

THE 'WAR ON POVERTY'

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by
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Slums and shanties are now being talked about all across America. The "Other America" is in the news. But skepticism reigns among those who are the people in the slums and in the shanties and among those who know how the Power Structure deals with human problems. This is a skepticism which looks at Johnson's proposals as "More Bull for a Billion." There is a suspicion that much of the effort will be like President Kennedy's announcement in 1962 that 400,000 unemployed persons "are being retrained" before a three-year program which optimally hoped to retrain 400,000 (and isn't) had even begun to train one person. But in Beginnings and the Continuation of Beginnings there is hope. And in the radical contrast between beginnings and needs, particularly given the potentialities, there can sometimes be the impulse to change, to grow, to Move Forward (Again?).

Poverty: a human issue

There is no need to cite here the vast literature of books and magazine articles that have "discovered" the Poverty that has always dwelled in America. That poverty was reduced by the New Deal and the national economic planning and mobilization of World War II (mostly the latter), has been common knowledge. To see that two-fifths of our population still live in poverty and deprivation in spite of the Affluent Society has taken X-ray vision by writers and a Negro Revolution to heighten national consciousness.

Something is missing in most current mass media accounts of the issue. Appalachian miners are now being besieged by reporters like Zuni Indians are pursued by anthropologists, both subjects being seen as certain quaint and zoo-like exceptions to the American way. Their situations are seen as static, isolated, Another Country. No hint is ever given that, in the words of economist Mary Jean Bowman, "No public policy directed solely or primarily to the solution of area problems...can have substantial economic results if the national situation is unfavorable." No hint is ever given that these "quaint" people live at the butt end of an unemploying and internally stagnating economy. These people are living not as "exceptions" but as victims of the "rules" of our current economy.

The people of those "romantically depressed" Thirties are still there, as neglected and isolated as ever. James Agee's white sharecroppers (Let Us Now Praise Famous Men) are still marginal farmers in North Alabama and, tragically, maybe one or two of them were in on the Anniston bus-burning, striking out at the Freedom-riding foe they see as their enemy more than the White Powers. Upon Sinclair's Chicago Jungle doesn't even have meat-packing jobs for many any more - automation has set in. John Steinbeck's migrant workers (Grapes of Wrath) in the Imperial Valley are still some of the most poverty-stricken workers in the country. And Richard Wright's Negro migrant has found that Jim Crow and The Ghetto go on and on in the northern city just like in the South.

Now is the time to make history, not just to write more poetic biographies.

Falacies about American poverty

More than political tenuity and business opposition block the development of a significant war on poverty. There are many misconceptions of the problem and its possible solutions.

Firs: "The problem is only a matter of individual disability and not a problem

of the economy and society as a whole." Low levels of education and skill limit a person's productive power. But these levels are higher today than ever before in American history. Twenty years ago, when education and skill levels were much lower, all of America's people were employed. The difference was that the society was then planned and mobilized for rapid production to meet felt needs - at that time war needs. Why couldn't the same society be mobilized today for rapid production to meet felt needs - peaceful, public, and personal? There are two basic problems: (a) the economy is operating at far less than full capacity, and (b) the economy is automating production much faster than it is re-allocating work and redistributing income to involve all the population in the expanding consuming and producing process.

Unemployment and poverty are basically matters of low economic growth and a particular kind of economic distributing and allocating system. Unemployment and poverty are particularly matters of individuals being trapped in certain regions, industries, and ethnic origins and therefore being the first to be fired in the automating economy. There are skilled steelworkers out of work; there are Negro college graduates doing menial work. Only in this context can it be said that low levels of education and skill are the determinants of economic position. A revolutionary upgrading of education is needed for all Americans, but this is not a justification for total isolation from a decent standard of living and a chance to participate in the "work" of society for the "relatively uneducated." As Mrs. Louise White, postmistress of Clairfield, Tennessee, puts it, "It's not the people; it's that there isn't any work."

Second: "Education and skill upgrading must come before any increased in personal income" (a corollary of the first misconception). Having realized that low income is not simply a function of individual disability but also involves the shape of the economy and the absolute value judgment made of productivity in our society, we must see the need on human and economic grounds for income redistribution. First of all, the poverty-stricken must have a decent level of income, regardless of work, before they can begin to participate fully in the society (including improving their education, health, and environment). In a market economy such as ours, income is the ticket of admission. The high percentage of poverty-stricken elderly will not have time to upgrade their skills first. Secondly, unless the full consuming power (effective demand) of all the people in the society is enlisted, the total growth of the economy sags for lack of "priming."

Third: "The majority of the poor are Negro." But poverty is a national disease with amazingly widespread distribution. Almost every American community has a slum - and, despite "renewal," the walls of the slum are becoming higher. Every community is a labor surplus area to some degree, which is the reason why there seems to be no exit for the poor. A recent Council of Economic Advisors study showed that depression is decreasingly confined to certain geographically isolated areas of distress and is increasingly becoming a growing characteristic of all areas of the country. Poverty is becoming more mobile.

Fourth: "Poverty will be solved by migration." The Agricultural Revolution has had an impact in America similar to the Enclosure Movement in England preceding the Industrial Revolution. Farming is a shrinking percentage of national output and, because of automation, is an ever faster shrinking percentage of national employment. A rapid farm-to-city migration has taken place, in the postwar years in particular, which has transformed the face of America. Interregional movements south to north and east to west have depleted the

population of the lower income areas of the country in favor of the growing high income areas. But now the wartime and postwar booms have slowed down. There is not such a great demand for workers in the industrial and metropolitan areas as before. In fact, most areas are having increasing trouble taking care of their own. One reporter said recently of one depressed East Tennessee town, "Most of the men have been out of the valley. Many have worked unskilled jobs in Ohio and Michigan. Sooner or later they were laid off from work. Then faced with a choice of a city slum or a shack at home, they came back."

A recent study of Eastern Kentucky eighth graders showed that after 10 years 27.7 per cent had either established civilian residence (military service expected) outside Eastern Kentucky and had returned or had re-established residence back in Eastern Kentucky one or more times after the initial move out. As long as there are no opportunities at home, the people will have to try it elsewhere, even if they bounce back. If real opportunities are provided elsewhere for "depressed people," with provision for travel, living conditions and work, then migration is a solution to their problems. But too often migration is not such planned resettlement; it is a desperate hunt for scarce jobs - it is mobile poverty - the cost of neglect, not the result of humane policy. As former Governor Combs of Kentucky once said, "When I was a boy in Eastern Kentucky one of the serious problems was isolation. We couldn't get in or out. We didn't know how other people lived. But now, of course, we can hear and see those people on radio and television." We can see how Governor Underwood dresses and acts, for instance, and we can see how other people in the outside world live. So we don't have the problem of isolation anymore. But still we need jobs. We need a great many jobs..."

Fifth: "The problem can be solved with modest increases in existing programs." This is the real failure of the Johnson approach - an unwillingness to acknowledge the failure and waste of token existing approaches such as the Area Redevelopment Administration; an unwillingness to acknowledge the need for vast public expenditures to change existing patterns, the need for structural change in patterns of investment and income distribution, and the need for more effective national economic planning to achieve the comprehensive goals of the society. Perhaps the failure is even more one of unwillingness to initiate such changes and the unwillingness to admit that modest tax cuts (favoring automation and high incomes) and reshuffling the duties of the Peace Corps director are not revolutionary changes.

Unfinished wars

A good beginning toward solving poverty might simply be to fulfill the unkept promises of past national legislation.

The Welfare State, erected essentially in the social revolution of the Thirties - consisting of social security, welfare assistance, minimum wage, agriculture subsidies, workmen's compensation, unemployment compensation, etc., has become horribly out of date in its levels of payment and has never really reached the poorest.

The guarantees of worker representation and unionization (Wagner Act, NLRB, etc.) have been made marginal by a shrinking base of organized labor, now only one-fourth of the total workforce. Meanwhile, wages lag far behind profits and unemployment and underemployment increase.

The Full Employment Act of 1946 stands in contrast with current unemployment figures of more than 6 per cent.

The Housing Act of 1949 authorized 810,000 units of public housing by 1953, but in 1963 only about 500,000 units had been built and many of these are at rents too high for the poor to pay; public housing to date has only accommodated 17 per cent of the persons publicly displaced by various renewal efforts; 100,000 persons had to foreclose their government-backed housing mortgages in 1963 for lack of funds; the Urban Renewal program has amounted more often to human clearance than it has to human housing.

The Area Redevelopment Act of 1961 has, along with programs such as Rural Areas Development (Agriculture) and Manpower Development and Training (Labor), sent a trickle of finance, attention, and retraining into the most distressed areas but has failed to transform the basic pattern of "depressed areas."

Even war, at least the preoccupying Cold war we are in now, no longer seems to produce the kind of impetus to national growth and full employment that World War II, in combination with the postwar "suppressed demand explosion," did. Since about 1957 the immense federal defense budget has simply accelerated the automating, research-intensive, big-profits industries at the expense of new job creation. About 100 giant corporations dominate defense procurement and account for three-quarters of all spending; the top 10 alone account for about \$8 billion.

It can be argued that the federal "developmental" policy in recent years has amounted mainly to one of unimaginative rear guard action - of agricultural subsidies for non-production in the declining rural areas and slum clearance in the overcrowded urban areas. Ducking of responsibility for general needs such as education and medical care, refusal of responsibility for the wrenching dislocations which defense has brought to the economy, and maiming efforts to expand the welfare State to reach the most distressed people - this has been the basic national "war-on-poverty" record over the postwar period.

The Latest War Unveiled

It is no wonder, then, that there is cautious but sincere rejoicing that the President has raised the comprehensive issue of poverty at all. In rhetoric with no equal since FDR's "One-third of a nation" speech in the Thirties (it was actually about two-thirds then!), President Johnson has called for the end of this dread disease - but, alas, with programs generally as bogus as in previous postwar years.

At least there now seems to be government acceptance that there is a problem, and some semblance of a coordinated federal effort to pursue the problem. Just as JFK defended the role of government as "planning partner" in a capitalist society at Yale in 1962, LBJ has now asserted that government has an important role in solving the poverty problem. What role? How much role? These are the questions that will be answered in the halls of Congress, in the committee rooms of the Executive - and in the streets - in the coming months. What is included in the federal war-on-Poverty package?

Tax Cut: This is not much of a poverty cure, although Johnson insists on calling the tax cut a major part of the war on Poverty - and even has gone so far as to say it helps Negroes as much as the civil rights bill. But, despite the "shot in the arm" it may give to business expectations and therefore economic growth, it fails to reverse the generally regressive national tax pattern which tends to reinforce poverty. Further, it encourages more automation through investment credits and corporation income tax cuts and therefore depreciates the number of new jobs that would be created by economic growth.

A Special "Deprived Areas" Education Program: A good beginning would be comprehensive federal aid for all primary and secondary schools with larger allowances and better grant percentages given for deprived areas. Nothing short of an all-out compensatory assault on educational underdevelopment and illiteracy is needed now. With a third of our population in school, Mr. Johnson has recommended only \$718 million in new legislative authorizations for education.

Special Training and Retraining Programs, Including Community Work Programs and a Youth Conservation Corps: The problem remains, "training for what?" Retraining programs have been notorious thus far in their inability to attract applicants and to place graduates. Can youth be mobilized for something more than rural tree-planting and ditch-digging? The fresh air will do the school drop-outs good, but the needs in the cities go beyond fresh air.

Youth Mobilization Through Accelerated Draft Selection: By moving the draft registration age to 16, Mr. Shriver hopes to develop special compensatory educational and physical fitness programs for the draft exam flunkies, many of them high school drop-outs. Is extension of our national "military obligation" the only way to reach our deprived youth? Will this lead to a "cannon-fodder" theory about these youths once they are brought up to draft standards? (Consideration of this proposal has been deferred.)

Domestic Service Corps: This is to provide a national cadre of social workers for community rescue operations to work at the behest and request of states and localities. The flaw in this program, as in many others, is that it rests on the permissive framework of federalism, allowing the federal government to work only where it is "called in." It will not be "called in" the most segregated towns of the South; thus some of the most underprivileged will lose out completely. Skills like teaching and developmental entrepreneurship should be stressed in the Corps more than "social work," but these are more disruptive of the local power structure and will thus probably be relatively shunned. Modest programs such as the pilot "Appalachian Volunteers," (college students who will clean-up-paint-and-fix-up schools during the summer) will probably set the pace, one which avoids real community mobilization and the kind of outside administrative "independence" and "interruption" so needed in many dormant and elite-dominated communities. An important question of the federal efforts is: Can they survive the jungle of state, county, and local government power structures in carrying out their programs?

An "Integrated Welfare Approach" in Human Resource Programs: A more promising though slowly-evolving, Federal approach to solving immediate human needs is being developed. More coordination is being stressed between the Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare Departments in programs oriented toward self-sufficiency for the recipients. These include welfare payments to cover literacy and skill training connected with job-placement programs. The only rub is in the smallness of the Departments' budgets--and the haunting unavailability of jobs for the semi-trained. Should economic self-sufficiency (productivity) always be the goal--or "sufficiency," the simple covering of people's needs? What of the "unproductive" elderly and disabled?

An Integrated Urban Planning Approach in Housing and Community Development: Another area where the concept is brighter than the budget is in Johnson's new program and new name for an "urban affairs" department. The stress is on total community planning, rehabilitation, less sterile publicly subsidized housing, and even "new towns." New coordination in this area could lead to more liveable communities--if the needed budget were provided. However,

barring urban revolution, one can expect more bulldozers and less homes, despite the rhetoric. Downtown businessmen, who make the decisions in Metro, still prefer central business district modernization to invisible and less profitable human rehabilitation. A full-scale wrestling match will have to be won with the Agriculture Department if "total regional planning" is to be achieved, since various sub-agencies of the USDA (such as Farmers Home Administration) are lending piles of money for competitive sub-standard subdivisions ("slurbs") just outside the city walls all across the country. As long as the purpose of city planning is, as Clarence Stein, the father of American "New Towns," charges, "to assist in the marketing and protection of property" and not "to create communities," planning will dwell on zoning for the elite rather than creating democratic communities which concern themselves with all the needs of the residents.

New Appalachian Development Program and Continuation of Previous Area Redevelopment Programs: From the realization of the inadequacy of marginal finance and retraining programs such as ARA in a starkly "underdeveloped" area like the Appalachian Mountains a new Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is being proposed. It would (a) generate a new infrastructure (highways water resources projects, community facilities); (b) emphasize commercial resources to supplement coal (timber, cattle, other minerals); and (c) develop the human resources of the area (education, training, medical centers). This program will depend on large amounts of discretionary investment power and independent staffing to carry out anything more than a compensatory expansion of existing federal programs in the area. Here in Appalachia, generally acknowledged as the most underdeveloped region of the country, will be tested the ability of the federal government to use its initiative in the middle of the private economy to achieve developmental results.

Meanwhile, the Poor are still with us, whether or not we are with them.

Appalachia: the heart of the matter

John Kennedy held a can of "Mollygrub" (surplus food) before a nationwide TV audience during his debate with Hubert Humphrey in the West Virginia Primary and declared that he would never forget these faces. Lyndon and Ladybird Johnson in the summer campaign of 1960 poignantly told of the "Save-a-Meal Plan" they had learned about from a West Virginia child--one meal a day being skipped by the children so they could at least have one decent meal. The Johnsons promised that the people of Appalachia would never be neglected again.

Since then, Appalachia has not lacked for attention. But it has lacked for action to meet its needs. We put this discussion forth with the assumption that a growing indigenous movement in the mountains, starting with the Committee for Miners, can without apology carry its own program proposals to the Courthouse, to the Statehouse, and to the Nation.

The list of mountain troubles is endless. It would not be valuable here to repeat too much of what the volumes and treatises say. In Hazard the troubles are many and the solutions are difficult. The issue is not just unemployment, although there is 50 per cent unemployment among the miners. There is a total failure of the community and region to provide a liveable situation for its people. What connects Harlem, an island in the midst of urban plenty, with Hazard, an urban island in a sea of rural isolation, is

"community decay:" this Culture of Poverty. Unemployment, it must be remembered is both a cause and a symptom of this decay, this neglect, this inexcusable blot on our society.

Appalachia needs upwards of 500,000 new jobs right now; Eastern Kentucky needs upwards of 100,000. Many of the smaller "ribbon towns" face ghost futures in the next decade. Migration is both an escape valve and a further depressant, because more and more of the migrants are bouncing back. Those that make it--the younger ones, the potential local leaders--leave high rates of dependency behind them in the mountains. Coal production is down due to coal seam exhaustion and the competition of other fuels; and firms are hiring less per ton to produce that due to automation. The rugged terrain is generally not good for farming; the non-coal counties are worse off in income than the more dramatically collapsing coal counties. There are few industrial complexes and truly metropolitan areas, and most of these are on the edges of Appalachia. In an area that has always depended on exploitation of natural resources, the harvest is thinning. The timber stands and livestock herds, supposedly the "new hopes" of the mountain in the eyes of some developers, are generally scrawny. The larger plots of land are largely absentee-owned. The smaller plots are too small to add up to anything without a "collectivist" revolution unheard-of among the highly independent mountaineers, who are in characteristic American fashion (and then some) "self-reliant" about their pea patches and conspiratorial about their welfare.

The people reflect the inadequacy of their environment. They are generally two years behind in educational attainment, not to mention quality (Harlan County's 80 per cent draft rejectees among the 17-35 age bracket is a flagrant example). Even most of the "skilled" are hung up in an obsolete corner, mining. Lacking the land or capital for self-venture, the only homegrown solution for many is to bid down wages or compete for the political welfare. This, Harry Caudill, author of Night Comes to the Cumberlands, tells us, is the grim catalyst of courthouse politics. The people cling on for dear life to their Welfare Fund hospitals, one of the few signs of provision for the future, re-opened in response to miners' protest and pickets with funds bootlegged from the Area Redevelopment Administration after the UMW shut them down.

Results of past attention

In 1902, 1930, and 1963 the Federal government surveyed Appalachia and found economic distress. Coal brought a new vein of gold and exploitation and violence to the mountains, but the rural mountain quality remained, even in the wake of extractive industrialization.

Public works and welfare were the federal legacies of the Thirties. A voluntarist tradition of community self-help has been encouraged for 52 years by a hardy group centered around Berea College called the Council of the Southern Mountains, whose efforts have not amounted to much in ostentatious public work or development. They have, until recently, however, been the only constant spotlight of attention on the problems of the area.

After the devastating floods in Eastern Kentucky in 1957 and 1958, a group called the Eastern Kentucky Regional Development Council grew, primarily on the efforts of a whirlwind gentleman named John Whisman, who later, as former Governor Comb's Special Assistant, helped push for the Council of Appalachian

Governors. The governors of eight Appalachian states (Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Maryland; Georgia and Alabama were added later) then petitioned President Kennedy to do something about Appalachia. In 1962 Kennedy appointed Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr., (who had also brought the Roosevelt name to Kennedy's rescue in the crucial 1960 West Virginia Primary), as Undersecretary of Commerce and head of the "President's Appalachian Regional Commission" to develop a thorough program for the development of the area.

Up until that time, although Appalachia had been the depressed darling of the 1961 Congressional push for Kennedy's Senate Bill #1 (Area Redevelopment Act, "ARA"), not much had been done there. The loan and retraining provisions of the ARA proved relatively useless for an area with such economic disadvantages. Some highway and tourist projects in West Virginia, a wood products demonstration center in Eastern Kentucky, a few scattered industrial projects and public facilities loans--these were the tokens repaid for the 1960 revelations. In many cases communities could not participate in loan programs for lack of local funds, let alone "hot industrial prospects." And, except for a widely publicized but slapdash "Crash Program" for Eastern Kentucky to shore up against the cold winter in the fall of 1963 (emergency food allotments, some home repair, some teenage work-training projects), this is what the federal government has done to date in Appalachia.

Individual states of Appalachia have initiated interesting programs in recent years with assistance from federal and private resources: North Carolina's Ford Foundation sponsored drive against "educational poverty;" West Virginia's community work program; Pennsylvania's campaign against strip mine waste and pollution; Tennessee's pioneering local and regional planning assistance program.

But all persons familiar with the hardest core problem areas of Appalachia know that without immediate massive outside assistance, Appalachia will become one large ghost region, inhabited by people who have chosen to die not in city slums but in their family grave-yards. And everyone knows that the only source of outside assistance is the federal government.

Proposed federal Appalachian program

Three devastating floods in Eastern Kentucky in five years, massive out-migration, the ghosting of more hamlets, the closing of welfare hospitals, wage and union-busting in the mines, acute rates of unemployment and under-employment--this is the picture. Unless solid assistance is brought to the mountains of Appalachia in the next few years, the whole community-life structure of most of Appalachia will be completely collapsed.

"PARC" is the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, which recently reported the results of more than a year of formulating on an intensive "single-focus team effort" for the development of the Appalachian region. FDR, Jr., has gathered together a staff of whiz kids, headed by experienced Congressional committee staffer John Sweeney, who have inventoried needs, imagined solutions, and honed a program for President Johnson to try to push through Congress.

It is noteworthy that the special staff designed "a future" for the people of Appalachia without making much contact with the people. Two "Grand Tours"

of all the Appalachian states were made by FDR, Jr., and his entourage, which consisted primarily of contacts with Appalachian state governors and meetings with those power structure representatives designated by the governors. The miners of Hazard were not consulted. To make contact with the staff they had to go to Washington and knock on PARC's door.

The PARC Report calls for the creation of an "Appalachian Regional Commission," representing both the Federal government and the governors of Appalachian states. This Commission would have a staff of researchers, planners, administrators, and community development specialists. Their job would be to coordinate and accelerate existing federal, state, and local programs in the Appalachian area, to develop new patterns of public and private investment in the region, and to initiate new programs for the upgrading of communities and "human resources." Under the PARC proposal, the federal arm of the program would be housed in the Commerce Department. Just how powerful the Commission would become depends on the powers and pocketbook Congress gives it and how much the states support and reinforce its efforts on the state and local level. Something between a totally independent TVA type set up and a simple coordinating committee is expected.

In defining the problems of Appalachia, the Report uses vivid language to describe this "Other Country" within America. But PARC's analysis fails in its emphasis: (a) No hint is given of diversities in the region (farms and mines, plateaus and mountains, and even some viable towns and cities as well as rural wasteland); (b) The inter-relationships with the national economy are forgotten in the stress on regional uniqueness; thus, the close relationship between national trends, e.g. automation and unemployment, and the deepening of these trends in the region are ignored; and (c) Unmentioned is the need to guarantee the welfare of all the people of the area regardless of economic means necessary, rather than to develop the region and hope for the best trickle-down effects possible.

The Report is totally geared to providing some form of makeshift economic development based on the existing natural resources, which will bring Appalachia "into the free enterprise orbit" of the American economy at large. This, of course, fails to deal with the fact that the "free enterprise orbit" as presently structured is manufacturing depressed areas such as Appalachia's rural and urban slums throughout the country.

PARC rejects "planned relocation" of any segment of the population as a solution because "the Nation is not politically equipped for the sophisticated and humane planning which would have to accompany a constructive relocation of large numbers from Appalachia." The Report asks the perfectly sound question: "Where would they be absorbed?" and yet fails to recognize the fact that hundreds of thousands of persons are voluntarily leaving the region now, many of them with very poor chances of finding anything but a new slum.

Emphasized in the Report are five different areas: Access, Water Development, Natural Resources, Human Resource Development, and Organization of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Some estimates show the initial budget request calling for about \$250 million in new funds for the first year, but including special accelerations in construction of highways, dams, and other projects, the figure will run much higher than this. A push for almost \$900 million in specially designated expenditures each year of the projected five-year program is expected, but this would almost equal the total War-on-Poverty request for

new expenditures. Provisions for federal loan guarantees, easy investment credits, and revolving fund credits, will also be sought to beef up the finance features of the program. The first two years, the Commission is to be subsidized by the federal government, but after this a 50-50 federal-state arrangement is anticipated. Most of the programs will be either direct federal grants or involve certain percentages of state and local contribution.

PARC's aim in Appalachia is to build a basic infrastructure and encourage certain promising industries in addition to the other national War-on-Poverty policies. Based solidly on a framework of "cooperative federalism" (no program may be imposed on an unwilling state), what actually gets achieved will depend on the cooperation, financial and otherwise, of state and local leaders. PARC pretends not to have a precise formula, but a "variety of programs...brought into coordinated attack to lay the preconditions...not as a solution but as the indispensable groundwork for a solution" for development of (a) human resource with supporting infrastructure and (b) natural resource capability and employment opportunities.

On what is PARC relying to supply these "preconditions?"

First, Access: Using the Interstate Highway System as the backbone, the plan is to construct additional "development" highways bringing major road connections within 25 miles of most mountain residents. This can bring the nation's market closer to the Appalachian interior and thus increase comparative productive advantages; it can also speed outmigration, allow service industries to move closer to the edges, and enable more long-distance commuting for work and travel. The net result is to emphasize the potential growth of certain nexus towns and cities at the expense of unviable ribbon towns. Mountain parkways, like that overlooking Hazard, are also to be constructed, supposedly to encourage tourist trade, seen as a possible growing industry. Small expenditures are also planned for improving airport facilities, especially for small private executive craft for management-hopping and ritzy recreation linkage.

Second, Water Resource Programs: Acceleration of Corps of Engineers and Soil Conservation Service flood control, irrigation, and conservation-recreation lake projects are consciously played down to avoid conflict with private power despite the recent lobbying by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for an "Appalachian TVA." Harry Caudill and others have also recommended public power programs. First of all, power is not given much emphasis in the report. Secondly, mine-mouth coal-using thermal steam plants are emphasized to meet growing regional and export power needs. In addition, water pollution, sewage treatment, and water supply projects are foreseen to help struggling communities provide basic utilities for their residents.

Third, Natural Resources: A plea is made by PARC to move from extractive processes to the building of industrial complexes, but little direct provision for such "companies" is suggested.

Agriculture--An effort to move farming in Appalachia from cropland to pasture and timberland is proposed on the assumption that the soil is relatively unproductive in crops but that there are expanding markets for beef and timber. A pasture improvement program is suggested involving 9.5 million acres, with Federal cost-sharing on a maximum of 25 acres per farm. The region now imports beef, and national demand is growing, but without coming up with some scheme

to integrate the small-owner parcels into productive collectives or some way of capturing the revenue for the region from the largely absentee-owned large acreages, it is hard to see this as the answer to poverty incomes and growing unemployment; especially when many of the unemployed miners have only enough acreage for a tidy flower garden. This can, perhaps, raise income in some of the low-income agricultural counties of Greater Appalachia, but it probably will not spread far.

Timber--PARC says that the wooded resource, despite its generally scrawny state now, "must provide most of the basis for a revitalized regional economy." The same problem of ownership exists here as in pasturage, the large holders live outside the region and the little holders are too small to succeed economically. To offset the disadvantages of the little landowner, PARC proposes the widespread organization and federal financing of "Timber Development Organizations," to be state-chartered and formed by any local group, to get management easements, lease-contracts, or outright purchases of timber lands. Access roads are to be provided. A demonstration program in better timber stand management and marketing and better timber utilization is also projected. To raise the long-run quality of timber resources new national forests are to be declared, encompassing 1.3 million acres including the headwaters region of the Cumberland, Kentucky, Licking and Big Sandy Rivers in Eastern Kentucky, to be called Mountaineer National Forest. PARC hopes that this major emphasis on timber will over time provide the preconditions for a growing wood-processing industry in the region (furniture, boxes, etc.).

Minerals--With coal way down in production and even farther down in employment, an effort to foster coal exports, new power uses, and manufacturing complexes built around coal will be made, but the program proposals in this area are vague. No direct public provision of such a power-manufacturing complex is envisioned.

Recreation--Although recreation is acknowledged not to be a major employer, it is seen as an accommodator program to open up new kinds of private investment capitalizing on natural features of Appalachia such as prime wilderness area, natural impoundments for water sports (although water pollution must be overcome first), and possible game habitats (but deer can't live off of hillsides strip-mined of their forage). A coordinated program of new parklands and public facilities for recreation is envisioned.

Fourth, Human Resources: Nothing imaginative is suggested; just the usual "expansion of existing federal programs" with some new emphasis on community work and training programs and expanded employment services (but where are the jobs?), community health facilities (but what about guaranteed medical coverage?). Acceleration of emergency welfare programs--food stamps, surplus commodities, and school lunches--is urged. Housing programs are mentioned but real community upgrading is ignored.

Limitations of PARC approach

The vision of developing improved communities, industrial complexes, and "up-graded," healthy, and well-fed human beings in Appalachia dominates the rhetoric of the PARC Report, but the specific program recommendations (and, more importantly, budget requests) fail to take even the first steps in these directions in most cases. The emphasis on roads, dams, timber, cattle, and training as the specifics of this vision leaves too much to the unseen hand,

a hand which has maimed the people, scarred the hillsides, polluted the rivers, and moved on. Though the PARC Report acknowledges the existing economic death in Appalachia, it fails to do more than prescribe smelling salts to lure private capital to the area. Though the PARC Report acknowledges the scarring of people in Appalachia, it fails to cope with the total problem of what it will take to give them equality in American society, whether they choose to stay in the hills or migrate to the cities.

This is not only a failure of nerve, a failure to see political resources that could be used to achieve a program that can honestly transform the region and the people within the region. It is especially a poverty of imagination, it is a loss of a great opportunity to project new approaches to solving the total needs of the individuals and their communities. Instead, PARC has exercised a conservative discretion in making its progress recommendations. In probably sincere hopes of getting a foot in the door and therefore being able to do something for the people of the area, they have failed to stand up and declare what is really needed for these people. All the controversial issues are dodged: direct public industrial and power investment, widespread powers of public planning and development, direct public creation of totally new or rebuilt communities, direct substitution for the technical and administrative inadequacies and roadblocks on the state and local levels, massive federal aid for education and medical care, directly created jobs or directly provided income for those persons who cannot be immediately "placed," humane "planned resettlement" for those persons who choose it. Thus PARC may have carefully ruled itself irrelevant. By putting most of their imagination into recommending clever ways of primarily financing agricultural development projects for marginal employment and income (timber, livestock), those who created the PARC Report denied themselves the forum they needed to make bolder proposals.

Now it is time for PARC to answer for its modest proposals and its more obvious oversights:

***Wouldn't the provision of cheap public power in all Appalachia be as strong an inducement to region-wide industrial development as the Tennessee Valley Authority has been in its more limited area?

***Can it be demonstrated that the expansion of land-intensive commercial activities (timber and livestock) will provide sufficient income and employment in the rural areas of Appalachia when most of the poverty stricken are very small landholders on generally very poor land and when the majority of land is owned outside the region? With agriculture a shrinking share of national production and fewer persons needed in it, can clear opportunities for agricultural income (expansion of sufficient national demand and "employment opportunities") be demonstrated?

***Isn't a policy of federally subsidized conversion from cropland to pasture and timber just a way of setting up small landowners for the kill---either by inadequate scale to meet competition or by land speculators to buy their name and controlling the spoil? By essentially ignoring the landless and steering the small-landed into unproductive traps, is this just a more subtle way of forcing hopeless migration in the name of development?

***Although recreational and tourist development in the area meets an important national need, can this kind of development be counted on to provide significant income and employment to reach many of the rural poverty-stricken in the region?

***Can new uses and new markets for coal possibly catch up with the automatic process in coal extraction and provide new jobs in mining?

***Isn't the race for labor-intensive production locations abating with the rise of automated competition, especially in unionized areas; and, except for certain waterfront or mineral-source locations, isn't the relative industrial attractiveness of the urban and urbanizing areas becoming even more pronounced? If so, isn't the only feasible economic solution to provide sufficient comparative advantage and economies-of-scale through direct public investment in those areas where Appalachia can be competitive among national growth industries?

Raising no other question about the PARC program than "Will it work?" we see the pitfalls that timid and marginal public proposals face in the area. Is not the most "pragmatic" approach to the problem a dramatic program which tells the truth about what's needed?

And yet we cannot fully blame the President's Commission for its hesitation. It is operating in an environment of political timidity. It is making its report as part of a total federal effort which seems preoccupied not with the size of the flood, but with how to get its feet wet. Perhaps the only way to "free" the staffs and commissions and to allow them to talk honestly about the tasks before us, is to urge that the people formulate their own program proposals and then confront the policy-makers and the program-pushers themselves.

VISION AT THE BASE---TO BREAK THE LOGJAM AT THE TOP

In the absence of a national leadership to carry out a program to fulfill the needs of the people of Appalachia, the people themselves, starting with the organized miners and hopefully including all the forgotten people of Appalachia, must make their own demands. What is needed is a New Society for Appalachia, a model for all America: New Vision, New Politics, New Towns, New Industries, New Lives.

New Vision: (1) There must be a new definition of the problems of "regional poverty" and a new vision for its solution. The problems of Appalachia must be seen in terms of national structural problems--automation, stagnation, and neglect.

- (2) The need is for democratic national planning and massive public expenditures to correct the society's poverty-making processes.
- (3) The need is for a shift in national investment patterns, away from defense, private waste, and excess profits, and toward meeting the most felt human need.
- (4) The need is to guarantee a decent life situation for all Americans, regardless of place or race, skill or age. Americans must agree upon a decent "floor" to be built under income and basic standards of life for all Americans; a decent home in a decent community, at least a high school education for all, adequate health care, full participation in economic and political decision-making, and meaningful employment in the ongoing processes of the society, social as well as productive.

This must be more than rhetoric. The government must honestly intend to guarantee such standards. Just as the Full Employment Act of 1946 was passed with clear national consciousness of a basic national goal (though it has

been eroded since that time), a new national standard should be set. This might be called a National Full Opportunity Act, guaranteeing specific basic living standards for all Americans. Just as the Council of Economic Advisors was created in 1946 to pursue policies guaranteeing full employment, so a "Council of Social Advisors" might be created in 1964 to pursue policies guaranteeing that all Americans enjoy standards of living which are considered commensurate with national full opportunity. What is important, however, is the achievement, not just the pursuit. Perhaps the most important single step toward fulfilling full opportunity is to achieve the statutory promise of the original Full Employment Act!

New Politics: Instead of simply an Appalachian development group, there should be a National Development Administration with regional units such as Appalachia to coordinate intensive efforts in particular areas. At present, Appalachia is the tail that must wag the dog, since there is no comprehensive national effort in this direction. Such a national program would cooperate with the states but would rely heavily on direct federal financing and control. Large federal staffs supplement and encourage local efforts. Regional "units of government" organized by the federal catalyst would administer programs either cooperatively with local governments or directly, if necessary. Such a national agency would have large discretionary investment powers, and the power of eminent domain and land purchase and allocation. Inherent in a national emphasis of this sort is not only direct regional investment power, but also coordination with national controls on interest rates, money supply, aggregate consumption levels, and so on.

The Appalachian program could be an example for "opening up" the depressed regions of the whole South, as well as urban slums and depressed areas of the North and West. The present Appalachian program involves parts of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, all of the Old Confederacy. A federal commission to study the Southeast River Basin (parts of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina) recently recommended a \$5.5 billion program for land and water resource development alone in that area. Parts of Southwest Georgia, North Florida, and South Alabama are as seriously depressed as many areas of Appalachia. Such regional developmental emphasis in the South should reach as well to the depressed areas of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia, the Delta country of Arkansas-Tennessee-Louisiana-Mississippi, the Big Thicket of Louisiana-Texas, the Mexican borderlands of Texas.

New Towns: Through carefully selected and planned community development efforts, as many persons as possible should be guaranteed decent community life as close to their existing homes as possible. President Johnson has approved the notion of "new towns" in his speech on community development; Appalachia is a perfect place to experiment with such a program. If war and the Cold War can build in Appalachia the planned "new city" of Oak Ridge and cause tenfold increase in the city of Huntsville, Alabama, (where Marshall Space Flight Center is located) why can't a site like Hazard be selected for reconstruction featuring aspects of community life selected by the people themselves? Just as Brazil carved out Brasilia in the jungle as a new national, cultural, and convention center, so America could turn to Appalachian new towns. This means the rehabilitation of potentially decent existing areas as well as starting from scratch. It also means making new towns of the "Appalachian" quarter of Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit as well, another policy which starts unraveling the national as well as the regional ball of twine. Tracing down the poverty-stricken Appalachians who are now living in urban slums across the country and providing them with decent community situations would be like initiating a nationwide new towns program. Well, why not?

Now Industry: The key question that must be asked of all economic development programs is: Will they seriously help in meeting the job and income gap, given the demands of the automating national economy? Are the industrial proposals stop-gaps or growth operations? The limits of resource extraction are clear, because the "exporter" generally pays more for "value added" in the finished products which he imports than he receives for the raw material which he exports. Breaking out of this colony status in relation to the rest of the American economy will take selective policies to develop high-wage, high-growth industry in the region. Once the initial elements of industrial complexes are constructed, often they become "self-expanding," in adding more industries because of newly-discovered "economies of scale," interlocking use of inputs-outputs, etc. This will take more than adequate preparation of potential industrial sites with decent processing water and public facilities. It calls also for public support for power development, labor force in-training at decent wages, and direct investment in needed products. This is what is done in wartime if adequate private investment cannot be found.

What needs of the society are not now being fulfilled by private industry and private research? Development of cheaper sound construction materials for prefabricated housing? Fabrication of processes for desalinization and depollution of water supplies? Experiments could be made in simulating "underdeveloped country" bottlenecks (use of labor-intensive production processes with relatively skilled workers) to demonstrate here in America how they could be solved. New techniques of production could be tried out as a challenge to existing industries, while keeping wages at good levels, just as TVA has pioneered in the development of new fertilizers.

New Lives: First things first demands that the Congressional log-jams be broken on federal aid to education and medical care. Without a thorough breakthrough on underprivileged education, efforts to help both the young and the older, real progress in human development will be stymied. "Compensatory Universities" could be built throughout Appalachia to serve as cultural centers and training centers for teachers, and community leaders. These could be built around existing college centers or at new locations.

The way to develop Appalachia as a recreation haven is to publicly develop low-cost recreation, training, and "retreat" sites for private organizations and industries throughout the country. As the leisure revolution becomes more predominant (the potential human good of job-killing automation) in America, these wilderness areas will be left less to tourist-promotion chances "rest and relaxation" areas, and will be guaranteed the "trade." This is important not only because Appalachia needs service jobs to fill its employment gaps, but because America will need more and more wilderness recreation area in the coming years.

Many of the detailed recommendations of the Committee for Miners' "Program for Eastern Kentucky" are excellent. More specific demands for change in each community should be formulated. Such demands must stem from a view held by the people themselves that there are certain expectations which are reasonable for them as American citizens to have. There are many possible development strategies for Appalachia, but the strategy that cannot be allowed is the present one of neglect and tokenism.

Selected programs can help many areas prove adequate to their residents' needs. For other individuals the only path is to live in a viable urban community, in or out of Appalachia. For others, their best life-chance is in the development of new towns built around new industry where their lives will no longer sink into the total neglect and squalor of the other America again. Nothing less

than a new society must be the expectation--and insistence--of the people of Appalachia.

Notes on strategy

The Hazard miners and their Eastern Kentucky allies have already shown their willingness to stand up for their rights and hopes. By picketing at home demanding reopening of the Welfare hospitals and picketing the White House seeking a meaningful federal development program, the miners have made sure that the local state, and national power structures have been confronted by their determination. The nation has been made aware of their plight. The parents of a depressed Appalachian town, Clairfield, Tennessee, recently followed suit with one of the first Appalachian school boycotts. The very existence of a federal Appalachian program, regardless of its content, will bring constant attention to the area and provide a great number of opportunities to raise the demands.

It is important to remember that Appalachia as currently defined is an area stretching from central Pennsylvania to northwest Alabama. The opportunities for alliance in every state with liberal-labor-Negro-political forces, particularly the equally insurgent and insistent Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and other community-based movements, should not be overlooked. The significance and limitation in the new federal approach to Appalachia is in the willingness of states like Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama (although with some balking from Virginia and Alabama) to join with northern states and the federal government in accepting responsibility for the problem of poverty in their areas. Therefore, strong pressures must be applied on the states and local communities as well as the federal government to follow through on the Appalachian program.

It is also important to remember that some national "interests" dwell in Appalachia who are directly concerned for the welfare of the poverty-stricken. Their national voices can be important, particularly on poverty. The National Farmers Union and Sharecroppers Fund back "developmental" agricultural programming. Many marginal Appalachian farmers live outside the coal counties and must be counted as potential for the movement if possible. "Citizens for TVA" and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association are for expansion of public power.

The miners can have considerable influence by exerting their power on local leadership. To do more than spotlight their problems on higher levels, however, they must find alliances and coalitions on the state, regional, and national level with those who desire the best kind of development for Appalachia. Much of what will be done for the region will depend on re-allocation of national resources for that purpose.

Where inadequacies or phoniness in the programs exist, they must be dramatically pointed out: jamming the retraining programs, for instance, to show the limited opportunities; or picketing an ARA motel boondoggle which isn't providing jobs.

The "Migration is Salvation" myth must also be met head-on. Hazard or Eastern Kentucky "alumni associations" might be organized on at least an informal basis in the Appalachian "quarters of cities which are already being organized (e.g., SDS full-time unemployment project in Chicago and projected summer projects in Louisville, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, etc.). These "alumni groups" could hold solidarity demonstrations or sympathy pickets to show that the problems of Eastern Kentucky and Appalachia are mobile and national.

Most federal programs provide for "local participation" in decision-making. Because few plain people call their hand on it, the local power structure still usually manages to run things. However the ARA, Manpower Development and Training program (Dept. of Labor), Agriculture Extension Service, and Rural Areas Development (Agriculture) programs, to mention a few, all have local supervisory committees which are by law supposed to have a "diversity of representation." Miners and other forgotten people should demand their right to representation; once seated on these committees, more details of local policy can be learned. Just keeping track of local programs on how (and to whom) their funds are expended can be an important function. Irregularities should be reported immediately to Washington. In addition, public hearings held by Bureau of Public Roads or Corps of Engineers, for instance, should be attended and group demands made clear.

Local groups can fruitfully formulate counter-plans and work for their implementation. With a little bit of technical assistance, the groups can formulate their own ideas about how, where, when, and for whom schools should be built and present their plan to the School Board. What they believe should be involved in urban renewal and housing programs can be presented to the local Planning Board or Urban Renewal group. The projects they feel can be most helpful to the local people can be presented to local Industrial Development Committees.

The demonstration can present the strong feelings of the forgotten and raise an issue in a dramatic way. Local school boycotts, such as in Clairfield, can demand better educational conditions. Some persons have suggested picketing the Selective Service offices to indicate opposition to proposed "school drop-out" conscription instead of jobs at home. Local mass tax strikes have been suggested to dramatize the need for the improvement of public services, living conditions, and employment opportunities.

Even applications for federal projects could be formulated by a protest group as a means of expressing the needs of the people. Application for participation in agricultural projects could be made by all the people, whether or not they have any land or capital, noting in each application that what is needed is sufficient land and income even to make a start on such a venture. Groups of miners could charter independent "districts" or "development associations" and get direct federal financing for water and sewerage systems, establish "industrial sites" and seek federal technical assistance grants for feasibility studies. It has even been suggested that unemployed miners form a "craft group" and apply for assistance from the State crafts program in Kentucky and then "sell" things along the highways with signs on their stands: "We Want Decent Jobs."

As part of mobilizing people in communities of Appalachia, it should be realized that unionization can be a great catalyst for unified social action in many different economic situations--from organizing marginal garment plants in the farm counties to assisting workers' organization in all the plants of the more diversified industrial areas (e.g., Ashland).

All opportunities to express community-based sentiments in cooperation with others should be seized. Some strategists insisted that a large contingent of miners at the Kentucky State Civil Rights March on Frankfort would have helped build new alliances and reach new audiences.

How does it all fit together?

How do people move from "demands" to "dreams"--from local gripes to steps toward achieving the sort of democratic society in which they really believe?

Attaining a meaningful national "Full Opportunity" program will take a concerted political drive among those very people who are now denied the opportunity to be fully "political" and economic" in the American society. These people are found in every area of America, for America in terms of its human potential is a national depressed area. In some areas, they are the majority.

These people must confront the operative political and economic system at all levels. Although the most immediate felt needs are usually the spark to their total awakening, they must demand not only the solution to their immediate problems; they must also seek the realization of their greatest aspirations--a new vision of a better society.

The forgotten people of Hazard and their alumni in Chicago, the neglected people of Mississippi and their alumni in Harlem, all Americans who feel the bite of poverty or the shame of national neglect must work together. This issue goes to the heart of the American political and economic process, and it must be kept alive until the society is transformed. Not only must the needs of the people be met, but the people must be involved in the basic fabric of life and decision-making, so that they gain control, through cooperation, over the forces that rule their lives.

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