

Poverty
(1977 folder)

The Citizen Poor of the 1960's

an examination
into a social
experiment . //

by **MILTON
VIORST**

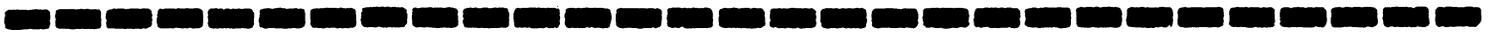
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The Citizen Poor of the 1960's-----

an examination into a social experiment

by Milton Viorst

① [Dayton, Ohio]

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Foreword

This book was published by the Urban Affairs Program of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. It is one of the projects sponsored by the Foundation to help find ways of improving the quality of life in American communities.

The Urban Affairs Program addresses the problems associated with cities—inadequate housing, ineffective education, pollution, inadequate public health care, and municipal services which do not meet the needs of urban residents—by researching and developing new approaches to their solution. It works closely with other organizations to develop new perspectives, long-range commitments to urban improvement, and recommendations appropriate for a national urban policy.

As part of this work, we undertook to document the impact on the urban poor of the social intervention efforts of the 1960's. We felt this information and the insight gained from a retrospective consideration of these programs would be a valuable resource for today's urban planners and framers of policy.

Milton Viorst was asked to record the representative experiences of those involved in attempting to empower the poor to deal with urban institutions. When he completed his research, a small

conference of public officials, policy makers, and academic critics was held at the Academy for Contemporary Problems in Columbus, Ohio. This group reviewed and critiqued Mr. Viorst's efforts, and their suggestions have been incorporated into the pages which follow.

Paul Ylvisaker, who was the Urban Affairs Director of the Ford Foundation during the early 1960's and who played a large role in developing the social intervention philosophy of that period, was asked to review Mr. Viorst's book. His introduction, which follows, frames the current social context from which the reader might appreciatively respond to Mr. Viorst's book.

Mr. Ylvisaker's view is optimistic and hopeful. In some ways, it reflects the view of Charles F. Kettering, the founder of the Foundation, who wrote:

"Our civilization as a whole is new. This is the first time in the history of the world that such a civilization has been in existence. It in itself is an experiment, and just because we have encountered difficulty is no cause for despair. We must find out what is wrong and then remedy it, but we must not give up hope of a better and more secure life."

James E. Kunde
Director, Urban Affairs
Charles F. Kettering Foundation

Introduction: The 60's in retrospect

After nearly a decade of ebbing spirit, the American nation seems to be readying itself again to accentuate the positive.

I get that sense when reading Milton Viorst's account of the social reforms of the 1960's revisited. What he reports is that more was accomplished during the last release of community energy than the violent reaction of fast-writing critics would have led us to believe for a while. We do not have to retreat further from a failure that never really happened.

I am admittedly a prejudiced observer; Viorst's findings are cut to my bias. I was among those caught up in that floodtide of hope. Successively as a mayor's aide in Philadelphia, a program officer at the Ford Foundation, and an advisor to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations; and later, as state commissioner and poverty warrior in New Jersey, I rode that wave to its climax and suffered its smashing against the rocks of harsh reality and hardening attitudes.

Now, predictably, I await the rhythm of the next tidal pulse, and I may even signal it before it is set to begin. If anticipation there is, this time it is not the eagerness of the surfer, impatient to catch another wave. Rather, it is the quieter appreciation of a political biologist, grasping both the logic of the eternal dialogue between land and sea, between slow-changing circumstance and fast-breaking hope, and the regenerating sequence of flowing tides.

For a stagnating America, it is time again to be washed.

Viorst is not prepared to make that statement as a prediction; he finds the mood of the country and its public policies still running too strongly to the contrary. However, his inspection of three sites reached by the earlier movement toward greater citizen participation, and especially that of the urban poor, convinces him that another surge is overdue. Oakland, Atlanta, and Chicago—each absorbing that energy in its own way — still show the residual benefits, but they are benefits, Viorst warns, that need constant rejuvenation.

Let Viorst make his own case, as forcefully he has, in the chapters that follow. My interest in writing these few pages of introduction is not to recite or second-guess his facts or his findings, but to place his chronicle in a somewhat broader perspective. I am cheered by Viorst's contradiction of what I have regarded as premature (and in one conspicuous case immature) appraisals of the social reforms of the 1960's. However, there is not much to be gained by reading Viorst's account as simply another round of self-justifying " 'tis 'tain't," although having remained silent through a decade of disputation, I do find that tempting.

Reading Viorst has prodded me into something more; he has roused me from the melancholy that has lately settled over some social reformers, to ask, "Did we give up too early and easily?" and, whatever the answer to that, "What lies ahead?"

These are probably the same questions; certainly the answers come together. To start with, Viorst is but one of a growing number of observers who are looking back upon the social activism of the 1960's with something other than fear of its second coming; they write with understanding and no longer see the glass half-empty, but half-full. Marris and Rein (*Dilemmas of Social Reform*, 1967) managed that open-mindedness at a remarkably early date; but their steadying voice was overwhelmed by the hooting that came with the "nixing" era.

Now, that steadying voice is being heard again. You can hear it in the reflections of those who recorded their evaluations of the Great Society in the Winter, 1974, issue of the *Public Interest*. It can be heard most clearly in an off-hand but salient comment by Sar Levitan, a noted authority on social programs of the 1960's, who said recently that the question is no longer "How can you prove they didn't?"

For we *did* survive the 1960's, and in many ways—certainly in comparison with the 1970's—we prospered. Even if one should judge the entire war on poverty lost, the battle was in an ennobling cause. If there was corruption, it was sporadic and incidental, not a rot spreading from a diseased core of Presidential cynicism and degenerating national purpose. If the reduction of poverty and unemployment were more a function of general prosperity than of explicit measures of social intervention, these gains were substantial, and they were not impeded by any policy of "benign neglect."

But go deeper, think longer. The social engineering of the 1960's, in historical perspective, was almost predictable, and greater participation of the citizenry, especially the poor, was maximally inescapable. The 1960's were the cresting time of four concurrent riptides of change that had been mounting since World War II:

First, there was that bulge of birthing that by the 1960's was cascading the raw energy, idealism, and anger of millions of teenagers annually onto the American scene. Along with that, there were the great population movements—one, of the better-off migrating from obsolescent central cities into burgeoning suburbs; the other, of those who hoped to be better off, escaping from rural poverty into the abandoned urban neighborhoods that soon became ghettos of despair.

In addition, there was a surging technology of motion and communication that let prisoners of the ghetto see, through car windows and television screens, the wealth and comfort they somehow could not free themselves to enjoy. Finally, swelling into an ugly red tide of death and spiritual contamination was the war in Vietnam.

That was more of a pummeling than any nation could absorb and still remain serene. In retrospect, it was a miracle that violence during the 1960's was as minimal as it was, and my own living of that decade convinces me that the social engineering of the 1960's—however faulted and faltering—was an essential part of that miracle.

It is easy to forget what it was like before and during the crashing of those massive forces and the frantic coping that took place. I remember Newark during years of riding its No. 4 bus from unkempt railroad station to well-kept airport, watching the city's structure deteriorate and its residents grow ominously sullen as the politics of exclusion and corruption made it ripe for revolution. I remember the foundation officer who warned me in the mid-1950's that racial tension and student restlessness were forbidden areas for philanthropic activity.

I remember the mayor—courageous enough to admit quietly that a tide of social anger was massing just offshore—who nervously asked me not to let word get around that his newly-funded program of community development was a euphemism for dealing with race and poverty, rather than real estate. We all remember the pervasive quiet before the inevitable storm: the oppressive silence in Congress, state legislatures, and city councils on issues that it took calculated deafness to ignore.

The plain fact was that as 1960 approached, the nation was utterly unprepared to deal with the social discontent and necessity for change that were imbedded in its policies and way of life. Suburbanizing majorities, preoccupied with their own concerns, left a dwindling rear guard of controlled politicians and civic bureaucrats to protect their remaining interests in the city. Urban minorities for a while waited for some show of benevolence; when nothing came but high-rise public housing, mountainous unemployment, and the politics of ethnic cannibalism, they set about with a vengeance learning how to participate.

In the short run, there were few options open to them to participate in the orderly way that is somehow expected of newcomers—although not so faithfully practiced in suburban zoning battles, labor negotiations, or other rites of encounter among the established.

Neither were there many avenues open for orderly learning. The social and cultural institutions of the central city were run as a closed corporation, and those who governed them were two generations removed from the city's newest citizens.

City halls and state legislatures were closer, but still a long generation and a much whiter shade of pale away, and besides, half or more of the urban newcomers were too young to vote. A benevolent establishment, even if there were one and it wanted to, was hard pressed to think of a way in which an orderly sharing of power between newer and older populations of American central cities could be accomplished.

But in the American tradition of believing that we should at least try, and in the best tradition of American pragmatism, a lot of people all over the United States began inventing their way out of impasse.

These were not just "liberals and intellectuals" indulging alleged fantasies of political power and testing exotic theories of social action. My rounds of urban America at that time, and they included most of America's major cities, turned up an assuring variety of home-grown responses to the rising threat of urban violence.

Although fragmented in motive and interests, they had the sharing of power as their common denominator: mayors looking for new-formed majorities in public decision-making; industrial leaders hoping to avoid destructive conflict; business leaders stymied in their efforts to rebuild the downtown areas of cities; churches trying to save their property and/or souls; ghetto politicians crying revolution but mindful that unless moderation prevailed, they would be the first to the guillotine.

As fate would have it, a few of us gave expression and form to this spontaneous flow of involvement and inventiveness. With incredible speed, a vast outpouring of diverse energies and motivations—blocked at other outlets—funnelled into a swirling set of open-ended phrases and programs: "community action"; "maximum feas-

ible participation"; "the war against poverty."

That quickly-rigged system of floodways was bound to be inundated by the volume of feeling—hope, hostility, ambition—that was abruptly loosed upon it, as would any other system devised, then or retrospectively. (One notion advanced at that time was to extend universal education through two years of college. That would have "reduced" unemployment; but it also would further have overwhelmed an unprepared higher educational establishment and made colleges and universities even more a disaster area than they later became.)

The depressing but seemingly inevitable fate of the poverty program and its participatory mechanisms was not that they failed in the transitional and well-nigh impossible mission assigned them, but that they were later perceived to have failed. Things accomplished and lessons learned were all read in the negative; and succeeding policies—logical enough in their progression—were eroded by the acids of reaction in which they had been formulated.

The progression from free-wheeling community action to the more controlled "Model Cities" showed that elected politicians were at last "getting their heads above water" and felt capable again of coping with change. The minorities also learned; no longer newcomers and more in control of the vote by age and numbers, their involvement shifted from captured agency to capturing city hall.

Another logical progression was from Model Cities to revenue sharing—but *only* on the assumption that national purpose remained constant, that the determination to improve the condition of America's poor was still intact.

Tragically, that was not the case. The nation lost that resolve. Unnerved by violence, it sought comfort in the siren song of those who now claimed that violence was caused, rather than contained, by the social engineering of the 1960's and that social unrest would subside if attention to the plight of the poor were diverted.

The cost of that great surrender has been heavy—and even heavier once the baser motives and tactics behind it were exposed. What latent willingness there might have been to sort through the lessons of the 1960's and to move more swiftly along that learning curve of social positivism was further undercut. Only a faint beat

of resolve remains, and one wonders how it can be made to quicken, or whether it ever will.

This question is especially pressing when one looks honestly at present urban fact. The social and physical condition of the older industrial cities—concentrated in the East and the Midwest, but finding company in older neighborhoods in the “Sunbelt”—are steadily deteriorating. Trend lines in housing and unemployment are racing calamitously in opposite directions; municipal bankruptcy looms; anarchy is prowling the cities’ deserted streets; and not even the advance of minority participation into the mayor’s office has brought solutions within reach.

A recent report by the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs confirms the bleak outlook: none of the data uncovered in the Center’s survey of 87 neighborhoods—23 black, 10 Hispanic, and 54 white—showed signs of anything but continuing demise. Black youth unemployment rates in central cities have soared to 40 per cent; what they announce is the advent of a culture of survival by other means—unconventional, if not illegal—a counter-culture of formidable purport, that may remain in continuing contest with traditional values and, over time, subvert them.

To rally Americans and revive a national resolve at this point in the tide of hope’s recession, may be too much to expect; the level of collective energy is low. It may still be dropping and, conceivably, may never return; the analogy of the tides could be fatally misleading.

The nation’s aspirations and capacities could forever dissipate in a constant flow outward—fleeing last century’s cities for this century’s “Sunbelt” or some next-century Shangri-la, abandoning the concept of the general welfare altogether and building a fortress of special interests and self-concern. There is evidence enough of that happening.

Then why the inkling of a resurging positive feeling, and why the sense that it may be of any avail?

My own answer comes partly from what I see, and partly from what I trust. I see emerging from the still-outward drift a gradual coalescence of opposing forces. The willingness to reassess dis-

passionately and with constructive intent what transpired during the 1960’s is one encouraging shred of evidence.

Another encouraging and more substantial indication is the American public’s growing sophistication about the complexities and complicated workings of modern society and politics. Cynicism, following upon naivete, can be seen (at least in the perspective of hope) as a transitory second stage along the nation’s learning curve; it too shall pass. Its legacy is positive as well as negative.

Consider, for instance, the growing assertions of constitutional prerogative (represented by impeachment proceedings during the Nixon administration) and recent efforts to protect personal rights of privacy. Look at the rise of advocacy and the re-institutionalizing of “tribunes of the people.” Note the street savvy of people who can differentiate between a hustle—anybody’s hustle—and the real thing. Look at the growing recognition that, for another generation at least, any solution that is real will have to respect some harsh economic realities and involve some very difficult trade-offs. The crucial requirement in all of this is that the bargaining process be open for public inspection.

In short, ebttide has produced its own counter-momentum; reaction has generated another flow of rising expectations, both in the mounting demand for public accountability and in the growing insistence on maintaining the integrity of public decision-making. These are not the same forces that beat upon this society a decade ago; they carry less of an unquestioned assumption of continuous American affluence and leadership. However, they remain as powerful as they were earlier. The historic logic behind these forces is equally compelling, and their effect on our society may be equally cathartic. Hopefully, with the vision of twenty-twenty hindsight, their effects will be less traumatizing.

Obviously, I have responded to what I trust, as well as to what I see. I trust what pulses in this nation—even when (but especially after) the cycle seems to have alternated for its time toward the negative.

Paul N. Ylvisaker
Dean, School of Education
Harvard University

Preface:

A look at Federal impact on the poor

The conventional wisdom in America has not been generous to the efforts made by the Federal government in the 1960's to renovate the nation's cities. Those who subscribe to this wisdom hold that the decade produced a mass of programs which, while excessively ambitious, were haphazardly conceived, thoroughly uncoordinated and clumsily executed. As evidence of defeat, they point facetiously to the continued presence of slums and poverty, of illiteracy and unemployment, of crime and delinquency. They contend that the Great Society's extravagantly touted urban endeavors produced little more than waste, disillusionment, corruption, and civil strife.

That those who never favored Federal intervention in the cities should have this perception is not surprising. But it also became the view of such proponents of Federal intervention as Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine, who in October of 1971 in New York said glumly, "We meet tonight in a time of failure of American liberalism. You can see the failure everywhere in this city and across the country. . . The blunt truth is that liberals have achieved virtually no fundamental change in our society since the end of the New Deal. We have made strong efforts, some of them even inspiring. We have made good speeches, some of them even great. And we have even made some advances . . . (But) how have we gained so little after so long a time and so much work?"¹ In short, the conventional wisdom holds that the consequences of the Federal urban programs of the 1960's were insignificant, if not outrightly disastrous.

But conventional wisdom is sometimes wrong. One explanation for its mistakes, surely, is the process by which it is shaped. Conventional wisdom seems largely to be the product of that segment of society which, having special access to information, also interprets and disseminates it. Among the principal participants in this process are academicians, politicians, and journalists,

whose social origins, attitudes, and experiences may, as a general rule, be described as middle-class.

These observers are, perhaps, irreproachable in helping to shape conventional wisdom on, say, the Soviet Union, economic policy, or Watergate. They may even have helped us to understand the impact of social reforms during the New Deal. But they proved to be peculiarly ill-fitted to judge the urban programs of the last decade.

One explanation lies in the difference between the Federal social programs of the 1960's and those of the 1930's, which sought to lift the total economy out of depression. Thus the programs of a generation ago touched the lives of a wide spectrum of Americans and benefitted from wide understanding. Since that time, the scope of distress has narrowed. In the 1960's the Federal government turned its attention to the cities and, particularly, to the black poor who lived in conditions of extreme poverty and social disarray within them.

The target of Federal concern in the 1960's was this relatively small and inarticulate segment of society that had little cultural or intellectual exchange with the overwhelmingly white middle-class. This middle-class was normally bewildered, if not shocked, by the manners and mores of these poor, and felt threatened by their economic and social objectives.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an early architect of anti-poverty programs and currently a United States Senator, dedicated an entire book, called *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, to criticizing the poor for not behaving as he felt they should. Representative Edith Green of Oregon, once a strong proponent of social welfare legislation, turned against the poor for the misuse of appropriated funds. Newspaper stories, often

1. Quoted in Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Real America*, New York, 1974, p. 150.

written by sympathetic journalists, usually dwelled heavily on the excesses of the poor and often dramatized hostile political confrontations as if democracy, itself, were menaced.

What the Moynihans, the Greens, and the journalists failed to convey was that individual episodes may not represent a pattern, and that their criticisms had to be understood within the context of a long-term process. In stigmatizing the urban programs of the 1960's with failure, their short-sightedness provided momentum for the real foes of Federal intervention.

Rarely was the black in the ghetto asked what he thought of Federal urban programs, or what impact they made on his life or his family's. To be sure, he was often "evaluated," and he made his presence felt in curves and statistics on income, education, and health care. But this segment of the population, which at its best is not known for its eloquence, seems almost never to have been consulted on whether the programs were good or bad, and rarely were its observations taken into account in the many studies conducted by professionally trained evaluators. It contributed rather little to the conventional wisdom.

Ben J. Wattenberg, a former aide to President Johnson, was among those who conducted statistical studies of the impact of Federal programs in the 1960's. Significantly, he entitled his book *The Real America: A Surprising Examination of the State of the Union*. Writing in the early 1970's he was surprised to find that many of the programs of income transferral—welfare, medicare, social security, food stamps, school lunches, subsidized housing, free milk—actually made a difference in the life of the poor. Would the poor themselves have been so surprised? Wattenberg's work seemed to confirm that conventional wisdom, being a middle-class phenomenon, was quite unrelated to the experiences of those toward whom the urban programs of the Great Society years were directed.

Yet, economic advances are not the entire measure, or perhaps even the most important, of the success of these programs at least in the early stages.

One of the major premises of the renovative efforts of the 1960's held that there exists a "culture of poverty," which imposes habits of mind that perpetuate misery far more tenaciously than does the mere lack of funds. Out of this premise

came the contention that the poor²—too long manipulated by political and social forces which they failed to understand and could not master—had to be accorded the opportunity and the means to dominate their environment, manage their own lives, control their destiny.

As President Johnson put it, Federal programs were to give "our people who live in the cities opportunities to develop as healthy, educated, productive citizens of our society—citizens who have the ability to get and hold jobs, and to take pride in the place in which they live . . ." Income transfers, however necessary, were a palliative. The goal of the social programs of the 1960's was, perhaps for the first time, to wipe out the "culture of poverty" itself, thereby making the poor independent and self-sufficient.

As the most innovative social thinkers saw the problem in the early 1960's, the best hope for achieving this goal lay in making two major revisions in administration. The first required that the poor, traditionally victimized by well-meaning but patronizing experts in social work, would have to participate themselves now at every level in the planning and execution of the programs that affected them. The second held that, since no single shortcoming in the social environment created the culture of poverty, the remedies would have to be comprehensive, focusing simultaneously on deficiencies in housing, education, health care, job training, capital availability, and whatever other conditions might contribute to determining the poor's negative attitude toward their own future. Insofar as possible, it seemed logical to tie the two new processes together, but each in its own distinct way was seen as essential to the achievement of the envisaged social transformation.

Of the two, involvement of the poor in decision-making was inherently the more troublesome, since it required shifts in the

2. The expression "the poor" can certainly be defined in many ways, and the reader may construe invidiously my unwillingness to define it specifically. I certainly do not mean someone who is broke. Normally, I do not mean the aged poor, or students living on a tight budget, or the rural poor. I use "the poor" to mean someone who is part of the urban poverty culture, as I might use other commonly used terms to describe members of other American sub-cultures. When clarity requires that I make distinctions (as between, say, black poor, and Chicano poor), I do so. But more often the generic term fits accurately enough.

exercise of power which carried a potential for social destabilization. "Comprehensivity" may have been the more complicated to attain, but it was essentially a technical problem for bureaucratic professionals and, thus, of relatively little interest for this book. The concern of this book is largely with the efforts of the poor—backed by the Federal anti-poverty and Model Cities statutes—to become a force of consequence in the 1960's within their governmental and economic environment.

The goal normally attributed to the citizen involvement process³ is "institution-building," a term rendered no less valid by its difficulty to define. It refers to the creation of organizations which wield power in a society through the mobilization of money, manpower, or technology. To build institutions requires the wide spread acquisition of skills in management, coordination, communications, analysis. Most contemporary observers would agree that the culture of poverty, in contrast to middle-class culture, is characterized by the weakness of such institutions and, consequently, by the inability of its members to master the complex social and professional demands of our times.

Thus, in seeking to build institutions, citizen involvement is an acculturation process, and the experience acquired in a failed effort may be nearly as valuable as in one which succeeds. Citizen involvement is trial-and-error and assumes that learning comes not only from the trial but from the error.

In American society, of course, this learning aims at making the inhabitants of the poverty culture more competitive. But competition, by its nature, suggests strife—and strife tends to become more intense as new competitors get closer to the vested interests lodged in the status quo. That the Federal government itself endorsed the citizen involvement process, with its inherent disposition to disruption, was remarkable. To call the idea revolutionary would be an exaggeration. But, in a decade rich in the rhetoric of revolution, citizen involvement was perhaps the only idea to emerge which promised important changes in the country's social and political structure.

The principle of citizen involvement had been in gestation for some years prior to President Johnson and was submitted to its first fragile tests in the urban experiments of the Ford Foundation in the late 1950's and early 1960's. By the time

Johnson acceded to the Presidency, it had become an established, although still largely untried, tenet of social work doctrine, and it was with rather little ado written into the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 in the form of the "maximum feasible participation" rule. This rule provided that the poor were not merely to receive Federal largesse, as they had for years, but were to have a substantial role in determining how it was to be dispensed.

Most observers were barely aware that the provision was even in the act. Those who knew were skeptical about whether it would be applied. Certainly no one, not even the young theoreticians who insisted that it be there, had the faintest notion how it would function in practice.

Indeed, what is noteworthy is not that the idea foundered on its newness but that it was tried at all. Federal statute books are full of legislative admonitions which in practice are reduced to noble statements of purpose observed in the breach. That the "maximum feasible participation" rule was not ignored is largely a tribute to the dedication to the strictures of the anti-poverty law of R. Sargent Shriver, first director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and of the staff he assembled. Rarely has a bureaucracy been as ardent, or as heedless of established power, in its day-to-day encounters.

A newborn organization, OEO was unencumbered by burdensome procedures and, supported by the President, it was in its early days remarkably free to improvise and invent, patronize and provoke. The OEO bureaucracy set out to channel power to the poor by organizing them, giving them some money, and then supporting them quietly from the sidelines while they undertook to fight for themselves. Even though the Model Cities legislation which followed in 1966 was much less explicit about "maximum feasible participation," the influence of OEO and its staff remained pervasive. The involvement of the poor in the politics of social programs had by that time acquired so much momentum that its force

3. In the literature, the concept involved here is variously rendered as "citizen involvement," "citizen participation" (or even "c.p."), "participation of the poor," etc. One could distinguish nuances of difference in these phrases, but more often they are used interchangeably. This paper dwells in considerable length on the difference in form that "citizen involvement" takes in differing circumstances, but accepts the interchangeability of the terms.

had to be reckoned with.

That the changes in direction which accompanied the anti-poverty and Model Cities legislation were bureaucratically complicated was obvious from the start. That their impact on the deeply seated culture of poverty would be felt only slowly and be measurable only with great difficulty should have been equally so. President Johnson's mistake lay not in endorsing these new processes but in failing to understand himself, and to communicate to the American people, that they would not yield their miracles quickly, if indeed they worked at all. The sense of impatience for concrete results which Johnson conveyed did not fit the dimensions of the problem—and could lead only to massive disillusion.

Yet, serious as this mistake in judgement was in influencing popular judgment, it was compounded by the rapid diminution of enthusiasm which, after the early blush, the Presidency gave to the new programs to defeat poverty. The Great Society's social strategy had hardly been born before it was demoted to step-child by foreign war. Hardly did it get moving before it encountered a new administration that was indifferent, if not outrightly hostile, to it. If the Johnson programs survived the early Nixon years at all, it was thanks largely to administrative inertia and the obstacles of the Federal legislative process.

By the end of the 1960's, however, changes in the political and social climate in the country had all but nullified the earlier commitment to transform the poverty culture. The Johnson programs were dismantled long before they had the chance to fail—and if the culture of poverty still flourishes, its presence scarcely serves as evidence that the premises of these programs were invalid.

Unfortunately, objective measures are not readily available to evaluate the impact of these programs. The conventional efforts to transfer resources are easy enough to assess from obtainable data. Wattenberg published Census Bureau calculations which show that, on the relative income scale, only the lowest fifth of Americans rose during the period from 1960 to 1970, while the top 5 per cent dropped noticeably. Robert Lampman, an economist who helped plan Johnson's anti-poverty program, published Social

Security Administration figures which show that social welfare expenditures at all levels of government grew from 10.6 per cent of the Gross National Product in 1960 to 17.6 per cent in 1972. Lampman notes that the country went far during the decade toward achieving a society in which no family's income was below some officially established poverty level.

But Lampman adds: "Even the successes have been called failures by reference to newer and higher goals which have tended to emerge almost before the ink is dry on the old ones."⁴ These are the goals which hold the new institutions must replace the old ones in the poverty culture. The institutions elude objective measurement.

This paper is an examination into these institutions. Specifically, it is an inquiry into the degree to which the involvement of the poor in the programs of the 1960's helped to break down the culture of poverty. It does not pretend to be scientific, although it is more than impressionistic. The material it contains has been obtained, in some measure, from prior studies but the conclusions it reaches emerge predominantly from extensive interviews with the men and women who participated directly in, and whose lives were, in many cases, shaped by these programs. It is less an effort to record data than to determine the meaning of events.

Oakland, Atlanta, and Chicago have been chosen for this study because of the diversity of their experience with the involvement of the poor. Each tried a different approach—Oakland: confrontation, Atlanta: cooperation, Chicago: co-optation—for bringing the poor into the economic and political life of the city. The differences created contrasting dramas, contrasting consequences, contrasting lessons.

It would be convenient to assert that, taken together, the three make up a microcosm of the quest of the urban poor for power in the 1960's. But it is probable that there were almost as many patterns to the struggle as there were cities in which the struggle took place.

The diverse patterns followed by Oakland, Atlanta, and Chicago were not the product of any deliberate decision but of the character of the

4. Ben J. Wattenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Robert J. Lampman, "What Does It Do For The Poor," *THE PUBLIC INTEREST*, winter 1974, pp. 66-82.

communities in which they evolved. Indeed, if one truth dominates this inquiry, it is that the peculiar history, demography, geography, and what-have-you of each city makes each a unique subject. Nonetheless, there are parts of each struggle which are representative of the struggle

as a whole, and certain experiences which emerge in common. It is the object of this study to examine the components of this struggle in three cities and, insofar as possible, convey the significant social lessons.

Oakland, California: Scene of “confrontation”

Oakland, California, belies the glamorous image that attaches to the rest of the San Francisco Bay area. It has nothing of the history, the sophistication, or the bawdiness of San Francisco. Nor does it have the high style of a Sausalito, the intellectual pretensions of a Berkeley, even the bourgeois grace of a Palo Alto. It has old businesses but no grand old merchant families. It has handsome panoramas but no artists. Its port berths ships from around the world but it has no cosmopolitanism. It is the terminus of a trans-continental rail line but seems curiously cut off from what moves the rest of the continent.

Oakland conveys more of the drabness of the Midwest than the buoyancy of California. It senses its deficiency of distinction and exhibits little civic spirit. Oakland is workaday, ingrown, insecure, and ungenerous.

Oakland's politics have long reflected its character. Its government is dominated by solid and respectable businessmen, who take pride in running a businesslike administration.

As in most cities, there is a mythology which holds that secret control is exercised by corporate tycoons and bankers. Indeed, Oakland has its share of banks and of major corporations—Safeway, Bechtel, World Airways, Kaiser Industries—but there is no evidence whatever of such control. In fact, it seems as if Oakland's big business has traditionally taken too little interest in the city, neither exploiting it, on the one hand, or showing a sense of *noblesse oblige*, on the other.

The single most powerful force in the city has been the *Oakland Tribune*, a rich newspaper run by the Knowland family. Its influence has been very conservative, but far less in the 1960's than in the 1950's, when it led a campaign to recall four city councilmen who dared to favor Oakland's participation in the Federal urban renewal program.

Basically, the city has been governed by men associated with small and medium sized busi-

nesses. They are serious but not terribly enlightened, honest but frequently unable to distinguish the public interest from the *status quo*.

It was during World War II that a basic change came over Oakland, with the influx into the city of substantial numbers of southern blacks and some Mexican-Americans to work in the shipyards and other industries. If Oakland's white Protestants expected these newcomers to go home after the war, they were mistaken. Not only did the minorities remain, but they continued their immigration.

In the decade from 1940 to 1950, the city's non-white population grew from 5 to 15 per cent and, by 1960, it had grown to 25 per cent. Today, the city's black population is estimated at about 40 per cent, with the non-white total—blacks, Mexican-Americans, Asians—hovering somewhere near a balance with the whites. Not surprisingly, the in-migration helped to stimulate a commensurate out-migration, the departure of whites leaving Oakland with a slightly smaller population, now at some 360,000, than it had twenty-five years before.

The overwhelming mass of these non-white Oakland residents are “flatlanders,” living on the broad plain between San Francisco Bay and the mountains which rise to the east. On this plain lie Oakland's downtown, its industrial areas, and its poorer, semi-segregated neighborhoods. Most of the whites and a few of the black middle-class live in the “hills.”

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the white “hill people” have looked on the “flatlanders” as outsiders, of no particular consequence, foreigners in their community, strangers who came uninvited and might in due course be counted on to leave. One readily senses a “we-they” feeling in Oakland and the common conviction among whites that this is their city, and that they alone have a right to govern it.

There is no mistaking that Oakland is governed

by "hill people." For decades now they have, without apology, held tightly to an electoral system which has guaranteed their control of the city council. Although the municipal charter requires that a city councilman reside in, in order to be representative of, each of the city's various districts, it also provides that councilmen be elected at-large, by vote of the entire electorate.

From this has emerged a pattern in which the nominating machinery from time to time selects a candidate who is ethnically of a minority, but who is put into power by the white majority's vote. The consequence of this system is that such a councilman, far from being politically representative of his district, looks upon his constituents as "the opposition." The Oakland City Council can boast of a black and two Asian members, all three firmly part of the ruling bloc. In recent elections, the white majority's margin has eroded noticeably and, in the last one, a genuine minority candidate, for the first time, actually won a seat. But, for all practical purposes, the "hill people" continue to dominate the system and have shown little disposition to share any of the city's real power with the "flatlanders."

Interestingly, in the first decade or two of the mass migrations, it seemed as if Oakland's black minority shared the white majority's perception of it as a community of outsiders. These were years of adjustment to a new way of life, far different from the ways of the rural South from which most blacks came and, after the passing of the wartime boom, they were years of considerable economic stress. One can reasonably assume that many blacks were themselves unsure whether they would go or stay, to what homeland they owed their loyalty, what their rights were in relation to entrenched power.

Through the late 1950's, blacks made few demands on Oakland's political structure. Occasionally, they complained about police abuses, employment discrimination in schools and city departments, or *de facto* segregation of school districts, but they certainly promoted no doctrine which held that they were being systematically deprived of what was rightfully theirs. Not until the end of the decade did there seem to crystallize—out of a maturing sense of community in the "flatlands", perhaps, and the growing impulse of the civil rights movement in the nation—the feeling that the black population was

an integral part of Oakland and ought to be recognized as such.

It is not surprising that Oakland's white leadership showed its first signs of interest in the problems of the city's blacks when the local crime rate began to rise.⁵ In 1957, City Manager Wayne Thompson, a man almost unique in Oakland's recent history for his commitment to what he called "people problems," responded to a plea for help from the Oakland police in dealing with delinquency. Thompson called together, along with the police, representatives of the public schools, the county probation department, the recreation department, and the state youth authority. Without legislative mandate, they formed a body called Associated Agencies, which sought voluntarily to coordinate information and policies regarding juveniles. Gradually, the number of participating agencies expanded, and the group formed subcommittees to coordinate the efforts undertaken within various troubled neighborhoods.

Thompson chose, as the group's executive, Evilelo Grillo, an American of Cuban descent with comfortable ties to both black and white culture. Fresh from a master's degree in social work at the University of California, Grillo brought the rather new notion of "comprehensivity" to the task. He was convinced that more important than "the richness and adequacy of the specific services we develop" were "the vertical and horizontal integration of what we already have."

Grillo's formula, it should be noted, was designed to maximize the participation of social work professionals, not ordinary neighborhood residents. Nonetheless, it worked so well the *Oakland Tribune* was convinced that Associated Agencies was responsible for a subsequent decrease—unfortunately short-lived—in juvenile arrests.

At about the same time that Thompson was organizing professionals into the Associated Agencies, he was lending his authority to a primitive citizens participation program, called the district community councils, established under the

5. The author is indebted for much of the detail on this period to the Ph.D. dissertation of Judith V. May (University of California) entitled *Struggle for Justice*. May's study explains why the account of Oakland's experience is so much richer than those of Atlanta and Chicago, where I feel it is so unfortunate that opportunities for important university inquiries were missed.

auspices of a private social welfare agency. By the end of 1957, such councils had been set up in four neighborhoods, with considerable citizen involvement, and Thompson had persuaded the city council to make a small appropriation to finance them.

In making the funds available, the city council seems to have been persuaded that the district councils would strengthen the hand of elected officials by mobilizing popular support for their decisions. Thompson and the organizing professionals, took quite a different view. Although it is clear that neither envisaged much autonomy for the district councils, both saw them as a forum in which citizens could be heard on public questions, and Thompson believed they would assist in the operation of city departments.

"Any time a problem involved a neighborhood, whether it was a police problem or a social problem or a freeway or park problem," he related, "there was a forum in that community where the citizens or our departments could go." This kind of spillover into semi-activism did not get the approval of the political leadership, however. Obviously, the councilmen were apprehensive that the district councils could become a springboard for opposition candidates and, by now, the first murmurs of political dissent were being heard.

As early as 1958, the city council approved a regulation prohibiting the district councils from endorsing candidates. But that was not enough, and the city council proceeded to withdraw its financial support from the program. Only a grant from the Bay Area United Crusade was able thereafter, to keep the district councils alive.

What actually saved the district councils, however, was the Ford Foundation, which came into Oakland in 1961 to sponsor the first of its "gray areas" programs. For some years Ford, recognizing how serious the deterioration of life in the cities was becoming, had been contemplating a shift in priorities from "safe" projects in scholarship and culture to major involvement in urban affairs. Paul Ylvisaker, the foundation official who most vigorously promoted this involvement, coined the name "gray areas" to refer to the fading sections of so many cities that lay between downtown and the suburbs. Ylvisaker was impressed with Wayne Thompson and was fascinated by the programs that seemed to be shaping up under his influence.

Ylvisaker conveyed an invitation to Thompson, who asked Evilelo Grillo to draw up a detailed proposal for a grant. What Ford approved, as part of its program of "comprehensive attacks on the human problems of the gray areas," were funds for the support of eight related demonstration projects in the Castlemont section of East Oakland. Ford agreed to allot \$1,250,000 over a three year period, which was to be matched in part by a commitment from the city.

The response the Ford Foundation received to its offer scarcely resembled the unalloyed gratitude it might have expected. Thompson and the social work professionals, to be sure, were pleased. The city's business community, including the *Oakland Tribune*, responded well to the argument that the funds would promote social tranquillity, preserve property values, maintain tax levels, and enhance the overall prosperity of the city.

Surprisingly, both to the Foundation and to officials, the residents of the Castlemont area were unenthusiastic, taking some umbrage at the suggestion that they lived in a slum and required some kind of special attention. What was not surprising was that the city council perceived the Ford program as a creator of compromising sources of power and responded with outright hostility. The council agreed, finally, to accept Ford's money but, save for some in-kind contributions, declined to put up any matching funds. Recognizing the political problems, the Ford Foundation decided to go ahead anyway.

Faithfully reflecting the concept of comprehensivity, the Ford program was called the Oakland Interagency Project, and Evilelo Grillo was named its director. An executive committee was formed, along the lines of the old Associated Agencies board, of representatives of the municipal departments and private organizations that participated in the project. In addition, a citizens advisory committee was established, composed chiefly of local business notables. Their support was needed to offset the indifference of the politicians.

Unrepresented in the governing structure of the project was the Castlemont community, which had never reconciled itself completely to being singled out for Ford's largesse. What the professionals working in the project were beginning to hear increasingly often from Castlemont

residents was a message which was soon to become a familiar refrain: Plan *with* us rather than *for* us.

Evilelo Grillo did not last long as director of the Interagency Project. Highly protective of the prerogatives of social work professionals, he saw Ford's generosity as a means of adding to the staff and the programmatic scope of existing agencies. His own responsibility, as he saw it, was not to devise new plans or goals but to coordinate the autonomous services being provided in health, education, housing, recreation, law enforcement, and other areas in which demonstrable needs existed.

Grillo was not hospitable to the introduction of new programs, such as neighborhood legal services. He thus collided directly with Ford's objective, which was to experiment with new techniques and procedures, and to evaluate results carefully. The Ford Foundation had no objection to Grillo's fondness for coordination, but it did not share his view that coordination was the be-all-and-end-all of its program. In the second year of the life of the Interagency Project this difference led to Grillo's resignation.

As Grillo's replacement, Thompson appointed Norvel Smith, an extremely sophisticated, soft-spoken black who had received a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, not in social work but in education. In contrast to Grillo's bureaucratic professionalism, Smith from the start showed a willingness to exercise the political potential of his office. Smith immediately hired new staff, commandeered new office space, and applied himself to the challenge of enlarging the program. With real zest for innovation, Smith was much more to the Ford Foundation's taste than Grillo. More important, within a few months of his appointment to the Interagency Project, President Johnson announced the launching of the war on poverty, and Smith was in a position to seize the opportunities it offered in Oakland's behalf.

Unlike other cities, Oakland entertained no serious debate over whether to locate the anti-poverty program inside or outside the local government. With the approval of Norvel Smith, City Manager Wayne Thompson simply transformed the organization that had been set up under the Ford grants into an official municipal agency. The Interagency Project staff was put on the city

payroll and designated the Department of Human Resources. Its citizens advisory committee was broadened and enlarged, and it assumed the functions of the "community action agency," which the Economic Opportunity Act made responsible for setting policy. It took the name Oakland Economic Development Council (OEDC).

Mayor John C. Houlihan, although not considered friendly to Oakland's minorities, recognized virtues in the anti-poverty program. A vigorous proponent of the city's economic development, he was enthusiastic about any funds the Federal government had to offer, and he did not hesitate to get on an airplane to Washington to promote an anti-poverty grant.

Houlihan, however, wanted the best of both worlds—an anti-poverty program and money which he himself could control—and he reasoned he could dominate the anti-poverty program in Oakland by serving as chairman of the OEDC. The membership board showed it would not be a satellite of city hall and had none of it. The board rejected his claim to leadership and elected, instead, an astute and aggressive black magistrate named Lionel Wilson. This move left Norvel Smith free of the direct supervision of hostile politicians, although the city council kept its hand in by inserting a requirement that it have the right of approval and veto all of OEDC expenditures.

The city council's claim, however, was just a part of the administrative complexity that emerged. As a member of the city manager's staff and employee of the OEDC board, Smith had two masters to divide his loyalty. At the start he remained beholden to the Ford Foundation, which had agreed to renew its own program. To be sure, all these masters seemed friendly enough as the program got underway, but in the administrative messiness lay a potential for trouble.

Interestingly, the force to which Smith was conspicuously un beholden at this stage was the poor themselves. Although Federal law now required "maximum feasible participation" of neighborhood residents, which presumably meant participation at all levels of the program's operation. There were no poor people at all invited to join in making the decisions of OEDC.

The absence of the poor became the focus of struggle from the very beginning. The mayor had

named the OEDC's original membership of twenty-five and had apparently sought conscientiously to make it representative. On it were five elected officials, six businessmen, two union officers, four black and two Mexican-American representatives of minority organizations, two social work professionals, and four clergymen.

Only two or three, however, lived in the target areas of the anti-poverty program, and none had an income low enough to qualify for program assistance. The OEDC set up committees of residents in each of the four target areas in Oakland, but their participation was defined as "grass roots liaison with the client population."

As Judge Wilson, Norvel Smith, and other blacks on the OEDC board saw it, the issue at stake was more than control of the Federal anti-poverty grant of one or two million dollars. They wanted these funds as leverage to influence the expenditure of the \$50 million more that the city council and school board had available for services. They did not accept the contention that they were unrepresentative of their clients. Most had begun their lives in poverty, and they argued that they were no less sensitive to its problems now that they were middle-class. Smith reasoned that to exert power over the city budget the OEDC board had to remain a broadly based coalition and not be transformed into an organization of the poor. At this stage, he clearly did not see the anti-poverty program as an instrument for building new black institutions.

It is unlikely that any of the poor people at the neighborhood level were thinking in those grandiose terms either, but they continued to press their campaign for more power. Not all of it was spontaneous. Melvin Mogulof, the OEO's western regional director, publicly pressed the OEDC to add *bona fide* poor people to its board. The Ford Foundation urged OEDC to balance its reliance on established agencies, public and private, by funding indigenous self-help groups sponsored by the neighborhood committees. At the street level, a few militants were making their appearance—some of them white, many from the clergy—promoting challenges to OEDC.

Gradually, OEDC members themselves shifted their perception and, in April, 1965, the board voted to seat two representatives from each of the four neighborhood committees. In the fall, it agreed to raise the number to three, but by this

time the neighborhood committees were insisting on a majority of the seats on the board.

Over the course of the ensuing year, the OEDC fought a rear guard action in behalf of the concept of the multi-class coalition. The neighborhoods, however, were relentless and, in March, 1966, their representatives staged a dramatic walkout of a board meeting to demonstrate their seriousness. By the end of the year the battle was over, with the poor the undisputed victors. OEDC was reorganized.

In restructuring itself, the OEDC resolved an intensifying grievance of Mexican-Americans who felt excluded by blacks from influence on the neighborhood committees. The board established, in addition to the four neighborhood committees, a Mexican-American committee, and each was given four seats. Besides these twenty, nineteen places were to be filled by elected officials, businessmen, union officers, social work professionals, and representatives of religious and ethnic organizations. Thus, within two years of OEDC's founding, the poor were in solid command of the direction of Oakland's anti-poverty program.

This step-by-step shift in power was far from cosmetic in its consequences. At the time Oakland's anti-poverty program started, its thrust was largely an extension of traditional services provided by public and private social agencies. Gradually, the neighborhoods began proposing projects, some of which were run out of the central OEDC office (Department of Human Resources) and others by structures that were specifically created by the neighborhood committees.

By the time the poor took majority control of the OEDC board, a substantial proportion of the anti-poverty funds were being spent on projects that were locally initiated and operated. Still others, which the OEO in Washington would not authorize, were paid for by the Ford Foundation. So, while the Federal government was reneging on its promise to dedicate increasing sums to the war on poverty, the modest amounts which continued to reach OEDC from assorted sources were being used in an unprecedented manner and were generating considerable excitement among Oakland's poor.

As control of the programs shifted to the poor, so did the nature of the programs. Many of these

programs had irreproachable and rather conventional social objectives, such as help for pregnant girls, vision services for children, summer employment for teenagers. Many of the other programs, however, focused largely on community organizing itself, which was a new conception, and the trend within OEDC clearly favored organizing over the provision of conventional services. All of the programs provided jobs in the neighborhoods, among people who would otherwise be unemployed, if not unemployable. They also provided invaluable experience in the initiation and administration of relatively complex enterprises.

It is probable—although it cannot be proven by any measure—that the energy consumed by anti-poverty projects contributed during this period to the stability of Oakland's minority neighborhoods. Unlike poor blacks in many other cities, Oakland's were not rioting. But, as this energy was diverted increasingly into organizing, city hall quite rightly perceived the trend as a threat to the political status quo.

The new administration of Oakland faced this threat with inflexibility. In 1965, the city council replaced Mayor John C. Houlihan, who had been indicted on an embezzlement charge, with John H. Reading, a former army officer and small businessman. At about the same time, Wayne Thompson was replaced as city manager by Jerome Keithley. In contrast to Thompson's sympathy for the anti-poverty program and Houlihan's frequent willingness to compromise with it, Reading and Keithley were traditional conservatives, who were openly hostile to the demands of the poor for a share of power.

Reading presented his beliefs to California's governor and senators, the Bay Area congressmen, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and any number of Federal officials. In testimony before a U.S. Senate subcommittee he said, "There is no city agency to serve 'the rich' or to represent 'whites.' But by government policy we now have a commission of the poor . . . Charges have been made that we used to have a 'white power structure' made up of the wealthy elite, but that does not justify setting up a whole new government, for example, of poor Negroes."

By the time Reading and Keithley replaced Houlihan and Thompson, Oakland did have one

unit of government in which there was black representation. It was the Oakland Redevelopment Agency, an anomalous bureaucracy in that—despite its close relationship to the politics of Oakland's growth—its funding came from Washington and its policy-making from a board that was independent of city administration.

In the early 1960's, the Redevelopment Agency board, which represented a much more diverse constituency than the city council, chose as its executive director a highly talented black architect and city planner from Cleveland named John B. Williams. The city government had relatively little influence in this selection.

In the ensuing years, Williams was credited with providing excellent leadership and fine technical direction to Oakland's urban renewal efforts. He was, however, forever squabbling with the city government. Part of the squabbling might be attributed to predictable bureaucratic rivalries, but another part, at least as significant, certainly flowed from Williams' sensitivity to the needs and desires of Oakland's blacks.

Throughout these years, Williams was probably the only senior public official in Oakland who retained the confidence of the city's minority groups, and he was skillful enough to do it without forfeiting the esteem of the business community. But he was never an "insider" in Oakland's governing structure, which sought relentlessly to absorb his powers into its domain.

Indeed, one need not agree with the conclusions which Reading presented to the Senate subcommittee to recognize that his analysis of Oakland's problems contained much validity.

But many of Oakland's most thoughtful blacks believed the existence of a 'white power structure' *did* justify setting up, if not a 'whole new government,' then at least a set of black institutions that could compete in society on relatively even terms. In regard to this ideology, they differed fundamentally from both the mainstream civil rights leadership of the time, whose objective was racial integration into a white-dominated society and the militants of nearby Berkeley, who preached a kind of separatist socialist revolution.

"My head was in Afro-American black institution-building," said Paul Cobb, one of the dynamic young leaders who emerged out of the Oakland anti-poverty program. "I went to Selma in 1965 and got a chance to sit down and talk to

Martin Luther King and John Lewis and a lot of those people. I said to myself, those cats are serious about forcing white people to like them. I thought it was childish to beg white people to let us sit down next to them, when we could use that organizational ability to amass money and build our own institutions.

"As for Berkeley, it didn't square with the philosophical notions I had. If your own people don't understand you when you call them a lumpen proletariat, then you better change your language. I admired them, but the reason I couldn't get involved with those left-wing jive socialists was because what the hell would I look like walking into a black community marketing socialism? I guess you could call me a right-wing nationalist in those days. I'd rather set up a black restaurant or a black bank."

Again and again, the anti-poverty program in Oakland demonstrated that it had involved people who had a clear idea of such objectives and had acquired the political skills to achieve them. In 1966 and 1967, OEDC engaged in two bitter power struggles with the city council, one to control a Federal employment program and the other a string of neighborhood service centers, and in both cases OEDC won. To be sure, the city council persistently thwarted OEDC's efforts to establish some sort of civil review mechanism over the Oakland police, but it is agreed that even in defeat the poor had shown enough power to reduce significantly abusive police practices.

More upsetting to the politicians than these confrontations, however, was the establishment by anti-poverty workers of the Oakland Black Caucus, a body whose proclaimed purpose was to diminish, if not to end, white middle-class dominance over city affairs. The shadow of the Oakland Black Caucus, natural offspring of the OEDC, chilled whatever sympathetic sentiments remained toward the anti-poverty program on the part of the city's politicians.

Within this atmosphere of mutual recrimination, both the city council and the OEDC leadership actively considered divorcing the anti-poverty program from the municipal administration. As long as Norvel Smith remained director, however, neither side seemed prepared to make the break. Both Mayor Reading and the black professionals who dominated the OEDC board were apparently sincere in believing that the eco-

nomic well-being of Oakland's poor could best be served by mutual cooperation. Yet both sides obviously recognized the political strain, and prepared to end the relationship only when it ceased serving their purposes.

Then in June, 1967, Smith announced that he was resigning to take a Federal appointment as deputy director of the OEO's western region, and the selection of his successor immediately became a subject of bitter contention. The city insisted on the right to fill the post, which it listed as director of the Department of Human Resources, through standard civil service procedures, the anti-poverty leadership insisted that the power to choose belonged to OEDC since the post involved was its executive director.

Interestingly, neither side made reference to the "Green amendment," which Congress had recently enacted to guarantee administrative control over the anti-poverty agencies to those city governments which did not have jurisdiction over them. In fact, in contrast to the spirit of the Green amendment, OEO indicated to the OEDC board that it had no objection to the administrative autonomy for the anti-poverty agency and the Ford Foundation followed OEO's lead.

By the end of the summer the crisis had reached a head, when City Manager Keithley refused flatly to appoint the OEDC board's choice for director. Mayor Reading made a last minute effort to avoid the schism, but OEDC prepared its papers of incorporation and seceded, to operate independently under the name OEDC Inc. (OEDCI). The city responded with ill grace, delaying as long as possible the transfer of the anti-poverty funds it held in the municipal treasury to the new corporation and refusing to authorize continuation of any of the meager in-kind services it had once provided.

The man to whom the city took such strong objection was, in contrast to the eminently approachable and always reasonable Norvel Smith, a dynamic personality, toughened by years in the trade union movement in San Francisco, and committed to building black institutions through confrontation with white ones. A black in his 40's, his name was Percy Moore and, although unknown when the search began, "he came on strong with a sales pitch about the powerlessness of the poor," according to Paul Cobb, a member of the selection committee, "and he introduced a

whole third world rhetoric around organization.”

What the choice of Percy Moore says is that, in the few years of the war on poverty, Oakland's black leadership had adopted an ambitious new agenda. The “black power” slogan was in the air, and black people were acquiring a sense of their strength. Organizing and mobilizing themselves around anti-poverty projects, Oakland's black poor had come to exercise vast new powers. Moore was a militant, but he was no sloganeering demagogue. As it turned out, he overestimated the strength of Oakland's blacks. But his responsibility, as he saw it, was to exploit the shift in power from whites to blacks, and to accelerate its momentum through relentless confrontation with the city administration. Strife inevitably followed.

The Federal government's Model Cities program provided Moore with an immediate opportunity to try out his strategy.⁶ At the end of 1966, before the Model Cities legislation was even passed, Mayor Reading had formed a task force to “pre-plan” Oakland's application for funds. His assumption, at this stage, was that OEDC would represent the poor, including the poor of West Oakland, the neighborhood envisaged for the program. Norvel Smith was then named to the task of finding membership. The Model Cities structure which the task force recommended provided that OEDC would be the operating agency for the city, and that citizen participation requirements be satisfied by consultations with OEDC's neighborhood advisory committees in the West Oakland area.

The pattern chosen by the task force emerged, in large measure, from a desire to restore some harmony between the city and the black community, which were at that moment locked in conflict over control of the employment and neighborhood centers programs. Smith seemed to approve of having the OEDC act as a buffer between the city administration and the citizens, and of limiting the citizens committees to an advocacy rather than an operational, role.

The black community leaders, however, while recognizing OEDC as their champion, were not prepared to let OEDC assume the decision making prerogatives of the neighborhoods. Significantly, it was HUD, having caught a glimpse of the task force recommendations, that suggested further citizen participation, both in

planning and in structure, although the Model Cities statute was much more vague than the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 on the “maximum feasible participation” question. Predictably, OEO backed HUD. About that time, Moore took over from Norvel Smith and prepared to take advantage of the opening provided by the Federal agencies to fight for an entirely different kind of administration of Model Cities.

“Acceptance of Model Cities by any black community,” Percy Moore wrote while the dispute raged, “should be premised upon the opportunity to permanently alter traditional relationships to the advantage of the black community. There is no point to building a model neighborhood for black people which does not include building in the influence and power required to sustain and maintain it. . . Citizen participation in Model Cities must, therefore, be such as to increase the potential for permanently ending the public neglect of black communities by enhancing the power of such communities in their relationships with city hall. Participation must mean effective control of the Model Cities process by residents living in the model neighborhood. . . To the community organizer, Model Cities is only important to the extent that it builds men and women into organizations competent to take and hold power.”

Anxious to resolve the organizational deadlock, HUD on November 27, 1967, called a meeting from which Keithley tried to rather clumsily exclude the new OEDC director. Not only did Moore appear, however, but so did 40 or 50 neighborhood residents to serve as his clique. HUD's report described the meeting as angry, but predicted it would be healthy in the long run.

Moore set his terms from the start in declaring that the West Oakland people “are talking not so much about participating as control.” Keithley answered that, even if he wanted to, the city council had not authorized him to bargain away control. Satisfying no one, a HUD spokesman pointed out to Moore, on the one hand, that Federal law required the city to retain ultimate

6. Much of the detail on the struggle for control of the Model Cities program has been drawn from *An Analysis of Federal Decision-Making and Impact: The Federal Government in Oakland, Vol. II*. Prepared by the “Oakland Task Force, San Francisco Federal Executive Board,” the volume was published by the Department of Commerce in August, 1968, and is now extremely hard to find.

control of the Model Cities program, and to Keithley, on the other, that HUD was unlikely to approve a Model Cities application without an organizational structure satisfactory to the neighborhood residents. At this point, according to HUD, Keithley turned to Moore to ask that OEDC "give leadership to developing a plan for the kind of citizen involvement which would be acceptable to neighborhood residents."

The next day, Moore addressed an open meeting in West Oakland in which he combined some fiery rhetoric with some solid proposals for a community bargaining position. On the basis of the *Oakland Tribune's* account of the meeting, the OEO regional office protested his caustic comments, lamenting the possibility that they might polarize the city.

Moore acknowledged the polarizing impact of his remarks and defended it. "I intend that the representatives of the black community and the poor in West Oakland," he responded, "approach that situation with a strong bargaining position with hat on head and not in hand. That kind of stance may be shocking to you and other powerful government officials, but it seems to be the only way in which dignity and respect of both parties can be maximized. . . ."

Moore then proceeded to reorganize West Oakland in preparation for the contest. To the dismay of some OEDC board members, he sent OEDC staff employees, most notably the indefatigable Paul Cobb, into West Oakland, where the strongest citizens organization was the neighborhood committee set up by OEDC. Cobb helped to form a new body, more widely representative than the old one, called the West Oakland Planning Committee (WOPC).

WOPC was organized on a rather unique principle, unconventional in a society accustomed to majoritarian elections, but ingeniously democratic. Any organization of at least ten members operating in West Oakland was invited to join. Political, religious, social, economic, and professional groups, varying from bowling clubs and baby-sitting coops to dental societies, were equally eligible. At the first meeting in December, 1967, membership had risen to one hundred sixty-five. In contrast to the anti-poverty bodies selected in sparsely patronized community elections, the West Oakland Planning Committee could convincingly claim to represent the full

spectrum of the neighborhood. It proved to be a sturdy force in negotiating with the city.

Once the bargaining resumed in January, 1968, the earlier plan to make OEDC the operating agency was, by mutual consent, no longer in the running. What was now involved, beneath the angry debate that raged over questions which often seemed trivially bureaucratic, was the very conception of Model Cities.

The dominant force within WOPC, influenced even more by the subtle mind of Paul Cobb than by the theorizing of Percy Moore, envisioned a form of community government, a kind of black separatism, an embodiment of neighborhood sovereignty. In contrast, all the city asked for was administrative assurance of reasonably efficient expenditure of funds. City hall knew it had to concede some variation of partnership to WOPC, but reasoned that if it retained ultimate financial responsibility, it was likely to decide the major policy issues.

In the ensuing weeks the two sides argued intensely over the role of the city manager in the Model Cities structure. Much of the debate can be attributed to the perception Oakland's blacks had that Jerome Keithley was hostile to them. More important than the personal factor, however, WOPC wanted to deal directly with the city council, rather than the city manager, because it considered itself a political, and not an administrative, entity.

One might speculate on how different the debate might have proceeded had West Oakland thought of itself as being represented on the city council. But West Oakland's councilman was Chinese, not black, and lived in the tiny enclave of Chinatown. As a practical matter, he had no contact at all with the black majority in his district. As WOPC saw its mission, it was to wrest control of a black neighborhood from the hands of a white political structure—represented in this instance by a Chinese-American—that was indifferent to its well-being.

Specifically, what WOPC demanded was the dominant power not only over the anticipated \$5 million block grant from the Model Cities program, it also sought preponderance over the policies of the service programs run in West Oakland by many of the city agencies. Furthermore, it asked for the final word on the operation of Federal programs as they affected West Oakland,

including those under the jurisdiction of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the U.S. Department of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Health, Education, and Welfare Department, and the Economic Development Administration.

Behind this quest for power was the logic of the Model Cities concept, which sought to coordinate all of the government services going into a neighborhood, rather than have their effectiveness impaired by planlessness. But, while the city finally conceded WOPC's authority over the Model Cities money, it was not willing to extend this authority over other municipal services provided West Oakland and, although the Federal agencies were more equivocal in word, they were no more acquiescent in practice. Without this authority, WOPC could not function as a neighborhood government and as the struggle proceeded, it became clear that this was a hopeless battle. So WOPC withdrew its ambitious demands.

WOPC made one further effort to extend its power, in this instance geographically. The city, in its early planning, had included in its Model Cities proposal the downtown redevelopment area, which is adjacent to West Oakland, in the hope thereby of obtaining more Federal funds. Some versions of its plans also included the Port of Oakland, which is not administered by the city government at all but by an autonomous commission. As soon as it became clear, however, that the city's control over the Model Cities program would at best be tenuous, city hall sought to strike the downtown area, as well as the port.

WOPC fought to the end to hold on to them. The motives went beyond simply extending its empire. To Oakland's blacks, the downtown and the port were the two great symbols of white economic dominance, where Oakland's economic activity was most intense, where the profits and the jobs were. It was from these that blacks were most conspicuously excluded.

As Ralph Williams, the elected chairman of WOPC, said at one meeting when asked why the port was so important, "We know as well as we know anything, that looking up and down the exclusive spots, the only black man we see is baking the biscuits in a kitchen. We like to fish, some of us have a little boat, we might even like to own a little business down there. We're tired of

the rich taking all this, and hiring us to be the busboy or chauffeur."

Remarks like these were about as close as the contest between WOPC and the city came to openly acknowledged class warfare. Some would say that, when all the talk about institutions and power was cleared away, this is what the struggle was all about. But, whatever the interpretation, the government of Oakland left no doubt that it would abandon Model Cities before it would compromise jurisdiction over the downtown and the port. Faced with this reality, WOPC withdrew this demand, too.

In view of the lost time and the agony of angry encounters, perhaps some explanation is required of the city's willingness to persist in the negotiations. One reason was certainly the unremitting pressure for a settlement applied by Melvin Mogulof, who had changed jobs from western representative of OEO to western representative of HUD. Mogulof officially committed HUD to the principle that the Model Cities program must be largely an undertaking of the people of West Oakland.

But it should not be forgotten that this was an era of pervasive fear that, at any time, the black community could "blow" if the white power structure became careless. This fear became more acute after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Washington riots in April, 1968. Fear of civil disorder was a major incentive for not giving up on the negotiations.

Indeed, Oakland did not blow, either before or after King's death, despite radicals like the Black Panthers and demonstrations and what seemed on a few occasions like very close calls. Justly or not, much credit for keeping the black neighborhoods "cool" was claimed by the network of street workers set up under the Oakland anti-poverty program. The city did not treat that claim lightly, and saw Model Cities, whatever the price it had to pay, as a means of strengthening the social stabilizers, and thereby contributing to the tranquillity it considered essential to Oakland's overall economic growth. A collapse of the Model Cities program was recognized as the kind of provocation that could set off city-wide disorders.

Agreement between the two sides was finally reached in mid-1968, and signed in August, after several HUD deadlines had passed and the better part of a year's work was lost. Under the agree-

ment the West Oakland Planning Committee, to be sure, did not become a sovereign power within its boundaries, but it probably won more than its leaders anticipated when the hassling started. The agreement reaffirmed the ultimate financial responsibility of the city council for the Model Cities program, as well as the administrative responsibility of the city manager. But it established the pre-eminence of WOPC at the various steps along the way at which policy is effectively made.

WOPC was to have a majority on the various joint committees charged with doing the Model Cities planning. It was to have the dominant voice in the selection of the Model Cities director, though he was officially a city employee. It was to have its own professional staff, to share in both preparing the initial HUD application and in the design of subsequent programming. Most important, it was to run the day-to-day Model Cities operations, which meant it could spend the anticipated \$5 million in HUD funds in whatever way it deemed best, including community organizing and the "leveraging" of Federal, city, and private funds into projects of its choice. This may not have been sovereignty, but it appeared to be the bones, as well as some of the flesh, of genuine neighborhood government.

Ideally, signature of the agreement should have opened an era of cooperation between the city government and West Oakland but, in reality, nothing like that happened. Perhaps harmony was too much to expect after the seemingly endless months of mutual outrage. But there was more involved than history.

City officials, anticipating an imminent shift of administrations in Washington, foresaw the establishment of new priorities by a Republican White House, and the disappearance from HUD of the kind of thinking that provided backbone for WOPC. Furthermore, they knew they had an ally in California's conservative governor, Ronald Reagan, who had even less rapport with blacks than the Oakland City Council, and who was likely to have considerable influence in a Republican Washington. So whatever city hall gave WOPC, it gave grudgingly, foreseeing correctly the approaching day when the Federal government would require it to give almost nothing at all.

Only one defeat was required to convince the city government that cooperation with WOPC—at least on terms it considered satisfactory—was

hopeless. As Model Cities director, the city manager wanted to appoint Norman Lind, the chief of city planning, who is white. WOPC's choice was Maurice Dawson, a black architect who had worked for the previous four and a half years for the Kaiser Cement and Gypsum Co. in Oakland.

Dawson was objectionable to the city not because of his background, which was quite acceptable, or even his membership in the Afro-American Association, a black consciousness group to which such prominent young leaders as Norvel Smith, Paul Cobb, Ron Dellums, and even Bobby Seale and Huey Newton of the Black Panthers, had at one time or another belonged. Dawson was *persona non grata* to the city because he was treasurer of the Oakland Black Caucus, the political group dedicated to overthrowing the city's established leadership. This leadership was not so naive that it believed it could keep WOPC non-political; Paul Cobb, a stalwart of the Black Caucus, was already WOPC's executive director. But, while the West Oakland community considered it legitimate to insist on a Model Cities director with a strong sense of black identity, Oakland's ruling politicians regarded it as foolhardy to admit a Trojan horse into the city's administrative deliberations.

Dawson finally got the appointment, but the city solved the dilemma of his potentially conflicting loyalty by cutting him loose. The offices assigned to him and his staff were not in city hall, nor even in some neutral site, which is what he requested. They were in the neighborhood office of WOPC, so there could scarcely be any mistaking to whom he owed his principal loyalty.

"When I got the job," Dawson said in an interview, "I was in effect given an invisible rope and told, 'Go hang yourself, because city hall is not going to give any support to the program.'" The WOPC people rather liked the ready access they had to Dawson but, without regular access to the city manager, Dawson soon perceived that he was without influence to bring the city's resources into West Oakland.

"Because the city manager didn't want to deal with us, and specifically with me," he said, "he was saying 'Whatever happens out there with that program is okay—good, bad or indifferent; we simply don't give a damn.' They were practicing benign neglect. It hurt the program. Without the city working with us, it took at least 12

months, if not 18, to hammer out what should have taken a month."

Yet, despite the obstacles, the Model Cities program in West Oakland survived, and some might say that for a while it even thrived. In the first year, 1969-70, WOPC received its anticipated Federal grant of \$4.9 million, and in the second year it received the same. By 1971-72, when the Nixon administration began seriously reducing housing expenditures, the allotment had been cut to \$3 million. Then, with the passage of new legislation, a final \$900,000 was allocated to phase the program out of existence by the end of 1974. Many people in Oakland who watched the WOPC say it was cut down just as it was beginning to reach its stride. The Model Cities idea, they say, might have proven a grand success, if only it had been tried.

Some contend, of course, that it was tried to excess, that Model Cities was an experiment which failed grievously. One of those who holds that opinion is Cecil S. Riley, a long-time municipal employee who in 1972 was named city manager, after Jerome Keithley went off to take a job in a more tranquil locale. Asked in an interview whether he thought Model Cities, with its intrinsic components of comprehensivity and citizen participation, was an untenable idea, he answered:

"I do. I most sincerely do. I think that had we been permitted to use the dollars within the framework of traditional city government, we could have delivered a far better product, a much more tangible one. It's very difficult to go and find the evidence of the millions and millions of dollars that have come to Oakland. They're there, but they're very intangible, and I'm not really in a position to gauge what it has meant to individual beneficiaries. I just can't. . .

"But to be very candid with you, in the main I feel that citizen participation has slowed the progress that we have achieved and, perhaps, has resulted in the minimizing of some of the success that we could have achieved. . .

"If we had been able to use Model Cities funds in the early days for community betterment, we could have gone in and built curbs and gutters and better streets and planted trees. I feel that would have been a better beginning than going into planning and things like that, and all these socially oriented programs."

Wilfred Lee, the executive director of WOPC, is willing to challenge Riley on Riley's own terms. So is Maurice Dawson. "We've put in some capital improvements within the West Oakland community," Dawson argued, "that the city of Oakland has neglected for over half a century, and never would have done if the Model Cities program hadn't been there."

Curbs and gutters are among them. So are improvements on the sewerage network, to enable many of the old houses in the neighborhood to come up to the code standards. Other tangible results were experimental programs to rehabilitate dilapidated housing and build new single-family detached homes, both of which were of modest scale but reasonably successful. Dawson says, in fact, that Model Cities was able to bring \$1.7 million in new housing into West Oakland, largely by negotiating an end of red-lining with twenty-two of the city's savings and loan associations.

"Social service programs that we ventured off into," Lee said, "ranged from child care to methadone maintenance programs to help the addicts. As you know, West Oakland was one of the major areas that had a considerable amount of drug traffic in it. At the point we started the program in 1969, we developed a methadone maintenance program with a doctor at the West Oakland health center, and we took one hundred addicts off the street and put them in the program. Now that program is up to 300 addicts a year. And we have had a marked improvement in our relationship with the police, where they don't bug the patients and try to come down and bust them and that type of thing.

"In fact, one social program we developed was a police relations program, where we took twenty model neighborhood residents with high school or equivalent education and put them into the police academy, and now they're police officers with the same status as any police officer in the city of Oakland. This type of relationship came about by working with the police department, and with the people. We were trying to improve that kind of relationship."

Lee says that, at the height of Model Cities activity, some twenty-six social service projects were operating, focusing across the gamut from infants to child care to teenage employment to senior citizens. Some of the programs worked

extremely well. Methadone maintenance, for example, was funded by the county board of supervisors in 1974 so it could continue after Model Cities itself died out.

Others of the programs, of course, failed, some through bungling. If it were related in dollar terms, Dawson estimates that Model Cities wasted "about \$1.5 million, maybe a maximum of \$2 million in finding ourselves." Much of this money could have been saved, Dawson insists, if the program had received some administrative and technical assistance from the city. "What I am saying," he argued, "is that it cost about \$2 million for us to re-invent the wheel." He said the rate of loss diminished tremendously as the Model Cities leadership learned the techniques of their jobs.

But the dividend the West Oakland community received from the Model Cities expenditures, even after \$2 million is written off for blundering, cannot be measured in terms of curbs built, or even addicts saved. Consider Wilfred Lee's description of the experiences West Oakland residents had, experiences that would be inconceivable in any other framework:

"As you know, WOPC was responsible for citizen participation. Our contract indicated that we would select the program, then be responsible for seeing that those programs got put together properly, then got contracted out to some agency for execution. If there was no agency available to do it, we had to create one. We had to insure that the people in the model neighborhood area got involved in creating that agency.

"We created several agencies to operate programs we wanted. In fact, we created three boards of directors in West Oakland, one for social service corporation, one for an economic development corporation, and one for a housing development corporation. Each of those boards had fifteen members, five appointed by the mayor and ten by WOPC, five from the community and five from the city at-large.

"Here's how it worked, from the beginning: WOPC was responsible for calling study committees together. These study committees consisted of model neighborhood residents and city department heads, and any other interested people who wanted to attend. Only model neighborhood residents would be paid a \$10 stipend to participate. We felt we had to pay them a stipend,

because a lot of them had to pay a baby-sitter or what-not to come out and participate, and it was a HUD allowable item. So the study committees came up with the type of program that was relevant and beneficial.

"Once those projects were identified—say we needed better child care service—then we looked for the most logical place to locate it, in the center of the model neighborhood area or on the periphery. Once the study committee drew up the plans, they had to get them approved by a policy committee, consisting of members of WOPC and all the city department heads. Once the ends were tied together, then it was sent to the city council for approval. Once it had HUD approval it came back to the city and we would contract it out to whomever we identified as responsible for it.

"In the case of child care facilities, we had had a program but it was limited. We simply contracted the new project out to the existent group. It was easier to gear up a project from one that already existed than to create a new agency to do it. We found that in creating agencies it took about 18 months to get all the fiscal matters in order and get it operating, because HUD required a lot of fiscal data on each one of the projects, the monitoring of it and insuring that it had accountability. So with a program that was already existent, we just tied into it and strengthened it.

"If the city had had relevant programs that were operative, we would have tied into them. It would have benefited the city, because the money would have stayed with the city departments. But the city wasn't offering many social services, so we had to go out and provide these things on our own."

Observers may honestly differ over whether this kind of experience in the management of affairs, offered to the poor in both the Model Cities and anti-poverty programs, represented the best way of utilizing Federal resources to deal with the urban economic problems of the 1960's. But it is probably accurate to say that whether they were the best way or not had little to do with their ultimate fate. After the inauguration in 1969 of a conservative Republican administration, beholden in no way to the votes of either the poor or the black, the days of both these Great Society programs were numbered.

One might conjecture whether these programs might have survived had they not become a factor

in local politics. But, by its very nature, citizen participation has inevitable political ramifications. It is supposed to. In a strict partisan sense, the West Oakland Planning Committee, despite the conflict of forces that accompanied its founding, actually proved relatively non-political. The OEDC staff, administering the anti-poverty program, was much more active than the Model Cities staff in stimulating political consciousness among the poor. Its mistake may have been in extending its efforts beyond the boundaries of Oakland into other areas of California.

“What we did was have everybody on the staff commit a percentage of their paycheck,” said Percy Moore, the OEDC director. “We raised money that way to support the Oakland Black Caucus and the Chavez farm movement in the valley and the Indians throughout the state.” As if the anti-poverty program did not have enough trouble with Oakland’s mayor and city council, Moore’s statewide involvement put it in direct confrontation with Governor Reagan.

Reagan could scarcely have been expected to retreat from the challenge. He had the legal authority, as governor, to abolish local anti-poverty programs in his state by veto, and he had used it more often than any governor in the country. By 1972, the danger that Oakland, or any other American city, might “blow” seemed to have vanished, although no one knew quite why. The chief incentive for conservatives to preserve the anti-poverty program was now gone.

Twice Reagan vetoed Oakland’s anti-poverty grant. The first time Moore, by lobbying resourcefully in Sacramento, succeeded in mobilizing enough political and public pressure to have OEO in Washington override the governor. The second time Moore failed, and OEDCI passed from the scene, its remaining programs left to languish in the hands of city hall.

That Moore stretched the power of Oakland’s poor until it broke is conceded by even his fierce admirers, and they remain numerous in the black community. Yet, while acknowledging miscalculation, few supporters of the poor would say that this power should not have been used. Certainly no one would argue desistance would have saved either the Model Cities or the anti-poverty program. Insofar as both sought to shift power to the powerless, the support of the Federal government against the locally powerful was absolutely essen-

tial to their survival.

Moore’s political gestures—in contrast to his effective management of the OEDCI program structure—may have had a kamikaze quality to them. But if the Model Cities and anti-poverty programs had withstood eight years of conservative Republican government in Washington, their survival would surely have proven only that, in the eyes of their adversaries, they were essentially as innocuous as the many welfare efforts that had preceded them.

Still, there was no turning back the political dynamism that the Model Cities and anti-poverty programs had generated. By the local election of 1969, the Oakland Black Caucus had prepared the machinery for a significant challenge to the mayor, and the black electorate was apparently primed. The candidate who had over the course of many months been groomed for the race was Donald P. McCullum, a highly regarded black lawyer who was president of the Oakland chapter of the NAACP and council for OEDCI. At the last minute, however, McCullum withdrew for family reasons, throwing plans into disarray. He was replaced by Larry Joyner, director of the East Oakland-Fruitvale Planning Council, which was the “shadow” counterpart of WOPC funded by OEDCI, on the non-Model Cities east side of town. Joyner, a serious but unexciting man, conducted a drab campaign, yet won more than a third of the vote.

Subsequently, the city council refused to endorse Joyner’s application for a HUD grant for East Oakland, and Mayor Reading persuaded Governor Reagan to suppress further funding of the East Oakland-Fruitvale Planning Council by OEDCI. Clearly, the Oakland political establishment was saying that it intended to play tough with any individual, as well as his supporters, who had the audacity to try to undermine the status quo.

The following year, the Black Caucus enjoyed its first break-through, in the congressional district which comprised Berkeley and parts of Oakland. Its candidate was Ronald Dellums, a black social worker and native Oaklander who had belonged to the same Afro-American Association which spawned Norvel Smith and Paul Cobb. Dellums had spent most of his professional career in various anti-poverty projects on the San Francisco side of the Bay, and had served on the Berkeley

City Council since 1967. Dellums' opponent was no rock-ribbed conservative but a moderately liberal white who had alienated much of his constituency by supporting President Johnson on the Vietnam war. Dellums challenged Jeffrey Coehlan in the Democratic primary, and won with 55 per cent of the vote. In the general election, he easily defeated his Republican opponent.

The campaign which the Oakland Black Caucus put on showed it could mobilize support and win, but the congressional district was quite different in composition from Oakland. Dellums' constituency had a majority of black and Chicano voters, as well as a substantial component of sympathetic whites. A candidate for the Oakland city council, running at-large, actually faced more voters, and a majority of them had a history of supporting the conservative political establishment.

In the Oakland councilmanic election of 1971, Paul Cobb ran for the seat which represented West Oakland, where he was born and raised. Only twenty-six years old, Cobb already had years of experience in the politics of the anti-poverty and Model Cities program. Though a constant irritant to the Mayor and his associates, he was actually deeply committed to the political system.

"I successfully played down my militant reputation," Cobb said, "and was out there talking about Oakland's being a world trade center, and the second largest containerized cargo port in the world. I wore a necktie, and appeared before the Chamber of Commerce, and became a member of the Retail Merchants Advisory Committee. I had labor union support, all the statewide black elected officials, all the black Baptist churches. If you looked at my campaign literature, you'd think I was at least a semi-establishment candidate."

The Black Caucus that year tried to build a minority coalition and, in addition to Cobb, supported a Hawaiian woman, a Chinese Republican, and a Chicano. To his dismay, Cobb says, he was publicly endorsed in the last week of the campaign by the Black Panthers, a small faction of blacks with a reputation for violence. Councilman Raymond Eng, Cobb's opponent, generously disseminated this endorsement throughout the city.

On election day, Cobb won 98 per cent of the vote in West Oakland, 95 per cent of the black vote citywide. But it was not enough. Eng, friend

and ally of Mayor Reading, won almost all of the white votes, and was re-elected by a margin of 3,000 out of 109,000 votes cast.

By the election of 1973, the Black Caucus was in serious disrepair. The anti-poverty program was now in the hands of city hall, and Percy Moore had left town. So had Paul Cobb, first to work on the McGovern presidential campaign, then to take a job in Atlanta promoting the election of black candidates nationwide. Because there was no central organizational force, several black candidates filed for the primary to run against the Mayor, but for reasons no one in Oakland quite understands none came from the mainstream of black leadership. The winner in the primary was Bobby Seale, the celebrated Black Panther chief.

For the general election campaign, Seale abandoned his black beret and leather jacket, and ran as a serious candidate much as Cobb had two years earlier. It was not astonishing that Seale lost, since Oakland's black community had never shown much sympathy for the violent fringe of the protest movement. But, as Cobb said, "If black folk have no other option, they'll vote for a black Republican or a black militant. In Oakland, they cannot vote for Reading." Bobby Seale came closer to winning than anyone ever anticipated, getting 48 per cent of the votes.

The election of 1973, however, turned out to be less significant for the narrow defeat of Bobby Seale for mayor than for the smashing victory of Joe Coto for the city council. Coto, a professional school administrator, had long been active in church and political organizations, as well as in anti-poverty projects, in his home district of East Oakland. A soft-spoken man, he conveys an inner fire in public speeches and private conversation. In unseating incumbent Councilman Paul Brom, Coto became the first anti-establishment candidate to win election to a city office in modern memory. What some observers found astonishing is that Coto is not black but a Chicano. Here is how he describes his winning effort:

"There were two of us who were running against Brom. The other candidate was a black man from East Oakland by the name of Carter Gilman. We were both running to prevent the incumbent from receiving 51 per cent of the vote, and the two of us had agreed early that if either of

us made it into the run-off, then we would support the other.

"I started running in early January for the April 15th primary. When you run for four and a half months, every day and night, you go to all the candidates nights, all the factories in the morning, welcome the workers when they're coming in, stand outside the supermarkets, have people leafleting on week-ends in churches and supermarkets, have people walking precincts, putting up signs in buses, mailing out a couple of pieces to residents.

"Paul Brom never did anything. He didn't make any of the candidates nights, didn't make any presentations, refused to appear on television. Then, ten days before the election, the *Tribune* comes out and endorses Brom. It didn't give any reasons, but every day for ten days the city's voters pick up the newspaper and there's his name on the front page. So all of the things I did to get name identification and visibility are counteracted by the newspaper. When the votes were counted, he received 44,000, and I only received 35,000, so he beat us without doing anything. But he didn't get a majority, so there was a run-off.

"After Gilman endorsed me, we had a good coalition going, more than Paul Cobb did in 1971. We had strong black involvement. I had worked with many community-based organizations, in manpower and youth programs, and I had established good relations with the key people in the black community, so it wasn't difficult to coalesce. We had Filipino involvement, Japanese involvement, Caucasian involvement. I was endorsed by the Central Labor Council, and some of the individual unions, which are interested in having a pro-labor council, though outside the leadership I sense that the working class vote is concerned about a 'minority take-over.' And, of course, we had Chicano involvement, which brought in about 10,000 votes.

"I was the first Chicano elected in a major race in northern California. The victory was really a coalition of ethnic groups, and we won 65,000 to 52,000. With that kind of victory, you can maintain an organization, and it's easier to assist other candidates who come after trying to do the same thing."

One of the remarkable elements in Coto's victory was his ability to unite black and Chicano voters. Throughout California the black and

Chicano communities, although both feel alienated from white society, have often been at each other's throats. In Oakland, blacks frequently took the position that Chicanos were unwilling to do the hard work of community organizing, and sided with conservative white politicians when it was expedient. Chicanos said that the anti-poverty program was run as a black fiefdom from which they were excluded, or else they had to tailor their programs along models established by and for blacks. They found Percy Moore particularly provocative, in failing to describe his constituency as "black and brown" or "the poor" but rather as "blacks."

Both sides had substance to their complaints but both knew that, unless they could create a coalition, they would continue to be political outsiders. The figures on Chicano voting strength are uncertain. Coto sets it at about 8 or 9 per cent, Cobb at about 4 or 5 per cent. But it is the margin between victory and defeat, and Coto was the first politician in Oakland to get it, and the black vote, too.

Coto thinks the way is now clear, as terms of office expire, for a minority coalition to begin taking over council seats. Coto recognizes the basic unfairness of the at-large electoral system and believes that ward elections would assure much better representation. Ironically, the at-large system is considered likely to seal the doom of the very politicians who, to preserve white majority dominance, fought so hard to retain it. No one in Oakland doubts that the day of a new popular majority is almost at hand. Most observers foresee that Oakland will be run chiefly by blacks by 1981; some say 1977. A black will certainly run for mayor in 1977, whether or not John Reading keeps his pledge to retire, but so will Joe Coto. Past performance suggests that the race will be very close, but Coto has the advantage of showing he knows how to break a winning coalition and to keep it intact at least until the polls close.

The anti-poverty and Model Cities programs have thus left their legacy in Oakland but, dead as they may be, there remains at least a breath of life in the idea that animated them. The same citizens groups that in their heyday fought city hall for power under the Great Society aegis have switched to arguing for the right to be heard under the new Community Development and

Housing Act of 1974, which superseded the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs. Here is how the *Oakland Tribune* on September 15, 1974, described the clash of forces.

"Community development—the latest catch phrase for where it's at in Oakland these days, especially politically—will get its first official airing before the city council next Tuesday afternoon.

"The term refers to the Community Development and Housing Act of 1974, legislation recently signed by President Ford which will send lump sums to the cities in place of previous categorical grants for activities such as redevelopment, Model Cities, and water, sewer, and open space projects.

"The idea is to give local jurisdictions more flexibility in how they spend Federal funds to improve the quality of life in urban areas.

"But the issue of community development is coming to mean much more in Oakland. There are those who believe that the method the city council adopts for the administration and expenditure of those funds—possibly some \$36 million over the next three years—will greatly affect the course of local government and who runs it.

"Bound up in the issue is the fact that many of the programs affected by community development are ones which operate in poor and minority communities where there is the most obvious need for improvements. And several representatives of those groups have contended that community development may be the vehicle for more political power in the affairs of city government. . .

"Of course the crux of the issue before the city council is the most effective way to spend community development funds to improve conditions in the city. . .

"City Manager Cecil Riley is expected to strongly recommend that the city council retain its jurisdiction and authority over community development and that the operation of the program remain within city hall."

Though the game is much the same as it was, however, the stakes are far different. No more does citizen participation, as Percy Moore would put it, mean control. Nothing in this act contemplates the kind of involvement which allowed poor people to devise and operate their own programs in their own communities.

Under this act, poor people will not be beckoned to acquire an enhanced sense of themselves by exercising responsibility over the destiny of themselves and their neighbors. Under this act, no new leaders will emerge from neighborhoods where most people look upon themselves not simply as the followers of life but the beaten. In the 1960's, young men like Paul Cobb and Ron Dellums were coming out of such neighborhoods, to serve apprenticeships under the anti-poverty or Model Cities programs, and go on to significant accomplishments elsewhere. It is revealing that those appearing before the city council to fight for their communities under the new legislation are the same ones who fought the first battles under the old legislation. But what they are demanding now in the name of citizen participation is simply the right to be heard.

Larry Joyner, chairman of the East Oakland-Fruitvale Planning Council and one-time candidate for mayor, admits that he is demoralized at how far back the practice of citizen participation has been pushed, but he acknowledges with some satisfaction that it has not been pressed back to where it started. Here is what he says:

"The most important thing for us in East Oakland is the fact that we have developed a citizenry that is able to know which way the city hall is. Many of the problems that confronted the group because of non-involvement, in terms of what the city, the state or the Federal government were planning for the area, have been rectified.

"If there is an activity going on any place in East Oakland, we have sufficiently trained and awakened the citizenry of their rights of being involved in that decision, particularly in any expenditure of public funds. So that we think that is a contribution that has been made which was always developable but was not being participated in before. That was a tremendous contribution from the standpoint of citizen participation."

Interestingly Mayor John H. Reading, after almost a decade of strife over the issue, seems to have come to much the same conclusion as Larry Joyner, his former antagonist, about the contribution of citizen participation, insofar as it is defined as the right to be heard, to the legislative process. He explains the position in the following excerpts from an interview.

Question: "In retrospect did citizen involve-

ment, which more than anything else distinguished government in the 1960's, facilitate your job or make it more difficult?"

Reading: "Oh, I think it made it more difficult. To start with, I was very impatient with it. See, my background was an individual entrepreneur, as a businessman. I was a small businessman, I owned my own company. I started it, I built it and I ran it, and I ran it as an individual for some 15 plus years. Of course, that is a completely different world from the political world, because if you have a problem you address yourself to it and come up with a solution. If it is a good one you profit, and if it is a bad one you take your lumps. But you do something about it. You act and get it over with."

Question: "Mr. Riley, the city manager, tends to think of civic accomplishment in terms of miles of freeway or how many buildings are built. I think it's fair to say that. Is that your view, too?"

Reading: "Yes, I think that way, too. My real tester or measure of success in the city is how big is our port, you know, how many tons went through it? What's the progress on building my city center, and how many new lessees? Here again, though, this is because of my background, where to me economic activity denotes success. And, as far as the city is concerned, economic success is a major step forward in terms of resolving the social problems we have."

Question: "What else bothers you about citizen participation?"

Reading: "The governmental process has always been lengthy, burdensome to accomplish anything. It is even more difficult now with this so-called citizen participation. At this point, I don't have the drive, the feeling that you can make great changes in the city that I brought to this job. I think that this is not good. This is bad. I think that people in public office come in with a great many ideas and aspirations, and if they've any background of being a doer, they want to get in and get things accomplished. But you just don't do it overnight in public office, and so you have to accept philosophically that it takes an awful lot of time. And this is where I say it's bad. Many times you have good ideas, and you just get to the point where you say, 'Well, I'm not even going to try it. My chances of getting it accomplished are only fifty-fifty, maybe one in ten, and what's the use of trying.' "

Question: "In the recent hearings on the Community Development and Housing Act, there were some rather strongly held disagreements expressed, but the discussion was conducted on a very civilized level, and everyone seemed to have considerable respect for everyone else's opinion. Do you agree that those hearings were constructive?"

Reading: "I was going to make that point. You see, back in '67 or '68, those people who were being brought into the governmental process were unsophisticated. They didn't know how things worked. So you had a great deal of friction and screaming and conflict and a lot of static and adversary situations. But I think we have grown in terms of the educational process that has gone on, to the point now where at least those people that we deal with are aware of the actions they have to take in order to make progress. You know, I think somewhere along the line they learned that screaming and hollering didn't accomplish anything. All it did was to build up animosities, and it actually prevented things from being accomplished. We had more than our share, particularly in the old poverty program. The way those meetings were conducted, it was just accusations and actual physical threats that went on during the course of every meeting. And I think now that all the people who were in those hearings realize that the way you accomplish things is through the orderly democratic process."

Question: "Is it reasonable to conclude that you and the city council have also learned?"

Reading: "That's the point I made earlier, that you philosophically accept that you have to be patient, that you have to go through this process to reach a conclusion, before you can move ahead. So it's a learning process for both."

Question: "But when you say that you have to be patient, it sounds a bit patronizing. It suggests that you, perhaps, learned something you could not have known a decade ago, when the forms of government were simpler."

Reading: "Don't you think tolerance is a form of education?"

Question: "Sometimes it is. But isn't there a difference to your saying to yourself, 'I've got to listen to this S.O.B. and I wish he would hurry up,' and 'I've got to listen to this S.O.B. because he is going to tell me something that I would not

otherwise have an opportunity to know'?"

Reading: "Well, I admit you're right. There is more attentiveness, willingness to listen than there was a few years back."

Question: "Of course, the democratic process is a lot more onerous than it was 10 years ago. But from the 1940's, when Oakland was a pretty homogeneous city, to the 1960's, when Oakland was a spectacularly heterogeneous city, the old inhabitants really had no communication with the new inhabitants. This process of citizen participation, which took a long time coming, suddenly established channels of communication which never existed before. Isn't that true?"

Reading: "Well, obviously that is true. What we went through in this very difficult period was establishing a communicative process. At the start it was extremely abrasive, but now it's reached the point where there is a smooth stream of communication both ways and a much greater understanding on both sides."

Question: "From which the community as a whole benefits?"

Reading: "No question about it. A valid statement . . ."

Grudging as Reading's observations are one would be forced to conclude from them that the net result of a decade of experience with citizen involvement has left Oakland a more solid community. But, the nature of power being what it is, those who have it tend to exploit it, and there is clearly a danger that in the next 10 years, unless there is a revolution at the polls which transforms the patterns of authority, citizen participation may make little or no further contribution to Oakland's solidarity. Indeed, whatever happens at the polls, there is a lesson to be drawn from Oakland's experience with Federal partisanship in behalf of the poor. By rectifying serious inequities in the access to power, Federal intervention in the long run benefits rich and poor alike.

Atlanta, Georgia: Scene of “cooperation”

Except that a significant proportion of its population is poor and black, and it owes its economic development to once having been the terminus of a major railroad, Atlanta, Georgia, bears very little resemblance to Oakland, California.

Atlanta is an inland and a Southern city and, according to the American stereotype, it should be racially disturbed, culturally sterile, and commercially lethargic. In fact, Oakland more closely fits that stereotype. For various reasons embedded in history and good fortune, Atlanta is one of the nation's most dynamic cities, actively pursuing racial harmony, cultural achievement, and commercial success. It might even be fair to say that it sees the three as facets of the same drive to urban greatness.

Unlike Oakland, Atlanta has a buoyant self-confidence, and a generosity of spirit, which allow it to deal in stride with many of the petty problems that bog Oakland down. White and black alike, somehow, have reached a consensus in Atlanta that their differences, while real, are nonetheless soluble, and they must not be allowed to become barriers along the road to decent urban life.

In the course of the research for this paper, an astute observer remarked that white and black leadership in most American cities tend to be a reflection of each other. It is easy to see how the thrust-and-parry relationship that has evolved between blacks and whites in most cities would validate that observation. The observation surely applies in Oakland, where black and white leaders seem to compete with each other in being querulous, parochial, and rude. In Atlanta, the figures who are recognized as long-standing leaders by the two races are characterized by reasonableness, mutual trust, and a feeling about the city which, at its most commonplace, is a kind of boosterism and, at its most exalted, is a genuine sense of community.

Without in any way belittling the black con-

tribution to this relationship, it is fair to say that the white establishment in Atlanta, in contrast to the rich merchants of Oakland, brings to its racial dealings a real recognition of the meaning of *noblesse oblige*. Atlanta's business elite, perceiving itself as an intrinsic part of the city, associates its well-being not merely with its balance sheets but also with the degree of harmony in which the people of Atlanta live.

Ivan Allen, Jr., who led Atlanta during the years of transition from rigid racial segregation, writes of the business elite's sense of responsibility in his remarkable and candid memoir, *Mayor: Notes on the Sixties*. His father, Allen wrote, had been part of a group of men that had guided Atlanta for nearly four decades, bringing it from a country town to a metropolis of nearly a million. In 1947, Allen says, his father confessed to him, “My generation has completely failed in every way to enlighten or solve the major issue which our section of the country has, the race issue . . . Your generation is going to be confronted with it, and it will be the greatest agony that any generation ever went through.”

Commenting on the city's elite in his father's day, Allen says, “They had done a wonderful job in their time, but times were changing and they were the first to realize that they were not prepared for the challenges of the second half of the twentieth century. We successors to the throne were expected to function just as they had: to love Atlanta, to cherish her, to guide her, to make her a better place than she was when we ‘inherited’ her. It was not unlike the situation we faced when we had taken over the family businesses from our fathers.”

No evidence acquired during an extended study of power relationships in Atlanta belies the picture conveyed by Allen in the following passage from his book:

“When I looked around to see who was with me in this new group of leaders. I

found my lifelong friends. Almost all of us had been born and raised within a mile or two of each other in Atlanta. We had gone to the same schools, to the same churches, to the same golf courses, to the same summer camps. We had dated the same girls. We had played within our group, married within our group, partied within our group, and worked within our group. We were children of the Depression who had come out of it with an appreciation of hard work, and we had been fortunate enough to have certain benefits passed on to us from our fathers so that our devotion to hard work—once the low spot of the Depression passed around 1933—made it possible for us to enjoy spiraling success in business for all our years.

“It was not a particularly colorful group—the passion of Citizens & Southern National Bank President Mills B. Lane for collecting antique cars was about as wild as we got—and there were few escapades, scandals, or divorces within our group. We were white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Atlantan, business-oriented, nonpolitical, moderate, well-bred, well-educated, pragmatic and dedicated to the betterment of Atlanta as much as a Boy Scout troop is dedicated to fresh milk and clean air.

“That sounds corny to a lot of people, especially to those in other cities whose ‘white-power structure,’ as we were later to be called in a not-so-flattering way, tended to be divided and not so interested in the progress of their city as they were in their own personal progress—but it was true about the business leadership, the new civic leadership, in Atlanta at that time. We *were* different in Atlanta. We were the presidents of five major banks, the heads of the Atlanta-headquartered industries like Coca-Cola, the presidents of the three big utilities, the heads of the three or four top retail establishments, the managers of the leading national-firm branches for the Southeast, the man in charge of the city transit system, the heads of the larger

local businesses such as the Ivan Allen Company and the Haverty Furniture Company, and the leading realtors. When you talked about the ‘power structure’ or the ‘establishment’ in Atlanta, you were really talking about the leaders of the top fifty or so businesses in the city. We had, for a dozen or so years, warmed up to our task by working on projects like the Boy Scouts Council and the Community Chest fund drive and various other good works, and now our time had come to replace our elders at the helm of the city. Nearly 90 per cent of us lived inside a half-mile radius of the intersection of Habersham and West Paces Ferry roads, no more than ten miles from downtown Atlanta, and we had shared the same problems, interests, and ambitions our entire lives. We were concerned with executive problems: managing a firm, handling taxes. This gave us a further common large bond, and it should not be surprising that we also constituted a separate social set—common backgrounds, common spirit, common interests, common goals—that was destined to evolve eventually into the business-civic leadership of the city: the ‘power structure.’”

But in Atlanta there was not only the power structure of which Allen talks, which was white, but a black counterpart, a fraction as powerful, to be sure, but providing a core of leadership, nonetheless, to which both races paid serious attention. The explanation for the evolution of this black power structure is surely related to the establishment after the Civil War of a series of black colleges in the city, now united as Atlanta University, which turned out year after year substantial citizens, prepared to lead and be rendered deference for their leadership.

Furthermore, there became rooted in Atlanta a black business tradition, which produced a major black insurance company, bank, newspaper, and real estate network. An integral part of the black business structure were the black churches, whose funds provided much of the working capital and whose members provided the patronage.

The black churches, institutional backbone of the black community in the South, preached a doctrine which, while conservative, contributed

substantially to the strength and cohesion of the city's blacks.

"Almost every big preacher in Atlanta preached," said Congressman Andrew Young, the city's first black member of Congress and himself a clergyman, "twelve commandments. The eleventh was 'Thou shalt own thy own home.' And the twelfth was 'Thou shalt send thy children to college.'" Thus there grew up in Atlanta what few cities in the South, and none in the North, could match: a black leadership cadre with a strong sense of its own value, coming out of an organized and well-to-do black middle class.

It would be an exaggeration to say that this leadership cadre was ever intimate with the white power structure during the long years in which the generation of Ivan Allen's father ran Atlanta, but white and black leadership were never as estranged from each other as they were in most Southern cities. At the very least, one would have to say that the presence of this black middle-class established a presence which white Atlanta could not ignore, as whites in Oakland, where there was no discernible black leadership, ignored the black population there.

There were long-standing lines of communication between whites and blacks in Atlanta, which only became significant when the seeds of the civil rights movement were sown after World War II, and blacks began to imagine that a change in their status was possible. Because the black community was "responsibly" led, the white establishment did not look upon emerging black expectations as quite the threat which whites elsewhere in the South considered them to be.

When the Supreme Court dismantled the first barriers to black voting in the late 1940's, Atlanta's black establishment was ready for the opportunity. The Atlanta Voters League was formed under the direction of John Calhoun who, now in his late seventies, is both a newly elected member of the city council and an Atlanta legend. The Atlanta Voters League, an arm of the black establishment, set out methodically to organize the black neighborhoods and get their residents registered and voting. Years later this organizational structure was still intact and ready to serve in the formation of citizens groups for the war on poverty.

By the early 1950's blacks in Atlanta were already voting in large numbers, and by the end of

the decade they could provide the difference between defeat and victory in any city election. It was at that point that the white "power structure" had to decide whether it would coalesce politically with blacks to preserve tranquillity and prosperity in the city, or join forces with the "crackers" to preserve white supremacy. In most other cities in the South, the white power structure—as it had throughout history—chose to support the poor whites in the population and fight for the racial status quo. In Atlanta, however, it chose to go with the blacks, and it was by the margin of black votes that Ivan Allen, Jr. in 1961 was elected mayor.

Allen's election, of course, did not by itself assure Atlanta's tranquillity. The city's white power structure, after all, could not control the state government, which was dominated by rural Georgia, nor the urban white working class, which was largely rural by recent origin and profoundly resistant to racial change. In a decade as tumultuous as the 1960's it would have been inconceivable for any large city to be an island of harmony, and Atlanta had its demonstrations, sit-ins and, on at least one occasion, a near riot. But it was not torn apart like Birmingham and Little Rock and Jackson in the South or, for that matter, like Los Angeles and Detroit and Cleveland in the North. The shift that took place in relations between races—meaning, for example, the integration of public facilities, the granting of employment rights in the police and civil services, the breakdown of the dual school system—was accompanied by agony but not by social chaos.

Recognizing the symbolic importance of Atlanta as the South's most important city, blacks pressed early and hard for the attainment of their objectives, and they won major victories there. Later, they felt so comfortable in Atlanta that they made it their headquarters for most of the Southern civil rights activity. They were confident that Atlanta's white power structure would uphold the law, and it did. In return, the white power structure was able to keep the city growing and prosperous.

This approach, which was universally discerned, if not esteemed, as eminently progressive, endeared Atlanta, and particularly Mayor Allen's administration, to the Democratic government of John F. Kennedy and, later, of

Lyndon B. Johnson. Both were committed to demonstrating the possibility of peaceful change on the race question, and were delighted to pour huge sums of money into Atlanta to help the experiment along.

For Allen's part, he was delighted to cooperate. He was the only political figure from the South who testified in behalf of Kennedy's civil rights bill in 1963. Far from joining the Southern chorus in denouncing Federal programs, he praised them. Ideologically cut off from the rest of Georgia, Atlanta was being badly bled of its tax resources by a punitive state government, and Allen was willing to take money and allies wherever he could find them. So, when Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964, Atlanta was enthusiastic about the prospect of participating.

Actually, Atlanta had undertaken an anti-poverty venture of its own, prior to the Federal enactment. Like the Oakland program that had preceded OEO, the Atlanta program was financed by a private foundation. Both the Atlanta and Oakland efforts grew out of a common intellectual seed, which was spreading in the early 1960's throughout the country's social worker network. The crucial difference, however, was that in Oakland the Ford Foundation came in to set the program up from the outside, and was treated by the social and political establishment as a foreign irritant; in Atlanta the Woodruff Foundation, a product of the huge Coca-Cola fortune that had for years flowed into the city, initiated the project, and its efforts were uniformly welcomed.

If there was discernible self-interest involved in Atlanta, it proceeded from the white power structure's worry over the prospect of carrying an increasing number of low-income Atlantans on the welfare rolls. The pre-OEO anti-poverty experiment was undertaken to put poor people to work. Whatever the motive, however, the lead taken by the Woodruff Foundation provided the assurance that the city's business elite could be counted on as an ally in an atmosphere that had not previously been sympathetic to social programs helpful to blacks.

The West End project, as the Woodruff Foundation's undertaking was called, was quick to adopt, in a form it found congenial, the new citizen participation doctrine. It established a neigh-

borhood center in an old house in the heart of the West End's low income area and, under the direction of a professional social worker, set up its headquarters within. It recruited local residents for polling, and they interviewed hundreds of people, either in their homes or in public meetings. The information acquired yielded the conclusion that the neighborhood contained many more unemployed than the state authorities had reported, and that what the residents wanted, no less than the Foundation, was more jobs.

Somehow, the Foundation persuaded the State Department of Labor to assign a job counselor to the neighborhood center and, dealing with people who had never before taken advantage of the state's employment facilities, he had remarkable success with job placement. Meanwhile, the social worker helped the newly employed get glasses and clothes and whatever else they might need for their work.

At the end of a few months, the Woodruff Foundation, calculating that the new jobs brought into the neighborhood many times the original expenses for the social worker and his services, pronounced the experiment worthy of further support. Thus the neighborhood center, with its "outreach" facilities, became embedded in Atlanta's anti-poverty concept, just as funds were becoming available under the new Economic Opportunity Act.

Mayor Allen and the Atlanta Board of Alderman did not hesitate in making a commitment to participation in the anti-poverty war. By concurrent resolution with the county government in August, 1964, an anti-poverty board was created, to function in association with but autonomously of the local authorities, with a thirteenth member of mutual choice to be chairman.

The consensus candidate for chairman was Boisfeuillet Jones, highly respected director of the Woodruff Foundation who, at the time, was on loan to Washington helping administer the Department of HEW. The Woodruff Foundation agreed to bring Jones back home to take on the duties as chairman of the anti-poverty organization, which in due course was chartered as Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA), a private not-for-profit corporation. A courtly man, white-haired and conservative in demeanor, Jones was well regarded for his capacities and indisputably compassionate toward the poor. Under his

leadership, Economic Opportunity Atlanta became not only a functioning adjunct of city government but an important channel for the ministrations of the white power structure. Operating out of the expensively paneled offices of the Woodruff Foundation on Peachtree Street, Jones remained the organization's chairman until his retirement in December, 1976.

It would be inaccurate to say that, in getting set up, Economic Opportunity Atlanta ignored the Federal requirements, either in practice or intent, for citizen participation. On the contrary, the Woodruff Foundation's West End experiment had, through its neighborhood canvassing and advisory committees, presumably demonstrated the virtues of citizen involvement. When the pressure grew for increased citizen participation, the board of Economic Opportunity Atlanta made the adjustment painlessly, increasing the membership of poor people in board seats to what subsequently became the statutory requirement of one-third. Furthermore, there was established a Central Citizens Advisory Council composed of neighborhood representatives, to provide a citizen input to the policy-making deliberations of the EOA board itself. But at no time did Economic Opportunity Atlanta even contemplate moving from citizen consultation to citizen control at any level of operation.

In fact, from its inception right through to today, the anti-poverty program in Atlanta has rejected any postulate which holds that it is a program *of* the poor, preferring instead the principle that it is a partnership of the various forces, both donor and recipient, which have an interest in it.

Jones recalled in an interview that at one point in the mid-1960's, OEO in Washington recommended that the neighborhood units of Economic Opportunity Atlanta be given more autonomy to design and administer their own projects. He remembers that the board turned the suggestion down indignantly, noting that the arrangement devised by Atlanta suited its personality just fine, whatever the experiences of other cities might be. Under that arrangement, citizen participation never was, nor was it ever intended to be, anything more than an advisory component in decision-making. The decisions themselves never left the hands of the board's non-poor majority along with the professional staff.

In terms of the distribution of services, the

pattern fixed by Economic Opportunity Atlanta was based on the designation of twelve neighborhoods in the city and two in the county where poverty was particularly concentrated. A neighborhood service center was established in each, in rented facilities at first, to provide a wide range of community services—medical, employment, and educational, as well as those under the aegis of various old-line social agencies. Characteristically, the center was run by a small staff of professional social workers responsible to the executive director at the Economic Opportunity Atlanta office downtown.

Citizens had their say in the operation of the centers through the presence of an elected neighborhood council, as well as through the other advisory groups organized by the center on the basis of blocks and census tracts. It seems generally agreed that communication between the professional staffs did indeed take account of the community will. But only in rare instances was there ever any serious argument over who had the power of the final word.

Economic Opportunity Atlanta also decided early that it would not undertake to provide itself, nor would it charter groups from within the neighborhood to provide, any services which were already available through an existing community agency. Early in OEO's history, self-generating Head Start organizations, founded largely by parents and operated chiefly out of churches, gradually attached themselves to anti-poverty budgets and threatened to become a major exception to Atlanta's policy. As the years passed, however, Federal requirements for funding Head Start programs became increasingly stringent and groups unable to meet them either dropped out of existence or merged into child development units at the neighborhood centers. Occasionally, too, Economic Opportunity Atlanta saw fit to incorporate and contract with senior citizens groups to perform certain services, even though some of these services might have been obtained as conveniently from existing organizations.

Neither of these exceptions, however, ever became pervasive enough to undermine Economic Opportunity Atlanta's determination to function within the existing framework of public and private social service agencies. Thus, when EOA talked of institutional change in Atlanta, it did not

mean the creation of new structures, except perhaps for the neighborhood service center itself. What it meant was the enactment of reform within the framework of the institutional status quo.

The consensus in Atlanta seems to be that this reform has been extremely successful. For the most part, the city's agencies, both public and private, did cooperate with Economic Opportunity Atlanta, particularly in offering the "out-reach" services that distinguished the neighborhood centers. Furthermore, EOA showed it could use the funds made available to it as "leverage" to persuade the agencies to modify programs or offer new ones in keeping with what the poor perceived as their needs.

Thus the school system provided night sessions for adults, the recreation department provided summer programs for kids, the employment service moved training programs into the ghetto. "The bureaucracies learned that if they wanted to utilize EOA money themselves," said Jim Parham, a former director of Economic Opportunity Atlanta, "they had to meet certain kinds of innovative plans, changing their hours and their programs, listening to people, actually getting involved with consumers, letting them have a voice in how some of these were designed. This was a new experience for some people in those establishments, and it had its effect." One of the effects was the almost universal acceptance of decentralization for the distribution of social services.

It is not easy to explain why Atlanta's bureaucracies were so receptive to change, relative at least to so many bureaucracies elsewhere that erected walls to resist it. "We did not make the assumption that the enemy was the city or a public agency," said William W. Allison, a black in his early forties, who currently directs the 450-member staff of Economic Opportunity Atlanta. "I guess we were saying the enemy was the system, a system that had grown up like Topsy. . . There had been a consistent effort on the part of the neighborhoods, and on the part of our staff, to work with the agencies, to get them to go out where the needs were. And, over a period of time, they've done it."

Allison said that the EOA experience led directly to citizen involvement, through advisory councils, in the administrative process of the

housing and hospital authorities, in the making of welfare policy, and even in the operations of private social welfare agencies. Certainly, it is fair to assume that mutually accepted citizen involvement has been a significant factor in the conspicuous absence in Atlanta of the kind of animosity which characterized Oakland. Atlanta has seen no serious efforts to create rival black separatist social service institutions. If the relative peace of the city is an index, it seems reasonable to conclude that the residents of the poor black neighborhoods have been satisfied with the concessions which the "power structure" has made to give them some influence over their destiny.

When Model Cities came along four years after the Economic Opportunity Act, the organizational process was not as harmonious. The Model Cities target area was made up of six of the neighborhoods that had been delineated and organized under the anti-poverty program, and much of the structure was actually devised under EOA auspices. Why the spirit of Economic Opportunity Atlanta was lacking is not exactly clear, but some factors bear consideration.

The leadership in the Model Cities community, having tested itself during the years it worked within EOA, was now ready to take on more responsibility, and insisted on procedures in the new operation which would give it greater influence. Both the city and the business establishment bristled, perhaps more offended by the no-confidence inference than worried by a loss of power. Furthermore, Mayor Allen, having announced that he would not stand for re-election, was now a lame-duck, unable and apparently unwilling to put his tremendous prestige into establishing good working relations between the various forces involved. Nor was there a Boisfeuillet Jones at the helm of Model Cities, with the kind of connections that could be used to calm troubled waters. For a while, Model Cities seemed to be in danger.

Yet, though it generated more discord than Atlanta had become accustomed to, Model Cities certainly did not set off a state of war as it did in Oakland. A compromise determined the composition of the board of directors, which came to be appointed half from the neighborhoods and half from the various municipal agencies. An advisory committee composed totally of neighborhood

representatives was empowered to screen proposals and plans, but it did not seem bent on acquiring complete control.

The Model Cities administration was set up in a neighborhood office under a black director who was acceptable to all sides and responsible to the Mayor. After a difficult beginning, Atlanta probably succeeded in establishing a fragile balance in the operation of Model Cities between forces that shadow-boxed suspiciously around one another for a few years, until some mutual confidence was achieved.

During those transitional years, none of the interested forces was completely satisfied. City hall and the Board of Aldermen were disturbed by the relative autonomy of Model Cities, and city departments like streets and recreation were upset at the ratio of money going into social programs that by-passed them. The business community, which continued to dominate Economic Opportunity Atlanta through Boisfeuillet Jones and a sympathetic board, did not like being excluded from major influence in Model Cities.

As for the neighborhoods, there were plenty of voices arguing convincingly in behalf of greater community control, and they found a receptive audience. These advocates did not like the decision made by the Model Cities board to follow EOA's practice of relying on existing departments and agencies for the execution of most of its programs. The Model Cities board granted hiring preferences to neighborhood residents, but these voices called for a bigger "piece of the action"—more incorporation of neighborhood groups to do the work, concessions to minority businesses, more black institution-building.

After Model Cities moved out of the planning and into the operational stage, the board showed considerable dexterity in distributing its benefits to a wide constituency in the bureaucracy and the neighborhoods, while demonstrating a sense of moderation to the business community. Only then did the carping noticeably diminish and cooperation steadily grow.

The debate has long raged, and undoubtedly will continue to rage, over whether Model Cities accomplished anything significant or, at least, anything remotely proportionate to the funds that were spent. Atlanta's Model Cities program received about \$7 million annually by direct grant from the Federal government for nearly five

years. Part of this it was able to designate as payment for a share in other Federal matching fund programs, which brought its total Federal income over the period to an estimated \$78 million.

Considerable as this sum is, it had to be spread over 3,000 acres and 35,000 inhabitants. In the Model Cities area, 90 per cent of the structures at the start of the program were classified sub-standard. As for the residents, in terms of the skills they commanded for escaping poverty most of them were surely sub-standard, too. The \$78 million came out to about \$400 per person per year, and the total less than a single year's tuition at most private universities. It is probably unrealistic to think that such a modest sum can prepare the poor to master their destiny, or transform a "culture of poverty," even if the expenditures had not been cut off at the end of five years.

Johnny Johnson, who served as Model Cities director through the five years, said his planners concentrated their physical improvements on three core projects in the target area. The east and west end each had a social and educational complex—consisting of a school, a community service center, a park, and several hundred units of new housing—at a total cost, including private as well as public expenditures, of some \$40 million each. In the center was begun an economic development core, to provide a basis for commercial growth. Here and there throughout the rest of the area were built small clusters of housing and modest parks, while miles of street, much of which had never before been surfaced, were finally paved.

In addition, there were the social programs, perhaps an excessive number of them, Johnson admits, for the funds that were available. They included, among others, school breakfasts and lunches, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, employment referral and training, daycare centers, family counseling, storefront libraries, programs for disturbed children and the elderly and juvenile delinquents, swimming pools, and scholarships for college students.

Reliable statistical measurements are not available for judging the success of the Model Cities program. In 1974, the *Atlanta Constitution* did a study on the impact of Model Cities, and determined that it was virtually impossible to

make a definitive judgment on the impact of the program. One of the *Constitution's* conclusions was, "Statistically, some things have gotten better and some have gotten worse. In some areas, the available statistics are so sketchy that nobody had much idea what's happened." One of the sharpest figures the *Constitution* found was that, during the Model Cities period, the housing supply in the area had actually dropped by 10 per cent, and population by 14 per cent. But, while one body of thought held that the figures proved that people were fleeing the area despite Model Cities, another body concluded that, because of Model Cities, people were upgrading themselves occupationally and moving to better neighborhoods. What the *Constitution* finally decided was that the results come out more favorably if measured "in the people's attitude than they do in statistics."

An expression of this attitude appeared in an anecdote recorded by a *Constitution* reporter after a walk through the Model Cities area with former Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. Pointing to the neighborhood houses, he wrote:

"These houses had started as roomy and well-built homes for well-to-do whites, had deteriorated through more than a generation of neighborhood transition and decay, had been chopped into crowded apartments, and finally were demolished by the sweeps of housing code enforcement and urban renewal.

"Where they stood, for the most part, are vacant lots.

"The ones that remain seem to be sinking through the same declining life cycle.

"Here and there, the present occupants are doing what they can. Their houses show a certain morose and shaggy dignity, despite the decay.

"In front of one of the houses, Mrs. Henrietta Terrell is sweeping her sidewalk. 'Mistuh Mayor', she calls across the street, 'I hadn't seen you since they shook you off.'

"Allen smiles and waves back, as both step back through the years to recall (a near-riot incident in 1966) the rocking police car.

"Allen crosses the street to hear out Mrs. Terrell. 'Honey, you're looking better and younger since you got out of being mayor,' she tells Allen.

"She has lived at 794 Capitol for 13 years. As for her job, she 'sweeps' at the Stadium.

"She names three new programs that her 10

children benefit from, two of the programs a direct result of Model Cities spending."

"The neighborhood is getting better,' she says. 'For a long while there wadn't nothing over here. It wadn't nothing but a slum,' Mrs. Terrell says."

In an interview, Mayor Allen provided a slightly different, more elaborate, account of his encounter with Mrs. Terrell. As Allen put it, after he and Mrs. Terrell waved from opposite sides of the street, "I walked up and said 'I wonder if you'd let me have my picture taken with you.' And she said, 'Oh man, I'd just love to have my picture,' and I said, 'Well, then tell me your name.' She said, 'Yessir, I'm Hattie Terrell.' And I said, 'Miss Terrell, I sure am glad to make your acquaintance'. . . She said, 'I ain't gonna have my picture taken without putting my wig on.' And I said, 'All right, go get your wig.'

"So she rushes in the house to get her wig put on and we talked to the boys and girls on the porch and one of them said, 'Yessir, you know momma kept us locked up the day they had that riot when you got thrown off that police car. I was over in the back of the house throwing rocks at you.'

"You got to live with these people, so I said, 'You didn't hit me, did ya?' He said, 'No sir, but I can throw the hell out of a rock.'

"You never know when you're gonna come out and expose yourself to the press in a situation like that, and you just have to have blind faith, I guess. So Miss Terrell went in and put on her wig to have her picture taken, and she came back and sprayed herself with a little perfume.

"I was just wondering if the reporter would catch it, but I said, 'Miss Terrell,'—because I learned a long time ago that one thing we had to learn to do was to show reasonable courtesy. You can just charm black people by being courteous. It changes their whole atmosphere.—'Miss Terrell, how long have you lived here?' She'd lived here fifteen years, she'd raised her whole family here. She came from Butts County. I asked her why she'd moved up here. She said, 'You don't know how bad it was down there.' I'm asking the questions and not giving the answers.

"Finally we got around to where the reporter says to her, 'Miss Terrell, were you here before we started the Model Cities project and what's the difference now?' And she said, 'Lord, child. You don't know how much better it is. You look up

and down the street at how much better it looks.' He said it didn't look much better to him. And she said, 'Well, you didn't see it then. All the houses were falling in. We've got some space now. The school's cleaned up and the street's been paved and everything's been paved and everything's better.'

"Then she said, 'But let me tell you, son, back in those days I was just a nigger, but now I'm Miss Terrell.' There's your whole answer, and I don't think the reporter ever caught it. But what she was saying was, 'Mayor Allen called me Miss Terrell.' She was saying, 'I was dirt under their feet and now I'm Miss Terrell.' It was unrehearsed and that was it. I was real pleased."

The notion that one might judge Atlanta's Model Cities program, and its anti-poverty parent, by the change in attitude which they generated recurs frequently in interviews. The change, however, was not one-sided. It was discernible on the part of both the governing and the governed, the administrator and the citizen, the representative and the voter. After examining Oakland, what is remarkable about Atlanta is that it took place with so little strife. In a word, Atlantans were so much more willing to learn.

Jim Parham, former director of Economic Opportunity Atlanta, said this of his meetings with neighborhood advisory councils: "These people came together and they talked about the problems in their neighborhood, and I'll never forget how pleased one little black woman about 30-years-old was when she was told her group, several of the people who organized with her, how they had gone directly to the man responsible for street signs. The street sign was either torn down or damaged beyond repair or something. They went down and talked to the man and, lo and behold, in the next day or two the sign was fixed.

"Now that doesn't sound like much to me and you, but it was a real gain, a real experience, a real achievement for them to get some response from the government. Well, the anti-poverty program stimulated that kind of thing. And it gave these folks, some people say, false expectations, which to some extent was true.

"Now it's one thing to get a street light or maybe a playlot and it's another to change an entire institution, or change the economic system. To get a playlot cleared off and a few toys or play materials, things for the children, is entirely

different from getting an entire city park built in a neighborhood. It's a lot of money. You don't get that accomplished just by one or two groups going down and demonstrating or meeting somebody.

"I found that if you really want to develop citizen leadership, and that's what we all said we wanted to do, none of us quite knew how to do that. But if you really wanted to develop that, you had to recognize it takes time. . . Well, to some extent we succeeded. The people who got their start in the anti-poverty program in Atlanta are still very active on the scene."

Johnny Johnson, former head of Model Cities, made this observation of the Atlanta experience: "One of the things that used to distress me all the time was the tremendous amount of time and energy that community people had to put in to getting somebody to listen to them. We used to meet to death.

"Nearly every night there was a meeting, or three or four meetings. And these are the people who can least afford to spend their time meeting and arguing and talking, constantly battling, whereas in the affluent community you pick up the phone, call some of your neighbors together and say, 'listen, we need to go down here to protest this zoning' or 'we need to go down here so we can get a pool in our park down here,' and you meet one time or maybe a couple times, and then you call a meeting with the council, or council committee, and you make your voices known. You call a few councilmen on the phone and you finally get a decision, without spending two years meeting on it.

"So we would dissipate the time, though I think it was perhaps necessary as part of the process. God knows the kind of energy that was put into this thing. It was staggering. . . But it changed the citizens' understanding of the decision process. It taught them where the buttons were to push, how to bring pressure to win key decisions that were in favor of the community. So they did learn something—both the city and the community learned something in the evolution of the program."

Former Mayor Allen, in an interview, came to the subject of neighborhood meetings from a slightly different direction: "The first thing that comes out of them is dissatisfaction. Public officials don't want dissatisfaction, but it's not a

glorious world and you don't get anything until you get your dissatisfaction out. They don't like it because there's still that old feeling, a bunch of niggers just don't know what they're talking about. And I'm not sure they do know what they're talking about. But there's one thing, you're not going to find out till you get them to talking and get an exchange of information. . .

"These meetings forcefully bring to the attention of the local officials the inadequacies of services. A lack of local services has been the history of the city, and it's a rule that services are generally furnished where someone has voiced the greatest demand. Protests tend to step up city services. In the old days a decision was made from city hall to run something this way or to run something that way, and it was cheapest to give least consideration to the poverty areas of the city. No question that these meetings create a dissatisfaction with the status quo, but they've been highly important in improving the lot of the people. . .

"Neighborhood meetings are the hardest thing for a public official to go through, and the greatest thing in the world for the city. They get people interested in what's going on and what they need to do, instead of the old idea of 'there ain't nothing I can do' and just lay back and fall dead.

"That's what segregation had done to us, and that's what poverty does to you. So your neighborhood program is great but, boy, they're hell on elected officials. If you want to catch hell, just go to one. You can't do anything right because everyone can find something wrong with all of us. It's hell to see your mistakes like that, but you just don't get rid of evil except by getting it out in the open."

What the observations about shifting attitudes by Jim Parham and Johnny Johnson and Ivan Allen, Jr. come down to, of course, is a commentary on power. In Atlanta, the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs succeeded in the objective, set up for them by their creators in Washington, of transferring power to the poor. Because the white power structure chose not to put up a bitter struggle against this transfer, the process went quite differently from the pattern established in Oakland.

In Oakland, bitter resistance led the black poor to conclude that their only prospects lay in developing their own separate institutions. They

reasoned that they had to fix their anti-poverty policies themselves, and execute them through their own bodies, either bodies they themselves chartered or existing black private enterprise. In Model Cities, the objective which Oakland's blacks sought was nothing less than complete control, which came close to meaning autonomous neighborhood government.

The demands of Atlanta's blacks never extended that far, although there were certainly well-placed elements in the black community which wanted no less. It may in fact be regrettable that Atlanta's blacks were not forced to wage a struggle within the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs. In Oakland, struggle strengthened the black institutional structure. But, relative to Oakland, that structure in Atlanta was already quite strong. Furthermore, Atlanta's blacks found, in effect, that they had nothing to struggle against. Skeptics insist that they were victims of a massive hoax perpetrated by the white establishment. But the consensus among Atlanta's blacks was that, thanks to an abiding attitude of mutual conciliation, they could attain their objectives within the framework of existing institutions and without hostile confrontation.

Indeed, the willingness of the white power structure to hear the message conveyed by black voting strength—and not try to shut it out as the whites did elsewhere, in cities like Oakland as well as in the South—meant a steady shift in elective offices to blacks. As early as 1964, before the passage of the Voting Rights Act, blacks were elected to the Atlanta Board of Aldermen, the city's legislative body, and shortly thereafter they were elected to the Atlanta school board.

Since then the Atlanta voters, some in districts that are predominantly white, have elected blacks to the state legislature, the state senate, and to Congress. In the 1974 election, a city charter commission recommended and the voters ratified—in sharp contrast to Oakland's rejection of electoral reform—a plan to democratize the municipal government by substituting ward elections for most of the at-large seats. In the same election, Atlanta chose a black mayor, the first in a large Southern city. From these facts it is reasonable to conclude that Atlanta's blacks declined to embark upon an extensive struggle for power within the Model Cities and anti-poverty organizations, or elsewhere because they were satisfied

they could attain power through the normal elective process.

These facts explain, furthermore, why neither Economic Opportunity Atlanta or Model Cities was ever seriously politicized. To be sure, occasionally aspirants for office tried to build some neighborhood organization into a personal political base, but the accusation was rarely heard that the black community as a whole was seeking to make the Model Cities or anti-poverty programs into a channel for challenging the white power structure.

Certainly neither the budgets nor the individual projects of the two programs ever became the focus of battle between city government and black community, as they did in Oakland, where both sides saw the stakes as political control. In Atlanta, it is no exaggeration to say that neither the Model Cities nor the anti-poverty program had a direct impact on political change.

Yet, it would deny the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs their due to fail to note a more subtle role they played in the political transition. Graduates of the advisory councils of both programs, at the neighborhood as well as higher levels, have gone on to win elective offices in the city council—on the school board and in the state legislature. The advisory councils trained not only candidates, however, but voters, too.

“We spent an awful lot of time in developing the community mechanism to turn out the vote and get people educated,” said Johnny Johnson, former head of Model Cities. “Even the process of electing the neighborhood leadership taught them the political process. OEO insisted that if a guy in a community wanted to be a leader he had to run for office, and we adopted the same principle. We put voting booths out there for them to elect their community leaders, and to get them accustomed to going in that little booth to elect

their councilmen and their mayors. I think it contributed to it.”

Economic Opportunity Atlanta calculates that the number voting for the various advisory councils in neighborhood elections rose from 7,000 or 8,000 in 1967 to 33,000 in the election of 1973. That represented about a third of the potential residents. In the 1974 mayoralty and city council elections, blacks voted in higher proportions city-wide than whites.

Recently, one has begun to hear more and more often in Atlanta the observation that the city's power has become split, with blacks pre-eminent in politics and whites in economics. Put differently, it is fair to say that blacks have learned that economic power will not necessarily accrue to them simply because they possess political power.

The conclusion some have drawn is that the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs represented a stage in Atlanta's development during which political power came to be shared between whites and blacks. Unquestionably, these two programs, by establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust and creating a network of dedicated workers, on several occasions kept the city from exploding into violence. The evidence is compelling, furthermore, that the impact of these programs on Atlanta will prove enduring.

How the lessons of citizen involvement which are intrinsic to them can be made applicable to the next stage of Atlanta's evolution, in which it will be necessary to distribute economic power more equitably, is not yet clear. More uncertain—is whether the harmony which characterized the last stage will continue through the next. The effort to transform political power into economic objectives may prove much more difficult.

Chicago, Illinois: Scene of “cooptation”

Chicago has had a substantial black community since the era of the Civil War, and throughout the many decades since then the city has steadily attracted blacks from the South with the promise of a freer and more abundant life. During the Reconstruction years, blacks were relatively few in number, and pursued lives that were comfortably integrated with Chicago's white population. But by the time the Jim Crow reaction set in throughout the rest of the country near the turn of the century, the community had become large enough to be noticed, and its presence began to generate resistance from majority whites.

More than any other ethnic group in the highly variegated Chicago mix, blacks throughout the city's history have felt the impact of discrimination. It has severely narrowed their prospects for the decent existence they had left home to find.

In the early 1900's, when black thinkers began to hone the issues of their dilemma, Chicago's black leadership argued long and hard over whether to follow the teachings of W. E. B. DuBois and press on against white resistance for full integration, or the teachings of Booker T. Washington and seek a strong, autonomous and self-sufficient indigenous community.

To say that one or the other philosophy triumphed would be an oversimplification; without conscious design, the two marched side by side through the years, complementing each other like infantry and armor, in the wars for racial equality. And wars they were for, despite periodic lulls, Chicago's blacks never adjusted to the inferior role assigned to them, while Chicago's whites never seemed quite ready to accept them as neighbors and economic rivals.

Indeed, over the decades, the issues in contention between whites and blacks in Chicago have remained remarkably constant. Very early, the white working class organized, through its labor unions and whatever other forms of pressure it could apply upon generally sympathetic

employers, to reserve the better jobs for themselves. At the same time, they had no difficulty making common cause with the white middle class, invisibly through lending institutions and real estate firms, more visibly through property owners associations and periodic physical intimidation, to keep blacks within the rigidly drawn frontiers of their ghettos.

As the black population grew, these ghettos occasionally leaped their boundaries into new, previously white neighborhoods, and yet their facilities could never keep pace with the swelling crowds. That black neighborhoods, under these appalling conditions of poverty and crowding, spawned vice and crime and persistent personal demoralization only confirmed the conviction of those whites who argued that the two races were so unlike each other that they had necessarily to be kept apart. In Chicago, it is fair to say, the bitter hostility between races can be attributed to a *conscious* effort on the part of the whites to maintain an advantage over blacks in the ongoing competition for jobs and land.

Yet it is important to note an unevenness in the development of black communities in different parts of the city. Black settlements on the southside of Chicago date well back into the last century. On the southside, before World War II, blacks probably came as close as they did anywhere in the North to achieving Booker T. Washington's objective of self-sufficiency, albeit at an economic level much lower than in the white neighborhoods nearby. Here, there grew up a notable black middle class, eminently bourgeois in its way of life and indistinguishable from whites in its aspirations. Southside blacks developed not only strong churches but also black banks and other forms of business, black professional and fraternal associations, black newspapers and social service organizations, black sporting teams, and resort hotels. On the southside, blacks first grouped together to challenge the white

monopoly in politics and the labor unions.

Although the black influx during World War II was so sudden and so huge that the southside's institutions were strained to the breaking point, even today this community structure remains more or less intact, contributing a certain measure of stability. On the westside of Chicago, such a community structure never existed at all.

Chicago's westside was white until World War II, by which time affluence and the automobile provided the means for a classic flight to the suburbs. Hardly had a few whites relinquished their property to blacks than the deluge began, accelerated in no small measure by real estate speculations. Within a very few years this sprawling area, substantially larger than the southside, changed color and character almost completely.

Arriving directly from the rural South, the black migrants in the years after Pearl Harbor were jammed mercilessly into rental housing that had always been charmless but, at an appropriate density, had at least been habitable. What is probably worse, these blacks brought along with them none of the institutions which are considered essential for the making of a community.

They suffered by comparison for having, for example, little of the self-help experience of the Jews, the organizational skills of the Irish, the intense family loyalty of the Eastern Europeans, all of whom were their nearby neighbors. Equally significant, the churches they founded lacked the strong central authority that the Catholics brought with them from Europe or, for that matter, the community focus which the Jews attached to their synagogues—the black churches were for the most part, scattered, small, autonomous, and basically powerless, in keeping with the teachings of Southern Calvinism. The doctrine was also a weak reed for building a community because of its insistence that temporal concerns were none of religion's affair. Institutionally, the life of blacks in westside Chicago thus began, and remains, a mess.

This mess surely bears some responsibility for the fact that, during the moments of recurring racial tension in Chicago since World War II, the westside has on several occasions exploded into destructive violence while the southside has remained relatively calm.

Given the anger between blacks and whites in Chicago, however, there would surely have been

more violence but for the influence of the Cook County Democratic organization, more commonly known as the "Daley machine"⁷ which is the city's most important institution of government. Although it is rigidly structured by wards and precincts, with clear lines of command from the street level to the mayor's office, Chicago's political machine has nonetheless proven itself over the years to be remarkably sensitive to the city's ongoing demographic changes. Though it remains under the control of the same Irish-American community which has been its principal force since its beginnings in the nineteenth century the machine has willingly admitted other ethnic groups, black as well as white, to a significant share of power.

Today it might aptly be described as a political coalition dominated by Irish-Americans, but in which other groups in Chicago's ethnic mix receive a more or less equitable share of the rewards of public office. Chicago's black community is an indispensable component in the operation of this coalition.

It is indispensable because it supplies a substantial proportion of the votes, generally calculated at a third or more, in Chicago's elections. These votes have not always been automatically Democratic. There was a time when Chicago had a flourishing Republican machine, too, and black voters, thanks largely to the Lincoln heritage, more comfortably voted Republican than Democratic. What is important to note, however, is that black politicians emulated their white counterparts and could control most of those votes through high pressure precinct and ward organizations. When black sympathies shifted *en masse* during the New Deal, it was a relatively simple matter for black politicians to enlist as Democrats, taking their voting power with them.

The transformation was sealed in 1939 by the conversion of William Dawson, political boss of the southside blacks. Dawson became a Democratic Congressman and, for a time, the single most influential leader in the Chicago Democratic machine.

Under Dawson, the machine bestowed upon

7. This book went into print shortly after the death of Mayor Richard J. Daley. The structure over which he presided, however, is likely to survive his departure, at least for some years, without major discernible changes.

blacks a relative plethora of political offices and administrative appointments, which increased over the years with the growing dependency on black votes. But the feeling in retrospect is that Dawson, nonetheless, sold out cheap. For what the machine has to offer is not only seats in Chicago's governmental and party machinery, many of which are merely adornments. The machine also determines who will get the jobs and contracts awarded under the city's comprehensive patronage system. Thus the machine has a huge economic impact on the life of Chicago.

It is estimated that the mayor, whomever he is, controls some 30,000 municipal jobs directly, plus an equal number indirectly which are under the jurisdiction of Cook County. These jobs, in effect, make the Democratic machine the city's largest employer. The mayor's office also awards contracts which range from a few hundred to millions of dollars, and their recipients can be made, frequently at the whimsy of the machine, pillars of the city's commercial life.

No one disputes that, since Dawson's day, the black community has been given large numbers of jobs and many contracts. But students of Chicago insist that the jobs which blacks have received have, on the whole, been the most menial and poorly paid, while the contracts they have won have, relatively, been small and unprofitable. In fact, many have concluded that the machine's objective in handling out largess to the black community has been nothing more than to keep it "in line," and that Dawson and the black political leadership which has succeeded him have delivered the black vote to the machine in return for what was in it for them rather than for their mass of black constituents.

One could even postulate that, while the Democratic machine has provided "liberal" and even efficient government in Chicago, its basic objective has been to maintain the equilibrium of the city by safeguarding the pattern of ethnic relationships that existed sixty or seventy years ago. Thus Chicago has built a large amount of low-cost public housing for blacks, but has allowed none of it to intrude upon white neighborhoods. It has made a reasonable effort to provide decent public education, but has been in constant trouble with the courts for keeping the schools rigidly segregated. It has seated blacks on

various public bodies but allowed them little influence over policy, while it has maintained the symbols of authority, the police and fire-fighting forces, overwhelmingly white. The city has cooperated with modest Federal programs to upgrade private housing in black ghettos, but it has done little to discourage Chicago's banks from the lending practices which keep the ghettos' boundaries intact, and the property within them in an incessant state of decline.

These are machine policies which, quietly but steadily, serve the city's majority of middle class and working class whites, to the detriment of the black community. Even though the blacks cast the ballots, whites are the machine's chief constituency. When old time Chicagoans say the city is an identifiable collection of seventy-two neighborhoods, as well as fifty political wards and two hundred fifty Catholic parishes, it is these whites who want it to remain that way. For pursuing this objective zealously, but with little hint of anti-black demagoguery, the machine gets these people's faithful support. In the last election, Mayor Daley was returned by a majority of 78 per cent, with white and black votes supporting him in roughly equal proportions.

Yet it would be unfair to suggest that Mayor Richard J. Daley, master of both the city government and the political machine for more than twenty years, pursued this objective cynically. Born and raised in Bridgeport, the same Irish-American neighborhood he lived in until his death, Daley thought of himself as the embodiment of everything that is good about Chicago's living arrangements. The city's streets and schools and parks gave him all the preparation he needed for life; a good family upbringing and the church endowed him with character; and the machine provided him with a structure with which to satisfy his ambition.

Whether or not he himself perceived it, one might reasonably assume that Daley's outlook bore some trace of the anti-black bias of his time, but it would not be accurate to categorize his mayoralty as anti-black in any ostensible way. Rather, the mayor believed that whatever opportunities were available to him as a youth are available to young blacks today. And, though it might bear some amelioration, the system did not need to be fundamentally changed.

Daley had little patience for the sociologists

who argue that the Irish immigrants who came together voluntarily in Bridgeport acquired a decidedly different view of the world from the black migrants who were forced into a ghetto. He attaches little significance to the observation that the Irish-American institutions developed over centuries were a stronger defense against the shocks of Chicago life than the makeshift institutions that blacks devised in self-defense against whites. His only concession would be that facing these handicaps, it might take blacks more time to succeed.

For Daley, city hall's responsibility toward blacks is, without upsetting the overall social tranquility, to make their neighborhoods more like Bridgeport where a kid, surrounded by love and support of his own people, will have a decent chance of reaching the top. In Chicago, Daley's critics think of this attitude as uninformed, if not naive; some think of it as a disguise for malevolence. Unless the election returns are misleading, however, most Chicagoans regard it as the keystone of very good government.

This is the attitude that the anti-poverty program encountered in Chicago when it was enacted in 1964. Like the mayors of other large cities, Daley had already begun expressing concern at the relentless rise over the previous few years in the welfare rolls. It was clear that Chicago faced particular problems in the closing down of the stockyards, and in the decline of the kind of industry that had, for as long as anyone could remember, provided a regular paycheck for immigrants with few marketable skills.

Under the direction of Deton J. Brooks, a black man with a Ph.D in education, Daley's welfare department had produced a series of intensive studies on what the city might do about the increase in black dependency. When the word came from Washington in early 1964 that the passage of anti-poverty legislation was imminent, Daley made Brooks the executive of a citizens committee charged with drawing up a plan for Chicago's participation. By the time the Economic Opportunity Act became law in early 1965, Chicago already had plans prepared for \$144 million in programs. These plans set the course for all of the anti-poverty activity which has since ensued.

Daley's program from the beginning left no doubt that he had no use for such abstractions as

citizens participation. In the hearings prior to the enactment of the anti-poverty bill, Daley testified, "We think very strongly that any program of this kind, in order to succeed, must be administered by the duly constituted elected officials of the areas with the cooperation of the private agencies." Representative Roman Pucinski, a Chicago machine Congressman, was more explicit in expressing, in the mayor's behalf, his unhappiness with "a tendency on the part of the government in Washington to deal directly with organizations in local communities, by-passing the local governments."

Deton Brooks, in an interview conducted for this book, said that, after passage of the act, he went to Washington and was personally assured by Adam Yarmolinsky, an architect of the legislation and chief organizer of the OEO staff, that the administration's intention was to keep the "maximum feasible participation" provision for use to bypass Southern city governments that were unwilling to participate in the program at all. Whatever Yarmolinsky may have told Brooks, however, the OEO bureaucracy in Washington began its work with no such understanding. This office clearly intended the community action segment of the anti-poverty program to be run largely by the poor, in Chicago and elsewhere.

Daley, however, refused to yield, and brought his case directly to President Johnson, who surrendered to his demand. The incident left a residue of ill feeling toward Daley on the part of the OEO staff. The mayor, however, after his meeting with the President, recognized that he had no need now of the OEO's good graces. According to Sargent Shriver, who was then OEO's director, it was the only battle in the war on poverty decided by President Johnson in which his office was defeated. Daley's victory enabled him to "co-opt" the program and make it an appendage of his political machine.

The conventional explanation for Daley's insistence upon attaching Chicago's anti-poverty program to his own office is that he saw the opportunity to enlarge his patronage army and understood the desirability of denying this patronage to anyone else. Unquestionably there is much truth to this assertion. The anti-poverty operation, at its peak, may have added as many as 10,000 jobs to Chicago's patronage rolls.

Naturally, they were passed around to the party

faithful, or to those who pledged faithfulness in return for work. Thus the program gave Daley a major instrument for bolstering his power in the black community, where it was most fragile and where the potential for political insurrection was greatest.

It must also be remembered that these jobs came along at a time when Chicago's blacks were openly restive. From Daley's point of view, it was good fortune that most of these jobs required minimal skills, and could thereby take up some of the unemployment slack among young men and women who might otherwise be tempted into disorder. These new job-holders, furthermore, had to be organized into a whole new bureaucracy, which meant that supervisory positions were created, carrying with them status, power, and money.

These were ideal jobs to award to blacks with leadership potential, who might otherwise despair of putting their talents to constructive ends. Better to have such people patrolling the streets to keep them quiet than to envelop them in turmoil. For a city that had edged closer than usual to social disorder, these jobs were a godsend.

Yet, it would be a mistake to conclude that these jobs were awarded without regard to ability, or that they inevitably became boondoggles. The Daley administration had earned a reputation for selecting employees not only for their political credentials but for their personal capacities, and the anti-poverty program was no exception.

Whatever their assignments, employees were expected to put in a full day's work for a full day's pay, and they were monitored for the results they produced. Daley was not tolerant of incompetence or poor management. One consequence of these rigors is that the anti-poverty program trained some excellent staff people, who have gone on to higher positions in public and private administration. Whatever its philosophical shortcomings, and these can honestly be debated, Chicago's anti-poverty program was competently run.

The debate actually turns on one's response to the conception of the political machine. Daley is surely sincere in looking upon his own as the best answer to the problem of managing a city as complex as Chicago. Certainly none of America's other cities, after the political machines which once ran them died, has solved the problem of

government, and social stability, any better.

When Daley hears a phrase like "citizen participation," he can honestly argue that the Chicago machine invented it, having invited all Chicagoans to participate in street-level politics and precinct meetings long before. When he hears talk of allowing a community to control its own destiny, he rightly points out that each ward's political organization is virtually autonomous, and its inhabitants are free to pursue their destiny however they may choose. When he hears the assertion that the black community must be allowed to develop its own institutions, he responds that at the ward level the machine is as indigenous as an institution can get, so why encourage the development of others to compete with it?

Daley believes that the Cook County Democratic machine is as representative and as effective a structure as man, given his imperfections, can devise to satisfy his personal and collective wants. He considers his own life as proof of the validity of this contention.

What Daley planned to make of Chicago's anti-poverty program was an extension of the social services that his administration offered to the city's poor. According to the original plan devised by Deton Brooks, the city was to establish a network of "urban progress centers" in Chicago's most impoverished neighborhoods, all but one or two of which were essentially black. With characteristic efficiency, the Daley administration rushed to open these centers, first at improvised quarters, later in new and permanent buildings, until a dozen were in operation at key locations around town.

The professional staff in charge of these centers was selected at city hall, where budgets were fixed and accounting monitored. This staff loosely presided over an assortment of "outreach" offices of municipal, county, and state agencies which were persuaded to bring their services to the urban progress centers. The staff also supervised battalions of "community representatives," people of modest skills who went out into the neighborhoods to conduct surveys on needs, disseminate information on services, and generally keep a finger on the pulse of the community. For the most part, these urban progress centers stayed open until well into the evening, and kept services available for emergencies around the

clock. It seems beyond dispute that these centers represented a discernible improvement in the life of the poor who lived within their reach.

The research for the preparation of this book included visits to many of these centers, which varied in appearance from the ultra-modern, handsomely landscaped Garfield Community Center, to the sprawling series of inter-connected stores at Lawndale, to the converted parish house-parochial school which is now the Martin Luther King, Jr. Urban Progress Center. Each of these varies slightly in the services it offers, presumably in keeping with diverse community needs.

At Garfield, the State Department of Corrections maintains an anti-delinquency unit to follow youths through the juvenile justice system. At Lawndale special emphasis is put on training, placement, and financial aid to assist in the acquisition of jobs. At the King center on the southside there is a large head-start program, as well as a smaller program to discourage teen-agers from dropping out of school, and even a fund to provide scholarship assistance for college students. At the various centers, recreation programs are available for senior citizens, child care for working mothers, typing, and literacy classes, a blood pressure testing service provided by the Health Department and a food stamp office administered by the State Department of Public Aid.

At Lawndale, the young man who had worked his way through the anti-poverty bureaucracy to become the center director said his facilities provided services for 12,000 to 15,000 individual residents of the neighborhood each month. A monthly average of 3,000 persons takes advantage of the various forms of employment assistance, he said, 300 babies receive lead poisoning tests, and several hundred addicts appear regularly for counseling on drugs and alcoholism. He noted proudly that during the westside riots of 1968, when a huge area was burned to the ground, the urban progress center was the only building in the Lawndale neighborhood that was not touched.

Tight as city hall's control is of these neighborhood centers, as well as of the city wide special service programs run directly from downtown, the Daley administration has been scrupulous in meeting the minimum requirements set by law for citizen participation. This is true not only for

the anti-poverty program but for Model Cities as well, the two under Daley being distinguishable only in a slightly greater intensity of services delivered to Chicago's four Model Cities areas. For some time, in fact, the two have been administered as a single program, called Model Cities-Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity.

Theoretically under this committee's jurisdiction, the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs are run by an administrative assistant to the mayor, a highly competent and dynamic black man named Erwin France. France's policies are subject organizationally to the guidance of the advisory council—which has given the agency its name. However, most of the members of this council are appointed by the mayor, though the poor, some of whom are elected, are assigned a third of the seats under the anti-poverty law. As long ago as 1965, a critic observed that the council roster read "like a fund-raising committee for the Democratic party." The membership has since changed, but no one would claim that the Model Cities/Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity exercises the slightest influence over the determination of anti-poverty policies.

Somewhat more influential, perhaps, are the neighborhood advisory councils attached to each of the urban progress centers. Half their membership is elected by neighborhood voters, half appointed by the mayor, which means that Daley needs only one elected vote to be sure of a majority.

In fact, the mayor's interests have rarely been threatened in these neighborhood elections—and, on the few occasions that a threat has loomed, the precinct machine has managed to turn out as many votes as necessary to establish the results favored by city hall. Paradoxically, on occasion the neighborhood machine leadership has been embarrassingly zealous in the anti-poverty elections, with the result that the mayor has had to appoint his critics to the council just to produce some semblance of diversity.

This diversity has not been without importance, because the councils have tended to provide some balance to the authority of the professional staffs, and even from time to time of the downtown office. But, in addition to their political handicaps, with only skeletal staff assistance of their own, the councils have been unable to build sufficient expertise in most matters to sustain

serious opposition. They have certainly never intruded in the machine's domain, by promoting candidates for city office or even by organizing voter registration drives.

One southside representative recalled a meeting some years ago in which a neighborhood council threatened to reject a plan forwarded from downtown. At the next meeting, city hall had the precinct machine send up a huge crowd of its supporters, assigned a parliamentarian from the mayor's office to "assist" in the proceedings, and effectively steamrolled the dissident forces. He said the neighborhood advisory council had no trouble understanding the message, and has been docile ever since.

During the entire 1960's, one can find only two efforts that can be categorized as "popular" or "grass roots" which in any significant way challenged the Daley machine's hegemony. The first was organized in Woodlawn, an old area on the south side of modest frame homes and small apartment buildings. Woodlawn experienced a tumultuous transformation beginning in World War II from a relatively prosperous white neighborhood to an utterly impoverished black ghetto.

Built for 40,000 people or so, Woodlawn's population steadily grew to double that number as absentee landlords jammed in migrants without regard to property maintenance, and white home-owners disposed of their houses as quickly as they could. In classical fashion, Woodlawn thus became a bonanza for real estate profiteers, and a natural target for "red-lining" by the banks. Owners, unwilling or unable to renovate their buildings, took what profits they could out of them and then abandoned them. The city, for its part, virtually abdicated its responsibilities and garbage piled high on the streets.

Gradually, gangs of marauding youths took over Woodlawn to terrorize black householders as much as departing white businessmen. The momentum of disintegration was still growing when The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) was formed in the early 1960's to try to make the neighborhood habitable once again.

The churches in Woodlawn took the lead, not only the black Protestant churches serving the new arrivals but, very generously, the white Catholic parish whose roots lay in the departed white community. They pooled their money to give TWO some starting funds, elected as their

president a moderate black minister named Arthur Brazier, and chose as their model two Chicago communities which had been pioneers in neighborhood organization.

The first was adjacent Hyde Park, site of the University of Chicago, which many decades before had formed a successful property owners association to keep from being swamped by the surrounding black ghettos. The other was the area in which Mayor Daley himself lived, organized during the Depression by the celebrated Saul Alinsky into the Back of the Yards Council to increase its economic power. Both now worked in close association with the Daley machine, which TWO by no means thought of as a friend. It was Alinsky to whom TWO turned for professional organizing help.

TWO did organize successfully, mobilizing the population of Woodlawn to stand up to unscrupulous profiteering by landlords and merchants, to hold the line against the University of Chicago's efforts to expand southward over the Hyde Park boundary, to demand decent educational, police, sanitation and other services from the city government.

Within a year, TWO was a force to be reckoned with on the south side, and in possession of clear political potential. Daley could well imagine that, in the near future, forces unleashed by TWO might sweep a half-dozen aldermanic seats from the Democratic organization and win the allegiance of a major segment of the city's blacks. Such a prospect he did not look upon with equanimity.

Daley promptly made up his mind to thwart TWO's dynamism. He is said to have applied a great deal of pressure to cut off TWO's local sources of funding, particularly from the Catholic church, its most affluent donor. He picked off the most promising young men in TWO, and throughout Woodlawn, and put them on the payrolls of his own agencies.

Most importantly, he successfully blocked TWO's attempt to become independently funded by the OEO in Washington, as were neighborhood organizations in Oakland and elsewhere in the country. The only Federal money TWO received during its formative years was a high-risk grant to finance a program which sought to control the street gangs—most notably the celebrated Blackstone Rangers—that were devastating

Woodlawn. The failure of the program, which the antagonism of the police and other city agencies assured, badly hurt TWO. The stain upon its reputation probably ended forever any possibility of its becoming a rival political force to Daley's machine on the southside.

Yet, with his characteristic shrewdness, Daley also extended to TWO the satisfactions of the velvet glove. Once TWO made clear that it was a power in Woodlawn, Daley personally appeared before one hundred neighborhood organizations at TWO's annual convention to symbolize his willingness to make peace. Since that time, the TWO leadership itself concedes that the city has been helpful, even indispensable, in its efforts to rehabilitate the neighborhood.

Using his persuasive powers as mayor, Daley helped resolve the longstanding dispute between Woodlawn and the University of Chicago. A compromise was devised under which TWO withdrew its objection to the university's expansion in return for the university's assistance in the construction of a major housing project. This construction started TWO on a course which, with the city's encouragement, has increasingly transformed it into a real estate development firm. TWO has built, or is building, apartment houses, a shopping center, and a theater. It has rehabilitated old housing, and maintains its own property security force.

Some would say that Daley has succeeded in diverting TWO into the kind of constructive activity of which he eminently approves, while neutralizing TWO as a political menace. Some militants say simply that TWO has sold out.

The fact is that Woodlawn is still an unsightly and unpleasant place to live, inordinately dangerous and devoid of economic opportunity. Within the past few years, its population has declined by almost a third, about the same ratio as the usable housing stock. But the general assessment is that, having reached bottom, Woodlawn has nowhere to go but up. For the moment, TWO's influence in the community remains backed by funds from the Ford Foundation. It remains to be seen how much impact TWO can have in restoring Woodlawn to a desirable level.

Leon Finney, executive director of TWO, was interviewed on these prospects in the ornate building that serves as TWO's headquarters. The building was once a prosperous bank, long ago

abandoned. The following are excerpts from the interview.

Finney: "We have a more stable community. I don't want to exaggerate, though. It's also artificial. You know, because of the housing abandonment most of the people living in the worst housing have moved out of the neighborhood. Or they were burned out. So I guess it's not fair to say that the stability of the community is a measure of success. I'd rather measure it in terms of employment, housing stock, the quality of health care, even the quality of education, and maybe more than anything the quality of hope we've been able to generate."

Question: "Could you have done anything about all that housing stock that was abandoned?"

Finney: "Yeah. I think we could have done something about it if we could have gotten the Feds to let some money be tapped. What the owners were saying was, 'we want out.' We could have bought the buildings, boarded them up, run them through a rehab process and put people back into them."

Question: "Why would you have been able to run them at an economically feasible level when these other people could not?"

Finney: "I think really because we had a commitment to the neighborhood and we would have worked every goddam angle to keep them going, just as we do right now. Most of the housing we own out there right now isn't profitable. We fight to get tax breaks and get taxes reduced. We fight with the utility companies to get favors, and we just fight to get expenses down. People cooperate with us because we've got a commitment to the neighborhood. That differentiates us from anybody else. We exist to save the neighborhood."

Finney seemed to have no illusions about the struggle, and acknowledged that at best it will be long. By now, he says, the outside profiteers have all abandoned Woodlawn, leaving TWO and the Daley machine to battle for the loyalty of its residents. Without dismissing the importance of the city's cooperation in physical redevelopment, he is contemptuous of what the city has done with its anti-poverty and Model Cities money.

"Work relief, social service, cultural development, all shit like that, nothing you could put your hand on," he said. "Just a bunch of people on a payroll walking through the neighborhood with

clipboards. A rip-off. If you could have gotten a city-wide movement with the Feds being willing to review and exercise some influence, we could have made a difference. But the machine just took that dough and bought up every goddam thing they saw."

Asked what TWO might have done with those funds, Finney replied: "I think we probably would have taken the dollars and, as opposed to directing them toward work relief, we would have bought up the real estate. We would have set up real estate management companies, or aided real estate management companies that would take possession of the property that people were criminally mismanaging."

"We would also have used that money in a different way for our public school system. With the carrot of dollars to put in, we probably would have forced in a different administration. We'd put our dollars in if we could get some better kind of quality administration, better teachers, better curriculum. We would have used the money to change the existing system rather than to supplement the existing way things worked.

"Undoubtedly we would have moved early to do something to help local businessmen in the community. I don't know just what, but we would have been very concerned about the decline of business, and we might very well have used some of those dollars to help defray the insurance expenses that they had, the real estate taxes they had, all of which contributed to their beginning to feel a lack of confidence in the neighborhood. That's kind of radical stuff but what it really says is, 'Hey, mister, let's use these resources to save the goddam neighborhood instead of using them for political control of the neighborhood, or to keep from raising taxes.'

"I suspect that we would have done what we could to set up training and assistance programs for people so that they could get into the job market, so they could be independent and free, so that they could make it. We would have generated jobs, not just payrollers. We would have tried to develop jobs not dependent on the city administration, or even OEO, because sooner or later that money was going to dry up, too

"When Model Cities came, they just took the same payrollers that were in the war on poverty and put them in Model Cities. All they did was take one sign down and put another sign up. I

guess we would have had some work relief, too, but our real goal would have been jobs that would last."

Without Federal money, TWO had no opportunity to test any of these ideas, and throughout Chicago TWO was the only organization of its kind. Whatever dreams its founders may have had for spreading their organizational movement throughout the city, they never got started or, in the few cases in which incipient organizations were founded, their activities were quickly starved to death. TWO remained able to survive, thanks in its later years to the Ford Foundation, but never to flourish. After a decade of the anti-poverty and model cities programs, the Daley machine, with its efficiently administered social service operations, had established its supremacy on the Woodlawn battlefield.

The only other threat to Daley's hegemony during the decade was an effort by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. which, at least in retrospect, can only be considered quixotic. In 1966, King decided to bring his civil rights campaign to Chicago, which with some justification he had once called the most segregated city in the nation.

Since Chicago's poor blacks seemed notoriously indifferent to the civil rights movement, he had very little organization on which to build, however. His only institutional base was in an umbrella group of liberal whites and middle class black organizations, called the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO), which had hitherto given its principal attention to the city schools. King's objective was to break down the almost sacrosanct system of segregated neighborhoods in Chicago and his tactic was to lead a series of mass marches of blacks, much as he had in the South, through residential districts of the white working classes. Daley recognized immediately the potential for violence and seemed ready not only to avoid a physical confrontation with King but to defuse the tension by volunteering concessions.

King did march throughout much of the summer, the city remained edgy for weeks, and Daley proclaimed his undying dedication to King's objectives while refusing to offer anything substantive to him in a series of highly publicized meetings. But Chicago's black masses largely ignored the hero of Montgomery and Selma, while his crusade, though he was in no way responsible,

was thrown considerably off stride by one of Lawndale's periodic riots.

Most debilitating of all to the prospect of success, however, was probably King's strategic preference for changing Chicago's spiritual outlook to organizing a political opposition. Convinced that he could somehow reach the virtue in Richard J. Daley, King discouraged any effort to use the movement as an organizing lever against the Democratic machine. His attempt at spiritual conversion failed, however, with the result that the few glittering promises which Daley had made thereafter faded in practice. By fall, King had returned to the South, leaving Chicago's already weak civil rights movement more powerless than ever, and organizationally in shambles.

And so the 1960's passed into the 1970's, with the configuration of power in Chicago unchanged. The anti-poverty and Model Cities programs certainly improved the conditions of life in a few neighborhoods, and probably eased the lot of a large number of blacks marginally.

If one is satisfied to measure these two programs in terms of delivery of social services alone, one would have to admit that in Chicago they were a huge success. In fact, if one is willing to accept the notion that the Cook County Democratic organization is an adequate vehicle for attaining the aspirations of the poor, one would have to agree that these two programs equipped the machine better than ever for the achievement of this objective.

But the designers of the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs believed that communities of the poor cannot realistically be expected to reach a level of self-sustaining prosperity without the acquisition of further power to choose and to influence the course they take. In some American cities in the 1960's, the anti-poverty and Model Cities programs succeeded in shifting some power to the poor. In Chicago these programs actually served to reinforce the status quo. By that measure, they were a failure.

Summary:

What have we learned?

The trend of the 1970's has been dramatically away from citizen involvement. If the Federal government's great financial innovation of the 1960's was to convey grants directly from the U.S. Treasury to community groups, the policies which have evolved since then have been quite the opposite.

President Nixon's "New Federalism" proclaimed as its goal the strengthening of the state and local governments against what were said to be the encroaching powers of Washington. One might applaud in principle the reversal of centralization. But the net effect of Nixon's change was to terminate the Federal government's alliance with the urban poor, and to shift whatever powers the neighborhoods had developed back to the established authorities in city hall, the county seat, and the state house.

The Community Development Act of 1974 substituted Federal block grants to local administrations for many of the categorical grants mandated during the Johnson years for Federal social welfare programs. This new legislation contained only the loosest requirement for citizen participation in the decision-making process and, as a practical matter, sanctioned the crushing of all existing and would-be programs operated at the community level. Nixon's "New Federalism" may have decentralized authority that had once emanated from Washington. But it recentralized authority that had once been dispersed among the indigenous organizations of the poor.

Yet, as the findings of this book suggest, the spirit of citizen involvement lives on in Oakland, Atlanta, and Chicago, and it is reasonable to suppose from them that it lives on elsewhere, too. Whether it can survive much longer, cut off as it is from Federal moral and financial help, is doubtful, however. If Nixon's proclaimed goal of restoring vigor to local governments has in fact been achieved, it is apparent that much of the price has been exacted from those Americans living in the

culture of poverty.

Some observers, though they may be quite well disposed to assisting the poor, take no exception to this change. They say that, in retrospect, the inevitability of domestic strife inherent in the establishment of new centers of power proved too disruptive to society. Many of them will say that citizen involvement, as an advisory process, has become a useful component of the public dialogue. But they add that citizen control, with its political implications, goes beyond dialogue to confrontation.

They point to such experiences as Oakland's as evidence that citizen control generates so much discord that all sides give priority to the battle rather than to the result. These observers—chiefly from the white middle class—have probably contributed disproportionately to what, in the introduction to this study, was called "conventional wisdom." They certainly helped prepare the public for Nixon's shift to the "New Federalism."

In the absence of "hard" data, reasonable men can presumably argue endlessly over whether Oakland's experience was healthy or unhealthy, whether the poor were helped or not, whether the money could or could not have been spent more usefully. What seems beyond argument, however, is that (1) the 1960's were turbulent times throughout the society, and disputes over citizen control were hardly incongruous within the overall social framework, and (2) social change probably cannot take place without a real fear on the part of some segments of the community that their interests are threatened, and the greater the inflexibility of the various segments the greater the likelihood of turmoil.

What is significant about Oakland, one might contend, is not that there was strife at all. It is that, by the end of the decade, the various contending segments had learned much about how to confine their differences within established

political channels and, though disagreements did not diminish, strife did.

One could make a case, in fact, that the "confrontation" model of citizen involvement in Oakland proved more useful to breaking down the culture of poverty than either the "cooperation" model of Atlanta or the "cooptation" model of Chicago. Certainly the relationship of the poor to the established classes changed more decisively in Oakland (where, admittedly, it started nearer to point zero) than it did in the other two cities, though one may question the durability of the change in the absence of a continuing Federal commitment.

The critics of the Oakland experience maintain that, whatever the change, its value was nullified by the damage done to the tranquillity of the city as a whole. Yet it is probably worth emphasizing that the organizations of the poor set up in Oakland under the Federal umbrella acted vigorously to counteract the threat of riots, and that relations between the poor and the police are surely better today than they were a decade ago. The organizations of the poor also made efforts to keep Atlanta and Chicago "cool during the volatile moments of the 1960's, though, for whatever reason, without the same degree of success."

In fact, it is probably naive to try to envisage any program of social action which aims to eradicate, or even to enfeeble significantly, the culture of poverty that does not also generate some amount of social destabilization. Overcoming the poverty of some must inevitably encroach upon the vested interests of others, in any society. In the United States, poverty is particularly related to the question of race and status of minorities. Though in the end strong measures may be unavoidable, it would be foolish to pretend that poverty can be conquered without stirring a wide range of Americans to a defense of what they already possess.

It is surely unrealistic to ask how the government can wage a war against poverty without evoking fears and ferment. President Johnson initiated such a war in the 1960's, and assumed that prosperity would somehow save us from these fears and this ferment. It did not. We have since learned enough to recognize that the question one must address is what strategy can bring the quickest and best results at the lowest cost. The measure is money, to be sure, but it is also the

condition to which the strategy brings society on the scale from calm to chaos.

The strategy on which the country has stumbled—and there is scarcely another verb to describe the inadvertence of the process—is known as busing or, by its bitterest critics, as "forced busing." Busing may seem far removed from citizen participation as a social instrument, but it is not. Both are society's answer to the problem of the poverty culture. The difference between them is that the Supreme Court has ruled that blacks have a constitutional right to maximum benefits from the educational system through busing. They have no comparable right to maximum benefits from the political system through citizen participation.

At best, the conviction that integrated education would dissolve the intellectual and psychological handicaps of poverty was a decent-minded ideal. At worst, it was a blunder.

That black children would get smarter just by sitting next to white children did them a serious injustice. That the proximity of poor black culture and non-poor white culture would somehow create greater understanding and sympathy between them was a misreading of significant signs in the American urban experience.

According to some experts, recent test results have produced evidence that the black child does marginally better in an integrated than in a segregated school, but other experts dispute that conclusion. What no one is prepared to claim is evidence that busing will significantly overcome the cultural disadvantages of the black poor in general. And for a social strategy whose results are so grievously unpromising, Americans have paid an incredibly heavy price in social disarray.

Ironically, the busing strategy of the 1970's can be interpreted as the antithesis of the institution-building strategy of the 1960's. The busing strategy says that if poor blacks are thrown in with non-poor whites indiscriminately, they will not only be able to hold their own but will get increasingly adept at exercising the skills demanded for success in modern society. The institution-building strategy holds that after blacks become more adept at exercising the skills demanded by modern society, they will be able to hold their own with whites and successfully compete.

As a practical matter, while the institution-building strategy concentrated on promoting

cohesion within a neighborhood, the busing strategy scatters the young residents of these neighborhoods to the four winds to dilute their efforts in the culture of the majority.

In a sense, there is in these two approaches something of the W.E.B. Dubois vs. Booker T. Washington debate referred to in the opening page of this study's discussion of Chicago. In our own time, this debate has suffered from frequent over-simplification into integration vs. segregation. It is not to be a segregationist to see validity in the Booker T. Washington approach, however, or an anti-integrationist to perceive a flaw in the Dubois contention. Rather, this book discerns a lesson in fact that the minorities that have integrated most successfully into the mainstream of American life, Scandinavians and Jews and Irish-Americans, for example, are those that have started out with the strongest indigenous institutions.

To be sure, the minorities which have best integrated into American society did not face the racial discrimination encountered by American blacks, as well as by American Indians and Chicanos. But in many cases they faced powerful religious discrimination, and some think that they still do. In being successful, they overcame the handicaps of religious discrimination, which may or may not be as devastating as racism. But what they had were institutions of their own that prepared them for the American test, and it seems reasonable to attribute to these institutions much of the credit for their collective success.

If one applies a similar kind of scrutiny to non-American societies, the result seems to be remarkably similar. By the standards of the contemporary industrial world, the most successful societies are not those endowed with the most resources, or whose experts are in command of the best technology. Resources can be imported, and technology can be bought, learned or donated. The most successful countries are those that have most thoroughly mastered the complexities of social organization and management.

The most dramatic example of this phenomenon in our own day is, of course, Japan, which was able to transform itself overnight from a feudal to an industrial nation, with neither a raw material nor a technological base. Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Germany are nations whose wealth we tend to take for granted, but which

surely is the product of social cohesion rather than of pre-existing material assets. Countries like Nigeria and Iran may, in due course, become effectively industrialized, but their oil income, by itself, is no guarantee of future success.

Indeed, money alone will not cure poverty—whether the money be in the form of transfers from the industrial to the undeveloped world or from rich Americans to poor Americans. Organizational technique, penetrating from the managerial level well into the body of workers of all sorts, is essential for the transformation of a culture of poverty, both abroad and at home.

In terms of method, the conclusion this study aims to convey is that the citizen participation component of the anti-poverty and model cities programs provided a promising start to the transformation of poverty cultures. It is apparent that the precise form which citizen participation takes must vary from community to community, much as water assumes the shape of the vessel that contains it.

But the Oakland, Atlanta, and Chicago experiences lead one to the conclusion that citizen involvement did make a salutary difference among the poor, and one could argue that its effectiveness was in direct ratio to the responsibility that poor citizens assumed within their communities. Furthermore, there is ample reason for contending that the citizen participation component can be restored to social welfare programs without paying a prohibitive price, and most notably without re-igniting the turmoil of the 1960's.

One reason is the obvious one that, for whatever cause, the temper of the times has changed. Another is that participants at all levels of the political process have acquired a familiarity with citizen participation, and a far larger number than a decade ago recognize its usefulness. Still another is that the concept of decentralization has proven appealing to most Americans, and the notion of people running their own programs with a minimum of central bureaucratic supervision may be more attractive than ever before. Finally, it is cheap, perhaps as cheap as central administration of the same programs.

One can imagine, for example, effectively promoting citizen participation by amending the Community Development Act to provide a modest bonus of, say, 3 to 5 per cent for any program run at the neighborhood level. This

would provide an incentive to both municipal officials and neighborhood residents, while those neighborhoods which do not want to be bothered with collecting their own trash or operating their own day care centers or conducting their own employment services need not be.

It is appropriate, and in fact essential, that government regularly evaluate programs with an eye to abandoning those that are ineffective or irrelevant. Too many government programs outlive their usefulness. It may very well be true, as some have asserted, that many aspects of the war on poverty began with unsound ideas, that much of the Model Cities conception was beyond the capacity of contemporary bureaucracy to execute. It is not the purpose of this book to judge those

assertions. But, in the case of citizen involvement, the evidence is compelling that the Federal government gave up without really evaluating it, and thus without really finding it wanting.

Perhaps an explanation for this abandonment lies in the vain search of evaluators for data, to apply a social process that yields no concrete data. Perhaps it lies in the power of mayors and governors to suppress programs, no matter how helpful to the poor, which intrude upon their domains. Perhaps it lies in the ideological disposition of an administration in Washington which lost interest in the poor as soon as they ceased threatening to be violent. Whatever the explanation, the flames of citizen involvement are dying. This study urges that they be revived.

About the Author

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As a syndicated political columnist for the *Washington Star Syndicate*, Milton Viorst has written on a wide range of timely and controversial issues. His columns appear regularly in the *Washington Star* and many other newspapers throughout the entire country.

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His full-length books include:

Liberalism: A Guide to its Past, Present, and Future in American Politics, Bantam, 1963; *Hostile Allies: FDR and de Gaulle*, Macmillan, 1964, Denoel in French, 1967; *Fall from Grace: The Republican Party and the Puritan Ethic*, NAL, 1968, Simon and Schuster, 1970; *Hustlers & Heroes: An American Political Panorama*, Simon and Schuster, 1971. Also with Sen. Clinton P. Anderson, *Outsider in the Senate*, World, 1970; with the staff of the *Los Angeles Times*, *Israel's Fight for Survival*, NAL, 1967; with Judith Viorst, *An Underground Gourmet Guide to Washington, D.C.*, Simon and Schuster, 1970.

He is currently working on a book which examines social disorder in the 1960's. It will be published by Simon and Schuster.

