, as in the case of a man whipping a poorly trained mule. The problem of changing the work habits and motivation of people who come out of such families is far more complex than mere supervision and pressure. It is a problem of changing the goals, the ambitions, and the level of cultural and occupational aspiration of the underprivileged worker.

This change in his cultural motivation cannot be attained by getting him into the starvation box. For the average slum family is a large economic unit, a clan of kin. They can depend upon each

other for shelter and food in time of unemployment, or of reduced income, or of prolonged absenteeism, or when they simply quit the job. In this slum culture, one may usually fall back upon his brothers, or sisters, or aunts, or nieces, or cousins for a bed and meals, in a way that middle-class people cannot. The middle-class adult person is ashamed to go to his relations or friends for food and shelter. "Respectability" prohibits such dependence. To avoid this embarrassing loss of "face", he will work harder, take more punishment of a mental and emotional kind on the job, and cling to the job more desperately than will the average lower class, underprivileged worker.

The masses of slum people cannot be frightened and forced into better work habits, simply through having the economic squeeze put on them, or through being threatened constantly with firing. Such threats do not intimidate them, as they do the middle-class clerk or schoolteacher, because the underprivileged worker is thoroughly accustomed to those conditions of life that middle-class people call "insecurity." Most important of all, he knows he can always "bunk in" with a relative, usually on his mother's side of the family, and he is certain that an extra plate will be filled for him and his, so long as his relatives have food. The harder the economic noose is drawn, the tighter the protective circle of the average working-class family is drawn. Thus economic intimidation is much less effective. Since most slum people do not get the rewards of social and economic prestige in our society, they do not fear the loss of the job or the attendant loss of respectability in their communities nearly so deeply as do the white-collar workers.

One is forced to ask why society as a whole allows millions of children born to these families in each generation, to be wasted, so far as their contribution to the efficiency of this nation is concerned. Part of the answer is that the status of children is still the lowest of any group in this society. Children are not considered of vital importance until old enough to vote. Children can bring no pressure upon local or national government. Children in the families of the lowest economic level are regarded as a drain upon the community and nation rather than as a source of tremendous ability and human capital. Children of this submerged third of the population, the bottom economic level, are truly the voiceless and forgotten human beings of America.

What kind of children grow up in such environments? What kind of persons are they likely to become? We know that most of them need more food, better housing, and more space in the bed,

since three or four or five have to sleep in one bed. We know that they do not get minimal medical, dental or eye care; that they do not have a place to study at home, or parents to provide them with the books or the incentive to read.

But what is the learned cultural behavior of such a child likely to be and what kinds of feelings, hopes and passions is he likely to have?

Growing up in the street culture of our urban blighted areas, living in tenements and kitchenettes, a child of our white and colored lower-economic groups learns a characteristic pattern of ambitions, of pleasures and of behaviors. Anger, love, sexual impulses—his basic psychological responses—are expressed more directly than in middle class. The child is allowed more often to fight when he is angry and to laugh when he is triumphant. Frequently he fights even his brothers and sisters. He does not have to accept the external peace between siblings which middle class parents try to impose.

In both his community and family, physical aggression usually is regarded as normal. Because fighting is common both in his family and his neighborhood, he learns to take a blow and to give one. He lives in a jungle, so far as the law is concerned. There is no effective protection by the police therefore he must learn to protect himself or expect to be attacked and whipped. His parents themselves believe that whipping is the normal way of controlling a child or a wife or a husband. Thus he gets his thrashings regularly and learns not to fear them. Ask any lower-class parent from the South what one should do to make a child obey and you are almost certain to be told, "Whip him." Because his punishment is chiefly physical, however, he is spared the constant attacks of prolonged guilt and also the fear of losing parental love which middle-class parents continually seek to arouse and to maintain during long training periods of their children.

The slum child, however, has his share of fear and worry. His family is more often struck by disease and by the separation of husband and wife. Their chronic poverty breeds fear of eviction—no place to sleep. The child's most constant fear is the fear of not getting enough to eat.

On the other hand, his family and his gang teach him not to fear a fight, not to be intimidated by the teacher or by the police, not to fear injury or even death as keenly as your child does. Thus a child in the slum is less stimulated by his own culture to be inhibited or to be fearful.

He also grows up fast in the sense of achieving personal maturity. He is not protected from the crises of life. He sits with the ill and with the dying. Even as a six-year old, he listens to family discussions of unemployment, of desertion, of adultery. He lives fast in a society where he himself will become a man (or a woman) at fourteen or fifteen.

The culture of these groups also differs from that of middle-class groups in its concepts of manliness and womanliness. The boy will learn to be more male, coarser, more aggressive physically, more openly sexual than the middle-class boy. He has had, on the whole, much more freedom and much more actual experience with sex. (This does not refer to the fantasies which the middle-class boy may have in his head, which may make him more sexual than the lower-class boy.) The slum girl will learn to be more outspoken, bolder sexually, more female, more expressive of her impulses and of her emotions than the girls trained in the middle-class family.

Thus, by the time the slum child has become an adolescent of fourteen or fifteen, he has learned a deep cultural motivation which differs at many points from that of middle-class children and adolescents. The teacher, himself, usually is a middle-class person who understands and approves the cultural behavior of the middle-class pupil but does not understand and does not approve of the cultural behavior of the child from the lower part of the class system.

In school, the child from the low economic levels is likely to lack confidence in his ability and in his future. His parents usually do not encourage him to compete in school, so that he usually lacks the drive for achievement which is the prime incentive that middle-class parents seek to instill in their children. Moreover, the lower-class child experiences down-grading in his first year in school, through the reading readiness tests, which are incorrectly named since they will not predict reading. The correlation with achievement is less than (.03) point three. It is the same with educational aptitude tests. These children have damaging experience with tests and texts, with the primers and readers, and with the curriculum as a whole which constitute the rigid structure of our educational system. These and the experience of being placed in the slow reader groups, at six years of age, when he does not yet know what it means not to be a reader or to be "ready for reading," severely damage the child's confidence and basic self esteem.

Finally, the child's subordinate place in society and the subordinate place of his parents, friends and neighbors tend to weaken his self esteem. This self depreciation is typical of most low-status children and is the result of their social subordination in most of their relationships with dominant groups, such as teachers. They learn a poor self image. Actual self contempt is hidden beneath a mask of resentment and hostility.

These children need teachers who will encourage them to try, to hope, to believe in their futures, in themselves, and in their abilities. They are hungry for approval, for encouragement, for some reason to have confidence in themselves against the dead weight of the social and economic pressures which drive them down to self depreciation and sullen resentment.

II

The most powerful force in shaping the future of this society or any other society, is the force of acculturation, that is, the economic and social forces which are changing the way of life, changing the culture of groups of people. This process of learning a new culture has been the life blood of the United States. Its successful operation has been documented not only among all groups of European immigrants, but also among many native-born, low-status white and Negro groups. Successful learning of the middle-class American culture may be seen in the middle-class German, Irish, Italian, Polish and other European immigrant groups, and in hundreds of Negro middle-class communities all over the country.

III

For both white and Negro low-status groups, the school is one of the most powerful factors in changing their culture, and their way of life. But the schools and our whole educational system are operating at the level of only a third to a half of their potential effectiveness in training these children.

We know, for instance, that a third of the white children of unskilled and semi-skilled families in a Midwestern city already are retarded in grade placement by the time they are nine and ten years old.¹ By the time white children from these lowest occupational groups are in their tenth year, they are about two years behind the children from the top occupational families in reading, and ten points lower in I.Q. ratings. Negro children of the lowest economic group are about seven points lower in I.Q. than the lowest group of white children at age ten.

But both groups have improved markedly in the last generation. Moreover, the difference between the average I. Q. of white low-economic groups, and of Negro low-economic groups has grown significantly smaller during the last 20 years.

The average I. Q. of white children of unskilled and semi-skilled parents in Chicago is 102.3, actually above the national average for all children.² The average I. Q. of Negro children born in Philadelphia is 97.³ Klineberg and Lee have shown, moreover, that the I. Q. 's of Negro children born in the South improve steadily with length of residence in New York or Philadelphia.⁴ This trend is statistically significant and continuous. Such an increase, in overall measure of educational aptitude, indicates the great power of better schools to raise the level of achievement by Negro pupils.

The best evidence we have concerning the marked effects of improved educational and economic environment upon the academic behavior of Negro students has been provided by studies of educational aptitude and achievement tests. The Selective Service System administered an educational qualifying test to candidates for the draft during World War II. Results of the analysis, by color-groups, supported the findings on intelligence tests given by the Army in the First World War. The rates of failure were much higher for whites in every southern state for which figures were available than for Negroes in Chicago, New York, or Massachusetts. Whereas only 2.5% of the Negroes tested by Selective Service in Illinois failed this minimum educational requirement test, the following proportions of whites failed it: in Alabama, 8.5%; in Virginia, 8.4%; in Texas, 10.4%; in Arkansas, 9.8%; in Georgia, 8.2%; in Kentucky, 6.1%; in North Carolina, 10.7%, and so on for the 15 states in which the percentage of whites failing the test was higher than the percentage of Negroes failing it in Illinois, New York, or Massachusetts.⁵

The best studies of the effect of migration to northern cities in raising the performance of Negro children on intelligence tests are those, cited above, by Professor Otto Klineberg on Negro migrant children in New York City, and by Professor Everett S. Lee on Negro migrant children in Philadelphia. Klineberg, using different samples at each age-level, found that on the Stanford-Binet and the National Intelligence Tests, the scores of migrants increased with increasing length of residence in New York and tended, after several years, to approximate those of the New York born. Of particular interest to those attempting to improve the language skills of Negro low economic groups is Klineberg's finding that only tests with a definite linguistic component showed such clear gains with length of stay in New York. With performance tests, "this result is not so clear."⁶

Lee's study provides us with the best test of the hypothesis that education in northern cities results in an increase in I.Q. which is correlated with the length of time the migrant child has been in the northern city.⁷ He found "a statistically significant and continuous upward trend in the intelligence test ratings of southern-born Negro children as their length of residence in Philadelphia increases. This increase manifests itself not only on a general intelligence test but also on each of the sub-tests of the Chicago Tests of Primary Mental Abilities, with the single exception of memory. The increase in general score cannot, therefore, be attributed to an increase in any one specific ability. Nor can the increase be laid to increasing familiarity with the tests or the testing situation, or to a general trend to be found among all students since there is no such increase in the scores of the Philadelphia-born students. It can further be shown that the migrant children who entered the first grade in Philadelphia are on the first three tests definitely inferior to the Philadelphia-born—but by the time they have reached the sixth grade there is no significant difference between their test ratings and those of the Philadelphia-born group."

IV

In America, we have only one way to get the complex work of our industry, business, science, and government accomplished at an increasingly efficient level with each generation. That method is literally the recruitment of able and ambitious people from the working-class level into the middle levels, which are the levels of the engineer, the scientist, the managerial group in industry and in education, and the teachers. Any school program which does not encourage this majority group, which does not discover the ability in these millions of pupils, and which does not help guide these able students into productive skills and jobs in our economy is handicapping us in a race against time. But most new (and old) teachers find it impossible to understand the behavior, the attitudes and values of these pupils; they are puzzled by the students' reactions to the material and to the instructor, and by their often sullen, resentful behavior. Most of our teachers, coming from middle-class backgrounds and from unrealistic academic training in colleges and universities, experience a cultural shock owing to the great difference between their own training and academic goals and those of most of their students. The result, in many cases, is bewilderment, on the part of both teachers and pupils, followed by disillusionment and apathy.

It seems clear, therefore, that the first thing we have to do, if we are to help students improve their attitudes toward themselves and toward the school work, is to change our attitudes toward them. If

they are to develop hope for their futures and faith in their ability to achieve a useful life, we must have faith in them. No one does anything well in life unless he feels that someone has faith in him and in his ability to achieve.

But it is difficult for middle-class teachers to believe in culturally disadvantaged students who are loud and aggressive. These pupils, the teacher learns, are uninterested in the silly and dull primers and in social studies texts or in arithmetic problems unrelated to their lives.

To stimulate new learning in these pupils, we need first a new relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher will have to initiate this new relationship by trying to understand the student and his strange, stigmatized culture. The teacher must also remember that the processes by which human beings change their behavior (learn) are extremely complex, and are usually slow.

The major principles involved in the student's learning what the teacher has to teach may be stated as follows:

1. All learning is stimulated or hindered by the teacher's feelings toward the student. They must trust and have faith in each other.
2. All school learning is influenced by the cultural attitudes which the teacher has toward the student, and which the student experiences toward the teacher. Often in rejecting the student's cultural background, the teacher appears to reject the student himself as a human being. In return and as early as the first grade, the student may reject the culture of the school and of the teacher. Both teacher and pupil must learn to respect the ability and position of the other.
3. All school-learning is influenced by the student's attitudes of the family and friends; that is, by the degree of interest and drive with respect to school work which the student has learned in his family and peer-group.
4. All school-learning is influenced by the presence, or absence, of intrinsic motivation in the curriculum itself. Neither the teacher nor the student can create interest in dull, unrealistic texts in reading, social studies, or arithmetic.

With regard to the present curriculum, teachers know that it is impossible to interest the majority of pupils of the lower socio-economic levels in the present primers and other texts. They realize that most of their time has to be given to discipline because the curriculum has no reality, emotional appeal, or interest for the pupils. It is this over-all structure consisting of a narrow academic curriculum, of equally narrow and outmoded tests, and boring unrealistic textbooks which kills the ability and interest of most of these students.

Scientific studies at many universities have shown that students learn well only when the materials and readings genuinely interest them. The scientists only prove what every teacher already knows. No interest in the materials, no learning!

V

The school cannot quickly modify the student's social values and behavior which have been learned in the family and other institutions in low-status communities. It is especially difficult to initiate such changes, furthermore, with the adolescent for his academic habits of speech and of study as well as the social habits of recreation, gang behavior, and sexual exploration are already established.

Nevertheless, the school actually does stimulate changes in certain basic types of cultural behavior, such as clothing, food-habits, house-furnishing, manners, and even in occupational aspirations. Many a girl from a poor, working family is now a nurse, or a typist, or a receptionist in a medical office, or a clerk in business or government because the high school raised her level of aspiration and because the home-economics teacher or the teacher of business encouraged her to hope and to try. In most such cases, the teacher has said nothing, but the teacher's example, as well as her encouraging and accepting behavior toward the student, has had its effect, sometimes years after the girl has graduated from high school.

Usually the school is the one place where the student from the slums has the chance to know and to want to become like a middle-class person (the teacher). We have found that the powerful influence of the school and its goals often shows its effects upon the student ten or fifteen years after graduation. Often when the teacher thinks that the student has long ago failed, and been lost in the world of the slum, he learns that the student has become a nurse, the owner of a small business, or even a teacher! Simply because an adolescent receives

a failing grade in an English or mathematics or biology course, one must not believe that he is certain to be a failure in the real world. The correlation between high school grades and later income is very low (and possibly zero for the working class), just as the correlation between I. Q. and teacher's grades is only .30. Both the intelligence test and high school courses are poor predictors of later success in the world, especially for boys. In either of the cases mentioned above, the correlation would have to be .85 and preferably .90 to enable us to predict with any degree of accuracy in the cases of individual students.

VI

The school is an important part of the vast network of economic and cultural forces which are changing the motivation and the aspiration of the low-status groups. Not only teachers and schools are aiding in this sweeping process but also the society's new standards of living, new desires for better housing, more adequate medical care, better jobs, and better communities and schools for their children. This mighty process of acculturation (and the increasingly available economic and social roles for these groups) are developing the motivation, the new goals and the desire to attain them which stimulate the use of the abilities by students and by adults.

It is in the air, in the spirit of the time; it leaps across the artificial barriers of residential and school segregation. It moves while the school is asleep or marking time. The basic process of acculturation which is raising the standard of living and lifting the aspirations of the masses in America cannot be stopped, although it is being impeded. Its working is inevitable. It is only in these terms of acculturation that one can begin to understand the tremendous efforts of the Negro Americans, after nearly fourteen generations in America, for full participation in the public, economic, political, and cultural life of the United States.

In the highly complex process of acculturation which operates over decades and generations, the teachers and the schools have labored hard, though at times blindly. Teachers have made sacrifices, have given their hearts to their work, but often have been discouraged. Looking at the results of their hard, nerve-wracking work in one class period, or one semester, or one year, they sometimes have felt that their lives have been wasted.

But the sacrifices have not been in vain. Time and work are telling. In just one generation, the I. Q. of Negro children in Philadelphia and Chicago has increased about ten points. Furthermore, as revealed by Special Monograph, No. 10, Volume 1, on Special Groups, by the Selective Service System (1953), Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, p. 147, the Negroes drafted in Illinois and New York had a far lower rate of failure on the educational test used by Selective Services than did the whites in 15 southern states.

What we, as teachers, must always remember is that man is a learner. No matter how handicapped he may be, he still possesses the highest of human capacities—the ability to improve himself by learning. Given the opportunity, he will learn his way up.

FOOTNOTES

1. Kenneth Eells, Allison Davis, Robert J. Havighurst, Virgil E. Herrick, and Ralph W. Tyler, under the chairmanship of Allison Davis, Intelligence and Cultural Differences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 112.
2. Robert D. Hess, "An Experimental Culture-Fair Test of Mental Ability" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, 1950), pp. 91-97.
3. Everett S. Lee, "Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration," American Sociological Review, XVI (1951), p. 231.
4. Otto Klineberg, Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 59.
Also E. S. Lee, op. cit., pp. 231-232.
5. U. S., Selective Service System, "Special Groups," Special Monograph No. 10, I (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 147.
6. Otto Klineberg, Race Differences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), pp. 186-187; 197.
7. E. S. Lee, op. cit., pp. 232-233.

THE OTHER AMERICA -
POVERTY AS A SEPARATE CULTURE*

by
Michael Harrington

Poor people in the United States of America are different. They can easily be defined in terms of their income. But that doesn't tell you everything about them. Poor people are different in terms of psychology, in terms of a way of looking at the world. Poor people live in a separate culture, in a vicious circle, in a downward spiral. It is not enough simply to change the income of the poor. One is dealing, when one deals with poverty in the United States, with a total problem of a way of life. Therefore, it is a problem that can't be disposed of by the simple expenditure of funds or the material construction of a building. It is a problem that can only be dealt with if we have the ingenuity and the vision to actually break through that culture and offer a new way of life to these people . . .

One of the problems of our society is, in many ways, that we no longer see the poor. And, if we are to do something about poverty, the first thing we have to do is to get people to see it; to understand that it is still there; to break through the myth and the fantasy that we live in a society of affluence, where everyone is all right. We live in a society where the development of our cities, the flight from the central city to the suburbs, has removed practically the entire middle class from contact with poverty. Poverty is no longer 'across the tracks' in our society. Poverty is now miles away, segregated . . . and not only in racial terms.

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Therefore, we must get people to see it. We live in a society where we have probably the best dressed poor the world has ever known. We don't live in a society of rags. One of the few things the American poor can get fairly decently is clothes. Therefore, we don't see the poor.

For the first time in history, the poor are a minority. When the poor are a majority, they have a break because everybody has to be concerned with them. But when the poor are a minority it is possible that their plight is worse, because there are fewer of them and it is possible to ignore them. It is possible to run the society, to have the growth and production, to have two-thirds who are happy and content, and simply forget about the rest of society.

There are signs that there is a developing consciousness about poverty. We have a Congressional Joint Economic Committee report that states that 32 million Americans, 19 per cent of our population, are poor. That figure is derived by a very modest definition: by setting \$2,500 as the income needed for an urban family of four . . .

We have a recent report by the Conference on Economic Progress, (see Current, July, 1962, Readers Service), that estimates that 77 million Americans, that is to say, 40 per cent of the population of the United States, are either poor or deprived; that is to say, live at a level much lower than is necessary for a decent existence by our standards.

But the point with poverty is not to get involved in a numbers game . . . Take any one of these figures and you have a scandal. More than that, it seems to me, if anything, the prospect for the poor in our society is a grim one. As things stand now, things will get worse for the poor before they get better. We live in a society where automation is destroying jobs and will destroy more jobs. We live in a society that has already tolerated unconscionable new poverty: in the coal mining areas in West Virginia and Pennsylvania; among automobile workers in Detroit; among packing house workers in Chicago. And the process that has been creating new poor people in the midst of an affluent society is not going to stop. If anything, it is going to accelerate.

Moreover, we live in a society in the West, among the advanced nations of the earth, that today has the lowest growth rate of any society, and when a trend of that kind develops, it means fewer jobs, fewer new jobs.

We live in a society that has, among all of the advanced nations, with the exception of Canada, the highest rate of chronic unemployment to be found in the Western world, a rate of unemployment four times greater than that of the countries of the Common Market, for example. You will find no country in Europe with unemployment over 2 per cent. You will find some with less than 1 per cent. And, in the United States, for years now, our unemployment has not dropped below 5 per cent. It is the goal of American policy now to hit a level of unemployment that, if reached, will still be three times greater than the currently prevailing in Europe: a goal we look forward to as an achievement.

As a result of this automation and unemployment situation, you have . . . one special group that is literally stricken with social havoc: the young people . . . We know now that these young people, barring considerable changes in our society, are already . . . at 16, 17, 18 years of age, condemned to be poor for the rest of their lives. This is so because we live in a society whose skill level is moving up and up; yet these young people have dropped out of school . . .

Poverty-stricken people form a culture. They have a special plight. In the old days in the United States, in the days of the great immigrant waves, it was possible to live in a slum and not be a slum dweller. Then you were part of a culture of hope, a culture of aspiration, which came from the old country. The slum was the center of a culture, of a religion, of a language—and of hope. There were, in the slums, the intelligent and the not so intelligent. There were those who wanted to break out. There was a mood; the great drama of American society was that the miserable slums at the turn of the century, in the period of immigrant waves, were way stations into the great society. Today that is no longer true.

Today our slums are peopled by those who weren't part of history when it moved forward, who were rejected by progress. It is peopled internally by migrants and particularly by racial minorities who have problems the like of which no other groups have faced. In these slums, now, the way into society has become much more difficult. It used to be that there was a continuum of skill in American society and a young person who dropped out of school could go into the plant as a laborer and slowly pick up skill and become a machine helper; then take a course at night and finally become a tool and die-maker. In an automated society, that process is over. We now, more and more, have a chasm between those who are highly trained and those not trained at all. Those who, because of their birth, because of the accident of their birth, get the disadvantage of a lack of education and culture and are in a worse position than in any like situation in the history of our country.

We have understood, more and more, that to be poor is to think and feel differently. George Gallup, in one of his polls, has found that the poor are more pessimistic about everything. The poor think World War III is more likely than do the middle class or the rich. The poor think that depression is likely. The poor think they won't take a vacation next year. The poor, given an option of predicting the future as a function of the present, assume it will be miserable.

And we now have evidence that is contrary to the myth that the really terribly mentally torn people of our society live in the suburbs, suffering the anxieties of \$15,000, \$20,000, and \$25,000 a year. That is not true. We have evidence from studies in New Haven and from the 'Midtown' studies in New York City that the life of poverty is a life productive of mental disturbances, neurosis, and psychosis; that the poor are not 'the happy savages' of an affluent society but, rather, that the poor are the greatest mental and spiritual and psychological victims of the affluent society—precisely because they are poor. We know the poor live in a vicious circle. They get sick more often, because they live under unhygienic conditions. They stay sick longer, because they don't have the money for the doctor and medicine. As a result of that, they are less capable of facing illness the next time it comes around. There is a downward treadmill that exists in the culture of poverty . . . Suffice it to say that, in the United States of America, there is not simply poverty as a fact, there is poverty as a way of life.

In order to approach this problem seriously, we need to think differently. We need to be radical, in the traditional sense of the word: we need to go to the root of the problem. Above all, we need to be comprehensive. If there is anything that is true about poverty, it is that you cannot attack it piecemeal. You cannot simply change one thing about a poor person's life and expect that you have made great progress. That is penny-wise and dollar-foolish—if you want to put it in the most actuarial sense of the word.

We can build decent housing for the poor. We should. But, if, at the same time that we build a building that is nice, we leave the job situation the same; we leave medical care provisions the same; we leave these people isolated from contact with the great society—then we will have vitiated 90 per cent of what we have done. Because poverty is not simply this factor or that factor or the other—poverty in the United States is the interconnection between these factors. That is what is meant when we say poverty makes a culture. If one is serious about attacking a culture, then one must think about it comprehensively . . .

If we are serious about abolishing poverty, we will understand that the first thing we have to do is bring the people I have been talking about back to society. And, to bring them back to society, we have to integrate them into society.

THE CULTURALLY DEPRIVED CHILD: A NEW VIEW*

by
Frank Riessman

I have been interested in the problems of lower socio-economic groups for about 15 years, during most of which time there has been a lack of concern for the educational problems of children from low-income families. In the last three or four years, however, this attitude has changed markedly.

There is now an enormous interest on the part of practitioners and academic people in this problem. I think we are on the point of a major breakthrough in terms of dealing with this question.

After appraising a good deal of the recent work that has been done on the education of disadvantaged children, I feel that there is a considerable agreement regarding many of the recommendations for dealing with the problem, although there are some very different emphases. What is missing, however, is a theoretic rationale to give meaning and direction to the action suggestions. I should like to attempt to provide the beginnings of such a rationale.

I think that a basic theoretic approach here has to be based on the culture of lower socio-economic groups and more particularly the elements of strength, the positives in this culture. The terms "deprived," "handicapped," "underprivileged," "disadvantaged," unfortunately emphasize environmental limitations and ignore the positive efforts of low-income individuals to cope with their environment. Most approaches concerned with educating the disadvantaged child

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either overlook the positives entirely, or merely mention in passing that there are positive features in the culture of low socio-economic groups, that middle class groups might learn from, but they do not spell out what these strengths are, and they build educational programs almost exclusively around the weaknesses or deficits.

I want to call attention to the positive features in the culture and the psychology of low income individuals. In particular, I should like to look at the cognitive style, the mental style or way of thinking characteristic of these people. One major dimension of this style is slowness.

Slow vs. Dull

Most disadvantaged children are relatively slow in performing intellectual tasks. This slowness is an important feature of their mental style and it needs to be carefully evaluated. In considering the question of the slowness of the deprived child, we would do well to recognize that in our culture there has probably been far too much emphasis on speed. We reward speed. We think of the fast child as the smart child and the slow child as the dull child. I think this is a basically false idea. I think there are many weaknesses in speed and many strengths in slowness.

The teacher can be motivated to develop techniques for rewarding slow pupils if she has an appreciation of some of the positive attributes of a slow style of learning. The teacher should know that pupils may be slow for other reasons than because they are stupid.

A pupil may be slow because he is extremely careful, meticulous or cautious. He may be slow because he refuses to generalize easily. He may be slow because he can't understand a concept unless he does something physically, e. g., with his hands, in connection with the idea he is trying to grasp.

The disadvantaged child is typically a physical learner and the physical learner is generally a slower learner. Incidentally, the physical style of learning is another important characteristic of the deprived individual and it, too, has many positive features hitherto overlooked.

A child may be slow because he learns in what I have called a one-track way. That is, he persists in one line of thought and is not flexible or broad. He does not easily adopt other frames of reference, such as the teacher's, and consequently he may appear slow and dull.

Very often this single-minded individual has considerable creative potential, much of which goes unrealized because of lack of reinforcement in the educational system.

Analysis of the many reasons for slowness leads to the conclusion that slowness should not be equated with stupidity. In fact, there is no reason to assume that there are not a great many slow, gifted children.

The school in general does not pay too much attention to the slow gifted child but rather is alert to discover fast gifted children. Excellence comes in many packages and we must begin to search for it among the slow learners as well as among the faster individuals.

My own understanding of some of the merits of the slow style came through teaching at Bard College, where there is an enrollment of about 350 students. There I had the opportunity of getting to know quite well about 40 students over a period of four years. I could really see what happened to them during this time. Very often the students I thought were slow and dull in their freshman year achieved a great deal by the time they became seniors. These are not the overall bright people who are typically selected by colleges, but in some area, in a one-track way, these students did some marvelous creative work. It was too outstanding to be ignored. I discovered in talking with students that most of them had spent five or six years in order to complete college. They had failed courses and made them up in summer school. Some had dropped out of college for a period of time and taken courses in night school. These students are slow learners, often one-track learners, but very persistent about something when they develop an interest in it. They have a fear of being overpowered by teachers in situations where they don't accept the teacher's point of view, but they stick to their own particular way of seeing the problem. They don't have a fast pace, they don't catch on quickly and they very often fail subjects.

At the present time, when there is a measure of public excitement for reducing the four-year college to three years, I would submit that many potentially excellent students need a five or six year span to complete a college education.

The assumption that the slow pupil is not bright functions, I think, as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the teachers act toward these pupils as if they were dull, the pupils will frequently come to function in this way. Of course, there are pupils who are very well developed at an early age and no teacher can stop them. But in the average development of the young person, even at the college level, there is

need for reinforcement. The teacher must pick up what he says, appeal to him, and pitch examples to him. Typically this does not occur with the slow child. I find in examining my own classroom teaching that I easily fall into the habit of rewarding pupils whose faces light up when I talk, who are quick to respond to me and I respond back to them. The things they say in class become absorbed in the repertoire of what I say. I remember what they say and I use it in providing examples, etc. I don't pick up and select the slower pupil and I don't respond to him. He has to make it on his own.

In the teacher training program future teachers should be taught to guard against the almost unconscious and automatic tendency of the teacher to respond to the pupil who responds to him.

Hidden Verbal Ability

A great deal has been said about the language or verbal deficit supposedly characteristic of disadvantaged children. Everybody in the school system, at one time or another, has heard that these children are inarticulate, non-verbal, etc. But isn't this too simple a generalization? Aren't these children quite verbal in out-of-school situations? For example:

That the educationally deprived child can be quite articulate in conversation with his peers is well illustrated by the whole language developed by urban Negro groups, some of which is absorbed into the main culture via the Beatnik and the musician, if you dig what I mean.

Many questions about the verbal potential of disadvantaged children must be answered by research. Under what conditions are they verbal? What kind of stimuli do they respond to verbally? With whom are they verbal? What do they talk about? What parts of speech do they use? Martin Deutsch of New York Medical College is doing some very significant research trying to specify these factors and I surveyed some of his findings in my book, The Culturally Deprived Child. I think Deutsch is getting at some very interesting things. One technique he uses is a clown that lights up when the children say something. "Inarticulate" children can be very verbal and expressive in this situation.

Disadvantaged children are often surprisingly articulate in role-playing situations. One day when I was with a group of these youngsters, sometimes mistaken for a "gang," I asked them, "Why are you sore at the teachers?" Even though I was on good terms with them I couldn't get much of a response. Most of them answered in highly abbreviated

sentences. However, after I held a role-playing session in which some of the youngsters acted out the part of the teachers while others acted out the parts of the pupils, these "inarticulate" youngsters changed sharply. Within a half-hour they were bubbling over with very verbal and very sensitive answers to the questions I had asked earlier. They were telling me about the expressions on the teachers' faces that they didn't like. They reported that they knew the minute they entered the room that the teacher didn't like them and that she didn't think they were going to do well in school. Their analyses were specific and remarkably verbal.

However, the quality of language employed has its limitations and I think herein lies the deficit. As Basil Bernstein indicates, the difference is between formal language and public language, between a language in a written book and the informal, everyday language. Since this deficit is fairly clear, the question might be asked, why make such an issue of the positive verbal ability to these children.

The reason is that it is easy to believe, that too many people have come to believe, that this formal deficit in language means that deprived people are characteristically non-verbal.

On the other hand, if the schools have the idea that these pupils are basically very good verbally, teachers might approach them in a different manner. Teachers might look for additional techniques to bring out the verbal facility. They might abandon the prediction that deprived children will not go very far in the education system and predict instead that they can go very far indeed because they have very good ability at the verbal level. In other words, an awareness of the positive verbal ability—not merely potential—will lead to demanding more of the disadvantaged child and expecting more of him.

Education vs. The School

There is a good deal of evidence that deprived children and their parents have a much more positive attitude towards education than is generally believed. One factor that obscures the recognition of this attitude is that while deprived individuals value education, they dislike the school. They are alienated from the school and they resent the teachers. For the sake of clarity, their attitude towards education and toward the school must be considered separately.

In a survey conducted a few years ago, people were asked, "What did you miss most in life that you would like your children to have?" Over 70% of the lower socio-economic groups answered, "Education." The answer was supplied by the respondents, not

checked on a list. They could have answered, "money," "happiness," "health," or a number of things. And I think this is quite significant. Middle class people answer "education" less frequently because they have had an education and don't miss it as much.

A nation-wide poll conducted by Roper after World War II asked, "If you had a son or daughter graduating from high school, would you prefer to have him or her go on to college, do something else, wouldn't care?" The affirmative response to the college choice was given by 68% of the "poor," and 91% for the more prosperous. The difference is significant, but 68% of the poorer people is a large, absolute figure and indicates that a large number of these people are interested in a college education for their children.

Why then do these people who have a positive attitude towards education hold a negative attitude towards the school? These youngsters and their parents recognize that they are second-class citizens in the school and they are angry about it. From the classroom to the PTA they discover that the school doesn't like them, doesn't respond to them, doesn't appreciate their culture, and doesn't think they can learn.

Also, these children and their parents want education for different reasons than those presented by the school. They do not easily accept the ideas of expressing yourself, developing yourself, or knowledge for its own sake. They want education much more for vocational ends. But underneath there is a very positive attitude towards education and I think this is predominant in the lower socio-economic Negro groups. In the Higher Horizons program in New York City the parents have participated eagerly once they have seen that the school system is concerned about their children. One of the tremendously positive features about this program and the Great Cities programs is the concern for disadvantaged children and the interest in them. This the deprived have not experienced before and even if the programs did nothing else, I believe that the parents and the children would be responsive and would become involved in the school, because of the demonstrated concern for them.

Some Weaknesses

A basic weakness of deprived youngsters which the school can deal with is the problem of "know-how." Included here is the academic "know-how" of the school culture as well as the "know-how" of the middle class generally. Knowing how to get a job, how to appear for an interview, how to fill out a form, how to take tests, how to answer questions and how to listen.

The last is of particular importance. The whole style of learning of the deprived is not set to respond to oral or written stimuli. These children respond much more readily to visual kinesthetic signals. We should remodel the schools to suit the styles and meet the needs of these children. But no matter how much we change the school to suit their needs, we nevertheless have to change these children in certain ways; namely, reading, formal language, test taking and general "know-how."

These weaknesses represent deficiencies in skills and techniques. However, there is one basic limitation at the value level, namely the anti-intellectual attitudes of deprived groups. It is the only value of lower socio-economic groups which I would fight in the school. I want to make it very clear that I am very much opposed to the school spending a lot of time teaching values to these kids. I am much more concerned—and in this I am traditional—that the schools import skills, techniques and knowledge rather than training the disadvantaged to become good middle-class children.

However, I think there is one area indigenous to the school which has to be fought out at some point with these youngsters; that is their attitude towards intellectuals, towards knowledge for its own sake, and similar issues.

These children and their parents are pretty much anti-intellectual at all levels. They don't like "eggheads." They think talk is a lot of bull. I would consciously oppose this attitude in the school. I would make the issue explicit. There would be nothing subtle or covert about it. I would at some point state clearly that on this question the school does not agree with them and is prepared to argue about the views they hold.

Summary and Implications

I have attempted to reinterpret some of the supposedly negative aspects—e. g., slowness—that characterize the cognitive style of disadvantaged individuals. But there are a great many other positive dimensions of the culture and style of educationally deprived people which are discussed more fully in my book, The Culturally Deprived Child: the cooperativeness and mutual aid that mark the extended family; the avoidance of the strain accompanying competitiveness and individualism; the equalitarianism, informality and humor; the freedom from self-blame and parental over-protection; the children's enjoyment of each other's company and lessened sibling rivalry, the security found in the extended family and a traditional outlook. The enjoyment of music, games, sports, and cards. The ability to express anger; the freedom from being word-bound; and finally the physical style involved in learning.

I have also indicated the basic weaknesses of the disadvantaged child which the school must work to overcome: lack of school know-how, anti-intellectualism, and limited experience with formal language.

There are others which should be noted: poor auditory attention, poor time perspective, inefficient test-taking skills, limited reading ability.

The school must recognize these deficiencies and work assiduously to combat them. They are by no means irreversible, but even more important, because neglected, the positive elements in the culture and style of low socio-economic groups should become the guide lines for new school programs and new educational techniques for teaching these children.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to emphasize the positive:

1. It will encourage the school to develop approaches and techniques, including possibly special teaching machines, appropriate for the cognitive style of deprived children;
2. It will enable children of low income backgrounds to be educated without middle-classing them;
3. It will stimulate teachers to aim high, to expect more and work for more from these youngsters. Thus, it will constrain against patronization and condescension, and determinate, double-track systems where the deprived child never arrives on the main track;
4. It will function against the current tendency of over-emphasizing both vocational, non-academic education for children of low income background;
5. It will provide an exciting challenge for teachers if they realize that they need not simply aim to "bring these children up to grade level," but rather can actually develop new kinds of creativity;
6. It will make the school far more pluralistic and democratic because different cultures and styles will exist and interact side by side. Thus, each can learn from the other and the empty phrase that the teacher has much to learn from deprived children

will take on real meaning. General cultural interaction between equal cultures can become the hallmark of the school;

7. It will enable the teacher to see that when techniques, such as role-playing and visual aids are used with deprived children, it is because these techniques are useful for eliciting the special cognitive style and creative potential of these children. All too often these techniques have been employed with the implicit assumption that they are useful with children who have inadequate learning ability;

8. It will lead to real appreciation of slowness, one-track learning and physical learning as potential strengths which require careful nurturing. The teacher will have to receive special training in how to respond to these styles, how to listen carefully to the one-track person, how to reward the slow learner, etc. Special classes for slow learners will not culminate in the removal of these youngsters from the mainstream of the educational process on a permanent second track, and longer periods of time in school and college can be planned for these students without invidious connotations.

WHAT'S BECOME OF THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY*

Interview With
John Kenneth Galbraith

Can America be "affluent" and still need a "war on poverty"? How poor are the poor Americans? Can everybody be rich, even in America?

For answers to these and other questions—and an appraisal of President Johnson's antipoverty plans— "U.S. News & World Report" interviewed J. Kenneth Galbraith, a former top adviser to the Government on economic policy and author of "The Affluent Society."

Among Mr. Galbraith's points—

*An effective poverty "war" will take 5 billion dollars a year or more in federal grants.

*Many innovations, such as a Federal Teaching Corps for slum schools, may be needed.

Q: Professor Galbraith, whatever became of the "affluent society," about which you wrote a book not so long ago?

A: We still have it. Indeed, there is more affluence today than when I wrote the book.

Q: And yet President Johnson is proposing a "war" on poverty for—

A: Yes, but that should not be surprising. The two things—affluence and poverty—have always existed together.

Q: Is poverty now the distinguishing mark of America?

A: No, it is not— nor has it been for a long time.

Q: Would you say that there is more affluence in American society than there is poverty?

A: Certainly.

*"Reprinted from 'U.S. News & World Report,' published at Washington." Copyright 1964 U. S. News & World Report, Inc." May 4, 1964.

Q: Is affluence general and poverty localized?

A: Yes. I first got a grant from the Carnegie Corporation in the 1950s to write a book about poverty—why people are poor. It soon seemed to me that well-being was the general case. Poverty was the exception. So I explored this state of general well-being, and I got around to talking about poverty rather late in the book—later, I have since learned, than quite a few people have read.

Q: Despite broad affluence, there are still poor people in this country—is that it?

A: That is correct. And growing prosperity and wealth by itself will not solve the problem of poverty.

The worst poverty afflicts people who are not able to make a useful contribution to the economy. These people do not contribute to the economy, so they receive nothing. No matter how fast the economy grows, they will continue to receive nothing. They have been left out.

Q: Who are today's poverty-stricken people?

A: I think you can put them in three or four groups, some of which overlap:

First of all, the poor are people with very little education beyond the primary grades. And the Negroes. These are overlapping groups.

There is another group in which poverty is due to location—people stranded in poor farming areas or in broken mining communities. The Appalachian Plateau is an example of the latter.

In addition, we must include people who are over 65, living on inadequate incomes, or families where the husband has disappeared and where the woman is trying to hold the family together.

These, broadly speaking, are the poor.

Q: In all, do these groups add up to 35 million persons?

A: Yes. This comes up to about one fifth of the total population, if one takes as the cutoff point people with incomes of less than \$3,000.

Q: Would you draw the "poverty line" at a different income?

A: It's arbitrary. In "The Affluent Society" I used a cutoff figure of \$1,000 to show the considerable number who were still abjectly poor. This was probably a mistake, because everybody said that Galbraith believes that anybody with more than \$1,000 is rich. It would have been tactically wiser to have used a higher figure.

However, I was trying to show that there continued to be people suffering very great privation even though most people had much higher incomes.

Q: In your view, what is the best way to attack the poverty problem?

A: It is vitally important to get the problem on the national agenda. This is the first accomplishment of the plan presented to Congress by President Johnson. It also involves federal, state and local governments as well as private agencies and business firms. This is also wise. The important further thing is to get at causes—of which bad education is the most important.

Q: The President is proposing to spend 1 billion dollars on poverty in the first year. Do you think that 1 billion is enough?

A: It's small. I would hope that there would be a very substantial increase in the effort next year. The President has himself made the same point.

The important thing this year is to get started on the right foundation—to do things on which we can elaborate and build in the years ahead.

Q: Spending on poverty, then, should be increased to—

A: I should think that, at a minimum, we should expect to get up to 4 or 5 billion dollars annually in a matter of three or four years.

Q: As you see it, what is the central problem in attacking poverty?

A: As I have said, I put great emphasis on education and educational repair work. This is simply a matter of looking at the situation and the figures.

The main requirement of a modern economy is a moderately well-educated person. A large number of the people who are in the very low income brackets are uneducated. Obviously, the thing is to spend money on education for the young and physically able who have missed or who will miss their chance for adequate schooling.

Q: You referred to "the figures." Which figures?

A: By that I meant the cost of helping the poor to get a better education and to get good jobs, compared with the cost of doing nothing—and of continuing people on welfare and relief programs.

Q: Spending more on education, then, would be cheaper?

A: It is an enormous bargain. If somebody is without education, without training, then he's often a public charge.

A lot of people who are getting less than \$3,000 a year are drawing it on welfare, and the community is paying for it. Make sure the children of these people get a good education, and they will contribute and not be a cost. And something can also be done along the same lines for those who missed out on schooling and need now to repair the loss.

One should also note that the man who has a job or farm which earns him less than \$3, 000 is not a very productive citizen. We want people who are able to earn, meaning produce, more than that.

Q: But aren't all levels of government already spending millions each year for education?

A: Yes, that is true. But there is need to do better. Quality of schools is not uniform. The physical plant, the quality of the teaching staff are excellent in many places—the better suburbs, for example. The same cannot be said for schools in slum areas or rural backwaters.

The problem of the schools in the poorest areas is that they have the poorest teachers. It's very hard to get teachers to face the problem of teaching in the slum schools. It's very hard to get the good teachers to go up into the Cumberland Plateau or into the Ozark Plateau. It's from such areas that we are now getting many of the functional illiterates.

Q: More specifically, what would you propose doing?

A: I think we must have a Federal Teaching Corps, initially numbering 10, 000 or 12, 000. Members would be well trained and tough enough to go to Harlem or any other slum area. They should be well paid.

Q: How much?

A: I should think \$12, 000 for anyone who could qualify for this elite teaching corps.

Q: How, exactly, would the corps operate?

A: Any school district could request these teachers. Three or four of them would go in and rehabilitate a school, bring up the standards. Their presence would act as a lodestone, an attraction for other teachers to come into the area. When the school had been brought up to standard—perhaps several years of work would be involved—then the teachers would move on to another school.

The corps would include administrators, teachers, counselors who would be well paid and be proud to go anyplace they were required.

Q: Where would you start this program?

A: I would start with the lowest-income rural counties and the slum and problem areas of the cities.

Q: Would you also propose building new school facilities in these areas?

A: That would have to go along with it. Teachers moving into a town in eastern Kentucky would immediately find that the school plant was in poor condition. They would organize a community-action program to get the school plant into shape.

Q: Would better teachers and better schools solve the problem of school dropouts?

A: They would help a lot. It is possible that the Government should make education grants to families so that children would not have to leave school to help support the family.

Q: Have you proposed the idea of a Federal Teaching Corps to President Johnson?

A: Yes, the idea was discussed. The decision was made not to include it in the poverty program this year. And there were reasons for avoiding such a step the first year. I have hopes for the future. It is the one sure way of getting our poor schools in good condition.

DOLE VS. EARNING ABILITY—

Q: Professor Galbraith, would you favor simply giving money to the poor to bring their incomes up to \$3,000 a year?

A: It is my impression that compassion and help for somebody who is poverty-stricken is considerably less damaging to that person's morale than well-to-do people often imagine. I would not reject direct payments for women struggling to keep a family together, or payments to old people.

However, I do feel that the solution for able-bodied people—those who can work—is to equip them to be productive citizens.

Q: Let them earn their way out of poverty?

A: Absolutely. Make sure, at least, that the next generation can.

Q: Where would these jobs come from? Do you see a need for expansion in what is known as the "public sector"?

A: Not necessarily. There is no doubt that many of the services that we will need in the years ahead—many of the important services—will be in the public sector of the economy. This is something that everyone should expect.

As more and more people have to live in the same space—and hence closer and closer together—more and more of their services will be provided by the public. New York City requires far more public services than does rural Iowa, simply because so many people are living close together.

With increasing urbanization, increasing density of population, the expansion in public services is going to be greater than the expansion of private services. If this doesn't happen, we're going to pay very heavily for it in happiness and convenience.

But where we expand the public sector, this should be based on a rational assessment of need. And it doesn't imply that you're going to have to employ people primarily on public-works projects.

PURPOSE OF A JOB CORPS—

Q: But in the President's antipoverty plan there is a proposed Job Corps, somewhat reminiscent of the Civilian Conservation Corps of depression days—

A: I don't see the Job Corps as a means of employing people. It is, rather, a way of preparing young people for employment. This is very important.

Q: So you do not see a large rise ahead in public employment—

A: A rise will take place in public employment, but it will be in response to the need for public services much more than in response to the need to provide jobs.

Q: Do you see enough jobs opening up in private industry for those with little education or training?

A: Private industry today has a very large number of unfilled positions for people with somewhat higher skills than these people now possess.

In Chicago, for example, there is a program to help people who missed out on education. They are given basic training—reading, writing, simple arithmetic.

Cab companies in the Chicago area are taking these people when they finish school. As you know, there is a high turnover among cab drivers. As a result of the training program, an important new source of drivers has opened up. Filling stations, too, are hiring these people.

Q: You hear a lot about automation taking over—

A: Machines are replacing men, but there are still a lot of things for which men are required. And there are a lot of opportunities for those with moderate skills.

For example, our hospitals are badly understaffed. The people who used to be employed as orderlies and attendants have gone on to better-paid jobs. And yet we have not trained enough of the presently unskilled people to fill these vacant jobs.

Q: Do you see the time when there will be two fully recognized economies—one private, the other public?

A: They are very closely interrelated.

One of the curiosities of American economic and political philosophy is the very great distinction we make between public and private employment. It wasn't a distinction we made in the nineteenth century. Then, we employed people in government, schoolteaching or on farms in accordance with where they were needed, and we had very little consciousness of the difference between government employment and private employment.

In the last 30 years, we've had a great ideological preoccupation with the difference between public employment and private employment. The truth is that they're complementary. Most public services are necessary for the effective and orderly expansion of the private sector. And our comfort is very much involved. And, of course, an effective expansion of the private sector is necessary to pay the taxes to support public employment.

The sooner we get over the notion that there is something inferior or dangerous about the public sector, and the sooner we get the notion that this is merely a matter of balanced growth, the better we'll be.

Q: Will expansion of public services require higher taxes?

A: Well, it certainly will require more tax revenues—no question about it. Whether it requires a higher tax rate or not is something else again.

If the economy continues to grow, the yields from present federal tax rates will be very large, and we shall have quite ample funds for needed welfare and public-service outlays—particularly if defense spending declines.

Of course, the problem with the States and localities is more serious. The problem of financing big cities such as New York and Chicago is the world's most formidable exercise in fiscal legerdemain.

The Federal Government gets its money much more easily than any other unit of government. I certainly don't think we should rule out the possibility of using more federal revenues for the support of States and, particularly, urban communities.

Q: Professor Galbraith, is the proposal to pay people for not working an answer to the poverty problem?

A: I must say I admire a group that is willing to come up with, and defend, such a radical proposal. I suppose that, as a consequence of advancing age, I wouldn't want to embrace it out of hand. I would want to give some thought to the implications.

Actually, I would be more attracted to the idea of a guaranteed right to a job, rather than a right to an income.

You know, many years ago Mayor La Guardia proposed in New York that anybody who wanted a job should have the right to get a job at the prevailing wage. He saw this as an obligation of the municipality.

END OF POVERTY: INEVITABLE —

Q: Do you see an end to poverty in this country?

A: I think that this is inevitable now that the President has put the problem firmly on the agenda.

Once the country gets committed to wiping out poverty—as it once got committed to the idea of providing a public-school system—as it is gradually getting committed to the idea of racial equality—you don't turn back.

Q: It is said that there will always be poor people who—

A: Well, of course, we will certainly continue to have great differences of income. And there will always be the poor, if you define the poor as those who have the least. But this, I suppose, is the difference between the poor and the impoverished.

Q: But can poverty, as it is defined today, be wiped out?

A: It can be and it should be. I have often amended an observation of William Pitt (Prime Minister of Great Britain in the late eighteenth century), who observed: "Poverty is no disgrace but it is damned annoying." In this day and age, when we are able to produce so much, poverty is not only annoying but also a great disgrace.

THE RICH ARE DIFFERENT*

Staff Report

Hemingway vs. Fitzgerald—
the sociologists referee

In his "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," first published in Esquire of August, 1936, Ernest Hemingway wrote:

He remembered poor old Scott Fitzgerald and his romantic awe of (the rich) and how he had started a story once that began, "The rich are different from you and me." And how someone had said to Scott, "Yes, they have more money." But that was not humorous to Scott. He thought they were a special glamorous race and when he found they weren't it wrecked him just as much as any other thing that wrecked him.

The ostensible thinker of these thoughts was a successful fiction writer corrupted by the easy money, dying (at the time of the story) of gangrene acquired while on African safari with a rich but unloved wife. But the "someone" who had answered Fitzgerald was undisguisedly Hemingway himself, and the description was his version of one of the most famous altercations in literary history. The dispute, and the comments on it, embittered the friendship between the men. The publication of the story was followed by a sharp exchange of correspondence including, from Fitzgerald, "a hell of a letter which would have been sudden death for somebody the next time we met"—which, finally, he never sent. Most critics have sided with Hemingway. In the radical ferment of the depression Fitzgerald's attitude—even when understood—seemed romantic and superficial, or worse.

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Many modern sociologists do not have this viewpoint. They consider Fitzgerald's descriptions of "the high life" valuable for making clear and vivid customs and life styles which might otherwise be buried in statistics and monographs. Joseph A. Kahl of Washington University writes:

Our creative literature has had many specialists who portrayed the old elite; F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of the best. He stood at the outer fringe; he knew them, but was not of them. He combined intimate acquaintance with outside perspective...

The Rich Boy

The story that Hemingway referred to was Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy."

Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them, makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful in a way that, unless you were born rich, it is very difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we are because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves. Even when they enter deep into our world or sink below us, they still think they are better than we are. They are different...

The rich have more money. Even a tautology can be useful. Hemingway implied that this was a primary and basic source of their power and prestige—and few people would argue that point with him. No matter how long established or with what titles, once an upper-class family loses its possessions it must start the long Chekhovian slide down into the lower orders. By desperate measures it might seem to hold on to social position, if not power, for some time ("shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves in three generations"); but, except for possible temporary exhumation for a Tennessee Williams play (complete with decayed mansion and crazed spinsters) the decline must go on.

But Hemingway implied that only money talked—and overtones, reverberations or sugarcoating were largely irrelevant. Not even the most dedicated economic determinist will go that far. To Karl Marx, for instance, money meant economic power. His upper class

was the "ruling class;" and, whether feudal knight, industrial capitalist or proletarian, it ruled because it controlled the means of production. The interests of the ruling class also determined, however indirectly, the entire social, legal, ethical, aesthetic, political, and religious structure of the time. A rich person who kept his money in a sock, and used it only for personal expenses, would have only marginal impact on the economy and be of marginal interest to a Marxian. If, as the Bible says, the heavens declare the glory of God, this is because the economic determinist would add, He controls the means of production there.

Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, in their "Middletown" studies, analyzed the class structure of an evolving middle-sized midwestern community. Their data convinced them that "the money medium of exchange and the cluster of activities associated with its acquisition drastically condition the other activities of the people." The meaning of class therefore is objective, and depends on economic facts, not social interpretation.

A Foreign View

W. Lloyd Warner, a social anthropologist who tried to study American communities much as he had studied primitive societies, reached different conclusions. (Fitzgerald says of "The Rich Boy": "The only way I can describe young Anson Hunter is to approach him as if he were a foreigner and cling stubbornly to my point of view. If I accept his for a moment I am lost.")

Warner too began his investigations with the view that "the most vital and far-reaching value-systems which motivate Americans are to be ultimately traced to an economic order." At first his interviews confirmed this hypothesis. Soon, however, discrepancies developed.

Certain groups . . . were at the bottom of the social order, yet many . . . members . . . were making incomes considerably more than that made by people . . . placed far higher in the social scale . . . A banker was never at the bottom of the society, and none in fact fell below the middle class, but he was not always at the top. Great wealth did not guarantee the highest social position. Something more was necessary.

He concluded:

Karl Marx and his followers insist our class system and ideology are phenomena of a capitalism base . . . Other writers, admitting economic determinism, argue that class is a multi-factored phenomenon. The present writers belong to the second group.

The communities Warner chose for study were relatively static—"with a social organization which had developed over a long period of time under the domination of a single group with a coherent tradition." They were relatively small—the largest, "Yankee City" had 17, 000 people.

One of Warner's major conclusions was that an objective criterion for social class status was not enough; also important was what people thought they were, and whether people of the class to which they thought they belonged accepted them, under what circumstances, and to what extent. Kahl notes:

Income alone will not put a family into this (the upper) class; they also must be personally accepted by the upper-class families of the community. A man gains acceptance . . . by virtue of forebears who belonged to the elite, or by his position in the commercial hierarchy . . . it must be respectable money, and it must put its owner into an interaction network of consequence. The upper class in any local community is, relative to other strata, small and cohesive; it is an organized social group, not merely a statistical category of similar people. In this sense it is qualitatively different from the other classes.

The upper classes (Warner's lower-upper and upper-upper) represent two categories of wealth—new and old money. "New" money has climbed within the last generation to the top of the financial structure; "old" money inherited its position. The difference may be temporary. "Old" money always had a merchant prince or robber baron a few generations back who was probably not accepted in his day. If the uncouth nouveaux riches of the kind so often caricatured (Jiggs and Maggie) are not accepted at first, their children, having gone to the same schools, riding academies, beauty parlors,

resorts, and tailors as the old elite, will be accepted eventually. They will, in fact, intermarry with them, becoming part of "family " of the involved blood relationships so characteristic of the upper class.

Man is capable of almost infinite pliability in manners and morals from one generation to the next—especially if it helps make him feel superior to his fellow man. John Crosby, the columnist, with some exaggeration, has described the impact of scholarship winners from the lower classes on Oxford University:

Theoretically, this should democratize the place. It doesn't. Instead, in a few months' time the peasants acquire different haircuts, different clothes, a new accent. After a year at Oxford the bone structure of their faces is subtly modified. Their noses grow longer, and they go home for Christmas holidays and are mortally ashamed of their mothers.

Upper-Upper-Upper

Nevertheless, few adults can acquire the necessary manners and polish in their brief, mature years. Analyzing the entries in the Social Register and Who's Who—"The Elite and Upper Class Indexes in Metropolitan America"—over a considerable period, E. Digby Baltzell points out that those duly registered and accepted as members of the American elite were almost always born into it. The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady may be sisters under the skin, but the lady's skin has been treated since birth by the most expensive doctors, beauticians and cosmetics—fed better, worked less, educated to respond in special ways, and caressed by gentlemen with better "breeding". Typically in America she will have been to Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, or Vassar; her husband to Princeton, Harvard, or Yale.

They will be closely associated with other members of their class through interlocking family, neighborhood, club, and business relationships, and through a great variety of public and private boards. Ann Faust of Washington University made a study of a random sample (every seventh name) of the Social Register of St. Louis (0.3 percent of the population). Twenty judges, themselves generally of Social Register status, independently rated the names of those couples ranked in the top third ("upper-upper-upper"). Ninety percent of men had been to Harvard, Princeton or Yale (as compared to 30 and 30 percent for the less privileged two-thirds of Social Registerites), 80 percent were Episcopalian, 100 percent resided on the three most prestigious

private streets (compared to 50 and 0 percent), 90 percent were in "X" Country Club, and 90 percent had memberships in Community Chest Boards. Even among the elite themselves, the marks of "quality" decline rapidly moving downward from the top.

Leaders lead; also noblesse oblige. The upper class is involved in more "participation" than any other group. Dorothy Hinds Spears, analyzing further the social class makeup of boards belonging to the Community Chest affiliated agencies in St. Louis found that owners, executives, and members of professions made up over 75 percent of board membership. The laboring groups accounted for 1.6 percent. Hospital boards attracted most upper-class members; homes for children the fewest. Thus the chief stockholder of a giant chemical corporation may feel it his duty to lend his talents, fortune, influence, and force of personality to lead hospital (and other) boards, and show them how to be more businesslike, tough-minded, and efficient in the public weal.

Though they may be derided by the new tycoon, the standards are set by the old elite. Kahl points out that the basic distinction is an attitude toward life:

This attitude is based on membership in a family line that has been established for at least one, and preferably two or three generations as members of the upper class . . . Such a family has a sense of permanence and position; its members are "comebory." . . . For the old elite it appears crude and boorish to display one's wealth or even talk too much about it. The important thing is not the money nor the skill with which it was earned but the style in which it is spent.

The Dilletanti

Since he has already "arrived" before birth, is independently wealthy, and in his locale people "know" who he is, the member of the old elite is not subject to the same pressures to prove himself as the nouveaux riches or the middle classes. Within limits set by tradition and family he may actually have greater leeway to be his own man. Eccentricities are allowed him; he can wear comfortable clothes to occasions where his subordinates are expected to be well-dressed; he can spend his time and money collecting Meissen china or chorus girls. He can afford to be gracious and friendly to "inferiors": the aristocrat in Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River warned

his fellow citizens, with some justice, to beware the man who rises to power "on one suspender." There can be leisure to dabble in art, scholarship, good works, or politics. It is even possible, as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Averell Harriman did, to become a political liberal — though this is not always as easily forgiven.

Wealth, position, and power are great buffers and cushions. The upper class has its alcoholics and schizophrenics too, but they almost never enter the drunk tank or the public asylum. Nor do its criminals twitch to the same pinches: "The law in its majestic equality," Anatole France said, "forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, or to steal bread."

Sociologists Arthur L. Stinchcombe and David J. Pittman, working in separate fields, have documented the close relationship between the percentage of time one is forced to spend in public places — streets, parks, alleys, stores—and frequency of arrest. The poor get little protection from private grounds and clubs, discreet butlers, expensive lawyers, and the constitutional strictures against unreasonable search and seizure. Skid Row provides a minority of the nation's drunks—but a majority of those who turn up on police blotters for drunkenness. Except for those rich like Tommy Manville and Horace Dodge who are newsworthily casual about marriage and divorce, the upper-upper deviants are generally hidden, and do not so much tarnish the public image of their class as do the deviants of the poor.

Tradition can change gradually, but cannot be grossly violated. John P. Marquand's George Apley was generally a kindly and considerate man; but he did not feel he was being unduly harsh or silly when he put pressure on a minor member of the family to move his mother's coffin from a prominent place in the family plot to one less exalted.

Fitzgerald describes the childhood of his rich boy, passed in a town which must have some resemblance to Warner's "Yankee City":

Anson's first sense of his superiority came to him when he realized the half-grudging American deference that was paid to him in the Connecticut village. The parents of the boys he played with always inquired after his father and mother, and were vaguely excited when their own children were asked to the Hunters' house. He accepted this as the natural state of things, and a sort of impatience with all groups of which he was

not the center—in money, in position, in authority—remained with him for the rest of his life. He disdained to struggle with other boys for precedence—he expected it to be given him freely, and when it wasn't he withdrew into his family. His family was sufficient, for in the East money is still a somewhat feudal thing, a clan-forming thing.

Gatsby the Ridiculous

Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, on the other hand, had not had the family or old wealth when he tried for Daisy Buchanan. He had acquired plenty of money, and he spent it in sufficiently grand style—"as though it were unimportant"—to qualify as a member of her class. But though the aristocrats of East Egg were willing to help him spend it, he and the money were too new, too raw, too closely associated with tainted sources. Time, the right schools, and prudent "legitimate" investment had not yet had their chance to spread a patina and sheen of respectability. Within the web of relationships described in the novel (Gatsby's criminal activities are hinted at, but kept mostly off-stage) he was a decent and considerate, if somewhat addle-headed, human being. Tom Buchanan was arrogant, brutal, unfaithful, superficial, and utterly self-centered. ("They were careless people," Fitzgerald says of Tom and Daisy. "They smashed things and people and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness . . . and let other people clean up . . .") But Buchanan was nevertheless a "gentleman" and could look down on Gatsby who was not; and Gatsby, with his pink pants, too ostentatious car and home, his "old sport" mode of speech and his altered name, remained a ridiculous, inappropriate, and outclassed figure to the end. Daisy, and her class, were not to be his no matter how many hundreds of elegant English shirts he bought and threw before her on the bed.

Gatsby shared with Hemingway the belief that raw wealth was all that was needed. Had he instead, like a sensible man, been willing to pursue status for its own sake instead of as a means to acquire a dream and a woman, he might eventually have lived to see his son marry her daughter—or at least become one of the Buchanan circle.

The Paraproprietal Society

Since Fitzgerald did his major work there have been changes in the status and power of the American upper class. As long ago as 1932 Adolph A. Berle, Jr. called attention to the fact that the personal possession of wealth was becoming increasingly dissociated

from direct control and manipulation of industrial and economic power—despite the older economic determinists. Father Paul P. Harbrecht describes our present economic patterns as "paraproprietal"—apart from ownership. The heavy backbone of modern American industry is corporate, bureaucratic, stockholder-owned, and executive-administered. The major corporations are so heavily capitalized that they are beyond the possibility of individual and family ownership-control. This does not mean, as some advertisements would have it, that "the people" own them (the people have never owned the banks which use their money). But it does mean that control of the means of production—that sacrosanct phrase of the Marxist—is no longer as simple or personal as in the days of Andrew Carnegie or the elder Henry Ford, and that it has largely passed into the hands of a class of professional managers who may or may not be members of the old elite. The connection between wealth and economic power has become attenuated. Warner describes how the shoe workers of Yankeetown, docile since the inception of the industry, suddenly struck and shut down the factories. He believes a major cause was the decline of prestige and influence of the old ruling class executives once the actual ownership of the plants had passed to out-of-town investors.

However gracefully and ostentatiously they may live on old investments and tax-free government bonds, upperclass people who have only marginal control over the economy must eventually become of marginal influence.

Other changes have taken place since Anson Hunter, in the name of "family," could force his uncle's wife to give up her lover. In the rapidly expanding, rapidly changing great metropolitan areas the rich and powerful are not nearly as pervasive as symbols and arbiters of taste and style as in Anson's Connecticut village or Warner's Yankee City. The famous, or merely notorious, in public life or show business, are almost always far more visible. Fitzgerald's descriptions may be becoming more important as representations of what used to be rather than of what presently exists. But in any case the rich were "different" then; they are different now.

SEE: J. A. Kahl, The American Class Structure, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, Class, Status and Power, The Free Press, 1953.

W. Lloyd Warner, American Life, Dream and Reality, Rev. Ed., The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

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THE POOR AMONG US— CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY*

by
Maxwell S. Stewart

Most Americans are shocked when they discover the extent of the poverty that exists in this country amidst our vaunted prosperity. For years we have been hearing of the dramatic rise in living standards that has occurred since World War II. We have prided ourselves on having more telephones, more bathtubs, more television sets, and more automobiles than any other country. Without question, most Americans are living better than ever before—so much better that most of us have ceased to be seriously concerned about obtaining the basic necessities of life.

Nevertheless, a vast reservoir of poverty remains. Recent estimates indicate that from 35 to 50 million Americans are poor; not starving, but inadequately nourished, poorly housed, and maimed in body or spirit. They may have radios and even television sets, but they are sometimes hungry, often sick and without adequate medical care, and almost always uneducated and dispirited.

As Michael Harrington, author of The Other America, has pointed out, the reason most of us are so shocked at the discovery of this vast amount of poverty is that the poor are largely invisible. They do not constitute a distinct social group; they are white, black, yellow, and brown. They look like anyone else, dressed in cheap clothes that do not appear very different from those worn by many who are moderately well-off. They are not found only in large cities, nor only in the country, nor only in the South, nor only in the East or West.

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They live off the beaten track, in the overcrowded slums of our large cities, across the railroad tracks or on the outskirts of our small towns, on the country back roads, or in the hills and valleys of Appalachia—that vast mountain chain stretching across nine of our eastern states.

The poor are wholly unorganized; they have no lobby in Washington nor in any of the state capitals. You will not find them demonstrating in the streets or writing letters to the press or to their Congressmen. They are, for the most part, passive and resigned; many—if not most—of them are without hope.

Who Are They?

Who, then, are the poor? Eight million or more of them are among the elderly—65 or over—who are no longer able to earn a living and who lack other financial resources. Eight or nine million live in families headed by women. Although most are white, six to eight million are Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican, or Indian—discriminated against educationally, socially, and economically. At least a million are young people: out of school, out of work, and unskilled. Other millions are unemployed industrial workers, displaced farm workers, migrants, former miners, or others living in pockets of poverty that have been bypassed by the postwar technological revolution—the rejects of automation.

At least a fourth of the poor live in families in which no one has a regular job. For example, take the Harrisons—an honest, hard-working family, but without a regular income.

The Harrisons, with three children aged 7, 4, and 2, applied for assistance when Mr. Harrison could not find a job. Since they did not qualify for any of the federally-assisted programs, they receive General Assistance, sometimes called Home Relief, entirely locally financed.

Mr. Harrison has a ninth grade education and has had no special training. He had worked as a grocery store clerk but most of the jobs were "on call," temporary work, or substituting for another employee who was ill or on vacation. These jobs usually terminated in the winter season and Mr. Harrison could not secure employment again until spring. Because he had frequently worked for employers with only two employees, or worked part-time, he was not eligible for unemployment compensation.

The county recently arbitrarily cut all General Assistance Grants to 60 per cent of need. The Harrisons are struggling to manage on \$112 a month. After rent is paid, they have \$72 a month to buy all other necessities.¹

Millions of the poor (the exact number can only be guessed at) are sick, crippled, mentally retarded, alcoholic, lacking basic education and training—or are children living in families headed by a person suffering from one or several of these disabilities. These people we have, in effect, cast out of the mainstream of American life by not providing enough jobs for those of them who could work, nor adequate security for those too old, too young, or too sick to hold jobs.

Most of the poor in the United States belong to one of the groups listed above. They are too old, too young, or too uneducated to earn a living; they live in a depressed area or belong to a vanishing occupational group; their skin is not the same color as their neighbors'; or they are recent immigrants. Many of them live in the South.

A graphic example of poverty in the South is the life of the migrant farm workers of Belle Glade, Florida, described in The New York Times of April 20, 1964.

At sunrise, they emerge from the squalid shacks and tenements in the neighborhood and begin to gather on the Ramp and along the streets that lead to it. They are young, old, and middle-aged men and women. Trucks and ramshackle buses begin to pull in. The drivers will be paid 75 cents to \$1 a head for each worker they deliver. The drivers, who want to recruit men and women who will be paid as pieceworkers, according to how much they pick, park around the Ramp itself. Those collecting laborers to work at flat hourly or daily rates pull into the adjacent streets.

Low wages, coupled with irregular work, mean abysmal poverty for most of the farm workers. The 1960 Census disclosed that the average yearly income of male farm laborers in the county where Belle Glade is situated was \$1,348.

Life in the Negro ghetto around the Ramp is bleak. Small children play in littered streets, mingling with

drunks and chickens. Large families are jammed into single rooms, even the meanest of which costs \$7 a week.

Pay-by-the-day usually means that families buy their food on a day-to-day basis. The fact that many do not have refrigerators reinforces this. Lack of money costs money: they cannot take advantage of sales or the economies of bulk buying.

It is one of the ironies here that, living in the midst of bountiful land that produces as many as three crops a year, many Negro farm laborers do not eat adequately. A check of a group of Negro farm workers by the Palm Beach County Health Department several years ago disclosed that nearly one in five had a nutritional problem.

There are, of course, a few persons who suffer from none of the handicaps listed previously, but who cannot earn a living because of defects in ambition, personality, or character. They include the most tragic of the poor—the alcoholics, the narcotics addicts, and the petty criminals. Also, included in the numbers of the poor are the bohemians—the "beats"—who choose to live in poverty as a protest against the regimentation of the workaday world.

But the essential point is that, for all of its wealth and the vaunted efficiency of its economic system, the United States is failing to meet the basic human needs of from one-fifth to one-fourth of its population. This vast sector of America desperately needs better education, health services, housing, and, above all, jobs and economic security.

What is Poverty?

Definitions of poverty vary, just as poverty itself varies in degree. In a report to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, Robert J. Lampman defined his terms with great exactitude. A member of a four-person family that had a total income of not more than \$2,500 in 1957 was described as a "low-income person." A member of a six-person family would be classified as "poor" if the family's income were under \$3,236, and an unattached individual would be "poor" if he had an income less than \$1,157. Using this rather restrictive definition, Lampman found that more than 32 million Americans were "poor" in 1957. Others place the poverty level somewhat higher and thus find a larger number of "poor."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, estimated that the cost of a "modest but adequate level of living" for a working-class family of four in New York City in 1959 was \$5,200. In the same year, the median family income in the United States, not considering the number of people in the family, was \$5,660. Yet 31 per cent, or 17 million, of America's 55 million families had incomes of less than \$4,000, and 13 per cent had less than \$2,000 a year. The average income for the eight states ranking lowest in median income was only \$3,760, and all these states are in the South. Together they contain 13 per cent of the country's population.

Characteristics of Poverty

Being poor usually means living in inadequate or unsatisfactory housing. According to the last census, three million housing units in the United States are dilapidated, another 8.3 million are deteriorating, and another 3.8 million lack a toilet, bath, or running water. Together these three groups make up about 25 per cent of America's housing units—a proportion roughly the same as that of low-income families. Not surprisingly, the area with the highest rate of poverty also contains the worst housing. In the four-state area of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, 40 per cent of all the houses are dilapidated.

The single factor that characterizes the greatest number of the poor, apart from lack of money, is lack of education. Nearly two out of three low-income families are headed by persons with no more than a grammar school education. Many of these persons cannot hold jobs not only because they are uneducated, but also because they are untrained and lack work experience. If many seem shiftless, it is often because they have never been able to experience the discipline of a steady job. Or it may be because they are psychologically defeated—a condition characterizing not only many of the aged, for whom there is literally no future, but also hundreds of thousands of school dropouts in their late teens and early twenties, who are beaten before they have a chance to get started in life.

Why are They Poor?

Poverty as it exists in today's affluent America, however, is complex. It is not simply, or even primarily, a matter of inadequate education. In contrast to the widespread poverty of depression days, it cannot be made to yield to national economic stimulants alone. To the extent that it is sectional or regional, local stimulants are called for—but not all depressed communities will be able to lift themselves by their own bootstraps. Even with the aged, the sick, and the crippled, the cause of poverty is not always as clear as it appears at first; a second look will usually reveal other factors.

There is a culture of poverty in the United States that is complex and self-propagating. The children of the poor grow up in squalor and filth. They are inadequately nourished, poorly clothed, and often lack adequate parental supervision. They attend inferior schools for a few years, and, under severe economic pressure, drop out as soon as they can. Lacking training, experience, and incentive, they either remain jobless or move from one casual job to another at the lowest pay. Marrying at an early age, they bring up an unrestricted number of children in the same kind of hopeless, deprived life. They may earn enough to provide some sort of food and shelter during their middle years, but in sickness and old age they fall back on relief or charity.

This is an outline of the life of tens of millions of Americans caught in poverty's net. A few escape, but they are replaced by those who fall from the ranks of the unskilled and semiskilled.

It often seems as if the fates conspire against the poor. In all of the good things of life—health, education, mental well-being, longevity, housing, recreation, culture—the victims of poverty are obviously shortchanged. Not only do they have far less money at their disposal at any given time than the rest of the population does, but they get significantly less for every dollar they spend. They are forced to live in slum dwellings that are notoriously overpriced. Lacking ready cash and ignorant of the basic principles of consumer purchasing, they are far more likely than the rest of the population to buy on credit, and much more likely to be victimized by unscrupulous high-pressure salesmanship. They tend to buy from peddlers or small local retailers whose goods are frequently shoddy and whose prices are higher than those of the standard department stores or mail-order houses. And when they are cheated, as they frequently are, they rarely do anything about it. One study showed that less than 10 per cent sought professional help when their complaints to the merchants were ignored.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

There is widespread agreement among economists that poverty, or at least the poverty that exists in the United States, is wholly unnecessary. Within the past year, the abolition of poverty has become a major objective of the Administration's domestic policy. The experience of some of the smaller European countries, notably Sweden, suggests the kind of broad, bold program that will be necessary to achieve this.

Stimulating Buying Power

In the fight against poverty in this country, great emphasis obviously must be placed on efforts to stimulate the national economy in the hope of employing as many of the jobless as possible. Certain methods of providing such stimulation have been generally recognized and accepted by leading economists for twenty years or more. It is known, for instance, that anything that increases the buying power of the public will encourage production and hence increase employment. The most recent device used to accomplish this was tax reduction, but there are many others. During the depression, for instance, the method most used was public works.

Today we hear a good deal about the "built-in stabilizers" that have served to cushion postwar recessions. There are several of these, but the reference is usually to tax policy; unemployment insurance; old-age, survivors, and disability benefits; and veterans' pensions. The government also has available a number of technical measures, such as "open-market operations" (purchasing of government bonds by the federal reserve banks), manipulation of interest rates, and other devices, for stimulating buying power.

Urgency of Education and Training

But no one of these methods alone, nor all of them together, can provide jobs for all of today's jobless; for this decade's unemployment, unlike that of the 1930's, will not immediately evaporate with an upswing in economic activity. An increasing number of the country's jobless are unemployable in today's economy, unless private activity is supplemented by large-scale public works.

For at the same time, there is a shortage of trained personnel for the kinds of jobs that must be filled before the economy can move forward. And this scarcity will inevitably check expansion long before the hard core of the unskilled unemployed can be absorbed. An illustration of this is the fact that in recent years highly educated and skilled workers have been asked to put in a great deal of overtime, at extra pay, despite the country's low rate of economic growth and the existence of millions of unemployed.

Lately the problem of the unskilled school dropouts has received considerable attention. Efforts to find jobs for these youths have frequently failed because the dropouts were not qualified for any but the most menial jobs—and these are increasingly scarce. For example, in 1960 New York City established a Youth Employment Service that interviewed 33,000 youths during its first two and a half

years of operation; only about 1, 300 permanent placements were made. Although most of the youngsters had had some high school education, many of them were unable to fill out simple application forms, some did not know how to make change, and some could not even read street signs.

Schools simply are not providing an adequate basic education for the hundreds of thousands of youngsters who are entering the labor market each year. The quality of the general education offered in our schools needs to be improved, and the greatest help should go to the young people who, at present, are receiving the most inadequate educations—those who have grown up within the culture of poverty.

In addition, much more emphasis should be placed on vocational training in our schools. Such training has never received the attention it deserves in this country.² Only 4 per cent of our expenditure for public education is spent on vocational training, and far too many of the vocational courses that are offered have been in subjects like plumbing or metal work, which do not really prepare students for the jobs available in today's world. Ninety per cent of America's schools provide no training for jobs in industry.

Problems of Vocational Education

Gunnar Myrdal, the distinguished Swedish economist, has pointed out the vital importance of rethinking the nation's whole vocational education program. "What Negro youth in the cotton districts need," he writes, "is not perfection in growing cotton—and screening the windows in shacks and tending to a garden—but a training that will help them get out of the cotton districts to compete for jobs in the expanding sectors of the American economy; the same is true of all farm boys and of youth in all regressive industries and localities."³

The youth are not the only ones unqualified by educational background for the jobs available today. Industries that have attempted to provide vocational training for men whose jobs have been eliminated by automation have found that many of the displaced men did not have sufficient educational background to make retraining possible. You cannot train a man to be a computer operator, for example, unless he can read and understand instructions and knows basic arithmetic. Vocational courses will have to be preceded by enough education to bring the worker's English and arithmetical skills up to at least an eighth grade level.

A graphic illustration of the plight of older men who have become victims of technological progress can be found in the West Virginia and Kentucky hills, where former coal miners are not qualified for

other skilled work, and can find little or no market for their unskilled labor. The task of retraining such workers, however, would probably be an ir_ _sible one. These men are social casualties and, as such, are just as deserving of support as are men injured at war.

It is evident that vocational training, of both young people and older unemployed workers, will have to be provided by either the state or federal governments. The government has provided for an increase in rehabilitation facilities in recent years, but not enough is being done to keep pace with the need. Also, much valuable training is offered by industry, but it is provided mostly for workers who are already employed and who have a sound educational background. Labor, too, offers some training, but far too many unions have inadequate or restricted training facilities.

Thus any program for combating poverty in the United States must include not only vigorous economic measures to stimulate business activity, but also basic education and vocational training to equip the unemployed—of all ages—for the kinds of jobs that will be created.

Strengthening Social Security

One of the most convenient and effective weapons in the war against poverty is a strong program of social security. It is interesting to note that there has been no major depression in the United States since the Social Security Act became effective. Although the forces affecting the nation's economy are undeniably complex, unemployment insurance must certainly receive some credit for cushioning the impact of postwar recessions on the nation's purchasing power. Similarly, regular monthly payments to the country's 12 million beneficiaries of old-age, survivor's, and disability insurance have provided an important stabilizing influence. The various public assistance programs and aid to dependent children—which, combined, cover some three and a half million additional needy families—also serve as stabilizers. Public housing projects have provided jobs in construction and helped to raise the morale of the families that are fortunate enough to obtain dwelling space.

But despite their undeniable contribution to the well-being of the American people, and the many improvements made in them in recent years, our social security provisions have not struck at the root of poverty. This is largely because each one of the social security programs contains a built-in bias against those in greatest need. Millions of the poorest Americans, both Negro and white,

receive nothing from social security or public assistance. To qualify for unemployment insurance, a man must remain in a job that is covered by the unemployment insurance program for a specified number of weeks. Thus, hundreds of thousands or irregularly employed and migratory workers never qualify. For those who do qualify, unemployment benefits are available for no more than six to nine months, and the hard core of the unemployed—the chronically jobless—have long since exhausted their benefits. A worker also must hold a job in covered employment for a specified period in order to qualify for old-age benefits, but thousands of the lowest-paid workers do not keep their jobs long enough to qualify. Benefits, moreover, are directly proportionate to wages. This means that those who have always had the lowest incomes, and thus are the least likely to have savings, receive the smallest benefits.

Slum clearance in cities has also tended to aid the middle-income third of the population rather than the lower third. The poverty-stricken slum dwellers who have been dispossessed to make way for public housing have been pressed deeper in the slums, while in many instances only the families with moderately high incomes have been able to pay the rents in the new housing units.

In addition, there is one basic cause of poverty for which social security has, as yet, made no provision; protection against the disastrous effects of unexpected high hospital, medical, and dental bills has been left to various voluntary health insurance programs. These schemes are much too costly for the very groups that suffer most from poor health. In fact, they often bar the aged or chronically ill just when these persons' need is greatest. Negroes, particularly, suffer from inadequate health services. The infant mortality rate of nonwhites is almost twice as high as that of whites.

"Medicare" would be only a partial remedy, since the financial assistance it would provide would be limited to hospital and nursing home care for the aged. In recent years, there has been no serious legislative proposal for bringing adequate medical care within the reach of all the American people, or for distributing its costs on a prepayment insurance basis. Providing adequate medical care for all would, of course, require an immense expansion of health personnel. More doctors would have to be trained; technicians and hospital workers would have to be upgraded. This expansion would make an impressive dent on youth unemployment.

Extending Minimum-Wage Laws

Poverty is not confined to the jobless, as we saw earlier in the reference to the agricultural workers in Belle Glade, Florida. Millions of unskilled workers are unable, because of low wages or irregular employment, to provide a decent living for their families. Many of them are not now covered by minimum-wage laws. An extension of the legislation to cover more types of employment and an increase in the minimums themselves are needed.

Irregularity of employment is a particularly serious problem for farm and construction workers, and its solution can hardly be left to employers alone. As has already been done in the case of other risks, the burden of irregular employment might well be spread through government-sponsored insurance programs.

Farm laborers and other irregularly employed workers tend to be the least organized sector of American labor. Perhaps this will always be the case, since the turnover in such employment is high and the leadership potential low. But where workers with similarly irregular patterns of unemployment—such as the longshoremen—have been organized, their incomes have been increased and conditions of employment notably improved.

The very fact that we still have tens of millions of Americans with incomes far below that necessary to maintain a "modest but adequate level of living" is an index of the failure of our social security system to achieve its basic goals. It is also a decisive factor in the inability of the American economy to attain a growth rate comparable to that of several European countries that assure much greater economic security for their populations.

The United States could certainly afford, through its social security system and minimum-wage legislation, to assure every American of the essentials of a decent living. Sweden has found that, by eliminating unemployment and providing adequate security for the aged and the handicapped, it has been able to maintain not only a high standard of living, but also a stable and prosperous economy. Early in 1964 a group of leading economists and writers urged that all Americans be guaranteed sufficient income to provide minimum subsistence.⁴ Walter Heller of the Council of Economic Advisers estimates that it would cost approximately \$11 billion a year to bring up all poor families to a \$3,000 level.

Area Redevelopment

In the areas of acute and chronic unemployment—the coal fields, and iron ore mining regions, many rural areas—special measures are obviously required. No nationwide economic shot-in-the-arm can possibly revive prosperity in many of these regions. Specific and carefully devised remedies are needed.

A modest beginning in this area has been made through the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961. Under this Act, loans and grants are made to areas with widespread unemployment to enable them to develop their resources and attract new industries. Provision is also made for retraining jobless workers for the new opportunities envisioned in the redevelopment programs. The Act requires participation by all groups within the community—businessmen, organized labor, public officials, service clubs, and other community organizations—in developing a forward-looking, comprehensive plan for revitalizing the depressed area. This plan must then be approved by federal authorities before funds are made available.

Such a program must obviously be an essential part of any effective drive against poverty. But to be successful, it will have to be on a much larger scale than has been considered so far. In addition, it must be recognized that many of the depressed areas lack local leadership capable of the planning that is necessary to achieve assistance through the Area Redevelopment Act program. Other areas are clearly beyond reviving. Thus, the local redevelopment program should be coordinated with a statewide or nationwide rehabilitation program that would provide not only retraining, but also relocation, for workers displaced by automation.

ADMINISTRATION'S WAR ON POVERTY

The broad outlines of President Johnson's "war on poverty" were presented to Congress on March 16, 1964. The program had the important merit of recognizing the need for a many-sided attack on the problem. Particular stress was placed on the education and training of unemployed youth, on the assumption that this was the best way to break the chain by which ignorance, hopelessness, and poverty are transmitted from generation to generation.

Youth Programs

The program proposed three youth training plans. These were:

- (1) A job corps designed to provide young men aged 16 through 21 with job training and education in

some 100 civilian camps and training centers. The cost was set at \$190 million. Half of the youths would be enrolled in camps and the remainder would be assigned to residential training centers. It is hoped that some 100,000 young men ultimately will be trained under this program.

(2) A Department of Labor-operated national work-training program for 200,000 young men and women between the ages of 16 and 21. This is to be conducted in young people's home communities at an estimated cost of \$150 million a year.

(3) A work-study program that would help 140,000 young men and women pay for their college expenses through part-time jobs on the campuses or in public or nonprofit agencies.

Encouraging Local Self-help

President Johnson also stressed plans for helping seriously distressed areas develop new industries and retrain the unemployed. The President's ideas in this area were not new; they involved a much-needed expansion of the Area Redevelopment program with its retraining provisions, and also emphasized a plan that has long been under study for the rehabilitation of Appalachia. The President's program went beyond previous ones, however, by proposing loans up to \$1,500 for small businesses on more liberal terms than had so far been available. Loans up to \$10,000 for every job created for the hard-core unemployed were also authorized for new or expanding industries in areas with ARA community plans.

An unusual new proposal would provide federal loans to non-profit corporations to acquire rural land and develop it into family-sized farms for sale to low-income families. A companion program would permit grants up to \$1,500 and loans up to \$2,500 to low-income families to buy, improve, or operate small farms.

Another element in the President's anti-poverty program was a proposal for a domestic peace corps, to be known as the Volunteers in Service to America. The Volunteers, numbering from 3,000 to 5,000 would be assigned to work in migrant labor camps, on Indian reservations, and in mental hospitals.

Broader Program Needed

The President emphasized that "this program will not eliminate all the poverty in America in a few months or a few years." It was intended as an initial step in the war against poverty, and is neither broad enough in scope nor financially substantial enough to produce a fundamental change in the prospects of the country's 35 to 50 million underprivileged. Even the youth programs, which are the newest and most promising, would reach less than half of the out-of-school, out-of-work young men and women who present our most pressing unemployment problem. No large retraining program is proposed for the hard core of workers displaced by automation, and no plans have been advanced for absorbing them into the economy if they are retrained. Nothing is proposed that would lift the burden from the aged poor, or that would improve the lot of millions of children living in poverty-stricken fatherless homes.

But what is most conspicuously missing is a full employment program utilizing all the of various tools in the economist's kit. The extent of such a program and the specific tools to be employed are such that it is impossible to eliminate poverty without first stimulating consumer demand. This could be achieved by various methods, including provision for more adequate social security, public works programs, and long-range planning.

Security For All

Elimination of poverty, if taken literally, would mean the assurance of a living income to every family in the United States. As far as possible, this must be achieved by providing enough job opportunities to absorb every person capable of doing constructive work. A particular effort must be made to remove the discriminatory practices of both industry and labor that prevent Negroes from enjoying their share of the employment opportunities that may be opened up. As in the case of education, a special effort is called for to make up for past injustices.

A comprehensive program would go even further. For those unable to work because of youth, age, illness, disability, or because no jobs are available, the social insurance system would be developed so as to provide full, not partial, security. The financial problem of large families, for example, might be mitigated by a system of allowances—such as Canada and many other countries provide—for the dependents of the unemployed. This kind of program is of tremendous importance, for unless these people can be brought into the mainstream of American life, they will inevitably transmit their burden to their children and to succeeding generations.

Security and Stability

Many economists believe that the additional benefits necessary to provide full security to underprivileged families should be derived from income tax revenues, rather than from additional payroll taxes. The income tax is graduated, with the largest amount contributed by those best able to pay. Thus, it has a limited effect on consumer demand. Payroll taxes, in contrast, come primarily from the pockets of wage earners who would otherwise spend the money for consumer goods. If it were politically possible to defray the entire cost of a complete security system through graduated taxation, we could be assured of an unprecedented degree of stability in our economic system. Adequate social security would maintain consumer purchasing power at a relatively constant level, regardless of unemployment or fluctuation in the business cycle. A steady consumer buying power would tend to stabilize not only the consumer-goods industries, but also—what is more important—the volatile capital-goods industries as well.

Public Works

Stability is not, of course, the only goal we seek. During recent years the American economy has been reasonably stable, but it has been a stability with four to five million unemployed. One group of economists argues that these persons can be absorbed only by an audacious program of public works. Others insist that if sufficient encouragement were given to private business, all unemployment would quickly melt away. Irrespective of the merits of these arguments is the fact that public works programs are badly needed in many fields. Examples of the kinds of programs needed are irrigation and flood control projects, development of port and river facilities, highway and school construction, community recreation projects, urban redevelopment, public housing projects, and reconstruction. For each \$1 billion we spend on public works, an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 new jobs will be created.

The only substantial public works activity envisioned in the Johnson "war on poverty" is in the President's Appalachian program. This includes provisions for local programs of highway construction, flood control, development of new coal mining techniques, improvement of timber production and pasture land. A small amount was added for educational, training, and welfare activities.

Long-Range Planning

Economic planning has a bad name in the United States. Many people still think of it as a Russian invention. Yet most European

democracies have found it desirable to set goals for the development of their country's economies. Such goals would appear necessary before decisions can be made about which of the vitally needed public works projects should be given priority, and how much money and manpower should be assigned to each. They can also serve as guides in choosing which of the many devices that are available for stimulating the economy should be used. Some planning has already been done in this latter area, but it is of a piece-meal variety. Moreover, the responsibility for basic economic decision-making is scattered among several government departments—notably the Treasury, Federal Reserve Board, and Defense Department—and contradictory policies have often been adopted.

Planning for steady overall growth is difficult, and it has been largely neglected in this country. When the Council of Economic Advisers was created in 1946, it was given the responsibility of forecasting "foreseeable trends in the levels of employment production, and purchasing power," and of setting an annual goal reflecting our capabilities and needs. Only in the last few years has the Council begun even partially to fulfill this function.

The lack of such planning is a serious barrier to the achievement of our economic goals. For example, there is little evidence thus far in the campaign against poverty of a guiding intelligence that has weighed the relative importance of each of the many facets of the problem and developed a truly comprehensive program. Without such guidance, we cannot hope to attain the balance and stability that are essential for success. To meet the need for this kind of guidance, the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower recommended early in 1964 that the Employment Act of 1946 be broadened to provide an instrument for planning.

Developing a balanced plan for economic growth in a free competitive economy is, at best, a difficult task. No individual and no government body can be expected to provide all of the answers. But controlled economic growth is the most essential element in the war against poverty. If such growth is to be achieved, some agency, such as the Council of Economic Advisers or the new Office of Economic Opportunity, must be given the responsibility, resources, and opportunity to provide competent leadership.

A Marshall Plan for Poverty?

"What America needs is a Marshall Plan to eradicate poverty in the nation," declares Gunnar Myrdal. "The raising and stabilization

of the growth rate in the national economy," he adds, "does not come about by itself, but only by deliberate public policy directed at expansion and steadily maintained expansion."

The term Marshall Plan is used, of course, to convey some idea of the magnitude and complexity of the effort needed to eliminate poverty in the United States. The amount of American money spent for the rehabilitation of Europe after World War II was many times the billion dollars a year provided in President Johnson's 1964-1965 budget for his "war on poverty." Surely this country can afford a more comprehensive effort to salvage the lives of millions of Americans now trapped in poverty. The presence of mass poverty is in itself a serious burden on the national economy—an unfilled demand for jobs, goods, and housing that, if satisfied, could support the expansion of business activity. If not employed, or if deprived of a living income, the jobless and partially employed are a tremendous economic and human waste. But if put to work, they represent an opportunity of vast proportions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Case from Family Service Highlights, Sept. -Nov. 1963.
2. See Man, Education and Work, American Council of Education.
3. Challenge to Affluence, Pantheon, p. 26.
4. "The Triple Revolution," New York Times, March 23, 1964.